



TILLBRIDGE SOLAR PROJECT

WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

ISSUE SPECIFIC HEARING 2 – ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS

TUESDAY 14TH JANUARY 2025

SUMMARY OF HEARING

ISSUE SPECIFIC HEARING 2

3a WATER ENVIRONMENT INCLUDING FLOOD RISK

The flood risk of the site and its surrounds due to the Proposed Development over its whole life.

The management of surface water run-off
Cumulative effects.

WLDC noted the discussions but raised no additional issues or views in the Hearing.

The discussion regarding fire risk (failure rates of infrastructure) and impact from fire water was particularly noted. An uncertainty that arose for WLDC from the discussion was, whilst acknowledging the likelihood and safeguards that would be in place for Tillbridge in isolation, what the robustness of the emergency service and response mitigation would be if there were multiple 'events' cumulatively across projects.

It was not fully understood at the hearing whether the likelihood of an event was linked to the ageing of the infrastructure (and maintenance regimes), or whether the risk was constant throughout the lifespan of a project. If the former, with four projects of over 2GW of solar infrastructure being deployed adjacent to each other with the same construction, is the risk of fire to infrastructure likely to occur at each project at a similar point in their lifecycles? And would there be any other external impacts that could increase the likelihood of fire that would apply to all projects cumulatively (e.g. increases in climate temperature)?

If so, it appears to WLDC that the magnitude of the cumulative impacts will require careful consideration and that resources to deal with cumulative events are adequate to ensure the successful implementation of the Management Plans.

3b SOILS AND AGRICULTURE

<p>The effects of the Proposed Development on the land including soil condition and agriculture.</p>	<p>Availability of land for food production</p>
<p>The assessment of the agricultural land classification and proposed use with reference to the recent written ministerial statement and use of best and most versatile agricultural land.</p>	<p>WLDC welcomed the discussion regarding whether land around the solar panel infrastructure would genuinely be available for grazing. It is understood that the applicant cannot provide a firm commitment that such food production will take place.</p> <p>WLDCs view therefore remains that all land upon which infrastructure will be located will be lost for the purpose of food production. With no firm commitments or mechanisms to ensure that grazing will take place, the loss agricultural land for the production of food must be weighed negatively in the planning balance.</p>
<p>The overall effect of the Proposed Development on UK food security.</p>	<p>Whilst NPS EN-3 requires solar projects to avoid ‘Best Most Versatile’ land (ALC Grades 1, 2 and 3a), WLDC maintains the view that the avoidance of such land classifications still results in the loss of agricultural land to which negative weight must be applied in the planning balance. Avoidance of BMV does not in itself indicate that a project is ‘acceptable’ as the amount of land lost must still be viewed as a negative impact.</p>
<p>The effects on land determined by the cable route corridor option proposed.</p>	<p>The weight attributed to this impact is influenced by the amount of agricultural land lost, including the cumulative impact of the loss of land available for food production as a consequence of the four NSIP projects.</p>
<p>The proposed ongoing management of the land</p>	

3c GENERAL AND OTHER PLANNING MATTERS INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO:

<p>BESS – associated development</p>	<p>WLDC noted the discussion on the BESS and the implications of the DC coupling electrical design adopted by the applicant. WLDC has not made prior representations on this matter and did not contribute to the discussion held in the hearing. It would be welcome if the applicant was able to provide further clarity on both the benefits and disadvantages of applying DC coupling instead of an AC/DC arrangement.</p> <p>In considering fire risk of BESS and how the mitigation proposed would be applied, WLDC noted that much of the discussion related to controlling the Tillbridge Solar Project itself. Consistent with WLC submissions on the determination of this application, the impacts of Tillbridge must be considered alongside the impacts of the other three projects. In the specific context of fire risk, WLDC is concerned about firstly fire events being more likely for all projects around the same period (due to their parallel project lifespans) and, secondly, would an emergency response be resourced to deal with multiple events should they occur concurrently.</p> <p>WLDC is unclear as to whether the risk of fire is linked to the age of the infrastructure (from fatigue) or whether the risk is ‘equal’ across the lifespan of the project. If the former, the risk of fire across all four projects would increase and be highest at the same point in the lifespan in the project, increasing the likelihood of cumulative incidents. Were more than one incident occur, WLDC seeks confirmation that the emergency response approach would be able to be carried out and that there would be sufficient resources to do so.</p>
--------------------------------------	--

	<p>WLDC noted the discussion on the implementation of a 'Resident Notification Scheme' and would support the development of this approach.</p>
--	--
