

# Meeting note

<b>Project name</b>	Tillbridge Solar Project
<b>File reference</b>	EN010142
<b>Status</b>	<b>Final</b>
<b>Author</b>	The Planning Inspectorate
<b>Date</b>	01 March 2023
<b>Meeting with</b>	Tillbridge Solar Limited
<b>Venue</b>	Microsoft Teams
<b>Meeting objectives</b>	Project Update Meeting
<b>Circulation</b>	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.

## **Scheme – Refinement of Extent of Development Consent Order (DCO)**

Tillbridge Solar Limited (“The Applicant”) shared the updated redline boundary and explained that following the outcomes of environmental assessments it had been refined since the submission of the EIA Scoping Request. The Applicant explained that they are working towards refining the red line boundary ahead of statutory consultation.

## **Update on Survey Work and key Headlines**

The Applicant explained that surveys are currently underway which began in April 2022.

The geophysical survey has been completed and the methodology for the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for trial trenching is being prepared and is to be agreed with the Lincolnshire County Archaeologist. The Applicant is preparing for trial trenching, which is due to commence in April 2023. The Cultural Heritage Zone of Influence has been agreed with heritage stakeholders.

The Applicant had confirmed that the Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) survey is largely complete for the Principal Site.

The viewpoint winter photography for the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) are currently being undertaken and the Applicant explained that they had an ongoing dialogue with Lincolnshire County Council’s Landscape Consultant.

The Applicant confirmed that approximately 70% of ecological surveys are now complete for the principal site, with remaining surveys to be completed for the remaining of the year.

It was confirmed that surveys had not yet commenced on the cable route corridor.

The Applicant confirmed that assessment relating to the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) is ongoing and findings at this time show that there is no functionally linked land within the study area. The Inspectorate queried if the Ramsar sites have been included within the assessment, which the Applicant confirmed that they have. The Applicant stated that discussions with Natural England (NE) have not yet occurred but are to commence. The Inspectorate advised that the Applicant provide evidence of any consultation with NE within the application documents.

The Inspectorate noted that the River Trent is tidal, the Applicant confirmed that they are aware of this.

The Applicant mentioned it has been unable to complete all surveys due to one landowner who has yet to grant access for surveys to be carried out. The Inspectorate asked if the Applicant was considering a Section 53 (rights of entry) application. The Applicant said it is hoping to reach voluntary agreement from the landowner. The Applicant stated that a request under section 172 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 is not currently possible as it did not have a generation licence but that it has applied for one. It is possible that if the generation licence is granted then it might utilise the powers under the Housing and Planning Act 2016 to gain access for survey work.

### **Consultation and Engagement**

The Applicant made the project public in summer 2022. An early engagement and collaboration activity was held in July 2022 including workshops with key stakeholders and followed up with the local community via a newsletter which was sent out to around 5000 residents. The Applicant produced a workshop report. The Applicant is having monthly meetings with the Local Authorities

The Applicant is currently holding a formal consultation on the Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) which started in February 2023.

The Applicant is looking to hold Statutory Consultation for six weeks between May and July 2023. The Statutory Consultation will follow the local elections; however, the Applicant has proposed a 'warm-up' consultation. The Applicant is planning to hold six in-person events, two seminars and webinars.

Letters and notices are currently being composed along with the statutory and non-statutory lists. The Applicant confirmed that the Consultation Report is currently being drafted and that land referencing is taking place; ongoing conversations are happening with landowners, Parish Councils, Local Planning Authority, statutory and non-statutory consultees. The Applicant confirmed that it will update the Inspectorate at the next meeting.

The Applicant was advised to supply the Inspectorate with a s46 notification before the consultation begins.

The applicant confirmed submission of the application will be Q4 2023.

## **Collaboration with Other Developers**

The Applicant is in collaboration with other solar farm developers in the area to refine the cable route corridor with Tillbridge. The Applicant shared a map illustrating the overlap of other projects near Tillbridge.

## **Programme**

The Applicant shared their timeline of events for the application process. The Applicant was advised to inform the Planning Inspectorate of exact dates, especially given the possible Q4 submission.

## **AOB**

- The Applicant requested that the website be updated for the submission deadline to be moved from Q3 to Q4.
- The Planning Inspectorate encouraged the Applicant to submit draft documents as they provide an opportunity for the Inspectorate to give advice about any aspects that may need clarification prior to submission and to highlight any procedural omissions.
- The Applicant was advised to read all advice notes carefully. It was also suggested that the Applicant look at other similar projects for guidance. The Applicant will let the Inspectorate know of their decision of whether to submit draft documents in due course.