



EAST PARK ENERGY

East Park Energy

EN010141

Cover Letter

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Cover Letter

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03 October 2025

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Planning Act 2008 – Application for a Development Consent Order for East Park Energy

Application Reference: EN010141

On behalf of BSSL Cambsbed 1 Ltd (the “Applicant”), I am pleased to enclose an application for a Development Consent Order (“DCO”) pursuant to section 37 of the Planning Act 2008 (the “PA 2008”) for the proposed East Park Energy project (the “Scheme”).

Subject of the Application

The Scheme comprises a new ground-mounted solar photovoltaic energy generating station and an associated on-site BESS on land to the north-west of St Neots. The Scheme also includes the associated infrastructure for connection to the national grid at the Eaton Socon National Grid Substation. The Scheme would allow for the generation and export of 400 megawatts (MW) of renewable electricity, as well as the storage of up to 100 MW of electricity in the BESS.

Subject to the Scheme securing Development Consent in Winter 2026/27 it is anticipated that works would start on site in early 2028 and be completed by mid-to late 2030 (although initial energisation of the Scheme is likely to commence prior to 2030). The Scheme comprises a temporary development with an operational phase of 40 years;

decommissioning activities would therefore likely commence in 2070, 40 years after final commissioning.

The 'Site' is located to the north-west of the town of St Neots and is across two administrative areas; Bedford Borough Council (a unitary authority) and Huntingdonshire District Council (a two tier authority with Cambridgeshire County Council).

This Application is necessary because The Scheme qualifies as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) under sections 14(1)(a) and 15(1) and (2) of the PA 2008, being an onshore generating station in England with a capacity exceeding 50 MW. As such, the decision on whether to grant development consent will be made by the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero. The NSIP and associated development are described in Schedule 1 of the **draft DCO [EN010141/DR/3.1]**, and **ES Vol 1 Chapter 2: The Scheme [EN010141/DR/6.1]**.

The location of The Scheme and its Order Limits are shown on the Location, Order limits and Grid Coordinates Plan **[EN010141/DR/2.1]**. The Scheme will be located within the Order Limits (the land shown on the **Works Plan [EN010141/DR/2.3]** within which The Scheme will be carried out). Land within the Order Limits is known as the 'Site'.

Application Fee and Documentation Enclosed

A fee of £8,946 has been submitted by BACS transfer to the account of the Planning Inspectorate on 17 September 2025 (Reference: EN010141) in respect of this Application. One complete electronic copy of the full application submission has been provided to the Planning Inspectorate via the agreed file transfer method (a secure SharePoint upload), in accordance with the Planning Inspectorate's guidance. In line with the requirements of Advice Note Six: Preparation and Submission of Application Documents, a GIS shapefile showing the Order Limits of The Scheme was supplied to the Planning Inspectorate on 11th September 2025 – this date being more than 10 working days prior to the submission of the Application.

A **Guide to the Application [EN010141/DR/1.3]** describing all documents within the Application is included, along with an **Electronic Application Index [EN010141/DR/1.5]** that will be updated over the course of the Examination.

A completed **Section 55 Checklist [EN010141/DR/1.4]** is also enclosed with this Application to assist the Planning Inspectorate in undertaking the acceptance checks required by section 55 of the PA 2008. The Applicant requests that the Planning Inspectorate does not publish certain sensitive documents (identified as confidential in the document tracker) in accordance with the Infrastructure Planning (Publication and Notification of Applications etc.) Regulations 2013 or any of the application documents before the application is formally accepted for examination.

Application Formalities

This application for development consent is made in the form required by section 37(3)(b) of the PA 2008. The application documents comply with the requirements of section 37 of the Act and with those set out in the relevant regulations and guidance, including:

- i. The Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed Forms and Procedure) Regulations 2009 (as amended) (the “APFP Regulations”);
- ii. The Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (the “EIA Regulations”);
- iii. The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) – Planning Act 2008: Guidance on the pre-application stage for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (April 2024);
- iv. The DLUHC - Planning Act 2008: Content of a Development Consent Order required for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (April 2024);
- v. The DLUHC – Planning Act 2008: Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects – Application form guidance (June 2013); and
- vi. The Planning Inspectorate – Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: Advice on the Preparation and Submission of Application Documents (January 2025).

The Scheme is Environmental Impact Assessment (“EIA”) development as defined by the EIA Regulations, requiring an Environmental Impact Assessment. An **Environmental Statement [EN010141/DR/6.1 / 6.2 / 6.3]** accompanies this Application in accordance with the EIA Regulations. In advance of submission, the Applicant obtained a Scoping Opinion from the Secretary of State on 8th December 2023, and the environmental assessments presented in the Application reflect the scope of matters identified (as set out in **ES Vol 2**

Appendix 4-3: EIA Scoping Opinion Response Matrix [EN010141/DR/6.2]). It has been confirmed with the Planning Inspectorate that the Application documents will be published on the National Infrastructure Planning website as soon as practicable after the acceptance of the Application (with any necessary redactions or confidential material identified), and the Applicant will likewise publish the application documents on its project website upon acceptance. All application documents have been prepared to meet the applicable statutory requirements and guidance as noted above.

