

Ms Susan Hunt
Examining Authority
National Infrastructure Planning
The Planning Inspectorate
Temple Quay House
2 The Square
Bristol
BS1 6PN

IP ref: 20038495
Our ref: AN/2023/134163/03-L01
Your ref: EN010123
Date: 29 September 2023

Dear Madam

Heckington Fen Solar Park - construction, operation and decommissioning of a ground mounted solar generating facility with a total capacity exceeding 50MW, together with an energy storage facility, below ground grid connection to, and extension at, the National Grid Bicker Fen Substation - Deadline 1 Submission

Post Hearings submission

The Environment Agency was unable to attend the Issue Specific Hearing 1 held on 19 September 2023 in relation to the draft Development Consent Order, or Issue Specific Hearing 2 held on 20 September 2023 in relation to environmental matters.

However, we have now had an opportunity to review the recordings of these Hearings and note that the Examining Authority has queried if the Environment Agency should be a consultee to Requirement 11 in respect of surface and foul water discharge – recorded as action point ISH1-AP11 [[EV-004a](#)].

We are aware that the only foul drainage required at the site will be during the construction phase (mentioned in paragraph 7.94 of Document 7.7 Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan [[AS-026](#)]) and we have provided the Applicant with information on the permitting requirements for septic tanks, which is the method proposed. We can also advise that the Environment Agency will not comment on surface water drainage matters, as these fall under the remit of the Lead Local Flood Authority (Lincolnshire County Council) and the Black Sluice Drainage Board. As such, the Environment Agency does not believe it is necessary to be a consultee to Requirement 11, as any matters arising from the foul drainage proposal can be dealt with through the environmental permitting process.

Applicant's change request application - response to the amended plans and documents

The Environment Agency has reviewed the proposed changes and notes that Bicker Fen is shown to be within the floodplain as detailed on the Environment Agency's Flood Zone Maps. The additional works lie within Flood Zone 3a as described in Table 1 of the National Planning Practice Guidance, (Flood Risk and Coastal Change - paragraph 078).

Environment Agency advice is that all critical infrastructure required to ensure the continuous running of the site is raised above the 1:1000 (0.1% annual probability) plus climate change flood level. This will ensure any equipment required to run the site should remain operational in the event of a flood of that design standard, which is considered to be a more extreme flood event. Providing this mitigation is incorporated into the development we would agree with the Applicant's assessment of '*no significant effects*' in respect of fluvial flood risk for the operational or decommissioning phases related to the Additional Works.

Please note that our advice has not considered the risk of flooding from groundwater, drainage systems, reservoirs, canals or ordinary watercourses. You will therefore need to take advice from other relevant flood risk management authorities in respect of flooding from these sources.

Should you require any additional information, or wish to discuss these matters further, please do not hesitate to contact me at the number below.

Yours faithfully

Annette Hewitson
Principal Planning Adviser

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