

#### Application by Sunnica Ltd for an Order Granting Development Consent for the Sunnica Energy Farm

The Examining Authority's written questions and requests for information (ExQ3)

#### Issued on 3 February 2023

The following table sets out the Examining Authority's (ExA's) written questions and requests for information - **ExQ3**. If necessary, the Examination Timetable enables the ExA to request further information under Rule 17 of the Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 to be submitted at Deadline 8, 13 March 2023.

Questions are set out using an issues-based framework derived from the Initial Assessment of Principal Issues provided as Annex C to the Rule 6 letter of 28 June 2022. Questions have been added to the framework of issues set out there as they have arisen from representations and to address the assessment of the application against relevant policies.

Column 2 of the table indicates to which Interested Parties (IPs) and other persons each question is directed. The ExA would be grateful if all persons named could answer all questions directed to them, providing a substantive response, or indicating why the question is not relevant to them. This does not preclude an answer being provided to a question by a person to whom it is not directed, should the question be relevant to that person's interests.

For example, the first question on air quality and human health issues has the unique reference number Q3.1.1. When answering a question, please start your answer by quoting the unique reference number.

If you are responding to a small number of questions, answers in a letter will suffice. If you are answering a larger number of questions, it will assist the ExA if you use a table based on this one to set out your responses. An editable version of this table in Microsoft Word is available on request from the case team: Please contact <a href="mailto:sunnica@planninginspectorate.gov.uk">sunnica@planninginspectorate.gov.uk</a>.

Responses are due by Deadline 7, Friday 3 March 2023.



#### Abbreviations used:

PA2008	The Planning Act 2008 ExA		Examining Authority	
	A11 11 0 1			
AC	Alternating Current	LEMP	Landscape and Ecology Management Plan	
ADR	Alternative Dispute Resolution	LIR	Local Impact Report	
Art	Article	LHA	Local Highway Authority	
ALA 1981	Acquisition of Land Act 1981	LPA	Local Planning Authority	
ALC	Agricultural Land Classification	LSE	Likely significant effects	
AP	Affected Person	LVIA	Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment	
BESS	Battery Energy Storage System	MoD	Ministry of Defence	
BoR	Book of Reference	NE	Natural England	
CA	Compulsory Acquisition	NGESO	National Grid Electricity System Operator	
CCC	Cambridgeshire County Council	NGET	National Grid Electricity Transmission plc	
CEA	Cumulative Effects Assessment	NMU	Non-motorised user	
СРО	Compulsory Purchase Order	NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework	
CEMP	Construction Environment Management Plan	NPS	National Policy Statement	
COMAH	Control of Major Accident Hazards	NSIP	Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project	
CTMP and TP	Construction Traffic Management Plan and Travel Plan	PHE	Public Health England	
DC	Direct Current	P(HS)	Planning (Hazardous Substances)	
dDCO	draft Development Consent Order	PRN	Primary Route Network	
DCO	Development Consent Order	PRoW	Public Right of Way	



DEMP	Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan	PSED	Public Sector Equality Duty
EA	Environment Agency	R	Requirement
EC	East Cambridgeshire District Council	RPG	Registered Park and Garden
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment	SAC	Special Area of Conservation
EM	Explanatory Memorandum	SCC	Suffolk County Council
EN-1	Overarching National Policy Statemen for Energy	t <b>SI</b>	Statutory Instrument
ES	Environmental Statement	SNTS	Say No To Sunnica action group
FPRF	United States Fire Protection Researc Foundation	h <b>SoS</b>	Secretary of State
FRA	Flood Risk Assessment	SPA	Special Protection Area
FS	Funding Statement	SuDS	Sustainable drainage system
GLVIA	Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment	TP	Temporary Possession
HRA	Habitats Regulations Assessment	UKHSA	United Kingdom Health Security Agency
HSE	Health and Safety Executive	WSC	West Suffolk Council

