



Submission by Mallard Pass Action Group (MPAG)

– unique ID ref. 20036230

Deadline 7:

CAH2

Compulsory Acquisition Hearing 2

Written Summary of Oral Case

MPAG representatives: Mrs Sue Holloway; Mr Tony Orvis; Mrs helen Woolley.

Compulsory Acquisition Hearing 2

1.1 Overplanting. In response to the question by the ExA whether the Applicant is using more land than is necessary and what the reasons are, MPAG pointed out that the Applicant has already clearly outlined their reasons in their Statement of Need para 11.5.1 :

“In the absence of electricity storage facilities, the Proposed Development’s overplanting strategy (see Section 7.7) seeks to maximise use of the grid connection capacity through its operational life”. This confirms that the Applicant considers there to be a link between the lack of a BESS and overplanting. The extent on the overplanting will depend on the cost benefit analysis of optimising the output during low levels of light/sunshine vs at higher irradiance times when clipping will have to take place due to manage the overcapacity.

1.2 Retained arable. Given 28% of the Order Limits is allocated to ‘retained arable’ for skylark provision, which seems rather excessive and questionable, MPAG are concerned and want to be reassured that this land will continue specifically in arable production, not just agricultural use. There is a risk that the land is taken out of arable farming, the skylarks plots could still be maintained, but the food production would be lost.

1.3 Cable routing. It is incumbent upon the Applicant to demonstrate they have looked at all the alternatives for cable routing, minimising their use of compulsory acquisition rights. Mr Beamish, resident and owner of Mallard Point, put forward an eminently sensible suggestion to route the cable behind the village across farmland owned by one of the landowners in this scheme. If the option to route via the culvert were not successful, meaning then residents would have to face the upheaval and disruption of running through Essendine, the Applicant needs to explain why it is not possible to explore the sensible option made by Mr Beamish. He also pointed out there could be technical reasons why the cable could not pass over bridge at the bottom of the hill of the A6121, rendering the routing through the village as not viable.

The Applicant pointed out that more CA rights would be required, but as the land is owned by a willing landowner involved in the scheme, using this route would negate the need for the CA powers on residents and most likely involve just 1 landowner.

The Applicant at the very end of the hearing suggested why it is not procedurally possible at this stage to consider an option which changes the Order Limits of the proposed development. MPAG would be keen to understand why that is not possible given every effort should have been made at the outset of the project to minimize the use of CA powers, all be they temporary powers.

Pickworth Road – it seems the Applicant has reconsidered whether they need to come down Pickworth Road from the west side of the site, right onto the A6121 to get back to the substation, so effectively now would be planning to bring the cables across country somewhere adjacent to E169 bridleway. Assuming Network Rail agree to the culvert route that would mean no cables would have to run through Essendine from the North or West side of the site. MPAG would ask that the drafting in the DCO and CEMP is very clear about the cabling iterations both **north** and **south** of the railway line . That could still leaves some uncertainty for the plots south of Uffington Lane on A6121 with no explanation as why they need to be on Land Plans and Book of Reference in the first place.

1.4 County boundaries

MPAG highlighted the challenges with traffic management for any street works given the locations of the county boundaries, particularly on the B1176. Whilst it was acknowledged both highway authorities would be consulted, it was suggested that there should be a lead highways authority to ensure joined-up management of the temporary traffic works.

1.5 5 year CA time limit

MPAG were just seeking clarification about comments the Applicant made at the compulsory acquisition meeting in Essendine. MPAG were asking about the 5 year time limit on CA and retained powers provided through the CEMP and DCO provisions.