

West Burton Solar Project

Environmental Statement Chapter 1: Introduction

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Issue Sheet

Report Prepared for: West Burton Solar Project Ltd.
DCO Submission

Environmental Statement Chapter 1: Introduction

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 This Environmental Statement (ES) has been prepared on behalf of West Burton Solar Project Limited ('the Applicant') in relation to an application (the 'Application') for a Development Consent Order (DCO) for West Burton Solar Project (hereafter referred to as the 'Scheme').
- 1.1.2 The Scheme comprises a number of land parcels (the 'Site' or 'Sites') described as West Burton 1, 2 and 3 which accommodate ground mounted solar photovoltaic (PV) generating stations (incorporating the solar arrays); grid connection infrastructure and energy storage; and the Cable Route Corridors. The Sites are located between approximately 7.4km to the south and up to 14.6km southeast of Gainsborough.
- 1.1.3 The Scheme will comprise the construction, operation and maintenance, and decommissioning of a generating station (incorporating solar arrays) with a total capacity exceeding 50 megawatts (MW), and export connection to the National Grid. The grid Point of Connection (POC) will be at the National Grid substation at West Burton Power Station.
- 1.1.4 The operational life of the Scheme is anticipated to be 40 years. Once the Scheme ceases to operate, the development will be decommissioned. A 40-year period for the operational phase of the development will be assessed in the EIA and reported in this ES which accompanies the DCO application. However, as is typical for energy generation NSIPs, the DCO Application will not seek a temporary or time limited consent.
- 1.1.5 The Scheme will be located within the 'Order limits' (the land shown on the Works Plans [EN010132/APP/WB2.3] within which, the Scheme can be carried out). The area subject to the Application comprises the Solar Array Sites (including an Energy Storage Facility at West Burton 3); the Cable Route Corridor connecting West Burton 1 and West Burton 2 to the substation at West Burton 3 and between West Burton 3 and to the POC); areas for landscape and ecological mitigation and enhancement; and areas for highways works or access referred to as the Site Access Works.
- 1.1.6 The majority of the Scheme will be located within the administrative boundary of West Lindsey District Council and Lincolnshire County Council; with the POC and the Cable Route Corridor, which connects West Burton 3 to the POC, being located within the administrative boundary of Bassetlaw District Council and Nottinghamshire County Council.
- 1.1.7 This chapter is supported by the following Figure 1.1 Location Plan [EN010132/APP/WB6.4.1.1].
- 1.1.8 A Glossary and list of abbreviations for the ES is provided in the document entitled Contents, Glossary and Abbreviations [EN010132/APP/WB6.1].

1.2 The Regulations

- 1.2.1 The Scheme is defined as an NSIP under Sections 14(1)(a) and 15(2) of the Planning Act 2008 (Ref.1), as it is an onshore generating station in England with a capacity of more than 50MW. The Planning Act 2008 (Ref.1) provides that the Secretary of State is responsible for determining the application for development consent, with the power to appoint a single person or a panel from the Planning Inspectorate to manage and examine the application (referred to as the 'Examining Authority'). In its role, the Examining Authority will examine the application for the Scheme and make a recommendation to the Secretary of State (for the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero) ('the Secretary of State') who will then decide whether to grant a DCO.
- 1.2.2 In accordance with Section 104(2) of the Planning Act 2008 (Ref.1), the Secretary of State is required to have regard to any relevant National Policy Statement (NPS), amongst other matters, when deciding whether or not to grant a DCO. However, at the point of submission of the DCO Application, the Scheme's proposed energy generating technology is not specifically referenced by an NPS and therefore the DCO will be determined in accordance with Section 105 of the Planning Act 2008 (Ref.1).
- 1.2.3 Section 105(2) of the Planning Act 2008 (Ref.1) provides the basis for deciding the DCO Application and the Secretary of State must have regard to the provisions set out in this section of the Planning Act 2008. This includes any matters which the Secretary of State thinks are both important and relevant to their decision. A DCO, if granted, has the effect of providing consent for development, in addition to a range of other powers, consents and authorisations, where specified, as well as removing the need for some consents (such as planning permission).
- 1.2.4 Section 115 of the Planning Act 2008 (Ref.1) also states that a DCO can include consent for 'associated development', which is development that is not an NSIP in its own right, but which is associated with the NSIP. This may be development that supports the construction, operation or decommissioning of the NSIP; which helps to address the impacts of the NSIP; or is of a type normally brought forward with the NSIP.
- 1.2.5 The Scheme is considered to be 'EIA development' as defined by the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (as amended in 2018) (the 'EIA Regulations') (Ref.2) requiring an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). This ES forms part of the DCO Application and presents the findings of the EIA undertaken for the Scheme in accordance with the EIA Regulations and the Planning Act 2008 (Ref.1).
- 1.2.6 Environmental impacts arising from the Scheme have been studied systematically as part of the EIA process, and the results are presented within this ES. The baseline for the assessment has been derived from surveys and studies within and around the Order limits. The assessment methodology is explained in Chapter 2: EIA Process and Methodology of this ES [EN010132/APP/WB6.2.2], including the approach to

cumulative assessment, and, where relevant, in the methodology section of each technical assessment chapter.

