



## Meeting note

<b>Project name</b>	Peartree Hill Solar Farm
<b>File reference</b>	EN010157
<b>Status</b>	<b>Final</b>
<b>Author</b>	The Planning Inspectorate
<b>Date</b>	27 July 2023
<b>Meeting with</b>	JBM Solar Ltd
<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.

### Proposed Development

JBM Solar Limited (the Applicant) explained that the scheme will generate over 50 megawatts (MW) of solar energy alongside battery storage. The Applicant stated it has secured a grid connection at Creyke Beck substation, which is located within the East Riding of Yorkshire.

The Applicant made the Inspectorate aware that JBM Solar Limited is part of RWE Renewables and explained there could be a change of company name submitting the application. The Inspectorate advised the Applicant to avoid, where possible, changes to the Applicant name once any formal part of the process is begun to ensure consistency in the named legal entity entering those processes eg formal EIA scoping, statutory consultation.

### Activities to Date

The Applicant explained that they are negotiating options with landowners and stated that eight landowners so far have signed option agreements.

The Inspectorate queried the extensive search area for the proposed cable corridor, and asked the Applicant to explain its approach to refinement of the search area eg in advance of EIA Scoping. The Applicant explained that it is considering refinement of the proposed cable corridor but that this was dependent on cost and timing factors, as well as environmental considerations and responses to consultation in due course and may not be possible in advance of the EIA Scoping process.

The Inspectorate advised the Applicant to consider the need case if they wish to compulsory acquire (CA) land. The Applicant stated they are aware of the CA 'tests' and will be ensuring that any case is robustly made.

## **Environmental constraints and considerations**

The Applicant stated that breeding and wintering bird surveys have been ongoing for approximately fifteen months, an agricultural land classification survey has been undertaken, and a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal on the solar site has commenced. For each of the 65 land parcels, it has also undertaken a Black, Red, Amber, Green (BRAG) site assessment to inform the design of the scheme in relation to each environmental topic. The Applicant also noted that there are other Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) and Town and Country Planning Act (TCPA) applications to consider in regard to cumulative impacts.

The Applicant explained they are currently establishing the scope of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and is aiming to submit a scoping request accompanied by a Scoping Report to the Inspectorate in Q4 this year. The Inspectorate advised the Applicant to refer to previously issued scoping opinions for the solar sector to aid this process, and to ensure that a robust justification is provided when proposing to scope out matters from the EIA.

The Inspectorate asked if the Applicant has had any engagement with statutory bodies. The Applicant stated is has had early discussions with the Environmental Agency (EA). To aid the EA and the other statutory bodies with resourcing, the Inspectorate advised the Applicant to provide these bodies with as much information as possible along with the anticipated timescales of when they will need to be engaged.

## **Community Engagement and Timeline**

The Applicant explained it will be involving local authorities early and throughout the process and engaging widely in the local communities.

The Applicant stated it has launched a pre-launch community engagement ahead of non-statutory consultation in which the Applicant has sought meetings with key stakeholders.

The Applicant explained they are planning to begin a 4-week non-statutory consultation in September 2023 for key stakeholders and local communities.

The Applicant explained that they intend to launch the project in Q3/Q4 2023 and will aim for statutory consultation in Q2/Q3 2024 with the Applicants Development Consent Order (DCO) anticipated submission in autumn 2024.

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

The following actions were agreed:

- The Inspectorate will set up a project email address and share it with the Applicant for all future correspondence to be sent.
- The Applicant would like another project update with the Inspectorate before EIA scoping and explained they are looking for a meeting date late September/ October.

