



Meeting note

Project name	Heckington Fen Solar Park
File reference	EN010123
Status	Final
Author	The Planning Inspectorate
Date	11 January 2023
Meeting with	Ecotricity (Heck Fen Solar) 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 (Ecotricity (Heck Fen Solar) Limited) has produced their Preliminary Environment Information Report (PEIR). The Applicant explained that they had conducted further targeted consultation at the end of 2022 and that there have been some changes to the project design layout following statutory consultation, including some changes to the redline boundary. The Applicant now have the right to compulsory acquire land in the Northwest region of the park to reinstate the public footpath.

The Applicant explained they have two possible routes for cabling to connect to Bicker Fen substation. One passes through an approved solar park, the second occupies more land with National Grid but is more constrained by electrical equipment.

The Applicant has now opted for a central substation and energy storage area, and will be using fixed PV panels.

Feedback on Agricultural Land Classification (ALC)

The Applicant has consulted with Natural England's soil advisor to help with their cable route and soil and land management plan. The Inspectorate highlighted the importance of the management plan as the Examining Authority (ExA) may want to see that information during the Examination phase should the project be accepted.

Environmental Statement and Risk/Safety Management Plan

The Applicant has conducted consultation with the fire authority and has involved them in the design evolution regarding fire safety measures relating to the energy storage element of the Proposed Development. The Applicant is also currently working on an outline risk management/ outline safety management plan for the Development Consent Order (DCO). The Inspectorate advised the Applicant to keep abreast of other solar farm NSIPs, such as the Longfield Solar Farm project currently in the Examination stage, to find best practice to submitting DCO management plans.

Submission requirements

The Inspectorate advised the Applicant to set out as much information as possible in the Statements of Common Ground (SoCG) and will ask for an update after the Rule 6 letter has been sent.

The Inspectorate will send the Applicant a Pre-Submission warm up letter prior to submission, and it will explain the submission requirements to the Applicant.

Draft DCO update

The Applicant explained there are approximately forty articles in the DCO – including powers of compulsory acquisition.

AOB

The Applicant confirmed that the planned submission date is still Wednesday 15 February 2023.

Specific decisions/ follow-up required?

The following actions were agreed:

- It was confirmed that the Inspectorate would clarify for the Applicant whether there was best practice on where any response to feedback should be shown by the Applicant in the submitted documents where they had addressed points raised within the Inspectorate's review of the draft ES Chapter on Soils and Agricultural land. Following on from the meeting the Inspectorate confirmed that there is no statutory requirement to demonstrate how feedback from the draft document reviews has been taken into consideration within the production of the final ES. As such it is up to the Applicant how they wish to reflect this within the application documents. A copy of the draft document feedback provided by the Inspectorate to the Applicant is appended to this Meeting Note for reference.
- The Applicant asked the Inspectorate if they knew of any useful examples of previously submitted DCOs for solar projects where the Applicant had undertaken a risk or safety management plan in consultation with the fire authority. The Inspectorate gave several examples of NSIPs in examination where consultation with the fire authority on battery safety and fire risk had been addressed for information in an email to the Applicant following the meeting.
- Please find attached the link to the [Draft Document Feedback](#) published on the National Infrastructure Planning Website.

