

COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

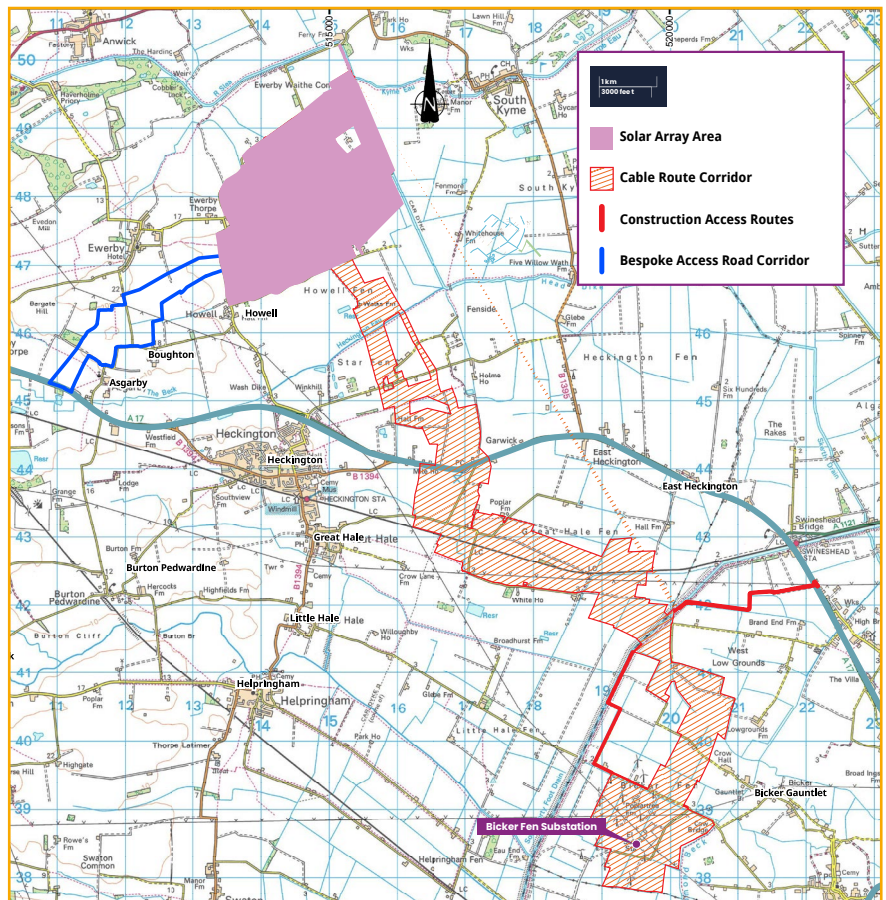
Update from our Director, James Hartley-Bond



Welcome to the latest newsletter for Beacon Fen Energy Park. Since we held our statutory consultation at the start of 2024, we have been refining our proposals for the project and are keen to share some updates with you. Thank you to all local residents and businesses who engaged with our statutory consultation, which provided valuable feedback.

We are now in the process of preparing to submit our Development Consent Order (DCO) application to the Planning Inspectorate. The map opposite shows the current red line boundary of the project, including access routes. We will continue to refine the cable route and the route of the proposed access road before finalising the DCO submission. There are more details of the next phase of the planning process in this newsletter, as well as information on some targeted consultation we are undertaking with a small number of statutory and localised consultees as a result of refinements to our proposals.

In order to stay informed on project progress once the DCO application has been submitted, I invite you to sign up to our digital mailing list by visiting beaconfenenergypark.co.uk/contact/ or sign up for e-mail updates at the Planning Inspectorate's project page.



Beacon Fen Energy Park is a proposed solar and battery storage project to the east of Sleaford and would generate an estimated 400MW (megawatts) of renewable energy, while the battery energy storage system (BESS) would store electricity with a capacity of up to 600MW. The project would connect into Bicker Fen substation via an underground connection and if granted consent, is expected to be operational by 2029.

What happens once we submit the DCO application?

We are planning to submit our DCO application to the Planning Inspectorate in March 2025.

- After the application has been submitted, the Planning Inspectorate has up to 28 days to formally accept our submission.
- Following this, those parties that wish to participate in the Examination can register as an 'interested party' by making a 'relevant representation' via the Planning Inspectorate website or by post.
- The Planning Inspectorate will appoint an 'Examining Authority,' typically comprising one or two inspectors, to conduct the examination.
- A Preliminary Meeting will be held and the Examining Authority will outline the procedure for the examination and its timetable.
- The Examining Authority then has up to six months from this point to carry out their Examination. This is mainly in writing, although a number of hearings will be held.
- Once the examination closes, the Examining Authority has three months to make a recommendation on the application to the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero.
- The Secretary of State then has a further three months to make a decision to either refuse or grant development consent. If it is granted then the DCO is 'made' with a piece of legislation published soon after.

Planned Timeline



Keeping informed

Further information on the DCO planning process can be found at:

<https://national-infrastructure-consenting.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/decision-making-process-guide>

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Targeted Consultation

We are commencing a targeted consultation exercise from Monday 16 December, regarding some small changes to how we may construct the project, limited to a few localised locations:

1. Inclusion of Triton Knoll's access track, Doubletwelves Drive and Bicker Drive for use by construction traffic associated with the National Grid substation extension works. This change will ensure construction vehicles will avoid rural Bicker roads as construction routes which will only be used in case of emergency. Ecotricity have included these roads within their application for the Heckington Fen Solar Park DCO and similarly proposed that the rural Bicker roads will only be used in case of emergency.
2. Inclusion of circa 262m of additional private track off Great Hale Drive for use by construction traffic vehicles (apart from Abnormal Indivisible Loads) to the refined cable route corridor. This short section of track was inadvertently excluded from the project's red-line boundary at our previous consultation, which we are correcting. We are also including widened accesses to the Solar Array Area.
3. Inclusion of land to facilitate the construction of a pedestrian footbridge across the Car Dyke in the north-eastern corner of the Solar Array Area, and inclusion of land off Ferry Lane to secure temporary access rights to facilitate the construction of the footbridge. This is a proposed enhancement to allow permissive access by local communities along new permissive pathways within the Solar Array Area.

The inclusion of these additional areas of land does not impact on any of the information included in the statutory consultation and our published Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR) remains relevant.

We are writing to a small number of statutory and localised consultees regarding changes to the project parameters. If you have not received a letter then you are not likely to be affected by the above proposals.

Once the targeted consultation closes on 19 January 2025, we will analyse any feedback received from the relevant parties ahead of finalising our DCO application.

More information on the targeted consultation can be found on the project website: beaconfenenergypark.co.uk/consultation/