



Meeting note

Project name	West Burton Solar Project <i>and</i> Cottam Solar Project
File reference	EN010132 <i>and</i> EN010133
Status	Final
Author	The Planning Inspectorate
Date	24 March 2022
Meeting with	Island Green Power
Venue	Microsoft Teams
Meeting objectives	Project update 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.

Progress Update

Since the project update meeting on the 11 January 2022, the Inspectorate issued Scoping Opinions to Island Green Power ('the Applicant') for both projects. The Applicant is progressing the assessments required for the Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PIER), whilst continuing to develop scheme design including refinement to cable route corridors.

The Applicant reminded the Inspectorate of its informal consultation with Local Planning Authorities and Parish Councils in December 2021 and noted that its technical and landscape teams have since met with local residents to discuss their concerns.

The Applicant explained that engagement events have occurred in various local areas. It added that the objective of the first round of community consultation was to introduce proposals to the community and have since analysed the feedback and informed scheme design (for example, consideration of panel height at the West Burton 4 site).

The Applicant explained that there is an existing flood issue at the village of Clayworth near the West Burton 4 site. The Applicant is exploring opportunities to provide flood mitigation at Clayworth to benefit the local community.

The Inspectorate highlighted key concerns that had been raised on similar projects through consultation. This included food security and associated carbon emissions, approach to archaeological surveys and data supporting the impact assessment on biodiversity. The

Inspectorate confirmed that in respect of archaeology surveys and mitigation, if an Applicant's approach was at variance to that advocated by a host authority / statutory consultee, the Applicant should explain the reason for variance and provide justification for the approach used.

The project anticipates constructing both tracking and fixed solar panels where design is appropriate. The Inspectorate noted that where either design is proposed, the Environmental Statement clearly sets out why the design is appropriate and ensure that a worst-case scenario captures potential impacts and effects from both types of panels where appropriate.

Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Opinion

The Applicant asked the Inspectorate to clarify on a couple of matters raised in the Scoping Opinion. The Inspectorate discussed these with the Applicant.

Statutory Consultation

The Applicant's overall strategy is to undertake two phases of consultation and consult on both projects in parallel. The Applicant's initial six-week consultation concluded in December 2021. The Applicant will report back to respondents on how their comments are being considered ahead of Phase 2 consultation. The Applicant expects to issue a community newsletter in April 2022 which will detail the results of Phase 1 consultation, summarise key issues and provide specifics on the volume of feedback.

The Applicant is preparing to consult the host Local Authorities on the draft Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC), which will be published ahead of the statutory consultation scheduled to begin in June 2022. Phase 2 consultation will involve publication of the PIER and community facing materials, including the sharing of more detailed design and refinements since the first phase.

The Inspectorate queried whether there would be a separate SoCC for each scheme. The Applicant noted that both SoCCs will acknowledge the other project, and that the schemes will be consulted on in parallel. The Applicant noted that there is an opportunity for respondents to note whether they are commenting on one project, both projects or a specific site on a project – and that this will be acknowledged in the SoCC.

Next project stages

The next project stages are to issue the PEIR and commence Phase 2 statutory consultation.

The following actions were agreed:

- Inspectorate to review Scoping Opinion and send explanation to the Applicant.
- To organise a follow-up meeting at the end of May 2022.