1.2.7 The EIA process has considered impacts resulting from the construction, operation (including maintenance) and decommissioning phases of the Scheme, and considers measures to avoid, reduce or mitigate any significant adverse effects on the environment and where possible, enhance the environment. Where applicable, the ES also identifies 'residual' impacts, defined as impacts remaining following the implementation of the proposed mitigation measures.

1.2.8 The structure of this ES is outlined in **Table 1.1** below.

Table 1.1: ES Structure

Document	Consultant
Volume 1 – Main Statement	Coordinated by Lanpro
Chapter 1: Introduction	Lanpro
Chapter 2: EIA Process and Methodology	Lanpro
Chapter 3: The Order Limits	Lanpro
Chapter 4: Scheme Description	Lanpro
Chapter 5: Alternatives and Design Evolution	Lanpro
Chapter 6: Energy Need, Legislative Context, and Energy Policy	Lanpro
Chapter 7: Climate Change	Bureau Veritas
Chapter 8: Landscape and Visual	Liz Lake Associates and Lanpro
Chapter 9: Ecology and Biodiversity	Clarkson and Woods
Chapter 10: Hydrology, Flood Risk and Drainage	Delta Simons
Chapter 11: Ground Conditions and Contamination	Delta Simons
Chapter 12: Minerals	Clover Planning
Chapter 13: Cultural Heritage	Lanpro
Chapter 14: Transport and Access	Transport Planning Associates
Chapter 15: Noise and Vibration	Tetra Tech
Chapter 16: Glint and Glare	Pager Power
Chapter 17: Air Quality	Tetra Tech
Chapter 18: Socio-Economics, Tourism and Recreation	Lanpro
Chapter 19: Soils and Agriculture	Daniel Baird Soil Consultancy

Chapter 20: Waste	Lanpro
Chapter 21: Other Environmental Topics – Electromagnetic Fields; Light Pollution, Major Accidents and Disasters, Human Health and Telecommunications, Utilities and Television Receptors.	Coordinated by Lanpro
Chapter 22: Mitigation Schedule	Coordinated by Lanpro
Chapter 23: Summary of Significant Effects	Coordinated by Lanpro
Volume 2 – Technical Appendices	Coordinated by Lanpro
Volume 3 - Figures	Coordinated by Lanpro
Volume 4 – Non-Technical Summary	Coordinated by Lanpro

1.2.9 A Statement of Competence [EN010132/APP/WB6.3.1.1] of the relevant assessors, required under Regulation 14.4 of the EIA Regulations, is provided at Appendix 1.1 of the ES.

1.3 The Applicant

1.3.1 The Scheme is being developed by the Applicant. The Applicant is part of Island Green Power Limited (IGP), who is a leading international developer of renewable energy projects, established in 2013. Further information on the Applicant can be found in the Funding Statement [EN010132/APP/WB4.2] that has been submitted as part of the DCO Application.

1.3.2 IGP has delivered 26 solar projects worldwide totalling more than 1GW of capacity. This includes 14 solar projects in the UK and Republic of Ireland. Their mission is to increase solar energy usage, making more renewable energy possible and saving thousands of tonnes of CO2 in the process.

1.3.3 IGP is also progressing the Cottam Solar Project (EN010133), which is within the same locality as the Scheme. The Cottam Solar Project was accepted for Examination by the Secretary of State on 9th February 2023.

1.4 Consultation

[DCO Consultation Requirements](#)

1.4.1 The DCO process sets out a number of statutory requirements regarding consultation. The Planning Act 2008 (Ref.1) requires applicants to carry out statutory consultation on their proposals ahead of submission of a DCO application. The requirements are:

- Section 42 of the Planning Act 2008 requires the Applicant to consult with the ‘prescribed persons’ which includes consultation bodies such as Natural England, Environment Agency, Historic England, host authorities,

neighbouring authorities and persons with interest in the land and those who may be affected by the Scheme.