The Planning Inspectorate has published guidance on the Use of Artificial Intelligence in casework evidence (September 2024). The Applicant can confirm that it has not used artificial intelligence to create any of the application documents or images within the application.

Need for the Project

There is a clear and urgent need for new renewable energy infrastructure in the UK to help address the climate change emergency, meet Net Zero 2050 targets, and bolster national energy security. The Scheme will make a significant contribution toward these objectives by delivering a large-scale source of clean, low-carbon electricity. The Scheme is expected to generate enough renewable electricity to power approximately 117,000 homes annually, cutting greenhouse gas emissions by displacing fossil-fuel generation and supporting the decarbonisation of the electricity supply. This contribution aligns with the UK Government's energy policy goals. In December 2024 the Government published the Clean Power 2030 Action Plan. This includes a target that Britain's electricity demand should be met entirely by "clean" generation by 2030, with at least 95% coming from low-carbon technologies. To achieve this the Action Plan sets an ambition of reaching 45-47 GW of solar power by 2030. Based upon a current installed capacity of 16.6 GW (in Q2 of 2024), this will require installing well over 4 GW of new solar each year on average.

By delivering 400 MW of new renewable generation capacity in 2030, the Scheme would play an important part in fulfilling these national policy objectives and in supporting the national transition to a low-carbon future. It will also improve energy resilience by providing domestically generated power and enhancing the diversity of the energy mix. A comprehensive account of the need and benefits of the project is set out in the **Planning Statement [EN010141/DR/5.3]**, demonstrating that The Scheme is both necessary and

urgent in the context of national policy and will deliver substantial public benefits in terms of renewable energy generation and carbon reduction.

Furthermore, the Energy NPSs and other national energy policy set out the Government's aims to provide secure and affordable energy supplies whilst decarbonising the energy system. This is in order to enable the UK to achieve its legally binding commitment to reduce carbon emissions and achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050; as well as provide a resilient and low cost energy network for the future. The Government recognises that the need to deliver these aims and commitments is immediate and therefore renewable energy NSIPs, including large scale solar projects, need to be delivered urgently. It has therefore identified that low carbon renewable developments, such as The Scheme, are 'critical national priority' infrastructure.

Consent Flexibility

The design of The Scheme has been developed to a sufficient level of detail to allow a robust EIA and thorough examination of the Application. However, certain aspects of the design are not yet fixed, and the Applicant, therefore, seeks a degree of flexibility in the DCO, in line with established practice for NSIPs. The approach to flexibility has had full regard to the Planning Inspectorate's Advice Note Nine: Using the Rochdale Envelope (March 2025). In particular, the Environmental Statement ("ES") has been prepared on the basis of a defined design envelope – considering the reasonable worst-case parameters for each element of The Scheme where flexibility is required. **ES Vol 1 Chapter 2: The Scheme [EN010141/DR/6.1]** describes the key parameters for the design, and the assessments in each technical chapter of the ES have evaluated the likely significant effects on that basis. This ensures that any potential environmental effects of The Scheme, within the range of possibilities, have been properly assessed and reported.

It is the Applicant's view that the inclusion of controlled flexibility in the **draft DCO [EN010141/DR/3.1]** is both necessary and appropriate, given the rapid evolution of solar photovoltaic and battery storage technologies. Allowing minor adjustments in detailed design (within the assessed parameters) will enable the project to utilise the best available technology and achieve optimal efficiency at the time of construction, without exceeding the environmental envelope assessed in the ES. The **Design Parameters and Principles Statement [EN010141/DR/7.1]** set out the design principles and maximum parameters for

the development, thereby clearly defining the scope of the consent and ensuring that the Scheme, as built, will remain within the consented envelope. The **draft DCO [EN010141/DR/3.1]** includes Requirements that fix these key design parameters and require the final detailed design to be in accordance with the design principles, providing certainty that the flexibility sought will not lead to any unforeseen or unassessed effects.

Compulsory Acquisition

The Application includes a request for powers of compulsory acquisition to acquire the land and rights necessary to construct, operate and maintain the Scheme, as well as powers for the temporary use of land (e.g. for construction compounds and working areas). The **Book of Reference [EN010141/DR/4.3]** and the **Land and Crown Land Plan [EN010141/DR/2.2]** identify all land interests that would be affected. The **Statement of Reasons [EN010141/DR/4.1]** provides the justification for the compulsory acquisition powers sought, explaining why the land and rights in question are required for The Scheme and how the tests of section 122 of the Planning Act 2008 are met. A **Funding Statement [EN010141/DR/4.2]** is also included, which demonstrates that adequate funding is available to enable the compensation payable in respect of any compulsory acquisition to be paid. These documents have been prepared in accordance with the APFP Regulations (in particular the requirements of Regulation 5(2)(d) and 5(2)(h)) and with regard to the relevant government guidance (namely DLUHC's Planning Act 2008: Guidance related to procedures for the compulsory acquisition of land (September 2013)).

