Planning Inspectorate

Application by Meridian Solar Farm Limited for an order granting development consent for the Meridian Solar Farm project

Agenda for Issue Specific Hearing 3 (ISH3) dealing with matters relating to the grid connection, site selection and assessment of alternatives, cumulative effects, flood risk and water quality, landscape and visual matters, and biodiversity and HRA

Hearing	Date and Time	Location
Issue Specific Hearing 3 (ISH3)	**Wednesday** **11 November 2026** **Hearing starts at 10:00am** Registration and seating available at venue from 9:30am and virtual registration process from 9:30am	Orton Suite Orton Hall The Village, Orton Longueville, Peterborough, PE2 7DN and By virtual means using Microsoft Teams

Agenda items

Item 1	**Welcome, introductions, arrangements for the hearing**
Item 2	**Purpose of the issue specific hearing and examining authority's (ExA) opening remarks**
	Grid connection
Item 3	• The applicant and National Grid Electricity Transmission plc (NGET) will be asked to give an overview of the outstanding areas of disagreement in respect of the proposed development and the proposed Grimsby to Walpole scheme. • The applicant and NGET will be asked to give an overview of the prospect of a location for a grid connection being identified by the close of the examination and the implications if this does not occur. • The ExA may ask questions of the applicant in relation to the above and other matters relating to grid.
	Site selection and assessment of alternatives

Item 4	• The applicant will be asked to provide a detailed explanation of its approach to considering alternative sizes and scales of site for the proposed development. • The ExA will ask questions on the Post ISH1 Note Strategic Site Selection [REP2-017] and Post ISH1 Note Sequential and Exception Tests [REP2-018]. This will include discussion of how the approach aligns with the requirements of NPS EN-1, EN-3 and EN-5. • The ExA may ask other questions relating to site selection and assessment of alternatives.
	Cumulative effects
Item 5	• The ExA will explore parties' positions in respect of the list of the projects that are included within the cumulative assessment, and the relative positions in respect of the suitability in informing the overall Environmental Statement on cumulative assessment. • The applicant and the local authorities will be asked whether the approach to the cumulative assessment is robust and has captured all relevant other developments • The applicant and local authorities will be asked questions regarding cumulative visual impact including Work No.14. • The ExA will ask questions relating to the intra-project cumulative effects described in ES Chapter 17. • The ExA may ask other questions relating to strategic level cumulative effects.
	Flood risk and water quality
Item 6	*Water quality* • The Environment Agency will be asked about its requirements for water monitoring, including baseline monitoring. *Flood risk* • The applicant will be asked to give a summary of updates to the flood risk modelling. • The applicant, Lincolnshire County Council as the Lead Local Flood Authority and the Environment Agency will be asked about the Outline Flood Emergency Response Plan [REP2-005], including the safety of workers in construction compounds, early warning proposals and the suitability of escape routes. • The same parties will be asked about the case for development in Flood Zone 3b and what alternatives may be available. • The ExA may ask questions of the applicant in relation to the above and other matters relating to the water environment.

	Landscape and visual matters
Item 7	*Visual Impact* • The applicant will be asked questions regarding the proposed Residential Visual Amenity Assessment technical note as referred to in response to Q15.0.26, and the provision of buffer zones and separation distances. *Landscape Character* • The applicant and local authorities will be asked questions related to whether the proposed development, either alone or in combination with other development, would lead to a large scale solar becoming a defining characteristic of the relevant Landscape Character Areas, Landscape Type and National Character Area. • The applicant will be asked questions relating to how the location and form of proposed planting including permanency and have been accounted for in the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment. *Design Parameters* • The applicant and local authorities will be asked questions in relation to the level of detail within the Design Parameters document submitted at deadline 3 on 27 October 2026 including whether it would lead to an appearance that demonstrates good aesthetic. • The ExA may ask questions of the applicant in relation to the above and other matters relating to landscape character, visual impact and design parameters.
	Biodiversity and HRA
Item 8	*Adequacy of surveys* • Lincolnshire County Council and Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust will be asked about the adequacy of surveying. *Ground nesting birds* • The applicant will be asked questions regarding the strategy for the protection, mitigation and monitoring of ground nesting birds. *Biodiversity Net Gain* • The applicant and Lincolnshire County Council will be asked about the implications of applying the Greater Lincolnshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy, • Biodiversity Net Gain calculation data, including application of trading rules, and • assessment of habitat type and condition.

	Habitats Regulations Assessment • The applicant and Natural England will be asked about the identification of functionally linked land, and • monitoring and mitigation of disturbance during construction. • The ExA may ask questions of the applicant in relation to the above and other matters relating to biodiversity and the HRA.
	Any other matters
Item 9	• The ExA may ask other questions of the applicant and interested parties on a limited range of other matters not included in the above topics**.**
Item 10	**Review of actions and close**

Purpose of ISH

The main purpose of the Issue Specific Hearing is 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.

- Applicant
- Lincolnshire County Council, including AAH Consultants
- Lincolnshire County Council as the Lead Local Flood Authority
- South Holland District Council
- National Grid Electricity Transmission plc
- Natural England
- Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust
- Environment Agency

However, this does not indicate that other parties will not be able to contribute. All interested parties (IP) 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 10:00am those attending virtually should join promptly at 09:30am 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.