

Pre-Hearing Note

Appeal refs: 6001285 and 6001284

Appellants: Mr Alex Ross of Pathfinder Clean Energy UKDev Ltd

Local planning authorities: South Holland and Fenland District Councils

Proposed development: Installation of 49.9MW ground mounted solar photovoltaic panels with associated battery storage, substation and ancillary plant and infrastructure, and erection of security fencing and pole mounted CCTV cameras on a site that crosses the boundary between the two council areas and which is described as land east of Guanockgate Road, Nr. Sutton St Edmund, PE13 4PY/land at Treading Field, Treading Drain, Tydd St. Giles, PE13 4PL

Background

1. A Hearing relating to the above appeals will take place commencing at **10am on Tuesday 27 January for up to 3 days** at the Boathouse, Harbour Square, Wisbech, PE13 3BH.
2. It will be conducted by M Chalk BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI, who is the Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government to determine the appeal.
3. The purpose of this pre-hearing note is to explain how the event will operate in a fair, open and transparent way and what should be done to ensure it runs smoothly.

Hearing arrangements

4. The Hearing will be run as an in-person event. If virtual attendance is supported by the venue please can the councils provide details of this on their websites alongside this note. It would assist the Inspector if the main parties could submit a list of those representing them at the Hearing. This should include full name, job title/role in the appeal and any professional qualifications. If available, a list of interested parties intending to appear at the event should also be provided. This can either be provided in advance or at the start of the Hearing.
5. If it is anticipated that a large number of interested parties will attend it would be useful if they could coordinate amongst themselves to prevent repetition of any points that they wish to make.

Format of the Hearing

6. The Inspector will start the event by running through procedural matters and seeking clarification on preliminary matters before moving onto the main issues. The preliminary matters will include:
 - The necessity for an Environmental Impact Assessment, and the implications for this Hearing
 - The proximity of the site to a National Gas pipeline
 - Any other points on which the Inspector wishes to seek clarification.
7. The Hearing will run as a structured discussion with the Inspector asking a series of questions to both main parties in respect of the main issues and any other matters. The discussion will be focussed on the evidence submitted in support of both parties' cases. All parties who so wish, will be given an opportunity to speak.
8. A provisional agenda is at the end of this note but is subject to amendment. The Inspector will issue a final version, if required, at the Hearing.

Statements of Common Ground

9. The contents of the agreed Statements of Common Ground are noted.

Additional information and late evidence

10. If it is considered necessary to introduce further documents that would assist the Hearing, please ensure that any additional documents that you intend to refer to are submitted via the case officer no later than **12 noon on Monday 26 January**.
11. This will allow them to be provided to the Inspector and the other party/parties prior to the Hearing opening. Any additional documents should be accompanied by an explanation of why they are relevant, and why it was not possible for them to be submitted with the main evidence. You should therefore review your cases promptly to ensure everything you intend to rely on is included.
12. Any late evidence submitted will risk an adjournment and/or an award of costs.

Conditions

13. The councils have submitted suggested conditions for each appeal without prejudice to their position that the appeals should be dismissed. These will form the basis of the conditions discussion at the Hearing. The Inspector's initial comments on these conditions are provided with this document.

Site visit

14. The Inspector will need to visit the appeal site. Arrangements for this will be made during the Hearing. As there are public rights of way crossing the site the Inspector may be able to carry out the visit unaccompanied. In any case, it is the Inspector's intention to adjourn or close the Hearing at the venue with no further discussion taking place on site even if the visit is an accompanied one.
15. The appellants are requested to advise on any health and safety requirements for the site visit.

Provisional agenda

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1. Introduction and opening formalities
2. Preliminary and procedural matters
 - Environmental Impact Assessment
 - National Gas pipeline
 - Any other preliminary or procedural matters arising
3. Questions arising, if any
4. Discussion of main issues
 - The effect of the proposed development on the supply of best and most versatile agricultural land, and on food security (both cases)
 - The effect on the character and appearance of the area (6001284 only, with South Holland District Council not taking part in the discussion of this issue)
5. Any other matters
6. Discussion of proposed conditions
7. Applications for costs, if any
8. Arrangements for site visit
9. Close of Hearing