cearn
solar farm

Programme Document

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1 Introduction

1.1 Document Purpose

1.1.1 Planning Inspectorate (PINS) advice and government guidance require the production and submission of a Programme Document for Development Consent Order (DCO) applications which lays out the proposed timetable and activities during the pre-application stage. This document fulfils that requirement.

1.1.2 Cearn Solar Farm is currently within the DCO pre-application process.

1.1.3 Following the Inception Meeting with PINS on 4 August 2026, Cearn Solar Farm Limited (the 'Applicant') will host and maintain the agreed Programme Document on its website and update it as necessary during the pre-application period.

1.2 Summary of Cearn Solar Farm

1.2.1 Cearn Solar Farm Limited is a subsidiary of Telis Energy UK, a green energy company that is transforming the UK energy landscape with innovative energy solutions, to help solve grid challenges. Telis Energy UK is part of the Telis Energy Group, a European green energy development platform with a target development pipeline of 10 gigawatts (GW) across Europe by 2030. Further information regarding the applicant is available at https://telisenergy.co.uk/.

1.2.2 Cearn Solar Farm is a proposed new solar farm with a generating capacity of >100MW comprising solar photovoltaic panels and associated infrastructure including on-site substation and battery energy storage system (BESS), collector compounds, access tracks, fencing, landscape enhancement and environmental mitigation (the 'Proposed Development').

1.2.3 It is anticipated that the Proposed Development will have an installed capacity of greater than 100MW, thus exceeding the relevant threshold to qualify as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) for which a DCO is required.

1.2.4 The site (the 'Site') of the Proposed Development is located within Vale of the White Horse District, Oxfordshire and comprises three main development areas, situated to the south of Garford, east of Charney Basset, north of West Hanney, south of Goosey and north-east of Baulking.

1.2.5 The Applicant is in the process of securing a connection with the National Energy System Operator (NESO) which will allow the export of electricity into National Grid Electricity Transmission's (NGET) Farmoor Substation, located approximately 12km north-east of the Site. Work is currently ongoing to define corridors within which the grid connection could be installed via underground cables. It is expected that a single defined grid connection route will be assessed in EIA accompanying the DCO application.

1.2.6 The application for development consent will be submitted to PINS, who will appoint an inspector(s) (the Examining Authority (ExA)) to assess and examine the application and make a recommendation to the Secretary of State for Department of Energy Security and Net Zero (SoS). The ExA will examine the application and make a recommendation to the SoS. The SoS will determine the application in accordance with the policies contained within the Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1), National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3), and National Policy Statement for Electricity Networks Infrastructure (EN-5) and a Local Impact Report(s) produced by the local authorities, and any other matters the SoS considers important and relevant. EN-1 sets out the policy tests that an energy NSIP must meet to be granted consent. NPS EN-1 states that low carbon energy generating infrastructure, such as a solar farm, is of Critical National Priority (CNP). The Applicant will also give due consideration to the requirements of EN-3 and EN-5.

1.3 Level of PINS Pre-application Service

1.3.1 The Applicant intends to proceed with the Tier 1: Basic service, considering the nature and complexities of the Scheme. The Applicant is an experienced developer of renewable energy and grid connection infrastructure, with an experienced project team that has successfully delivered similarly scaled solar Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) in the UK.

1.3.2 The Applicant and its project team have the experience, knowledge, and tools available to prepare a submission that can be accepted for examination and examined within a proportionate period within the statutory six months maximum.

1.3.3 There is also an established policy framework under the relevant National Policy Statements, providing clear policy guidance via EN-1, EN-2 and EN-3, all of which have been designated by the SoS.

1.3.4 Although the Applicant is opting to proceed with the Tier 1 Basic service, the Applicant intends to develop a number of documents listed in the PINS Pre-application Prospectus. These may include:

- Use of pre-application Principal Areas of Disagreement Summary Statements (PADSS), informed by Issues Trackers shared and agreed with consultees;
- Production of a Policy Compliance Document outlining how the Proposed Development complies with policy; and
- Production of a Design Approach Document outlining the good design principles adopted in respect of the Proposed Development.

1.3.5 Although the Applicant is not seeking a 'fast-track procedure' in respect of the DCO application, it will seek to expedite the application as much as possible (as resolve key issues as quickly as possible) in order to achieve shortened timescales for: the pre-examination period; the examination period and recommendation period.

1.4 Document Contents

1.4.1 This document details the following information:

- Timetable of the Pre-Application process including the planned DCO application submission date;
- Key issues and activities including main project issues for resolution and risks and the plan to resolve or manage them;
- The plan for engaging stakeholders and details of the financial support to be proposed for those stakeholders; and
- Measures to minimise programme risk.

