

# Little Crow Solar Park development consent decision announced

The Little Crow Solar Park application was for an Energy scheme comprising ground mounted solar photovoltaic arrays, electrical storage, grid connection infrastructure and other infrastructure integral to its construction, operation, maintenance and decommissioning. The solar park will have an intended design capacity of over 50MWp (megawatts peak).

The application was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for consideration by INRG SOLAR (Little Crow) Ltd on 04 December 2020 and accepted for Examination on 23 December 2020.

Following Examinations during which the public, Statutory Consultees and Interested Parties were given the opportunity to give evidence to the Examining Authority, recommendations were made to the Secretary of State on 05 January 2022.

This is the 109th Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project and 68th energy application to have been examined by The Planning Inspectorate within the timescales laid down in the Planning Act 2008.

The Planning Inspectorate's Chief Executive, Sarah Richards said:

"The Planning Inspectorate has now examined more than 100 nationally significant infrastructure projects since the Planning Act 2008 process was introduced, ensuring local communities have had the opportunity of being involved in the examination of projects that may affect them.

"This Examination took place during the COVID-19 pandemic and its associated restrictions, and the Examining Authority worked hard to ensure that local people, the local authority and other Interested Parties were able to fully participate.

"The Examining Authority listened and gave full consideration to local views and the evidence gathered during the examination before making their recommendation."

The decision, the recommendation made by the Examining Authority to the Secretary of State and the evidence considered by the Examining Authority in reaching its recommendation are publicly available on the [project pages of the National Infrastructure Planning website](#).

ENDS

Journalists wanting further information should contact the Planning Inspectorate Press Office, on 0303 444 5004 or 0303 444 5005 or email: <Press.office@planninginspectorate.gov.uk >

Notes to editors:

The Planning Inspectorate's [National Infrastructure Programme of Projects](#) details the proposals which are anticipated to be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate as applications in the coming months.

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## [TRA to review trade remedy measures on Hot Rolled Flat and Coil steel](#)

Press release

The Trade Remedies Authority has begun transition reviews into anti-dumping and countervailing measures on Hot Rolled Flat and Coil steel from China.



[The Trade Remedies Authority \(TRA\)](#) has today (Tuesday 5 April) initiated transition reviews into anti-dumping and countervailing measures on imports of Hot Rolled Flat and Coil steel from China to decide whether the duties are still needed.

These measures are among those that the UK inherited from the EU system – the TRA is reviewing them to make sure they are still suitable for the UK's needs.

The measures cover Hot Rolled Flat and Coil steel products often used in the construction and automotive industries among others. The period of investigation for the transition reviews is 1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022, while the injury period is 1 April 2018 – 31 March 2022. [View further information on the TRA's current transition reviews, including the notice of initiation for this review.](#)

Businesses that may be affected by the investigation (such as importers or exporters of the products or UK producers of similar products) can contribute to the investigation by registering on the TRA's online case platform. They can also stay up to date with developments in the case, which will be posted on the TRA's public file.

## Note to editors

- Anti-dumping duties allow a country or union to take action against goods which are being sold at less than their normal value – this is defined as the price for ‘like goods’ sold in the exporter’s home market.
- Countervailing measures are put in place to counter imports being sold at unfair prices due to government subsidies in their country of origin.
- These measures are two of the three types of trade remedies – along with safeguard measures which address sudden, unforeseen floods of imports – that are allowed under World Trade Organisation (WTO) rules.
- Trade remedies are usually applied at the border as a duty on imports.
- The TRA is the UK body that investigates whether trade remedy measures are needed to counter unfair import practices and unforeseen surges of imports.
- Trade remedy investigations were carried out by the EU Commission on the UK’s behalf until the UK left the EU. Forty-four EU trade remedy measures of interest to UK producers were carried across into UK law when the UK left the EU and the TRA is currently reviewing each one to check if it is suitable for UK needs.
- Period of Investigation – when we are investigating dumping and subsidy cases, we will use a period of investigation of around a year. We will aim for the end point to be as close as possible to the date of initiation. However, we will decide this on a case-by-case basis.
- Period of injury – the injury period will usually cover the period of investigation and normally the 36 months immediately before this (i.e. 48 months in total). TRA investigators look at evidence of injury over a longer period than the general period of investigation so that they can assess trends and other factors in more detail than if they looked at a single year.

