



Meeting note

Project name	Steeple Renewables Project
File reference	EN010163
Status	Final
Author	The Planning Inspectorate
Date	15 March 2024
Meeting with	Renewable Energy Solutions (RES)
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 Summary and Scoping Parameters

The Applicant gave a summary of the proposed project and the Scoping Parameter Plan. Information about the project was made public in October 2023, when the Applicant launched its outreach with key stakeholders. The Applicant then held a period of non-statutory consultation in November/December 2023.

The Applicant provided an overview of the geographical location of the proposed project, mentioning its proximity to the West Burton Power Station to the north of the site. It highlighted that the site is situated in North Nottinghamshire, with the river Trent serving as a boundary between Nottinghamshire to the west and Lincolnshire to the east. The West Burton Power Station, a coal-fired power station, was decommissioned last year and is currently undergoing dismantlement. There is a gas fired power station to the east of the site. The area has gained attention due to the UK Atomic Agency involvement in the STEP (Sustainable Technology for Energy Production) programme, focusing on nuclear fusion. The site abuts the power station site, with National Grid's 400KV substation retained as part of the STEP programme. The Applicant has a connection agreement with National Grid for 600 megawatts into National Grid's 400kV substation at West Burton power station. The total proposed project area is estimated to be around 2200 acres; however, the Applicant noted that further adjustments based on consultation feedback are likely to be made to the development area.

The Applicant acknowledged the presence of various constraints in the area, including an adjacent consented sand and gravel quarry which is commencing development, and a consented 49.9 megawatt solar scheme. The quarry was initially consented about 15 years ago by Nottinghamshire County Council to Tarmac and has since changed ownership to Aggregate Industries. The Applicant noted that the quarry is expected to begin operations by the end of the year or early next year based on indications from Aggregate Industries. It emphasised the need to address issues such as access and



discharge permits. The Applicant indicated that construction is expected to commence on the consented 49.9 megawatt solar scheme soon.

The project falls within the jurisdiction of Bassetlaw District and Nottinghamshire County and the Applicant noted changes in constituency boundaries. Additionally, it mentioned ongoing discussions with local authorities and MPs regarding the project's implications. It was emphasised that the project is in its early stages and the design work is underway.

Scoping Parameters and Timescales

The Applicant presented its proposed scoping design parameters and highlighted its decision to present design parameters at this stage rather than a finalised design. This approach aims to provide clarity on the proposed development elements, while reflecting the ongoing design process.

The Applicant acknowledged the need to circulate the shapefile and the red line boundary at least 10 days prior to the submission of the scoping report and will provide a precise date via email following the meeting.

Inspectorate comments and guidance

The Inspectorate raised a question about the potential impact of the project on habitats and ecosystems, particularly considering regulatory considerations. The Applicant confirmed that the discussions with colleagues have taken place regarding the approach to Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) with intentions to liaise with Natural England separately, and reference it in the scoping submission. It noted the need for clarity on the consultation process and costs associated with Natural England's involvement. The Applicant also confirmed plans to consult with the County Council archaeologist regarding potential archaeological surveys. It will provide an email confirming the status of service and consultations for clarity and transparency.

Regarding land interests and survey access, the Applicant specified that discussions are underway varying levels of agreement. While there are no major issues anticipated, it acknowledged the need for ongoing negotiations and agreements with the landowners and tenants and emphasised the current flexibility in the proposed project to allow for this.

The Inspectorate acknowledged the need for flexibility, particularly regarding environmental considerations and land interests. It highlighted the importance of ongoing engagement and consultation with stakeholders, including Natural England and the County Council to refine the proposals.

The Inspectorate highlighted the need to look for venue availability and capacity at the project location and the need for proactive engagement as early as practicable in the process. The Applicant expressed its commitment for continued engagement and consultation including plans to establish the monthly steering group with the local planning authorities and would like feedback from both Bassetlaw and Nottinghamshire councils. The Applicant did highlight difficulties in gaining engagement with Bassetlaw District Council.

The Applicant outlined its proposed structure for consultation in summer 2024 and indicated a tentative submission date for the Development Consent Order (DCO)



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application in early spring 2025. The Inspectorate highlighted the complexity of managing resources and requested the Applicant to provide updates to timescales when available.

The Inspectorate extended this request to the intended scoping submission and asked for the Applicant to provide a specific request date by email. The Inspectorate reminded the Applicant that it can assist with any necessary file transfer and testing.

AOB

The next meeting has been organised for June 2024.