



Meeting note

File reference	NA
Status	Final
Author	Siân Evans
Date	4 March 2016
Meeting with	EnergyMyWay (UK) Ltd
Venue	Temple Quay House
Attendees	Tony Thickett – Planning Inspectorate Kathryn Dunne – Planning Inspectorate David Price – Planning Inspectorate Siân Evans – Planning Inspectorate Peter Vyvyan-Robinson – EnergyMyWay (UK) Ltd Peter Grubb – Savills Nick Beddoe - Savills
Meeting objectives	Initial developer meeting
Circulation	All attendees

Summary of key points discussed and advice given:

The developer was made aware of the Planning Inspectorate's (PINS) openness policy and that any advice would be recorded and placed on PINS' website under section 51 of the Planning Act 2008 (PA2008). Any advice given does not constitute legal advice upon which the applicant (or others) can rely.

The developer outlined the proposal for a 100MW solar farm on the Caldicot Levels in the borough of Newport, South Wales. The developer has undertaken non-statutory consultation, received a formal scoping opinion from Newport Borough Council and signed agreements with all 17 land owners. The developer described the proposed site as reclaimed salt marsh and is low grade agricultural land (3b – 5). The landscape is already industrialised and is low lying, with any higher ground some distance away and therefore the developer explained that the visual impact of the proposed scheme will be low. The proposed solar farm will be separated out into different parcels of land and there will be underground cables to connect the sites. To enable the solar farm to provide energy at peak times the developer proposes the installation of several hundred battery storage boxes.

PINS advised that as the generating capacity of the project is proposed to be over 50MW, the project would be classed as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project under PA2008, rather than a Development of National Significance. However the draft Wales Bill outlines proposals to devolve the power to determine Welsh energy

infrastructure projects up to 350MW to the Welsh government. It is currently not known when the Bill will come into force.

PINS gave a brief overview of the PA2008 process. National Policy Statements (NPSs) were discussed and explained as the primary policy for NSIPs. Although the energy NPSs do not specifically refer to solar farms, they would at least be treated as important and relevant considerations for the proposal.

PINS advised that, while it is not mandatory, it is strongly recommended that applicants obtain a scoping opinion from PINS when preparing their Environmental Statement. This is a free service offered by PINS and, to date, scoping opinions have always been issued within the 42 day deadline. This is likely to be very comprehensive, will provide commentary on the description of the development and will flag up any issues before the preparation of application documents.

PINS advised that associated development cannot currently be included in the development consent order (DCO) for applications in Wales. PINS advised the developer to look at the DCOs for Tidal Lagoon Swansea Bay and Clocaenog Forest Wind Farm.

PINS advised the developer of the importance of thorough consultation with statutory consultees and the community. The consultation report is a key document that is checked before the application can be accepted for examination. Resolving any issues and getting statements of common ground signed early can assist with the smooth running of the examination.

Kathryn Dunne confirmed that she is the main contact at PINS, while Peter Beddoe is the main contact for the developer.