

# Heckington Fen Solar Park

EN010123

## Applicant Responses to Relevant Representations

Applicant: Ecotricity (Heck Fen Solar) Limited

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**APPLICANT RESPONSE TO RELEVANT REPRESENTATIONS**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Ecotricity (Heck Fen Solar) Limited (the Applicant) responses to the key issues raised in Relevant Representations submitted by Interested Parties in relation to the Heckington Fen Solar Park application.

1.2 A total of 26 Relevant Representations were submitted by Interested Parties. A further 2 Late Submissions were accepted by the Examining Authority. Two Additional Submissions from Anglian Water and Cadent Gas Limited were made in September 2023. The Applicant's response to these Relevant Representations has been broken down as follows:

1.3 The tables within Appendix 1 contain the Applicant's responses to the Relevant Representations submitted by the three Host Local Planning Authorities:

- Boston Borough Council (**RR-004**)
- Lincolnshire County Council (**RR-013**)
- North Kesteven District Council (**RR-021**).

1.4 The tables within Appendix 2 contain the Applicant's responses to the Relevant Representations submitted by other Statutory Consultees and Statutory Undertakers:

- Network Rail Infrastructure Limited (**RR-001**)
- Black Sluice Internal Drainage Board (**RR-003**)
- Environment Agency (**RR-009**)
- The Forestry Commission (**RR-010**)
- Historic England (**RR-011**)
- Anglian Water (**RR-012** and **AS-032**)
- National Gas Transmission Plc (NGT) (**RR-016**)
- National Grid Electricity Transmission Plc (**RR-017**)
- Natural England (**RR-019**)
- NHS Lincolnshire Integrated Care Board (**RR-020**)
- The UK Health Security Agency (**RR-026**)
- Cadent Gas Limited (**AS-033**).

1.5 The tables within Appendix 3 contain the Applicant's responses to the Relevant Representations submitted by Parish Councils:

- Amber Hill Parish Council (**RR-002**)

1.6 The tables within Appendix 4 contain the Applicant's responses to the Relevant Representations submitted by Non-Statutory organisations:

- Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust (**RR-014** and late submission)
- The British Horse Society (**RR-025**)
- Canal and Rivers Trust (no number, late submission).

1.7 The tables within Appendix 5 contain the Applicant's responses to the Relevant Representations submitted from a local Member of Parliament and members of the public;

- Christopher George Barlow (**RR-005**)

- Christopher Hinge (**RR- 006**)
- David John Bowler (**RR-008**)
- Matthew Stephen Birch (**RR-015**)
- Ryan Beveridge (**RR-022**)
- Sir John Hayes MP (**RR-024**).

1.8 The tables within Appendix 6 contain the Applicant's responses to the Relevant Representations submitted by businesses, who have an interest in land within the Order Limits:

- Triton Knoll OFTO Limited ("TK OFTO") (**RR-007**)
- National Grid Ventures (**RR-018**)
- Schroders Greencoat (**RR-023**).

1.9 The Relevant Representations include the following themes:

- EIA Methodology and Consultation
- Site Description, Site Selection, Iterative Design Process
- Proposed Development
- Planning Policy
- Landscape and Visual
- Residential Visual Amenity
- Ecology and Ornithology
- Hydrology, Hydrogeology, Flood Risk and Drainage
- Cultural Heritage
- Socio-Economics
- Noise and Vibration
- Climate Change
- Transport and Access
- Air Quality
- Land Use and Agriculture
- Glint and Glare
- Miscellaneous Issues
- Cumulative
- Health
- Asset Protection
- DCO Process
- Grid Connection
- Mitigation.

**APPENDIX 1 – HOST LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITIES’ RELEVANT REPRESENTATIONS AND APPLICANT’S RESPONSES**

Theme	Consultee Comment	Applicant Response
<b>Boston Borough Council (RR-004)</b>		
Residential Visual Amenity	The eastern boundary of the solar park runs along the borough boundary. The Borough has residents 800m from the boundary. One dwelling on the A17 is 450m from the site and will have the cable route to the 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 in the Borough relates to the cable route. The impact is temporary and the Borough has experience from the Triton Knoll and Viking Link cables. From this experience once the cable work is complete the visual impact of the disturbed route is minimal.	The Applicant notes this comment, and no further response is deemed necessary.
Residential Visual Amenity	None of the properties that are judged to be visually effected by the proposed development to a major adverse (significant) extent are within Boston Borough. Design changes increase the physical separation between dwellings and elements of the solar park infrastructure, reducing the height of the panels. The design changes to the solar park can also help Boston Borough Residents.	The Applicant notes this comment, and no further response is deemed necessary.
Climate Change	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 Applicant notes this comment and welcomes the support from Boston Borough Council.
Air Quality	More detail on what measures are to be employed in the event of a fire to protect residents from fumes.	The outline Energy Storage Safety Management Plan is a control plan / certified document (APP-242) and secured by Requirement 7 of the DCO. The final details will be contained in the plan submitted to and approved by the relevant planning authorities, in consultation with Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue Service prior to commencement of the energy storage facility.
Air Quality	Residents of the Borough will not be affected by dust generated when crops are planted or harvested whilst the Solar Park exists on site as the ground will not be disturbed and will be vegetated. The report indicates that dust generated during construction and decommissioning will be controlled by a Construction Environment Management Plan, and a Construction Traffic Management Plan. Emissions at decommissioning are considered in the Decommissioning and Restoration Plan. Emissions from plant, machinery and vehicles could be very different during decommissioning owing to changes in motive power over the lifetime of the solar park as current Government policy seeks a move away from hydrocarbons.	The Applicant notes this comment, and no further response is deemed necessary.

Theme	Consultee Comment	Applicant Response
Cultural Heritage	The Borough Council would like to know when work is to be undertaken on the trial trenching of the cable route.	Trenching has been completed on the cable route where the Applicant has been able to secure agreements with landowners; this includes on land at Royalty Farm which has the greatest archaeological potential. The Outline WSI for Evaluation (APP-244) trenching on the cable route is secured under Requirement 12(1) of the DCO which provides that trenching for the remainder of the cable route must be completed before commencing the cable route works.
Landscape and Visual	Cable route landscaping - 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	The Applicant notes this comment, but unfortunately it is not possible to incorporate landscaping into the cable route as it is only a temporary land use. Further opportunities are being explored with National Grid but due to land and technical constraints it is very difficult to provide any landscaping at the Bicker Fen Substation.
Landscape and Visual	The height of the boundary hedge is quoted differently in different documents please can this be clarified.	A variety of heights are proposed to help integrate the new hedges into the landscape. The oLEMP (APP-239), which is secured under Requirement 8 of the DCO, includes the correct references.
Landscape/ Residential Visual Amenity	Landscape and visual impact is considered. This is concerned more with landscape character and less on residential amenity. Changes to landscape character are mitigated by the scale of the landscape and consequential impact on residential amenity by the distance between the Solar Park and the residential properties in the Borough. As a result the outlook from these 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. The two viewpoints that will experience a significant effect will do so for a temporary period as the cable is installed. The locality has experienced similar impacts when the Triton Knoll and Viking Link underground cables were installed.	The Applicant notes this comment, and no further response is deemed necessary.
Ecology	What BNG 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	The Applicant notes this comment. However, it is not possible to incorporate BNG into the cable route as it is only a temporary land use. Where the grid connection is through farmland it will be returned to farmland. Sensitive local areas such as the South Forty Foot Drain will be avoided by the use of long horizontal directional drilling, and the road/track side verges are outwith the Applicant's control for the purposes of tree planting and BNG.

