

From: [David Conway](#)
To: [Heckington Fen Solar](#)
Cc: [Conway, David](#)
Subject: NGET response to The Examining Authority's written questions and requests for information (ExQ1)
Date: 07 November 2023 14:20:59
Attachments: [REDACTED]

Hello,

Further to the Examining Authority's written questions (ExQ1) issued on 17 October, I am happy to attach a response on behalf of National Grid Electricity Transmission (NGET) covering the following:

- BIO. 1.2
- DCO. 1.2
- DCO. 1.3
- DCO 1.4
- TT. 1.3
- TT. 1.5
- TT. 1.6

While NGET has submitted relevant representations previously, we do not appear to have been issued with an interested party number, hence why our submission has been emailed rather than submitted through the PINS website.

Any issues please let me know.

Kind Regards,

David

David Conway

Consultant Consents Officer
National Grid electricity Transmission



RSK Environment Ltd
Fourways House, 57 Hilton Street, Manchester, M1 2EJ, UK
M: - [REDACTED]
Advanced notice of annual leave:



Application by Ecotricity (Heck Fen Solar) Limited
Heckington Fen Solar Park

The Examining Authority's written questions and requests for information (ExQ1) Issued on 17 October 2023

The following table sets out the Examining Authority's (ExA's) first round of written questions and requests for information – ExQ1. Questions are set out using an issues-based framework derived from the Initial Assessment of Principal Issues provided as **Annex D** to the Rule 6 letter of 21 July 2023. Questions have been added to the framework of issues set out there as they have arisen from representations and to address the assessment of the application against relevant policies.

Column 2 of the table indicates which Interested Parties (IPs) and other persons each question is directed to. The ExA would be grateful if all persons named could answer all questions directed to them, providing a substantive response, or indicating that the question is not relevant to them for a reason. This does not prevent an answer being provided to a question by a person to whom it is not directed, should the question be relevant to their interests.

Each question has a unique reference number which starts with an alphabetical code and then has an issue number and a question number. For example, the first question on general matters is identified as GEN.1.1. When you are answering a question, please start your answer by quoting the unique reference number.

If you are responding to a small number of questions, answers in a letter will suffice. If you are answering a larger number of questions, it will assist the ExA if you use a table based on this one to set out your responses. An editable version of this table is available in Microsoft Word format is available on request from the Case Team. Please contact: Heckingtonfensolar@planninginspectorate.gov.uk and include 'Heckington Fen Solar – ExQ1' in the subject line of your email.

Responses are due by Deadline 2: Tuesday 7 November 2023



Abbreviations used:

| | |
|--------------|---|
| AP(s) | Affected Person(s) |
| BBC | Boston Borough Council |
| BMV | Best and Most Versatile (agricultural land) |
| BoR | Book of Reference |
| CA | Compulsory Acquisition |
| CEMP | Construction Environmental Management Plan |
| CTMP | Construction Traffic Management Plan |
| DAS | Design and Access Statement |
| DCO | Development Consent Order |
| dDCO | Draft Development Consent Order |
| DPD | Design Principles Document |
| DRP | Decommissioning and Restoration Plan |
| EA | Environment Agency |
| EIA | Environmental Impact Assessment |
| ES | Environmental Statement |
| ExA | Examining Authority |
| GIS | Gas Insulated Switchgear |
| HGV | Heavy Goods Vehicle |
| IP(s) | Interested Party (Parties) |
| LCC | Lincolnshire County Council |
| LIR | Local Impact Report |



| | |
|-------------|---|
| LLFA | Lead Local Flood Authority |
| m | Metre |
| NE | Natural England |
| NKDC | North Kesteven District Council |
| NSIP | Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project |
| NPS | National Policy Statement |
| R | Requirements |
| RPAs | Relevant Planning Authorities |
| RR | Relevant Representation |
| SF6 | Sulphur hexafluoride |
| SoCG | Statement of Common Ground |
| SMP | Soil Management Plan |
| TP | Temporary Possession |

The Examination Library

References in these questions set out in square brackets (eg [APP-010]) are to documents catalogued in the Examination Library. The Examination Library can be obtained from the following link: [EN010123-000343-Examination Library.pdf \(planninginspectorate.gov.uk\)](https://www.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/examination-library/EN010123-000343-Examination%20Library.pdf). It will be updated as the examination progresses.

