



Meeting note

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| Project name | Temple Oaks Renewable Energy Park |
| File reference | EN010126 |
| Status | Final |
| Author | The Planning Inspectorate |
| Date | 24 September 2021 |
| Meeting with | Ridge Clean Energy Engena LTD |
| Venue | Microsoft Teams |
| Meeting objectives | Project inception 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.

The Inspectorate explained that the publication of the meeting note could be delayed up to six months, or until a formal scoping request had been submitted.

Project Information

The Applicant stated that the proposed development will be a 250 MW scheme with battery storage of approximately 400 MWh. The proposed development is in the South Kesteven District Council area in south Lincolnshire. The proposed development will cover 340ha of land within the Applicant's holding of 633ha total land. The Applicant stated that there is no public access to the site, the settlement of Folkingham is 1.8km to the north with the nearest dwelling located 600m to the east of the site. The project is focused on a disused RAF airfield, which is currently used for storing agricultural equipment and vehicles.

The Inspectorate enquired as to whether a grid offer has been secured by the Applicant. The Applicant stated that they have not secured a connection agreement yet. The Applicant is still considering options regarding point of connection and route. The Applicant understands that there is capacity at the sub-station at Bicker Fen for both import and export and is confident of securing an agreement with Western Power Distribution (WPD) and National Grid. The Applicant stated that their formal application for a grid connection will be submitted to National Grid soon.

The Applicant queried whether battery storage can be included in an application for a National Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP). The Inspectorate confirmed that battery storage can be included in applications for NSIP generation stations as associated development. The principles around what constitutes associated development are set out in Government guidance. The essential points being that associated



development is subordinate to the NSIP and that there is a direct link in terms of the scale and nature of the associated development with the NSIP.

Activities to date

The Applicant stated that ecology surveys had been undertaken, these included breeding bird and wintering bird surveys. The Applicant said that ornithological surveys were to continue through the winter. The Applicant stated that the site has been classified as Grade 3 agriculture land. The Applicant said that soil surveys are scheduled to be taken next month, but that they do not expect a change in classification. Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) Surveys are planned due to forests around the sites being formerly used for bomb storage. The disused launch pads on the airfield are to be checked for heritage reasons.

EIA scoping

The Applicant stated that their scoping report was expected to be ready in November 2021, the introductory document contains the different assessments that are to be carried out for the scoping report. The Applicant stated that from an EIA perspective, most of the time sensitive data had already been collected. The assessments left to carry out are considered to be less time critical. The Inspectorate suggested a submission date for the EIA scoping in early November or early in 2022 due to constraints on the ability of statutory consultees to respond to consultation deadlines over the Christmas period. The Inspectorate said that any glint and glare issues should be addressed. The Inspectorate also advised that it would be better not to request a scoping opinion until the Applicant was confident where the project's grid connection will be located.

Stakeholder Engagement

The Applicant stated that they are yet to contact South Kesteven District Council regarding the proposed development although they would be approaching them soon to make them aware of the project. The Applicant asked if they should involve the Inspectorate in early meetings with the District Council. The Inspectorate declined the request on the basis it cannot devote resources to meetings with third parties, led by Applicants, across all of the casework that is handled. The Applicant said that initial consultation with National Grid and the Distribution Network Operator gave confidence on securing a connection.

The Inspectorate suggested that Advice Note 3 be looked at in regard to consultation bodies. It was the duty of the Applicant to ensure that they identify all the relevant prescribed consultees, including the relevant local authorities. The Inspectorate will produce their own consultation list for the purposes of preparing the Scoping Opinion. This list will be included in the Scoping Opinion. The Inspectorate advised that the Applicant avoided carrying out their own consultation at the time that the Inspectorate was asking consultees for comments on the Scoping Opinion.

Land Ownership

The Inspectorate asked the Applicant if the proposed development would require any Compulsory Acquisition (CA). The Applicant stated that all land required for the current layout of the proposed development is owned by two landowners. The Inspectorate suggested a Book of Reference be produced even if there is no CA. The Applicant



confirmed the red-line boundary contains no common land or Special Category Land and that the Ministry of Defence had no further interest in the land.

Consultation

The Applicant stated that they wish to involve the local community throughout the application through the use of methods such as local exhibitions and webinars (Covid-19 permitting), they want to ensure that feedback from consultations is addressed in the planning application. The Applicant stated that they are looking to provide additional community benefits and the methods and impacts will be discussed in their Statement of Community Consultation. The Inspectorate queried whether the Applicant was aware of their duties in the pre-application process. The Inspectorate described the statutory pre application duties on applicants under Sections 47, 42 and 44 of the Planning Act 2008. The Inspectorate stated that the Infrastructure Planning: Applications, Prescribed Forms and Procedures Regulations 2009 (APFP regulations) should be followed by the Applicant to find out the Statutory Bodies that need consulting and ensure that their notices and consultation activities were compliant.

The Inspectorate explained that, typically, applicants include both statutory and non-statutory consultation in the Consultation Report. The Applicant was advised to view Advice Note 14 in respect of compiling a consultation report as part of the application for a DCO.

Submission date

The Applicant gave a potential submission date of Q4 2022. The Applicant said their main concern is the time taken to secure a connection agreement. The Inspectorate suggested that if the submission is to fall around Christmas that they should delay submission until January so as not to curtail the already short acceptance period of 28 days.

Other

The Inspectorate asked the Applicant who their legal advisor was, the Applicant stated the name of their current solicitor, however, the legal advisor for this project is to be confirmed. The Inspectorate confirmed to the Applicant that changes can be made to the application during the Pre-App process given they do not constitute it becoming new/different application to that which was consulted on. The Inspectorate confirmed that while the new National Policy Statements (NPS) were still in draft, they could be used to understand the direction of travel of policy as it relates to new solar projects. Projects that are accepted for examination after the new NPSs are designated will be able to rely on the new NPSs.

Practical Arrangements

The Inspectorate confirmed that an E-mail mailbox and project webpage can be set up prior to the publishing of the meeting note. In the meantime, the main point of contact will be the Case Manager.

The Applicant will inform the Inspectorate of when it is happy for the project page and meeting note to be published on the NI website.