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Consultee Comment</b>	<b>Applicant Response</b>
Cumulative	Cumulative impacts on residents, landscape, biodiversity and flood risk 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.	The Applicant notes this comment and has completed an Interrelationship Report with other Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (document reference ExA.IRReport-D1.V1). Other projects connecting into Bicker Fen Substation are also considered in this Report.
Flood Risk/ Climate Change	The Borough is protected by flood defence schemes. Flood risk is increased by sea level rise that is caused by increased temperature melting ice. Increased temperature also thaws permafrost, which releases methane into the atmosphere and causes further warming. This solar park will have less whole life cycle GHG intensity than hydrocarbon fuels 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.	The Applicant notes this comment, and no further response is deemed necessary.
Flood Risk	With the implementation of embedded mitigation measures, the residual effects associated with operation of the Energy Park are Negligible and Not Significant. The electrical connection to the National Grid Bicker Fen Substation comprises an underground cable that would not give rise to impacts upon hydrology, hydrogeology, flood risk and drainage during the operational phase. As such the proposal does not increase flood risk to residents of the Borough.	The Applicant notes this comment, and no further response is deemed necessary.
Transport and Access	Information has been provided on vehicle movements and will be managed by a Construction Management Plan. The proposal has minimal traffic impact on residents of the Borough.	The Applicant notes this comment, and no further response is deemed necessary.
Transport and Access	In the DCO schedules 4 and 7 Lincolnshire County Council is the Highway Authority. We consider they should be listed rather than Boston Borough Council.	The Applicant can confirm that column 1 within Schedules 4 – 7 merely identify the location in which the street or work is situated, rather than the competent authority. No updates are therefore considered necessary.
Noise and Vibration	A number of dwellings are quoted in the Noise and Vibration report and the supporting Noise Modelling. Some are within Boston Borough but overall the reports conclude the effects are negligible to minor and not significant.	The Applicant notes this comment, and no further response is deemed necessary.
Socio- Economic	Overall, there are beneficial effects in terms of employment, economic contribution, and business rates in all relevant phases of development. Notably, beneficial economic contribution effects are considered to be significant in the construction and decommissioning phases, and beneficial business rates effects are considered to be significant in the operational phase. Effects relating to accommodation demands in the construction and decommissioning phases are adverse but not significant.	The Applicant notes this comment, and no further response is deemed necessary.



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<b>Lincolnshire County Council (RR-013)</b>		
Planning Policy	Table 5.1 refers to the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan 2017 however this plan has since been replaced by the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan 2023 which was adopted in April 2023. All documentation and assessments should be updated to consider relevant policies now contained within this new Development Plan.	The Applicant notes the Local Plan has been updated. A further iteration of the Statement of Need and Planning Statement (APP-234) and Planning Policy chapter (APP-058) of the ES will be submitted at a later deadline.
Landscape	LCC is concerned that the development has the potential to transform the local landscape by altering the character of the area and consequence of changes to the land use over a large area. This change has potential to affect wider landscape character by replacing large areas of agricultural or rural land with solar development, affecting the current openness, tranquillity, and agricultural character, that are identified as defining characteristics of the area. We also have concerns about the effects of the development on views from receptors as result of a change from views within an agricultural or rural landscape to that of a landscape containing large scale solar development. The landscape is predominantly flat which would limit long distance views, however, with limited existing vegetation cover long distance views of the site and development are possible and intermittent views may be possible from the railway line, which follows the A1121 before heading towards Heckington to the south of the site along Heckington Fen.	The Applicant notes this comment. A comprehensive Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (APP-059) is included in the ES with a variety of photomontages (APP-146 - APP-147), including for a number of residential receptors within the Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (APP-060, APP-150 and APP-151). Screening is proposed around the perimeter of the Energy Park to limit views into it.
Landscape	LCC also has concerns about the cumulative landscape and visual effects of the proposed development particularly when assessed alongside other proposed NSIP projects including Beacon Fen Energy Park which is being proposed to the north and south of Heckington.	The Applicant notes this comment and the subsequent design amendments to Beacon Fen Energy Park, which results in a single site over 3km to the northwest of Heckington. The cumulative impact of this scheme has been assessed so far as information is available at this stage of the project.
Landscape	It is unclear the extent of disturbance to hedgerows from construction activity. It would therefore be beneficial to clarify the extents of any hedgerow removals to ensure the LVIA fully assesses these changes, and also where removed hedgerows may be replanted or potentially translocated. This includes an assessment of the impacts on vegetation around the permanent and existing access points which are shown on the plans as part of the development.	The Applicant refers to the Arboricultural Report (APP-179) which is included as an Appendix to the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment of the ES (APP-059). Article 36 and Schedule 10 of the DCO also provides details as to the worst-case hedgerow removal for the purposes of the authorised development.
Landscape	Public Rights of Way (PROW) – insofar as the proposal affects routes within Lincolnshire	The Energy Park includes a single PROW which will be extended via a permissive path. Other PROW within the area are not impacted by the proposed development.
Transport And Access	The assessment within the Transport and Access Chapter of the ES is appropriate and provides a reasonable estimate of HGV and car traffic associated with the development during construction and shows that the impact will be	The Applicant notes this comment, and no further response is deemed necessary.

Theme	Consultee Comment	Applicant Response
	within acceptable levels on the highway network.	
Transport and Access	For the Outline CEMP, the following principles are agreed: - routing via A17, - access locations and - left in/left out only allowed to prevent traffic turning across A17. - junction layouts and vehicle swept paths shown are acceptable.	The Applicant notes this comment, and no further response is deemed necessary.
Flood Risk	The surface water flood risk assessment, the restriction to greenfield runoff rates and the Surface Water Drainage Strategy Report is an acceptable level of detail at this stage and it is noted that the draft DCO includes appropriate conditions requiring detailed design approval of access, parking, drainage to be approved by the LPA prior to commencement.	The Applicant notes this comment, and no further response is deemed necessary.
Cultural Heritage	Main Site - sufficient evaluation, including trenching, has been undertaken on the main site to inform an adequate mitigation strategy in respect of non-designated heritage assets (e.g. buried archaeological features). Trenching on the main site has been demonstrated to work well allowing for a targeted and proportionate mitigation proposal and strategy to be put forward. The proposed mitigation strategy for the main site is therefore agreeable and an Outline Written Scheme of Investigation for Mitigation is also provisionally agreeable in principle.	The Applicant notes this comment and welcomes the confirmation that sufficient evaluation has been undertaken on the main energy site.
Cultural Heritage	The medieval duck decoy pond is not shown on Figure 10.4 (Energy Park Archaeological Mitigation Areas – APP-162) and so this should be included for clarity. The Outline Written Scheme of Investigation for Mitigation will need to include the duck decoy pond which will require an Archaeological Clerk of Works.	The Applicant notes this comment. It is an error that Figure 10.4 depicts only those areas proposed for Strip Map Sample Archaeological Excavation, and not also those areas (like the duck decoy) proposed for other forms of mitigation (e.g. the avoidance of topsoil stripping and other below-ground impact, overseen by an ACoW, during the construction phase). The Outline WSI for Mitigation and Figure 10.4 will be updated at Deadline 2 to ensure consistency between the documents.
Cultural Heritage	Cable Route – LCC considers trenching to be necessary to provide baseline data to identify and assess potential impacts. As a result there is currently no mitigation strategy proposed for the cable route as the trial trenching evaluation work has yet to be completed and whilst an outline Written Scheme of Investigation for evaluation (Document 7.13 - APP-244) for the cable route has been submitted and is agreeable in principle, this should be implemented at the earliest opportunity so that the results can be incorporated.	The Applicant confirms that, as of the end of September 2023, the cable route trenching has been completed in three land parcels to the south/east of South Forty Foot Drain in areas with the greatest archaeological potential. It has not yet been possible to secure access to further parcels. Requirement 12(1) of the DCO secures the need to undertake evaluation/trenching works (in accordance with the Outline Written Scheme of Investigation for Evaluation (APP-244)) prior to undertaking the cable route works. The results will feed into an update to the Outline Written Scheme of Investigation for Mitigation (APP-245)

