



Meeting note

Project name	Helios Renewable Energy Project
File reference	EN010140
Status	Final
Author	The Planning Inspectorate
Date	Wednesday 14 February
Meeting with	Stantec
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 introduction

The Applicant provided an overview of the Proposed Development and explained that it will have a total capacity of up to 250 megawatts (MW), with an export capacity of 150MW and will include the following key infrastructure:

- Solar Photovoltaics (PV) infrastructure;
- Energy storage infrastructure;
- Grid connection;
- Access tracks;
- On site substation and grid connection cabling;
- Green infrastructure; and
- Boundary fencing and close circuit television (CCTV).

The Inspectorate queried the location of the main substation and Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) in a flood risk area. The Applicant explained that the site main substation and BESS is located in Flood Zone 3 because of design considerations including the need to create the right formation of panels, the position of cabling, and keeping noise away from sensitive receptors. The Applicant stated that it is working with the Environment Agency (EA) and fire and battery safety specialists to develop appropriate design of the substation and BESS site. The Applicant explained that adequate water supply would be provided on site and a strategy for the testing, discharge or export of water would be prepared.

The Applicant explained that the solar panels would be tracking rather than fixed panels, allowing them to pivot above peak water level, during flood events.

The Applicant provided a summary of the land parcels that have been removed since the original red line boundary, due to further environmental information and sensitive receptor considerations. It explained that the original boundary had been refined and the grid connection corridor had been reduced overall, although additional land has been included to accommodate the need for Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD) under an existing private rail corridor.

Programme

The Applicant provided key programme dates:

- Request for Scoping Opinion submitted 6 June 2022;
- Scoping Opinion adopted 14 July 2022;
- Statutory consultation 26 October 2023 – 21 December 2023;
- Development Consent Order (DCO) submission preparation Q4 2023/ Q1 2024; and
- Target submission April 2024.

The Applicant explained that it is in the process of resolving consultation matters and that it did not intend to use the Planning Inspectorate's Draft Document Review service.

Key section (s) 42 consultation responses

The Applicant provided a summary of issues that key consultees had raised.

The Applicant stated that key issues that had been raised by North Yorkshire Council (NYC) included landscape and human health. It explained that human health concerns included understanding the impacts of construction workers on health services in the local area and the Proposed Development intimidating and limiting residents use of Public Rights of Way, and the associated health impacts of this. The Applicant explained that this issue had been scoped out of the Environmental Statement (ES) as a standalone chapter on the premise that human health would be assessed in other relevant chapters. The Applicant will be addressing this in the ES, with a Human Health technical note, appended to Chapter 2: Methodology, which will sign post readers to where human health matters are discussed throughout the ES.

The Applicant stated that key issues that had been raised by the EA included flood risk, ground water protection and pollution prevention. The Inspectorate asked whether water demand for the Proposed Development is considered a key issue. The Applicant explained that the fire safety strategy will cover water demand.

The Applicant stated that key issues that had been raised by NE included air quality, internationally designated sites, nationally designated sites, and best and most versatile agricultural land. The Applicant stated that it is providing NE with air quality modelling data and all designated sites along the HGV routes will be assessed. The Applicant explained that Natural England (NE) had requested further assessment to inform the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) screening process.

The Inspectorate asked whether Statements of Common Ground (SoCG) would be produced with these parties. The Applicant explained that it has a template SoCG with North Yorkshire Council and it will produce SoCGs with other key parties (EA, NE, Heritage England and National Highways).

AOB

The Inspectorate advised that it should be made aware of slippage to the submission date and asked whether there are any risks for this to occur. The Applicant explained that it is reliant on consultees for feedback and agreed positions.

The Inspectorate queried whether there are any outstanding Compulsory Acquisition matters. The Applicant stated that there are minor issues relating to the grid connection.

The Inspectorate advised that it required the shapefile 10 working days before the submission date.