



Longfield Solar Farm

Application Forms [PINS Ref: EN010118]

Covering Letter

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Longfield Solar Energy Farm Ltd

APFP Regulation 5(2)(q)

Planning Act 2008

Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed Forms and Procedure)
Regulations 2009

Longfield Solar Energy Farm Limited
Alexander House
1 Mandarin Road
Rainton Bridge Business Park
Houghton le Spring
DH4 5RA

28th February 2022

The Planning Inspectorate
National Infrastructure Directorate
Temple Quay House
Temple Quay
Bristol
BS1 6PN

FAO: Bart Bartkowiak

Dear Mr Bartkowiak,

Planning Act 2008 – Application for a Development Consent Order for Longfield Solar Farm

Application Ref: EN010118

On behalf of Longfield Solar Energy Farm Limited (the Applicant) I am pleased to enclose an application for a Development Consent Order (DCO) (the Application) pursuant to section 37 of the Planning Act 2008 (PA 2008) for the proposed Longfield Solar Farm (the Scheme).

1.1 Subject of the Application

- 1.1.1 The Application is for a DCO to construct, operate (including maintenance), and decommission ground mounted solar photovoltaic (PV) panel arrays, a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS), and supporting infrastructure.
- 1.1.2 The Application is required because the Scheme is classified as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) pursuant to sub-sections 14(1)(a) and 15(1) and (2) of the PA 2008, as an onshore generating station in England with a capacity exceeding 50 megawatts (MW). As such, the decision whether to grant development consent will be made by the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (Secretary of State). The NSIP and associated development are formally described in Schedule 1 of the **draft DCO [EN010118/APP/3.1]**.

1.2 Application fee and documentation enclosed

- 1.2.1 A fee of **£7263** has been submitted by CHAPS transfer to the account of the Planning Inspectorate.
- 1.2.2 The Application is submitted via a SharePoint system, which has been set up for file transfer of the application documents. This was agreed with the Planning Inspectorate.

- 1.2.3 A GIS shapefile showing the Order limits for the Scheme was issued to the Planning Inspectorate via email on 4th February 2022. A selection of draft application documents was also shared with the Planning Inspectorate on 18 October 2021. The shared documents comprised: a sample of the Land Plans; draft Works Plans; draft Development Consent Order; draft Explanatory Memorandum; a sample from the draft Book of Reference; part of the draft Consultation Report; draft Application Index; draft ES Chapters 1 (Introduction), 2 (The Scheme), and 4 (Consultation); draft Statement of Need; and draft Design Principles. Feedback on the draft documents was provided by the Planning Inspectorate on 8 December 2021. The Applicant has taken account of the feedback in finalising its Application.
- 1.2.4 A **Section 55 Checklist [EN010118/APP/1.4]** that has been completed by the Applicant has been included with the Application to assist with Planning Inspectorate's compliance check of the Application.

1.3 Application formalities

- 1.3.1 This Application is made in the form required by Section 37(3)(b) of the PA 2008 and the application documents comply¹ with the requirements in Section 37 of the PA 2008 and those set out in:
- The Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed Forms and Procedure) Regulations 2009 (the APFP Regulations);
 - The Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (the EIA Regulations);
 - The Department for Communities and Local Government's (DCLG) 'Planning Act 2008: Nationally significant infrastructure projects – Application form guidance' (June 2013);
 - The Planning Inspectorate's 'Advice Note Six: Preparation and submission of application documents' (September 2021).
- 1.3.2 It has been confirmed to the Planning Inspectorate on 28th January 2022 that the Application will be published (with any necessary redactions and minus any confidential documents) on the Planning Inspectorate's webpage from the point of acceptance.

1.4 Scheme description

- 1.4.1 A non-technical description of the Scheme is included within the **Guide to the Application [EN010118/APP/1.2]**. A more detailed technical description of the Scheme is included within **Chapter 2 of the Environmental Statement (ES) [EN010118/APP/6.1]**.

1.5 Consent flexibility

- 1.5.1 The Scheme comprises an energy farm with Solar PV and BESS infrastructure. Solar PV and BESS are evolving, and as a result, the **draft DCO [EN010118/APP/3.1]** and supporting **Works Plans [EN010118/APP/2.2]** propose a degree of flexibility to allow the latest technology to be utilised at the time of construction. A number of the design

¹ The Applicant agreed with the Planning Inspectorate on 31st January that some plans did not need to meet the required scale specified by Regulation 5(3) of the APFP Regulations. See paragraph 1.10.1 of this letter for further information on this matter.

aspects and features of the Scheme cannot be confirmed until the tendering process for the design and construction of the Scheme has been completed. **Outline Design Principles** that set out the design parameters within which the Scheme is proposed to be constructed and operated are provided as **Appendix A** of the **Design Statement [EN010118/APP/7.3]**. The environmental impact assessment undertaken to assess the environmental effects of the Scheme has considered and reflected the flexibility sought in the draft DCO. The reasonable worst case set out in the **Design Principles, Appendix A** of the Design Statement **[EN010118/APP/7.3]** has been assessed in the ES and those Design Principles are secured by the **draft DCO [EN010118/APP/3.1]**.

