



Bassetlaw
DISTRICT COUNCIL
— North Nottinghamshire —

National Infrastructure Planning
Temple Quay House
2 The Square
Bristol
BS1 6PN

Our Ref: 23/00295/PREAPP
Your Ref: EN010131
Officer: John Krawczyk / Clare Cook
Email: planning@bassetlaw.gov.uk

18th May 2023

Dear Sir,

GATE BURTON ENERGY PARK – BASSETLAW DISTRICT COUNCIL LOCAL IMPACT REPORT

The NSIP Proposal

Details of the Proposal

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.

The scheme is split into two elements:

1. 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
2. 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.

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 of likely to be approx 531MW to maximise grid export capacity to 500MW.

Site Description and Surrounding Location

The site straddles the boundary of West Lindsey and Bassetlaw. 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.

The majority of the order lies within the District of West Lindsey, it is the cable corridor route that is within Bassetlaw District; 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.

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).

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

The following planning history applies to this site:

Application Number	Description	Decision and Date
22/01713/FUL	Gainsborough Road, Bole Construction and Operation of a Battery Energy Storage System with an Electrical Output Capacity of up to 500MW and Associated Development Including Power Inverter Systems, Electrical Banking Station, Electrical Cabling including Below Ground Cabling to 400KV Switchyard, Welfare Facilities, Internal Access Roads, Site Security Infrastructure, Lighting, Boundary Treatments, and Landscaping.	Pending Consideration
22/01031/CDM	Land To The West Of Cottam Power Station Construction of an Underground Foul Water Rising Main	No Objection 11.08.2022
22/00831/SCR	Screening Opinion application for the demolition of West Burton A Power Station, North Road, West Burton,	EIA required July 2022
22/00707/FUL	Former High Marnham Power Station The Construction and Operation of a Solar Photovoltaic(PV) farm with other Associated Infrastructure Including Sub Stations, Security Cameras, Fencing, Storage Containers, Access Tracks and Landscaping	Grant - 05.01.2023
22/00358/FUL	Gainsborough Road, Saundby Installation of a Solar Farm and Battery Storage Facility with Associated Infrastructure.	Grant - 14.07.2022
22/00047/CDM	Variation of the trigger date of conditions 67 and 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 on-Land at Sturton le Steeple, Gainsborough Road, Retford	
21/00737/SCR	Screening Opinion for Solar Photovoltaic Farm on Land West Of Sturton Road, Bole. Nottinghamshire	EIA not required May 2021
21/01661/DEM	Cottam Power Station	Grant – 02.03.2022

	Demolition and Site Clearance	
21/01552/VOC	Sturton Le Steeple Variation of Condition 2 on P. A. 20/00117/FUL - Extend the temporary Period of Permission to 40 Years from When the Site Becomes Operational.	Grant - 22.02.2022
21/01550/SCR	Screening opinion for the installation of a solar farm and battery storage facility immediately to the west of Saundby	EIA not required Nov 2021
21/01147/FUL	Tuxford Road, Skegby Installation of a Solar Farm and Battery Storage Facility with Associated Infrastructure	Grant - 16.12.2021
20/01723/CTP	Cottam Power Station Request for Lawful Development Certificate with Respect to the Cottam Power Station Site and the Proposed Installation of Replacement Cooling Water Make-Up and Purge Water Supplies for the Cottam Development Centre	Grant Certificate of Lawfulness – 01.03.2021
20/00117/FUL	Installation and Operation of a Solar Farm Comprising an Array of Ground Mounted Solar PV Panels with Associated Infrastructure Including Housing for Inverters a Substation Compound, Point of Connection Mast, Fencing, Security Cameras, Cabling, Access Tracks and a Temporary Construction Compound on Land North West And South Of Field Farm, Wood Lane, Sturton	Grant 27/8/2020
19/01556/CDM	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 at West Burton Power Station and Bole Ings Ash Disposal Site, Retford, DN22 9BL	
19/00167/SCR	Cottam Power Station Screening Opinion - Demolition of Power Station	Not EIA – 28.02.2019
18/00249/FUL	Cottam Power Station Proposed 50MW Battery Storage Facility	Grant - 17.04.2018
NSIP	Cottam Solar Project	Pending
NSIP	West Burton Solar	Pending
NSIP	Cottam Solar	Pending
NSIP	Tillbridge Solar	Pending

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

The submission has set out the relevant policies for the application 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.

