



Little Crow

Solar Park

Little Crow Solar Park, Scunthorpe

STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND WITH LOCAL WILDLIFE TRUST (AGREED)

DEADLINE 6

Revision:
Regulation No:
PINS Reference:

Deadline 6
APFP Reg:5(2)(q)
EN010101

Author:
Date:

Clarkson and Woods
August 2021

**LITTLE CROW SOLAR PARK
LAND TO THE EAST OF STEEL WORKS,
SCUNTHORPE**

**STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND
(SOCG)**

AGREED DOCUMENT AUGUST 2021

BETWEEN:

- I. LITTLE CROW SOLAR PARK; AND**
- II. LINCOLNSHIRE WILDLIFE TRUST**

ON BEHALF OF INRG SOLAR (LITTLE CROW) LTD

Pegasus Group

First Floor | South Wing | Equinox North | Great Park Road | Almondsbury | Bristol | BS32 4QL

T 01454 625945 | **F** 01454 618074 | **W** www.pegasusgroup.co.uk

Birmingham | Bracknell | Bristol | Cambridge | Cirencester | East Midlands | Leeds | Liverpool | London | Manchester

PLANNING | **DESIGN** | **ENVIRONMENT** | **ECONOMICS**

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Statement of Common Ground has been prepared as part of the application process for a Development Consent Order for the Little Crow Solar Park [“the Development”]. This document has been prepared jointly between INRG Solar (Little Crow) Limited (“the Applicant”) and Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust.

Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust

- 1.2 Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust (LWT) is a voluntary charitable organisation which cares for Lincolnshire’s wildlife and countryside. The Trust also identifies and promotes opportunities for making Lincolnshire richer in wildlife through involvement in forward planning and in connection with developments. The Trust covers the whole of the historic county of Lincolnshire – from the Humber to the Wash. It is one of 46 similar Wildlife Trusts covering the UK which are affiliated to the Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts.

INRG Solar (Little Crow) Ltd

- 1.3 Founded in 2009, INRG Solar Ltd has established itself as one of the largest developers of solar parks in the UK. As an independent developer, INRG Solar have experience of a variety of energy projects including solar, batteries and peaking plants. INRG Solar have a proven track record in delivering projects and have developed and sold numerous ground mounted solar schemes ranging between 5MW to 50MW.

Purpose of Document

- 1.4 The document has been structured to reflect the matters and topics relevant between the Applicant and LWT. This document is intended to summarise clearly the agreements reached between the parties on matters relevant to the examination of the Application and assist the Examining Authority.

Status of this Version

- 1.5 The Statement of Common Ground was originally prepared in March 2020 and subsequently modified and updated.
- 1.6 The Statement of Common Ground was agreed in August 2021 and submitted to the Examining Authority to assist in the examination of the Application.

1.7 The remainder of this document is split into the following sections:

Section 2: Development Overview

Section 3: Ecology and Biodiversity

Section 4: Matters Subject to Further Negotiations

Section 5: Matters Not Agreed

Section 6: Agreement

2. DEVELOPMENT OVERVIEW

- 2.1 The Applicant has applied for an order granting development consent for the construction, operation, maintenance and decommissioning of Little Crow Solar Park, a ground mounted solar park with an intended design capacity over 50MWp (megawatts peak) with associated development. The application was made on 4 December 2020 and was accepted for examination on 23 December 2020.
- 2.2 An operational lifespan of 35 years would be sought linked to the first export date from the development. The development will progress in accordance with a phasing plan. A single substation compound will serve the development, and this will be required for the duration of the development and retained thereafter. The substation compound would be located near the northern boundary of the application site and to the east of the existing double row of 132kV overhead electricity pylons which traverse the site.
- 2.3 The proposal comprises seven land use zones or works zones, these are: -
- Work No. 1: Arrays of Ground Mounted Solar Panels
 - Work No. 2A: Battery Energy Storage System
 - Work No. 2B: Battery Energy Storage System (alternative location)
 - Work No. 3: Formation of Ecological Corridors
 - Work No. 4: Substation Building and Compound
 - Work No. 5: Upgrade to Main Access Track
 - Work No. 6: Perimeter Development Buffer
 - Work No. 7: Temporary Construction and Decommissioning Compound
- 2.4 These work zones are presented on the drawing "Works Plan" (Document Ref 2.8 LC DRW PINS Ref APP-013). The general arrangement for the overall layout is presented on drawing "Works Details – Whole Site Plan" (Document Ref 2.10 LC DRW PINS Ref APP-014).

