



# Planning Inspectorate

## Application by Steeple Solar Farm Limited for an order granting development consent for the Steeple Renewables Project

### Agenda for issue specific hearing 2 on environmental matters:

Hearing	Date and Time	Location
<b>Issue specific hearing 2 (ISH2) on environmental matters, likely to include but not limited to:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Land use and agriculture</li><li>• Flood risk, groundwater and contaminated land</li><li>• Biodiversity and ecology</li><li>• Historic environment</li><li>• Landscape and visual</li><li>• Other matters to include: fire risk; transport, noise and dust.</li></ul>	<b>Wednesday 11 February 2026</b>  <b>Hearing starts at 14.00pm</b>  Registration and seating available at venue from 13.30pm and virtual registration process from 13.30pm  <b>And</b>  <b>Thursday 12 February 2026</b>  <b>Hearing starts at 09.30am</b>  Registration and seating available at venue from 09.00am and virtual registration process from 09.00am	West Retford Hotel, 24 North Road, Retford, Nottinghamshire, DN22 7XG and  By virtual means using Microsoft Teams

### Agenda

1. Welcome, introductions, arrangements for the hearing
2. Purpose of ISH 2
3. Flood risk, groundwater and contaminated land

The Examining Authority (ExA) will ask questions and seek responses to matters relating to the effects of the proposed development on flood risk, groundwater and contaminated land, including:

- The ExA will invite the local councils and other interested parties (IPs) to present their main points from the evidence submitted regarding flooding, groundwater and contaminated land matters. It would assist the ExA if as far as possible the various bodies could present their evidence in a co-ordinated manner which avoids repeating points made by others.
- The ExA will ask the applicant to respond to each of the points made by the local bodies.
- The applicant to respond to the Environment Agency's (EA) questions on the need for additional resilience in the event of a breach, and the risks from hazardous chemical pollution (eg to groundwater) from the batteries in the Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) from a breach.
- Regarding the EA's review of the Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan:
  - reference their outstanding concerns detailed in the SoCG [[REP3-048](#)]. EA to provide update on relevant aspects of the drainage strategy and Pollution Incident and Emergency Response Plan
  - EA to provide comments on foul water management
- The EA state that the Flood Risk Assessment should be updated to include an assessment of decommissioning phase flood risk impacts [[REP3-048](#): EA 9.1]. Applicant to respond.
- Regarding the Contaminated Land Conceptual Site Model (CSM) and associated risks to groundwater detailed in SoCG [[REP3-048](#); EA 11.3]. Applicant and EA to provide an update on contaminated land and associated risks of groundwater pollution with respect to the Phase 1 Geoenvironmental Desk Study Report. With respect to mitigation or remediation measures for contamination, the EA to detail amendments to the CSM they consider are appropriate.
- EA to provide an update on their review of the applicant's hydraulic assessment and the need for updated 1d models.
- EA to provide an update on their review of the following documents, and with respect to the above questions:
  - Hydrology, Hydrogeology, Flood Risk and Drainage (Revision 2) [[REP2-019](#)]
  - Phase 1 Geoenvironmental Desk Study (Revision 2) [[REP2-022](#)]
  - Phase 1 Geoenvironmental Desk Study Appendix (B) Historical Maps [[REP2-024 - 028](#)]
  - Water Framework Directive Assessment (Revision 2) [[REP2-037](#)]
- Regarding local flood risk: Nottinghamshire County Council (NCC) to update on discussions regarding the applicant's response to NCC's Local

Impact Report paragraphs 5.8.1 – 5.8.30 [[REP2-050](#)] and submission of SoCG (*please note that the ExA will be requiring submission of the draft SoCG with NCC by deadline 4*).

#### **4. Effects on health, safety and wellbeing**

The ExA will ask questions on the effects of the proposed development on human health, including the long-term wellbeing of the adjacent communities and the risk presented by potential incidents related to the BESS and the effects from noise and dust.

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire and Rescue Service will be asked for their comments regarding the acceptability of the applicant's proposal relating to fire safety of the BESS.