1.6 Habitats Regulations Assessment

- 1.6.1 A Stage 1 Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening exercise was undertaken to identify likely significant effects. This is reported in the **Habitats Regulations Assessment: No Significant Effects Report (HRA Report) [EN010118/APP/6.7]**, as required by Regulation 5(2)(g) of the APFP Regulations. The HRA Report identifies all relevant European sites potentially affected by the Scheme and provides sufficient information for the Secretary of State to undertake an appropriate assessment to determine whether the Scheme would have an adverse effect on the integrity of any European site. The Applicant's Appropriate Assessment, set out in the HRA Report, concludes that there would be no adverse effects on the integrity of European sites as a result of the Scheme.
- 1.6.2 The HRA Report has been prepared in accordance with the Planning Inspectorate's 'Advice Note 10: Habitats Regulations Assessments' and Regulation 5(2)(g) of the APFP Regulations.

1.7 Compulsory Acquisition

- 1.7.1 The land over which the Applicant is seeking powers of compulsory acquisition of land, rights and interests and powers of temporary possession in the **draft DCO [EN010118/APP/3.1]** for the purposes of the Scheme is listed in the **Book of Reference [EN010118/APP/4.3]**. The **Statement of Reasons [EN010118/APP/4.1]** also provides details of the powers sought and negotiations to date.
- 1.7.2 The **Book of Reference [EN010118/APP/4.3]** has been prepared and is submitted in compliance with Regulation 5(2)(d) of the APFP Regulations, and in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government guidance 'Planning Act 2008: Guidance related to procedures for compulsory acquisition of land' (September 2013).
- 1.7.3 Details of the adequacy of the funding for compensation are provided in the **Funding Statement [EN010118/APP/4.2]**. The Statement of Reasons and Funding Statement are submitted in compliance with Regulation 5(2)(h) of the APFP Regulations.

1.8 Other consents

- 1.8.1 A summary of other consents and licences likely to be required in addition to those being requested as part of the draft DCO is provided in the **Consents and Agreements Position Statement [EN010118/APP/3.3]**.

1.9 Pre-application consultation

- 1.9.1 The Applicant has had careful regard to the pre-application consultation requirements of the PA 2008, the guidance on pre-application consultation issued by the DCLG and the Planning Inspectorate, and its pre-application discussions held with the Planning Inspectorate, as required by Section 50(3) of the PA 2008.
- 1.9.2 As required by Section 37(3)(c) of the PA 2008, the Application is accompanied by a **Consultation Report [EN010118/APP/5.1]**, which provides details of the Applicant's compliance with sections 42, 46, 47, 48 and 49 of the PA 2008, the APFP Regulations, the EIA Regulations, and the relevant guidance.

1.10 Other matters

- 1.10.1 As required under Regulation 5(3) of the APFP Regulations, all plans, drawings or sections provided under Regulation 5(2) are no larger than A0 size, are drawn to an identified scale (not smaller than 1:2500) and, in the case of plans, show the direction of north. The exception is some figures that accompany or form part of the **Environmental Statement (Volume 3, Figures) [EN010118/APP/6.3]**, and other documents within Book 7 of the submission, which vary in scale due to the large size of the Scheme. Context would be lost for the plans if they were to conform to the scale requirements required under Regulation 5(2). This was agreed with the Planning Inspectorate on 31st January 2022. These plans are no larger than A0 size and show the direction of north.
- 1.10.2 In accordance with Regulation 5(5) of the APFP Regulations, the Applicant retains all responses to the consultation carried out under Part 5 of the PA 2008, and can make them available at the request of the Planning Inspectorate and/or the Secretary of State.
- 1.10.3 The following Application documents contain confidential information and therefore redacted versions are also provided:
- a. Appendix 8J, Badger Survey Report, of the ES **[EN010118/APP/6.2]**
- 1.10.4 The Applicant will keep all application documents under review and will endeavour to provide updates (where it considers it necessary to do so) during the examination of the Application considering questions and comments received from the Examining Authority and Interested Parties.
- 1.10.5 We look forward to hearing from you in relation to a formal acceptance of this Application. If we can be of any assistance, please do not hesitate to contact us using the details provided below.

Yours sincerely,

James Pateman
Longfield Solar Farm Ltd.

0800 0194 576
info@longfieldsolarfarm.co.uk
<https://www.longfieldsolarfarm.co.uk>