

Gate Burton Issue Specific Hearing (ISH) 2 - Draft DCO

7000 Acres is an interested party in the DCO Examination for the Gate Burton Solar Project and three additional solar NSIPs in the local area.

During ISH 2 the Applicant failed to address a number of issues that had been raised at ISH 1 and in many Written Representations. These issues include:

- A lack of detail on the Battery Energy Storage System (BESS).
- 7000Acres has submitted written evidence to show that the current BESS design shown in Work No. 2 does not meet current guidance, lacks sufficient water to contain a battery thermal runaway and has no bunding to retain fire water. Work No. 2 must be modified to meet current safety and environmental requirements.
- The wording of some requirements uses the wording “*substantially in accordance with*” to reduce the full intent of the requirement. The word “*substantially*” must be removed.
- The Applicant has failed to explain why in Requirements 38 and 39 they should have the ability to fell any tree or remove any hedge they wish. The current wording of the dDCO would allow the Applicant to remove all hedgerows and trees they believe to be necessary without any checks and balances. In the opinion of 7000 Acres, the dDCO should be revised to state that any lopping, pruning, felling or removal of hedgerows, trees or shrubs should be in accordance with the Landscape and Ecological Management Plan.
- As with other aspects of this application, the Examining Authority (and local residents) are deprived of evidence regarding decommissioning. No general framework for decommissioning is provided, or criteria against which successful decommissioning can be tested. There is no evidence that agricultural land will be returned to its original state.
- 7000Acres contests that a 60 year period of operation is temporary land use, it is a generational change in the landscape. 7000Acres believe that the dDCO should limit the operational period to the lifespan of the original solar panels, i.e. circa 25 years.
- Requirement 21. (1) states:
“Within 12 months of the date that the undertaker decides to decommission any part of the authorised development, the undertaker must submit to the relevant planning authority for that part a decommissioning plan for approval.” Decommissioning should commence as soon as the development is no longer producing energy, or at the end of the consent period, whichever is sooner. This must not be left at the discretion of the Operator, who might choose to never decommission the scheme.

- 7000Acres agrees with the oral submission made by Lincolnshire County Council at ISH 1, that a Decommissioning Bond should be established to ensure there are sufficient funds to decommission the scheme should the Applicant (or future operator) be financially unable to do so at the point required.

Noise, Glare and Emission Requirements

7000 Acres requests the Examining Authority to consider placing limits on noise, glare and emissions in the dDCO. This is due to the size of this project and the nearby three other solar NSIPs of a similar size. As the individual and cumulative effect of these schemes will be detrimental to residents' physical and mental health, we consider it appropriate to place these limitations on the Applicant.