



Information Governance Team

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Dear Sir/Madam

Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR)

Request ID: FOI487459538

Thank you for your request for information relating to Coventry Solar Farm north of M6 Motorway.

You have requested the following information:

1. Has feasibility report been produced by the council? and please disclose copy of that document?

We are advising you as per EIR Regulation 6, that this information is published and publicly available. Please find a link to the work conducted in 2021:

<https://energy-capital-tfwm.hub.arcgis.com/pages/coventry-eiz>

Please scroll to the bottom and click on the link called Synthesis Report. Further to this study the Council proceeded to explore further the opportunity for solar development in the area of Lentons Lane and Woodway Lane.

In relation to the following questions, if this information is disclosed within the feasibility study requested at (1 above), that is sufficient response, if disclosed)

2. How is the council proposing to develop and finance this site; eg. with council funds or to lease to private operator to develop, or other agreement?

The Council has made decisions to proceed with Woodway Lane and Lentons Lane sites. The Council has not made a decision on finance yet but has received significant interest from the

private sector as potential investors. The delivery model will be negotiated subject to a successful planning application.

3. If the council is proposing to own and operate the proposed site itself, how is such speculative development compatible with it's duty?

As above the Council will evaluate market options following a successful planning application.

4. How would any lease to private operator be marketed and assessed?

This would follow due process in accordance with Local Government Procurement regulations.

5. What provision has the council made for a community based energy group, of local households and businesses, to operate and benefit from any development of this site?

The project is at an early stage and more consideration will be given to this once local feedback has been collated and planning permissions and grid connectivity established.

This work supports the Council's climate change strategy.

7. How many units of electricity does the council's forecasts estimate the site will produce annually?

Based on the PVGIS tool and utilising the locally recorded solar irradiance data from the last five years the predicted output for a nominal 32MWp (DC) ground mounted solar farm at the Lentons Lane/Woodway lane location, has suggested a figure of 30.38GWh (30,380,849kWh) for the first year.

8. What unit rate has the council estimated that it will cost to produce electricity? and what unit rate has the council estimated that it or an operator will receive for electricity produced?

Regulation 12(5)(e) of the EIR: Confidentiality of commercial or industrial information states that a public authority may refuse to disclose information to the extent that its disclosure would adversely affect the confidentiality of commercial or industrial information where such confidentiality is provided by law to protect a legitimate economic interest.

The Council considers that disclosure of the requested information would cause harm to and impact upon its commercial position by weakening its negotiation position with future contractors and other third parties.

Please see <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2004/3391/regulation/12/made> for the full details of Regulation 12.

All exceptions under EIR are subject to a Public Interest Test (PIT) which means that we need to consider whether "in all circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exception outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information". Please find this PIT below.

Interests of the Council

The information relates to legitimate economic interests. Disclosure would reduce the Council's capacity to negotiate future contracts. The disclosure of information would undermine the Council's ability to negotiate competitive rates because potential suppliers would adjust their bids accordingly. This would undermine the possibility of securing value for money. In addition, it would also reveal details of the marketplace and decision making process. The disclosure of which would likely cause harm to and impact upon the Council's commercial position, thereby increasing the Council's likely expenditure and time resources. This would be to the detriment of the project and the public interest in seeing that the Solar Farms are developed with the best advice and services, and at favourable rates.

Disclosure of the withheld information, which relates to the early stages of a major procurement process, would undermine our capacity to negotiate. We consider that in this instance, the disclosure of the withheld information would provide an unfair advantage to third parties and, accordingly, such information has been withheld.

Factors supporting disclosure

- General public interest in the disclosure of information to ensure transparency and visibility of public bodies being held to account regarding decisions made.
- That the Council is using public money effectively, and that the Council is getting value for money when making decisions and purchasing services.

Factors supporting non-disclosure

- Releasing this information would impact on, and potentially cause harm to, the Council's commercial position and would be likely to prejudice future procurements.
- The information relates to legitimate economic interests. The release of such estimations would compromise the Council's ability to secure good value in their future discussions with contractors and other third parties. This would be to the detriment of the project and the public interest in seeing that the Solar Farms are developed with the best advice and services, and at favourable and competitive rates.
- Disclosure at this early stage would adversely affect the finances for the Council and thus the public purse because potential suppliers would adjust their bids accordingly. It is important that the Council protects its interests and its bargaining position in negotiations.
- Disclosing this information would likely adversely affect incentives on third parties to release efficiencies and reduce costs by creating market expectations of key rates and funds available. This would result in a worse outcome for the taxpayer.

Conclusion

While we acknowledge the public interest in being open and transparent, disclosure of this information would impact on future procurements and affect the Council's ability to secure the best value outcome for the taxpayer. There is a strong public interest in ensuring the Council is able to make robust decisions regarding its suppliers of goods and services. We therefore consider that the public interest in maintaining the exception outweighs the public interest in disclosure of the withheld information.

9. Who does the council's envisage the electricity produced will be sold to /consumed by?

This will be determined later on in the project, depending on the delivery model.

10. How does the council justify making such proposal on protected Green Belt land?

The principle of this development within the green belt will be assessed through the forthcoming planning application process.

11. Is there any envisaged association of this project with the current electrical development works on land to the West of Alderman's Green Road, North of the Oxford Canal?

No information is held in relation to this request under the exception at Regulation 12(4)(a). Under our duty to advise and assist we confirm that we are not sure what project is being referred to as the Council does not have a similar project in the area suggested.

The supply of information in response to a FOI/EIR request does not confer an automatic right to re-use the information. You can use any information supplied for the purposes of private study and non-commercial research without requiring further permission. Similarly, information supplied can also be re-used for the purposes of news reporting. An exception to this is photographs. Please contact us if you wish to use the information for any other purpose.

For information, we publish a variety of information such as: [FOI/EIR Disclosure Log](#), [Publication Scheme](#), [Facts about Coventry](#) and [Open Data](#) that you may find of useful if you are looking for information in the future.

If you are unhappy with the handling of your request, you can ask us to review our response. Requests for reviews should be submitted within 40 days of the date of receipt of our response to your original request – email: infogov@coventry.gov.uk

If you are unhappy with the outcome of our review, you can write to the Information Commissioner, who can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF or email icocasework@ico.org.uk.

Please remember to quote the reference number above in your response.

Yours faithfully

Information Governance