



Meeting note

Project name	Stonestreet Green Solar Project
File reference	EN010135
Status	Final
Author	The Planning Inspectorate
Date	27 January 2023
Meeting with	EPL 001 Limited (The Applicant)
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.

Project overview

The Applicant provided a project update including confirming that two grid connection options were expected to be taken forward to examination and the final option decided after examination. The preferred option would be a connection directly into Sellindge Substation and the alternative would be connecting to the Sellindge Substation via an existing nearby tower. The Applicant confirmed that both options were expected to be included and assessed in the application using worst-case scenarios. The Inspectorate queried if any other options would be presented in examination and the Applicant confirmed they did not anticipate any other options would be presented and the Works Plans would display the limits of deviation.

The Inspectorate enquired if there had been any changes to the red line boundary that was sent for scoping. The Applicant confirmed there were no material changes, but some minor changes that do not alter the scope of assessment.

Consultation

The Applicant provided an update on the consultation that had been undertaken to date; statutory consultation was undertaken in October and November 2022 and included a consultation booklet and preliminary environmental information with over 2,200 leaflets sent to homes and businesses within a 4km boundary of the site, an online presence, and a community liaison panel. Briefings have also been provided to local councillors and the two local MPs. The Applicant also explained that it held four exhibitions in nearby areas for local people, held a public presentation and Q&A session and had met with a number of residents in the vicinity of the site.



The Inspectorate queried whether a Statement of Reasons, Funding Statement and Book of Reference (BoR) would be submitted with the application. The Applicant confirmed that these would be submitted. The Applicant confirmed it may seek compulsory acquisition powers and that Category 1, 2 and 3 consultees had been identified.

The Inspectorate queried what methodology had been used for identifying Category 3 persons. The Applicant explained that it had taken a conservative approach in identification and undertaken consultation with a number of local residents that could be affected.

The Applicant stated consultation with host authorities had been undertaken, and that it was working through consultation responses. The Inspectorate asked if responses from host authorities were regarding the Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) or general consultation. The Applicant explained that it was regarding both. The Applicant outlined that it was proposing to update the SoCC in advance of the next stage of consultation and that the draft updated SoCC was with local authorities, and it expected comments during February. It also explained that further statutory consultation would then be conducted in spring 2023 to respond to comments from the consultation undertaken in 2022 and provide focused information relating to landscape and visual impact, biodiversity net gain, cultural heritage, Public Rights of Way and mitigation measures.

The Inspectorate enquired whether there had been engagement with other bodies such as Natural England (NE) or the Environment Agency (EA), and whether discussions had flagged any key issues. The Applicant confirmed that it had engaged with these bodies and that they had provided advice on ensuring the Environmental Statement (ES) included the relevant information, and that it was looking to continue engagement with NE and EA.

The Applicant explained that it was in discussion with various parties, including with host authorities to produce Statements of Common Ground for Examination and it hoped it could respond to most concerns raised prior to Examination. The Inspectorate queried whether any Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) issues had arisen. The Applicant explained that there has been nothing of particular concern so far and that it was in the process of ensuring the necessary assessments had been undertaken. The Inspectorate also asked about the Mineral Safeguarding Area and whether the Applicant had spoken to the relevant mineral planning authority. The Applicant stated that it would need to clarify and update the Inspectorate. The Inspectorate also asked about archaeology. The Applicant explained that it had undertaken a full geophysical survey of the site and is in discussion with the local authority to determine what further work is required to ensure any potential archaeological areas are protected.

The Inspectorate queried whether the Applicant's name had changed from Evolution Power Limited. The Applicant explained that its name had not been changed and that 'EPL 001 Limited', which is a subsidiary of 'Evolution Power Limited', is the Applicant. The Applicant confirmed that consultation had been undertaken under the name EPL 001 Limited, the section 48 notices were published with EPL 001 Limited clearly stated as the Applicant and the application would carry forwards under this name. The Inspectorate advised the Applicant to make it clear in the application.



Draft Documents

The Inspectorate queried whether the Applicant intended to submit any draft documents, stating that it could take 6 to 8 weeks to review documents. The Applicant confirmed that it intended to submit draft documents. The Inspectorate advised that the draft Development Consent Order, Explanatory Memorandum, BoR, Land and Works Plans, ES project description, HRA and Flood Risk Assessment would be useful documents to submit. The Inspectorate asked when the Applicant expected to submit draft documents. The Applicant explained that it would create a target programme of what would be submitted and when.

Project Timeline

The Applicant set out a brief project timeline explaining that it hoped to submit the application in summer 2023 and asked whether a regular meeting with the Inspectorate prior to submission would be beneficial. The Inspectorate confirmed that this would be helpful and requested that the Applicant keep the Inspectorate up to date with progress on the project and expected submission date, reminding the Applicant of the role of the Inspectorate in providing advice. The Inspectorate and Applicant agreed to set up regular meetings.

The Applicant requested that the Inspectorate update the submission date on the project webpage to summer 2023. The Inspectorate confirmed it would do this.

Specific decisions/ follow-up required

The following actions were agreed:

- Applicant to update the Inspectorate on the Mineral Safeguarding Area and whether it has spoken to the relevant mineral planning authority.
- Inspectorate and Applicant to set up regular meetings prior to submission.
- Inspectorate to update submission date on the project webpage to summer 2023.