The Applicant has taken a proportionate approach to land acquisition and has been actively engaging with landowners to secure voluntary agreements wherever possible. As explained in the **Statement of Reasons [EN010141/DR/4.1]**, at the point of submission, the Applicant has entered into option agreements or agreements in principle with the majority of the landowners required to deliver The Scheme. The principal need for compulsory acquisition powers in this Application relates to cable routing and associated rights needed to connect the Scheme to the Eaton Socon Substation. The Applicant will continue to negotiate in good faith with all affected landowners and stakeholders throughout the examination process. It is the Applicant's intention that, if agreements are reached and maintained, it would not exercise any compulsory acquisition powers granted by the DCO in areas where the land or rights are secured by agreement, but it has applied for them to ensure that the scheme

can still be delivered even if there were to a breach of those agreements. In summary, the compulsory acquisition powers sought in the **draft DCO [EN010141/DR/3.1]** are no more than necessary and are sought only to the extent that the development cannot reasonably be delivered without them.

Habitats Regulations Assessment

The Application includes Information to Inform Habitat Regulations Assessment **[EN010141/DR/5.7]**, which provides sufficient information to enable the Secretary of State to make an appropriate assessment of the implications of The Scheme on any European site to which regulation 48 of the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 (the “Habitats Regulations”) applies, as required by Regulation 5(2)(g) of the APFP Regulations. This report has been prepared in accordance with the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: Advice on Habitats Regulations Assessments (March 2025). The report identifies all relevant European sites potentially affected by The Scheme and sets out the screening undertaken for the purposes of the Habitats Regulations.

Other Consents

There are certain additional consents and licenses that will be required to construct and operate The Scheme which fall outside the DCO process. These may include, for example, environmental permits, protected species licences, and highways approvals, among others. The Applicant has identified the likely requirements and is engaging with the relevant consenting bodies (such as the Environment Agency) to ensure that all necessary parallel consents will be secured at the appropriate time. Full details of all other consents and licences that are expected to be obtained separately (and which are not being sought through the DCO) are provided in the **Other Consents and Licences Statement [EN010141/DR/5.5]**. This statement lists the consents anticipated, the regulating authorities, and the current status or plans for obtaining each consent. The Applicant will coordinate the application for development consent with these other consent processes to avoid any impediments to timely project delivery. Notably, no impediments have been identified that would prevent the implementation of The Scheme, and the Applicant is not aware of any reason why the necessary supplementary consents or licences would be withheld in due course.

Pre-Application Consultation

The Applicant has carried out extensive pre-application consultation on The Scheme, in accordance with the requirements of the Planning Act 2008 and relevant guidance, to ensure that the views of local communities, stakeholders, and statutory consultees have been taken into account. As required by section 37(3)(c) of the Planning Act 2008, a detailed **Consultation Report [EN010141/DR/5.1]** accompanies this Application, providing a full account of the consultation activities undertaken under sections 42, 47, and 48 of the Act. This includes consultation with prescribed bodies and statutory consultees (section 42), the local community and persons living in the vicinity of the Site (section 47, following a Statement of Community Consultation agreed with the host authority), and the publication of notices in local and national media (section 48) advertising the proposed application.

The statutory consultation for the Scheme was conducted between 24th September and 29th October 2024, exceeding the minimum 28-day period as prescribed by the Act, to allow the public and consultees ample time to engage and respond. The Applicant held public exhibitions and briefing events in the local area and provided information on the project website, ensuring that people had various opportunities to learn about the proposals and provide feedback. Additionally, regular meetings with Planning Officers at Bedford Borough Council, Huntingdonshire District Council and Cambridgeshire County Council, as well as technical stakeholders (for example, Historic England, the Environment Agency, Natural England, and others) to discuss and refine aspects of the proposal. All feedback received through both the non-statutory (informal) and statutory consultation stages has been carefully considered by the Applicant. In response to the consultation input, a number of changes and refinements were made to The Scheme prior to finalising this Application – these are documented in the Consultation Report. The Consultation Report includes the **Consultation Report Appendices [EN010141/DR/5.2]** which includes copies of the consultation materials, copies of newspaper notices, and a record of the responses received, along with the Applicant's consideration of and responses to the key issues raised.

The Applicant is satisfied that the consultation undertaken fulfils the requirements of sections 42, 47, and 48 of the PA 2008, and has had regard to the feedback in accordance with section 49 of the Act.

Conclusion

On behalf of BSSL Cambsbed 1 Ltd, we kindly request that the Planning Inspectorate now proceeds to examine this Application under section 55 of the PA 2008 and, in due course, accepts it for examination. We believe that the Application is comprehensive and meets all applicable submission standards. We look forward to receiving confirmation of the acceptance of the Application in due course and to engaging with the Examining Authority through the DCO examination process.

Please do not hesitate to contact me or the undersigned representative of the Applicant if you have any questions or require any further information regarding the Application. We would be happy to assist the Planning Inspectorate in any way necessary to facilitate the acceptance and examination of the application.

Yours sincerely,



DCO Project Manager