#### **The Examination Library**

References in these questions set out in brackets, eg [APP-010], are to documents catalogued in the Examination Library. The Examination Library will be updated as the examination progresses and can be obtained from the following link: <a href="https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/wp-content/ipc/uploads/projects/EN010106-002090-">https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/wp-content/ipc/uploads/projects/EN010106-002090-</a>

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ExQ3: 3 February 2023

ExQ3	Question to:	Question:
3.0	Principle and Natu	re of the Development
Q3.0.1	The Applicant	Decommissioning Should the ExA conclude that there would be likely to be permanent effects on the environment after decommissioning, despite the currently proposed post-decommissioning management measures?  If the ExA does so conclude, why should it not require that the DCO secure effective regulation of the post-decommissioning environment?
Q3.0.2	The Applicant	Decommissioning  Should the Applicant seek compulsory acquisition powers to enable it to discharge Requirements to address the post-decommissioning environment, and provide within the LEMP details of those measures and the areas of land to be included, taking account of the review process SCC has advocated in [REP4-143]?  If not please explain why not.
Q3.0.3	The Applicant	Decommissioning
Q3.0.3	тне Арріїсані	We note your updated framework Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan (DEMP) [REP5-008] and updated Funding Statement (FS) [REP5-004].
		With reference to paragraph 2.2.1 of the FS, please explain what the decommissioning of the proposed development will cost and how it will be funded; and
		Given the change in the ownership structure described in section 2.1 of the FS, please update the FS as necessary to ensure that it contains the most up to date information.
Q3.0.4	The Applicant	Good design  Further to your response to our ExQ1.0.5 and ExQ1.0.6, and in the light of any relevant submissions by Interested Parties, please comment on the need for a DCO Requirement for a Design Champion and for a Design Council Design Panel review.
Q3.0.5	The Applicant	Community benefit and legacy
		Further to your response to our ExQ2.0.1, we note that you say that you are "in the process of developing a suite of further community benefits which it hopes will be enshrined in a planning agreement".  • What are these?

ExQ3	Question to:	Question:
		Do the relevant local authorities agree? and
		What is the real legacy of the proposed development for local people?
3.1	Air Quality and Hum	an Health
Q3.1.1	The Applicant	BESS: future large solar farm projects
		What literature are you aware of that details the future development of battery storage solutions for large solar farm developments. If you are aware of any such, please provide succinct details and references.
Q3.1.2	The Applicant,	BESS: relevant regulations
	WSC, ECDC	Are you aware of any proposals before Parliament to bring specifically within scope of the relevant regulations large scale battery storage development for solar energy projects?
		If so please provide brief details.
Q3.1.3	The Applicant	BESS: COMAH and P(HS) regulations
		We note your response to our ExQ2.1.2 and ExQ2.1.3.
		Surely evolving technology will mean reduced impacts when the proposed development is constructed: that being the case, why do you not fix the design on that basis and commit through the DCO to obtaining authorisation under the COMAH regulations and hazardous substances consent?
Q3.1.4	The relevant local	BESS: design assumptions
	authorities	Please comment on the Applicant's response to our ExQ2.1.4 in respect of assumptions made about the size, power rating and chemical make-up of the BESS and the consequent assessment of the impacts.
Q3.1.5	HSE UKHSA and	BESS: unplanned atmospheric emissions
	EA	Please comment on the Applicant's response to our ExQ2.1.15. Do you think that undue reliance is placed on the detailed consequence modelling to be undertaken post consent?
Q3.1.6	HSE and EA	BESS: consent under COMAH and P(HS)
		Please confirm that you were consulted on the proposed development, and the BESS in particular, and when (ie at what stage(s) in the planning process);

