

# RWE

## **Pear tree Hill Solar Farm Programme Document**

**August 2024**

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 What is Peartree Hill Solar Farm?

- 1.1.1 RWE Renewables UK Solar & Storage Ltd (“the Applicant”) is proposing to submit an application to the Secretary of State for the Department of Energy Security and Net Zero for a Development Consent Order (“DCO”) to construct, operate and decommission a new solar energy and storage facility with an export capacity of 320 megawatts (MW) known as Peartree Hill Solar Farm.
- 1.1.2 Peartree Hill Solar Farm will be developed on farmland to the east of Beverley in the administrative boundary of East Riding of Yorkshire.
- 1.1.3 The main components of Peartree Hill Solar Farm include:
- Solar photovoltaic modules and associated mounting structures;
  - On-site supporting equipment including inverters, transformers, and switchgear;
  - A Battery Energy Storage System (“BESS”);
  - Two on-site substations to connect the solar photovoltaic modules to distribution and transmission networks;
  - Low voltage and 33 kilovolts (“kV”) interconnecting cabling within the land areas to connect the solar photovoltaic modules together and to connect the solar photovoltaic modules to the two on-site substations;
  - 132 kV underground cabling connecting the on-site substations to the National Grid Creyke Beck Substation;
  - Associated infrastructure including access tracks, parking, security measures, gates and fencing, lighting, drainage infrastructure and storage containers;
  - Works at National Grid Creyke Beck Substation to facilitate the connection of the 132 kV underground cabling in to the Substation;
  - Highways works to facilitate access for construction vehicles;
  - Environmental mitigation and enhancement measures; and
  - Temporary development during the construction phase including construction compounds, parking and temporary access roadways.

## 1.2 Document Purpose

- 1.2.1 National Infrastructure Planning Guidance – ‘Planning Act 2008: Pre-application stage for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects’ and ‘Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: 2024 Pre-application Prospectus’ requires the production and publication of a Programme Document setting out the timetable and activities undertaken during pre-application on a DCO project.
- 1.2.2 This Programme Document has been prepared to support the pre-application stage of the DCO. It is a live document and will be updated by the Applicant as necessary until the submission of the DCO. This document will be published on the Applicants website at <https://peartreehillsolar.co.uk/>.
- 1.2.3 Peartree Hill Solar Farm is currently part way through the pre-application process. At the time of issue, the project has just finished its Statutory Consultation.
- 1.2.4 This Programme Document for Peartree Hill Solar Farm has been prepared in accordance with National Infrastructure Planning Guidance.

## 2 Pre-Application Timetable

### 2.1 Timetable of Milestones

2.1.1 The main milestones and dates during the DCO pre-application period are set out below in **Table 1**. Those highlighted in green are completed milestones. The remaining dates are forecasted.

**Table 1: Peartree Hill Solar Farm main milestones and dates**

<b>Milestones</b>	<b>Actual / Forecast Dates</b>
Launch	September 2023
Non-Statutory Consultation	6 October – 9 November 2023
EIA Scoping Report Submitted	9 November 2023
EIA Scoping Opinion received	20 December 2023
Statement of Community Consultation published	15 May 2023
Main Statutory Consultation	15 May – 26 June 2024
Adequacy of Consultation milestone	3 months prior to submission (Mid-August 2024)
Draft application documents to the Planning Inspectorate for early review	September 2024
<b>Application Submission</b>	<b>November 2024</b>

### 3 Main Issues for Resolution

3.1.1 **Table 2** below sets out the Applicant’s current view of the potential main issues for resolution in respect of the DCO application and the activities being undertaken to resolve those issues.