Citation of Questions

Questions in this table should be cited as follows:

Question reference: issue reference: question number, eg GEN.1.1 – refers to question 1 in this table.



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| 5. DEVELOPMENT CONSENT ORDER | 7 |

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|--|--|--|---|
| 1. GENERAL, MISCELLANEOUS AND CROSS-TOPIC QUESTIONS | | | |
| BIO.1.2 | Applicant National Grid Electricity Transmission Plc | <p>The Landscape Strategy Plan [PS-091] details landscaping proposals for the energy park site only and not the Bicker Fen substation. The accepted Change Application shows an area of mixed species plantation is proposed to be removed to enable additional substation infrastructure. This is further considered in the Change Application documents [PS-003 onward] which state that '<i>replacement tree planting has not been possible at Bicker Fen substation due to technical constraints and limited land availability</i>'. At Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2) [REP1-020] it was indicated that there are numerous constraints to planting including location of cables.</p> <p>Could the Applicant and National Grid Electricity Transmission Plc (NGET):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Provide further details/plans on the extent of loss of mixed species plantation woodland to be removed to the south-west corner of Bicker Fen substation, with an indication of minimum and maximum area of loss for a) a GIS system and b) an Air Insulated Switchgear (AIS) system. ii) Provide a more detailed explanation as to why planting around the Bicker Fen substation is not appropriate | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Appendix 8.13- Further Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey Report- Bicker Fen Substation (document reference Pre-ExA.ChangeApp.ESAPP8.13.V1/ PS-153) contains details of the mixed species plantation and the percentage loss of each type of tree. It is not possible at this stage, and prior to detailed design being undertaken, to indicate a minimum area of loss but as a comparison we have indicated the areas of loss for a GIS system and an AIS system as requested. <p>A maximum footprint for the Gas Insulated Switchgear will be approximately 5,625m² (e.g., 75m by 75m). Some Switchgear apparatus will be housed indoors in a building 30m by 20m, and 15m in height. All of the infrastructure for the Gas Insulated Switchgear option will be in the footprint of Work No.6A and Work No.6B as shown on the Works Plan (document reference 2.2 / PS-014).</p> <p>The Air Insulation Switchgear will be approximately 14112m², and 15m in height. All of the infrastructure for the Air Insulated Switchgear option will be in the footprint of Work No.6A and Work No.6B as shown on the Works Plan (document reference 2.2 / PS-014).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ii) Consideration has been given to providing additional planting within NGET land. However, the substation site already has a planting plan imposed as part of a landscape condition for the original substation (Boston Borough Council application reference 05/0046). This accounts for woodland and tree planting to the north and western boundaries, and a wetland area to the south eastern corner. The remaining land is |

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Responses due by Deadline 2 (Tuesday 7 November 2023)

| ExQ1 | Question to: | Question: | Answers: |
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| | | <p>and has not been included in the plans.</p> <p>iii) Give further consideration as to whether off-site planting in the vicinity of the substation (or a contribution to third party planting) has been considered, which potentially could be secured via legal agreement.</p> | <p>either constrained by existing infrastructure (e.g. pylons, cables) or is required for further development in the future and therefore should not be further constrained limiting the ability for other customers to connect to this site in the future. This statement is supplemented with a plan at Appendix 4 of this document.</p> <p>iii) The Applicant confirms consideration continues to be given to a number of options to satisfy Boston Borough Council's concerns that the replacement tree planting being provided on the Energy Park is not adequate because it is not within BBC's area.</p> <p>These include planting along the southern boundary of National Grid Bicker Fen Substation in the highway verge. This would need to be agreed with Lincolnshire County Council highways. This area is not large enough to replicate the total area of planting loss at National Grid Bicker Fen Substation and has not been progressed to date although this remains possible if agreement can be reached that it would satisfy BBC (which to date they have indicated it would not).</p> <p>The land noted by Black Sluice Internal Drainage Board at Issue Specific Hearing 2 on the 20th September 2023 for potential plantation is already underway and the trees will be funded by a grant, as such this cannot be progressed and a contribution to help maintain the new woodland is not likely satisfy BBC's requirements.</p> <p>A further option is a designated tree planting charity, for example Boston Woods Trust. The Trust confirms they only plant trees close to Boston, and when they have sufficient</p> |