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# Reported massacre in Mali: UK Minister for Africa's statement

Press release

Minister for Africa Vicky Ford gave a statement on a reported massacre in Moura, Mali, in which hundreds of people were killed.



Minister for Africa Vicky Ford said:

The UK is horrified by the reports emerging from Mali which indicate that hundreds of people were killed in Moura last week, following a counterterrorism operation carried out by the Malian Armed Forces (FAMA) with the alleged involvement of the Wagner Group. The allegations of civilian deaths require an urgent, transparent and impartial investigation, to bring those responsible for any violations and abuses of human rights to justice.

We note the statement from the Malian Ministry of Defence that the FAMA targeted violent extremist groups around Moura. However, multiple reports suggest that civilians were also killed by Malian Armed Forces and Wagner operatives. All counterterrorism activity must be carried out in strict compliance with International Humanitarian Law – civilians are not targets and they must be protected.

We call on the transitional authorities in Mali to ensure unfettered access to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) to allow them to carry out their investigation, as they are mandated to do by the United Nations Security Council. The results of this investigation must be made publicly available, and steps taken to ensure civilians in Moura are protected.

The latest reports from Moura follow a clear trend in a surge of human rights abuses since the deployment of Wagner Group to Mali.

Violations and abuses of human rights are contrary to the values that the UK and Mali share and will lead to worsening instability and violence. We urge the government of Mali to end all ties with the Wagner Group.

On behalf of the people of the UK, I offer my deepest condolences to the families of those who have been killed.

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## [Farming company fined for polluting Somerset watercourse](#)

Magistrates have ordered the company to pay £34,000 in the case brought by the Environment Agency.

Velcourt pleaded guilty at North Somerset Magistrates Court on Monday 4 April 2022, to polluting a tributary of the Hardington Brook, Hardington, Somerset, on or before 1 August 2018.

The company, whose head office is in Ross-on-Wye, was ordered to pay the Environment Agency costs of £14,000, a total fine of £20,000 and a victim surcharge of £170.

On 1 August 2018, the Environment Agency received reports of dead fish in the Hardington Brook and Buckland Brook – tributaries of the River Frome. Officers attended and found dead fish – including brown trout and bullhead in the Hardington Brook.

The next day they traced the discoloured water to a side stream flowing from the direction of Manor Farm, where they found a non-permitted discharge from the farm's surface water drainage system.

The discharge was heavily discoloured, and samples confirmed it would prove fatal to fish because of its concentration of ammonia and very high biological oxygen demand which limited the oxygen supply to the fish in Hardington Brook.

Manor Farm is owned by the Radstock Cooperative Society, but operated on their behalf by Velcourt Ltd, of Orchard House, Phocle Green Business Park, Ross-on-Wye.

The farm manager stopped the discharge and emptied the ditch. But a follow up inspection by an Environment Officer on 14 September 2018 found polluting matter in the ditch.

The inspection concluded the farm's dirty drainage system still posed a 'high potential pollution risk' due to insufficient storage capacity and appropriate engineering. Consequently, farm run-off was able to enter the surface water ditch and subsequently the watercourse.

The Environment Officer concluded the farm infrastructure was not adequately constructed in accordance with the Water Resources (Control of Pollution) (Silage, Slurry and Agricultural Fuel Oil) (England) Regulations 2010 (SSAFO Regulations). Clean and dirty water systems were not adequately separated, and the slurry storage and dirty water drainage systems had not kept pace with the expansion of activities at Manor Farm.

Jo Masters for the Environment Agency said:

We expect much better from such a large and experienced farming business, both for the environment and the local community.

Regulations are in place to protect the environment and our communities and by not keeping up with the regulations this company has put the environment at risk of harm.

