



Planning Inspectorate

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Your Ref: F/YR24/0457/F

Our Ref: 6001284

Date: 27 January 2026

Dear Sir/Madam,

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT) REGULATIONS 2017 (SI 571/2017) ('THE EIA REGULATIONS')

Appeal by: Pathfinder Clean Energy UKDev Ltd

Site Address: Land at Treading Field, Treading Drain, Tydd St. Giles, Cambridgeshire, PE13 4PL

The Inspector has referred to the Secretary of State, pursuant to Regulation 14(2) of the EIA Regulations, the question as to whether the application that is the subject of this appeal is an EIA application within the meaning of the EIA Regulations.

The development proposed, namely the 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, falls within the description at 3 (a) of Schedule 2 to the EIA Regulations. In the opinion of the Secretary of State, and having taken into account the criteria in Schedule 3 to the EIA Regulations, the proposal is likely to have significant effect on the environment for the following reasons:

The proposed development is a solar development covering 140.5ha and the Inspectorate notes cumulative schemes, including Meridian Solar Farm, would be located across a total of 1,196ha in the surrounding area. Given that both the proposed development and cumulative schemes are located on best and most versatile (BMV) agricultural land of grade 2 and 3a and are located in a flat-lying rural landscape, the Inspectorate considers there is potential for cumulative effects from the combined loss of BMV agricultural land and landscape and visual effects.

In accordance with Regulation 14(5) of the EIA Regulations, the Secretary of State hereby directs that the application is an EIA application for the purposes of the Regulations.

The Secretary of State therefore notifies you by this letter that the submission of an Environmental Statement (ES) is required under those Regulations.

Under regulation 28(1) of the EIA Regulations, the relevant planning authority must take steps to secure that this screening direction is placed on the part of the Planning Register which relates to the application that is the subject of this appeal.

You are reminded that, under regulation 14(7) and 14(8) of the EIA Regulations, the Secretary of State shall be under no duty to deal with the appeal unless, within 3 weeks from the date of this notification, appellant writes to inform him that an ES will be provided. A letter should be sent to the above postal or email address and marked for the attention of the Environmental Services Team. Please confirm whether you intend to submit an ES, and if you do, how long you anticipate this will take to prepare.

Under Regulation 2(1) of the EIA Regulations, an ES must contain the information specified in that Regulation. It is recommended that you refer to the EIA Regulations¹ and the online Planning Practice Guidance on EIA² in preparing the ES.

We would draw your attention to court cases which have stressed the need for all the relevant environmental information in an ES to be comprehensive and easily accessible, and to the requirements regarding the publishing and posting of site notices as directed in Regulation 20(1).

You will bear in mind that the Secretary of State's opinion on the likelihood of the development proposed having significant environmental effects is reached only for the purposes of the direction.

A copy of this letter is being sent to the relevant planning authority for information.

Yours faithfully,

Tom Oliver

TOM OLIVER
Operations Lead - Environmental Services Team
(Signed with the authority of the Secretary of State)

cc: Ben Murphy, Third Revolution Projects (Appellant's Agent)

Where applicable, you can use the internet to submit documents, to see information and to check the progress of cases through the Planning Portal. The address of our search page is:

<https://acp.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/>

¹ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2017/571/introduction/made>

² <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/environmental-impact-assessment>