



## Meeting note

<b>Project name</b>	Frodsham Solar Farm
<b>File reference</b>	EN010153
<b>Status</b>	<b>Final</b>
<b>Author</b>	The Planning Inspectorate
<b>Date</b>	21 February 2023
<b>Meeting with</b>	Peel Cubico Renewables Limited
<b>Venue</b>	Microsoft Teams
<b>Meeting objectives</b>	Inception 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. The Inspectorate explained that the publication of the meeting note could be delayed up to six months, or until a formal scoping request had been submitted (if requested by an Applicant for commercial reasons).

### Details of the proposed development

Peel NRE and Cubico Sustainable Investments have formed a Joint Venture; Peel Cubico Renewables Limited are promoting Frodsham Solar under the Special Purpose Vehicle, Frodsham Solar Limited (the Applicant). It was explained that Skyray will be leading the technical design who are familiar with the Development Consent Order (DCO) process.

The Applicant explained that this project is taking place in the area of Cheshire West and Chester and is located in between the M56 running south of the site and the Manchester Ship Canal running north on land known as Frodsham Marshes. The Applicant followed on by stating the site had five local communities around the proposed development: Runcorn, Frodsham, Helsby, Elton and Ince.

The Applicant stated the site is historically marsh land. The Applicant does not own all of the land at present but is in the process of acquiring long-term leases for the site.

The Applicant explained they have included battery storage infrastructure in the Proposed Development. The Inspectorate queried whether there were any implications of locating the solar panels within the flood plain, in which the Applicant explained they are designing the scheme cognisant of the flood levels which have been agreed with the Environment Agency, including locating essential infrastructure out of the flood plain. The Inspectorate

also asked about the generating capacity connection agreement with the local distribution network operator, the Applicant explained it's in a region of 100 Mega Watts.

The Applicant stated that an existing windfarm already exists next to the site, and that the Proposed Development sits in the North West Industrial Cluster which aims to be net zero by 2040.

## **Activities to date**

The Applicant explained they have been seeking discretionary advice from Natural England (NE) and contacted them in November but have not yet been able to meet with them.

## **EIA Scoping**

The Applicant explained they have conducted preliminary assessment work, by conducting ecological surveys and noise assessments.

The Inspectorate advised the Applicant when considering the scope of traffic and transport assessment to estimate the predicted percentage increase of vehicle usage on the roads, rather than a qualitative assessment of the existing and potential HGV use as suggested in the discussion.

The Inspectorate asked if the Applicant is looking at using track or fixed tracker panels. The Applicant explained that the decision is at a preliminary stage but at present it is planning on using fixed panels. The Inspectorate advised the Applicant to include both types of panels in their scoping if both remain as options under consideration.

The Applicant explained it is planning to submit their scoping to the Inspectorate in mid-April 2023. The Inspectorate asked that the Applicant let them know if the estimated dates change and provided advice on the practicalities of making a scoping request.

## **Consultation**

The Applicant explained it plans to conduct two public consultations, one in early summer 2023 and then the second in winter 2023. The Applicant also added it is planning engagement with Local Authorities and Parish Councils relevant to the site location.

The Inspectorate advised the Applicant that it must give a clear description as the intended pre-application consultation will include both non-statutory and statutory consultation, and the Inspectorate explained that this should be reflected. The Inspectorate also advised that where consultation is described as statutory that it is clear how it has met all the relevant requirements.

## **AOB**

The Inspectorate advised the Applicant that their next project update meeting should take place after the scoping process has been completed and the Applicant had completed

their first round of consultation. A discussion was held in relation to a potential request for review of draft documents by the Inspectorate, to which the Inspectorate advised that depending on the type and number of documents a typical time scale for feedback of 6-8 weeks should be allowed for.