

Summary comments.

The solar park is located within North Kesteven District and the eastern boundary of the site runs along the Borough / District boundary. The Borough has residents that are about 800m from the site boundary. One dwelling that fronts the A17 will be about 450m from the solar park and will have the cable route pass to its north and east. The impact of the solar park on Boston Borough residents is reduced by distance, any intervening natural and built landscape features and the proposed boundary hedge to the solar park.

The direct impact of the solar park on the Borough relates to the cable route to the National Grid substation at Bicker Fen. However, this impact is temporary whilst the route is excavated, the cables installed and the trench re filled, with the agricultural land being restored to agriculture.

The Borough has experience of Triton Knoll off shore wind farm and Viking Link Interconnector installing cables across our landscape to connect to the Bicker Fen Substation. We have also had an Anglian Water pipeline installed to link the town of Boston to a point of supply to the north that also crossed our neighbour, East Lindsey District Council. From this experience once the cable work is complete the visual impact of the disturbed route is minimal, relating to marker posts to warn of buried cables and any repaired hedgerow planting whilst it establishes.

We have undertaken a high-level review of the submitted documents focussing on topics that directly or indirectly impact the Borough's residents. We make the following Relevant Representation, which can be summarised as follows:

- Boston Borough Council is broadly supportive of the proposals for a variety of reasons including but not limited to:
 - It contributes to the nation's transition from hydrocarbons. The solar park will have less whole life cycle GHG intensity than hydrocarbon fuels (Chapter 13 inset 13.2) and although its individual impact on sea level rise is close to zero it, along with other non-hydrocarbon fuels, represents an appropriate direction of travel.
- Boston Borough Council does however believe there are a series of issues which require further detail, clarification, analysis or discussion, these include but are not limited to:
 - The documentation shows that dust and emissions will be controlled during construction and decommissioning by various management plans. However wind direction could introduce fumes from fire across the Borough and so the Borough would like more detail on what measures are to be employed in the event of a fire to protect residents from fumes;
 - The documentation says heritage setting assessments, archaeological desk-based assessment and geophysical survey of the Cable Route Corridor for the grid connection has been undertaken. However, unlike the Energy Park site no trial trenching has been undertaken prior to submission. A written Scheme of Investigation for trial trench evaluation of the cable route shows 240 trenches over the cable route. The Borough Council would like to know when this work is to be undertaken;
 - The documentation explains the evidence work that has been undertaken on the solar park and the cable route. The majority of the land is considered to be of low conservation value. Biodiversity net gain is to be achieved on the Energy Park. What can be achieved along the cable route to link the new habitat on the solar park with landscaping around the Bicker Fen National Grid, Triton Knoll and Viking Link substations plus mitigation of impacts on the South Forty Foot Drain Local Wildlife Site?;

- Various documents consider landscape and residential visual amenity, noise and vibration plus glint and glare. Outlook from the properties and the consequent impact on residential amenity is mitigated by the expansive nature of the location, distance between the Solar Park and the dwelling and any intervening landscape features. Two viewpoints in the Borough will experience a significant effect for a temporary period as the cable is installed. None of the properties judged to be visually affected are in the Borough but mitigation measures for the dwellings in North Kesteven will also benefit dwellings in Boston Borough such as physical separation, reducing the height of the panels and the position of the sub station. Glint and glare on residents of the Borough relates to Boston Aerodrome, users of the A1121, part of the A17 and living near to the solar park. The highways have the potential for Significant effect prior to mitigation. This becomes Not Significant after mitigation. For residential impact there are a number of observation points that have been used to assess impact. Those in Boston Borough are OP24 to OP34. The impact on OP24 to OP28 are Not Significant. The impact on OP29 to OP34 is Significant prior to mitigation and Not Significant after mitigation. A mitigation feature is the planting of a boundary hedge but the height is different in different documents. The height needs clarifying.
- We have looked at the draft DCO, and its schedules. In Schedules 4 and 7 Boston Borough Council is listed. However, Lincolnshire County Council is Highway Authority and we consider they should listed instead. We appreciate that the DCO may need to evolve throughout the DCO process as the Applicant seeks to respond to any issues raised.
- Cumulative impacts in relation to the cable connection route should be adequately assessed, due to the number of proposed renewable energy proposals seeking to route cable connections to Bicker.

END