ExQ3: 3 February 2023

ExQ3	Question to:	Question:
		Please comment on Requirement 7 in the revised draft DCO [REP6-013] and the adequacy of the Applicant's outline Battery Fire Safety Management Plan (OBFSMP) as updated at Deadline 5 [REP5-050]; and
		Please comment on the need or otherwise for a Requirement in the DCO that the Applicant will seek consent for the BESS elements of the proposed development, in terms of the transport to site, construction, operation, decommissioning and transport away from site following decommissioning.
Q3.1.7	WSC	BESS: hazardous substances consent
		You state in your Deadline 5 reply [REP5-101] to the Applicant's response to the LA's joint submissions [REP4-035] that the DCO should provide for the granting of hazardous substances consent in the event that it is required, rather than it being subject to a separate consenting process.
		Would it not be more practicable and effective to require the Applicant to meet the standards set out in the consenting regime for such matters?
		Do you have cause for concern that such regime would not adequately deal with those matters, and if so why?
Q3.1.8	The Applicant	BESS: emergency response plan
		We note the revised outline Battery Fire Safety Management Plan (BFSMP) submitted at Deadline 5 [REP5-050].
		<ul> <li>Please confirm that in paragraph 5.2.1 line 6 and elsewhere (eg paragraph 5.2.2 line 2) CRFS should read CFRS as an abbreviation of the Cambridge Fire and Rescue Service; and</li> </ul>
		Appendices A and B are not listed in the table of contents and do not appear to be referred to: please explain what Technology 1 and Technology 2 are.
Q3.1.9	The Applicant	BESS: final version of outline Battery Fire Safety Management Plan (OBFSMP)
		We note your response to our ExQ2.1.17, and in particular that the revised outline Battery Fire Safety Management Plan (BFSMP) now includes an independent fire protection engineer.
		Please explain
		i) why you would not conduct ingress protection testing, eg to IEC60068; and
		ii) why you would not use data analytics to warn of maintenance or failure of components and/or systems.

ExQ3	Question to:	Question:
Q3.1.10	HSE	BESS: health and safety related consents
		Please comment on the Applicant's response to our ExQ2.1.18, with particular reference to the statement that " it is not practical at this stage to outline in detail a programme of these consents"
Q3.1.11	The Applicant	Emergency response and evacuation planning
		We note your response to our ExQ2.1.19: your response indicates that major accidents and disasters assessment is required by the framework CEMP, OEMP and DEMP but that "The final management plans must be in substantial accordance with the framework plans".
		i) What do you mean by "substantial"; and
		ii) how can those likely to be affected by major accidents and disasters have confidence in the final plans which will be agreed post consent?
3.2	Biodiversity and N	ature Conservation (including Habitats Regulations Assessment)
Q3.2.1	The Applicant	Framework CEMP [REP5-044]
		Tables 3-4 and 3-5 do not appear to show the commitment to position all drainage to avoid the area of constraint associated with retained trees.
		Will this be rectified? if so, please explain how this will be secured within the framework CEMP.
Q3.2.2	The Applicant	Framework CEMP [REP5-044]
		How would performance of the detailed Arboricultural Method Statement be secured in the framework CEMP and DCO?
		Please include reference to WSC's comments on the pre-construction bat survey in its D6 submission [REP6-080].
Q3.2.3	The Applicant	Framework CEMP [REP5-044]
		Will pre-commencement surveys for bats now be included in the CEMP following WSC's comments at D5 in response to the Applicant's summary of submissions made at ISH2 [REP4-030]?
Q3.2.4	The Applicant,	Ecology working group
	the LPAs	How is it proposed to continue to fund the Ecology Working Group, including funding work undertaken by that group?
Q3.2.5	The Applicant	ISH2: correction

