



Hedgehog Grove Solar Farm Ltd
19th Floor
10 Upper Bank Street
Canary Wharf
London
E14 5BF

Hedgehog Grove Solar Farm- Withdrawal of DCO Application

The Planning Inspectorate
Temple Quay House
2, The Square
Bristol
BS1 6PN

PINS ref: EN0110021

By email to: HedgehogGroveSolar@planninginspectorate.gov.uk

15 August 2025

Dear Sarah Norris,

On behalf of the Applicant, Hedgehog Grove Solar Farm Ltd, I write to formally withdraw the Proposed Development comprising a solar generating station with a maximum export capacity of 98 megawatts (MW) and associated infrastructure from the Pre-Application Stage of the Development Consent Order (DCO) consenting regime for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIP).

Our reasoning for this withdrawal request is driven by a combination of factors, including the consideration of legislative changes, timescales, costs and democratic accountability.

The applicable legislative change relevant to the Proposed Development is an increase in the NSIP thresholds for solar projects. The Infrastructure Planning (Onshore Wind and Solar Generating stations) Order 2025 is a statutory instrument which has been used to amend the NSIP thresholds of solar projects in the Planning Act 2008 from a maximum export capacity of 50MW to 100MW. The order was made on 9 June 2025 and will come into force on 31 December 2025.

The forthcoming change to the NSIP threshold for solar projects presents an opportunity for the Proposed Development (with a maximum export capacity of 98MW) to instead be consented via the Town and County Planning Act (TCPA) consenting regime.

The project team have carefully considered the comparative options of the project remaining as a NSIP subject to the DCO consenting regime or a transition to the TCPA consenting regime. One of the factors favouring the TCPA consenting regime is a shortened preparation phase (compared to the DCO consenting regime) which increases the likelihood of the project meeting time-limited targets in relation to submission of a planning application and a future energisation date.

It is important that these targets are met to ensure that the project will contribute materially to the UK's decarbonisation pathway by providing low-cost, zero-carbon generation during the 2027–2030 window of heightened capacity need identified in NESO's Future Energy Scenarios. The project will supply zero-carbon generation which supports NESO's Future Energy Scenarios capacity need.

A further benefit of the TCPA consenting regime is that it is more democratically accountable than the current DCO consenting regime. As an alternative to the current DCO application, the Applicant is seeking to prepare a cross-boundary planning application to be submitted to Uttlesford District Council (UDC) and Braintree District Council (BDC); therefore, any decision would be made at a local level. This contrasts with the current DCO application which is subject to a national level of decision making.

Democratic accountability is at the heart of the project team's approach, with the Applicant placing a high value on fostering strong relationships with the local community and ensuring the direct involvement of stakeholders impacted by the project.

In line with this commitment, the company intends to, for instance, continue to organize Community Liaison Group (CLG) meetings, even though such meetings are not strictly required under the TCPA regulatory framework.

The decision to maintain these meetings reflects the Applicant's proactive approach to developing the project in accordance with the feedback received from local residents and authorities. The company intends to maintain a dialogue to address local needs and expectations, while simultaneously reducing the risk of potential objections or disputes during the planning and implementation phases.

Notwithstanding this move to a local level consenting route, we are grateful to the Planning Inspectorate, and the many stakeholders that have worked with us, engaged with us and provided feedback on the DCO application to date. As we move forward, this provides us with a strong, rich source of material to work on and, where appropriate, incorporate into the preparation of our TCPA cross-boundary planning application.

Equally, we now look forward to working closely with UDC and BDC and other relevant stakeholders as we progress with the solar farm development proposals towards application submission.

Yours Faithfully

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Associate Director- Icení Projects