**Table 2: Main areas of potential issue and resolution**

Potential Main Issue	Summary of Issue	Activity to reach resolution
Biodiversity	Potential effects on ecologically sensitive areas across the site.	<p><b>Further work:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Completion of surveys, such as passage bird surveys, appropriate targeted species surveys at watercourse crossing points, and Preliminary Ecological Appraisal survey of the cable routes.</li> <li>- Biodiversity Net Gain assessment and calculation to be submitted with the DCO application.</li> <li>- Mitigation and enhancement proposals to be developed through ongoing engagement with stakeholders, such as Natural England, East Riding of Yorkshire Council and Yorkshire Wildlife Trust.</li> </ul> <p><b>Overview of proposed mitigation:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Existing habitats to be retained as much as possible.</li> <li>- Ecological mitigation and enhancement areas to be incorporated into the design to provide habitat for ground nesting birds, wintering birds and a range of other species.</li> <li>- Where appropriate, nectar-rich wildflowers and meadow grassland proposed to be planted underneath and between solar PV modules.</li> <li>- Minimum offsets from watercourses/ditches, woodland, trees and hedgerows to be incorporated in the design layout.</li> </ul>
Flood risk	Potential effects on flood risk and drainage at the site and in the surrounding area.	<p><b>Further work:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Completion of Flood Risk Assessment (“FRA”), including drainage strategy, and its supporting hydraulic modelling informed by ongoing</li> </ul>

		<p>engagement with consultees such as Environment Agency and Beverley and North Holderness Internal Drainage Board to confirm embedded mitigation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- FRA to include an assessment of climate change effects on flood risk posed to the Site for Peartree Hill Solar Farm's proposed lifetime.</li> </ul> <p><b>Overview of proposed mitigation:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Solar PV modules and vulnerable infrastructure to be raised above derived flood levels (with no likely resultant significant effects on floodplain storage).</li> <li>- Easements from watercourses and flood defences to be incorporated in accordance with Beverley and North Holderness Internal Drainage Board and Environment Agency guidance.</li> <li>- Dispersed hardstanding or containerised infrastructure designed to direct rainfall to the ground locally. Where a concentration of containers or hardstanding is proposed, such as the substation compounds, a more formal drainage strategy may be embedded within the designs.</li> <li>- Where appropriate, it is proposed to form site access tracks from permeable materials.</li> </ul>
<p>Landscape and Visual</p>	<p>Potential effects on visual amenity for local receptors</p>	<p><b>Further work:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Completion of Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment informed by ongoing engagement with East Riding Yorkshire Council's appointed landscape consultant.</li> <li>- Outline Landscape Masterplan to be submitted with the DCO application.</li> </ul> <p><b>Overview of proposed mitigation:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Development of Design Principles to embed landscape and visual mitigation into the design layout.</li> <li>- Bespoke buffers/offsets, e.g. from the River Hull and around certain residential properties, and new planting incorporated into the design</li> </ul>

		layout to minimise landscape and visual impacts.
Cultural Heritage	Potential effects on nearby heritage assets and on-site archaeology	<p><b>Further work:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Completion of surveys and assessments as part of ongoing consultation with Historic England and the East Riding of Yorkshire Council and Hull City Council archaeological advisor.</li> </ul> <p><b>Overview of proposed mitigation:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Offsets to minimise impacts on the setting of nearby Scheduled Monuments.</li> <li>- No solar infrastructure within the footprint or within a defined radius of identified possible below-ground remains.</li> </ul>
Agricultural Land Classification ("ALC")	Potential effects on Best and Most Versatile ("BMV") land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- An ALC report will be submitted with the DCO application.</li> <li>- Further consultation with statutory consultees, such as East Riding of Yorkshire Council, will be undertaken in relation to the ALC survey results and the proposed Outline Soil Management Plan as part of the ongoing assessment that will inform the ES.</li> <li>- A review of the cumulative availability of BMV land in the region will be undertaken following consultation and agreement of the assessment approach. A cumulative assessment of BMV land in the region will be presented in the ES.</li> </ul>



