

**Bassetlaw District Council**

**Planning Committee**

**07 February 2024**

**Report of the Head of Planning and Place**

**Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project Briefing Note;  
One Earth Solar Farm; Southeast Bassetlaw Locality**

Cabinet Member: Identity and Place

Contact: Beverley Alderton-Sambook

**1. Public Interest Test**

- 1.1 The author of this report, Beverley Alderton-Sambook, has determined that the report is not confidential.

**2. Purpose of the Report**

- 2.1 Following Planning Committee on 10 Jan 2024, Members resolved to amend the Planning Scheme of Delegation to include elements of the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) regime to be presented to either Planning Committee or Planning Consultation Group in order that Member input could be had on the Authorities' submission to the project Promoter and Planning Inspectorate as part of the Development Consent Order (DCO) Process.
- 2.2 The DCO process is laid down in the Planning Act 2008. In this process, Bassetlaw District Council (BDC) is not the decision maker but acts as a statutory consultee in the process. This differs to that where the BDC is the Local Planning Authority and thereby decision maker in planning application determinations, which is pursuant to the legislative requirements set out in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
- 2.3 As part of the revised Scheme of Delegation, it was considered that a report as early as practicable on any NSIPs impacting on the district would be tabled to Members in the form of a briefing paper. This is one such briefing for the site known as One Earth Solar Farm which is located in the southeast of Bassetlaw.

**3. Background and Discussion**

- 3.1 This proposal is for a large scale solar farm and battery storage that sits on the boundaries of Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire. It crosses both sides of the River Trent and impacts on the administrative areas of Bassetlaw, West Lindsey, Newark and Sherwood and North Kesteven Councils.

Details of the Proposal

- Proposal is solar farm of up to 740MW (enough to power more than 200,000 homes) ground-mounted solar photovoltaic (PV) panels

- Associated battery energy storage system to store excess electricity generated when low demand
- Connection into High Marnham power station
- Proposed areas of Biodiversity enhancement and landscaping

Site Location

3.2 The initial red edge of the site is located in the south east of Bassetlaw which is the majority of the brown coloured area to the west of the River Trent as shown in the image below. This impacts upon the Bassetlaw villages of Ragnall, Fledborough, Skegby, High Marnham and the wider visual impacts on villages further afield such as Low Marnham, Normanton on Trent, Darlton and wider.



Consenting programme a part of the planning process

3.3 The 2008 Planning Act details the steps a DCO must move through.



3.4 The proposal is at Stage 1, Pre-Application, part of the process which has a number of elements the developer must move through over a period of circa 2 years:

Pre-Application Stage – Applicant (promoter) is the centre of the project

- Non-Statutory consultation with all relevant parties – Occurred between September and November 2023. Developer discusses actions they have undertaken to date being:
  - Letter dropped 1000 homes
  - Knocked on doors
  - 27 Sept – 8 November (6 weeks consultation). They will publish a consultation document available online and various localities in the area
  - Held a number of exhibitions
  - Webinar
  - BDC Member engagement (see appendix for questions and answers)
- Carry out further design work – targeted date Winter 2023
- Statutory consultation with all relevant parties – targeted date Spring 2024
- Application submitted to PINS – targeted date Winter 2024

3.5 There are specific workstreams required of the Authority for this stage and these are detailed below with current progression noted:

Action	Authority Response
Non-Statutory consultation	Initial informal discussions with officers and members, September 2023
Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Scoping Request Submission from PINS	Received 13 November 2023
Issue EIA scoping opinion Deadline set by PINS 11 December 2023	Issued 11 December 2023
Prelim Environmental Information Report (PEIR) - this looks at the effects of the projects on the environment Promoter targeting for PINS submission Nov 2023-Feb 2024, so BDC need to respond prior to this	
28 days to provide comment on the draft Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) Promoter targeting submission to BDC Jan-Feb 2024	
Respond to promoter consultation about the scheme (s42) Promoter targeting Final SoCC Publication, April 2024	
Discuss with promoter about s106 agreements and requirements	
Local authorities are advised to begin work / arrange delegations for Local Impact reports / Statements of Common Ground	
Local authorities are advised to consider and make arrangements for joint working with	

other local authorities	
Agree the terms of any planning performance agreement with the promoter	
Statutory Consultation Commences (s46) Authority response Promoter targeting April –May 2024	
Adequacy of Consultation Report 28 days for Authority to respond	

