



## Meeting note

<b>Project name</b>	West Burton & Cottam Solar Farm Projects
<b>File reference</b>	EN010132 & EN010133
<b>Status</b>	<b>Final</b>
<b>Author</b>	The Planning Inspectorate
<b>Date</b>	09 September 2022
<b>Meeting with</b>	West Burton Solar Project Limited & Cottam Solar Project Limited
<b>Venue</b>	Microsoft Teams
<b>Meeting objectives</b>	Project Update Meeting
<b>Circulation</b>	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 and Statutory Consultation Update***

The Applicant provided an extension to the consultation due to updated soil sample results. The Applicant concluded the additional statutory consultation on 23 August 2022. The Applicant is now reviewing the information to see how it impacts the design aspects of the project. The Applicant received just under 700 pieces of feedback via email, the website and hard copy feedback forms. A further 139 comments were received following the extension to consultation.

The Inspectorate queried whether the Applicant conducted any further in person events during the consultation extension. The Applicant advised that the information was provided in hard copy form but there were no further in person events.

The Applicant is now working to articulate their response to consultation feedback comments. Feedback has highlighted concerns of food security, size and scale, impact on the existing environment, biodiversity, visual impact and construction traffic.

Approximately 40% of feedback received was provided for both projects, with 10% specifically for Cottam and 50% for West Burton. Feedback was mainly site specifically driven and therefore the Applicant was able to clarify which project affects which localities.

The Inspectorate recommended the Applicant takes the time to review the Advice Notes to ensure that they follow the guidance on how to communicate how they have considered and responded to consultation feedback.

The Applicant will provide a compliance table as an appendix. They will also provide a summary of the feedback received in the Consultation Report (CR), including Applicant responses to individual feedbacks.

The Applicant confirmed that they are not providing draft documentation for review.

The Applicant confirmed that they are still planning to submit the projects individually, but that consultation has been conducted concurrently. The Applicant advised that a statement of community consultation was conducted for both projects and they feel that combining consultation events has helped reduce consultation fatigue. The Applicant considers that clarity was provided regarding which information was pertinent to which project.

The Inspectorate queried whether the Applicant has explored the possibility of some of the land being used jointly as arable land. The Applicant advised that arable crops and grazing has been considered in the plans. The Applicant appreciates the need to consider biodiversity issues.

The Inspectorate queried whether the Applicant is able to respond to concerns regarding visual impact. The Applicant confirmed that the Idle Valley Nature Reserve, Stow Deer Park Scheduled Monument and the Chesterfield Canal were raised as areas of visual impact concern. The Applicant advised that they are looking at specific design and mitigation responses for these sites.

The Applicant is aware of the guidance available regarding cumulative impact and will take this into consideration where there may be overlap with other solar projects in the locality.

The Inspectorate queried whether the Applicant is aligning programmes such as the construction traffic programme to help minimise the effects on the local area. The Applicant confirmed that they are working to minimise the cumulative impacts.

Where there are overlapping order limits, the Applicant explained that effort is being made to ensure that there is consistency in reporting between all projects and that the EIA and DCO will acknowledge each project.

The Inspectorate queried whether there is any Compulsory Acquisition (CA) that applies to overlapping land between projects. The Applicant confirmed that, whilst all three projects (West Burton, Cottam and Gate Burton) will be applying for CA powers, it is intended that these powers would only be used as a 'fallback', given that at this stage, it is intended that rights to the land subject of the Schemes will be secured by voluntary agreement.

The Inspectorate queried whether the Applicant has had contact with Tillbridge Solar due to the project being within a proximity of the West Burton and Cottam projects. The Applicant confirmed that meetings are planned to get project updates to explore the possibility of any collaboration.

### ***Application(s) target submission dates***

The Applicant advised that they still intend to submit the Cottam Solar project in November 2022 but that the West Burton Solar project will now be submitted in January 2023.

The Applicant will confirm a date with the Inspectorate at a later date.

### ***Quadripartite meeting 30 September 2022***

The Inspectorate confirmed that the Quadripartite meeting has been arranged for Friday 30 September 2022 and that contact will be made shortly regarding agenda items.

The Applicant confirmed that they have a number of suggestions and points of discussion that may be appropriate for the meeting. The Applicant will send these in writing to the Inspectorate for consideration.

The Inspectorate confirmed that the addition of Tillbridge to the meeting.

### ***Any Other Business (AOB)***

The Inspectorate confirmed that a new solar Advice Note is due to be published, if possible, by the end of the year and that while the project is significantly progressed, the Applicant may still find benefit from monitoring this.

The Applicant queried whether the change to the Government cabinet and Secretary of State means any changes to existing processes or guidance. The Inspectorate advised that at this stage they are unable to provide any updates on this but more information will become available over time.

The Inspectorate queried whether there are any updates for consultation regarding archaeology and trenching. The Applicant advised that there is an ongoing dialogue with the Lincolnshire County Council's archaeologist.

The Inspectorate and the Applicant agreed that a final meeting in October 2022 would be beneficial ahead of the submission of the Cottam Solar Farm project in November 2022.

The Inspectorate reiterated that the shape file for the red line boundary will need to be provided at least 10 working days ahead of submission.