



STONESTREET GREEN SOLAR Post-Acceptance Newsletter July 2024

Introduction

EPL 001 Limited's ('EPL 001') application for a Development Consent Order ('DCO') for the Stonestreet Green Solar project (the 'Project') was accepted for detailed examination by the Planning Inspectorate on 9 July 2024.

EPL 001 submitted its application following consultation and engagement with stakeholders and the local community over a three year period.

The Project comprises the construction, operation, maintenance, and decommissioning of solar photovoltaic ('PV') arrays and energy storage, together with associated infrastructure and an underground cable connection to the existing National Grid Sellindge Substation. The agreed grid connection for the Project will allow the export and import of up to 99.9 MW of electricity to the grid.

The decision to accept the Project means the Planning Inspectorate, acting on behalf of the Government, is satisfied that the consultation process met the required standard and that the application contains the appropriate information to allow the examination of the Project by a panel of independent experts.

This newsletter provides a summary of the Project benefits, an update on key changes made following the Summer 2023 statutory consultation, and information regarding the application, the process going forward and how local residents can participate.



Benefits

The Project will deliver the following key benefits:

- It will meet the urgent national need for secure and affordable low carbon energy infrastructure.
- It will make a meaningful contribution to the UK's legally binding net zero commitment. The Project will generate 35% of the total electricity generated from solar in Kent in 2022.
- It will increase domestic energy security and reduce the market price of electricity. Use of solar to generate power means that more expensive gas generation that relies on imports is not required as regularly.
- The inclusion of battery energy storage, co-located with the solar generation allows the Project to maximise the usable output and deliver the electricity when it is required.
- It will deliver a range of ecological enhancement measures that will result in a biodiversity net gain ('BNG') of at least 100% for habitat units and at least 10% for hedgerow and river units.
- It will result in a reduction in nitrate emissions to the East Stour River as a result of the removal of the Site from intensive arable agricultural use.
- It will introduce new public rights of way to provide new facilities for active travel, recreation and links between communities and developments, including support for wider connections between Ashford and the Otterpool Park development on attractive and safe, well-maintained paths.
- Approximately 132 direct full time equivalent ('FTE') jobs over the 12-month construction period and will generate circa £6.2m in Gross Added Value ('GVA') within the regional construction economy.



Project Updates Post Consultation

Prior to submitting the application EPL 001 carried out comprehensive pre-application consultation on its proposals, including a five-week non-statutory consultation and two five-week statutory consultations during which 16 public events were held.

Following each consultation changes were made to the proposals in response to comments received from statutory bodies and the local community.

In Summer 2023 a second round of statutory consultation was undertaken by EPL 001. The following key changes have been made to the submitted proposals in response to comments received during that consultation:

- removal of panels from the northern part of the Project in Fields 26-29, with this area retained to allow the Project to deliver extensive biodiversity improvements and also ensure that new footpaths in the area to increase local connectivity;
- removal of the Alternative cable route following confirmation that the Project will connect directly into Sellindge substation and other minor amendments to the Project boundary (Order Limits);
- introduction of internal access tracks and water tanks to ensure the Project complies with relevant guidance regarding fire safety issued post-consultation.

The Application

The application is supported by a number of documents, including the Environmental Statement and other documents that are required to support a project of this nature. Documents that provide an overview of the Project include:

1. the **Guide to the Application**, which sets out the structure of the application and the documents that have been submitted with the application;

2. the **Planning Statement**, which considers how the project complies with relevant planning policy, and provides a summary of the overall benefits and impacts of the Project;
3. the **Environmental Statement Non-Technical Summary**, which provides a non-technical summary of the Environmental Statement;
4. the **Consultation Report**, which sets out how we have consulted during the pre-application stage, along with how we have had regard to consultation feedback

Copies of all of the application documents are available on PINS' website <https://national-infrastructure-consenting.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/EN010135> and on the project website, www.stonestreetgreensolar.co.uk

Electronic copies on USB of all Application Documents will be available to access at the Deposit Locations listed below from 25 July 2024:

- Ashford Borough Council Offices, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford TN23 1PL (Monday to Friday: 9am to 4pm; Saturday and Sunday: closed)
- Folkestone and Hythe Council Offices, Civic Centre, Castle Hill Avenue, Folkestone CT20 2QY (Monday to Friday: 10am to 4pm; Saturday and Sunday: closed)
- Ashford Library, Ashford Gateway Plus, Church Road, Ashford, Kent, TN23 1AS
- New Romney Library, 82 High Street, New Romney, TN28 8AU
- Lyminge Library, Station Road, Lyminge, CT18 8HS
- Hythe Library, 1 Stade Street, Hythe, CT21 6BQ

Information on the opening hours for the libraries listed above can be viewed on Kent County Council's website at:

<https://www.kent.gov.uk/leisure-and-community/libraries/visiting-a-library>



Current Project Status

As the application has been accepted by the Planning Inspectorate the Project is now at the Pre-examination stage.