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ExQ3	Question to:	Question:
		Paragraph 3.6.1 of your written summary of oral submissions at ISH2 [REP4-030] refers to the "Morten review".
		Please correct this so that it reads "Lawton review".
Q3.2.6	The Applicant	HRA: dust monitoring
		Please respond to CCC points [REP4-137] regarding dust monitoring for the Molinia feature at Fenland SAC.
Q3.2.7	NE	HRA: stone curlew
		NE is invited to supply the evidence referred to in paragraph 3.2 of [REP5-096] to confirm conclusions of no functional link between stone curlew within the order limits and stone curlew at Breckland SPA.
Q3.2.8	NE	HRA: conservation objectives
		Is NE satisfied with the conservation objectives provided by the Applicant in its HRA Report?
Q3.2.9	NE	HRA: Eversden and Wimpole Woods SAC
		SNTS raised in [REP3A-041] and at Deadline 6 [REP6-074] the proximity of Eversden and Wimpole Woods SAC to the Proposed Development.
		Natural England is invited to comment on the identification of this site and whether further consideration is required in terms of the implications of the proposed development for this site.
Q3.2.10	NE	HRA: noise and light spill
		Does NE consider that noise and light spill contour maps and modelling data are still required to validate the conclusion of no LSE for Chippenham Fen Ramsar site from non-physical disturbance pathways?
Q3.2.11	NE	HRA: air quality
		At [REP2-090] NE commented on the potential for in-combination effects on air quality sensitive features at Breckland SPA.
		NE is invited to confirm whether it considers this pathway still remains and, if so, the qualifying features where there is potential for Likely Significant Effects (LSE).
Q3.2.12	Relevant local	HRA: in-combination assessment
	authorities, SNTS	Are IPs satisfied that the Applicant's in combination assessments, contained within its HRA Report has fully considered all relevant plans or projects? If not, what assessment remains outstanding?

ExQ3	Question to:	Question:
Q3.2.13	LPAs, SNTS	HRA: great crested newt Are IPs satisfied with the conclusion of no LSE on the Great Crested Newt (Triturus cristatus) qualifying feature at Fenland SAC?
3.3	Compulsory Acqui	isition, Temporary Possession and Other Land or Rights Considerations
The ExA	has no questions in	this round.
3.4	Cultural Heritage a	and Historic Environment
The ExA	has no questions in	this round.
3.5	Draft Development	t Consent Order (dDCO)
Q3.5.1	The Applicant,	Fees schedule and related matters
	ECDC, WSC	How would the DCO be amended, with possible reference to Schedule 13, paragraph 2, to incorporate an eventual Fees Schedule for the discharge of Requirements in the DCO?
		<ul> <li>What further changes are necessary or desirable to the proposed wording set out by WSC in its Deadline 5 submissions?</li> </ul>
		How would a commitment by the Applicant to pay, prior to commencement, a contribution towards enforcement monitoring during the lifetime of the proposed development be best secured?
		<ul> <li>Are there any significant examples, of which the District Councils or the Applicant are aware, of monetary commitments set out in plans certified in a DCO, where a dispute has arisen and was resolved through enforcement of the relevant DCO Requirement?</li> </ul>
Q3.5.2	ECDC	Temporary use of land
		You have previously expressed concerns over the widespread use of the term "temporary use of land" within the DCO.
		• What amendments do you think should be made, if any, to the DCO to identify appropriate precise time limits in relation to the various uses of the term?
		If you have any such preferred amendments, please provide a justification for them.
3.6	<b>Environmental Sta</b>	tement – general matters
The ExA	has no questions in	this round.

