



Meeting note

Project name	Peartree Hill Solar Farm
File reference	EN010157
Status	Final
Author	The Planning Inspectorate
Date	03 July 2024
Meeting with	RWE
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.

Project programme update

The Applicant provided an update to the project programme outlining all progress that had been made to date. The Applicant advised that the consultation period had run for 6 weeks from May until the end of June but had been extended to allow for responses from additional consultees with the survey remaining online until early August. The Inspectorate were informed that four events had been held in addition to two webinars with a similar number of responses to those received for the non-statutory consultation. The Applicant advised that responses received would be analysed and used to confirm a final design for the scheme.

The Applicant stated that the anticipated submission date would be November 2024. The Inspectorate advised that a submission in November has the potential to slip into December, which may create resource implication for relevant Local Authorities, that will be required to submit Adequacy of Consultation responses. This may also have resource implication for PINS managing the Acceptance. The Applicant noted the concern and confirmed that the intention is to submit November 2024, with sufficient time to allow the 28-day acceptance process to be concluded before the Christmas break.

Stakeholder Engagement

The Applicant outlined that 104 responses had been received (at the time of this call) during the statutory consultation process, which included around 150 attendees across the events that were held. The Applicant advised that they had informed a number of parish councils that late responses would be accepted. The Inspectorate were informed that 23 responses had been received from statutory consultees including Historic England (HE), Natural England (NE), Environment Agency (EA) and utility providers.

The Applicant provided a summary of feedback and key issues that had been raised through the statutory consultation, which included responses from the community focusing on the visual impact of the proposed scheme however responses noted that the Applicant had made some concessions. The use of agricultural land was also raised as a key issue in responses received.

The Applicant provided an overview of the engagement with technical and statutory consultees that had taken place. The Applicant noted that they had met with the EA regarding flood risk and that the EA had reviewed the proposed flood model, that has led to initial feedback along with discussions being held on the response received from the EA on the Preliminary Environmental Impact Report (PEIR). The Applicant advised that they have meetings scheduled with the EA to discuss matters pertaining to water quality, the Water Framework Directive and mitigation areas for ecology and landscape.

The Applicant proceeded to discuss meetings being scheduled with NE to discuss their response received on the PEIR with a specific discussion on how the Applicant intends to address the comments raised on breeding and wintering birds along with the proposed mitigation and enhancements. Discussions had also been held with HE to discuss the PEIR response received who advised that comments raised should be dealt with in the Environmental Statement submitted as part of the proposed Development Consent Order (DCO) application.

The Applicant informed the Inspectorate that ongoing discussions had been held with the East Riding of Yorkshire Council (ERYC) highways department to discuss the adoption of passing places and any potential areas of widening. The Applicant noted that they have a project meeting with ERYC which is held monthly following the adoption of a Planning Performance Agreement (PPA).

The Inspectorate advised the Applicant that the consultation report should be clear in outlining where the Applicant has met the requirements of the Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC). The Applicant outlined the intentions for the Adequacy of Consultation Milestone (AoCM) requesting comments from the Inspectorate. The Inspectorate advised that they are unable to provide comments without formally reviewing the document, but the general content appeared appropriate.

Pre-Application Prospectus

The Applicant queried the requirement to submit an Expression Of Interest (EOI) due to the anticipated submission of its application in November 2024. The Inspectorate advised that an EOI should be submitted to allow for any potential slippage in the project programme. The Applicant advised that they are intending to undertake some of the actions that the Pre-Application Prospectus suggests including an issues tracker to inform a Preliminary Main Issues for Examination (PMIE) document.

Draft Document Review

The Applicant requested to know whether a reduced draft document review period would be able to be supported by the Inspectorate for core documents. The Inspectorate advised that they are unable to commit to shorter review period and under the Prospectus a six-week period is the present expected turn around.

Actions

The following actions were agreed:

- Applicant to confirm the requirement for a pre-submission meeting following the submission of the AoCM
- Applicant to submit the EoI by deadline of 10th July 2024
- Applicant to give consideration as to whether they wish to proceed with a document review without a shorter review process