During this period the public is able to register to become an interested party by making a written representation (known as a 'Relevant Representation') to the Planning Inspectorate, providing comments on the submitted application. These are considered by the Planning Inspectorate in deciding the topics that should be considered as part of the examination.

Members of the public who register as an interested party may also have the opportunity to take part in an open floor hearing as part of the examination.

Any members of the public that wish to register to be an interested party have until **12 September 2024** to register and submit their representation.

Details on how to register are available on PINS' website <https://national-infrastructure-consenting.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/EN010135>

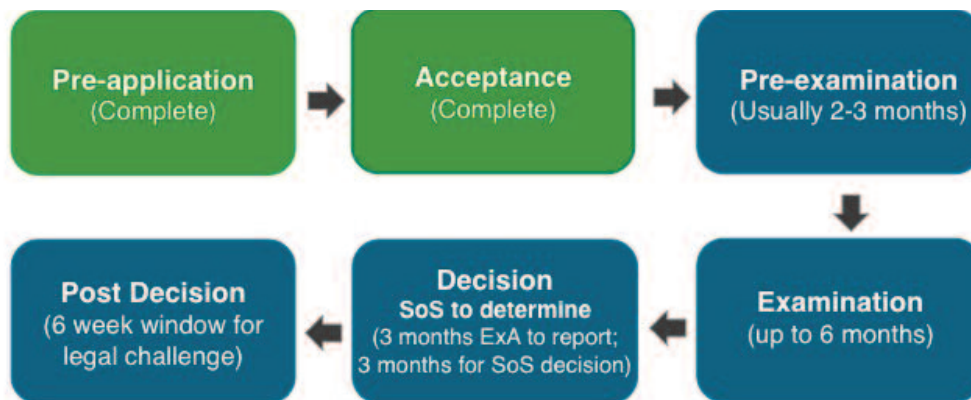
We will also make this information available on our website, www.stonestreetgreensolar.co.uk

If you require guidance on obtaining and completing a Planning Inspectorate Registration and Relevant Representation Form, please telephone the Planning Inspectorate on 0303 444 5000 or email stonestreetgreensolar@planninginspectorate.gov.uk

PINS has guidance on how to get involved in the process here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nationally-significant-infrastructure-projects-advice-note-eight-overview-of-the-nationally-significant-infrastructure-planning-process-for-members/nationally-significant-infrastructure-projects-advice-note-82-how-to-register-to-participate-in-an-examination>

The DCO Process - Overview



Examination

The Planning Inspectorate has appointed an Examining Authority ('ExA') which is the inspector who will carry out the examination.

Towards the end of the Pre-examination period the ExA will issue a formal notification (Rule 6 Letter) which sets the date of the Preliminary Meeting and identifies the key issues that the ExA believes are relevant for examination. The examination will begin the day following the Preliminary Meeting and will last up to six months.

The Examination is primarily a written process but there will be a number of hearings which can be attended by members of the public. We expect the examination to begin in Autumn 2024 with public hearings to be held in the local area on dates to be determined at the Preliminary Meeting.

Following the Examination, the Examining Authority is required to make a recommendation to the Secretary of State. The Secretary of State will then issue their decision.



Contact details

For further information or queries about the Project, please contact the Project team by calling 08081 698335 (free of charge); writing to FREEPOST Stonestreet Green Solar (free of charge; no stamp required); or emailing info@stonestreetgreensolar.co.uk

You can contact our Community Relations Team by using the details below.

Email: info@stonestreetgreensolar.co.uk

Call our Freephone information line: 08081 698335

Visit our website: www.stonestreetgreensolar.co.uk

Send us a letter: FREEPOST Stonestreet Green Solar

You can also follow us on Twitter: @SGS_solar