

Gate Burton Energy Park EN10131

Outline Public Rights of Way Management Plan
Document Reference: EN010131/APP/7.8
January 2023

APFP Regulation 5(2)(q)
Planning Act 2008
Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed Forms and Procedure) Regulations 2009

Prepared for:

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 Gate Burton Energy Park Limited ('the Applicant') is applying for a Development Consent Order (DCO) for the proposed Gate Burton Energy Park (the Scheme) which comprises the construction, operation (maintenance), and decommissioning of a solar photovoltaic (PV) array electricity generating facility and electrical storage facility with a total capacity exceeding 50 megawatts (MW) to the National Grid at the Cottam National Grid Substation.
- 1.1.2 The electricity generated by the Scheme will be exported to the National Grid via the Grid Connection Corridor, via a connection between the Gate Burton Energy Park Substation and the Cottam National Grid Substation. This connection will also facilitate the import of electricity to be stored within the Battery Energy Storage System (BESS).
- 1.1.3 The Order limits are split across the two administrative areas of Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) and Nottinghamshire County Council (NCC), primarily consisting of agricultural fields mainly under arable production, with some small parcels of pasture, interspersed with trees, hedgerows, small areas of woodland and farm access tracks. The Scheme is also split across the administrative areas of West Lindsey District Council (WLDC) and Bassetlaw District Council (BDC).
- 1.1.4 The Scheme for which development consent is sought has been carefully developed following a detailed iterative design process. The design process has considered relevant national and local design policy and guidance, information from site appraisals and field work and feedback from stakeholders.

1.2 Purpose and Structure of this Plan

- 1.2.1 This Outline Public Rights of Way Management Plan (OPRoW MP) outlines how Public Rights of Way (PRoW) will be managed by the Applicant for the Scheme to ensure they have been suitably considered and able to operate as well as possible, in terms of both user safety and accessibility.
- 1.2.2 The OPRoW MP has been prepared in view of the Draft National Policy Statement (NPS) for Renewable Energy EN-3 (Ref 1), which was published for consultation in September 2021. The Draft NPS may be subject to change in the final version, but nevertheless currently states:
 - Paragraph 2.49.5 - "Considering the likely extent of solar sites, it is possible that proposed developments may affect the provision of local footpath networks and public rights of way. Public rights of way may need to be temporarily stopped up to enable construction; however, it should be the applicant's intention, where practicable and safe, to keep all public rights of way that cross the proposed development site open during

construction and to protect users where a public right of way borders or crosses the site. Developers are encouraged to design the layout and appearance of the site to ensure continued recreational use of public rights of way, where possible during construction, but in particular across the operation of the site, and to minimise as much as possible the visual outlook from existing footpaths. It should be noted that sites may provide the opportunity to facilitate enhancements to the local footpath network and the adoption of new public rights of way through site layout and design of access”

- Paragraph 2.49.6 - “It is anticipated that detail on how public rights of way would be managed to ensure they are safe to use is detailed in an outline Public Rights of Way Management Plan”.
- 1.2.3 Both the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan (Ref 2) and Draft Bassetlaw Local Plan (Ref 3) also emphasise the importance of ensuring existing PRoW are kept open and are minimally disrupted during construction.
- 1.2.4 LCC raised the matter of PRoW during statutory consultation (between 22 June 2022 and 05 August 2022), with regards to protecting the characteristics of these routes as providing local value beyond that of connectivity. NCC noted the potential to impact six PRoW within the Grid Connection Corridor during the construction phase and requested that any potential closures are employed sensitively to optimise connectivity. NCC, in its statutory consultation response of August 2022, also acknowledged the collaborative approach being taken with Cottam Solar Project in terms of minimising impacts on the PRoW network.
- 1.2.5 Further to the above, as part of the EIA Scoping Opinion, BDC stated that the Grid Connection Corridor has the potential to affect several PRoW in Nottinghamshire and that the Rights of Way Officer should be consulted for the relevant area(s). No further comments were made as part of the PEI Report statutory feedback. WLDC provided no comments with respect to PRoW as part of the above.
- 1.2.6 In light of these comments and the Draft NPS, the Applicant is keen to demonstrate the Scheme has taken appropriate measures to allow the various PRoW to continue to be used by the local community during the construction, operation, and decommissioning stages.
- 1.2.7 It should be noted that no significant effects on PRoW users are anticipated following the assessment of the Solar and Energy Storage Park and Grid Connection Corridor within **ES Volume 1, Chapter 13: Transport and Access [EN010131/APP/3.1]**.

