

Nottinghamshire County Council

# Local Impact Report – Gate Burton Energy Park

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# 1. Introduction

- 1.1. Nottinghamshire County Council has prepared this report in accordance with the advice and requirements set out in the Planning Act 2008 and the Advice Note One: Local Impact Reports Version 2, April 2012. The advice note reflects the IPC being abolished and the work of the IPC transferring to the Planning Inspectorate under the Localism Act 2011.
- 1.2. The Advice Note states that when the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) decides to accept an application it will ask the relevant local authorities to prepare a Local Impact Report and its preparation should be prioritised and indicate where the local authority considers that the development would have a positive, negative or neutral effect on the area. The Report may include any topics that they consider to be relevant to the impact of the development on their area as a means by which their existing body of knowledge and evidence on local issues can be fully and robustly reported.
- 1.3. The Advice Note indicates that topics addressed in the Local Impact Report may include:
  - Site description and surroundings/ location
  - Details of the proposal
  - Relevant planning history and any issues arising
  - Relevant development plan policies, supplementary planning guidance or documents, development briefs or approved master-plans and an appraisal of their relationship and relevance to the proposals
  - Relevant development proposals under consideration or granted permission but not commenced or completed
  - Local area characteristics such as urban and landscape qualities and nature conservation sites
  - Local transport patterns and issues
  - Site and area constraints
  - Designated sites
  - Socio-economic and community matters
  - Consideration of the impact of the proposed articles and requirements within the draft Order (such as the scheme) in respect of all of the above
  - DCO obligations and their impact on the local authority's area.
- 1.4. The Local Impact Report may also comment on the development consent obligations and the requirements and also any relevant representations.
- 1.5. In producing the Local Impact Report the council has not sought the views of local parish councils and local interest groups as to any particular matters that

should be reflected in the report because the parish councils and other local groups have the opportunity, through the consultation process, to make their observations direct to PINS.

- 1.6. The Local Impact Report is intended to be used by the local authority as a means by which the existing body of local knowledge and evidence on local issues is fully and robustly reported.
- 1.7. The Local Impact Report has been written so as to incorporate the topic areas suggested in the Advice Note (set out above) and the obligations and proposed requirements submitted with the application for DCO.

## **2. The Project Proposal**

### **The NSIP Proposal**

- 2.1. Gate Burton Energy Park is a proposed solar photovoltaic electricity generating facility. The application per se is to construct, operate, maintain and decommission ground mounted solar photovoltaic panel arrays, on site battery storage and associated infrastructure.
- 2.2. The scheme is split into two elements:
  - The solar and energy storage park – this includes the areas proposed for solar panels, the BESS, on site grid connection infrastructure including a substation and transformer stations, access roads, security fencing and areas for biodiversity and landscape mitigation and enhancements
  - The grid connection corridor – this comprises of the underground 400kV cable from the edge of the Solar and Energy Storage Park to the Cottam National Grid Substation and associated works. The Corridor is wider than will be required for the cable itself due to the need for some flexibility over the cable route location, particularly in the context of potential other grid connection infrastructure required to support other proposed projects in the area (see below), and to provide space for construction and access. Access to the Grid Connection Corridor will be required for construction and decommissioning of the grid connection and infrequently for maintenance.
- 2.3. The consent order submission uses the Rochdale Envelope due to the fact that certain design elements are not known at the present time. This approach means that the assessment of the application has been based on the worst case scenario and a set of parameters have been submitted. It is expected that the installed capacity is likely to be approximately 531MW to maximise grid export capacity to 500MW.

## Site Description and Surrounding Location

- 2.4. The site straddles the boundary of West Lindsey District Council, Bassetlaw District Council and lies partly within Nottinghamshire County Council. The landscape within the site comprises of agricultural fields, woodlands, hedgerows, linear tree belts, farm access tracks and local roads. The River Trent passes through the grid connection corridor. The area includes several small rural villages and limited employment developments.
- 2.5. The majority of the order lies within the District of West Lindsey, it is the cable corridor route that is within Bassetlaw District/Nottinghamshire; this is defined as the Grid Connection Corridor in the documentation and the element applicable to Bassetlaw lies to the west of the River Trent.
- 2.6. There are 3 other NSIP schemes in this area – West Burton Solar Project, (to connect to West Burton Power Station) Cottam Solar Project (to connect to Cottam Power Station) and Tillbridge Solar (to connect to Cottam Power Station).
- 2.7. West Burton and Cottam Solar Projects are at similar stages to Gate Burton and the developers have worked together to minimise the impacts by designing the cable routes so that they share a selection of the route.

