



Meeting note

Project name	Green Hill Solar Farm
File reference	EN010170
Status	Final
Author	The Planning Inspectorate
Date	15 May 2024
Meeting with	Green Hill Solar Farm Limited
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 Update

The Applicant explained that following non-statutory consultation, additional land had been offered to the Applicant and following review, has been incorporated into the Order Limits. This land has been identified as 'Site G' and is located approximately 1km south of 'Site F' within the administrative boundary of Milton Keynes City Council.

The Applicant confirmed that the additional site does not affect the generating capacity, which remains at 500MW, but the additional land allows further flexibility in design and optionality. Site G is approximately 170 hectares, bringing the total site area to approximately 1120 hectares. Ancient woodland, listed buildings, scheduled ancient monuments, a conservation area, public rights of way and an overhead line have been identified within 2km of Site G. The cable route search area has been extended from Site F to Site G.

An update on timescales for application submission and other programme implications was given, following the non-statutory consultation:

- Second round of non-statutory consultation end of May 2024.
- EIA scoping expected at the end of June 2024.
- PEIR to be submitted October 2024.
- Statutory consultation from November-December 2024.
- DCO application submission April 2025.

The Applicant confirmed it may consider a draft document review by the Inspectorate but will discuss further in due course.

An update was provided on survey progress, with a large majority currently underway and transport surveys still to be undertaken. The Applicant explained it had been advised by Natural England that one year of bird surveying was sufficient. The Applicant will include this confirmation and explanation in the Scoping Report.

The Applicant provided an update on consultations and technical engagement. Four core workshops have been held, which invited members of the public to provide local insights and feedback on the scheme. Another co-design session for the newly identified Site G will be held at Milton Keynes in due course. Feedback will be captured and included in the environmental masterplan.

Technical engagement with various parties is ongoing, including on conservation, minerals, highways and archaeology with the host authorities, ecology with Natural England and hydrology with Environment Agency.

A newsletter will be issued in June 2024 and a neighbour letter introducing Site G will be issued in May 2024. The Applicant confirmed hard copies of documents are available upon request.

The Applicant confirmed that there will be optionality in the Scoping for the BESS location(s), substation locations and cable routeing. The optionality is likely to be removed before the application submission.

The Applicant also confirmed that there is a high concentration of minerals sites (legacy, operational and planned) near the River Nene, which makes the cable crossing under the river challenging. The Applicant is currently considering this issue.

AOB

The Inspectorate advised the Applicant to be mindful of the updated The Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed Forms and Procedure) Regulations 2009, effective from 30 April 2024, when carrying out its statutory consultation. The Applicant confirmed it is aware of this and has been taken on board.

The Inspectorate queried how the Applicant intended to submit its scoping report. The Applicant confirmed it will look to use a file-sharing site, testing with the case team before submission. It also confirmed that it would submit shapefiles two weeks prior to submission of the report.

As the Applicant has already had its Inception Meeting with the Inspectorate, the Applicant queried the Programme Document (NSIP reform), and what is expected of it going forward. The Inspectorate advised that the updated Pre-application Prospectus will be published shortly and will contain information relating to this. The

[Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: 2024 Pre-application Prospectus](#) was published on 16 May 2024. It will be followed by an Expression of Interest (Eoi) for levels of service.

The Applicant queried whether it could apply for fast-track process under the new regime. The Inspectorate explained that this is also likely to be covered in the Prospectus and Eoi. However, the Inspectorate confirmed that it is possible under the current service for applications to be examined in a shorter time than the statutory six-month period, depending on the quality of the application, the number of outstanding planning issues and the engagement of key parties.