



## Meeting note

<b>Project name</b>	<b>Kingsway Solar</b>
<b>File reference</b>	<b>EN010165</b>
<b>Status</b>	<b>Draft</b>
<b>Author</b>	<b>The Planning Inspectorate</b>
<b>Date</b>	<b>5 September 2024</b>
<b>Meeting with</b>	<b>Kingsway Solar Farm Ltd.</b>
<b>Venue</b>	<b>Microsoft Teams</b>
<b>Meeting objectives</b>	<b>Objectives</b>
<b>Circulation</b>	<b>All attendees</b>

### 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.

### Welcome and introductions (All)

The Applicant gave a brief overview of its business Downing Renewable Developments

### Key Objectives for the meeting

1. Introduce the Applicants key leads (see above)
2. Provide a site update
3. General project overview
4. Plan next meeting which will be more substantial and technical

### Site Update

The redline boundary has changed since the Inception meeting (27 September 2023) which the Applicant stated was its main task since that meeting. It explained that previously the site was smaller with an arrangement of land holdings. Over the past 6 months the boundary has expanded, one of the landowners has withdrawn from the scheme but the Applicant is still engaging with four others. The aspiration is a 500-megawatt solar farm. The Applicant is currently engaging with an additional landowner who is interested in the scheme. If the land is secured the existing red line boundary may again change. This would give the proposed development more flexibility. The Applicant confirmed they would update the Inspectorate imminently.

The Inspectorate asked if the Applicant will be holding its non-statutory consultation once the landowner agreement is secured. The Applicant confirmed this would be the case.

The Inspectorate enquired if the Applicant would still be able to deliver on the 500 megawatts if the new land could not be secured. The Applicant assured the Inspectorate that it had conducted testing demonstrating that 500 MW solar farm could be achieved with less land however less mitigation measures would be available due to the larger percentage of land being filled with construction. If the Applicant does bring more land into the site they will have to revisit options for the 400 MW substation location and may gain improved grid connections.

The Applicant also stated that it no longer plans to use overhead lines following discussions with National Grid and instead will connect to the Burwell substation which is to the north of Grid Connection corridor A. It will look to submit scoping slightly after the non-statutory consultation as a more definitive corridor will be selected once feedback has been received and reviewed.

The Inspectorate enquired how talks were progressing with National Grid. The Applicant will provide an update at the next meeting.

## **Programme Overview**

The Applicant currently plans to:

- Launch non-statutory consultation in mid-October 2024 then submit scoping at the end of October 2024.
- Launch statutory consultation in Spring 2025 and finally to submit its draft Development Consent Order (dDCO) towards the end of 2025.

The Applicant requested the next project update meeting to take place late September or early October with the Inspectorate. The Inspectorate agreed but outlined the new Pre-Application service. It advised the Applicant coordinate any future meetings carefully and when these would be most useful given the new programme structure and the Applicant's choice of tier. This was noted by the Applicant.

The project has been in the public domain since Autumn 2023. Between September until end of last year the Applicant sent introduction letters to key stakeholders and elected representatives introducing the Proposed Development to the Local Authorities (LAs) including Parish Councils. Initial discussions regarding land was had. This is an evolving topic.

## **Approach to non-Statutory consultation**

The Applicant's approach to non-statutory consultation will have a mixture of events and publicity measures to cover all interested parties and wider consultation areas. There will be design workshops with stakeholders to focus on constraints and the red line boundary for a collaborative approach. The Applicant is meeting with councils next week.

## **Next Steps**

The Inspectorate outlined that it will request an adequacy of consultation from LAs after submission and that this should be considered by the Applicant when consulting. The Applicant will confirm Non-statutory consultation dates late September 2024 along with statutory consultation dates. It will also be able to advise on the Scoping Report submission date. The Inspectorate suggested that the Applicant should look at the Section 55 checklist to ensure all criteria is being met when carrying out consultations.

The Inspectorate advised that it would like to see specific dates within the Applicants programme plan for resourcing purposes. This should also include agenda items from the Inception meeting. The Inspectorate stated it will update the project webpage with Autumn 2025 as the submission date.

The Inspectorate recommended the Applicant to look at the inception meeting agenda to carry some information across from that into future meetings which we have together. (The Inspectorate will share this with the Applicant).

The Applicant was reminded that the GIS shape file must be sent to the Inspectorate 10 days before the Scoping Report to allow for consultation bodies to be identified.