## Relevant Planning History and any Issues Arising

- 2.8. The following planning history applies to this site:

*Table 1 – Planning History Nottinghamshire County Council - 'County Matters' sites, applications/permissions of note*

Application Reference	Applicant for 'other development' and brief description	Distance from project	Status	Scale and nature of development likely to have a significant effect?
1/22/01031/CDM	Construction of an underground foul water rising main. Land to the west of Cottam Power Station, Retford, DN22 0NP	Within the DCO project application boundary west of Cottam P/S	Granted 24/11/22 and under construction	Majority of works are to be below surface level
<a href="#">1/22/00047/CDM</a>	Variation of the trigger date of conditions 67 and	800m at closest distance to west and 4km north	Variation approved 20/04/2022.	Significant but non operational quarry

	68 to 31 December 2024 to afford sufficient time for additional surveys, to secure all necessary approvals under non-planning regimes and implementation works to take place prior to extraction recommencing - Land at Sturton le Steeple, Gainsborough Road, Retford	of Cottam power station	Relates to a longstanding permission for a sand and gravel quarry. Permission has been implemented with enabling works, but mineral extraction has yet to commence. Quarry is also allocated in the Minerals Local Plan.	development. Output permitted up to 500,000 tpa for 20+ years, but 100,000tpa more realistic. Aprox 7 million tonnes reserve. Expected to be mainly exported by HGV, but river barge possible. Wetland restoration.
<a href="#">1/19/01556/CDM</a>	Variations of conditions 11, 13, 37 and 53 of planning permission 1/18/00234/CDM to enable full ash recovery from phase 1B/2 and revisions to method statement, restoration, landscaping and aftercare. - West Burton Power Station and Bole Ings Ash Disposal Site, Retford, DN22 9BL	2km north west	Active PFA ash extraction operations. Up to 400,000 tonnes per annum extracted for sale to construction industry	Significant and large scale extractive industry. Export of PFA is via road transport/ HGV. Restoration to grassland and wet areas
<a href="#">1/21/01770/CDM</a>	Variation of Condition 46 of Planning Permission 1/13/01359/CDM to defer the submission of a restoration and aftercare strategy for the former ash disposal site until 25th December 2025 to allow an extended period of time for the wider redevelopment of the Cottam Power Station site to be fully considered.- Cottam Ash Disposal Site,	2.8km southwest	Ash operations paused pending further time to allow wider development options at the former Power Station site	Previous large scale ash deposit and extraction operations. Partially restored. Not clear if more ash will be extracted in the future and depends on wider development options

	Outgang Lane, Retford, Nottinghamshire, DN22 0EU Proposal			
1/12/01027/CDM; 1/12/01028/CDM	Gainsborough Oil wells- multiple existing well sites (aprox 7 within Notts)	4.5km- 5.5km north west (various sites)	Conventional oil extraction- mostly active and with permission until 2032. Ground water monitoring boreholes recently given permission Conventional oil extraction- mostly active and with permission until 2032. Ground water monitoring boreholes recently given permission	Part of wider oil field into Lincolnshire. Oil collected by HGV to collecting station. Operated by Igas
Multiple site permissions. S73 extensions of time granted 2021	Beckingham Oil wells- multiple existing well sites (aprox 13 well sites)	6-9km NW (various sites)	Conventional oil extraction- mostly active and with permission until 2032. Ground water monitoring boreholes recently given permission	Part of wider oil field. Oil collected by HGV to collecting station. Operated by Igas
1/43/12/00006	South Leverton Oil wells x4 sites	6km south-west	Conventional oil extraction sites- with permission until 2032.	Operated by Igas
1/23/00410/CDM	The extraction, processing and export of pulverised fuel ash from former ash disposal lagoons and their progressive restoration, and associated development including earthworks,	Approximately 12km NW of Cottam Power Station	Submitted 10/03/23 and under consideration	

	dewatering and soil storage, ponds and excavations, hard and soft surfacing and landscaping and boundary treatment, buildings and structures, plant, conveyors, utility connections, roadways, parking, drainage, and ancillary development Former ash disposal lagoons south of Lound, Retford. DN22 8SG			
19/00551/FULM	Field Reference 7600, off North Scarle Road, Wigsley, Nottinghamshire NG23 7EU - Creation of Fish Farming Pond shown on plan FP2 to involve Incidental Mineral Extraction, processing and export of minerals, forming pre phase of the wider development granted under Appeal Decision ref: 19/00551/FULM	About 12km south	Subsequent application for County Matter mineral extraction (in part) approved 29/09/22	Noted to be beyond 10 km but on developers list. Unlikely to be cumulative issues given distance

2.9. The issue of cumulative development especially with the other proposed NSIPs will need careful consideration by the examiner to ensure that the proposed development is in accordance with current planning policy.

