

Sent by email only: littlehalepc@gmail.com

FAO: Debbie Scott
Little Hale Parish Council
9 Forum Way
Sleaford NG34 7FF

13 October 2023

Dear Ms Scott,

Planning Application: Proposed Development for a Photovoltaic Solar Array, Grid Connection, Access Improvements and Ancillary Development on Land at Little Hale Fen, North Kesteven, Lincolnshire

We are writing with regard to the above planning application for a Photovoltaic Solar Array, Grid Connection, Access Improvements and Ancillary Development on Land at Little Hale Fen, North Kesteven, Lincolnshire.

We have been made aware that our application proposals will be discussed during the Parish Council meeting on 17th October 2023. We thought it would be helpful to provide a short summary of the proposed development and set out why we believe the proposals should be supported.

The proposed development is cross-boundary with the solar farm and construction access being located within North Kesteven District Council (Application Ref. 23/1021/FUL), and part of the buried cable route being located within Boston Borough Council (Application Ref. B/23/0300).

Our proposal would provide a solar farm with an export capacity of up to 49.995MW of electricity (MWe) during peak operation, with a buried grid connection cable to National Grid's Bicker Fen Substation running along the access track to Little Hale Drove and then east towards South Forty Foot Drain within the public highway. Construction access to the Site would be taken from the A17, from the north, along Carterplot Road and Great Hale Drove to Mountain Farm. A temporary haul road would be constructed from Mountain Farm to Little Hale Drove and this would ensure construction vehicles do not pass through the villages of Heckington, Great Hale, Little Hale or Helpringham. The decision to do this has been taken to minimise the disruption to the local community during construction. The location and the extent of the proposal are illustrated in the enclosed Planning Drawing 3059-01-13 (Site Location Plan) with the temporary access track indicated in green.

Benefits of the Proposed Development

- In combination with other large-scale solar and electricity storage projects across the UK, our proposal is essential to enable the UK to achieve its 2030 interim target and to decarbonise the electricity system by 2035, *en route* to achieving the legally binding net zero target by 2050.

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- The benefits of this particular location are its proximity to a viable point of connection and immediately available grid connection capacity. New grid connection requests across the UK are now typically only available into the 2030s. The proposal would utilise the available grid capacity at National Grid's Bicker Fen Substation helping to meet the significant local and national need for renewable energy by 2025.
- The proposed development could contribute approximately 50 GWh's of renewable energy generation per annum to the National Grid in North Kesteven and provide enough electricity to supply up to approximately 20,000 homes in District, equivalent to approximately 40% of existing houses.
- The project would generate additional employment during both the construction/decommissioning stage and the operational phase of the development. AGR is committed to providing education, training and employment opportunities to local people wherever possible on all of its projects.
- AGR prioritises the use of local firms for the supply of materials and services to increase the local economic benefits of its projects.
- Solar development would not result in the permanent loss of agricultural land and agricultural activities such as sheep grazing would continue throughout the operational life of the solar farm development.
- The proposal would assist in diversifying income streams for the farm that would lease the land to AGR Solar 3 Limited. The change in land use would provide an opportunity to diversify farming activity through sheep grazing and the establishment of a new flock on the farm land holding.
- The project would contribute to the future and long-term viability of the farm whilst providing much-needed funding to enable the farm to modernise and adapt to funding changes and climate change adaptation as well as supporting the farm to reach its own net zero emissions aspirations.
- Significant net biodiversity gains associated with the landscape mitigation proposals, which include a significant increase in new hedgerow planting, wildflower meadows and pesticide free management practices within the solar farm area.
- The layout of the proposed development has been developed carefully to ensure long term benefits in respect of landscape fabric, soils quality and biodiversity. The design measures provide buffers to existing ditches/boundary features and establish boundary hedgerows and woodland blocks to restore the landscape fabric of the area whilst at the same time screening the development from the wider countryside. In addition, wildflower species rich grassland would be developed within the buffers to ditches and hedgerows to enhance biodiversity. Grassland would be established under the panels to support low intensity grazing and to keep the site in agricultural production.

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To conclude, there is an immediate need for renewable energy generation in response to the Climate Change Emergency and the Government's target to achieve Net Zero by 2050. The proposed development would make an important contribution towards meeting these requirements, whilst delivering significant environmental, economic and social benefits.

AGR is keen to work with the communities local to its projects and we therefore welcome your Parish Council questions, comments and feedback on our planning application. We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you and hope we can work together to ensure the proposed project has a positive impact on the local community and one that can be supported by the Parish Council.

Yours sincerely,



Luke Rogers,
on behalf of AGR Solar 3 Limited (The Applicant)