

**7000 Acres**

**Summary of Oral Submissions – Preliminary Meeting Tuesday 15  
October 2024**

**Tillbridge Solar Project**

**Deadline 1 – Tuesday 29 October 2024**

## **Agenda Item 2 - The Examining Authority's remarks about the Examination Process**

Statement of Common Ground – At the time of the Preliminary Meeting we were unaware the Applicant wished to meet our group to arrange a meeting in relation to this matter. Since, the Preliminary Meeting we have accepted an invitation to have a meeting discussing the way forward in this process with the Applicant and in addition, appreciate the Examining Authorities inclusion of 7000 acres on the list of participating parties as expressed in the recently published Rule 8 letter.

## **Agenda Item 3 - Initial Assessment of Principal Issues (IAP)**

7000 acres highlighted Principal Issue 2 Climate Change, Principal Issue 3 Cumulative and In-Combination effects and Principal Issue 6 Human Health, safety, accidents and major accidents. These subjects were highlighted as in previous Examinations 7000 acres believe they were not thoroughly examined and as such the full facts and implications of the previous NSIP solar schemes in the West Lindsey District were not considered. Therefore, we ask the Examining Authority to widen their scope for the above matters and as such allow an Issue Specific Hearing on Cumulative and In-Combination Effects, an Issue Specific Hearing on Energy and an Issue Specific Hearing on Human Health and Well Being. The magnitude of granted and proposed schemes in such a small rural area is unprecedented and as such the full implications of these schemes need to be understood and addressed.

## **Agenda Item 4 - Draft Examination Timetable**

Item discussed as submitted in writing for Procedural Deadline A.

It is acknowledged that during the Preliminary Meeting the Examining Authority offered to hold a further Open Floor Hearing in January 2025 scheduled during the evening to enable interested parties and public participation. Also, we wish to request that all future Hearings be carried out as blended events thereby allowing both on-line and in person representations. Lincolnshire County Council stated that the broadband coverage in the rural areas of Lincolnshire can be intermittent and so

unreliable. Therefore, in practice future blended events would be a reliable format for the Examination going forward.

The Examiner invited suggestions for locations of Accompanied Site Inspections (ASI) where private access may be required. 7000 acres will ask our members to contact the Case Team with suggestions.

### **Agenda Item 5 - Notification of Initial Hearings**

7000 acres stressed during the Preliminary Meeting that the public and interested parties are discouraged to engage in the process by the many procedures, timelines and mass of information they are bombarded with. Therefore, the methods and means of engagement need to be simplified by the Planning Inspectorate to enable participation. 7000 acres, in effect, enables the process for the Planning Inspectorate by interpreting and explaining the procedures to our members and our communities. This action by our group should not be necessary.

In addition, the community consultation process carried out by the Applicant is in effect misleading as the leaflets and other communication media and events portray schemes in a 'rose-tinted' way. Direct questions at community consultations were not answered by the Applicant. This leads to confusion and discourages participation.

The above two issues have a detrimental impact on community engagement.

Therefore, 7000 acres argues that the consultation and examination processes be significantly improved to enable real and honest public engagement for such schemes.

### **Agenda Item 7 - Any other matters**

7000 acres stressed that public confidence in the NSIP regime and examination process has been severely undermined by the decision-maker (Secretary of State) due to recent comments about communities and people who are affected by such schemes. This in effect makes the process undemocratic as the public and interested parties are disenfranchised. This also means the Examination process is undermined.