2. Baseline Conditions

2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 There are a number of PRow which pass through or run adjacent to the Site boundary (the 'Order limits') which are summarised below. The details of the PRow have been obtained from the PRow Interactive Map on the Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) website (Ref 4) for the part of the Site within Lincolnshire, and from the rowmaps website (Ref 5) for the part of the Site within Nottinghamshire (in the absence of a definitive map on NCC's website). The PRow (footpaths, byways and bridleways) are also shown on **ES Volume 2: Figure 2-2 [EN010131/APP/3.2]**.
- 2.1.2 The PRow which pass through or border the Order limits and form part of a wide network of PRow in the surrounding area, have been set out below for both the Solar and Energy Storage Park and the Grid Connection Corridor running progressively from north to south.

2.2 Solar and Energy Storage Park

- **PRow LL|Upto|53/1** – a footpath which runs for 1250m within the vicinity of the northern extent of the Solar and Energy Storage Park, running in an east to west direction between PRow Kexb/53/1 and Upton Road.
- **PRow LL|Knai|44/1** – a footpath which runs for approximately 330m within the vicinity of the northern boundary of the Solar and Energy Storage Park, running in an east-west direction between the railway line in the west and B1241 to the east.
- **PRow LL|Knai|44/2** – a footpath that runs for approximately 450m in an east-west direction, along the northern boundary of the Solar and Energy Storage Park (in its northwest corner) from Knaith Hill/ Station Road to the railway line in the east. The PRow also runs through the Solar and Energy Storage Park for a short distance.
- **PRow LL|Mton|69/1** – a footpath which runs for approximately 350m and meets the south-western boundary of the Solar and Energy Storage Park to the south of Willingham Road, running in a north-south direction between the Solar and Energy Storage Park in the north and A1500 Stow Park Road in the south.

2.3 Grid Connection Corridor

- **PRow LL|Mton|68/1** – footpath which runs for approximately 450m within the vicinity of the Grid Connection Corridor boundary, through the field to the south of A1500 Stow Park Road in a south-western direction towards A156 High Road.
- **PRow LL|Mton|66/4** – a footpath that runs for approximately 500m along the eastern bank of the River Trent, to the west of A156 High Street and south of Marton. The PRow runs in a north-south direction commencing at Trent Port Road in the north and connecting with PRow LL|Bram|66/1 in the south.

