

Gate Burton Energy Park

EN010131

Written Summary of the Applicant's Oral Submissions at the Open Floor Hearing (OFH1) on 4 July 2023
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Planning Act 2008
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Prepared for:

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 An Open Floor Hearing was held at 14:00pm on 04 July 2023 as a blended event, with some parties in attendance at the DoubleTree Hilton, Brayford Wharf North Lincoln LN1 1YW and others using the virtual platform of Microsoft Teams.
- 1.2 Oral submissions were made by Ms Elizabeth Garbett and Mr Jamie Allan on behalf of 7000 Acres Action Group, and Ms Sheryll Felix as a local resident. Ms Amy Stirling (Senior Associate Solicitor at Pinsent Masons LLP – the Applicant's legal advisers for the Application) provided a response to the matters raised and it is her oral submissions that are summarised in this document.

2. Overview of Oral Submissions by the Applicant

- 2.1 Ms Stirling, on behalf of the Applicant, responded to Ms Garbett's query around the specific need for large scale ground mounted solar in the United Kingdom ("UK"). The Statement of Need [APP-004] (the "Statement") describes how and why the Scheme addresses all relevant aspects of established and emerging government Policy, and sets out that the case for need is built upon the contribution of the Scheme to the three important national policy aims of decarbonisation, including:
 - Net Zero and the importance of deploying zero-carbon generation assets at scale;
 - Security of supply (geographically and technologically diverse supplies); and
 - Affordability.
- 2.2 Ms Stirling noted that the Statement was prepared by a third-party consultant who independently looked at the need for the capacity that could be generated by the Scheme, in the context of the wider GB electricity market. The Statement also considers the role that the whole of the Scheme and the battery and energy storage system ("**BESS**") can have in supporting the GB market and grid balancing services.
- 2.3 Ms Stirling also responded to Ms Garbett's query in relation to general solar capacity and its role in contributing to decarbonisation. The UK government is committed to ground mounted solar PV throughout various policy documents and consultations. For example, Draft National Policy Statement for renewable energy infrastructure (EN-3) ("**NPS EN-3**"), whilst not yet designated, provides

a strong signal of support in favour of solar technology to be consented through the solar DCO regime. Paragraph 3.10.1 of NPS EN-3 states:

“The government has committed to sustained growth in solar capacity to ensure that we are on a pathway that allows us to meet net zero emissions. As such solar is a key part of the government’s strategy for low-cost decarbonisation of the energy sector.”

The Applicant has proposed this Application to continue to support government strategies and ambitions.

- 2.4 Ms Stirling also responded to Ms Garbett’s comment on the intermittency of solar and the impact this may have on its contribution to decarbonisation. The Applicant has proposed BESS as part of its Scheme design to help support the intermittency of the renewable power from the solar PV panels, and to provide important grid balancing services. These grid balancing services are not only in respect of the electricity generated by the Scheme but shall also benefit the import and export capacity of the wider National Grid network.
- 2.5 Finally, Ms Stirling responded to Ms Garbett’s comments in relation to agricultural land classification and concerns around ground mounted solar being an insufficient land use. Ms Stirling referred to Chapter 12 of the Environmental Statement: Socio Economics and Land Use [APP-021] which considers the low levels of ‘best and most versatile’ (“BMV”) land associated with the Scheme and which will be temporarily impacted during operation only. Chapter 12 presents information on the different percentages of BMV land expected within the Order limits and confirms only limited interactions.
- 2.6 The Applicant has also submitted various measures and controls in support of land use and waste management in the Framework Construction Environmental Management Plan [APP-224], Framework Operational Environmental Management Plan [APP-225], and Framework Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan [APP-226]. These documents are all proposed to be secured by Schedule 2 of the Draft DCO [APP2-15] through Requirements 12, 13 and 19 respectively. A breach of any of these Requirements would be a criminal offence pursuant to section 161 of the Planning Act 2008, therefore the Applicant has provided strong commitments to responsibly construct, operate and decommission the Scheme.