**Relevant development plan policies, supplementary planning guidance or documents, development briefs or approved master-plans and an appraisal of their relationship and relevance to the proposals**



- 2.10. The submission sets out the relevant policies for the proposal at Table 1.1 of the Planning Design and Access Statement and it will be for the Secretary of State to assess the proposed development against these policies.
- 2.11. This section seeks to set out the planning policy context for Nottinghamshire County Council only to inform the Secretary of State of the relevant planning policies
- 2.12. The following strategic objectives and policies are considered relevant to the proposed development:

**Nottinghamshire and Nottingham Replacement Waste Local Plan Part 1: Waste Core Strategy (2013)**

- SO2 Care for our environment – protect our landscape, countryside, wildlife and valuable habitats from harmful development and make the most of opportunities to enhance existing open space and provide new habitats. Protect water, soil, and air quality across the county. Protect our heritage assets and their settings, including archaeological remains and protect the character of our townscapes.
- SO3 Community well-being – protect local amenity and quality of life from the possible impacts of waste management such as dust, traffic, noise, odour, visual impact etc. and address local health concerns. Make sure that local people have the chance to be involved in decisions about new waste management facilities by providing more information, encouraging wider involvement and targeting key groups or individuals where appropriate.
- SO4 Energy and climate – encourage the efficient use of our natural resources by promoting waste as a resource to be re-used, reduce the need to transport waste, minimise energy use and encourage use of combined heat and power where this can help to offset fossil fuel use. Minimise potential climate change impacts from waste management but accept that some change is inevitable and manage this by making sure that all new waste facilities are located and designed to withstand the likely impacts of flooding, higher temperatures and more frequent storms.
- SO5 Sustainable transport – encourage alternatives to road such as water and rail where practical. Locate sites close to sources of waste and/or end-markets to reduce transport distances and minimise

impacts on the strategic road network. Make use of existing transport links to minimise the impact of new development.

- Policy WCS1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development - When considering development proposals the Councils will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework. They will always work proactively with applicants jointly to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area. Planning applications that accord with the policies in this Core Strategy (and, where relevant, with policies in other plans which form part of the Development Plan) will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision then the Councils will grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise – taking into account whether:
  - Any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework taken as a whole; or
  - Specific policies in that Framework indicate that development should be restricted.
- Policy WCS10: Safeguarding Waste Management Sites - The following sites will be safeguarded for waste management facilities:
  - a) Existing authorised waste management facilities including potential extensions and sites which have a valid planning permission that has not yet been implemented; or
  - b) Sites allocated in the Site Allocations Document. Safeguarding will only apply to the above identified sites and any land immediately adjacent to the site where a need to safeguard has been clearly demonstrated

### **Nottinghamshire Minerals Local Plan (2021)**

- Policy SP7: Minerals Safeguarding, Consultation Areas and Associated Minerals Infrastructure Minerals Safeguarding Areas 1. Locally and nationally important mineral resources, permitted reserves, allocated sites and associated minerals infrastructure will be safeguarded from needless sterilisation by non-minerals development through the designation of minerals safeguarding areas as identified on the Policies Map. 2. Non-minerals development within minerals safeguarding areas will have to demonstrate that mineral resources will not be needlessly sterilised as a result of the development and that the development would not pose a serious hindrance to future extraction in the vicinity. 3. Where this cannot be demonstrated, and where there is a clear and demonstrable need for

the non-minerals development, prior extraction will be sought where practicable. Minerals Consultation Areas 4. District and Borough Councils within Nottinghamshire will consult the County Council as Minerals Planning Authority on proposals for nonminerals development within the designated Mineral Consultation Area, as shown on the Policies Map. 5. The Minerals Planning Authority will resist inappropriate non-minerals development within the Minerals Consultation Areas. 6. Where non-minerals development would cause an unacceptable impact on the development, operation or restoration of a permitted minerals site, mineral allocation, or associated minerals infrastructure, suitable mitigation should be provided by the applicant prior to the completion of the development.