- **PRoW LL|Bram|66/1** – footpath that runs for approximately 1000m along the eastern bank of the River Trent. The footpath commences to the east of A156 High Street to the south of Marton along an existing field access track and runs in a north-western direction towards the eastern bank of the River Trent where it links with PRoW LL|Mton|66/4.
- **PRoW NT|Cottam|FP1** – a footpath that runs for approximately 1200m along the western bank of the River Trent. The PRoW runs in a north-south direction, linking with Habbleshthorpe|FP9 in the north, PRoW NT|Treswell|FP7 and NT|Cottam|BW7 in the south and PRoW NT|Cottam|FP3 in the west.
- **PRoW NT|Cottam|FP3** – a footpath that runs for approximately 1000m along the western bank of the River Trent, north of Cottam. The footpath commences to the east of Headstead Bank, along an existing field access track which runs in a west-east direction through the fields where it joins with PRoW NT|Cottam|FP1.
- **PRoW NT|Cottam|RB4** – a restricted byway that runs for approximately 1100m in a north-south direction between Broad Lane in the north and Cottam Road in the south.
- **PRoW NT|SouthLeverton|BOAT16** – a byway that runs for approximately 1100m along Cow Pasture Lane in a north-south direction between Broad Lane in the north and Cottam Road (Outgang Lane) in the south.
- **PRoW NT|Treswell|FP4** – a footpath that runs for approximately 250m to the west of Cottam Power Station. The PRoW runs through the fields to the north of Torksey Ferry Road in a southwest-northeast direction, connecting with PRoW NT|Rampton|FP5 to the south of Rampton Thorns, and with PRoW NT|Treswell|FP5 to the east of Rampton Thorns, outside of the Grid Connection Corridor boundary.
- **PRoW NT|Rampton|FP5** – a footpath that runs for approximately 800m to the west of Cottam Power Station. The PRoW runs through the fields to the north of Torksey Ferry Road in a southwest-northeast direction, connecting with PRoW NT|Treswell|FP4 to the south of Rampton Thorns and Torksey Ferry Road in the south.
- **PRoW NT|Treswell|FP5** – a footpath that runs for approximately 600m to the west of Cottam Power Station. The PRoW runs through the field to the south of Cottam Road in a north-south direction, connecting with PRoW NT|Treswell|FP4 and PRoW NT|Rampton|FP6 in the south.
- **PRoW NT|Rampton|FP6** – a footpath that runs for approximately 500m to the west of Cottam Power Station. The PRoW runs through the field to the north of Torksey Ferry Road in a north-south direction, connecting with PRoW NT|Treswell|FP5 in the north and Torksey Ferry Road in the south.
- **PRoW NT|Rampton|BOAT13** – a byway that runs for approximately 2000m along Torksey Ferry Road in a west-east direction. The PRoW connects with PRoW NT|Rampton|FP10, NT|Rampton|FP6, NT|Rampton|FP20, NT|Rampton|BOAT12 in the west along Torksey Ferry Road and with NT|Rampton|BW8 and NT|Rampton|FP7 in the east.

- **PRoW NT|Rampton|FP20** – a footpath that runs for approximately 380m to the south of Torksey Ferry Road, along Nightleys Road in a north-south direction. The PRoW connects with PRoW NT|Rampton|BOAT13 to the north and with NT|Rampton|FP9 in the south.
- **PRoW NT|Rampton|BOAT12** – a byway that runs for approximately 600m to the south of Torksey Ferry Road, along Shortleys Road in a north-south direction. The PRoW connects with PRoW NT|Rampton|BOAT13 to the north and with NT|Laneham|BOAT10 in the south.

3. The Proposed Scheme

3.1 Construction

Introduction

- 3.1.1 Access to all existing P_{RoW} will be maintained during the construction phase, with no P_{RoW} closures and a limited number of temporary P_{RoW} diversions around the Grid Connection Corridor works area when the cables are installed. The P_{RoW} will be managed throughout the construction phase to ensure that routes can continue to be used as safely as possible. The existing P_{RoW} widths will be maintained for all P_{RoW} throughout the construction phase. An indicative drawing showing the various forms of P_{RoW} management to be implemented for existing P_{RoW} during the construction phase is shown on **ES Volume 2: Figure 13-8 [EN010131/APP/3.2]**.
- 3.1.2 It should be noted that whilst the proposed construction routes and crossing point locations within the Order limits may be subject to minor changes during detailed design, these changes are not expected to change the principles presented in this OPRoW MP or result in any additional adverse impacts. Any changes will be agreed with the relevant local authority in terms of how these changes are proposed to be managed throughout the construction phase of the Scheme. The following sets out the likely impacts on P_{RoW} during the construction phase:

Solar and Energy Storage Park

Physical P_{RoW} Separation from Construction Routes and Works

- 3.1.3 The following existing P_{RoW} will be physically separated from the proposed construction routes and works areas using mesh, Heras, or other similar types of fencing where necessary, to maximise the safety of P_{RoW} users within the Solar and Energy Storage Park:

- **P_{RoW} LL|Knai|44/2**

P_{RoW} Crossing Points

- 3.1.4 It is important that public safety is maintained when construction vehicles utilise routes within the Solar and Energy Storage Park. The proposed construction routes are expected to cross the following P_{RoW} within the Solar and Energy Storage Park:
- **P_{RoW} LL|Knai|44/2**
- 3.1.5 This proposed crossing point will be carefully managed to allow all users to safely pass through this area as follows:
- Providing manned controls at the crossing point (including marshals/banksmen and gates) when vehicles are crossing the P_{RoW}, with a default priority that construction traffic will give-way to other users;

- Providing advanced signage to warn users of the potential presence of construction vehicles and PRow users; and
- Maximising visibility between construction vehicles and other users at the crossing point.

