



Meeting note

Project name	Gate Burton Energy Park
File reference	EN010131
Status	Final
Author	The Planning Inspectorate
Date	02 November 2021
Meeting with	Low Carbon
Venue	Microsoft Teams meeting
Meeting objectives	Induction 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 (if requested by an Applicant for commercial reasons).

Details of the proposed development

The Applicant is Low Carbon, a British-owned investment and asset management company, with experience in over 100 sites in the UK developing over 520MW of solar projects. It is a Certified B corporation. The team comprises of AECOM (Environmental and Planning), Pinsent Masons (Legal), Gateley Hamer (Land Referencing), Camargue (Consultation) and Low Carbon (Technical Design).

The development is located south of Gainsborough, in West Lindsey District Council. It is some 3.5km from Cottam Power Station. The Applicant informed that the proposed solar project would generate 500MW, with the provision for a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) which will be required for the functioning of the solar park. The Inspectorate inquired what would be the extent of the storage size, to which the Applicant informed that they were still studying different options and would let the team know as soon as possible. The approximate area of the site is 684ha, which will include space for ecological and landscape mitigation.

The Applicant has an accepted grid connection offer with National Grid at Cottam Power Station, which is in Bassetlaw District Council. As such, the proposal falls within West Lindsey District Council, Bassetlaw District Council, Lincolnshire County Council and

Nottinghamshire County Council. At present, the exact cable route from the Site to the grid connection point has not been confirmed.

Environmental constraints

The Applicant informed the Inspectorate that the site sits in close proximity to Heynings Priory Scheduled Monument (SM). There are another 13 SMs within 5km of the site, including a Roman fort 900m south-west of the site. The Grade II* listed Gate Burton Hall is located 250m to the west, the scheme also impacts a Grade II listed farmhouse. The Inspectorate queried whether there were any archaeological remains around the site, to which the Applicant indicated that early studies had not identified any specific constraints but that surveys and studies were ongoing.

The Applicant confirmed that the site has small parcels of ancient and semi-natural woodland, Burton Wood. The Inspectorate queried what measures were taken to protect the woodlands in the proposed development, to which the Applicant responded that the design will take these matters into account. Agricultural land grade was noted to be Grade 3 but would be confirmed by surveys.

A single public right of way (PROW) is located along the top of the site and only a small portion of the site is located within Flood Zone 2 and 3, although the possible cable routes are located almost completely within Flood Zone 3, where it crosses the River Trent.

The Inspectorate highlighted the potential for the project to overlap with the programmes for other major projects in the area and discussed the implications for the cumulative impact assessment.

The Inspectorate asked the Applicant whether any local airports would be impacted by glint and glare from the panels. The Applicant responded that it had not been in contact with any aviation authority but will conduct a glint and glare assessment and include it in the application submission.

Compulsory Land Acquisition

The Applicant informed that its intention is to secure the land privately and do not envisage land assembly issues. Agreements are in place for the main site, and work is underway on cable routes. However, the Applicant confirmed that Compulsory Acquisition (CA) will be used in the case of an unknown ownership or land owner insolvency.

The Inspectorate queried if there were any special category land included in the Development Consent Order (DCO). The Applicant informed that it was not sure yet, and also informed that the cable route could go either overhead or underneath the River Trent, but this has not been confirmed yet.

Project Programme

The Applicant gave a brief introduction to their key milestones:

- Submission of Scoping Report to the Planning Inspectorate: mid-November 2021

- Stage 1 – Non-Statutory Consultation: Q1 2022
- Formal Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC): April/May 2022
- Finalise PEIR: April 2022
- Statutory Consultation: Summer 2022
- Finalise Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Prep Environmental Statement (ES): August-October 2022
- Submission DCO application: December 2022

The Inspectorate queried the flexibility of the submission date for the Scoping Report. The Inspectorate noted that for a submission in late November, the statutory 42 day deadline would coincide with Christmas and asked whether there was flexibility to move the submission dates. The Applicant suggested that an earlier submission could be possible but would be subject to advice from the wider project team. **Post Meeting Note:** EIA Scoping Report was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate on Friday 12 November, bringing forward anticipated submission by 1 week.

Scoping and Environment Surveys

The Applicant stated that a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) has been undertaken and that other surveys are ongoing including botanical and reptiles surveys, as well as breeding and wintering bird surveys. Habitats on site will also be evaluated to allow a biodiversity net gain calculation and assessment to be carried out.

Project launch and consultation

The Applicant informed that a project website has been launched (www.gateburtonenergypark.co.uk) and that the project was made public on the 12 October 2021 after consultation with the four relevant host authorities. A Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) is being proposed to the local planning authorities (LPAs).

The Inspectorate inquired whether the LPAs had any experience of working with DCOs and whether there was potential for other projects to overlap impacting on the resources of the key statutory bodies. The Applicant informed that Lincolnshire County Council was involved in another NSIP project.

The Applicant confirmed that there would be two rounds of consultation. The first would be a non-statutory community consultation, in Q1 2022; and a second statutory community consultation in August 2022.

The Applicant notified of their engagement with Island Green Power to discuss consultation strategy on the West Burton and Cottam solar projects.

AOB

The Inspectorate informed the Applicant of the requirements for setting up a project website. **Post Meeting Note:** the project page has now been set up on the Inspectorate's website.

