



# BEACON FEN ENERGY PARK

Planning Inspectorate Reference: EN010151

Programme Document

December 2024



## Quality information

<u>Prepared by</u>	<u>Checked by</u>	<u>Verified by</u>	<u>Approved by</u>
JM	CT	CT	CT

## Revision History

<u>Revision</u>	<u>Revision date</u>	<u>Details</u>	<u>Authorised</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Position</u>
00	July 2024	PINS Issue			
01	Dec 2024	Public Issue			

## List of Outstanding Issues and Information

<u>Outstanding issue/info.</u>	<u>Section/Paragraph</u>	<u>Responsibility</u>	<u>Action</u>

### Disclaimer

This report has been produced by DWD, the trading name of DWD Property and Planning Limited. Registered in England No. 15174312. Registered Office: Spring Lodge, 172 Chester Road, Helsby, Cheshire, England, WA6 0AR. The report is intended for the sole and exclusive use of the instructing client or party. The report shall not be distributed or made available to any third party or published, reproduced or referred to in any way without the prior knowledge and written consent of DWD. The report does not constitute advice to any third party and should not be relied upon as such. DWD accepts no liability or responsibility for any loss or damage to any third party arising from that party having relied upon the contents of the report in whole or in part.

## Table of Contents

1.	Project Description .....	1
1.1	Components .....	1
1.2	Background.....	1
2.	Project Overview and Timelines .....	3
3.	Main Issues and Risks.....	4
3.1	Main Issues Identified by the Applicant.....	4
3.2	Risks to Achievement of Pre-App Stage Identified by the Applicant .....	5
4.	Stakeholder Engagement .....	6
4.1	Statutory Engagement .....	6
	Ongoing Stakeholder Engagement Aims .....	6
	Methods of communication .....	7

# 1. Project Description

## 1.1 Components

- 1.1.1 The Proposed Development consists of a ground-mounted solar photovoltaic (PV) electricity generation and battery energy storage system (BESS), together with associated grid connection infrastructure, at an area sited approximately 6.5 km northeast of the village of Sleaford and 2.5 km north of Heckington (the 'Site'). The Proposed Development would have a generation capacity of approximately 400 megawatts (MW) of electricity, with associated development including a 600MW BESS.
- 1.1.2 The Proposed Development represents a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) under section 15(2) of the Planning Act 2008.
- 1.1.3 The Site is made up of three key areas, the Solar Array Area (comprising the solar PV and BESS infrastructure) the Cable Route Corridor (connecting the Solar Array Site via an underground cable to the existing Bicker Fen National Grid 400kV substation, where various works may be required) and the Access Route Corridor (for a bespoke site access).
- 1.1.4 At the County level, the Site is located within the administrative area of Lincolnshire County Council (LCC). At the local level, the majority of the Site is within the administrative area of North Kesteven District Council (NKDC), with the southern extent of the Cable Route Corridor located within the administrative area of Boston Borough Council (BBC).
- 1.1.5 A degree of flexibility has been maintained regarding a number of design matters that are not fixed at this stage in the Development Consent Order (DCO) application. This is to ensure that there is sufficient flexibility to utilise the latest technologies at the time of construction, to enable potential improvements in efficiency and functionality beyond what can be achieved by current technologies.
- 1.1.6 Several technological design options and other reasonable alternatives have been considered, and the preferred options have been taken forward, taking into account the objectives of the Proposed Development and requirement for optimal functionality.
- 1.1.7 Alternative design parameters and layouts have also been considered, informed by the results of environmental surveys and assessments. Key matters include Substation and BESS location.

## 1.2 Background

- 1.2.1 We carried out a round of early (non-statutory) consultation in May and June 2023. In November 2023 we published a Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) (which can be found [here](#)).
- 1.2.2 The statutory consultation for Beacon Fen Energy Park opened on 22 January 2024 and ran for six weeks under 3 March 2024. Following on from that, we held a targeted consultation comprising the addition of Crown Estate and

Ecotricity land interests, plus and an extension of consultation for certain existing consultees in respect of some minor increases to land area, for which we provided a section 46 notification on 29 February 2024.

- 1.2.3 We recently commenced a second targeted consultation exercise, starting on 16 December 2024 and concluding on 19 January 2025, in respect of a number of small changes to the draft Order Limits.
- 1.2.4 The purpose of this version of our Programme Document is to publicly provide our current view of the issues and timings of the project, which informed the decision on service level. This will be shared directly with the relevant local authorities upon publication.

## 2. Project Overview and Timelines

2.1.1 The table below sets out the key project stages and anticipated milestone dates:

PROJECT STAGE	DATE OF MILESTONE
Project launch	March 2023
Early (Non-statutory) Consultation	15 <sup>th</sup> May – 18 <sup>th</sup> June 2023
Received Scoping Response	May 2023
Statutory Consultation	22 <sup>nd</sup> January 2024 – 3 <sup>rd</sup> March 2024
Targeted Consultation	March 2024
Agreed 2 <sup>nd</sup> Targeted Consultation methodology with Local Planning Authorities as per SoCC (which can be found <a href="#">here</a> ) for small changes to the redline boundary	December 2024
2 <sup>nd</sup> Targeted Consultation commencement	December 2024
Adequacy of Consultation Milestone	January 2025
2 <sup>nd</sup> Targeted Consultation closure	January 2025
Review of 2 <sup>nd</sup> Targeted Consultation outcomes.	Planned for January – February 2025
Submission of DCO application	Planned for March 2025

## 3. Main Issues and Risks

### 3.1 Main Issues Identified by the Applicant

3.1.1 The table below sets out the Applicant's current view of main issues to be addressed in the application, and what activities are being take to address these issues.

