

Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) objects to the Mallard Pass Solar Farm proposal. Whilst the project would produce clean renewable energy that would support the nations transition to a low carbon future and deliver significant biodiversity net gain benefits through the creation of mitigation and enhancements as well as other more limited positive impacts (as identified within our Local Impact Report), these positive impacts are not outweighed by the negative, some significant, impacts that arise given the overall size and scale of the development. Of particular concern are the permanent and negative impacts that this proposal would have on the landscape character and appearance of the area through the replacement of large areas of agricultural or rural land with solar development; the loss of arable agricultural land, the vast majority of which is classed best and most versatile land; the significant negative impacts on potential buried archaeology; and, the negative impacts upon the users of Public Rights of Way in and around the development as a consequence of changes to the visual appearance of the area and views from these routes.

The Examining Authority should note that this project is one of 10 other solar generation NSIPS currently being promoted within our County which collectively propose to cover more than 8,300 hectares or 20,500 acres of primarily agricultural land. Given the strategic importance of the County as a food producer for the nation, any developments on BMV land should start from a position of refusal with the emphasis for applicants to prove otherwise. LCC will therefore be seeking the applicant to provide a bond equal to the full cost of site restoration and safe disposal of all the solar panels (without landfill) and infrastructure to ensure the land is restored once it is decommissioned. This bond should be based on a Green Book calculation that, as a minimum, is based on the year of the expected operational life of the development.