



Meeting note

Project name	Springwell Solar Farm
File reference	EN010149
Status	Final
Author	The Planning Inspectorate (the Inspectorate)
Date	23/05/2023
Meeting with	Springwell Energy Farm Limited
Venue	Microsoft Teams
Meeting objectives	Project Update Meeting
Circulation	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.

Non-Statutory Consultation Feedback

Springwell Energy Farm Limited (the 'Applicant') explained they have conducted non-statutory consultation from 24 January 2023 to 7 March 2023. The Applicant conducted 4 public events and received 223 responses from the consultation. The Applicant explained that the key feedback received revolved around the scale of the project, potential environmental impact, and the perceived impact on food security from the use of agricultural land.

Stakeholder and Resident Engagement

The Applicant explained they are in regular contact with North Kesteven District Council and Lincolnshire County Council, and explained they will shortly commence discussions regarding the Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC).

The Applicant confirmed they are continuing to engage with the Ministry of Defence (MoD) regarding the RAF base located near to the Proposed Development site.

The Applicant explained they sent a letter on 22 May 2023 offering to meet with the most potentially affected residents to discuss the draft updated design.

The Inspectorate noted that the Scoping Report had sought to scope out certain receptors, but that insufficient evidence had been provided to agree to enable the Inspectorate to scope those out. The Applicant recognised this and aimed to provide more evidence in the Environmental Statement (ES) to refine the scope of the assessment.

Technical Stakeholders

The Applicant outlined forthcoming engagement with Natural England, Environment Agency and Historic England. It also explained that individual meetings are being scheduled with stakeholders including National Highways, Anglian Water and the Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue Service.

The Inspectorate queried whether the Applicant has experienced any issues concerning engagement with stakeholders, given the significant number of proposed Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) in the area. The Applicant stated they have not come across engagement issues yet but implied that the engagement was at an early stage.

The Applicant added that it is seeking to work collaboratively with other energy promoters in the local area to improve strategic planning outcomes.

National Grid substation

The Applicant explained they have a grid connection agreement with National Grid in the Navenby area, explaining that a new substation is proposed, the location of which is yet to be confirmed. The Applicant is having regular meetings with National Grid around the potential location of the proposed substation including the provision of baseline survey data to assist its site selection process. Discussion with National Grid is also ongoing regarding the consenting process.

Approach to PEIR and Environmental Matters

The Applicant stated that its PEIR will not replicate a draft of the Environmental Statement in accordance with PINS Advice Note 7. The Statutory Consultation will actively seek consultees' comments and provide the opportunity for both the design of the Proposed Development and the EIA to take into consideration any comments received. The Inspectorate advised that if the PEIR is lighter on detail, the Applicant should allow sufficient time in their programme after receiving feedback on the PEIR to discuss issues in greater detail with stakeholders ahead of submission. The Applicant intends to undertake statutory consultation in Q3 2023.

The Inspectorate queried if the Applicant is planning on taking advantage of the Inspectorate's draft documents review service. The Applicant confirmed and will suggest a list of documents to share closer to the time.

The Applicant stated that it would be working with Local Authorities (LA) imminently to discuss the scope of archaeological trial trenching.

Good design

The Applicant explained its ongoing approach to design considerations and added it is now at Design Stage 2 – BRAG (Black, Red, Amber, Green) Assessment. The Applicant demonstrated how these design considerations are playing out at a local design level, including reference to providing appropriate offset to local settlements and considering

sequential views and the experience of people using Heath Road and other local roads. The Inspectorate advised the Applicant to clearly establish across their suite of application documents what the design parameters are and how these have been secured.

AOB

The Applicant explained that the programme is on track, with a view to submitting an application for Development Consent in Q2 2024.

The Applicant will contact the Inspectorate for another project update meeting prior to the beginning of statutory consultation.