This section seeks to set out the planning policy context for Bassetlaw District Council only to inform the Secretary of State of the relevant District policies.

The adopted development plan for the District is the Bassetlaw Core Strategy 2011. The Council considers that the CS policies of this document are now out of date and therefore carry limited weight in the decision making process; however where the development management policies are consistent with the NPPF these are afforded full weight in the decision making process.

The following Core Strategy Policies are applicable to this proposal:

Policy CS1 sets out the settlement hierarchy, seeking to ensure that the proposed scale of development is consistent with its locality. Based on this Policy the cable route corridor would fall in Policy CS9 – all other settlements. This policy seeks to ensure that development is of a scale proportionate to its surroundings.

The CS policies are generally silent in respect of solar farm development; however it is acknowledged that Government Policy supports such development in appropriate locations.

The following Development Management policies are applicable to the proposal:

Policies DM1 and DM2 – this considers economic development in the countryside; however these do not relate to solar farm development.

Policy DM4 states:

POLICY DM4: DESIGN AND CHARACTER

A. Major Development Principles

All major development proposals will need to demonstrate that they:

- i. make clear functional and physical links with the existing settlement and surrounding area and have not been designed as 'standalone' additions. Where physical links cannot be made (e.g. for reasons of third party land ownership) provision must be made such that they can be provided in future should the opportunity arise;*
- ii. complement and enhance the character of the built, historic and natural environment;*
- iii. are of a scale appropriate to the existing settlement and surrounding area and in line with the levels of proposed growth for that settlement as set out in policies CS1-CS9; and*
- iv. provide a qualitative improvement to the existing range of houses, services, facilities, open space and economic development opportunities.*

Where neighbouring or functionally linked sites will come forward together within the timeframe of this DPD, the Council will expect applicants to work together with the Council to ensure that any proposals are, or can be, properly integrated and will provide complementary development.

Proposals for major residential or mixed-use development will be expected to demonstrate that they score well (allowing for site constraints where applicable) against the design principles established in the Building for Life guidance and any subsequent or complementary best practice guidance on design and placemaking by the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) or comparable organisation.

B. General Design Principles

Individual development proposals, including single buildings, changes of use or extensions to existing buildings, will only be accepted where they are of a high-quality design that addresses the relevant areas below:

i. Local character and distinctiveness

New development, particularly backland and infill development, should respect its wider surroundings, in relation to historic development patterns or building/plot sizes and forms; density; and landscape character.

ii. Architectural quality

New development should respect its context, without resorting to negative pastiche³¹ architecture, in terms of density, height, scale, mass, materials and detailing. Developments in prominent positions at 'gateways' to settlements or town centres will be of particularly high-quality design that will serve to reinforce a positive perception about the quality of place.

iii. Public realm

New development should support stimulating and safe streets and public spaces, with active frontages at ground level to public spaces; have appropriate landscaping and boundary treatments (retaining historic walls and hedgerows); integrate crime prevention measures where this will not compromise the other principles of good design; and provide useable and functional open space.

iv. Accessibility

New development should ensure that all people, including those with disabilities, can easily and comfortably move through and into it; prioritise safe, easy and direct pedestrian movement and the creation of a network of attractive, well-connected public spaces; establish both visual and functional relationships between the different parts of a development and between the development and its wider setting.

v. Amenity

New development should ensure that it does not have a detrimental effect on the residential amenity of nearby residents; provides a decent standard of private amenity space; allows adequate space for waste and recycling storage and collection; and is not to the detriment of highway safety.

vi. Carbon reduction

New development will need to demonstrate that careful consideration has been given to minimising CO₂ emissions and measures that will allow all new buildings in Bassetlaw to adapt to climate change. Such measures include, but are not limited to: use of suitable construction materials; site layout and building orientation that makes best use of passive heating and cooling, natural light and natural ventilation; minimising water consumption and maximising water recycling; achieving the highest feasible level of energy efficiency; and maximising opportunities to integrate renewable and low carbon energy infrastructure.