- Policy MP2: Sand and Gravel Provision 1. An adequate supply of sand and gravel will be identified to meet expected demand over the plan period from: a) The extraction of remaining reserves at the following permitted quarries: MP2c Sturton Le Steeple

#### **Relevant development proposals under consideration or granted permission but not commenced or completed**

2.13. See Table 1 above.

#### **Local area characteristics such as urban and landscape qualities and nature conservation sites**

2.14. These have been discussed in the above policy section. The Examiner is requested to seek views from the statutory bodies including Wildlife Trust, Natural England and Environment Agency on these topic areas.

#### **Local transport patterns and issues**

2.15. Nottinghamshire County Council are the Highway Authority for area. This section of the LIR report reviews the outstanding issues associated with highways and transport aspects of the proposals and in particular the matters which require careful consideration.

2.16. NCC will be seeking conditions with respect the size, location, and access arrangements for any temporary compounds required to facilitate the construction of the grid connection, the routeing of vehicles involved in the laying of the cable and the condition and suitability of those routes or as set out in an agreed CTMP.

2.17. NCC assume the grid connection cable would be abandoned or repurposed on decommissioning rather than being removed. Otherwise, we would be seeking similar conditions to the above.

#### **Site and area constraints**

- 2.18. The site lies within Nottinghamshire and within a predominately rural area and comprises of the cable route corridor. The area constraints have been outlined in the above policy section.

### **Designated sites**

- 2.19. The designated sites have been outlined above in the Policy Section.
- 2.20. The County Council does not have professional in house expertise to comment on ecological designated sites and therefore advice should be taken from Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust and Natural England.

### **Socio-economic and community matters**

- 2.21. In terms of agricultural land it is understood that soil sampling has not been undertaken due to the fact that the land will be restored to agricultural use following construction of the scheme; however it is not yet known if there will be any restrictions on continued agricultural use associated with the cable easement. The cabling corridor contains 74.8 ha of best and most versatile agricultural land. It is considered that providing the majority of the cabling route land can be restored for agriculture then this is acceptable in policy terms.
- 2.22. Public rights of way are an important consideration for the County Council. It is anticipated that as the cabling is underground that the main disruption to public rights of way would be during the construction phase.
- 2.23. In terms of minerals and waste the County Council have the follow concerns.
- The specifics relating to ‘Gate Burton’ and the cabling options for connection to the national grid. The entire of western side of River Trent lies within a Sand and Gravel Mineral Safeguarding Area, but that given relatively small land take we do not foresee any problems.
  - The northern cabling route option, the buffer zone for which, runs through or at least very close to the permitted sand and gravel site at Sturton Le Steeple quarry (1/46/06/00014/). As this site is not presently active, it may not have been picked up as part of the initial scoping exercise. NCC would draw attention to Adopted Minerals Local Plan March 2021 (Policy MP2c) and Policies Map Inset 4.

2.24. The enhancement measures outlined in the ES are as follows:

- Outline skills, supply chain, and employment plan will be implemented during construction to promote employment and training opportunities

2.25. One of the main concerns with the proposal is that of cumulative impact, given the fact that there are 3 other NSIPs in the same vicinity proposed. Two of these are at an advanced stage and there has been discussions amongst the developers to limit impacts of the schemes.

2.26. This has been addressed by the Environmental Statement and it is understood in respect of the cabling that there are 2 scenarios:

- All 3 projects ducts and cables are installed within a 24-36 month period.
- The construction of the ducts and cables of the grid connection corridor will be sequenced over 5 years

2.27. Obviously there are implications in respect of both of these options eg the shorter period of time is likely to create more significant impacts but the longer period of time does mean that the impacts maybe less but will last longer and have more effect in terms of timescales. The examiner is requested to weigh up the pros and cons of each option in terms of the impacts on the local community and area.

**Consideration of the impact of the proposed articles and requirements within the draft Order (such as the scheme) in respect of all of the above**

2.28. It is requested that the examiner considers the time period for the life of the project. County Council officers are of the opinion that if the ES has been based on a life period of 60 years then the development order should be for 60 years and not indefinitely.

**DCO obligations and their impact on the local authority's area**

2.29. The County Council has no further comment to make on this subject.