#### **5. Land use and agriculture**

The ExA will ask questions and seek responses to matters relating to the effects of the proposed development on land use and agriculture, including:

- The ExA will invite Fields for Farming, the local councils and other IPs to present their main points from the evidence submitted regarding land use, agriculture and socio-economic matters. It would assist the ExA if as far as possible the various bodies could present their evidence in a co-ordinated manner which avoids repeating points made by others.
- The ExA will ask the applicant to respond to each of the points made by the local bodies.
- NCC to update on its position regarding the applicant's proposals for use of agricultural land and submission of SoCG (*please note that the ExA will be requiring submission of the draft SoCG with NCC by deadline 4*).
- Clarification from the applicant on the amount of agricultural land that may still be permanently lost as a result of the areas used for ecological enhancements as set out in the oSMP (Section 14) [[REP3-027](#)] and how this could affect the assessment of the loss of BMV land over 5ha in the ES.
- Regarding the absence of agricultural land classification (ALC) survey across the full order limits, including the cable route area, NE and/or the applicant to update on NE's position following review of the updated oSMP submitted at D3 [[REP3-027](#)].

#### **6. Biodiversity and ecology**

The ExA will ask questions and seek responses to matters relating to the effects of the proposed development on biodiversity and ecology, including:

- Concerns raised regarding the adequacy of ecological and habitat surveys undertaken to date (including but not limited to aquatic invertebrate, badgers,

barn owls, bats, breeding and wintering birds, brown hares and great crested newts) and whether sufficient provision has been made for further surveys.

- Effects, including cumulative, on skylark and other bird species and the adequacy of mitigation proposed.
- The effects on badgers and Lincoln Red Original Population.
- Adequacy of proposed mitigation measures set out within the application documents for habitats and species and whether they would be adequately secured and effectively maintained thereafter.

Documents that may be referred to during the discussion of this item include: ES Chapter 7 [[REP3-009](#)], ES Appendix 7.12 – Biodiversity Net Gain Report [[APP-114](#)], ES Appendix 7.13 – Skylark Mitigation Strategy [[APP-115](#)], ES Appendix 7.14 - Outline Landscape and Environmental Management Plan [[APP-116](#)], Figure 6.9 Landscape and Ecological Mitigation Strategy [[APP-160](#)] and ES Appendix 4.1 – Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan [[REP3-011](#)].

## **7. Transport and access**

The ExA will ask questions and seek responses to matters relating to the effects of the proposed development on transport and access, including:

- The applicant to update on its discussions with National Highways and NCC regarding the adequacy of the traffic assessment, with particular regard to construction related traffic.
- The ExA will invite the local councils and other IPs to present their main points from the evidence submitted regarding transport and access. It would assist the ExA if as far as possible the various bodies could present their evidence in a co-ordinated manner which avoids repeating points made by others.
- The ExA will ask the applicant to respond to each of the points made by the local bodies.
- The ExA will invite NCC and Bassetlaw District Council the opportunity to respond.

## **8. Historic environment**

The ExA will ask questions and seek responses to matters relating to the effects of the proposed development on the historic environment, including:

- The current position of parties in respect of the need, or otherwise, for further pre-determination trial trenching and the adequacy of proposals to undertake further trenching, as set out in ES Appendix 9.5 - Outline Written Scheme of Investigation for Post-Consent Archaeological Works [[APP-126](#)].

- Effects on the setting of Crow Tree Farm, West End Farm and the Church of St Peter & St Paul and the requested removal of the area of solar arrays by NCC.
- Effects on North Leverton Manor House and North Leverton Windmill and the requested removal of the area of solar arrays by NCC.
- Effects on the setting of Grade II\* listed Burton Chateau.
- Effects on Sturton le Steeple's Christian heritage and the Pilgrim Trail - The ExA wishes to further understand the issues raised by IP's and the applicant's responses on this matter; particularly in relation to the contribution made to the significance of heritage assets.
- The approach to mitigating effects and the drafting of dDCO requirement 17 – archaeology.

