



Inception Meeting

Project name	One Earth Solar Farm Project
File reference	EN010159
Status	Final
Author	The Planning Inspectorate
Date	18 July 2023
Meeting with	PS Renewables (PSR)
Venue	Microsoft Teams
Meeting objectives	Inception 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.

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).

The Project

This is a proposal by PS Renewables (PSR) in partnership with Ørsted. The project team consists of Pershing Consultants, DWD LLP, Icení, Pinsent Masons and Logika Group. They are currently working together to create a proposal to share with the community.

The Applicant shared the Proposed Development site. The grid connection offer is 740MW, which includes battery storage, and will connect to the High Marnham substation. There are five Local Authorities within the site currently being considered for solar panels and battery storage, together with mitigation and enhancement: Newark and Sherwood District Council, Bassetlaw District Council, West Lindsey District Council, Lincolnshire County Council and Nottinghamshire County Council.

The Applicant has been undertaking initial surveys to understand the ecology of the area, including breeding birds, bats and Great Crested Newts, and are in various stages of negotiations with landowners to gain access for surveys. The site lies in a landscape which is predominantly open, with a sparse settlement pattern, but also characterised by the industry previously located along the River Trent, including the site of the former High Marnham Power Station and Cottam Power Station, together with the Fledborough

Viaduct. There are no ecological designations within the site. Part of the site lies within Flood Zone 3, and discussions with the Environment Agency will shortly take place.

The Applicant explained that good design will be an important consideration when finalising the scheme, to minimise potential impacts on the nearby settlements and to seek to maximise the benefits delivered by the scheme.

Regarding Heritage and Archaeology, the Applicant said that there is a Conservation Area close to the site (South Clifton), with nearby listed buildings, including in North and South Clifton, Fledborough and Ragnall. Additionally, there are scheduled ancient monuments within the area currently being considered for mitigation and enhancement. The Applicant informed the Inspectorate that there had been no engagement thus far with Historic England. The Applicant confirmed that work is being undertaken to understand more about the monuments. The Inspectorate encouraged the Applicant to engage in early dialogue with HE to provide as much time as possible for engagement.

The Inspectorate asked whether there are any other NSIPs in close proximity to the proposed site. The Applicant confirmed that Cottam, West Burton and Gate Burton solar projects lie to the north of the site but are some distance away. There are likely to be cumulative issues that the Applicant will need to consider.

The Applicant is aware of the potential projects involving High Marnham substation but said that these will not affect the Proposed Development, and that engagement with NGET is ongoing.

The Applicant shared its indicative programme:

- Non-Statutory Consultation: September-October 2023;
- EIA Scoping: November 2023;
- Statutory Consultation/PEIR: April-May 2024
- DCO application submission: January 2025.

The Inspectorate asked whether there will be a draft document review between the statutory consultation and the application submission dates. The Applicant will consider whether to pursue a draft document review and will advise the Inspectorate in due course.

The Inspectorate highlighted that the Draft NPSs are available and provide useful information for the Applicant, for example the importance of good design at an early age of the Scheme. The Applicant noted that design is at the forefront of their scheme and they mentioned that they are working with a PHD student regarding biodiversity net gain in their proposal.

EIA Scoping:

The Applicant provided an overview of the environmental aspects it intends to scope into the Environmental Statement and plans to submit a Scoping Report in November 2023 and propose matters that could be scoped out based on the description of the proposal.

It was agreed that the next project update meeting would be scheduled around mid-end October 2023, prior to the submission of the Scoping Report. The Applicant informed that it provide possible meeting dates to the Inspectorate as soon as possible.

The Applicant stated its intention to reach voluntary agreement with landowners. However, Compulsory Acquisition powers may be included in the DCO in due course in case agreements are not reached.

Specific decisions/ follow-up required?

N/A

