



The Planning Inspectorate

Tillbridge Solar Project
EN010142
s51 Advice Log
Updated: December 2023

A new approach to the recording of s51 advice is being trialled on the Tillbridge Solar project under the [NSIP Reform Early Adopters Programme](#).

This document contains the advice that has been provided by the Planning Inspectorate at meetings with the applicant Tillbridge Solar Limited and their consultants. The format used should be considered as transitional at this time as the approach is developed.

This log is a record of advice we have provided for this project.

There is a statutory duty under [section 51 of the Planning Act 2008](#) to record the advice that is given in relation to an application or potential application and to make this publicly available.

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Date of meeting	Meeting overview
11/07/2022	Inception Meeting and Introduction to project
30/09/2022	Project Update Meeting
01/03/2023	Project Update Meeting
03/05/2023	Project Update Meeting and Early Adopters Programme Initiation
11/07/2023	Project Update Meeting and Early Adopters Programme Update
06/09/2023	Project Update Meeting, Consultation Update and Early Adopters Programme Update
12/12/2023	Project Update Meeting, Consultation Update and Early Adopters Programme Update

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Topic	Meeting date: 11 July 2022
Project Overview	<p>Tillbridge Solar is a joint venture between Tribus Clean Energy and Canadian Solar and involves the construction, operation, maintenance, and decommissioning of ground-mounted solar photovoltaic arrays along with various supporting infrastructure.</p> <p>Infrastructure includes a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS), solar stations with electrical equipment, substations, access tracks, security measures, landscape planting for screening, Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) initiatives, and underground cabling to connect to the National Grid.</p>
Site Selection and Cable Route	<p>The Applicant stated a Site Search Assessment in 2020 identified suitable land to the east and south-east of Gainsborough for further consideration.</p> <p>Factors considered included topography, irradiance, available grid connection, and planning and environmental constraints.</p> <p>The preferred cable route crosses a railway line and the river Trent.</p> <p>Sensitive habitats will be identified through baseline surveys to guide non-intrusive techniques and avoid trenching impacts.</p> <p>Approximately 16km of cable line is planned.</p>
Stakeholder and Consultation strategy	<p>The Applicant explained various activities have been undertaken, including data collection, mapping, surveys, and meetings with local authorities.</p> <p>Collaboration workshops are scheduled from July 20 to July 22, 2022.</p>
Compulsory Acquisition Powers (CA) and Cumulative Concerns	<p>The Applicant aims to negotiate voluntary acquisition of property rights but may include CA powers in the Development Consent Order (DCO) as a precaution.</p> <p>Most landowners have entered into exclusivity agreements, and progress is being made on option/lease arrangements.</p> <p>Local authorities have raised concerns about regional-scale bird impact and archaeology impacts.</p>
Tracking Panels and Noise	<p>The Applicant plans to use single access trackers rotating East to West, which are expected to produce minimal noise. This will be assessed further.</p>

	<p>Fixed south-facing and single-axis trackers will be considered for EIA scoping.</p> <p>The Applicant will provide information regarding any existing tracking panels in operation later.</p>
Practical arrangements for scoping	<p>The Applicant stated that scoping is likely to occur towards the end of Q3 2022.</p> <p>Statutory Consultation is planned for Q1 2023, and the application submission is scheduled for Q3 2023.</p> <p>The Inspectorate reminded the Applicant of the Statutory Instrument template and of sending the GIS shape files before submitting the scoping report.</p>
Topic	Meeting date: 30 September 2022
Purpose of the meeting and key issues raised	<p>The meeting involved Applicants for Cottam, West Burton, Gate Burton, and Tillbridge Solar projects along with four local authorities: Bassetlaw District Council, Lincolnshire County Council, Nottingham Council, and West Lindsey.</p> <p>The purpose was to facilitate open discussions regarding potential issues arising from the proximity and timing of these solar projects.</p> <p>Local Authorities issues raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bassetlaw DC: Impacts on agricultural land, landscape, visual impact, and heritage. - Lincolnshire CC: Concerns about resource pressure due to numerous proposed projects, loss of agricultural land, landscape, archaeology, and carbon reduction. - Nottingham Council: Worries about local flood risk, landscape, visual impacts, and loss of agricultural land. - West Lindsey DC: Engaged but facing overlap issues causing resource pressure and consultation fatigue.
Local Authority collaboration	<p>The Local Authorities request for support in timetabling with concerns about resource pressure and timing due to multiple projects and the need for additional staff, especially in high demand areas.</p>
Expected Submission dates	<p>Gate Burton: End of January 2023.</p> <p>Cottam DCO: Week three of November 2022 (or first week of January 2023 if delayed).</p> <p>West Burton DCO: Early January 2023 (or late January 2023 if Cottam is delayed).</p>