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| | | | <p>land available to them. BBC consider that this location is too far away to be associated with the loss of trees at National Grid Bicker Fen Substation.</p> <p>The Applicant continues to explore options to satisfy the request of Boston Borough Council but would reiterate that planting is included in the Energy Park within a separate woodland parcel and within hedgerows on the northern boundary which will replace the tree loss at the Bicker Fen Substation when considering the project as a whole.</p> |
| 5. DEVELOPMENT CONSENT ORDER | | | |
| DCO.1.2 | National Gas Transmission Plc | <p>The RR from National Gas Transmission Plc (NGT) [RR-016] raises a number of comments in relation to protection of apparatus including a high pressure gas transmission pipeline. The Applicant's response [REP1-019 and REP1-022] indicates that protective provisions have been agreed and that access to the pipeline and gas valve will remain for NGT, however the NGT's position is not yet included in the SoCG [REP1-013].</p> <p>Could NGT confirm if protective provisions in Schedule 13 Part 4 of the dDCO [PS-024] are agreed, and whether they wish to raise any further comments in response to the Applicant.</p> | <p>Protective Provisions for the benefit of National Gas Transmission have been included in the dDCO at deadline 1. The protective provisions are agreed but the parties are finalising negotiations over the terms of a commercial agreement which has not yet been concluded. This is anticipated to be concluded well within the examination timescales and NGT will update to confirm the position as soon as this is the case.</p> |
| DCO.1.3 | National Grid Electricity Transmission Plc | <p>The RR from NGET [RR-017] raises a number of comments in relation to protection of apparatus and that they have entered into a connection agreement with</p> | <p>Protective Provisions for the benefit of National Grid Electricity Transmission have been included in the dDCO at deadline 1. The protective provisions are agreed but the parties are finalising negotiations over the terms of a commercial agreement which has not</p> |

ExQ1: 17 October 2023**Responses due by Deadline 2 (Tuesday 7 November 2023)**

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|---------|--|--|--|
| | | <p>the Applicant. The Applicant's response [REP1-019 and REP1-022] indicates that protective provisions have been agreed and that a grid connection agreement is in place.</p> <p>The SoCG [REP1-014] indicates that the agreed form of protective provisions are in version 3 of the dDCO [PS-024] and that discussions on commercial terms for the protection of NGET's assets are ongoing but expected to be concluded during the course of the Examination.</p> <p>Could NGET confirm if the protective provisions in Schedule 13 Part 7 of the dDCO [PS-024] are agreed, and provide an update on discussions regarding asset protection, highlighting any issues which remain outstanding.</p> | <p>yet been concluded. This is anticipated to be concluded well within the examination timescales and NGET will update to confirm the position as soon as this is the case.</p> |
| DCO.1.4 | National Grid Electricity Transmission Plc | <p>In the latest version of the dDCO received at D1 [PS-024] an additional Article (45) was added in relation to the NGET extension works.</p> <p>Could NGET:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">i) Explain the situation which might arise that would mean they need to apply for Work No's 6B or 6C under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 or the General Permitted Development Order 2015.ii) Confirm if they are satisfied with the wording of Articles 32 and 45. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">i) As a regulated transmission operator, NGET are legally obliged to provide connections to any customer who requests it, the connection priority/order of connections is potentially subject to change for instance if the Applicants project timescale changed for funding or any other reasons. In such circumstances NGET may need to connect other parties first/in a different order. Accordingly these provision simply make it clear that NGET can still use the TCPA 1990 regime where it is necessary or it elects to do so in order to meet it's connection and licence obligations including to maintain an efficient and economic network, without prejudicing the implementation of the DCO. |