3. ECOLOGY AND BIODIVERSITY

3.1 The lead consultant on behalf of the applicant on ecology and biodiversity is Clarkson and Woods Ecological Consultants Ltd.

Table 3.1 Ecology & Biodiversity Common Ground

<i>Applicant comments</i>	<i>LWT comments</i>	<i>Status e.g Agreed / not agreed / N/A</i>
<i>Methodology</i>		
<p><i>Desk Study Methodology</i></p> <p>As part of a comprehensive desk study, data was purchased from the Lincolnshire Environmental Records Centre (LERC) in August 2017. This included data on protected species; red data book species; Species of Principal Importance; local Biodiversity Action Plan species and invasive species within 2km of the site. Records for notable and/or protected species within 1 - 2 km is considered to be of greatest relevance as this is usually the distance encompassing the typical home ranges of most of the species studied. Details of locally designated sites within 1km were also obtained. Due to the nature of the proposals, non-statutorily designated sites beyond 1km are unlikely to be within the zone of influence of the development. It is understood that the scope of the desk study is considered sufficient for the purposes of the assessment</p>	<p>LWT agree that the desk study methodology is adequate for the purpose of the assessment in this case.</p>	<i>Agreed</i>
<p><i>Survey Methodology</i></p> <p>A series of ecological surveys to establish the baseline have been undertaken between July 2017 and November 2019. The scope of detailed surveys was agreed in January 2018 primarily through liaison</p>	<p>LWT are satisfied with the ecological survey effort and methods used.</p>	<i>Agreed</i>

<p>with North Lincolnshire Council. However, it is understood that LWT are satisfied that the survey effort and methods.</p>		
<p><i>Assessment Methodology</i></p> <p>The standard approach applied in the UK to Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA) is that developed by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) in 2016 and revised in 2018¹. This methodology has been followed and used to evaluate existing conditions, and to assess the significance of likely effects on ecological features that may arise. The assessment methodology is considered appropriate.</p> <p>LWT previously raised a point in regards to Biodiversity Net Gain and undertaking a metric calculation, which they recognised was not required, but considered best practice. This was done.</p> <p>The Natural England Biodiversity Metric 2.0 ²was used in May 2021 to provide a quantitative assessment of the Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) delivered by the scheme. Although this has since been updated by the Biodiversity Metric 3.0 on 7th July 2021³, Natural England advise that projects utilising Metric 2.0 before July 2021 can continue to do so.</p>	<p>LWT agree with the assessment methodology used to date, and agreed with it after briefly reviewing the BNG metric calculation on 26th August.</p>	<p>Agreed</p>
<p>Baseline Information</p>		

¹ CIEEM (2018) Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine. CIEEM, Winchester.

² <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5850908674228224>

³ <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6049804846366720>

<p><i>Designated Sites</i></p> <p>Of the eleven locally designated sites identified within the desk study, seven were considered to be within the zone of influence, primarily due to the proximity to the application site. Four were of sufficient distance that no direct or indirect impacts were deemed likely to occur.</p> <p>Locally designated sites within the zone of influence were: Broughton West Wood Local Wildlife Site (LWS), Manby Wood LWS, Heron Holt LWS, Broughton Far Wood LWS, Rowland Plantation LWS Broughton West Wood Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI) and Santon Wood SNCI. Parts of Manby Wood and Broughton West Wood were identified as being Plantation on Ancient Woodland Site (PAWS). All locally-designated sites with the Zone of influence were evaluated as being of County importance</p> <p>The classification and evaluation of designated sites has been agreed with North Lincolnshire Council, and it is understood that LWT are satisfied with this.</p>	<p>LWT is satisfied with the identification and evaluation of the designated sites in the vicinity of the proposed development.</p>	<p>Agreed</p>
<p><i>Habitats and Species</i></p> <p>Several habitats and species present on or adjacent to the Site, which are described in section 7.4 of the ES chapter (Doc Ref 6.7A LC ES CH7 PINS Ref REP5-011) were classified as Important Ecological Features and were taken forward within the assessment. The baseline evaluation of species and habitats was agreed with North Lincolnshire Council.</p> <p>It is understood that LWT are satisfied with the evaluation agreed with North Lincolnshire Council.</p>	<p>LWT agree with the evaluation of habitats and species, as agreed with North Lincolnshire Council.</p>	<p>Agreed</p>