ExQ3	Question to:	Question:	
3.7	Landscape and Vis	sual Effects	
Q3.7.1	The Applicant	Photomontages In relation to the Verifiable Photomontages [APP-220 to APP-232] please state the notional size of the solar panels portrayed in the photomontages.	
Q3.7.2	The Applicant, SNTS	Photomontages The Verifiable Photomontages from Viewpoints 11, 11b, 12a, 14, 18, 25, 32, 33 and 46 [APP-221; APP-222; APP-223; APP-226; APP-227; APP-228; APP-229 and APP-232] appear to show summertime planting superimposed on wintertime landscapes.  Please comment on the extent to which you consider that these photomontages give an accurate representation of the effects of mitigation planting during the winter.	
3.8	Noise and Vibratio	n	
The ExA	has no questions in	this round.	
3.9	Socio-Economics and Land Use		
Q3.9.1	CCC, SCC	PRoW and haul roads  Further to the CCC response to our ExQ2.9.12, are you satisfied with the revised wording in the draft DCO submitted at Deadline 6 [REP6-013] of Requirement 6, and also of Schedule 6 Part 2 in respect of the temporary use of motor vehicles on public rights of way?  If not, please explain why not.	
Q3.9.2	The Applicant	Consolidated access and PRoW plans  We note your response to our ExQ2.9.13. Please advise when the consolidated set of Access and Rights of Way plans will be submitted.	
Q3.9.3	The Applicant	Consolidated access and PRoW plans  Will the Applicant, before submitting a consolidated set of access and public rights of way plans, have discussed this with LHAs as well as LPAs, notwithstanding the Applicant's current position on NMUs as noise receptors?  If not please explain why not.	

ExQ3	Question to:	Question:
Q3.9.4	The LHAs	PRoW improvement plan
		Are the proposals in the Applicant's response to our ExQ2.9.14 for a section 106 agreement acceptable?
Q3.9.5	CCC and the Fordham Walking	Fordham Walking Group concerns  Are you satisfied with the proposals put by the Applicant in its response to our ExQ2.9.18? If not, please
	Group	explain why not.
Q3.9.6	The Applicant	Fordham Walking Group concerns
		Will Fordham (Cambridge) Walking Group be included as a consultee in the FCEMP [REP5-044] and if not why not?
Q3.9.7	The Applicant	Additional spurs on circular path at E05
		Will the revised Environment Masterplan [REP-061] be updated to include an additional spur to Beck Road, and one to the northern edge of the site as requested by CCC in relation to E05?
		If not please explain why not.
Q3.9.8	The Applicant	Sectional drawings
		Please explain where in the application documents sectional drawings show accurately verges that are part of the highway and whether you have engaged effectively with the local highway authorities to use highway boundary data to provide the examination with this information.
		If not please explain why not.
Q3.9.9	The Applicant	Shared use of accesses
		Please explain where in the application documents it is clearly explained, including by means of a plan or plans, how site and cable route accesses would be shared with agricultural, commercial, or domestic traffic during construction and operational stages of the proposed development, with a clear explanation of how conflicts will be managed.
		If this information is absent, please explain why.
Q3.9.10	The Applicant	NMUs
		Will the Applicant now accept that NMUs should be assessed as noise receptors?
		If not please explain why, having regard to the local authorities' concerns expressed in their Deadline 6 submissions, for example CCC's Comments on Applicant's Response to ExQ2, Q2.9.9, page 72.

ExQ3	Question to:	Question:
Q3.9.11	The Applicant,	Enhancements to the PRoW network
	CCC, SCC, WSC, ECDC	Please summarise, with reference to relevant policy statements or guidance if considered relevant, your understanding of how, if at all, the ExA may or should take account of the extent to which a section 106 obligation or obligations completed by the end of the Examination would meet concerns expressed by IPs for the need for the proposed development to incorporate enhancements to the PRoW network.
		In your response, please include what account may or should be taken by the ExA in its recommendation report in the event of any proposed party failing without reasonable excuse to make good progress to complete the same.
Q3.9.12	The Applicant	Public and private roads
		The ExA considers that in the interests of clarity Schedule 5 parts 1 and 2 of the DCO should be updated to clarify which roads are public and which are private, and whether the works referenced in column (3) would take place on public or private sections of the roads listed in column (2).
		Does the Applicant agree? If so, please provide the necessary amendments within the next iteration of the DCO.
Q3.9.13	The Applicant	PRoW closures
		Are the amendments proposed to the DCO and CEMP to ensure that PRoW would only be closed as a last resort, as included in CCC's response to 8.81 Public Rights of Way Closure Note [REP-068], acceptable? If not please explain why not.
Q3.9.14	CCC, SCC	PRoW closure note [REP5-068]
		How do you see the proposals for marshals to be in place to guide PRoW users, crossing where works would take place, working in practice, for example with regard to timing and availability?
Q3.9.15	The Applicant	PRoW closure note
		Does the Applicant agree with the wording of the proposed amendments to the DCO, Articles 11(1), 11(3), 9(1)(b), Schedule 2, Requirement 16 provided by CCC on behalf of itself and SCC in its D6 submissions, together with the amendments to the CTMP?
		If not please explain why not.
3.10	Traffic, Transport ar	nd Highway Safety
Q3.10.1	The Applicant	CTMP and TP [REP5-015]