MAIN ISSUES	MITIGATION ACTIVITIES
<p>Agreeing with the Environment Agency (EA) the Flood Risk Assessment approach and modelling methodology which drives modelled heights.</p>	<p>We have been engaging with the EA for some time to obtain model data and reach agreement on methodology and have encountered delays. We have since had clarity on most matters though have a query around freeboard, and we are working on the flood modelling.</p>
<p>Extent of prior archaeological evaluation sought by Lincolnshire County Council within our solar array area.</p>	<p>The county archaeologist has sought much higher levels of prior evaluation (as % of surface area of panels) than other counties in our experience. We complied with this request initially, until unusually wet weather meant that the disruption and excavation for the trial trenches (the area of which exceeds that for the piles for the panels themselves) was disproportionate and causing concerns locally. We have kept the county archaeologist and LPA officers briefed as to this approach.</p>
<p>Lincolnshire County Council and North Kesteven District Council's requests regarding public rights of way permissive paths.</p>	<p>We have been in discussions with the local authorities for a period of time discussing the potential of introducing a permissive pathway in the Solar Array Site for the lifetime of the project (40 years). Following further design work and land discussions we are proposing a long permissive path through the site, though we have chosen a route which we feel is more beneficial for public amenity than that suggested by NKDC/LCC. We do not consider this is required mitigation for the project, rather it is an enhancement we will seek to deliver along with other community benefits. Implementation of this permissive pathway is still subject to detailed design and engagement with stakeholders.</p>
<p>Concerns relating to retention of bespoke access road during operation of the Proposed Development from North Kesteven District Council</p>	<p>We have explored other options, and taken a balanced view taking into account relevant environmental considerations and the need to both maintain and decommission this infrastructure in a timely way. We will set out</p>

MAIN ISSUES	MITIGATION ACTIVITIES
	our justification and are also assessing the relevant worst case scenario for each topic within the Environmental Statement.

### 3.2 Risks to Achievement of Pre-App Stage Identified by the Applicant

RISKS TO PRE-APP STAGE	PROCESS FOR MANAGING RISKS
New land interests being impacted.	We have carried out additional land referencing during the preparation of the 2 <sup>nd</sup> Targeted Consultation and consulted existing and new land interests.
Consultees being away due to Christmas holidays and not being able to properly consider the consultation and respond.	We have ensured that the 2 <sup>nd</sup> Targeted Consultation allows additional time for responses to account of the impact of school holidays, a total of five calendar weeks being given.
Unexpected consultation findings requiring updates to documents or design.	We have included time in the programme to update documents or the design of the Proposed Development in case of unexpected consultation findings. However, given our extensive consultations to date we do not think this is a high risk.
Time constraints meaning we are unable to submit the updated draft Consultation Report to the Planning Inspectorate for review.	We will ensure any updates to the Consultation Report are consistent with the existing document and are with respect to feedback already received from the Planning Inspectorate. We do not propose an additional review but will be submitting our Adequacy of Consultation Milestone.



## 4. Stakeholder Engagement

### 4.1 Statutory Engagement

#### Key Stakeholder/Technical Meetings Held

4.1.1 The below table sets out the key recent stakeholder/technical meetings held, including with local communities, and ongoing technical engagement during and since statutory consultation. For brevity we do not list out all meetings held since the inception of the project in 2023. We also do not list out the numerous individual meetings held with near neighbours (residents bordering the solar array area and other development areas) of the Proposed Development for brevity and GDPR reasons.

DATE	KEY STAKEHOLDER/S
<b>STATUTORY CONSULTATION</b>	
10/01/2024	LCC, NKDC and BBC
07/02/2024	LCC, NKDC and BBC
27/02/2024	Network Rail
<b>WITH COMMUNITIES</b>	
17/01/2024	Sleaford Town Council
18/01/2024	South Kyme Parish Council
05/02/2024	Great Hale Parish Council
05/02/2024	Asgarby & Howell Village
07/02/2024	Ewerby and Evedon Parish Council
08/02/2024	Bicker Parish Council
<b>ONGOING TECHNICAL ENGAGEMENT</b>	
03/04/2024	LCC, NKDC and BBC
17/04/2024	SHDC
01/05/2024	LCC, NKDC and BBC
13/05/2024	LCC, NKDC and BBC
03/06/2024	LCC
27/08/2024	LCC, NKDC and BBC
08/11/2024	LCC, NKDC and BBC

#### Ongoing Stakeholder Engagement Aims

4.1.2 The following overall objectives are established:

- Use existing communication channels to update relevant consultees with relation to the Proposed Development.
- Demonstrate how the proposals and the application have taken account of consultation and how the consultation was conducted fairly, safely and considerately.
- To maintain positive relationships with near neighbours and key stakeholders.

- 4.1.3 The Statement of Community Consultation has already been published (and can be found [here](#)).

### Methods of communication

- 4.1.4 At an early stage we set up Planning Performance Agreements with Lincolnshire County Council, Boston Borough Council and North Kesteven District Council with adequate funding arrangements. These have been working well and resulted in regular, effective communication, as evidenced by the comprehensive responses received to our statutory consultation. We will shortly be negotiating Planning Performance Agreements related to post-submission.
- 4.1.5 The key other engagement activities and methods carried out are summarised in the table below:

METHOD/ACTIVITY	DETAILS
Briefings	Briefings are periodically/at pertinent points offered to relevant Parish Councils, Ward Councillors and members of Parliament.
Project Mailing Update	A leaflet and map will be sent via mail drop to near neighbours, political stakeholders, other potentially interested groups and via email to those who signed up to the digital project mailing list.
Media Commentary	This will be prepared in case of journalist queries, although due to the small nature of the changes will not be automatically distributed.