- Section 47 of the Planning Act 2008 requires the Applicant to consult with the local community. As part of this, a Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) must be prepared which sets out how the applicant proposes to consult on the Scheme. The Applicant must consult with the host authorities on this document and have regard to their comments.
- Section 48 of the Planning Act 2008 requires the Applicant to publicise the Scheme in the 'prescribed manner' in a national newspaper, The London Gazette, and local newspapers. The Section 48 notice also needs to be sent to prescribed consultees.
- Section 49 of the Planning Act 2008 requires the Applicant to have regard to any relevant responses received to the consultation and publicity that is required by Sections 42, 47 and 48 of the Planning Act 2008.

1.4.2 Throughout the period September 2021 to June 2022, informal consultation took place with relevant stakeholders. Regular meetings were held with host authorities and other bodies as necessary. Statutory and non-statutory consultees were also consulted. Stage 1 consultation is described in the Consultation Report [EN010132/APP/WB5.1 – 5.13] supporting the DCO Application. In addition, each technical chapter of the ES provides further detail on any topic specific consultations that took place during Stage 1.

1.4.3 In respect of the local communities affected by the development, the Applicant undertook a first stage of public consultation throughout November and December 2021.

1.4.4 The Scheme was subject to EIA scoping with a Scoping Opinion issued on 2nd March 2022. In the preparation of the Scoping Report consultation was undertaken with key stakeholders where possible. The Planning Inspectorate consulted on the Scoping Opinion, with the prescribed consultation bodies, as listed in Schedule 1 of The Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed Forms and Procedure) Regulations 2009 (as amended) (Ref.3). Those responses were included with the Scoping Opinion issued by the Planning Inspectorate. Any key matters raised in those responses are covered in the individual aspect ES chapters.

[Stage 2 Consultation: Statutory Consultation and Preliminary Environmental Information](#)

1.4.5 A Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR) was prepared and published in June 2022 to satisfy the requirement of the EIA Regulations (Ref.2). 'Preliminary environmental information' is defined in Regulation 12(2) of the EIA Regulations as information "*which (a) has been compiled by the applicant; and (b) is reasonably required for the consultation bodies to develop an informed view of the likely significant environmental effects of the development (and of any associated development)*".

- 1.4.6 The PEIR enabled consultees to understand the likely environmental effects of the Scheme. It presented the preliminary findings of the environmental assessments undertaken up to that point. This allowed consultees the opportunity to provide informed comments on the Scheme, the assessment process, and preliminary findings prior to the finalisation of the Application and this ES.
- 1.4.7 The statutory consultation period was extended for 4 weeks following publication of detailed agricultural land classification (ALC) reports in July 2022 which identified the entirety of the site at West Burton 4 as being entirely “best and most versatile” agricultural land. When considered with other environmental and technical constraints, and consultation feedback, it was decided West Burton 4 should be removed from the Scheme. This prompted the removal of the associated cable route, and the requirement of the main substation and energy storage to be relocated to West Burton 3. A further targeted consultation was then held with Section 42 and Section 44 consultees and targeted members of the community proximate to the West Burton 3 site on these updated proposals.
- 1.4.8 The outcome of the Stage 2 consultation, extended ALC consultation, and targeted West Burton 3 consultations have been considered in the final Scheme design, EIA and DCO Application, now submitted. The Stage 2 and additional consultations have described in the Consultation Report [EN010132/APP/WB5.1 – 5.13] supporting the DCO Application. In addition, each technical chapter of the ES provides further detail on any topic specific consultations that took place during Stage 2.

1.5 Collaboration

- 1.5.1 There are a number of other NSIP scale solar schemes in proximity to the Scheme that will be the subject of separate DCO applications, namely Cottam Solar Project; Gate Burton Energy Park (which has been accepted for Examination); and Tillbridge Solar Project. IGP is the developer progressing the Cottam Solar Project. Gate Burton Energy Park and Tillbridge Solar Project are separate developers.
- 1.5.2 The Applicant has worked closely with the Gate Burton Energy Park to undertake a common approach to assessments of impacts including from a cumulative perspective. In addition, the consideration of combined construction activities, where possible, to reduce environmental impacts has been factored in to the DCO Application. This was considered in particular in relation to areas where cable routes overlap.
- 1.5.3 This has been possible because the Gate Burton Energy Park project is on a similar programme to the West Burton and Cottam Solar Projects and sufficient information regarding these schemes has been available. Tillbridge Solar Project is some way behind these projects in terms of programme with a DCO application anticipated in Q3 2023. Notwithstanding this, the Applicant is in dialogue with the developer for Tillbridge Solar Project to seek to work collaboratively in a similar way as with Gate Burton Energy Park.

1.6 References

- Ref.1 The Planning Act 2008.
- Ref.2 Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (as amended in 2018) (the 'EIA Regulations').
- Ref.3 The Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed Forms and Procedure) Regulations 2009 (as amended).