ExQ3	Question to:	Question:
		We refer to your response to our ExQ2.10.12, to the updated Appendix 13C Framework CTMP and TP [REP5-015] and to the updated drafting of Requirement 16 in the draft DCO: to avoid confusion, please confirm that
		<ul> <li>the cover sheet status column of the updated Appendix 13C Framework CTMP and TP [REP5-015] should read "Deadline 3A" for Rev 03 dated 28 November 2022; and</li> </ul>
		• the updated Requirement 16(3) should read (ExA emphasis) "(3) No part of the permitted preliminary works for each phase comprising above ground site preparation for temporary facilities for the use of contractors, the diversion and laying of apparatus and site clearance (including vegetation removal, demolition of existing buildings and structures) may commence until a permitted preliminary works traffic management plan for that phase has been submitted to and approved by the relevant county authority for that phase or, where the phase falls within the administrative areas of both the county of Suffolk and the county of Cambridgeshire, both relevant county authorities."
Q3.10.2	The Applicant	CTMP and TP [REP5-015]
		Please clarify in your response to D4 submissions [REP5-057] whether use of cable route site accesses would occur through routine inspection or the like, and please explain the reference to "the same Temporary Traffic Measures", as it is unclear how this would be possible, practicable, or desirable
Q3.10.3	The Applicant	CTMP and TP [REP5-015] Please
		(i) explain where in the application documentation it is clear what vehicle movements or management during the operational phase have been considered, such as at Sunnica West Site A, Access A; and
		(ii) please provide a clear explanation, by the use of plan or plan(s) and drawings, of how safe access can be established at this site, without significant removal of foliage at both sides of the junction.
Q3.10.4	The LHAs	Traffic regulation measures
		Are you content with the revised drafting of Article 44? If not, please explain why and suggest alternative drafting.
Q3.10.5	The Applicant	Side agreement
		Regarding the emerging discussions between the Applicant and the LHAs for a side agreement in respect of inspection, certification and other highway matters, why should the agreement not be completed and submitted to the Examination before it closes?

ExQ3	Question to:	Question:			
Q3.10.6	The Applicant, CCC, SCC	Side agreement  What account may or should be taken by the ExA in its recommendation report in the event of any proposed party to the side agreement failing without valid reason to make good progress to complete the same before the close of the Examination?			
Q3.10.7	The Applicant	Costs of damage to local highway network			
		Please provide a formula by which any eventual commuted sum to meet the costs of damage to the local highway network, due to the construction of the proposed development, may be effective and enforceable and inserted into the CTMP, or provide a proposed amendment to the DCO to secure this commitment.			
3.11 Water Resources, Flood Risk and Drainage					
Q3.11.1	The Applicant	Sustainable Drainage Systems Will the Environmental Masterplan include the sustainable drainage features set out in the Drainage Strategy General Arrangements Drawings, Appendix F, of the Drainage Technical Note [REP5-070]? If not please explain why.			
Q3.11.2	The Applicant	Risk of flooding Will maps be included within the application documents to demonstrate the extent of pluvial flood risk, as has been provided for fluvial flood risk mapping? If not please explain why not.			

ExQ3: 3 February 2023 Responses due by Deadline 7: Friday 3 March 2023								