Trerice Solar Farm – App ref. PA24/09234

Briefing Note for Cornwall Council Strategic Planning Committee

Overview

Statkraft UK is proposing Trerice Solar Farm, a combined solar photovoltaic and Battery Energy Storage System development within the parish of St Dennis. The project has been carefully designed following public consultation, technical surveys and community feedback, resulting in meaningful revisions to address local concerns.

Planning Officer recommendation: Approve

Cornwall Council's Planning Officers have recommended approval, noting that the scheme aligns strongly with local and national renewable energy policies. The limited and mitigated temporary impacts are outweighed by the substantial public benefits of the scheme which are summarised below.

Why here?

- **Optimal solar irradiance:** The selected site has high solar irradiance levels, ideal for efficient solar energy production.
- **Grid connection:** The site is strategically located close to the existing grid network and has a pre-2030 connection date.
- **Landscape context:** Impact to the wider landscape and character of the area would be insignificant and localised, with extensive planting mitigation to soften the minimal impact over time.

What are the benefits?

- **Renewable energy generation:** Trerice Solar Farm would generate approximately 32MW of clean energy, enough to meet the equivalent needs of over 10,000 homes annually. This would contribute significantly to Cornwall's target of 100% renewable energy by 2030.
- **Carbon reduction:** Trerice Solar Farm is projected to prevent over 7,500 tonnes of CO2 emissions annually, aiding national and local climate objectives.
- **Energy security and grid stability:** Incorporating a 45MW Battery Energy Storage System, the scheme would enhance grid efficiency and reliability by safely storing renewable electricity generated during periods of low demand and releasing it during peak times.

What changes are proposed to landscape and biodiversity?

- **Landscape mitigation:** Significant native planting, restoration of hedgerows, and the creation of wildflower meadows would enhance local biodiversity and help visually integrate the site into the local area.

- **Biodiversity net gain:** The scheme would deliver a substantial biodiversity net gain, with over 23% habitat improvement and a 17% tree canopy cover increase, ensuring positive, long-term ecological outcomes across the site.
- **Improving connectivity:** The site involves the creation of 1.3km of permissive paths across the site linking to the existing PRoW network and new recreational and wildlife areas, improving the public's countryside access.

Are we using agricultural land?

None of the site is located on high quality Grade 1 or 2 land. The development involves what is termed as a **temporary use** (40 years) of Grade 3a and 3b agricultural land, with grazing remaining viable throughout operation. After the project is decommissioned, the land would revert to its previous agricultural use, with recent studies showing that the soil is likely to be in an improved condition due to resting from intensive use.

How did we engage local community?

Statkraft held comprehensive community engagement starting in 2021 and culminating in October 2024, adapting our plans based on stakeholder feedback, including:

- **Renaming** the project to better reflect local identity (from 'Treviscoe' to 'Trerice Solar Farm').
- **Reducing** the total number of solar panels.
- **Increasing** native planting for enhanced biodiversity and screening.
- Incorporating the potential for **new** recreational footpaths.

A dedicated Community Benefit Fund worth £400 per MW of operational capacity would also be established, providing funds for every year of operation for local people to spend on local priorities such as energy efficiency and other community projects.

How have we addressed local concerns?

- **Reducing visual impact:** Extensive landscape mitigation would significantly minimise visual impacts, preserving landscape character.
- **Managing construction traffic:** The Construction Traffic Management Plan would effectively manage impacts, address road safety and ensure minimal disruption during the short construction period.
- **Effective flood and drainage infrastructure:** A robust Sustainable Drainage System ensures effective water management, alleviating local flooding concerns.
- **Minimal noise and heritage impact:** Comprehensive assessments confirm negligible noise impacts, with no harm to nearby heritage assets due to careful site layout and screening.

Contact us

If you have any questions or would like to speak to a member of the team, please contact our Community Relations Team using the details below:

- **Email:** ukprojects@statkraft.com
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