

Great North Road Solar Park - EN010162

Elements Green Trent Limited

Section 51 Advice Log

Meeting date: 26 February 2025

There is a statutory duty under [section 51 \(s51\) of the Planning Act 2008](#) for the Planning Inspectorate to record the advice that it gives in relation to an application or potential application, and to make this publicly available.

This document comprises a record of the advice that has been provided by the Inspectorate to the applicant (Great North Road Solar Park) and their consultants during the pre-application stage. It will be updated by the Inspectorate after every interaction with the applicant during which s51 has been provided. The applicant will always be given the opportunity to comment on the Inspectorate's draft record of advice before it is published.

The applicant will use this Advice Log as the basis for demonstrating regard to section 51 advice within the application.

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Date of meeting	Meeting overview
09 October 2024	1. Welcome and introductions (All) 2. Project Progress and Milestones (Applicant) 3. Statutory and Non-Statutory Consultation Update (Applicant) 4. NG+ (Community Benefit Scheme) - updates on the delivery approach and initiatives to date (Applicant) 5. Project Name Change (Applicant) 4. Next Steps (All) 5. AOB (All)
26 February 2025	1. Project Progress Update 3. Summary of Statutory Consultation 4. Design Updates 5. Programme Update and Next Project Stages

Great North Road Solar Park - s51 Advice Library	
Topic	Meeting date: 09 October 2024
Programme document	The Inspectorate advised that main issues for resolution and activities the Applicant will undertake to address those along with proposals for engaging with the relevant stakeholders should form part of the Programme Document (PD). PD should include dates for the draft documents review and Adequacy of Consultation Milestone; As part of the Programme Document there is also an onus on the Applicant to identify, track and manage the risks to pre-application stage.
Programme document	The Inspectorate highlighted that the PD should be updated as necessary and published on the Applicant's website in the format accessible to everyone (Word, PDF etc).
Draft Docs	The applicant asked that when the Inspectorate receive the applicants PEIR responses back can the Inspectorate then look at draft docs? The Inspectorate advised that it would take 6 weeks to review the draft docs and asked the Applicant to incorporate such date within the PD. The draft documents the applicant proposes to submit for review would include the DCO and various chapters of the Environmental Statement. It is advisable to provide documents as completed as possible and not the skeleton version of the. to allow the Inspectorate to give valuable feedback. Enough time needs to be allowed for the Inspectorate to review the documents and for the Applicant to review the comments and make any necessary changes before submission of the Application for examination. The Inspectorate also asked that the Applicant provide as much notice as possible regarding the date for the draft docs to be submitted so they resources can be planned accordingly. The Applicant confirmed that they need to further discuss this internally before a date can be confirmed.
Change requests	The Inspectorate advised that changes to the Application should be made as early as possible. Late change requests in Examination can be refused due to lack of time for assessments by the ExA, and any new Relevant Representation period for any new affected parties.

Agreements with landowners	It is advisable for the agreements with the landowners to be concluded prior to the start of the examination. Agreements should not be outstanding after Examination as that can cause substantial delays in a decision on the project.
NG Plus	The Inspectorate reminded the Applicant, in relation to the advice from previous meeting in relation to flood alleviation, to make sure it is clear in the ES and associated documents what is and isn't relied upon as mitigation for adverse effects, and which is a wider benefit outside of the DCO. Where the NG plus works are proposed to take place outside of the DCO, the Inspectorate noted that the ES should outline the approach to assessing whether there is cumulative effects if there are multiple schemes going on in the same area. The Applicant noted this and that they were aware of the guidance on cumulative effects.
Consents/Licences	The Inspectorate asked the Applicant to provide the information about other consents/licences to be obtained.
Next Steps	Submission is proposed for the Summer of 2025, more concrete dates will be added to the Programme Document. The Inspectorate advised the Applicant to provide the dates for the future pre-application meetings.
Advice pages	The latest advice pages for frequently asked questions published on 10 October 2024 is available here Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: 2024 Pre-application Prospectus - Frequently Asked Questions - GOV.UK
Programme Document Feedback	The applicant supplied the Inspectorate with its initial Programme Document in line with the Expression of Interest process after the publication of the 2024 Pre-application Prospectus. The applicant has since revised and expanded upon the content within its initial Programme Document in the latest version (dated 21 October), as published on its website. Having reviewed this latest version, the Inspectorate considers that it satisfactorily covers the expected content as set out in the government's pre-application guidance at paragraph 10, namely: • "the date the applicant intends to submit their application • a comprehensive timetable of the applicant's pre-application process, the main events with dates and milestones demonstrating how the pre-application process will be completed (using the maximum target of 2 years as a benchmark)

