

Application by RWE Renewables UK Solar and Storage Limited for an Order Granting Development Consent for the Byers Gill Solar Project

Agenda for Issue Specific Hearing 7 (ISH7) on Environmental Matters:

Hearing	Date and Time	Location
Issue Specific Hearing 7 (ISH7) on Environmental Matters <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cumulative Effects 	Wednesday 27 November 2024 Registration and seating available at venue from: 13:30 Virtual Registration Process from: 13:30 Event starts: 14:00	Dolphin Centre Horse Market Darlington, DL1 5RP and By virtual means using Microsoft Teams Full instructions on how to join online or by telephone will be provided in advance to those who have pre-registered

Agenda

1. Welcome, introductions, arrangements for the Hearing

2. Purpose of the Issue Specific Hearing

The main purpose of the ISH7 is to undertake an oral examination of Environmental Matters in relation to Cumulative Effects.

3. Cumulative Effects

The purpose of this item is to examine issues linked with the assessment of the cumulative effects of the Proposed Development.

This discussion will be informed by written submissions received up to this point of the Examination, with a particular focus on, but not limited to:

- ES Chapter 13 Cumulative Effects [APP-036];
- ES Figure 13.1 Long List of Committed Developments [APP-102];
- ES Appendix 13.2 Long List of Committed Development [APP-161];
- ES Figure 13.2 Short List of Committed Developments [APP-103];
- ES Appendix 13.3 Short List of Committed Developments [APP-162];
- ES Appendix 13.1 In-Combination Effects Table [APP-160];
- ES Non-Technical Summary [APP-022].

Although the ExA has made every effort to review all the documents received at Deadline 5 prior to the publication of this Agenda, please note that the list above may not fully reflect documents received on that Deadline. However, these will be reviewed by the ExA prior to the Hearing and the Applicant and all IPs should be aware that additional questions relating to submissions made at Deadline 5 may be posed by the ExA as far as these relate to the DCO.

The ExA will ask the Applicant to set out, in broad terms how it has assessed the cumulative effects for the construction, operation and decommissioning phases of the Proposed Development.

The ExA will request the Applicant to highlight any necessary mitigation, monitoring, management and compensatory measures and their likely effectiveness.

The ExA notes the Applicant's Comments on Deadline 2 Submissions [REP3-004] in response to Darlington Borough Council's (DBC) Response to the ExA's ExQ1 [REP2-031] regarding a Long and Short List of Committed Development (GCT.1.13). The Applicant is requested to update the ExA regarding the further sensitivity analysis to understand the implications for the cumulative assessment in response to the development applications identified by DBC.

The ExA will ask the applicant to explain each of the identified cumulative effects of the Proposed Development as summarised in Table 13-10 of ES Chapter 13 Cumulative Effects [APP-036].

With reference to the other smaller sites identified in the Statement of Common Ground with Great Stainton Parish Meeting [REP4-016], row ID GSPM6 on page 6, (also evidenced in DBC's Landscape and visual assessment, table LLIR1), as well as the Cowley Complex solar plant identified by Mr Smith [REP1-036]. The Applicant is requested to update the ExA regarding how these particular sites have been considered in the assessment of cumulative effects.

With reference to the Applicant's response to ExQ1 CU.1.3 [REP2-007], the ExA notes that *"The cumulative temporary loss of agricultural land is still considered potentially significant due to the extent likely to be lost temporarily within the locality."* The Applicant is requested to explain its proposals for mitigating these 'significant' cumulative impacts.

The ExA will give the Local Host Authorities (LHAs) the opportunity to comment. The ExA asks that the LHAs concentrate on the main outstanding areas of disagreement.

The ExA will particularly be looking for comments from Darlington Borough Council (DBC) regarding the additional development applications they have identified. The ExA asks that DBC concentrates on the main outstanding areas of disagreement.

The ExA will give the Parish Councils (PCs) the opportunity to comment, particularly Bishopton PC and Great Stainton Parish Meeting. The ExA asks that the PCs concentrate on the main outstanding areas of disagreement.

The ExA will then give the Bishopton Villages Action Group (BVAG) the opportunity to comment. The ExA asks that the BVAG concentrates on the main outstanding areas of disagreement.

The ExA will then give an opportunity for other IPs to comment on any issues raised under this point of the Agenda. The ExA requests that the IPs concentrate on the main outstanding areas of disagreement.

4. Review of issues and actions arising

5. Any other business

6. Closure of the Hearing

Attendees

The ExA would find it helpful if the following parties could attend this Hearing:

- the Applicant;
- Darlington Borough Council (DBC);
- Bishopton Parish Council;
- Great Stainton Parish Meeting;
- Bishopton Villages Action Group (BVAG);
- IPs who submitted comments on any of the topics proposed to be covered at this Hearing.

All IPs are invited to attend the ISH and make oral representations. However, this is subject to the ExA's power to control the Hearing. Participants may be legally represented if they wish, but the Hearing will be conducted to ensure that legal representation is not required.

The ExA has sought to provide sufficient detail to assist the parties to prepare for the Hearing. The details set out above are indicative and the ExA may find it necessary to include additional Agenda items or to amend the order in which the items are dealt with.

Anyone wishing to attend the Hearing in person, who has not already advised the Case Team of this, should do so as soon as possible by completing the [Event Participation Form](#).

The event will be livestreamed and a link for watching the livestream will be posted on the [project webpage of the National Infrastructure Planning website](#) closer to the Hearing date. IPs and members of the public who wish to observe the Hearing can therefore view and listen to the Hearing using the livestream, or view and listen to the recording, after it has concluded.

Arrangements Conference

Parties who have registered to attend virtually, and Invitees, will receive an email shortly before the Hearing containing a joining link and telephone number to enable participation virtually as necessary. Please join the Arrangements Conference promptly. The Case Team will admit you from the virtual Lobby and register your attendance. The Arrangements Conference allows procedures to be explained and will enable the Hearing to start promptly.

Procedure at ISH

Guidance under the Planning Act 2008 and the Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 provides that it is for the ExA to probe, test and assess the evidence through direct questions of persons making oral representations at Hearings. Questioning at the Hearing will be led by the ExA. Cross questioning of a person giving evidence by another person will only be permitted if the ExA decides it is necessary to ensure representations are adequately tested or that an IP has had a fair chance to put its case.

Every effort will be made to ensure that the issues will be discussed on the day that they are scheduled for. The hearing will finish as soon as the ExA deems that all those present have had their say and that all matters have been covered. If there are additional matters to be dealt with or there are submissions that take a considerable amount of time at any hearing, it may be necessary to prioritise matters and defer others to written questions.

The agenda is for guidance only. It is not designed to be exclusive or exhaustive. The ExA may add other issues for consideration, may alter the order in which issues are considered and will seek to allocate sufficient time to each issue to allow proper consideration of them. Any lack of discussion of a particular issue at a hearing does not preclude further examination of this issue, including the asking of further written questions.

Please contact the Case Team if you have any questions regarding the arrangements for the hearing or how to participate:

Email: byersgillsolar@planninginspectorate.gov.uk

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