Theme	Consultee Comment	Applicant Response
Land Use and Agricultural	Whilst LCC acknowledges that the development has been revised to remove areas of BMV land and it is proposed to graze sheep on area of the land in lieu of the current arable use, concerns remain about the impact of the development in terms of the loss of productive arable farmland not only from this site but also when considered in combination with other NSIP scale projects.	in due course, which is secured by Requirement 12(2) of the DCO. The Applicant notes the Council's concern, but wishes to reiterate that the agricultural use will remain onsite with the land being grazed, as secured through the outline Landscape Ecological Management Plan (document reference APP-239) and Requirement 8 of the DCO. The scheme provides an opportunity to produce energy whilst continuing to farm the land, and improve biodiversity as well. The cumulative schemes within Lincolnshire currently equate to c.1% of BMV farmland in the county. Further information on this is contained at Appendix 2 of the Interrelationship Report (document reference ExA.IRReport-D1.V1).
Cumulative	Documents and assessments contained within the ES updated to take into account Fosse Green, Springwell Solar Farm and Beacon Fen Energy Park.	The Applicant notes this comment and a further update to the ES documentation is planned for a future Examination deadline. These schemes are covered in the Applicant's Interrelationship Report (document reference ExA.IRReport-D1.V1). It should be noted these schemes will need to consider Heckington Fen within their cumulative assessments.
Climate Change	LCC is likely to make comments in respect of the conclusions made with regard the sustainability benefits of the development and the contribution it makes to reducing greenhouse gas emissions.	The Applicant notes this comment and will respond to further comments in due course should they become available.
DCO Process	Unprecedented number of DCO projects that are currently on-going in Lincolnshire. Of the many NSIPs that the Council is currently aware of, 9 of these (which includes this proposal) relate to large-scale solar development and in addition to Heckington Fen, 4 of these other solar proposals have already been submitted and accepted by PINs for Examination (i.e. Gate Burton (EN0110131); West Burton (EN010132); Cottam (EN010133); Mallard Pass (EN010127)). In addition a second wave of DCO projects are now commencing their pre-application stage with ambitious timetables working towards submission over the next 6-12 months. Limited resources and personnel and number, scale and timing of these projects so attention given to examination timetables to ensure hearings and deadline dates take into account other projects.	The Applicant notes this comment and has agreed a Planning Performance Agreement with LCC.
<b>North Kesteven District Council (RR-021)</b>		
Cumulative	Cumulative impacts with other solar projects (Beacon Fen, Springwell and Fosse Green) and the Lincolnshire Reservoir will need to be considered as well as Tillbridge Solar Project	The Applicant notes this comment and will continue to monitor the cumulative impact of schemes in the local area and prepare an update on cumulative impacts within the Environmental Statement (ES) in due

Theme	Consultee Comment	Applicant Response
		course. These schemes are covered in the Applicant’s Interrelationship Report (document reference ExA.IRReport-D1.V1).
Cumulative	Whilst the scope of cumulative impacts associated with the Heckington Fen Solar Park and other non-NKDC solar projects are (without prejudice) likely to be relatively narrow, overlapping examination programmes might still prove to be problematic, especially if the examination programmes are not aligned to avoid hearing clashes.	The Applicant notes this comment and is aware that Local Planning Authorities may have many competing deadlines. A Planning Performance Agreement has been agreed in principle to support the Council’s resource.
Cumulative	Cumulative impacts during construction with other solar projects including in relation to the proposed grid connection into Bicker Fen Substation particularly with the Beacon Fen Solar project.	The Applicant notes this comment and will update the Environmental Statement (ES) in due course. Beacon Fen Solar is covered in the Applicant’s Interrelationship Report (document reference ExA.IRReport-D1.V1).
Planning Policy	The assessment and planning balance will be carried out with regard to Relevant National Policy Statement(s); Statutory development plan framework – comprising the 2023 Central Lincolnshire Local Plan; Published guidance and advice notes; Representations from other parties; and compliance with legislation scrutinised in detail.	The Applicant notes this comment and further updates to the Planning Statement, or an addendum, will be provided during the course of the Examination.
Land Use and Agriculture/ Cumulative	It is essential that consistent information and evidence is presented at all three earlier examinations (Gate Burton Energy Park, Cottam Solar Project and West Burton Solar Project) to enable a fair and consistent recommendation (and decision) to be made; including in relation to agricultural land/food security impacts and BMV agricultural land (negative impacts).	The Applicant notes this comment and has used publicly available information of land grade to compile the Interrelationship Report. The Applicant would, however, stress the need to consider each scheme on its own merits.
Land Use and Agriculture	Land use - loss of BMV agricultural land including any evidence of prioritisation of non-BMV land and whether/how residual impacts can be mitigated (including through grazing); Also ‘Alternatives’ in the context of BMV land.	Areas to the south and west of the Energy Park have been removed. Separating out further areas has been considered but is not deemed viable for effective arable use. The land will still be classified as agricultural land and areas around the panels will be grazed.
Flood Risk	‘Alternatives’ in the context of flood risk. Hydrology and flood risk – including evidencing compliance with the flood risk sequential test.	The Sequential and Exceptions Test have been detailed in the Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy (AS-021 and AS-023).
Landscape	Landscape and visual effects (including lighting impacts and glint and glare); Effects on public amenity and recreation; and residential visual amenity.	The Applicant has completed a Landscape and Visual Assessment (APP-059) as well as a Glint and Glare assessment (APP-070). Large lengths of hedgerows are planted within the scheme and residential properties are set back from the Energy Park. A Residential Visual Amenity Assessment has been completed (APP-060).
Glint and Glare	Effects of glint and glare	The Applicant has completed a Glint and Glare assessment (APP-070).