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| ExQ1 | Question to: | Question: | Answers: |
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| | | | <p>ii) NGET have agreed the wording of Article 32 and 45 with the Applicant</p> |
| TT.1.3 | Applicant National Grid Electricity Transmission Plc | <p>Paragraph 4.3 of the outline CTMP [PS-152] states that “<i>Construction traffic accessing the Bicker Fen substation will also follow the same construction route to the A52 and A17 roundabout where it will turn onto the A52 towards Bicker. It is anticipated that the majority of construction traffic will use the existing National Grid Bicker Fen Substation access road and access and egress the site via Cowbridge Road, Bicker Drove and Vicarage Drove, as shown at Figure 2.1.</i>”. It is noted that NGET are expected to submit a final CTMP for their own works, as the Bicker Fen extension Works No’s 6B and 6C would be a standalone phase.</p> <p>Could the Applicant and NGET consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Should the dDCO [PS-024] specify a separate CTMP for the Bicker Fen substation works, or is Requirement 14 sufficient to cover this? | <p>NGET considers that Requirement 14 is sufficient as currently drafted and it is not necessary to expressly state on the face of the DCO that NGET will submit a separate plan (i.e. the CTMP). This is because Works No’s 6B and 6C will either form a separate phase of the development or form part of a phase dealing with the works at Bicker Fen substation.</p> <p>Paragraph 2.1.20 of the Explanatory Memorandum (document reference 3.3/PS-026) states that the number of phases will be determined by the undertaker prior to commencement of the Order and notified to the relevant planning authority under Requirement 3 of Schedule 2 to of the Order. Each phase of the Authorised Development is then considered in accordance with the Requirements at Schedule 2 of the DCO, which allow for discharge in respect of each phase. The final plans submitted will therefore be relevant for the particular phase in question.</p> <p>Requirement 14 (Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP)) is structured so that “no phase of the authorised development may commence...” until the final CTMP (relevant for that phase) is approved by the county authority in consultation with the relevant planning authority. It is anticipated that NGET will submit a CTMP for the traffic movements associated with Works No’s 6B and 6C or that NGET’s traffic movements will be dealt with as part of the overall discharge of Requirements in respect of the phase of works at Bicker Fen substation.</p> <p>Pursuant to Requirement 14(1), the final CTMP must be in accordance with the general principles in the outline CTMP (document reference 7.10/ PS-152), as is relevant to that phase of works.</p> |

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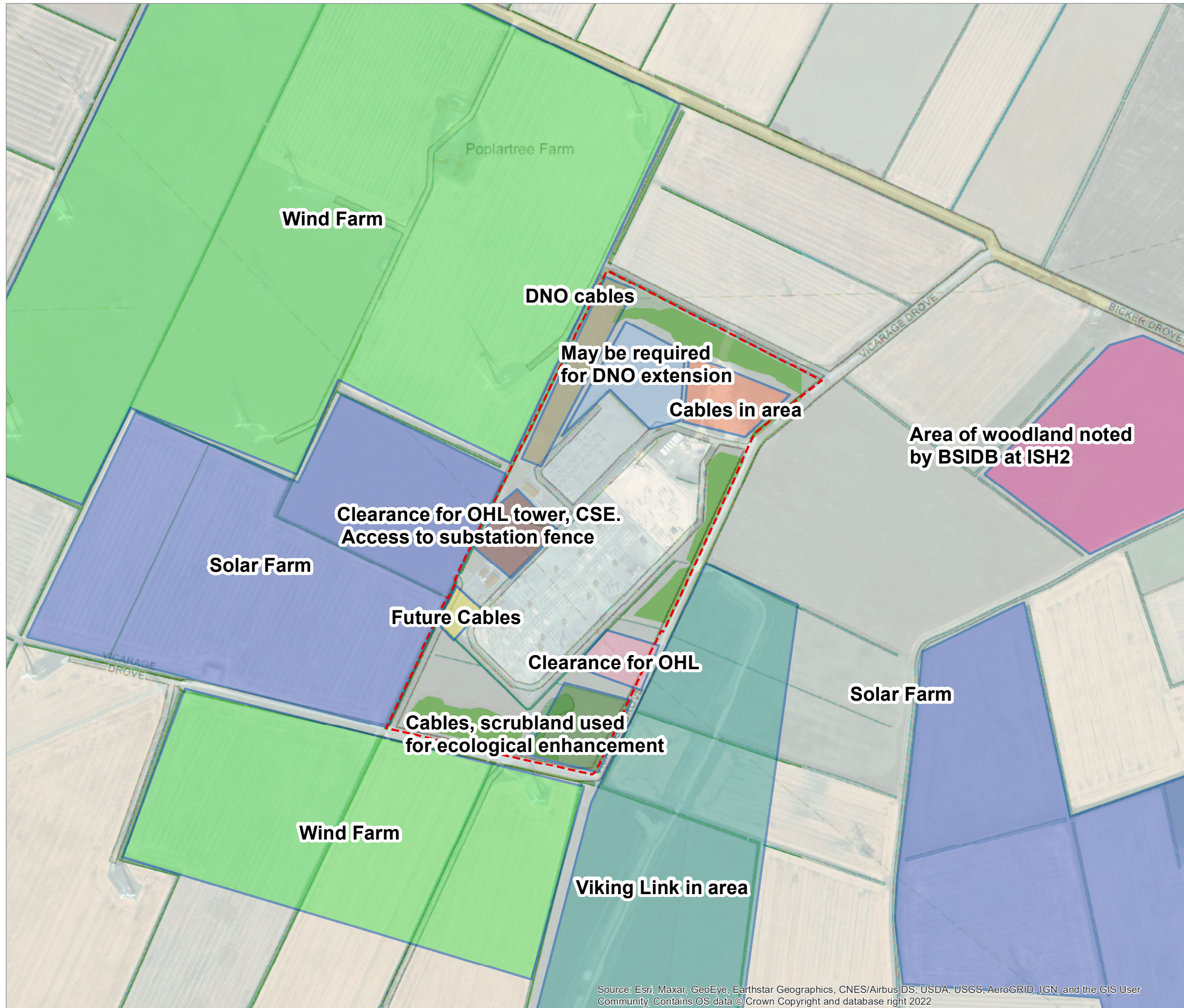
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| ExQ1 | Question to: | Question: | Answers: |
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| TT.1.5 | Applicant Lincolnshire County Council National Grid Electricity Transmission Plc | <p>Table 14.8 of ES Chapter 14 [PS-073] sets out the activity and type of HGV traffic flows to the energy park and indicates that substation transformers and a crane would be delivered via Abnormal Indivisible Load (AIL). Paragraph 14.6.3 indicates that the construction of the energy park would require around 107 AILs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Could the Applicant and NGET clarify if AILs would be necessary for the works at Bicker Fen substation? ii) Could LCC clarify if they have any comments to make regarding the use of AILs on the local highway network? | <p>NGET confirm that no AILs would be necessary for the extension works at National Grid Bicker Fen Substation.</p> |
| TT.1.6 | Applicant Lincolnshire County Council National Grid Electricity Transmission Plc | <p>Paragraph 14.6.14 to 16 of ES Chapter 14 [PS-073] estimate traffic flows to the National Grid Bicker Fen substation extension works to 2,076 vehicles over the 60 week construction period, plus construction worker movements, leading to an average of 18 two way vehicle movements per day. Tables 14.9 and 14.11 indicate Links Four (Cowbridge Road), Five (Bicker Drove) and Six (Vicarage Drove) as having a high impact significance from HGV traffic flows. Paragraph 14.6.22 states "<i>Given that Links Four to Six are of negligible sensitivity, the</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ii) NGET provided the figures quoted in paragraphs 14.6.14-24.6.8 and Table 14.9 of ES Chapter 14 and can confirm that to our knowledge they are an accurate indication of existing and proposed traffic flows. |

