

# Heckington Fen Solar Park

EN010123

## Statement of Common Ground with Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust

Applicant: Ecotricity (Heck Fen Solar) Limited

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**STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND**

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**1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) has been prepared by Ecotricity (Heck Fen Solar) Limited ("the Applicant") in conjunction with Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust ("LWT").
- 1.2 The proposed development comprises the construction, operation (including maintenance), and decommissioning of a ground mounted solar photovoltaic (PV) electricity generation and energy storage facility (hereafter referred to as "the Energy Park"), cable route to, and above and below ground works at, the National Grid Bicker Fen Substation (hereafter referred to as "the Proposed Development" (inclusive of Energy Park)) on land at Six Hundreds Farm, Six Hundreds Drove, East Heckington, Sleaford, Lincolnshire.
- 1.3 This SoCG notes:
- "Agreed" indicates where the issue has been resolved,
  - "Not Agreed" indicates a final position of the parties that is not agreed, and
  - "Under discussion" indicates where these points are the subject of on-going discussion wherever possible to resolve, or refine, the extent of disagreement between the parties.
- 1.4 It can be taken that any matters not specifically referred to in this SoCG are not of material interest or relevance and therefore have not been considered further. It is recognised however that engagement between all parties will need to continue due to their joint interest in matters arising from the Proposed Development.
- 1.5 The purpose of the SoCG is to identify the areas where the principal parties do not agree and remain in dispute. This will allow the Examination to focus on the most pertinent issues.

Impacts of the development

- 1.6 It is agreed that all environmental constraints and sensitive receptors relevant to the determination of the application have been considered in the application plans and documents.
- 1.7 It is agreed that the development proposed is an EIA development, and the submitted EIA assesses the realistic worst-case effects of the development.

Summary of main issues agreed/not agreed

- 1.8 Based on engagement to date common ground is expected to be agreed.

**2. MATTERS TO BE AGREED**

Reference and Status	Topic	LWT’s Position	Applicant’s Position
<b>1. Assessment of effects (including survey areas, baseline data and methodology) which relate to ecology and biodiversity</b>			
1.1 Agreed	Survey areas	LWT 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 engagement with Heckington Fen Solar Park.	Considered appropriate and no further comment required. The Applicant welcomes the positive feedback from LWT.
1.3 Agreed	Baseline data		
1.4 Agreed	Methodology		
1.5 Agreed	Research opportunities	LWT propose that such sites offer the opportunity for future surveying by research students to further our understanding of how	The Applicant considers monitoring, which could assist with research opportunities that may be progressed, in the Outline

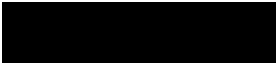
Reference and Status	Topic	LWT's Position	Applicant's Position
		biodiversity alters during the operational phase of solar farms in the UK. This would begin to fill the sizeable knowledge gap in how ecological receptors (e.g. farmland birds specialists, invertebrates etc) alter and provide evidence based approaches for future best practices.	Landscape Ecological Management Plan (doc. ref. 7.8) and proposes an ecologist will be appointed to provide professional advice to the land manager on all aspects of habitat creation and management.
<b>2. Effects on habitats, species and designated sites, including cumulative effects</b>			
2.1 Agreed	Skylark plots	The reduction in land in the south and west reduces the Biodiversity Net Gain area which will remain in arable agricultural production. 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 LWT 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.	The Applicant has an Option to Lease this area and is expecting to sub-lease it for arable agricultural production. Skylark plots are detailed further in the Outline Landscape Ecological Management Plan (doc. ref. 7.8) in which the Applicant commits to working with North Kesteven District Council (NKDC) and LWT to carry out or contribute to a strategy for the benefit of Skylarks either on land in which the Applicant controls (as per the Option area referred to above) or such other land or through such other equivalent mechanism as NKDC and LWT may propose.
<b>3. Mitigation and enhancement measures</b>			
3.1 Agreed	Mitigation and enhancement	LWT support 'skylark plots' to be incorporated into the LEMP as mitigation. LWT agree with the	A number of mitigation and enhancement areas are included within the Proposed

Reference and Status	Topic	LWT's Position	Applicant's Position
		mitigation described for badgers and would stress the importance of consulting with Natural England.	Development documentation.
<b>4. Biodiversity Net Gain</b>			
4.1 Agreed	Biodiversity Net Gain	<p>LWT agree that "<i>The creation of large areas [...]of species rich grassland is likely to lead to a net biodiversity gain...</i>" and acknowledge the inclusion of the headline results of the BNG calculations.</p> <p>The reported BNG is a reasonable benchmark for other prospective solar NSIPs in Lincolnshire to either match or exceed.</p>	The Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) has been completed and is included in the ES documentation. The legal mechanism for securing BNG is provided for under Requirement 8 of the DCO.
<b>5. Protected Species Licences</b>			
5.1 No comment	Protected Species Licences	The Applicant would coordinate this with Natural England.	The Applicant would coordinate this with Natural England.
<b>6. Drafting of the dDCO including Protective Provisions</b>			
6.1 Agreed	The appropriateness of the draft Development Consent Order including its structure, scope, requirements and protective provisions.	LWT are satisfied that all surveys and practical considerations for the natural environment have been taken into account during the draft DCO. The report detailing the structure and scope of these surveys is inline with comparable solar farm NSIPs within Central Lincolnshire.	<p>The Applicant welcomes the confirmation from LWT.</p> <p>The draft DCO is based on legal precedent and includes the appropriate structure, scope, provisions, requirements and protective provisions.</p>

**3. SIGNATORIES**

The above SoCG is agreed between Ecotricity (Heck Fen Solar) Limited ("the Applicant") and Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust, as specified below.

Duly authorised for and on behalf of Ecotricity (Heck Fen Solar) Limited

Name:	Laura White
Job Title:	Senior Development Manager
Date:	2 <sup>nd</sup> October 2023
Signature:	

Duly authorised for and on behalf of Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust.

Name:	Ashley Reaney
Job Title:	Conservation officer
Date:	2/10/2023
Signature:	