Theme	Consultee Comment	Applicant Response
		Planting around the perimeter of the Energy Park is also proposed.
Ecology	Ecology and biodiversity impacts (including evidencing Biodiversity Net Gain). Mitigation during construction/decommissioning.	A Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) calculation was included (APP-202), however further information is proposed to be presented at Deadline 2. Requirement 8 of the DCO secures the BNG. Mitigation during construction is covered in the Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (APP-238); and during Decommissioning will be via a Decommissioning and Restoration Plan (APP-240) – whereby an Outline also accompanies the submission.
Cultural Heritage	Archaeological considerations including trenching and evaluation along the grid connection corridor (negative impacts). Mitigation during construction/decommissioning.	Where land agreements have allowed trenching has been completed.
Transport and Access	Traffic. Mitigation during construction / decommissioning.	A Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP), in accordance with the outline CTMP (APP-241), will be implemented during the construction and decommissioning phases of the project, as secured by Requirement 14 of the DCO.
Noise	Impacts	The Applicant notes this comment and engagement from the Council’s Environmental Health Officer has been ongoing throughout the development.
Air Quality	Safety and human health	The Applicant notes this comment and confirms the relevant authorities have been consulted, and detail provided in the Environmental Statement where relevant.
Mitigation	NKDC expect the Applicant to deliver measures that mitigate all impacts to ensure that the overarching impact of the project is mitigated as far as possible.	The Applicant notes this comment and where mitigation is considered necessary this is summarised in Mitigation Schedule (APP-233).
DCO Process	NKDC expect their views on the drafting and approvals process for DCO requirements to be given significant weight in their role of ensuring that the impacts upon local environment and communities are minimised, and as an approving and enforcement authority.	The Applicant notes this comment and no further response is deemed necessary.

**APPENDIX 2 – OTHER STATUTORY CONSULTEES AND STATUTORY UNDERTAKERS RELEVANT REPRESENTATIONS AND APPLICANT’S RESPONSES**

Theme	Consultee Comment	Applicant Response
<b>Network Rail Infrastructure Limited (RR-001)</b>		
DCO Process	Network Rail will require adequate protective provisions and/or requirements to be included within the Order and an agreement with the Promoter to ensure that the new rights sought are exercised in regulated manner to prevent adverse impacts to the Railway and efficient operation of the Railway.	The Applicant notes this comment and confirms that Protective Provisions are being discussed with Network Rail’s legal advisors.
<b>Black Sluice Internal Drainage Board (RR-003)</b>		
Flood Risk	The Board will require elements of the Land Drainage Act 1991 (as amended) to be incorporated within the Protective Provisions of the DCO to ensure that the development does not interfere with any part of the works carried out by the Board under its statutory duties, nor to affect any drainage infrastructure which may increase the risk of flooding. At present the Board have no objections to the proposals provided the applicant complies with our requirements.	The Applicant notes this comment and confirms Protective Provisions have been agreed with Black Sluice IDB. The DCO will be updated at Deadline 2 accordingly.
<b>Environment Agency (RR-009)</b>		
Flood Risk	The Agency has no objection to the principle of the proposed development and believes the issues summarised below are all capable of resolution.	The Applicant notes this comment and no further response is deemed necessary.
Flood Risk	The DCO – amendments and additions are requested in respect of some Requirements and Articles. Draft Protective Provisions for the Agency are included in Schedule 13, Part 5 but we will not agree to the disapplication of the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016 until the wording of these is agreed.	The Applicant notes this comment and further discussions with the EA’s legal advisors has remained ongoing, with Protective Provisions now agreed. The DCO will be updated at Deadline 2 accordingly.
Asset Protection	The Agency is the freehold owner of several plots of land adjacent to the South Forty Foot Drain and submits an objection to any acquisition of rights over its land at the current time. The Agency will continue to work with the Applicant to resolve this matter during the Examination period	The Applicant notes this comment and further discussions with the EA’s land advisors has remained ongoing, with the view to reaching an agreement on this. The Applicant is using a long horizontal directional drill beneath the South Forty Foot Drain and so does not expect to interfere with any above ground land rights of the EA.
Flood Risk	Flood risk – The assessment of risk from a fluvial perspective is appropriate to the scale, nature and location of the development but clarification is requested in respect of the setting of finished floor levels for the control rooms.	The Applicant notes this comment and further details will be provided within the Outline Design Principles (APP-232) to capture this amendment at the next appropriate deadline.
Hydrology	Groundwater protection – based on the information available the Agency is	The Applicant notes this confirmation.

Theme	Consultee Comment	Applicant Response
	satisfied that the development poses a negligible risk to controlled waters.	
Hydrology	The Water Framework Directive – subject to the identified mitigation being fully implemented and best practice methods being followed in respect of pollution prevention, as well as the relevant water abstraction licences and discharge permits being obtained prior to construction commencing for that activity, there should be no deterioration on waterbody status.	The Applicant notes this comment and no further response is deemed necessary.
Hydrology	Water resources – consideration should be given to any potential impact on water levels when crossing ditches, drains and watercourses using open-cut techniques to ensure water levels are not changed in such a way as to impact the water availability of any water abstraction licences. Should water be required to be stored on-site for emergency use, the source for this water will need to be carefully considered as East Anglia is classed as an area of serious water stress.	The Applicant notes this comment. Tanks are provided within the design to provide water resource if the final design requires it.
<b>The Forestry Commission (RR-010)</b>		
Ecology	I have compared the maps of the proposed Heckington Fen Solar Park with our own Forest Mapping system and found there are no ancient woodlands within the proposed development area. We also note from the Arboricultural Impact Assessment that there are no plans to remove any trees within the site and there will be appropriate protection measures in place for the trees on the site during construction. We therefore have no further comments to make, and have no need for further consultation	The Applicant notes this comment and confirms the Forestry Commission provided further comments on the removal of the woodland at Bicker Fen Substation as part of the Change Application Consultation. The Applicant considered this feedback and provided further planting within the Energy Park.
<b>Historic England (RR-011)</b>		
Cultural Heritage	It is important that risk of avoidable / unmitigated damage to sensitive remains is well managed in proportion to their importance. This can be achieved through layout, deployment of green space and construction options for cabling and panel mounting etc. Archaeological risks can thus be well addressed with a sound understanding of where archaeological sensitivity and importance lies across the site and cable corridor. We refer you in the first instance to the expertise of local authority archaeological advisors. It is they who will (should DCO be granted with appropriate requirements) advise upon the acceptability of written schemes of investigation (WSI) and their accordance with a robust overall archaeological strategy secured through DCO submission.	The Applicant notes this comment. The Applicant had secured WSIs (in accordance with the outline WSIs) under Requirement 12 of the DCO.