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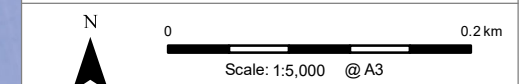
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|------|--------------|---|----------|
| | | <p><i>increases in traffic result in a temporary Negligible level of impact significance at all links, and therefore are Not Significant in EIA terms”.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">i) Can the Applicant explain why these particular Links are identified as being of negligible sensitivity value.ii) Can NGET confirm if paragraphs 14.6.14 to 14.6.18 and Table 14.9 of ES Chapter 14 [PS-073] are an accurate indication of existing and proposed traffic flows to the Bicker Fen substation.iii) Can LCC confirm if they agree with the Applicant’s assessment of sensitivity of Links Four (Cowbridge Road), Five (Bicker Drove) and Six (Vicarage Drove), or if, having regard to Table 14.2 of ES Chapter 14 [PS-073], you consider the sensitivity of any of these Links should be increased. | |



- Legend**
- National Grid Title
 - Area of woodland noted by BSIDB at ISH2
 - Cables in area
 - Cables, scrubland used for ecological enhancement
 - Clearance for OHL
 - Clearance for OHL tower, CSE. Access to substation fence
 - DNO cables
 - Future Cables
 - May be required for DNO extension
 - Solar Farm
 - Viking Link in area
 - Wind Farm
 - Existing Woodland

Figure: Bicker Fen Substation Overview
Title: Appendix 4 - Examining Authority Questions - BIO 1.2 ii Deadline 2



| | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Drawn by: MW | Checked by: LW | Approved by: LW |
|-----------------|-------------------|--------------------|

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Heckington Fen

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