Impact Assessment and Mitigation		
<p>As described in section 7.6 of the ES Chapter (Doc Ref 6.7A LC ES CH7 PINs Ref REP5-011), key sources of impacts during construction were identified to be habitat loss, fragmentation, disturbance of species through noise and vibration, degradation of habitats by pollution or dust deposition and the incidental mortality of species during construction.</p> <p>The key mitigation measure to minimise construction related effects will be the implementation of an Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP), which is provided as a technical Appendix (7.7) (Doc Ref 7.27 LC TA7.8 PINS Ref APP-096).</p> <p>Fenced biodiversity protection zones are to be installed between habitats of high importance (namely woodland, hedgerows, ponds, ditches and trees) to protect from damage and degradation.</p> <p>It is understood the LWT are satisfied that the protection zones are adequate for the safeguarding of nearby Local Wildlife Sites and PAWS.</p> <p>Protection zones are also to be retained around badger setts to avoid damage/disturbance to setts and badgers therein, and thereby ensuring legal compliance.</p> <p>The CEMP also outlines good practice measures to be adopted during construction with the purpose of protecting biodiversity.</p> <p>Proposed protection zones and good practice measures outlined in the CEMP are considered adequate to reduce construction phase impacts to acceptable levels.</p>	<p>LWT agrees with the potential construction impacts identified and their mitigation through implementation of a CEMP. Having read the Outline CEMP, we agree that the installation of fenced biodiversity protection zones should provide adequate mitigation for the habitats and species identified. The CEMP also identifies good practice measures to follow and we are satisfied that together this should provide sufficient mitigation for potential construction impacts on the ecological receptors identified.</p>	<p>Agreed</p>

<p>The proposals include planting of approximately 2.5km of new native hedgerow planting, which is expected to give rise to beneficial effects through increasing connectivity as well as foraging and nesting/sheltering habitat for a range of species.</p> <p>The assessment of impacts and key mitigation measures are considered to be common ground.</p>		
<p>Fewer operational phase effects were noted as post construction activity at the site would be minimal.</p> <p>An Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) (Doc Ref 7.28C LC TA7.8 PINS Ref REP4-011) has been prepared which sets out how the site will be managed post construction in order to maximise its ecological value and ensure the operational mitigation measures are implemented.</p> <p>The cessation of intensive arable farming practices and creation of grassland habitats will likely give rise to beneficial effects for a range of ecological features.</p> <p>It is understood that LWT are satisfied with the proposals outlined in the LEMP</p>	<p>LWT agree that operational phase impacts are likely to be fewer and that these can be dealt with through implementation of a LEMP. Having read the Outline LEMP we agree with the proposed habitat creation and management methods.</p>	<p>Agreed</p>
<p>Residual Effects</p>		
<p>Residual effects after mitigation measures have been applied are described within section 7.4 of the ES chapter (Doc Ref 6.7A LC ES CH7 PINS Ref REP5-011). Residual effects for all Important Ecological Features are either non-significant, or are considered to be positive effects which are significant at Local level. The description and classification of residual effects are understood to be agreed.</p>	<p>LWT agree with the description and classification of residual effects.</p>	<p>Agreed</p>