## 4 Stakeholder Engagement

- 4.1.1 The Applicant has taken a proactive and inclusive approach to engagement with stakeholders and the local community during the DCO pre-application period.
- 4.1.2 The Applicant has conducted a two-phase consultation process. The initial non-statutory consultation served to introduce the local community to Peartree Hill Solar Farm and to provide an early opportunity to shape the evolving design. The later statutory consultation was delivered in accordance with the requirements of the Planning Act 2008, and provided an opportunity for both the public and statutory consultees to provide further comments on the progressed project design.
- 4.1.3 Key local stakeholders, including all relevant parish councils, host and neighbouring MPs and key East Riding of Yorkshire councillors, were informed of the proposals ahead of the non-statutory consultation and statutory consultation, with invitations to be briefed/updated on the proposed development. Meetings were conducted from September 2023, through the non-statutory consultation period to November 2023 and then in the run-up and during statutory consultation.
- 4.1.4 Prescribed parties were informed of the non-statutory and statutory consultation. As part of the development of the technical design and environmental assessment work, engagement has taken place with a number of statutory parties since Summer 2023, including East Riding of Yorkshire Council, Historic England, Environment Agency and Natural England. This engagement helped shape the PEIR and will inform the Environmental Statement.
- 4.1.5 Regarding landowners, as part of the initial project development, the Applicant identified and engaged with landowners on the proposed parcels which could host the solar farm. As part of the non-statutory consultation, a number of indicative cable route corridor options were presented. Landowners within these corridors were identified and sent a letter at the start of the non-statutory consultation informing them that one of the presented options passes through land they own or occupy and invited them to comment on the proposals.
- 4.1.6 Prior to the statutory consultation, the Applicant carried out diligent inquiry in order to identify all persons who fall within the categories set out in section 44 of the Planning Act 2008 for the Proposed Development. All land interests have been consulted about the proposed scheme in accordance with section 42 of the Planning Act, which will be described in the Consultation Report.
- 4.1.7 Understanding the views of the local community, local authorities and other stakeholders has been instrumental in refining and enhancing the project as it has progressed.

- 4.1.8 The Applicant is currently analysing responses received as part of the statutory consultation and will produce a Consultation Report as part of the DCO application.
- 4.1.9 The Applicant will continue to engage statutory bodies on any outstanding issues, this includes a monthly meeting with the East Riding of Yorkshire Council.
- 4.1.10 Near submission of the DCO application, the Applicant will publish a ‘you said, we did’ document outlining how the feedback received at statutory consultation has informed the Proposed Development. This will be uploaded to the project website and emailed to key stakeholders and all of those who took part in the consultation.

## **4.2 Financial Support Agreements**

- 4.2.1 The Applicant has entered into a Planning Performance Agreement with the host Local Authority, East Riding of Yorkshire Council. The purpose of this agreement is to help provide the necessary support and resource that the East Riding of Yorkshire Council needs to constructively engage in the DCO pre-application process.

## **4.3 Statement of Community Consultation**

- 4.3.1 The Statement of Community Consultation (“SoCC”) can be found on the Peartree Hill Solar Farm website here: <https://peartreehillsolar.co.uk/documents/>.
- 4.3.2 The purpose of this document is to set out how the Applicant proposed consulting people living in the vicinity of the Peartree Hill Solar Farm project site about the proposals. East Riding of Yorkshire Council was consulted on the draft version of the document for 28 days.
- 4.3.3 Due to the proximity to the cable route, Hull City Council was also consulted on the SoCC.
- 4.3.4 The Adequacy of Consultation Milestone Report and Consultation Report will outline in detail how the SoCC was prepared, consulted and then how the statutory consultation was delivered in accordance with its commitments.

## 5 Main Risks to the Pre-Application Stage

- 5.1.1 The Applicant regularly reviews any potential risks that arise during the pre-application stage for Peartree Hill Solar Farm and will continue to do so in considering the consultation feedback responses and through engagement with stakeholders and land owners.
- 5.1.2 The Applicant is not currently aware of any risks that would prevent the Applicant from achieving the pre-application stage for Peartree Hill Solar Farm.