Temporary PRow Diversions

- 3.1.6 No temporary PRow diversions are expected to be required within the Solar and Energy Storage Park.

Grid Connection Corridor

Physical PRow Separation from Construction Routes and Works

- 3.1.7 The following existing PRow will be physically separated from the proposed construction routes and works areas using mesh, Heras, or other similar types of fencing where necessary, to maximise the safety of pedestrians and cyclists within the Grid Connection Corridor:

- **PRow LL|Mton|68/1**
- **PRow LL|Mton|66/4**
- **PRow LL|Bram|66/1**
- **PRow NT|Cottam|FP1**
- **PRow NT|Cottam|FP3**
- **PRow NT|Cottam|RB4**
- **PRow NT|SouthLeverton|BOAT16**
- **PRow NT|Rampton|FP5**
- **PRow NT|Rampton|FP6**
- **PRow NT|Rampton|BOAT13**

PRow Crossing Points

- 3.1.8 It is important that public safety is maintained when construction vehicles utilise/ cross routes within the Grid Connection Corridor. The proposed construction routes are expected to cross the following PRow within the Grid Connection Corridor:

- **PRow LL|Mton|66/4**
- **PRow NT|Cottam|RB4**
- **PRow NT|SouthLeverton|BOAT16**
- **PRow NT|Rampton|FP5**
- **PRow NT|Rampton|FP6**

- 3.1.9 The proposed crossing points will be carefully managed to allow all users to safely pass through these areas as follows:

- Providing manned controls at the crossing point (including marshals/banksmen and gates) when vehicles are crossing the PRow, with a default priority that construction traffic will give-way to other users.
- Providing advanced signage to warn users of the potential presence of construction vehicles and PRow users; and
- Maximising visibility between construction vehicles and other users at the crossing point.

Temporary PRow Diversions

3.1.10 The following PRow are expected to be temporarily (and locally) diverted around each works area when the cables are installed, for a short period (circa. six weeks each). These are set out as follows:

- **PRow LL|Mton|66/4**
- **PRow NT|Cottam|FP1**
- **PRow NT|Cottam|RB4**
- **PRow NT|SouthLeverton|BOAT16**
- **PRow NT|Rampton|FP5**

3.1.11 The construction works will be very localised at the above locations and the temporary PRow diversions will only reroute the existing PRow around the works area before re-joining the existing PRow. The temporary diversions are expected to be a maximum of 50m in length, allowing a 5m buffer from the edge of each works area.

3.1.12 Each minor diversion will be clearly marked out, along with appropriate signage at either end of the diversion. The diversion routes will be agreed with the relevant local authority for each diversion prior to construction of the Scheme.

3.1.13 The existing PRow will be reinstated in each location once the Grid Connection Corridor has been installed, noting that public access will be retained throughout the period of localised PRow diversions.

3.1.14 In addition, the following PRow are expected to be temporarily (and locally) diverted to ensure that these remain physically separated from the proposed construction routes:

- **PRow LL|Bram|66/1**
- **PRow NT|Cottam|FP3**
- **PRow NT|Rampton|FP6**

3.1.15 As above, each diversion will be clearly marked out with appropriate signage. The diversion routes will be agreed with the relevant local authority prior to the construction of the Scheme. Existing PRow will be reinstated once construction access is no longer required. Public access will be retained throughout the period of localised PRow diversions.