2 Pre-Application Programme

2.1 Overview

2.1.1 Cearn Solar Farm is at an early stage of development. However, an initial programme has been developed with the aim of achieving the key activities required prior to the submission of the DCO application. This section summarises the activities that have taken place to date and forecasts the remaining activities required to achieve the successful submission and acceptance of the DCO application.

2.2 Project Programme

2.2.1 It is the Applicant's intention to submit the DCO application in or around **September 2027**.

2.2.2 Table 1 summarises the key milestone dates for the application and takes into account the recently published NSIP Government guidance which comes into force on 24th July 2026, which reflect the changes made to the pre-application stage pursuant to the Planning and Infrastructure Act 2025.

2.2.3 The dates provided below are subject to change and will be updated accordingly in subsequent versions of this document.

Table 2-1: Cearn Solar Farm Key Pre-Application Activity Dates

Milestone Description	Forecast Dates
Public Project Launch	September 2026
Stage 1 Consultation	September - October 2026
EIA Scoping Report submission	October 2026
Receipt of EIA Scoping Opinion	December 2026
Stage 2 Consultation	February – March 2027
DCO Application Submission	September 2027

3 Issues and Activities

3.1.1 The Applicant has assembled an experienced team of technical consultants and will be undertaking a suite of technical feasibility studies and environmental baseline surveys, in order to inform both the design process and the identification and assessment of the likely environmental effects of Cearn Solar Farm.

3.1.2 The Applicant, will through the submission of an EIA Scoping Request in October 2026, be seeking to confirm the scope of the Environmental Statement (ES) and ensure that all necessary environmental baseline surveys have been commissioned.

3.1.3 Table 3-1 below identifies the Applicant's view on key considerations that may require resolution with stakeholders throughout the pre-application stage and the associated next steps. The table is not exhaustive, and there will be other environmental matters, such as noise and vibration, air quality and dust, and ground conditions, which will require consultation with statutory stakeholders; however, Table 3-1 focuses on the key issues and activities.

3.1.4 The Applicant intends to submit with the DCO application a 'Potential Main Issues for Examination' (PMIE) document

Table 3-1: Cearn Solar Farm Pre-Application Potential Main Issues for Resolution

Topic	Status	Potential Mitigation Steps
Ecology and Biodiversity	There are no significant ecological designations that apply to the Site; however, site specific ecological surveys will be undertaken, the results of which will be reflected in the design.	• Pre-application engagement with Natural England, Vale of White Horse District Council (VoWHDC) and Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) to discuss survey scope and biodiversity design. • Ongoing ecological surveys and assessment to inform design.
Hydrology and Flood Risk	The majority of the Site falls within Flood Zone 1, however, several field parcels fall within Flood Zones 2 and 3.	• Engagement with the Environment Agency, OCC (as main Lead Local Flood Authority) and relevant Internal Drainage Boards. • Ongoing assessment of water resources, including analysis

		of flood data and modelling to inform design.
Landscape and Visual	Potential for effects upon local landscape character and visual amenity, noting the Site is not covered by any statutory or local landscape designations.	• Consultation with VoWHDC and OCC to agree the approach, methodology, viewpoints and study area. • Ongoing surveys and assessment to inform design.
Cultural Heritage and Archaeology	The Site is located in close proximity to several Listed Buildings. The potential for unknown archaeological remains has not been fully tested yet and remains ongoing.	• Ongoing engagement with Historic England, VoWHDC, and OCC heritage and archaeological officers. • Geophysical surveys and walkover site visit scheduled and assessment ongoing to inform design.
Best and Most Versatile (BMV) agricultural land	The Site is partially located within areas which are provisionally mapped as Best and Most Versatile (BMV) soil.	• Agricultural Land Classification surveys scheduled and assessment ongoing to inform design. • Consultation with Natural England, VoWHDC and OCC to discuss the Agricultural Land Classification methodology, associated results and early design approach.
Cumulative Effects	The Site is in close proximity to the proposed White Horse Reservoir.	• Ongoing engagement with VoWHDC and Thames Water. • Continued engagement with other projects in the local area to understand potential interrelationships and mitigation measures to minimise cumulative effects.
Grid Connection	The Grid Connection Corridor will extend north-east of the Site via underground cables connecting into NGET's proposed Botley West 400kV substation, known as Farmoor Substation.	• Ongoing engagement with relevant stakeholders including landowners, VoWHDC and National Grid.