Theme	Consultee Comment	Applicant Response
<b>Anglian Water (RR-012 and AS-032)</b>		
Asset Protection	Some provisions differ from Anglian Water’s protective provisions template that was previously shared with the Applicant. Any impacted Anglian Water assets need to be identified and either diverted or protected.	The Applicant notes this comment and confirms protective provisions have been agreed with Anglian Water.
Asset Protection	If necessary, Anglian Water will also seek and agree a Statement of Common Ground with the Applicant, for example, if protective provisions are not agreed before Deadline 1 and so are a live matter for the Examining Authority.	The Applicant notes this comment and confirms a Statement of Common Ground has been agreed with Anglian Water.
Asset Protection	It is noted that no connections to Anglian Water’s services for potable water, and surface water and foul water are proposed for the development. The applicant should be aware that in the event a potable water connection be required, that such supplies may not be available.	The Applicant notes this comment and confirms potable water, surface water and foul water are not required for the development, opting for rainwater harvesting, trickle fill, septic tanks and utilising the existing farm supply if required.
Asset Protection	Apologies for the late notice but I can confirm that Anglian Water have now resolved all outstanding queries with the applicant, and have agreed the Protective Provisions and signed a Statement of Common Ground. As such, Anglian Water will not be attending the hearing tomorrow.	The Applicant confirms this position.
<b>National Gas Transmission Plc (NGT) (RR-016)</b>		
Asset Protection	NGT will require appropriate protection for retained apparatus including compliance with relevant standards for works proposed within close proximity of its apparatus. NGT’s rights of access to inspect, maintain, renew and repair such apparatus must also be maintained at all times and access to inspect and maintain such apparatus must not be restricted.	The Applicant notes this comment and confirms the appropriate protections are provided within the protective provisions, which are now agreed with NGT.
Asset Protection	Where the Applicant intends to acquire land or rights, or interfere with any of NGT’s interests in land or NGT’s apparatus, NGT will require appropriate protection and further discussion is required on the impact to its apparatus and rights.	The Applicant notes this comment and confirms the appropriate protections are provided within the protective provisions, which are now agreed with NGT.
Asset Protection	The high pressure gas transmission pipeline located within the proposed order limits is an essential part of the gas transmission network in England, Wales and Scotland. NGT has a duty to protect its position in relation to infrastructure and land which is within or in close proximity to the draft Order Limits	The Applicant notes this comment and confirms access to the pipeline and gas valve will remain for NGT.
Asset Protection	NGT will require protective provisions to be included within the draft Development Consent Order (the “Order”) for the Project to ensure that its interests are adequately protected and to ensure compliance with relevant safety standards.	The Applicant notes this comment and confirms the protective provisions, which are now agreed with NGT.



Theme	Consultee Comment	Applicant Response
<b>National Grid Electricity Transmission Plc (NGET) (RR-017)</b>		
Asset Protection	National Grid will require appropriate protection for retained apparatus including compliance with relevant standards for works proposed within close proximity of its apparatus. National Grid’s rights of access to inspect, maintain, renew and repair such apparatus must also be maintained at all times and access to inspect and maintain such apparatus must not be restricted. National Grid has a substation (Bicker Fen 400KV) and high voltage electricity overhead transmission lines (4ZM 400kv overhead line) within or in close proximity to the proposed Order Limits. This apparatus forms an essential part of the electricity transmission network in England and Wales.	The Applicant notes this comment and confirms the appropriate protections are provided within the protective provisions, which are now agreed with NGET.
Asset Protection	Where the Applicant intends to acquire land or rights, or interfere with any of National Grid’s interests in land or National Grid’s apparatus, National Grid will require appropriate protection and further discussion is required on the impact to its apparatus and rights.	The Applicant notes this comment and confirms the appropriate protections are provided within the protective provisions, which are now agreed with NGET.
Grid Connection	The Project proposes a connection to National Grid’s Bicker Fen substation. Ecotricity has entered into a connection agreement which necessitates the connection bay and additional National Grid infrastructure in order to connect the Project	The Applicant confirms the grid connection agreement is in place.
<b>Natural England (RR-019)</b>		
Land Use and Agriculture	Further work is required to fully assess the extent of impacts to Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land, including from Biodiversity Enhancement Areas.	<p>The Applicant notes the areas previously shown as Biodiversity Enhancement Areas are now outside of the Order Limit.</p> <p>The Applicant notes that draft EN-3 (2023) at paragraph 3.10.18 now states that field surveys should, if necessary, be used to establish the Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) grades of proposed solar sites. The paragraph contains no further guidance in respect of when a field survey is ‘necessary’ and what the survey should include and exclude, specifically in the context of cabling and cable routes. The previous version of draft EN-3 stated that the ALC survey ‘<i>should be extended to the underground cabling and access routes</i>’, but, following consultation feedback, this wording has been removed from the 2023 draft of EN-3 (previously at para 2.48.14 of the 2021 draft EN-3). The Applicant therefore considers that the direction of travel from government in the latest draft EN-3 is that cable routes do not need to be assessed from an ALC perspective.</p>

Theme	Consultee Comment	Applicant Response
		Notwithstanding this, the Applicant is content to undertake further ALC studies on cable route prior to construction with the methodology to be agreed with Natural England.
Land Use and Agriculture	Deficiencies in the Soil Management Plan, which must be addressed to ensure soil resources are managed and maintained appropriately during construction and for the lifetime of the development.	The Applicant has provided an Outline Soil Management Plan for the Energy Park and for the Cable Route, which is secured under Requirement 13 of the DCO, to cover this concern. Further detail from Natural England has been sought as part of the Statement of Common Ground.
Ecology	Further information is also required regarding potential protected species licences required from Natural England.	The Applicant notes this request and is working with Natural England to complete this with a view to obtaining a Letter of No Impediment.
DCO Process	Natural England’s concerns regarding impacts to other elements of the natural environment have been addressed within the ES submission and, subject to the appropriate use of DCO requirements, we consider impacts to these elements can be ruled out.	The Applicant notes this comment and no further response is deemed necessary.
<b>NHS Lincolnshire Integrated Care Board (RR-020)</b>		
Health	NHS Lincolnshire Integrated Care Board would like to thank you for sharing the consultation and notes the work but do not have any comments to make at this time	The Applicant notes this comment and no further response is deemed necessary.
<b>The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) (RR-027)</b>		
Health	With respect to Registration of Interest documentation, we are reassured that earlier comments raised by us on 26 August 2022 have been addressed. In addition, we acknowledge that the Environmental Statement (ES) has not identified any issues which could significantly affect public health. UKHSA/OHID is satisfied with the methodology used to undertake the environmental assessment. Following our review of the submitted documentation we are satisfied that the proposed development should not result in any significant adverse impact on public health. On that basis, we have no additional comments to make at this stage and can confirm that we have chosen NOT to register an interest with the Planning Inspectorate on this occasion.	The Applicant notes this comment and no further response is deemed necessary.
<b>Cadent Gas Limited (AS-032)</b>		
Asset Protection	I write on behalf of Cadent Gas. I understand there is a request for the Heckington project team to engage with Cadent Gas to provide a Statement of Common Ground as part of the examination process. I can confirm Cadent Gas has no assets being affected by the project, therefore it deems the need for such a document unnecessary. If for another	The Applicant notes this and concurs with the position.

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Consultee Comment</b>	<b>Applicant Response</b>
	reason you feel there is a need please do not hesitate to contact me to discuss.	

