

Heckington Fen Solar Park

EN010123

Outline Supply Chain, Skills and Employment Plan

Applicant: Ecotricity (Heck Fen Solar) Limited

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Pursuant to: APFP Regulation 5(2)(q)

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OUTLINE SUPPLY CHAIN, EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS PLAN

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Prepared By	Heckington Fen Energy Park Project Team (Ecotricity)	
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Rev 1	February 2023	Application Version
Rev 2	December 2023	Deadline 3
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This Outline Supply Chain, Employment and Skills Plan (the 'Plan') provides details of the supply chain, employment, training and learning opportunities available during the construction and operation of the Heckington Fen Solar Park ('the Proposed Development').

The development will take approximately 30 months to build. Once complete, the development will provide electricity to the National Grid.

Prior to works commencing on Works No. 1, 2, 3, and 4 at the Energy Park site, and Works No. 5, 5A and 5B for the cable route, a supply chain, employment, and skills plan (which must be substantially in accordance with this Plan) should be submitted to and approved by both North Kesteven District Council and Boston Borough Council.

The Plan, and its compliance is secured by Requirement 16 of the DCO (document reference 3.1).

The objectives of the Plan are to:

1. Detail the intention to use local labour where possible (subject to suitable qualifications, experience, economic viability and availability),
2. Where practically feasible, available and cost competitive, procure goods and services, known as the supply chain, from local contractors, sub-contractors and suppliers to support local employment,
3. Detail recruitment and training opportunities involved in the development (construction and operation), and
4. Support the development of skills in the local area.

Socio-economic benefits of the development were identified in the Environmental Statement (document reference 6.1.11), in particular this included additional jobs for the local area, business rates and increase in demand for accommodation.

Operational labour requirements would be promoted at the relevant time also.

Decommissioning labour, recruitment, and training opportunities are expected to be aligned, at least in part, with the objectives outlined above which are specific to the construction phase. It is noted that definitive commitments in terms of the decommissioning phase are unlikely to be possible as part of the Plan at the point at which it is secured by Requirement 16 of the DCO (document reference 3.1) due to uncertainties regarding political and economic landscape, or the education infrastructure, at such time in the future that decommissioning would be undertaken. Nevertheless, it is the intention to set principles in terms of the objectives under which decommissioning labour, recruitment, and training opportunities will be agreed.

1. Utilising Local Labour

When considering new permanent and temporary positions during the construction and operation of the site, the Developer (Ecotricity (Heck Fen Solar) Limited) will use all reasonable endeavours to appoint local jobseekers, apprentices and graduates with the relevant skills and experience. Applicable roles will be advertised locally via Jobcentre Plus and PeoplePlus, or other appropriate means, for example newspapers, posters, online and job fairs. Local labour will be targeted as North Kesteven and Boston.

A meet-the-buyer type event will also be held in the local area, whereby the Developer will contact local firms who may have an interest in building out elements of the project. It is anticipated that some businesses may prefer a one-to-one meeting, and these will be facilitated as required. Examples of these have already been undertaken by the Applicant, and included visiting offices of local firms, or onsite meetings.

Interested parties, at this stage, are advised to contact the Developer to be added to an interested parties list for future consideration:

Email: heckingtonfensolar@ecotricity.co.uk,

Call: Freephone 0800 151 0784

Write to us at: FREEPOST ECOTRICITY SOLAR PARK.

A designated local employment coordinator will oversee the final Supply Chain, Employment and Skills Plan.

Table 1 includes a list of organisations that will be contacted to fulfil the objectives of this Plan:

Table 1- Examples of public and private sector organisations

Primary public sector partners	North Kesteven District Council
	Lincolnshire County Council
	Boston Borough Council
	Greater Lincolnshire LEP
Education and training providers	University of Lincoln
	Boston College
	Grantham College
	Lincoln College
	Carres Grammar
	Kesteven & Sleaford High School
	St Georges Academy
Business sector groups	People Plus
	Jobcentre Plus
	Astute Recruitment

2. Supporting Local Services

Some elements of the build-out will be technology-specific which can only be undertaken by the commissioned technology providers. However, where opportunities exist for local firms to be involved, these will be engaged accordingly, examples include landscaping, fencing, security, plant hire and operators, materials including aggregate and concrete etc. This will apply during construction predominantly but also during the operational and maintenance phase.

Local services are likely to benefit from other factors, such as increased spend in the area from hospitality and accommodation, already demonstrated during the planning stages with requirements for plant hire, accommodation, food, fuel, hall hire and provision of mobile welfare and security facilities.

Other elements of the supply chain involve manufacturing either in the UK or abroad. This could include steel for the panel mounting structures – for which there are known UK suppliers, or panel manufacturers which are typically based abroad due to the location of raw materials. Fencing, drainage and security is likely to be more commonly provided by local contractors and discussions with local suppliers has already commenced.