Since the incident there has been considerable investment in the farm's infrastructure and Velcourt has also reviewed arrangements at the other farms it manages.

### **Charge:**

On or before 1 August 2018, at Manor Farm, Hardington, Velcourt Ltd caused a water discharge activity not under or to the extent authorised by an environmental permit, namely the discharge of poisonous noxious or polluting matter into a tributary of the Hardington Brook, Somerset.

### **Radstock Cooperative Society**

In 2020 the Environment Agency accepted an Enforcement Undertaking (EU) from Radstock Cooperative Society in relation to their responsibilities in this case.

The Society, which owns Manor Farm, has made a payment of £10,000 to the environmental charity Westcountry River Trust.

### **What is an Enforcement Undertaking?**

An Enforcement Undertaking is a Civil Sanction available to the Environment Agency (EA) as an alternative sanction to prosecution or monetary penalty for dealing with certain environmental offences. It is a legally binding voluntary agreement proposed by a business (or an individual) when the EA has reasonable grounds to suspect that an environmental offence has occurred.

Enforcement Undertakings for environmental offences were introduced under the Environmental Civil Sanctions (England) Order 2010 and the Environmental

Civil Sanctions (Miscellaneous Amendments) (England) Regulations 2010.

Accepting an Enforcement Undertaking is always at the discretion of the EA but if accepted enables firms and individuals who have damaged the environment or operated outside of legislative requirements to offer to complete actions which will address the cause and effect of their offending, including making a payment to a suitable environmental project.

EUs can be offered for offences including polluting rivers, breaching permit conditions designed to protect communities, or not registering and follow recycling/recovery obligations. The Environment Agency then carefully considers whether the actions offered by the offender are acceptable.

### **Why use Enforcement Undertakings?**

- Businesses will voluntarily secure compliance now and in the future, without attracting a criminal record
- The environment, local community and those directly affected by the offending can benefit through actions being offered in an EU
- They allow the EA to deal with the less intentional and polluting offending in a more proportionate way than prosecution through the criminal courts

The Environment Agency reserves the right to prosecute, where offenders do not follow the terms of an Enforcement Undertaking offer.

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## **Vehicle stop checks on waste carriers carried out in Gloucester**

Press release

Officers from the Environment Agency joined forces with Gloucestershire Police, the Driver Vehicle Standards Agency, Gloucester City Council and Tewkesbury Borough Council on Thursday 24 March to carry out roadside vehicle stop checks in Gloucester.



Giving advice about waste duty of care regulations

The team stopped and checked 16 waste carriers and commercial vehicles, giving advice about the waste duty of care regulations. 11 of the vehicles were carrying waste and, while 9 held a waste carrier registration, 2 were found to be carrying waste but were not registered. Advice was provided to the drivers to register, and enforcement action is now being considered.

With the Easter spring clean on the horizon, the Environment Agency is reminding anyone looking for someone to take away their home or garden rubbish to check they are registered to do so. They should also ask where the carrier intends to take the waste and make sure they have been provided with a waste transfer note, as required under the waste duty of care regulations.

A spokesperson for the Environment Agency said:

We are dedicated to stamping out waste crime, but it is an ongoing battle against criminals who seek ways to undercut legitimate businesses at the expense of the environment.

Waste operators, including carriers, brokers and dealers, have to be registered to carry waste. However, there are those who operate illegally without being registered.

We all create waste, and we all have a responsibility to ensure our waste is handled legally and correctly so it doesn't cause harm to human health or pollution to the environment.

Our advice to homeowners and businesses is to check someone is registered to take your waste away, by asking for the waste carrier's permit number and confirming that it is listed in the register of waste carriers, brokers and dealers. You could be breaking the law and be at risk of prosecution if your waste isn't managed properly.

To report any waste crime or a company is operating illegally, call the Environment Agency 24/7 on 0800 807060 or report it anonymously to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.



Check your waste collector is a registered carrier before you use them:  
<https://environment.data.gov.uk/public-register/view/search-waste-carriers-brokers>.

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