

Meeting note

Project name	Stonestreet Green Solar Project
File reference	EN010135
Status	Final
Author	The Planning Inspectorate
Date	29 August 2023
Meeting with	EPL 001 Limited
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.

Programme Update

The Applicant is targeting a submission date in late October 2023.

The Inspectorate confirmed that the general timeframe to complete a review of draft documents is 6-8 weeks but this is subject to internal capacity.

The Inspectorate advised that they are in the process of reviewing the draft documents.

The Applicant advised that they can submit the shape file shortly and the Inspectorate reiterated that a minimum of 10 working days is requested.

The Inspectorate confirmed that feedback on documents will be provided together, at the same time. However, should any major observations be made, there is a possibility that contact could be made sooner.

Consultation Update

The Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) was published to the Applicants website on 26th May 2023.

A total of 97 responses were received to the statutory consultation undertaken.

The follow key consultation feedback themes were identified:

- Location and scale of development.

- Landscape impacts and impacts on rural character.
- Impacts on heritage assets.
- Impacts on designated ecological sites and protected species.
- Approach to design development.
- Construction traffic impacts.
- Mitigation, biodiversity net gain and post-construction management of the project.
- Flood risk and impacts on flood storage.
- PRow impacts and enhancements.

Engagement Update

The Applicant provided an engagement update as follows,

Ashford Borough Council (ABC)/ Kent County Council (KCC)

The Applicant is involved in a monthly meeting with ABC and KCC.

The Applicant is also engaging in discussions with KCC regarding their archaeology approach.

High Speed 1

Ongoing engagement regarding potential Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD) under the railway line.

Environment Agency

Ongoing discussions related to works within the flood storage area.

Natural England

Ongoing engagement including regarding a Letter of No Impediment for Protected Species.

Historic England

Historic England have responded to the second round of consultation and the Applicant is engaging with their S42 response.

UKPN

Ongoing engagement regarding a connection to a UKPN substation.

Kent Fire and Rescue

The Applicant is continuing to engage regarding the Draft Outline Battery Safety Management Plan.

The Inspectorate queried when Folkstone and Hythe District Council (FHDC) were removed as a host authority and whether this is captured within the draft documents. The Applicant advised this happened following the submission of the draft documents and therefore some of the figures will need to be updated.

The Applicant confirmed that it is still seeking agreement with the representative of KCC in relation to the final trial trenching approach; areas agreed have been trial

trenched and ground truth the results of the geophysical surveys. KCC are requesting further trial trenching pre-determination which is still under discussion.

Scheme Changes

The Applicant discussed a small number of scheme changes that are currently being explored following consultation with various agencies.

The Inspectorate queried whether, with a possible removal of some land (fields 26-29) from the project, whether the capacity would still be in excess of 50MW. The Applicant confirmed that it would be.

The Applicant also plans to remove the alternative grid connection route.

The Applicant confirmed that an agreement is in place for a grid connection in October 2025.

AOB

The Inspectorate advised that, should the project slip to a later date, that the Applicant should be aware of the impact of submitting the project during the Christmas period and consider a submission in the new year. This is due to the Acceptance period being 28 calendar days, regardless of bank holidays.