	<p>Tillbridge's scoping report: Anticipated to be submitted on 30 September 2022, with full submission expected in Q3 2023.</p> <p>The Inspectorate reminded the Applicant to provide GIS shape file to them before submission.</p> <p>The Inspectorate emphasized the importance of clear communication regarding any changes to expected submission dates.</p>
Topic	Meeting date: 01 March 2023
Key Updates and Survey Work	<p>The Applicant explained various surveys have been ongoing since April 2022, including geophysical and Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) surveys.</p> <p>One landowner has not granted access for surveys. The Applicant is working towards voluntary agreement but may consider Section 53 (rights of entry) application if necessary.</p> <p>Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for trial trenching is being prepared, with collaboration from the Lincolnshire County Archaeologist.</p> <p>Cultural Heritage Zone of Influence agreed with heritage stakeholders.</p> <p>Ecological surveys are 70% complete for the principal site, with ongoing winter photography for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA).</p>
Redline Boundary, Environmental Assessments and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)	<p>The Applicant updated the redline boundary based on environmental assessments, refining it for statutory consultation.</p> <p>Ongoing assessment indicates no functionally linked land within the study area.</p> <p>Ramsar sites have been included in the assessment, and discussions with Natural England (NE) are forthcoming.</p>
Consultation and Engagement	<p>Public engagement commenced in summer 2022, including workshops and newsletters reaching around 5000 residents.</p> <p>Formal consultation on the Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) started in February 2023.</p> <p>Statutory Consultation planned for six weeks between May and July 2023, including in-person events, seminars, and webinars.</p>
Submission Timeline	The Applicant anticipates submitting the application in Q4 2023.
Any Other Business (AOB)	The Applicant requested an update to the website for the submission deadline (from Q3 to Q4).

	<p>The Planning Inspectorate encouraged the Applicant to submit draft documents for early review and clarification.</p> <p>The Applicant was advised to carefully read all advice notes and consider looking at similar projects for guidance.</p>
Topic	Meeting date: 03 May 2023
Statutory Consultation Date Change	<p>The Applicant postponed the statutory consultation start date from May 9 to May 30, 2023, in response to feedback from West Lindsey District Council regarding the draft Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC).</p> <p>This change was made to accommodate potential implications of local elections, where all WLDC Members are up for re-election in May. The consultation will now run until July 11, 2023.</p>
Survey Progress	<p>The Applicant explained most surveys for the Principal Site are complete, with some ecological surveys continuing into the summer.</p> <p>The Applicant expects all surveys to be finished, and their results will be incorporated into the Environmental Statement (ES) at the time of submission. This will be reevaluated as the project progresses.</p> <p>Trial trenching on the Principal Site has started and will run until September, covering the entire scheme, including the Cable Route Corridor.</p> <p>Access issues with the final landowner have been resolved, allowing completion of necessary surveys.</p>
Collaboration with Other Projects	<p>The Applicant is collaborating with developers of other NSIP solar projects in the area concerning survey work.</p> <p>The project team will review existing survey data to determine if additional surveys are needed for the cable route corridor.</p>
Draft Documents	<p>The Inspectorate offered the Applicant its Draft Documents review service, to be considered in relation to the project's schedule.</p>
NSIP Reform Early Adopters Programme	<p>The Inspectorate inquired about the project's involvement in the NSIP Reform Early Adopters Programme, and the Applicant confirmed receipt of the invitation and indicated intent to respond within the given timeframes.</p>
Submission Timeline	<p>The Applicant maintains the plan to submit the application in Q4 2023.</p>
Topic	Meeting date: 11 July 2023

