



Meeting note

Project name	Oaklands Farm Solar Project
File reference	EN010122
Status	Final
Author	The Planning Inspectorate
Date	24 February 2023
Meeting with	Oaklands Solar Farm Limited
Venue	Microsoft Teams
Meeting objectives	Project Update Meeting
Circulation	All attendees

Summary of key points discussed and advice given

The Planning Inspectorate (the Inspectorate) advised that a note of the meeting would be taken and published on its website in accordance with section 51 of the Planning Act 2008 (the PA2008). Any advice given under section 51 would not constitute legal advice upon which applicants (or others) could rely.

Project Update

The Applicant confirmed that the project design has now been frozen.

The Applicant also confirmed that there is ongoing engagement with statutory parties such as Natural England and the Environmental Agency and that they have draft Planning Performance Agreements (PPA) with local authorities for review and approval currently. The Applicant confirmed that they are engaging further with these local authorities.

The Inspectorate confirmed that they may request consultation responses under reg 5(5) if there are any consultation concerns during the Acceptance period and that these would need to be provided within 48 hours of a potential request. They do not however need to be included in the Consultation Report (CR) but do need to be ready if requested during the Acceptance period.

The Applicant queried recent policy updates regarding NSIP Reform. The Inspectorate advised that NSIP Reform will be ongoing during the Oaklands Farm Solar project but it cannot be confirmed whether any changes would affect this project.

The Inspectorate queried whether protective provisions will be required for the project. The Applicant confirmed that protective provisions will be included in the draft Development Consent Order.

Draft Documentation

The Applicant confirmed the following anticipated dates for the submission of draft documents, for the Inspectorate to review.

Environmental Statement (ES) & Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) - First chapters (1-4) in late March/early April 2023.

Draft Development Consent Order (dDCO) and Consultation Report (CR) – Dates to be confirmed.

The Inspectorate confirmed that they will be unable to review the full consultation report during the draft document review and requested the Applicant not to include any appendices.

The Inspectorate advised that it would be helpful to see the Explanatory Memorandum, Land Plans and Work Plans with the draft DCO. The Inspectorate also advised the Applicant to submit the Book of Reference for review.

The Inspectorate advised the Applicant to follow the relevant guidance when drafting the application documents (which is available on the national infrastructure website), highlighting where they have met the guidance and explaining where and why they may not have met the guidance, if this is relevant. The Inspectorate also advised the Applicant to review section 51 advice and any section 55 checklists for other recently accepted projects to help determine what issues regularly occur.

The Applicant confirmed that they are planning to submit the HRA Report at the same time as the Environmental Statement chapters, as part of the draft documents.

The Inspectorate advised that they have had some issues using one particular file sharing service but that the Applicant can choose which file sharing site they use. The Inspectorate advised that anything over 12Mb cannot be submitted by email, so the use of a file sharing service will be required.

Targeted Consultation

The Applicant advised that their targeted consultation would commence in early March 2023 and it will run for 6 weeks to take into account the Easter break.

The Applicant queried whether the Inspectorate would need the full 6 weeks to review their draft documents, if the documents are being submitted gradually, rather than all at once. The Inspectorate advised that this depends on the documents themselves and available resourcing.

The Inspectorate advised that it is extremely helpful for the Applicant to confirm anything novel or any specific areas they would like to be reviewed, to help the Inspectorate provide a targeted review.

The Applicant advised that they plan to submit the shapefile in June 2023 and the DCO submission is planned for late June 2023. The Inspectorate confirmed that the shape file is required 10 days prior to the submission of the DCO application.

Specific decisions/ follow-up required?

The following actions were agreed:

- The Applicant is to email the Inspectorate during w/c 27 February 2023 with draft document submission dates.
- The Applicant is to confirm any additional attendees for future meetings and the Inspectorate is to forward the monthly meeting invite.