



Meeting note

Project name	East Yorkshire Solar Farm
File reference	EN010143
Status	Final
Author	The Planning Inspectorate
Date	20 July 2022
Meeting with	Boom Power
Venue	Microsoft Teams
Meeting objectives	Inception Meeting
Circulation	All attendees

Welcome, introductions and s51 advice

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.

The Inspectorate explained that the publication of the meeting note could be delayed up to six months if requested by the Applicant, or until a formal scoping request had been submitted.

Proposed Development

The Applicant introduced its company and project team. Boom Power was started in 2021 with 14 employees, who previously worked for Wirsol Energy. The team has project experience from the UK (inc. [Cleve Hill Solar Park](#)) and Australia. The Applicant explained the origin of the company's name. Currently, Boom Power has 16 live projects in the UK (- build, own, operate and maintain). The company supplies power to avg. 450k homes per year. The East Yorkshire Solar Farm project team includes AECOM, DDM Agriculture, Pinsent Masons and Ardent (Infrastructure & Regeneration).

The scheme (Proposed Development) is located in East Riding of Yorkshire, Selby District Council (inc. cable route to the Drax Power Station) and North Yorkshire County Council. The site lies approximately 1.4km north-west from Howden (near the River Derwent, River Ouse and the A614). The Applicant explained the project meets the threshold to be defined as an NSIP under the PA2008 (with over 50MW generation capacity). The Applicant confirmed that discussions had started with landowners and National Grid.

EIA Scoping and Environmental Surveys

The Applicant identified some environmental planning constraints which relate to flood risk (zones 2&3) around the site and agricultural land (grade 2-4), as well as the nearby

Derwent Valley Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

The Inspectorate enquired whether any of the land parcels were functionally linked to the Humber Estuary designated sites, in terms of providing bird foraging or breeding habitat. The Applicant commented that the environmental surveying including bird surveys were still ongoing and further information will follow.

The Applicant highlighted a network of public rights of ways and bridleways within the site and the surrounding area. It also provided illustrative images of a grazed solar park, mounted modules, wild grass under power lines and CCTV poles by perimeter fence line.

The Inspectorate queried whether the solar panels would be fixed or tracking. The Applicant confirmed the solar panels would be fixed. The Inspectorate drew the Applicant's attention to the privacy issues related to the usage of CCTV cameras along the public pathways. The Applicant responded that it was aware of the issue and that potentially infrared images could be recorded rather than visual images.

The Inspectorate enquired whether the panels would be resilient enough to operate submerged in case of flooding. The Applicant responded that the panels would be 1.2-1.4m above ground and were very unlikely to be submerged, even in case of the worst possible flooding, however they would be still operational. A Flood Risk Assessment will be submitted with the application.

The Inspectorate enquired if there was any solar farm currently under construction for the purpose of a potential site visit. The Applicant responded that at present, it only has some pending planning applications. The Applicant explained that a grid connection of up to 400MW has been agreed with National Grid.

The Applicant shared images of typical solar panels, associated works and an example of landscape/visual enhancement from another NSIP. The Inspectorate advised that the Environmental Statement should illustrate the worst case scenario in terms of landscape mitigation including winter photomontages for the Year 15 scenario.

The Inspectorate highlighted some potential areas of concerns, in particular, the cumulative regional scale impacts of projects, for instance, in relation to agricultural land, archaeological resources and birds and landscape.

The Inspectorate enquired about the project's Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) targets. The Applicant confirmed that its intention was to go beyond the 10% BNG and make the project as biodiversity positive as possible. It claimed to have a good track record in this respect and confirmed that an Environmental Management Plan would be produced as part of the Development Consent Order (DCO) submission. The Inspectorate highlighted the importance of ensuring that sheep grazing densities do not impact on the biodiversity potential of the site.

The Applicant made reference to the [Sunnica Energy Farm](#) and [Longfield Solar Farm](#) NSIPs. It monitors those applications and will take into account the issues raised by Natural England and Interested Parties (eg. regarding agricultural land).

The Inspectorate informed the Applicant of its ongoing discussions with Natural England regarding the EIA process and district level licensing, and recommended [Advice Note 11](#) for further information.

Programme timetable

The Applicant listed its activities to date, notably, drafting the Scoping Report; planning policy review; press release and letters to MPs; working on its consultation strategy; preparation for agricultural land classification survey and geophysical surveys and meeting with the Local Authorities.

The Applicant indicated that the Scoping Report would be submitted late August 2022, based on the findings of its ecological and other environmental surveys (e.g. Extended Phase 1 habitat survey already completed).

The Applicant indicated that non-statutory consultation is expected to take place in autumn 2022, with statutory consultation expected in February 2023. The Applicant has an anticipated DCO submission date of August 2023.

The Inspectorate requested to be notified of any significant changes in the Programme timetable.

Stakeholder engagement and Consultation strategy

The Applicant reported that the Stakeholder engagement was progressing well, including local MPs, Councils, ward councillors and landowners. A press release was issued on 1 July announcing the project. Regarding the Consultation strategy, a 28-day non-statutory consultation will take place in the autumn, in-person and online. The statutory consultation will follow in early 2023.

The Inspectorate advised that the accessibility of hard copy and downloadable documents (files size, broadband speed, etc) should be considered. It also advised that the Applicant should consider hard-to-reach/seldom heard groups and ask the Local Authorities for further advice.

Compulsory Acquisition and land issues

The Applicant provided an overview of its position in terms of Compulsory Acquisition and Land issues. It aims to acquire land by voluntary agreement, including for the cable route and it confirmed that the land referencing had commenced.

Practical Arrangements

The Inspectorate informed the Applicant of the next steps, including setting up a project page on the National Infrastructure Planning portal and a project mailbox. The Inspectorate reminded the Applicant of the Statutory Instrument template and of sending the GIS shape files before submitting the Scoping Report.

The Applicant and The Inspectorate will schedule the next project update meeting in August.