

Heckington Fen Solar Park

EN010123

Appendix 6 Non-Statutory Consultation – Hearing Your Views

Applicant: Ecotricity (Heck Fen Solar) Limited

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CONSULTATION REPORT – APPENDIX 6 NON-STATUTORY CONSULTATION – HEARING YOUR VIEWS

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Appendix 6 Non-Statutory Consultation – Hearing Your Views

Non-statutory consultation	
Summary Issue	Regard had by the Applicant
<p>Food security</p> <p>Respondents suggested that the Project could set aside land for agricultural use e.g. to grow soft fruit. They also expressed concern that it would change the classification of agricultural land and take it out of use, asking when it would be reinstated.</p> <p>They also questioned the production of "feed" wheat, saying some of the land on the site was marketed as Grade 1 and Grade 2 farmland in 1999/2000. They added that the land has previously been used to grow sprouts, broccoli, peas, beans, potatoes and bulbs.</p> <p>Respondents queried whether the land could be used for wheat production or animal feed.</p> <p>Respondents queried the suitability of Grade 1 agriculture for solar.</p> <p>Respondents wanted to know if the Project was related to any other schemes being developed in Lincolnshire and asked for a plan of the site.</p>	<p>Food security</p> <p>The Applicant is proposing to set aside 2.15 hectares for a community orchard – for nature conservation and growing soft fruit.</p> <p>The growing of soft fruit under the panels was considered but was not deemed suitable for the site.</p> <p>The land will still be classified as agricultural land. The area underneath and around the panels is proposed to be managed as a nature conservation pasture with grazing. Some areas would not allow grazing during spring until birds have finished nesting and flowers seeded. That period will be followed by a hay cut and aftermath grazing.</p> <p>The land will be reinstated after the project lifetime (40 years operational life).</p> <p>The southern and western parts of the site previously noted as 'potential biodiversity net gain areas' have been removed from the Order limits to allow that land to remain in agricultural use (some 62ha).</p> <p>The agricultural land classification of the site is based on survey data gathered from over 450 soil samples (taken by soil augers) from across the land holding (by an independent third party).</p> <p>The previous sale particulars are unlikely to have been based on this level of detailed analysis.</p> <p>The survey showed that some of the land is classified as 'best and most versatile' (grade 1 = 11.1%; grade 2 = 7.4% and grade 3a = 30.5%). These higher grades are closer to the A17 and scattered amongst tracts of poorer soils. It is worth noting that some of the</p>

	<p>better-quality land on Six Hundreds Farm has been left out of the site area altogether (some 62ha).</p> <p>The vast majority (80%) of the development land is grade 3, and suffers the usual constraints of heavy soils, notably blackgrass infestation and a general susceptibility to wetness, both of which constrain current farming activities. Savills have prepared a detailed note on the practical implications of farming (document reference 6.3.16.1).</p> <p>One of the Applicant's environmental specialists responded to the query regarding the site's suitability for wheat production directly, based on information from the farm manager, trusted traders and analysts. They let the respondent know that the site is not suitable for economically sustainable wheat production for large scale human consumption, but predominantly used for feed wheat. Further information was provided on the market including reference to big swings in crop quality and yield each year which play a big part in UK bread milling usage.</p> <p>The Applicant provided a plan of the site via email. They also informed the respondent that the Project is not related to any other schemes being developed in Lincolnshire.</p>
<p>Construction traffic Respondents enquired about construction traffic routes.</p>	<p>Construction traffic The Applicant will implement a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) during the construction phase of the Project. They have prepared a draft version of the CTMP as part of the PEIR and the ES, which is submitted with the Application (document reference 7.10).</p> <p>The aim of the CTMP is to minimise the impact of the construction phase on local residents, businesses and the highway network.</p>

	The Triton Knoll access route will be used to access the cable route. A new access point from the A17 is noted below.
<p>Access</p> <p>People asked for more information on the proposed site access.</p>	<p>Access</p> <p>The Applicant is proposing to use the existing access point near Elm Grange for the very initial stages of construction.</p> <p>The Applicant also intends to construct a new access point which will be used for the majority of the construction phase and will be retained for the operational phase. This new access point which will require the creation of a new T-junction of the southern boundary of the Energy Park site. The Applicant's plans for this work were previously approved as part of the wind farm application.</p>
<p>Visual impact</p> <p>Consultees wanted to know more about the visual impact of the Project and associated infrastructure, including the proposed height of the solar panels, the area they would cover, and the screening options being considered.</p>	<p>Visual impact</p> <p>The Applicant has provided further details on the associated infrastructure within the PEIR and ES.</p> <p>The Applicant will protect and enhance existing hedgerows and lines of trees within the Energy Park with gapping-up (using appropriate species).</p> <p>The Applicant is also proposing to establish new hedgerows along the perimeter of the Energy Park, and gapping up hedgerows within the Energy Park.</p>
<p>Biodiversity</p> <p>Residents asked whether the Applicant has consulted the RSPB.</p> <p>Additionally, they expressed interest in grazing on site.</p> <p>A consultee offered to provide advice on potential species for tree planting.</p>	<p>Biodiversity</p> <p>The Applicant has consulted the RSPB, amongst others, as part of the consultation process.</p> <p>The Applicant will ensure the right to graze under the panels is retained.</p> <p>The Applicant noted the consultees offer and added the Forestry Commission's local team to their consultation database.</p>
<p>Flood risk</p>	<p>Flood risk</p> <p>The Applicant will be working closely with the Environment Agency (EA), Black Sluice</p>