**APPENDIX 3 – PARISH COUNCIL’S RELEVANT REPRESENTATIONS AND APPLICANT’S RESPONSES**

Theme	Consultee Comment	Applicant Response
<b>Amber Hill Parish Council (RR-002)</b>		
Site Design	The Councillors resolved that their response still stands with regards to the Solar Farm. Cllrs discussed the information received regarding the Solar farm, noting that they will be 4.5m high and have a lifetime of 40 years, although it is yet to be decided whether they would be tracking or fixed.	The solar array heights have been reduced since the Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR). To clarify, the Outline Design Principles (APP-232), secured by Requirement 6 of the DCO, sets out the maximum heights under Table 1.1 - (Work No.1 A- Solar PV Modules and Mounting Structures) which states that the maximum height of the highest part of the solar PV modules will be 3.5m Above Ground Level (AGL). The solar PV modules and mounting structure will be located within the limits of deviation of Work No.1 as shown on the Works Plan (AS-004).
Land Use and Agriculture	Cllrs resolved that they are in favour of a Solar farm as such, however they do have concerns about the fact that the land to be used is Good quality land that will be removed from agricultural production. The land currently proposed to be used is a mixture of grade 1 and 2 land, capable of producing good crops of roots and vegetables. Grade 3 and 4 land would be far more appropriate for a solar farm.	The Energy Park has been surveyed and comprises a mixture of land qualities. The Energy Park comprises 49% land of the best and most versatile quality, being a mix of Grades 1, 2 and 3a in a complex pattern mostly intermixed with grade 3b, such that few fields are wholly of BMV quality. It is considered that the installation of solar arrays has a limited effect on the underlying soil resource and the land quality and is a reversible installation – particularly in the context of this scheme which has an operational lifetime of 40 years. Accordingly, the underlying soil resource and land quality is not affected across the areas where panels will be located. The area of land that is sealed (i.e. where soils are removed and buildings, stone or concrete are added, such that the agricultural land is permanently lost or lost for the duration of the Proposed Development), are limited and are mostly located on poorer quality land. Fixed equipment, tracks etc will seal less than 3 ha of BMV agricultural land, and 17.4 ha of poorer quality land. It is concluded that agricultural land use can and will continue for the duration of the Proposed Development. This is in the form of grazing which is secured in the Outline Landscape Ecological Management Plan which is secured by Requirement 8 of the DCO.

**APPENDIX 4 – NON-STATUTORY ORGANISATIONS RELEVANT REPRESENTATIONS AND APPLICANT’S RESPONSES**

Theme	Consultee Comment	Applicant Response
<b>Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust (RR-014)</b>		
Cumulative	The Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust are concerned with the lack of a strategic approach among the solar energy industry with regard to the volume of PV sites across the county. We routinely consult with the applicants on these projects and want to see greater mitigation and enhancement measures undertaken by solar farm applicants. The cable corridor routes often stretch over many kilometres and can impact large tracts of land beyond the immediate development site.	The Applicant notes this comment; cumulative impacts are considered in the ES documentation. The cable route corridor is a temporary land use so opportunities are more limited, however within the Energy Park significant enhancements are provided in the form of a community orchard, permissive path, hedgerow planting, BNG areas, and to the extent necessary skylark plots (located within the landowner’s boundary under the Applicant’s control).
<b>Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust (Late Submission)</b>		
Ecology	We are satisfied that all ecological surveys were carried out at appropriate times of the year (Table 8.1) and the Environment Statement in general is very detailed and well thought out. This has been a common thread throughout our engagement with Heckington Fen Solar Park.	The Applicant notes this comment and welcomes the positive feedback from LWT.
Ecology	The proposed ecological enhancements show the various intersecting boundary treatments forming wildlife corridors through the site to the surrounding landscape (with Head Dike being an ecologically significant connection along the northern boundary). The work conducted during consultation to move various infrastructure and equipment closer together onsite and at fewer locations improves this further.	The Applicant notes this comment and no further response is deemed necessary.
Ecology	The habitat enhancement areas have been reduced in number following consultation and agricultural land grade assessment. This reduced enhancement area would still result in a high BNG value for the site (though this has yet to be calculated for the development since) while allowing the fields between the A17 road and the panel arrays to remain in agricultural production. This loss in area has meant the latest revisions do not include dedicated areas for skylark plots which require large areas of open space for breeding success. The field parcels to contain panel arrays, and their enhanced sward as a result, are likely to be suitable feeding areas of skylarks but these should also be supplemented with viable breeding spaces. There are currently few, if any, records of skylark successfully breeding between panel arrays of solar farms, though there is scant research in this area.	The Biodiversity Net Gain has been calculated at Appendix 8.12 (APP-202). The skylark plots are secured in the Outline LEMP and under Requirement 8 of the DCO, for an area of land in which the Applicant has an interest, or such other land, or through such other mechanism to be agreed with NKDC in consultation with LWT.

Theme	Consultee Comment	Applicant Response
Cumulative	LWT in principle understands that an individual solar farm may not have a negative impact on ground nesting birds such as skylark and lapwing, at a population level. But we have taken the decision due to the sheer volume of solar farm developments being applied for across Greater Lincolnshire including NSIPs, that we will take a consistent approach, as we believe cumulatively, there is true potential to impact populations in Greater Lincolnshire.	As noted above, skylark plots are secured in the Outline LEMP (APP-239) and under Requirement 8 of the DCO, for an area of land in which the Applicant has an interest, or such other land, or through such other mechanism to be agreed with NKDC in consultation with LWT.
Ecology	Following the most recent contact with the ecology team for Heckington Fen Solar Park, there remains an option for further research to be conducted on the solar farm site in regards to the potential retrospective creation of skylark plots (Paragraph 2.12 Outline LEMP, ref: 7.8). We would strongly encourage this option be taken up by the applicant as this could build on our limited knowledge of behavioural changes in farmland bird species as a result of solar farm development.	The Applicant considers monitoring in the Outline Landscape Ecological Management Plan (APP-239), which could assist with research opportunities that may be progressed and proposes an Ecologist will be appointed to provide professional advice to the Land Manager on all aspects of habitat creation and management.
<b>The British Horse Society (RR-025)</b>		
Transport and Access	In Lincolnshire the incidents on highways reported to the BHS rose from 61 in 2021 to 78 in 2022. This illustrates the importance of protecting, improving and extending safe off-road provision to help to prevent these numbers from increasing in the future, particularly where developments will impact on the infrastructure.	The Applicant notes this comment and confirms an Outline Construction Traffic Management Plan (APP-241) has been included to help secure highway safety measures. The scheme is not stopping up any bridleways that may be used by horse riders.
Socio Economics	DEFRA has recorded 2,586 horses in the immediate LN4, PE20 and NG34 postcode areas (2021), making a total of £14,347,128 contribution to the economy. There are livery yards in the area creating employment and using equine services (vet, farrier, feed, instructors, etc) as well as growing interest in equestrian tourism ('take your horse on holiday').	The Applicant notes this comment and no further response is deemed necessary.
Transport and Access	The bridleway and byway network in this area is limited and fragmented, therefore forcing equestrians to ride/lead/drive on the main roads to reach the safety of off-road provision further afield. Document 14. Transport and Access responds to the BHS question in 2022 regarding a permissive route within the site, partially following Public Footpath Heckington 15, which could be multi-user to include vulnerable road users - equestrians, cyclists, pedestrians, wheelchair users and mobility scooter users – rather than solely pedestrians. This would then connect with Sidebar Lane. The applicant states that 'the Applicant does not have the requisite land rights to enable this'	The Applicant notes this comment and no further information is available which changes the response given in 2022.