	• the applicant's view on the main issues for resolution and activities they will undertake to address those • the applicant's proposals for engaging with statutory consultees and local authorities during the pre-application period and any intended financial support agreements, such as Planning Performance Agreements (PPAs) • the applicant's identification of risks to achievement of the pre-application stage and the process by which these risks are tracked and managed • cross references to the SoCC required by section 47 of the Planning Act". • The PD needs proof reading as a number of grammar / sentence structure issues are currently present It would be helpful if the applicant could also include information as to whether any other consents or permissions are being sought for this project, and whether the applicant intends to use an Issues Tracker and if so, will share this with local authorities, statutory consultees and others to agree the status of the issues raised. Overall, the Programme Document provides enough detail about the proposed development, timetable and activities for the pre-application process, as well as the applicant's approach to engagement with statutory consultees and other parties. Comments made by Environmental Services Team: • Paragraph 2.3 When talking about councillors – is it district, county or both? When talking about parish councils – Should Parish meetings be also listed? The Inspectorate had a couple of Parish meetings wanting to submit comments on the scoping and they were not permitted to do so under the current regulations. • Paragraph 2.8 and 3.2 (2.8) Clarity needed between DCO scheme and NG+ schemes to be implemented outside of the DCO process. (3.2) Some of the issues table may also be linked to the NG+ aspects above, which as of the last update meeting were in parts to progressed outside of the DCO process. This table possibly shouldn't refer to these, or at least clarify what is part of the DCO scheme being consulted on?
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Statutory Consultation	The applicant's statutory consultation stage ran from 9 January to 20 February 2025. The applicant is currently reviewing the 331 responses received and is progressing statements of common ground with relevant parties. The main themes from the previous consultation phase were landscape, ecology, land use and loss of Best and Most Versatile land issues. In answer to a question from the Inspectorate, the applicant said that they had received both joint and individual responses from the Parish Councils.
Programme Update	The applicant advised that its updated Programme Document will be published shortly along with the adequacy of consultation milestone. The Inspectorate asked questions whether RWE had any concerns about the effects of the proposed development on its statutory undertaker assets and the adequacy of consultation to date. The applicant explained that they were proactively addressing such matters with RWE and were scheduling a meeting to further discuss these issues. The applicant said that it was proactively monitoring made DCOs on solar cases to note any emerging standards and best practice. The applicant said that it was not expecting to include any particularly novel or complex drafting in its DCO but asked if the Inspectorate could provide any information or guidance on emerging standards. The Inspectorate pointed to the Rule 6 letter and Recommendation Report for the Gate Burton Solar Farm project, which had addressed how cross-cutting matters concerning cumulative effects from other NSIPs was examined as well as the extent of trial trenching and loss of agricultural land. The Inspectorate is also seeking to meet with DESNZ in the near future and would share any information relating to expected standards coming from the Secretary of State's department. The Inspectorate advised the applicant to be clear in its Programme Document when statutory parties and local authorities are needed to contribute to any pre-application stages and to ensure local authorities have adequate time to provide feedback. The Inspectorate also advised the applicant that if they are seeking to use the Inspectorate's draft document review service, to be aware that the timescale is 6-weeks to review documents. It would also be helpful if the applicant could specify if they would be sending a draft DCO and draft

	Explanatory Memorandum, to ensure appropriate resources are in place. In answer to a question from the Inspectorate, the applicant said that there were no issues raised with the proposed development's name change. The Inspectorate advised to check the Environmental Impact Assessment regulations to ensure there were no outstanding processes to address in relation to changing the project's name during pre-application.
Other matters	The Inspectorate alerted the applicant to an email received from the Environment Agency relating to its updated policy on flood risk and coastal erosion data. The applicant advised that the submission date is expected to be brought forward from August to May 2025.