Mitigation and Management Measures

- 3.1.16 Further to the measures already identified above, proposed mitigation and management measures relating to PRow include:
- Maintaining access to/ along PRow during the construction phase, including existing widths for PRow users;
 - Providing temporary PRow diversion routes where necessary e.g. when the Grid Connection Corridor is installed, to avoid any PRow closures. Each diversion will be clearly marked out, along with appropriate signage at either end of the diversion. The diversion routes will be agreed with the relevant local authority prior to construction;
 - Providing sufficient protection/ separation between existing PRow and the proposed construction route and works areas where necessary;
 - Managing areas where the internal construction route crosses any existing PRow (where these are unable to be diverted), by maximising visibility between construction vehicles and other users (pedestrians and cyclists), implementing traffic management e.g. advanced signage to advise other users of the works, as well as manned controls at each crossing point (marshals/ banksmen), with a default priority that construction traffic will give-way to other users;
 - Providing a minibus service to transfer construction staff to/ from the Grid Connection Corridor, in order to reduce traffic to this portion of the Scheme and therefore the number of potential PRow interactions (i.e. vehicles crossing PRow to access different areas across the Site); and
 - Developing a communications strategy including regular meetings with contractors to review and address any issues associated with walking or cycling to/ from the Site, as well as to relay information including any restrictions and requirements which should be followed.
- 3.1.17 It should be noted that pedestrian and cycle routes will be maintained and remain unobstructed at all times when in use, to ensure the continued safe passage of the public including when using the PRow through the Site and at crossing points.

3.2 Operation

- 3.2.1 The existing PRow which pass through or run adjacent to the Order limits are expected to be unaffected during the operational phase.
- 3.2.2 It is not expected that any Temporary Traffic Management (TTM), PRow diversions or closures will be required and the majority of vehicles accessing the Site will be maintenance vehicles/ Light Goods Vehicles (LGVs) and will be nominal in number.
- 3.2.3 The Scheme will retain the existing links to adjacent PRow routes and highways as at present. The operational phase of the Scheme will include the following measures:

- Maintaining access to all existing PRow within the Site, with no diversions or closures (any PRow temporarily diverted during the construction phase will be reinstated during the operational phase); and
 - Controlling areas where the internal maintenance route crosses any existing PRow (such as by providing gates), permitting only operational traffic to utilise these internal routes within the Site. Operational traffic would give-way to other users when utilising the crossing points. Visibility will be maximised between operational vehicles and other users, with warning signage provided if required.
- 3.2.4 A minimum width has been incorporated into the Scheme design for PRow, as well as for the corridor in which they will be provided (between Scheme infrastructure). In all cases the PRow will be of at least existing width, with at least 5m spacing either side of the centreline of the PRow and therefore delivering a minimum 10m space. This will avoid the perception of being channelled into narrow passages between PV Panels.
- 3.2.5 It should be noted that no permissive paths are proposed during the operational phase. The **Framework Operational Environmental Management Plan (OEMP) [EN010131/APP/7.4]** therefore focusses on proposed mitigation relating to PRow during the operational phase.

3.3 Decommissioning

- 3.3.1 During the decommissioning phase it is anticipated that the PRow will be managed in a similar way to the construction phase. There are not expected to be any PRow closures although some minor diversions are likely to be required to provide safe access across the Site whilst decommissioning activities are taking place. These diversions will be temporary and are expected to be similar in nature and duration to those during the construction phase.
- 3.3.2 A **Framework Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan (DEMP) [EN010131/APP/7.5]** has been prepared which further provides details of the proposed mitigation relating to PRow during the decommissioning phase.

4. Summary and Conclusion

- 4.1.1 This document outlines the current PRow which pass through or run adjacent to the Order limits and demonstrates how safe access will be maintained along and across these PRow during the construction, operation, and decommissioning of the Scheme, in accordance with Paragraph 2.49.6 of the Draft NPS EN-3.
- 4.1.2 A separate **Framework OEMP [EN010131/APP/7.4]** and **Framework DEMP [EN010131/APP/7.5]** have also been prepared to provide details of the proposed management of PRow and any PRow mitigation during the operational and decommissioning phases.

References

- Ref 1. DECC (2021), Draft National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3)
- Ref 2. Central Lincolnshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee (2017), Central Lincolnshire Local Plan 2012-2036
- Ref 3. Bassetlaw District Council (2021), Bassetlaw Local Plan 2020-2037: Publication Version
- Ref 4. Lincolnshire County Council (2022), Public Rights of Way Map (<https://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/coast-countryside/public-rights-way/3>)
- Ref 5. Barry Cornelius (2022), rowmaps