



Meeting note

Project name	Helios Renewable Energy Project
File reference	EN010140
Status	Final
Author	The Planning Inspectorate
Date	27 April 2023
Meeting with	Enso Green Holdings D 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.

Project Update including changes since scoping

Enso Green Holding D Limited (the Applicant) explained that the red line boundary has been refined to:

- reflect the updated cable route and grid connection.
- reduce potential impacts to nearby residential properties.
- reduce potential impacts to a railway line.
- to retain existing woodland; and
- to avoid areas of flood risk.

A small area to the east of the Proposed Development site has been amended to include additional land within the red-line boundary to ensure a bridge is not affected by the cable route. The Applicant is currently discussing the new cable route with the relevant landowner. Additionally, some land near Drax Power Station, which had previously been included, has now been removed. The Inspectorate advised that the Environmental Statement (ES) should clearly set out the proposed changes since the Scoping Report and ensure that any potential impacts are assessed. The Applicant queried whether it was necessary to seek a further Scoping Opinion because of the changes to the red-line boundary and the Inspectorate stated that as long as the changes are explained and assessed within the ES a further Scoping Opinion is not required.

The Inspectorate queried the grid connection and generation capacity for the project considering the reduced area of solar array; the Applicant confirmed the grid connection offer is 190MW export capacity with a installed capacity of approximately 250MW.

The Inspectorate queried what the Applicant considered to be the key issues. The Applicant confirmed that landscape and visual impact, and the land take of best and most versatile agricultural land (of grade 3a and above), were key topics being raised. The Applicant confirmed that a comprehensive discussion on impacts to agricultural land was being undertaken and the Inspectorate highlighted that cross referencing to the assessment of alternatives would benefit such a discussion. The Inspectorate also explained that there were a number of solar projects currently in examination and recommendation stages which may provide some helpful information.

Project Programme

The Applicant explained it is currently engaging with local councils about Planning Performance Agreements (PPA).

The Inspectorate asked how the Applicant's engagement with Local Authorities (LAs) has been, to which the Applicant responded that it has a good relationship with LAs; meetings have been ongoing and Statements of Common Ground (SoCG) have been discussed.

Although the exact dates have not been finalised yet, the Applicant confirmed that the Preliminary Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) and Statutory Consultation is likely to run for some 6 weeks from late Summer-early Autumn.

The Applicant also confirmed that the DCO application will be submitted in Q1 2024.

AOB

The Inspectorate asked what land management would be employed underneath the solar arrays. The Applicant anticipates that the land will be grazed.