A meet-the-buyer type event for local contractors will be undertaken prior to construction starting in earnest. The Developer will contact local firms who may have an interest in building out elements of the project. It is anticipated that some businesses may prefer a one-to-one meeting, and these will be facilitated as required.

The Federation of Small Businesses and the local Chamber of Commerce will be contacted in advance of this event to understand their experience with firms who may be able to assist.

3. Recruitment and Training Opportunities

Our experience to date has found that apprentices are already likely to be in placements with firms who offer services similar to those listed above. This project is likely to provide more opportunities for trainees and those looking to get back into work. These roles could be placements lasting a number of weeks within firms supplying goods and services, through to 8-26 week programmes for traineeships or back to work opportunities. It may be possible to establish new apprenticeships over the course of the construction period; from discussions with potential suppliers this could be in the order of 2-5 apprentices. The Applicant will assess this possibility throughout its tendering and procurement process

for an EPC contractor. When submitting the final Supply Chain, Employment and Skills Plan, the Applicant will confirm whether it has been possible to secure apprentices and, in the event it has not been possible, outline the steps it has taken to explore this opportunity.

The requirement to host these opportunities where practicable will be written into the proposed scope of works for goods and services and considered during the tendering process. Where reasonably possible and commercially viable the aims of the Plan will help local jobseekers find work via a range of paid and unpaid roles and stimulate awareness of careers in construction, green technologies and other sectors related to the development.

Opportunities will be advertised with stakeholders, such as the local planning authorities, Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership, job adverts, website vacancies, and notice to local recruitment teams.

At least one careers-type event will be held locally in advance of the main construction starting onsite. This will be arranged with local education providers. Events could be planned for North Kesteven District, Boston Borough or Lincolnshire as a whole.

Secondary employment may be forthcoming as a consequence of the development for example in the hospitality, accommodation and other supporting industries. A number of operational jobs are also anticipated, for the ongoing maintenance of the site, and sheep grazing.

Practical demonstration of the trial trenching has already taken place on site with students from the Keys Group - Elm Grange School. A further archaeological talk has been provided within the community, at Heckington Village Hall. Attendees could ask questions of the applicant and specialists.

A fund to facilitate training and apprenticeships to a value of £50,000 per annum (index linked) will be provided for the 40-year operational lifetime of the Proposed Development. The Applicant has agreed with North Kesteven District Council and Boston Borough Council that the mechanism to do this should be through a section 106 agreement. The parties agree that this section 106 mechanism can be evidenced alongside submission and approval of the final plan.

4. Support the Development of Skills Locally

The Plan offers an exciting opportunity to work with local firms, employment and training agencies to develop local skills through the awareness of renewable technologies, in particular solar and energy storage. Delivery partners could include the Elm Grange School, Colleges in Boston and Sleaford, other further education colleges and universities which might be further afield, such as Lincoln and Grantham, Jobcentre Plus and PeoplePlus.

At appropriate times during the construction phase, open-day type events could include school visits and careers information days. The timing of such visits will ensure minimal risk to visitors and staff alike.

A meet-the-buyer type event for local contractors will be undertaken prior to construction starting in earnest. Specific local skills required include:

- Security
- Landscaping and planting
- Fencing
- Plant hire and operators
- Materials including aggregate and concrete
- Site management

5. Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring reports are proposed to include a summary of activities completed, including any qualifications gained. These would be provided annually to North Kesteven District Council, Boston Borough Council and Lincolnshire County Council, and would be coordinated by the Project Manager.

Table 2 provides a summary of the above opportunities.

Table 2- Supply chain, employment and skills opportunities – depending on the phase being commenced, the table below would be amended accordingly, and currently shows examples.

Supply chain	Employment and Skills	Publicising
Landscaping Fencing Security Plant hire and operators Materials including aggregate and concrete Ground works including drainage Site management	<p>Communicate requirements for supply chain with local providers listed in Table 1.</p> <p>Engage with local suppliers.</p> <p>Engaging with suppliers already known to the Applicant to highlight and understand gaps in provision of supplies and personnel.</p> <p>Working with providers in Table 1 identify any gaps in the skill base of the local population.</p>	<p>Promoting opportunities locally, such as the project's webpage, local news publications, and working with local job centres.</p> <p>Outreach to local businesses.</p> <p>Raise general awareness of the project using local advertisements.</p> <p>Maintain dialogue with the parties listed at Table 1 for upcoming opportunities so they can communicate it through their own channels.</p>

Technology-specific personnel are likely to be required for the following aspects of the Proposed Development:

- Electrical connection
- Energy storage installation.