Project and Programme Update	<p>The Applicant plans to submit the project in Q4 2023.</p> <p>Statutory Consultation closed on July 11, 2023. Some parties requested additional time to respond, which the Applicant granted.</p> <p>The Applicant does not have the current capacity for the Inspectorate's Draft Document Review service but may consider submitting specific sections for feedback.</p>
Feedback from Statutory Consultation	<p>The Applicant conducted various events, with positive and lengthy engagement from attendees.</p> <p>Briefing sessions were held with several local councils, and meetings with relevant authorities regarding flood risk, drainage, and environmental health are ongoing.</p>
Environmental Update	<p>The Applicant explained that ongoing ecological surveys are being conducted, with trial trenching scheduled until September 2023.</p> <p>Regular meetings with authorities and stakeholders are being held to discuss various environmental aspects.</p> <p>Collaboration with other solar farm developers is ongoing, particularly regarding cable route corridors.</p>
Cumulative Considerations and Inter-dependency Report	<p>The Applicant is proactively considering cumulative impacts and inter-dependency with other projects.</p> <p>The Inspectorate advised considering different construction phases and worst-case scenarios.</p>
Post-Consenting Strategy and Cable Route Planning	<p>The Applicant is having ongoing discussions with other developers to plan cable routes, ensuring all cables can be accommodated within the corridor.</p>
Early Adopters Programme Participation	<p>The Applicant expressed interest in participating in the Early Adopters Programme and has signed up for trialling three proposed components.</p> <p>These components include a Programme Plan, Multiparty Meetings, and an Advice Log, which aim to enhance transparency and coordination.</p>
Next Steps for Applicant	<p>The Applicant is encouraged to publish a Programme Plan on their website within two weeks.</p> <p>Consider initiating multiparty meetings for focused discussions on specific topics.</p>

	Stay engaged with the Advice Log, a dynamic record of interactions with the Inspectorate, which will be published on the National Infrastructure Planning website.
Topic	Meeting date: 06 September 2023
Project Update	<p>Statutory Consultation concluded on July 11, 2023, with high attendance and 127 responses from the public. These will be considered for their Environmental Statement.</p> <p>The Applicant plans to submit their Development Consent Order application on November 23, 2023.</p>
Draft Documents	<p>The Applicant expressed interest in using the Draft Documents Service and will confirm by September 25, 2023.</p> <p>The Inspectorate explained some documents will have a shorter turnaround time under the EAP, while others will follow the usual 6–8-week review period.</p>
Consultation Update	<p>The Applicant also discussed a 28-day targeted consultation due to design refinements in the cable route corridor. This will expand the project's boundary.</p> <p>Landowners near the expanded boundary will be consulted, followed by a community newsletter.</p>
Stakeholders	<p>The Applicant met with environmental authorities regarding flood risk assessment, with no disagreements reported.</p> <p>The Applicant explained engagement with Historic England is ongoing, and meetings will influence the project's design and discussions with West Lindsey District Council on Landscape and Visual Assessment are ongoing.</p> <p>The Applicant plans to meet with Natural England to discuss soils and are in talks with the Marine Management Organisation for deemed consent, aligning with nearby solar schemes.</p>
Early Adopters Update	<p>The advice log will be updated to record any advice from the Inspectorate.</p> <p>Additionally, the Inspectorate pointed to a similar log for the A66 Northern Trans-Pennine Project.</p>
Topic	Meeting date: 12 December 2023
Project Update	The Applicant explained that all ecological surveys have been completed. Trial trenching has been completed on the Principal Site and geo physical surveys completed along the cable route corridor.

Targeted Consultation	<p>The Applicant stated that overall, the Proposed Development's Order Limits has reduced compared to the Preliminary Environmental Information Report stage. However, there are limited areas where the Order Limits have expanded in response to survey findings and/or collaboration with other developers where Order Limits overlapped with other projects in the locality. The Applicant explained that it will undertake targeted statutory consultation relating to these areas where the Order Limits had increase between 14 December 2023 to 25 January 2024. The consultation methodology has been agreed with the relevant local authorities and will be undertaken in accordance with the Statement of Community of Consultation.</p>
Programme	<p>The Applicant stated that the DCO submission date to the Inspectorate will be the 27 March 2024.</p>
Submission of Draft Documents for Planning Inspectorate's comments	<p>The Applicant stated it aims to submit draft application documents to the Inspectorate in January 2024 seeking feedback if there is enough time in their programme plan.</p> <p>The Inspectorate advised that Draft Documents feedback can take a duration of 6 - 8 weeks to provide, where the Applicant may request a further meeting to discuss this feedback if required.</p>
Early Adopter Programme Update	<p>The Applicant confirmed it would be producing a new programme reflecting the updated submission date, in keeping with the requirements of Component 1 of the Early Adopters Programme. The Inspectorate requested that this is to be shared with key stakeholders and statutory consultees.</p>