Theme	Consultee Comment	Applicant Response
	<p>however most paths, permissive or otherwise, are over private land and this development provides an opportunity to negotiate multi-user access for the period of the scheme.</p>	
<p>Transport and Access</p>	<p>According to BETA two-thirds of equestrians are women and Church et al (2010) found 37% of women who are horse riders are over 45 years of age and over a third would pursue no other physical activity. Developers should be looking at how to include this group, not how to exclude them.</p>	<p>The Applicant notes this comment and confirms it is not within its gift to offer anything further than the permissive path which connects into the Public Right of Way network which is not currently a bridleway.</p>
<p>Transport and Access</p>	<p>Public Bridleway Swineshead 13 relies on access via Royalties [SIC] Lane therefore appropriate, safe access to the bridleway in terms of surface and dimensions, must be protected here. Timms Drove is an unclassified road on the List of Streets and the access spur proposed leads towards Public Bridleway Swineshead 13. With the exception of the construction phase, an opportunity would be to provide access between the bridleway and the road here.</p>	<p>Royalty Lane (also spelt Royality Lane on some mapping) will be subject to a directional drill under the South Forty Foot Drain so access will not be impeded.</p> <p>Timms Drove does not connect to the Bridleway Swineshead 13; the connecting spur is onto Triton Knoll which is a private track.</p>
<p>Transport and Access</p>	<p>HGV return journeys at the height of the construction period will impact on the volume of traffic on the road network locally. Already mainly 60mph roads, the additional traffic will make the road network higher risk for vulnerable road users in the absence of speed restrictions or other traffic calming measures. Movement of the construction traffic may well coincide with times that equestrians are active on the roads to reach the off-road routes.</p>	<p>The Applicant notes this comment. An Outline Construction Traffic Management Plan is provided with the Application (Doc. Ref. 7.10, APP-241) and secured under Requirement 14 of the DCO. Appropriate signage and advice and training for contractors will be given as necessary.</p>
<p>Transport and Access</p>	<p>The mitigation proposed in document 14. Transport and Access focusses on information for other users of the highway rather than education for the contractors regarding behaviour around vulnerable road users. HGV's are generally 2.5m wide and 4.5m high (some vehicles for component transportation significantly larger) which, on the road network local to the site, would sandwich a horse and rider between the vehicle and the hedgerow or ditch along the route with little room for refuge which may cause panic.</p>	<p>The Applicant notes this comment. An Outline Construction Traffic Management Plan is provided with the Application (APP-241) and secured under Requirement 14 of the DCO. Appropriate signage and advice and training for contractors will be given as necessary.</p>
<p>Transport and Access</p>	<p>Research continues into historical evidence which indicates a number of ancient roads in the vicinity of the site are unrecorded or under recorded as footpaths or UCR's; these routes can be reasonably alleged to subsist at a minimum of bridleway status. The BHS would welcome continued discussion.</p>	<p>The Applicant notes this comment and has reviewed historical plans; and confirmed with the landowner there are no routes that should be classified as bridleway status on the Energy Park. The BHS has been kept informed on the project updates, for example the Change Application.</p>

Theme	Consultee Comment	Applicant Response
<b>Canal and River Trust (Late Submission)</b>		
Hydrology	Having reviewed the location of the project and the relationship of the proposed solar park and its associated development sites with our network, we do not believe that the proposals as shown would cross land owned or operated by the Trust. Should the scheme be amended to potentially affect the River Witham we would welcome further consultation on the proposals, so that we can advise about any potential impact for our network.	The Applicant notes this comment and no further response is deemed necessary.
Hydrology	The South Forty Foot Drain (Black Sluice Navigation) runs through the cable corridor of the site. This navigation is neither owned nor managed by the Canal & River Trust, however, pursuant to the charitable objectives of the Trust, we support the preservation, conservation and protection of inland waterways for the public benefit. We are aware that the Environment Agency is dedicated to preserving the Black Sluice Navigation and encouraging future regeneration of this waterway through the Fens Waterway Link project and support such initiatives. We advise that consideration is given to any response from the Environment Agency with regards to the impact of the proposal on their preservation and regeneration objectives.	The Applicant notes this comment and no further response is deemed necessary.



**APPENDIX 5 – LOCAL MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT AND MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC, RELEVANT REPRESENTATIONS AND APPLICANT’S RESPONSES**

Theme	Consultee Comment	Applicant Response
<b>Christopher George Barlow (RR-005)</b>		
Land use and Agriculture/ Cumulative	Some of the land proposed for this use is high grade agricultural land. This application is one of several currently under consideration with more on the way. Who is overseeing this significant change of use of land currently used to grow food?	The Applicant notes this comment and the Secretary of State for the Department of Energy Security and Net Zero will make the final decision. The land will still be classified as agricultural land and the area underneath and around the panels is proposed to be managed with sheep grazing. Further information on this is contained at Appendix 2 of the Interrelationship Report (document reference ExA.IRReport-D1.V1).
<b>Christopher Hinge (RR-006)</b>		
Site Description	I want to be kept informed of all planning applications and all subsequent changes to the planning application regardless of what they are. There have been changes to the original application which have so far not been notified, regarding size of equipment and also size of the proposed farm.	The Applicant notes this comment and by submitting a Relevant Representation the individual has confirmed their interest in the development. A number of consultation events have taken place since 2021 and where details have changed this has been communicated.
<b>Mr David John Bowler (RR-008)</b>		
Land Use and Agriculture	We hereby OBJECT to the above application on the basis that the project is partly on top quality agricultural land, against government and Lincolnshire County Council Policy. This is destroying the area as an agricultural high quality growing area needed for food security, which is being systematically destroyed. We cannot import all our food and the destruction of high grade agricultural land must stop.	The Applicant notes this comment and confirms the solar park will still be classified as agricultural land. The area underneath and around the panels is proposed to be managed as with sheep grazing. Over 80% of the land is grade 3 land, and suffers the usual constraints of heavy soils, notable blackgrass infestation and a general susceptibility to wetness, both of which constrain farming activities. The practical difficulties of farming the BMV mixed with the poorer quality land can be seen in the way the grading varies across the site. Dividing the fields into different cropping areas would be significantly hindered by the field layouts, with all fields bordered by sizeable ditches. An alternative could be miscanthus which offers no food security.
Cumulative	There is also gross overbearing industrial development of the area with a huge and repeatedly expanding electricity sub station, thirteen wind turbines, two interconnectors and numerous other industrial solar panel developments.	The Applicant notes this comment, where applicable the cumulative schemes are considered in the baseline or cumulative assessment. The Applicant has also prepared an Interrelationship Report to document and stay on top of the interaction with other schemes (document reference: ExA.IRReport-D1.V1); this report will be updated at each Examination deadline (where necessary).
Transport and Access	It will generate vast volumes of traffic and pollution. ongoing expansions of the existing National Grid sub station listed	The Applicant notes this comment and has considered the cumulative schemes where applicable. To mitigate the impact on

