



# Preliminary Meeting Note

<b>Application:</b>	Heckington Fen Solar Park
<b>Reference:</b>	EN010123
<b>Time and date:</b>	Tuesday 19 September 2023 10.00am
<b>Venue:</b>	Boston United Football Ground and virtually via Microsoft Teams

*This meeting note is not a full transcript of the Preliminary Meeting. It is a summary of the key points discussed.*

The full audio recording of this Preliminary Meeting is available on the National Infrastructure Planning website and can be accessed [here](#).

## 1. Welcome and Introduction

Susan Hunt welcomed those present and introduced herself as the single Examining Authority (ExA) to examine the Heckington Fen Solar Park project application. The ExA explained the appointment was made by delegation from the Secretary of State for the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.

The ExA explained that the ExA would be examining the application made by Ecotricity (Heck Fen) Limited (the Applicant) before making a recommendation to the Secretary of State who will decide whether an Order granting Development Consent for the proposed project, which is a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP), should be made.

The ExA explained that information about this Application is on the project-specific page of the National Infrastructure Planning website.

## 2. General Data Protection Regulation

The ExA explained the Planning Inspectorate's duties under General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

Further info relating to the GDPR can be found in the Planning Inspectorate's [Privacy Notice](#).

## 3. Preliminary Meeting Process

The ExA explained the purpose of the Preliminary Meeting (PM) and that the PM would focus only on procedural aspects of the Examination. The ExA advised that discussions about the merits of the application can only be considered once the Examination of the Application begins. The Examination would commence after the PM closes.

The ExA invite those participating to introduce themselves. The Applicant, Lincolnshire County Council, North Kesteven District Council and Boston Borough Council introduced themselves.

#### **4. Examination Process**

The ExA briefly explained the examination process under the Planning Act 2008 (PA2008) was provided in Annex B of the Rule 6 letter dated 21 July.

Further information about the Examination process can be found in the Planning Inspectorate's [Advice Note 8.4](#)

#### **5. Hearings and Site Inspections**

The ExA summarised the arrangements for Hearings. The draft timetable provides for two sets of Hearing, the first of which would follow the PM and the second currently scheduled for w/c 20 November 2023.

The ExA advised that it had already undertaken an Unaccompanied Site Inspection (USI) on 23 May 2023, the note of which has been published on the project webpage of the National Infrastructure Planning website. The ExA advised that time had been reserved for an Accompanied Site Inspection (ASI) to take place during w/c 20 November 2023 and may also carry out a further Unaccompanied Site Inspection.

The ExA sought comments from participants on the arrangements for hearings and site inspections. These were duly noted and considered by the ExA.

Further information relating to hearings and site inspections can be found in our [Advice Note 8.5](#)

#### **6. Procedural decisions**

The ExA clarified the procedural decisions made under section 89(3) of the PA2008 and asked for any observations. Procedural decisions can be found in [Annex G of the Rule 6 letter](#).

The Applicant welcomed that a decision on the Change Application would be contained within the forthcoming Rule 8 letter, and explained that Cadent Gas does not intend to submit a Statement of Common Ground. North Kesteven District Council/ Lincolnshire County Council noted that Springwell and Fosse Green were not included in list of projects included in the interrelationship with other projects at Annex C of the Rule 6 Letter.

#### **7. Initial Assessment of Principal Issues**

The ExA explained the purpose of the Initial Assessment of Principal Issues (section 88 of the PA2008), which can be found in [Annex D of the Rule 6 letter](#) and asked for any observations on them.

North Kesteven District Council/Lincolnshire County Council noted that cumulative effects for the planning authorities should be a principal issue in its own right (Annex D of the Rule 6 Letter: 5. General and Cross Topic Matters bullet point 5).

## **8. Examination Timetable**

The ExA duly noted comments from the parties in attendance regarding the draft Examination Timetable contained in [Annex E of Rule 6 letter](#) and considerations will be reflected in the Rule 8 Letter.

## **9. Any other matters**

The ExA invited comments from participants on any other matters. North Kesteven District Council/Lincolnshire County Council advised that the ExA consider whether an issue specific hearing on Best and Most Versatile agricultural land would be appropriate.