Enhancements		
<p>A number of ecological enhancements are proposed which deliver additional ecological benefits beyond those expected to occur as a result of the mitigation measures described above. These are described in section 7.9 of the ES chapter (Doc Ref 6.7A LC ES CH7 PINS Ref REP5-011). Management prescriptions designed to ensure delivery of the proposed enhancements are set out within the LEMP.</p> <p>This includes easements of existing arable land sown with acid grassland seed mixes containing foodplants of target butterfly species (including grayling, wall and small heath) which are known to be present in the locality. Increasing opportunities for these species is a priority in the region LC and was highlighted during correspondence with North Lincolnshire Council in January 2018.</p> <p>A range of features for wildlife (including bat and bird boxes) are to be installed at the site, and existing habitats (including ponds, ditches and hedgerows) are to be brought under management to increase their value to wildlife.</p> <p>The enhancements have been designed within input from North Lincolnshire Council and are expected to deliver positive impacts for biodiversity. It is understood that LWT are satisfied with the proposed enhancement measures.</p>	<p>LWT are satisfied with the ecological enhancements described within the ES and the proposed management set out within the LEMP. We support the targeting of enhancements towards priority habitats and species such as acid grassland and grayling, wall and small heath butterflies. We support the installation of new features for species such as bat and bird boxes and hibernacula, and the improved management of existing habitats.</p>	<p>Agreed</p>

3.2 A summary of consultation between Clarkson and Woods and LWT is provided in Table 3.2 below.

Table 3.2 Ecology and Biodiversity Consultee Responses

<i>LWT comments</i>	<i>Applicant comments</i>	<i>Status e.g Agreed / not agreed N/A</i>
<p>LWT were consulted in March 2019 on the proposals. Clare Sterling (CS) – Conservation Officer for LWT - indicated that discussions between the applicant and the North Lincolnshire biodiversity officer on ecological work to date and enhancement proposals was satisfactory from LWT viewpoint and had no further comments to make.</p>	<p>None.</p>	<p><i>Agreed</i></p>

4. MATTERS RAISED IN RULE 6 LETTER

4.1 The Examining Authority has made a request through their Rule 6 letter requesting that the applicant seek to include the following matters within the SoCG with the Environment Agency. Where these matters have already been agreed within the SoCG, this is highlighted within the relevant response

Matter	Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust Response
Survey areas, assessment of baseline data and data collection methodologies	The survey approach, methodologies and assessment of baseline information has already been agreed within section 3 of this SoCG.
Analysis of data and the presentation of results, including the use of expert judgements and assumptions	LWT is satisfied with the analysis and presentation of results.
Methodology for EIA, including assessment of cumulative and in-combination effects	LWT agree with the assessment methodology used to date, as stated in this SoCG.
Likely effects on any protected species and on special interest features of sites designated for nature conservation purposes	LWT is satisfied with the assessment of impacts and residual effects on ecological features, which is already covered in section 3 of this SoCG
Mitigation and enhancement measures, including likely effectiveness, monitoring procedures and method for securing such measures within the dDCO (Doc Ref 3.1E LC DCO PINS Ref REP5-004)	LWT is in agreement with the mitigation and enhancement measures as already covered in section 3 of this SoCG The preparation and implementation of a CEMP and LEMP, will be secured under requirements 8 and 10 of the dDCO respectively. These are

	considered appropriate as drafted in the dDCO.
Drafting of the dDCO (Doc Ref 3.1E LC DCO PINS Ref REP5-004), including the Articles and Requirements	LWT consider the dDCO is appropriate as drafted.

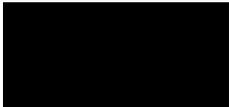
4.2 There are no outstanding matters between Applicant and LWT

5. MATTERS NOT AGREED

5.1 There are no outstanding matters between Applicant and LWT

6. AGREEMENT ON THIS STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND

6.1 This Statement of Common Ground has been jointly prepared and agreed by:

FOR LWT	
NAME:	Suzanne Fysh
SIGNATURE:	
POSITION:	Conservation Officer, Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust
DATE:	26/08/21

FOR THE APPLICANT	
NAME:	Peter Timms
SIGNATURE:	
POSITION:	Senior Ecologist, Clarkson & Woods
ON BEHALF OF:	INRG Solar (Little Crow) Ltd
DATE:	26/08/21

