



Defence Infrastructure Organisation

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Wing Sum To
Planning Inspectorate,
Infrastructure Decisions and Applications Service,
c/o QUADIENT,
69 Buckingham Avenue,
Slough
SL1 4PN

Your Reference: EN0110026
Our reference: DIO 10069534

Dear Wing,

MOD Safeguarding – RAF Topcliffe

Proposal: Sedgeby Solar farm - Construction and operation of a solar farm plus BESS with associated infrastructure (with an approximate generating capacity of 350 MW(AC) of solar power, plus 350 MW of BESS).

Location: Land parcels, south of Little Sessay, known as Sessay Park (west) and Briar Hill (east).

Thank you for consulting the Ministry of Defence (MOD) on the above proposed development.

The Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) Safeguarding Team represents the Ministry of Defence (MOD) as a consultee in UK planning and energy consenting systems to ensure that development does not compromise or degrade the operation of defence sites such as aerodromes, explosives storage sites, air weapon ranges, and technical sites or training resources such as the Military Low Flying System.

This proposal is for a large solar farm split across two parcels of land known as Sessay Park (west) and Briar Hill (east). The sites will be connected using an underground cable referred to as the 'Cable Route Search Area'. Battery storage (BESS) and other infrastructure are also included in the proposals.

The application site occupies the statutory safeguarding zones surrounding RAF Topcliffe. In particular, the aerodrome height and birdstrike safeguarding zones surrounding the aerodrome and is approx. 4.9 km from the centre of the airfield.

Birdstrike

Within this zone, the principal concern of the MOD is that the creation of new habitats may attract and support populations of large and, or flocking birds close to aerodromes.

The MOD should be consulted on any further applications or amendments. Of particular concern to MOD safeguarding would be applications for any element that introduced or contained proposals for development that might provide an attractant environment for those large and or flocking bird species hazardous to aviation safety. These may include plans for Biodiversity Net Gain, SUDS and solar pv panels.

Where these features form part of an application the MOD may seek to impose conditions which may require the submission, approval, and implementation of a Bird Hazard Management Plan.

It is noted that a Flood Risk Assessment has been submitted as part of this application which shows proposed swales to ensure that key areas remain free from flooding. It is recommended that any swales proposed are designed not to be permanently wet, but to hold water only during and immediately after extreme rainfall. Vegetation should be managed to obscure the potential waterbodies to make it as unattractive as possible to hazardous birds. Similarly, proposals show a detention basin as part of the drainage strategy for the BESS element of the development. At this stage of the application the detail and design of the basin is not available and will therefore require further assessment when submitted. However, the applicant should be aware that the basin should be designed to hold water only during and immediately after an extreme rainfall event (1:30 or larger) or if more permanently wet should be designed as a vegetated wetland with plants obscuring any water present.

It is acknowledged that at this stage of the application process, full details are not yet available and the MOD requests that it be consulted at all further stages of the development to further assess proposals against our safeguarding criteria.

Aerodromes

A safeguarding zone is in place to protect the airspace surrounding aerodromes, this is known as the Obstacle Limitation Surface (OLS). Within this zone, the principal concern of the MOD is that structures/development, whether permanent or temporary, may project through the OLS and into the airspace above and surrounding an aerodrome where aircraft are likely to be at critical stages of flight. The introduction of obstacles into this area has the potential to degrade aviation safety.

At this application stage, where no details are available for the design or maximum height of the proposed development, MOD representations are limited to the principle of the development only.

In summary the MOD has no objection to the principle of this application but will require to be consulted at all future stages of the application process.

The MOD must emphasise that the advice provided within this letter is in response to the information made available on the Planning Inspectorate website as of the date of this letter. Any variation of the parameters (which include the location, dimensions, form, and finishing materials) detailed may

significantly alter how the development relates to MOD safeguarding requirements and cause adverse impacts to safeguarded defence assets or capabilities. In the event that any amendment, whether considered material or not by the determining authority, is submitted for approval, the MOD should be consulted and provided with adequate time to carry out assessments and provide a formal response.

I trust this is clear however should you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

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