

**Application by Mallard Pass Solar Farm Limited for an Order Granting Development Consent
for the Mallard Pass Solar Project – project ref. EN010127**

Submission by Mallard Pass Action Group (MPAG) – unique ID ref. 20036230

Procedural Deadline A - Written Submission on the Examination Procedure.

1. The Applicant's draft Development Consent Order is due to be submitted by 3rd May. Once published on the portal, if MPAG were to identify material changes affecting the application, we would ask the ExA to review the Examination timetable in the light of this. It may affect the work being undertaken by specialists, legal counsel and the wider team in preparation for the Written Representation due at deadline 2 on 15th June. That may necessitate extra time being required to assess the implications of any changes.

2. MPAG would like the ExA to note, that holding Open Floor Hearings on Day 1 of the Examination and having to register before 3rd May, gives the public no opportunity to assess the draft DCO and/or be party to other hearings/written submissions prior to contributing themselves. It does give other consultees and particularly the Applicant a head start with their arguments. It is desirable that hearings should be used to supplement Written Representations, not the reverse.

3. Parish Councils play an important role in supporting their parishioners through many issues which arise in their parish. For the local villages around the proposed development, this application is of huge concern, and parish councils have been helping residents navigate the process and key issues.

Essendine is at the epicentre being fully surrounded by the proposed development. Unfortunately Essendine Parish Council from 5th May to 22nd June will not be able to operate as they were not quorate upon submission of election papers, and an election can now only be tabled on 22nd June. During that time period the council cannot operate, other than basic administrative council business being conducted by the clerk. In the light of this, given the residents need support and guidance to take them through not just a complex NSIP application, but also the Compulsory Acquisition hearing process, MPAG would ask on behalf of residents that the ExA consider some changes to the timetable, so that the Parish Council once operational can fully support their residents.

a. Moving the first Compulsory Acquisition hearing to a date later than w/c 10th July.

b. Extending the Written Representation deadline for Essendine Parish Council until after the council has re-formed.

4. Greatford Parish Council is going through an election on 4th May. Should the process not go to plan and a fully functional council was not able to be formed, MPAG would ask for some flexibility with respect to future deadlines affected.

5. The local authorities play a pivotal role in this NSIP application process by way of checking, challenging and fully assessing the application. MPAG wanted to check that the ExA has taken account of the unprecedented pressure on Lincolnshire County Council who has 7 solar farm NSIPs to deal with and limited resource, and may not be able to attend key meetings and fully support submissions.

6. MPAG accepts that it is not possible to work around all holiday commitments. However when considering the exact dates for Issue Specific Hearings, we would ask that a Water/Flood risk and Soils hearing(s) are not

tabled w/c 10th and 17th July. MPAG has limited resources in comparison to the Applicant or other statutory consultees and are asking purely for that reason.

7. MPAG request that 21 days notice is given of Issue Specific hearings so that appropriate resourcing and specialist support can be organised where possible.

8. MPAG want to flag that allocating 10 working days to cover OFHs, ISH, CA hearings and site visits may not be sufficient. Would it be prudent to table some other dates should the existing ones not cover all the requirements?

9. MPAG accepts the list of Principal Issues may not be comprehensive at this stage, but would like to ensure the following are fully covered:

a. Scale. How will the ExA ensure that the **scale** impacts are fully explored not just as individual topics, but also in combination with each other? With only 1 NSIP solar farm approved but not yet built at this scale by the Secretary of State, namely Cleve Hill, it cannot be assumed the impacts are directly proportional compared to smaller sub 50MW solar farms.

a. Meeting the Need and contribution to Net Zero. This could be explored more fully with site selection and alternatives.

b. Supply chain. Annex C1 p16 of Rule 6 letter states the issue of human rights will be covered. MPAG, and the residents we represent, have huge concerns in this matter. This also correlates with concerns about national infrastructure security.

c. Community and consultation issues – there was over 1200 Relevant Representations, over 95% of those are against the development.

d. Health & safety issues could also be covered with noise and air quality

10. The ExA, in the Rule 6 letter (p33), has asked and “would like to hear views of the relevant parties on the possibility and benefits of a SoCG with Mallard Pass Action Group.” The applicant approached MPAG on 1st February in respect of this. Our response at the time was that if we were to engage in this process, it would be once we are fully immersed in the Examination. Looking at the timetable of deadlines, Written Representations (WRs) are pivotal not only for the party submitting them, but for the Applicant to understand the issues being raised. With that in mind we don’t believe a SoCG would be beneficial for either party until after the WRs have been submitted on 15th June. Once reviewed fully by the Applicant they can consider whether there are likely opportunities for common ground.