

# Meeting note

<b>Project name</b>	Kingsway Solar Farm
<b>File reference</b>	
<b>Status</b>	<b>Final</b>
<b>Author</b>	The Planning Inspectorate
<b>Date</b>	27 September 2023
<b>Meeting with</b>	Kingsway Solar Farm Ltd.
<b>Venue</b>	Microsoft Teams
<b>Meeting objectives</b>	Kingsway Solar Farm 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.

## Introductions

Introductions were given by both the Inspectorate's team and the Applicant (Kingsway Solar Farm Ltd.). This included a summary of the background of Downing LLP as parent company.

## Proposed Development

### Project Overview

The Applicant outlined a proposal for a new solar photovoltaic (PV) electricity generating facility to be located southeast of Cambridge within South Cambridgeshire District Council and between the A11, Balsham and West Wrating.

The proposed development aims to have a potential capacity of up to 500MW of electricity to export, where a connection offer for 200MW with National Grid has been accepted with a view to allow for a further 300MW.

The Applicant is working to establish an onsite point of connection (PoC) to the National Grid through the existing 400kV Burwell to Pelham Line. Surveys are being planned to identify appropriate substations for connection to the development.

A generation license application has been submitted. Land agreements and EIA activity are currently ongoing.

## **Land Agreements**

The proposed development will be located in an area of approximately 900 hectares under the interest of six key landowners. The area planned for development will evolve subject to surveys and stakeholder engagement, and contain Solar PV, associated infrastructure, and environmental enhancement areas. The Applicant explained that discussion and agreements with these landowners are currently ongoing.

A cable route may be required depending on the established PoC. The Applicant aims to secure land options for the easement for any required cable route.

The Applicant confirmed that no crown land has been identified to date within or near the vicinity of the site. The Applicant intends to secure voluntary access to commence survey work around the site, as well as agree options to lease with all 6 key landowners.

## **Environmental Considerations**

A range of ground surveys have commenced and will continue leading up to DCO submission.

The proposed site location has been carefully chosen to avoid, where possible, known environmental sensitivities and considerations. The Applicant noted that existing areas of Ancient Woodland have been identified which will require careful consideration in the detailed design.

## **Stakeholder Engagement**

The Applicant has been engaging with the Greater Cambridge shared planning service. The Applicant identified the primary stakeholders, which included South Cambridgeshire District Council, Members of Parliament, Host Parish Councils, Neighbouring Parish Councils, Cambridgeshire County Council among others.

The Applicant acknowledged that some of the parties may change due to parliamentary updates.

## **Project Programme**

The Applicant is aiming for a February 2024 Project Launch, with non-statutory Consultation Workshops to begin in Spring 2024, whilst Statutory Consultation is anticipated to commence in Autumn 2024. Q2 2025 is the current anticipated submission date for the proposed Development Consent Order application.

The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Scoping Report submission is expected to be complete by March 2024. The Applicant listed a number of key topics for the Report such as Biodiversity, Climate, Transport and Human Health.

## **Environmental Surveys**

### **Survey Activity**

The Applicant explained that a suite of environmental surveys is being undertaken for land affected by the proposed cable route corridors and the main development area.

### **Ecology Surveys**

The Applicant is undertaking ecological surveys for wintering birds, breeding birds, bat activity, great crested newt HSI (Habitat Suitability Index) and eDNA for presence/absence, and to inform a wider Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA).

### **Other Surveys**

The Applicant listed additional proposed surveys to inform its assessment of landscape and visual impacts, Flood Risk and impacts to water features, noise, agricultural land classification, heritage, archaeology, arboriculture, and transport access.

### **Next Steps**

The Applicant and the Inspectorate discussed the next steps for the pre-application stage. The Applicant will supply the Inspectorate with the necessary information to create a page on the NI website, set up a project email address, and provide key contact details for ongoing liaison.

The Applicant confirmed they would provide the Inspectorate with the proposed DCO boundary, in advance of their Scoping Report Submission, including the relevant information required by the Inspectorate in advance of this submission and a list of relevant Local Authority Contacts.

### **AOB**

The Applicant and the Inspectorate discussed the prospect of submitting draft application documents for feedback and the likely timescales associated with this. It was noted that the Applicant may benefit in having a further meeting with the Inspectorate ahead of their planned statutory consultation to allow the Inspectorate to provide any comment on consultation material and/or statutory consultation process.