



Botley West Solar Farm

Preliminary Environmental Information Report

Volume 1

Chapter 3: Consenting and Consultation Process

30 November 2023

Approval for issue

Christopher Lecointe

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Prepared by:

RPS
20 Western Avenue,
Milton Park, Abingdon,
Oxfordshire, OX14 4SH
United Kingdom

Prepared for:

Photovolt Development Partners GmbH,
on behalf of SolarFive Ltd.

Contents

3	CONSENTING AND CONSULTATION PROCESS	1
3.1	Overview of Consenting Process	1
3.2	Consultation Process	2
3.2.2	Consultation Undertaken to Date.....	3
3.2.3	Consultation on the Scoping Report.....	3
3.2.4	Statutory Consultation	4
3.3	Next Steps	4

Diagram

Diagram	Figure Title
3.1	Overview of the Application Process

Glossary

Term	Meaning
The Applicant	SolarFive Ltd
The Project	The Botley West Solar Farm (Botley West) Project

Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Meaning
DCO	Development Consent Order
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
ES	Environmental Statement
PEIR	Preliminary Environmental Information Report
PINS	The Planning Inspectorate
PVDP	Photovoltaic Development Partners GmbH
SoCC	Statement of Community Consultation

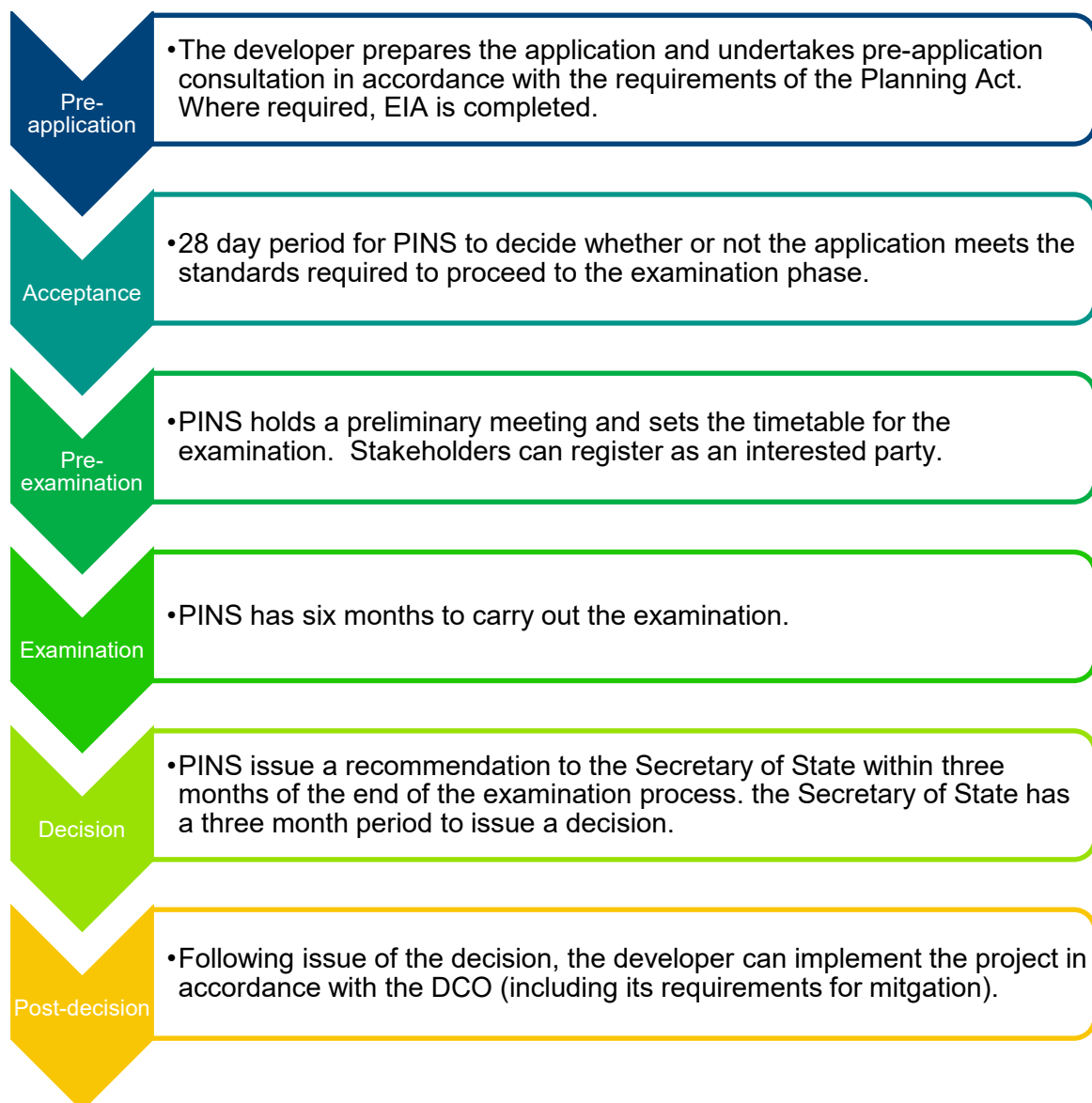
3 Consenting and Consultation Process

3.1 Overview of Consenting Process

3.1.1.1 As set out in Chapter 1: Introduction of the Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR), Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) are defined through the Planning Act 2008.

3.1.1.2 The key stages in the application process are set out below in Diagram 3.1: Overview of the Application Process.

Diagram 3.1 Overview of the Application Process



3.1.1.3 The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is undertaken during the pre-application stage. EIA is an iterative process designed to assess projects as informed through consultation. EIA and the consultation on its results is integral to the delivery of projects of this nature. The views of consultation bodies and the local community are sought through the publication of interim

results of the EIA process in this Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR).

