

# Meeting note

<b>Project name</b>	East Yorkshire Solar Farm
<b>File reference</b>	EN010143
<b>Status</b>	<b>Final</b>
<b>Author</b>	The Planning Inspectorate
<b>Date</b>	25 January 2023
<b>Meeting with</b>	East Yorkshire Solar Farm Limited ('The Applicant')
<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.

## Introductions

Introductions were given by the representatives of the Inspectorate and the Applicant team.

## Programme update

The Applicant provided the Inspectorate with a programme update. The statutory consultation is currently targeted for May 2023, which makes allowance for the 2023 Local Elections to be held for host authority East Riding of Yorkshire Council. The Development Consent Order application submission is expected in Autumn 2023.

## Design update

The Applicant provided a design update and explained changes to the scheme. The Applicant has made amendments after consultation to widen footpath/bridleway corridors to 20 meters either side of the path to reduce the corridor effect of the panels and place additional paths onsite to connect to existing routes. The Applicant explained that it had been in discussions with local landowners and this may result in changes to the redline boundary. Further to this, engagement with a local wildlife charity has led to further inclusion of a dedicated wildlife area and a bird hide (or similar), adding potential treelines to leave grassland open for birds.

The Applicant explained that placement of the field substations is anticipated to be greater than 250 meters away from residential properties with battery storage to be co-located with the field substations. The Site has National Grid assets to the south and the Scotland to England Green Link 2 is also proposed in the area under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended). The Applicant is in contact with National Grid to discuss the interface with these projects. The Applicant will be moving to seek protective provisions and land agreements shortly.

## Consultation update

The Applicant has drafted the Statement of Community Consultation and is preparing for statutory consultation in May 2023, this includes preparation of venues, inspection points and information materials. The Applicant confirmed they have shared this information with officers from the three host local authorities. The Inspectorate asked if there were any hard to reach groups in the local area and suggested the Applicant talk to the local authorities regarding this.

The Applicant confirmed it has established Planning Performance Agreements (PPAs) with East Riding of Yorkshire Council, North Yorkshire County Council and Selby District Council. The PPA with East Riding of Yorkshire Council has been signed and North Yorkshire County Council and Selby District Council PPA is being reviewed by their legal team before signing.

The Applicant confirmed joint meetings including technical discussions are being held with the local planning authorities (LPAs). Engagement is ongoing with Natural England, Historic England, Network Rail, National Grid, the Environment Agency and the Marine Management Organisation.

The Inspectorate explained the importance of making sure consultation material is clear and easy to understand and suggested the use of local landmarks to make locations easily identifiable when drafting plans.

## Land Update

The Applicant provided a land update. It was explained that the red line boundary had been selected to reduce the number of affected landowners, with land added in response to feedback during non-statutory consultation, with the identification of Category 3 persons in progress. To summarise the Applicant's findings so far, the area within the red line boundary contains Crown land, with only a few unregistered areas. The Applicant will begin land referencing from the start of February 2023. Land Interest Questionnaires will be issued to all parties and statutory undertakers with interests within the red line boundary.

## Environmental Update

The Applicant explained the key environmental updates since the last project update meeting.

Overwintering bird surveys are ongoing to determine the potential for the Site to be functionally linked to the Lower Derwent Valley Special Protection Area (SPA) and Humber Estuary SPA. The Applicant advised that Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) is ongoing, including engagement with Natural England. The Applicant stated that further Phase 1 ecology surveys are to recommence in March at the start of the survey season, with other required surveys to be undertaken within appropriate survey windows.

A high-level Tree Constraints survey is also underway, and the results will feed into the development of the Scheme and supporting documents.

It was confirmed that Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) data will feed into the proposed location of the field substations and the two main Grid Connection Substations. With the development of hardstanding to avoid Best and Most Versatile (BMV) land as far as is practicable. Initial ALC surveys have been completed within the solar site, with further surveys to more accurately define the location and extent of BMV land within the solar site to be conducted in 2023.

Geophysical survey of the solar site is 80% complete and the data collated to date has been shared with East Riding of Yorkshire Council, the survey of the solar site will be completed in early 2023 when ground conditions allow. The geophysical survey of the Grid Connection cable corridor to commence in 2023 following engagement with North Yorkshire Council and Historic England.

Site surveys have been undertaken to define viewpoints relating to landscape and visual impact. The Applicant states that these are to be agreed with the LPAs and will feed into the project design.

The traffic site surveys are underway with high level traffic routing reports being used to investigate available access options.

Baseline noise monitoring is ongoing using a methodology agreed with the LPAs and the Applicant has engaged in discussions with local residents to utilise private gardens for monitoring.

To assess flood risk the Applicant has used existing flood modelling data sourced from the LPAs, with a meeting requested with the Environment Agency to discuss the Flood Risk Assessment and any modelling requirements.

Further consultation with the Marine Management Organisation will be held to discuss Marine Licensing requirements.

## **Any other business**

The Applicant queried whether there was an update on the National Policy Statement energy suite, which was rumoured may be subject to further consultation and designation shortly. The Inspectorate advised that it was not currently in a position to comment.