



BEACON FEN ENERGY PARK

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Chapter 5 – Consultation
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Revision History

Revision	Revision date	Details	Authorized	Name	Position

List of Outstanding Issues and Information

Outstanding issue/info.	Section/Paragraph	Responsibility	Action

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5. Consultation

5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 Consultation is a key stage within the preparation of DCO applications and the EIA process. The Applicant has undertaken early and ongoing engagement to inform the design of the Proposed Development and also assist in the identification of potential environmental issues for consideration within the EIA.
- 5.1.2 EIA is an iterative process which, alongside ongoing consultation, informs the development of robust proposals which ‘design out’ potential significant effects as far as possible, whilst also incorporating enhancements and benefits for the local area.
- 5.1.3 As set out below, this PEIR forms an important part of the consultation process, providing consultees with preliminary information on the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development.
- 5.1.4 Statutory consultation is being undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the Planning Act 2008¹, and associated regulations including the Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed Forms and Procedure) Regulations 2009 and the EIA Regulations.

5.2 DCO Consultation Requirements

- 5.2.1 The DCO process sets out a number of statutory requirements regarding consultation. The Planning Act 2008 requires applicants for DCOs to carry out formal (statutory) pre-application consultation on their proposals. There are several requirements as to how this consultation must be undertaken that are set out in the Planning Act 2008 and related regulations:
- Section 42 requires the applicant to consult on the proposed application with ‘prescribed persons’, which includes certain consultation bodies such as the Environment Agency and Natural England, relevant statutory undertakers, relevant local authorities, those with an interest in the Site and persons who would or might be able to make a relevant claim for compensation;
 - Section 47 requires the applicant to consult with the local community on the proposed application. Prior to this, the applicant must prepare a Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) and consult on it with the relevant local host authorities and have regard to their responses (see Section 5.6 below). The SoCC must set out the proposed community consultation including (pursuant to the EIA Regulations) how the PEI will be publicised and consulted on. Once finalised, a SoCC Notice must be published in local newspapers circulating within the vicinity of the land in question and the SoCC itself made available for inspection by the public. The formal pre-application community

¹ The Planning Act 2008: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2008/29/contents>

consultation must then be carried out in accordance with the final SoCC;

- Section 48 places a duty on the applicant to publicise the proposed application in the ‘prescribed manner’ in a national newspaper, The London Gazette, and local newspapers circulating within the vicinity of the land. In addition, the EIA Regulations require certain prescribed consultees to be sent a copy of the Section 48 notice; and
- Section 49 places a duty on the Applicant to have regard to any relevant responses received to the consultation and publicity that is required by Sections 42, 47 and 48.

5.3 Overview of Consultation

5.3.1 Engagement will be ongoing throughout the preparation of the DCO application; however, consultation can broadly be divided into the following key stages:

- EIA Scoping;
- Early Non-Statutory Consultation;
- Statutory Consultation (the current stage).

5.3.2 Further information on each of the above stages is set out within this Chapter.

5.3.3 In addition to the above key stages, the following has also been undertaken:

- A project website has been set up to provide up to date information on the Proposed Development and the planned timeline for consultation: www.beaconfenenergypark.co.uk;
- Meetings have been held with statutory consultees to provide an introduction to the Proposed Development, and consult on specific matters including the development of the design; and
- Leaflet drops have been undertaken at nearby homes and businesses to provide updates on the progress of the application.

5.3.4 Full details of the consultation undertaken in relation to the Proposed Development will be provided within a Consultation Report which will be submitted with the DCO application.

5.4 EIA Scoping Consultation

5.4.1 The Scoping Report (Appendix 1.1) was submitted to PINS on 19th April 2023. PINS reviewed and consulted on the Scoping Report and adopted a Scoping Opinion (Appendix 1.2) on 26th May 2023. PINS formally consulted prescribed consultation bodies and their responses are included within the Scoping Opinion.

5.4.2 A summary of the issues raised in the Scoping Opinion and how these have been addressed as part of the EIA is included at Chapter 4.

5.4.3 Following the adoption of the Scoping Opinion, the Applicant has continued engagement with relevant consultees on the issues raised. Engagement undertaken in relation to specific environmental matters has been undertaken

with the relevant organisation or planning officer and is set out within the corresponding technical chapter.

5.5 Non-Statutory Consultation

5.5.1 The Early (Non-Statutory) Consultation phase for the Proposed Development was held between 15th May and 18th June 2023. Feedback was sought on early designs for the Proposed Development, the approach to EIA, and the Applicant's approach to consultation.

5.5.2 The Early (Non-Statutory) Consultation included:

- Three in-person events held in Heckington, Helpringham and Donington;
- Two online webinars;
- Meetings with local parish and town councils;
- Meetings with county and district councillors; and
- Visits to near neighbours to the Site to discuss the Proposed Development.

5.5.3 The Early (Non-Statutory) Consultation was advertised via:

- a maildrop to every home and business within 2.5km of the site boundary (at the time of Scoping);
- adverts in the Boston/Sleaford Target, Lincolnshire Echo and Sleaford Standard newspapers;
- articles published in the local media;
- A4 posters in the local area; and
- digital mailshot to the subscribed mailing list.

5.5.4 A total of 208 people attended the in-person events and webinars. All attendees were invited to complete a feedback form and 88 completed forms were received.

5.5.5 There was a mixed view of both supportive and unsupportive comments from those who attended the events and webinars. Comments were received across a range of matters, however the key concerns raised included:

- construction traffic;
- impact on views from properties; and
- the overlap with Anglian Water's proposed Lincolnshire Reservoir.

5.5.6 The responses to the Early (Non-Statutory) Consultation informed the development of the design proposals and the EIA considered as part of this PEIR, including key sensitive receptors and potential areas for mitigation.

Removal of Beacon Fen South

5.5.7 As set out within Chapter 3, Beacon Fen South (BFS) was included within the Site at the stage of Scoping and the Early (Non-Statutory) Consultation and has since been removed.

5.5.8 PINS, planning officers and other key stakeholders were informed directly of this change. The website was updated, a press release was issued and a

newsletter was sent to local homes and properties in order to inform the wider public.

5.6 Statutory Consultation

5.6.1 The Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) was prepared in accordance with section 47 of the Planning Act 2008 and outlines how the Applicant would consult with the local community.

5.6.2 The SoCC explains how the Applicant has identified consultees, the proposed consultation strategy, the timescales for consultation and how consultees can respond to the consultation and shape the Proposed Development.

5.6.3 The approach to public consultation set out in the SoCC includes:

- Hard copy correspondence sent to all properties within the consultation zone (approximately 8,012) ahead of the statutory consultation phase.
- Holding four in-person events in locations near to the Site.
- Holding two online webinars.
- Updating the dedicated project website at pertinent intervals (www.beaconfenenergypark.co.uk), including FAQs, digital versions of all consultation documents and a digital version of the consultation feedback form.
- Provision of hard-copy versions of consultation documents at in-person events and deposited at a range of local information points.
- Stakeholder briefings and emails.
- Publicising the consultation via newspaper adverts, press releases, information posters, social media adverts and digital mailshots.

5.6.4 Pursuant to the Planning Act and its associated regulations, it is required to provide a minimum period of 28 days for receipt of responses to the consultation; however, the Applicant has provided for the statutory consultation to be held for a period of 42 days, in order to provide additional time for consultees to submit responses.

5.6.5 The responses received during the Statutory Consultation will be carefully considered and given due regard in accordance with Section 49 of the Planning Act 2008.