



## Meeting note

<b>Project name</b>	Springwell Solar Farm
<b>File reference</b>	EN010149
<b>Status</b>	<b>Final</b>
<b>Author</b>	The Planning Inspectorate
<b>Date</b>	7 November 2023
<b>Meeting with</b>	Springwell Energy Farm 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 (s)51 would not constitute legal advice upon which applicants (or others) could rely.

### Update on National Grid Substation

The Applicant stated that at the first stage of consultation they had included the proposed National Grid substation within the Order Limits of the Proposed Development (PD). Since then, they have continued to work with National Grid to understand its preference for the location of this new substation and it will no longer form part of the PD. The Applicant will add a corridor to the Order Limits for an underground cable, including where the substation could be located. They are continuing to work with National Grid as its plans for the development of this substation progress.

The non-statutory consultation and Scoping Report were carried out based on the substation being included in the Development Consent Order (DCO) and the Applicant informed that they are not planning to re-scope and reassured that no requirements of the PD will be affected.

The Applicant showed the emerging Zonal Masterplan, illustrating the current assumptions on location of project elements including solar panels and battery storage.

### Engagement with Stakeholders

The Applicant noted they have had positive engagement with Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust (LWT). LWT held a forum with potential developers in the local area to inform a strategic approach to biodiversity.

There are ongoing discussions with officers including the County Archaeologist. The Applicant has carried out a desk-based analysis and geophysical surveys to inform areas for pre-determination trial trenching.

### Environmental Surveys



The Applicant detailed its environmental surveys including potential trial trenching, wintering bird surveys, potential bat surveys, Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) surveys and a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA).

## **Programme Update**

The Statement of Community Consultation will be published in December 2023. The Applicant plans to commence Statutory Consultation in January 2024 for six weeks. The Inspectorate reminded the Applicant to submit their s46 notification to PINS before commencing the Statutory Consultation. The Applicant confirmed that their aim is to submit their DCO application in September 2024.

The Inspectorate advised that, if the Applicant intends to submit draft application documents for review, the standard timeframe for feedback to be provided is six to eight weeks. The Inspectorate recommended that the Applicant highlight any novel approaches taken in the DCO.

The Inspectorate advised to clearly detail the project's evolution within the application, explaining any changes to the project description since the Scoping Report was drafted, and whether the scope of the Environmental Statement (ES) has changed to account for these. This can be included in the ES or annexed but the Applicant must ensure it is signposted and clear in the DCO submission.

The Inspectorate recommended looking at the Examining Authority's questions from other solar farm DCO applications in Examination. The Inspectorate advised the Applicant to be mindful of the summer holiday period when submitting their DCO application, to allow LPAs sufficient time to reply with their Adequacy of Consultation Response.

The Applicant enquired about the National Policy Statements and the Inspectorate were unable to provide an update.

## **Specific decisions/ follow-up required?**

The following actions were agreed:

- The next project update meeting to be held after the Statutory Consultation in Q1 2024.
- The Applicant to provide the Inspectorate with a date for draft document submission when known.