



## Meeting note

<b>Project name</b>	Lime Down Solar Park
<b>File reference</b>	EN010168
<b>Status</b>	Final
<b>Author</b>	The Planning Inspectorate
<b>Date</b>	20 February 2024
<b>Meeting with</b>	Lime Down Solar Park (“The Applicant”)
<b>Venue</b>	Microsoft Teams
<b>Meeting objectives</b>	Project Update 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.

### Project Overview

The Applicant provided an overview of the project. The site is located wholly within the administrative boundary of Wiltshire Council and within five host parish councils, covering an approximate 787 hectares of land. National Grid’s (NG) Melksham 400kV substation will serve as the point of connection with three cable route search corridors being assessed to identify a preferred route. The length of the cable route is expected to be between 15km and 20km. The Applicant will produce a decommissioning plan for the end of the project’s 60 year operational period.

The Applicant highlighted a number of key project milestones currently anticipated for the project. The scoping submission to the Inspectorate is expected within Q2/Q3 of 2024. The Development Consent Order (DCO) Application Submission is expected for the start of 2025. The Inspectorate noted that any requested draft document review would require consideration of the 6-8 period needed for review and return.

### Site Overview

The Applicant outlined key features of the surrounding area and highlighted areas of conservation, scientific interest, monuments, ancient woodland and other features which would require consideration. The site is located close to both National Landscape area and

a significant amount of Public Right of Way (PRoW). The Applicant intends to keep nearby PRoWs as open as possible and avoid closures.

To gain a better understanding of local flood zones and possible surface water flooding, the Applicant is engaging with the local flood authority. Other noted points of consideration include local listed buildings, ecology and arboriculture. Survey work to address these areas has been undertaken although further surveying is being planned to aid implementation of buffers for these impacts. The nearby M4 motorway was also highlighted as point of consideration.

## **Activities to date and EIA**

Significant engagement to date was discussed, noting the agreement with NG regarding connection to the Melksham Substation and an initial briefing with Wiltshire Council's Cabinet. The Project is planned for a public launch on 8 March 2024.

The Applicant discussed that the majority of ecological surveys have been concluded, with remaining survey work taking place in Q2 2024. The Inspectorate inquired about Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) and how it will be incorporated into the application. The Applicant noted its significance and will be looking at habitat creation options following planned survey work around the issue. Site locations for habitat creation are all currently within the order limits.

## **Consultation**

The Applicant provided an overview of the expected dates of consultation activity. The stage one (non-statutory) consultation will span 6 weeks from 14 March to 25 April 2024. Consultation postcards will be sent to addresses within the core consultation zone alongside local advertisements and information events. Feedback from this consultation will be used to inform changes to the project going forward. The stage two (statutory) consultation is currently planned for Q3-4 2024.

## **Next Steps**

The date in April was recommended for the next update meeting to coincide with the upcoming Scoping submission. The Inspectorate noted that the Scoping report should include comments on the waste and replacement of solar panels, ideally within an overall waste strategy. In addition, further advice was given relating to land matters, emphasising the importance of clarity when discussing justifications of land acquisition and use.