Theme	Consultee Comment	Applicant Response
	<p>below (so far) 1. Heckington Fen solar panels 2. Temple Oaks solar panels 3. Viking Link interconnector 4. Vicarage Drove Solar Panels 5. Red House Farm solar panels (possible) 6. Beacon Fen (2 schemes) solar panels 7. Bicker Fen solar panels 8. Any other similar schemes to come. All these expansions of the National Grid substation will involve large volumes of their traffic using Cowbridge Road Bicker. These levels of traffic are impossible for Cowbridge Road to accommodate. The road, which is in a terrible condition is three metres wide with no pavements and no passing places. Therefore traffic trying to pass has to use the grass verges causing seas of mud and damage.</p>	<p>Cowbridge Road the Applicant is proposing to use Triton Knoll access track for the works associated with the Solar Park, cable route and works at Bicker Fen Substation for which the Applicant has control of.</p>
<p>Transport and Access</p>	<p>During the construction of the substation the water supply in the area was broken 57 times by heavy traffic on the verges. This can be checked with Anglian Water. This left local people and businesses without water for up to 3 days at a time, and never did National Grid (NG) provide bowsers or bottled water.</p>	<p>The Applicant notes this comment.</p>
<p>Transport and Access</p>	<p>Several construction schemes (Triton Knoll and Viking Link interconnectors) have avoided Cowbridge Road and constructed new roads off the A17 and A52 for their traffic. As part of any planning permission NG must be required to use one of the alternative routes other than Cowbridge Road for all their traffic.</p>	<p>It is proposed that the Triton Knoll access route will be used to access the cable route construction and Bicker Fen Substation. National Grid will continue to access its substation using the National Grid haul road off the A52. National Grid will be subject to the controls and relevant Requirements in the DCO, including the need to operate under a Construction Traffic Management Plan (in accordance with the outline CTMP) (APP-241). In addition, the Applicant is exploring ways to further manage any National Grid traffic on Cowbridge Road.</p>
<p>Transport and Access</p>	<p>The road has agricultural traffic, horseriders, walkers, local traffic, cyclists and is part of the Brown Fen Waterways Trail. I have to use the road for my mobility scooter which means that if the latest Official Highways Code is followed vehicles cannot pass.</p>	<p>The Applicant notes this comment and highlights above the steps being taken to avoid any impact on these road users.</p>
<p>Air Quality/ Noise/ Residential Amenity</p>	<p>Local residents have suffered years of diesel / petrol fumes, clouds of dust (or mud when wet) shocking noise (exacerbated by the condition of the road), vibration and sleep deprivation. This has caused severe illness in all the Cowbridge Road properties. What we have suffered contravenes Health and Safety legislation, and Human Rights Act sections</p>	<p>The Applicant notes this comment.</p>
<p><b>Matthew Stephen Birch (RR-015)</b></p>		
<p>Ecology/ Landscape</p>	<p>Negative impact on biodiversity, and rights of way.</p>	<p>The Applicant notes this comment.</p>

Theme	Consultee Comment	Applicant Response
<b>Ryan Beveridge (RR-022)</b>		
Transport/ Landscape/ Flood Risk/ Residential Amenity/ Ecology	Will be considering the topics and Mitigations proposed on the following subjects: Baseline studies Construction noise Construction traffic local network Construction traffic A17 Construction operational hours Visual impacts and proposed design envelope Flood risks and effects on local properties Groundwork impacts on local properties Fencing Hedgerows Cabling Local access and footpaths Wildlife impacts	This comment has been reviewed and further details on these elements are included in the ES and secured where appropriate via Outline Plans.
<b>Sir John Hayes MP (RR-024)</b>		
Land Use and Agriculture	I am extremely concerned about the proposal and the impact it will have on South Lincolnshire. This proposal will see prime agricultural land removed from food production at a time when recent events have reminded us of the vital importance of food security. It is so important that farming land, such as this site, remains in production to ensure that food prices remain affordable, and we can continue to feed our nation.	The Applicant notes this comment and the potential conflict between food and energy security. It should be noted the site will remain in agriculture with grazing, and is currently largely used for feed wheat. A majority of the land is Grade 3b, with 80% comprising Grade 3a and 3b, 3a being at the lowest end considered "best and most versatile".
Socio-Economics	This application could affect the viability of the business that currently farms the land, with the possibility of job losses, affecting the local economy.	The Applicant has confirmed with the landowner that no jobs will be lost with the provision of the Energy Park, this is due to landholdings elsewhere. Furthermore 5 FTE jobs are predicted, in addition to 1.5 FTE for managing the sheep.
Landscape and Visual	This proposal will have a detrimental impact on the Fenland landscape and local amenity, changing the character and nature of the surrounding environment forever.	The Applicant has completed a landscape and visual impact assessment and will provide hedgerows, community orchard and a permissive path.

**APPENDIX 6 – BUSINESSES, RELEVANT REPRESENTATIONS AND APPLICANT’S RESPONSES**

Theme	Consultee Comment	Applicant Response
<b>Triton Knoll OFTO Limited (“TK OFTO”) (RR-007)</b>		
Asset Protection	The Book of Reference identifies several plots as land owned by Triton Knoll Offshore Windfarm Limited or in which Triton Knoll Offshore Windfarm Limited has an interest over which compulsory acquisition powers are sought. Accordingly, once the transfer of the OFTO assets is finalised, TK OFTO will have apparatus within the Order boundary and wishes to protect its future rights and interests in land and its apparatus. TK OFTO has been liaising with the Promoter to reach satisfactory agreement, and discussions are at an advanced stage. However, TK OFTO reserves the right to make further representations as part of the Examination process, including the provision of Protective Provisions, if an agreement cannot be reached.	The Applicant notes this comment and discussions with TK OFTO remain ongoing; the Protective Provisions (for the benefit of TK / TK OFTO’s apparatus) are at advanced stage, and the Applicant is hopeful of securing a voluntary agreement to use TK’s access track in order to avoid using compulsory acquisition rights over the track.
<b>National Grid Ventures (RR-018)</b>		
Asset Protection	Viking Link Ltd has cable rights running through the site. As Nationally Significant Infrastructure, we will require any works within proximity of Viking Link to be submitted to National Grid Ventures to ensure we have no objections and can sign off a crossing agreement (where applicable).	The Applicant notes this comment and confirms Viking Link will benefit from Protective Provisions within the Order. The Applicant is also in discussions with Viking Link in relation to bespoke Protective Provisions.
<b>Schroders Greencoat (RR-023)</b>		
Asset Protection	The Heckington Fen Solar Park would be developed on the area of a wind farm owned (in majority) by Schroders Greencoat. We shall ensure that Heckington Fen Solar Park development is not detrimental to the operation of the wind farm.	The Applicant notes this comment and confirms Bicker Fen Wind Farm will benefit from Protective Provisions within the Order (at Part 1 of Schedule 13).