- 3.1.1.4 The culmination of the EIA process including consultation on its preliminary results is the Environmental Statement (ES) that will be provided as part of the application for development consent. All consultation details will be documented in the Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) and the Consultation Report.

3.2 Consultation Process

- 3.2.1.1 As stated above, pre-application consultation is an important requirement for development consent applications. It provides an opportunity for interested parties to comment on a project whilst at a formative stage, and for potential issues to be taken into account and, where necessary, addressed before the application is submitted for examination.

- 3.2.1.2 The Planning Act 2008, the Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed Forms and Procedure) Regulations 2009 and the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017, set out the following requirements for pre-application consultation:

- Notify PINS of the proposed application;
- Produce SoCC in consultation with the relevant local authorities, setting out how the applicant proposes to consult the local community about the Project to meet the requirements of Section 47 of the Planning Act 2008 and which confirms that the proposed application is EIA development and how the Application will be publicised and consulted on;
- Publish the SoCC and undertake community consultation in accordance with the SoCC;
- Identify and consult statutory consultation bodies in accordance with Section 42 of the Planning Act 2008;
- Provide preliminary environmental information (this report) in accordance with Regulation 12 of the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017, forming part of the statutory consultation to be carried out prior to the submission of the application ;
- Ensure sufficient time for consultation with the community and with statutory consultation bodies and have regard to relevant responses to publicity and consultation; and
- Prepare a Consultation Report to accompany the application for development consent, setting out details of the above.

- 3.2.1.3 PINs Advice Note 7 provides guidance on the EIA process, PEIR and ES. With particular reference to the expected format and content of a PEIR, Regulation 12 of the EIA Regulations contains a cross-reference to the expected content of an Environmental Statement as set out at Regulation 14. The PEIR does not need to be a complete draft ES. It should, however, contain information *‘which is reasonably required for the consultation bodies to develop an informed view of the likely significant environmental effects of the development’* (Regulation 12(2)(b) of the EIA Regulations 2017).

3.2.2 Consultation Undertaken to Date

Initial consultation during 2022

- 3.2.2.1 Photovolt Development Partners GmbH (PVDP) on behalf of the Applicant, SolarFive Ltd. (SolarFive) undertook early engagement about the Project with the host authorities, political leaders and statutory consultees from September 2022 onwards, including holding a webinar for elected members prior to the start of the first stage of community consultation.
- 3.2.2.2 PVDP then undertook its first stage of non-statutory community consultation between Thursday 3 November 2022 and Thursday 22 December 2022, including with Parish Councils and key stakeholder groups. This was extended by a week following high levels of feedback from the community and key stakeholders.
- 3.2.2.3 Seven in-person consultation events were held in Woodstock, Long Hanborough, Cassington, Tackley, Cumnor, Eynsham and Begbroke. Two consultation events were added following feedback from the community, with PVDP also holding an online community webinar in early December.

Feedback so far

- 3.2.2.4 Engagement during the consultation period resulted in over 620 attendees at in-person consultation events and 56 attendees on the community webinar. Feedback was received throughout this consultation period, including 767 completed feedback forms (663 digital and 104 hard copies) and 316 pieces of written feedback through the Project communications channels. This feedback has been analysed by the project team and informed the refinements in project design. The Project had published a Phase One Consultation Summary Report in July 2023 that captured the feedback received at the first stage of consultation and set out how this will be considered in the evolving design of Botley West Solar Farm.

3.2.3 Consultation on the Scoping Report

- 3.2.3.1 This PEIR reflects the Secretary of State's Scoping Opinion provided by PINS on 24 July 2023 and the consultation feedback within it. In addition to the consultation meetings undertaken to date (which will continue through the pre-application phase), the PEIR will form the basis of formal consultation with statutory bodies as part of the wider statutory consultation. This PEIR has responded to the key points raised in the scoping report and these details have been provided in individual topic sections within Volume 1. In doing so each specialist topic area reported in this PEIR in Volume 1 includes;
- the relevant feedback received to date from consultation;
 - the results of Scoping;
 - data that has been collected so far; and
 - data that remains to be collected and any uncertainties over the preliminary results presented.

3.2.4 Statutory Consultation

3.2.4.1 As stated above in Section 3.2, this phase of the pre-application process involves the provision of a SoCC and PEIR on behalf of the Applicant.

3.2.4.2 The SoCC (which was reviewed in liaison with the host authorities) sets out the structure and approach of statutory consultation and this PEIR summarises the results of the EIA to date. In doing so the SoCC will set out;

- the details of the Project;
- details of the relevant planning process;
- details of how the Applicant will engage, consult and help the local community to understand how particular aspects of the proposed development may impact them. This will include details of how the information will be disseminated;
- details on how the Applicant will publish the required PEIR relating to the Project; and
- details on how people can provide responses to the Applicants consultation and engage with the Applicant to help shape the proposed development.

3.2.4.3 The evolution of the Project reported at this stage reflects feedback received at the non-statutory consultation and some of the findings from EIA scoping stages. All consultation materials tie-in with and support the information provided in this PEIR.

3.3 Next Steps

3.3.1.1 The details of the Project will be further refined based on the responses to consultation with the community and with the statutory consultee bodies. The consultation responses will be used to inform the final application for development consent and the ES.

3.3.1.2 The application will be accompanied by a Consultation Report, which will set out details of the consultation undertaken, the responses to consultation and how this has informed the application.