<p>Respondents asked how the Applicant will manage drains to avoid flooding adjacent land.</p>	<p>Internal Drainage Board (BSIDB) and the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) to mitigate flood risk. As part of this work, they have completed specialist hydraulic modelling. A Flood Risk Assessment will accompany the ES (document reference 6.3.9.1).</p>
<p>Community benefits Members of the local community expressed interest in how the Project could benefit Heckington Parish, in particular, and those living near the proposed development.</p>	<p>Community benefits The Applicant is looking into incorporating a new permissive path, community orchard, and biodiversity enhancement areas into the Project. They are also considering the provision of a community benefit fund, which would be outside of the DCO application process. Any such fund would need to be aligned with Ecotricity’s mission – to end the use of fossil fuels and tackle the climate crisis.</p>
<p>Supply chain People expressed concern over where the solar panels would be sourced from, and the potential implications for the environment. Respondents asked the Applicant to remain transparent about their supply chain processes and ensure the required technology is sourced ethically.</p>	<p>Supply chain The Applicant has not decided which supplier to use at this stage. They note that solar panels (as with most technology products in the modern economy) could end up being sourced from almost anywhere in the world, including China. The Applicant is firmly committed to maintaining the highest levels of transparency and sustainability throughout their supply chain. Ethical sourcing is a priority for the Applicant. They support the solar industry’s efforts to ensure imports are ethically sourced.</p>
<p>Wind farm Respondents wanted to know whether the Applicant could make use of much of the data that they collected for the previous wind farm application. People also wondered how the wind farm is connected to the Project.</p>	<p>Wind farm The Applicant is working with a team of environmental specialists to ensure the data that the eventual application is based on is of the highest quality. As the previous wind farm application was based on data collected over many years, the Project team has commissioned additional surveying work to ensure it is still accurate and updated accordingly. This previous data was considered as historical data and reference</p>

	<p>was made to it where applicable (e.g. in relation to noise levels).</p> <p>The planning application for Ecotricity's proposed wind farm was approved by the then Secretary of State (SoS) for Energy and Climate Change in February 2013. However, Ecotricity have been unable to begin constructing it due to difficulties satisfying concerns raised by the Ministry of Defence over the scheme's potential impact on local radar systems. The Applicant believes the climate crisis needs fighting now, which is why they are proposing this Project.</p>
<p>Alternative technologies Respondents noted wave and tidal power, albeit costing more, does not need the sun or the wind.</p>	<p>Alternative technologies The Applicant has noted this response.</p>
<p>Grid connection Respondents asked why the area is so big for the grid connection, expressing concern that it would be to expand the solar park in the future.</p> <p>They also enquired about where the cable route would be going.</p> <p>Respondents noted that they had struggled with the grid capacity locally.</p>	<p>Grid connection A larger area was initially included for the grid connection as surveys were ongoing. Following surveys and workshops with technical experts, the Applicant reduced the grid connection area, as shown in the PEIR, and subsequent ES. The DCO considers this area for a grid connection only (not for solar panels).</p> <p>The proposed development will connect into the 400kV network due to its size. Smaller schemes would connect at a lower voltage, which is understood to be constrained locally.</p>
<p>Historic England Confirmed attendance for online presentation and that the Applicant does not need to contact English Heritage.</p>	<p>Historic England Noted for consultation going forward.</p>
<p>Buglife Confirmed the Energy Park does not fall into any of the designated Important Invertebrate Areas or indeed the B-Lines so unlikely to hold much invertebrate interest at present. Provided links to Buglife Manual for pollinator friendly mixes and wildflower seeds.</p>	<p>Buglife Noted and thanked for the update.</p>
<p>Keys Group</p>	<p>Keys Group</p>

<p>Confirmed receipt of the newsletter and commented 'sounds exciting' and 'potentially something the students could get involved in at some point'. Recommended property team may be another contact.</p>	<p>Requested property team details (not received). However, a new contact was since provided and remains in contact with the Project Manager.</p>
<p>Bicker Buds The Bicker Buds expressed concern at the consultation zone not including all properties in Bicker and questioned how to engage in the application in future.</p>	<p>Bicker Buds The newsletter was posted in two batches, which covered all properties in Bicker as taken from a database purchased from Ordnance Survey using Royal Mail data. Following confirmation of the address Bicker Buds are on the consultation list.</p>
<p>NFU Expressed interest in receiving a more detailed map of the location in relation to the existing landscape. They further reported queries on how DCO size solar parks sit alongside food production in Lincolnshire.</p>	<p>NFU The applicant sent a larger scale plan on an aerial background to see the wider landscape. The Applicants response to food production are detailed in 'Food Security' in table 6.2.</p>