4 Approach to Stakeholder Engagement

4.1 Overview

4.1.1 The Applicant's approach to engaging with relevant stakeholders during the pre-application period and beyond will focus on proportionate, targeted and constructive communication and collaboration. In line with the updated NSIP guidance[1], the Applicant will use the pre-application stage to identify key issues early, gather useful local intelligence and inform the ongoing development of the Proposed Development.

4.1.2 The Applicant's approach will focus on meaningful dialogue with those most likely to be affected by, or have a technical interest in, the Proposed Development. Key bodies for engagement are expected to include:

- Planning Inspectorate;
- Relevant statutory bodies and undertakers;
- Host and neighbouring local authorities;
- Elected Representatives;
- Persons with an interest in the land; and
- Community (inc. community groups, local residents and businesses).

4.1.3 Each of the above stakeholders will have different interests in the Proposed Development and, as such, the Applicant will tailor the approach to engagement as appropriate. In this section, the Applicant has set out how it proposes to engage with these different groups.

- The Applicant proposes to maintain a live record of stakeholder engagement and key issues raised during the pre-application stage. This will inform the ongoing design process, the approach to mitigation and the identification of matters that may need to be addressed before submission or before examination.
- An Issues Tracker document will also be produced to consolidate the relevant areas of disagreement during the pre-application phase to inform the PMIE (which will be . produced and submitted with the DCO application.)
- Table 4-1 outlines a high-level summary of key stakeholders, the rationale for engagement and potential engagement methods.
- Future iterations of this Programme Document will include:

[1] Planning Act 2008: Guidance on preparing an application: Part 1 - Pre-application steps (July 2026)

- a more summary of how the applicant is engaging with the various bodies, including details of any recurring meetings and/ or working groups;
- a statement setting out which bodies the Applicant expects will produce pre-application 'principal areas of disagreement summary statements'; and
- an indication of the degree to which the applicant expects for specific issues raised by a statutory body to be resolved before the application is submitted.

Table 4-1: Approach to Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder	Potential Methods of Engagement
Planning Inspectorate	• Direct engagement • Written briefings • Project Update Meetings
Relevant statutory bodies and undertakers	• Direct engagement through relevant technical lead(s) • Written Briefings • Targeted technical meetings and/or workshops • Preparation of Statements of Common Ground (SoCG), as appropriate • Evidence Plans, as appropriate • Project Website
Host Authorities	• Direct engagement and ongoing liaison with relevant technical leads • Written Briefings • Targeted technical meetings and/or workshops • Invitation to public engagement activities • Project Website • Preparation of SoCG, as appropriate
Neighbouring Authorities	• Written Briefings • Targeted meetings, as appropriate • Invitation to public engagement activities • Project Website
Elected Representatives	• Direct engagement • Written briefings • Briefings ahead of public launch where appropriate • Invitation to public engagement activities • Project Website
Persons with an interest in the land	• Direct engagement • Invitation to public engagement activities • Written correspondence

	• Project Website
Community (inc. community groups, local residents and businesses)	• Direct engagement • Newsletter • Invitation to public engagement activities • Targeted meetings and/or workshops • Parish Council briefings • Near-neighbour engagement • Project Website

4.2 Financial Support to Stakeholders

4.2.1 The Applicant will seek to enter into Planning Performance Agreements (PPAs) with host authorities, as well as cost recovery agreements with key stakeholders to facilitate a smooth and more efficient pre-application process. These agreements should help to secure the necessary resourcing and support to effectively inform the relevant bodies of detailed and relevant aspects of the Proposed Development and help to foster a co-operative and constructive relationship.

5 Identification and Management of Pre-application Risks

5.1.1 The project manager for the Applicant monitors consenting risks (including pre-application) on an ongoing basis, allowing for the early detection and resolution of obstacles that could impede progress. This person is responsible for monitoring and managing all aspects of the risk management process, including:

- The development and regular review of a risk register;
- Ensuring there are adequate resources for managing risks;
- The continual monitoring of the project to identify any new or changed risks; and
- Regular reporting on the status of risks to internal senior management.

5.1.2 Risks are analysed and evaluated according to the likelihood they will be realised and the level of seriousness/impact they will have if they do occur. Measures that will be taken to reduce risk include:

- Early engagement with key stakeholders to reduce the potential for additional survey requirements;
- Working closely with landowners to minimise delays associated with field crops and agreeing land access;
- Ongoing monitoring to identify any additional emerging schemes in the local area suitably early in the process; and
- Ensuring that in-house engineering concept design work is suitably progressed to provide a high degree of certainty around the draft project parameters and draft Order Limits at consultation and application preparation stages.
- This Programme Document will be updated by the Applicant to record key project risks and an explanation of how they are being tracked and managed throughout the duration of the pre-application process.