Documents that may be referred to during the discussion of this item include: ES chapter 9 [[APP-067](#)], ES Appendix 9.2 Magnitude Surveys Geophysical Survey Report [[APP-123](#)], Appendix 9.3 Archaeological Mitigation Statement [[APP-124](#)], ES Appendix 9.4 Outline Written Scheme of Investigation for Pre-Determination Trial Trenching [[APP-125](#)], ES Appendix 9.5 Outline Written Scheme of Investigation for Post-Consent Archaeological Works [[APP-126](#)], Archaeological Strategy Note [[REP2-053](#)] and Trial Trench Evaluation [[REP2-060](#)].

## **9. Landscape and Visual**

The ExA will ask questions and seek responses to matters relating to the effects of the proposed development on landscape and visual, including:

- The applicant's deadline 2 and deadline 3 submissions - The ExA will allow parties the opportunity to provide comments on the additional information and responses to questions provided by the applicant, and the extent to which previous concerns have or have not been addressed. The applicant will be provided the opportunity to respond to any of the points made.
- Assessment of cumulative effects and whether further assessment is required, noting NCC's response to ExQ1 Q13.3.3 [[REP2-063](#)] and the applicant's response to NCC [[REP3-039](#)].

Documents that may be referred to during the discussion of this item include: ES chapter 6 [[APP-064](#)], viewpoints and photomontages in ES Appendices 6.1 and 6.2 ([\[REP3-017\]](#), [\[REP3-018\]](#), [\[REP3-019\]](#) and [\[REP3-020\]](#)), Additional Photomontages Winter [[REP3-050](#)] and Cumulative SZTV Plan [[REP2-054](#)].

## **10. Review of issues and actions arising**

## **12. Any other business**

## **13. Closure of the hearing**

## **Purpose of Issue Specific Hearing**

The main purpose of the hearing is to undertake an examination of various environmental impact matters arising from consideration of the application and representations. The ExA will seek to clarify and get views on matters relating to each of the subjects set out in the agenda above.

## **Attendees**

The ExA would find it helpful if the following parties could attend this hearing:

- The applicant
- Bassetlaw District Council
- Nottinghamshire County Council
- Parish Councils
- Fields for Farming
- Environment Agency – primarily item 3
- Historic England – primarily item 8
- Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust – primarily item 6
- Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire and Rescue Service – primarily item 4
- Any other statutory undertakers, other public authority, body or organisation who would be affected by and has submitted comments on the above topics.
- Other IPs who submitted comments on the above topics

However, this does not indicate that other parties will not be able to contribute. All IPs are invited to attend and make oral representations on the matters set out in the agenda, subject to the ExA's ability to control the hearing.

The ExA has sought to provide sufficient detail to assist the parties to prepare for the hearing. The details set out above are indicative and the ExA may find it necessary to include additional agenda items or to amend the order in which the items are dealt with.

Anyone wishing to attend the hearing in person, who has not already advised the case team of this, should do so as soon as possible.

The event will be livestreamed and a link for watching the livestream will be posted on the [project webpage of the National Infrastructure Planning website](#) closer to the hearing date. IPs and members of the public who wish to observe the hearing can therefore view and listen to the hearing using the livestream, or view and listen to the recording, after it has concluded.

## **Registration process**

Parties who have registered to speak (both in person and virtually) will receive a joining instruction email shortly before the hearing which will include a link to the virtual event on Microsoft Teams, and a telephone number should they need to participate by telephone. To enable the hearing to start on time at **14.00pm** those

attending virtually should join promptly at **13.30pm** to ensure that all virtual attendees can complete the registration process in good time.

### **Procedure at ISH**

Guidance under the Planning Act 2008 and the Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 provides that it is for the ExA to probe, test and assess the evidence through direct questions of persons making oral representations at hearings. Questioning at the hearing will be led by the ExA. Cross questioning of a person giving evidence by another person will only be permitted if the ExA decides it is necessary to ensure representations are adequately tested or that an IP has had a fair chance to puts its case.