#### 4. Implications

- a) For Service Users  
Understanding the process that NSIPs move through assists everyone in the engagement process. It is highlighted that it is the developers' responsibility as part of the DCO process to meaningfully engage and that method and analysis will be presented to the Planning Inspectorate as part of the submitted documentation. The production of briefing papers for Members on NSIPs enables a broader understanding of development in the district that can be shared and understood by all.
- b) Strategic & Policy  
The principle of clean green renewable energy production is supported in local and national planning policy. The corporate vision for Bassetlaw is for administrative area to become the greenest, most sustainable district in which to live and work, building on its legacy of energy production, manufacturing and logistics to power the net zero economy.
- c) Financial – Ref 24/203  
As this is a member briefing paper, there are no implications arising.
- d) Legal – Ref 182/02/2023  
As this is a member briefing paper, there are no implications arising.
- e) Human Resources  
As this is a member briefing paper, there are no implications arising.
- f) Climate change, Environmental  
As this is a member briefing paper, there are no implications arising.
- g) Community Safety, Equality and Diversity  
As this is a member briefing paper, there are no implications arising.
- h) GDPR  
As this is a member briefing paper, there are no implications arising.
- i) Whether this is a key decision, and if so the reference number.  
As this is a member briefing paper, this is not a key decision.

#### 5. Options, Risks and Reasons for Recommendations

- 5.1 As a briefing paper, this report is for noting only

#### 6. Recommendations

6.1 As a briefing paper, this report is for noting only

**Background Papers**

**Location**

One Earth Solar Project website

<http://oneearth solar farm.co.uk/>

National Infrastructure Planning Advice Notes

<https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/legislation-and-advice/advice-notes/>

## **Appendix 1; Questions raised as part of the Informal Member Consultation 20 September 2023**

### Questions

Cllr Pulk – Interested in battery storage to even out the demand when required. Asked for further technical detail to be issued.

Response - Agreed.

Cllr Pressley – What happens when there is no power / when the sun isn't as bright?

Response - Still stores energy

Cllr Evans – Has solar PV's and battery storage. It's not about sunshine it's about daylight.

Cllr Stanniland – The power station site is owned by JGPears. Is the connection point owned by them or is it owned by them?

Response - The responsibility for a grid connection lays with the grid. JGPears are the landowners around the substation. JGPears will need to approve cabling across their land. Will be seeking their approval. The DCO process does also allow for voluntary acquisition

Cllr Pressley – what happens when the solar farm finishes? They last about 40 years.

Response - They are classed as temporary use of land and will be restored

Cllr Pidwell – Have you done a survey of the agricultural quality of the land and if so how much BMV will be lost?

Response - In the process now of doing the survey work

BAS – Unsure if members are aware but as this is such a large scheme there are opportunities for the communities to access community fund pots. Can attendees tell us if this will be accessible and will it be tabled with communities?

Response - Yes, it will be discussed and what that could look like at the public exhibitions.

BAS - are all landowners on board with the scheme for the cabling routes?

Response - Don't need a long cable route so all landowners want to be in the scheme. Where there may need additional cable crossings it is on the JGPears land

BAS – are any of the solar PV's to be located on the JGPears land?

Response - None of the solar PV's are located on the JGPears site

JK - There is a much wider NSIP, the North Humber to High Marnham National Grid proposal. Are you aware of that and the issues surrounding the substation and connectivity? There's also a likely new pylon route

Response - One Earth Solar are connecting into the existing substation and are in regular talks with National Grid.