Account will also be taken of any relevant Village Design Statement, Conservation Area Appraisal or character appraisal approved or adopted by the District Council and Bassetlaw's Landscape Character Assessment. Where there is obvious tension between the requirements listed above, due to the sensitivity of the location of certain sites, the Council will work with

applicants and local residents to achieve a balanced solution. Some factors are likely to outweigh others in reaching a decision in such cases.

This policy seeks to ensure that new development is designed so that it respects the character of the area in which it is located and also protects the amenity of neighbouring residents. There is a clear support for carbon reduction.

Policy DM10 of the Core Strategy expands on DM4 and specifically considered renewable and low carbon energy, it states:

POLICY DM10: RENEWABLE AND LOW CARBON ENERGY

A. Carbon Reduction

The Council will be supportive of proposals that seek to utilise renewable and low carbon energy to minimise CO2 emissions. Proposals for renewable and low carbon energy infrastructure will also need to demonstrate that they:

- i. are compatible with policies to safeguard the built and natural environment, including heritage assets and their setting, landscape character and features of recognised importance for biodiversity;*
- ii. will not lead to the loss of or damage to high-grade agricultural land (Grades 1 & 2);*
- iii. are compatible with tourism and recreational facilities;*
- iv. will not result in unacceptable impacts in terms of visual appearance; noise; shadowflicker; watercourse engineering and hydrological impacts; pollution; or traffic generation; and*
- v. will not result in an unacceptable cumulative impact in relation to the factors above*

Large-scale renewable and low carbon energy proposals must provide full details of arrangements for decommissioning and reinstatement of the site if/when it ceases to operate.

B. District Heating and Co-location

Proposals for new development in District Heating Opportunity Areas⁴⁶ will, where the scale of the proposal permits, be expected to demonstrate consideration of District Heating as a means of achieving carbon compliance. District Heating opportunities include those supplied by heat from waste management sites, power stations, coalmine methane facilities or new standalone infrastructure. Applicants will be expected to engage with the Council at pre-application stage to assess the feasibility of achieving this objective.

Where District Heating Networks are established, all subsequent new development close enough to connect to such a network will be expected to do so where there are no barriers to this connection. Proposals for heat producing development will be expected to demonstrate consideration of the feasibility of utilising its waste heat for heat consuming development. Support will be given to proposals that will ensure the co-location of compatible heat producing and heat consuming development

C. Major Development

Major development proposals will be expected to deliver specific low-carbon and renewable energy infrastructure in line with assessments of feasibility and overall viability.

D. Community Energy Schemes

Support will be given to community led energy schemes in line with the Council's Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Study (or subsequent replacement), on exception sites if necessary, where explicit community support is demonstrated

Policy DM4 in respect of this proposal would seek to ensure that the design of the development is acceptable along with acceptable impacts for residential amenity and highway considerations.

The bulk of this development is within West Lindsey where it will be for the examiner to consider the design of the proposal against their planning policies. However as Bassetlaw is the neighbouring authority to the main site advice should be taken from Nottinghamshire County Council in respect of the impact of the development on the wide landscape.

Bassetlaw contains the cable corridor route which will be underground. A full assessment has been undertaken by the applicant on various cable routes and option C1 was taken as the best option for minimising impacts on the environment and local residents whilst at the same time providing technical requirements.

The main impact on residential amenity will be during the construction process. Generally hours of construction will be between 7am-7pm mon to fri and 9am – 1pm on a Saturday during the summer months and between 8am -6pm mon to fri and 9am-1pm on a Saturday during the winter months. Some works may occur out of these times such as cable jointing.

The construction compounds for the cable routing are proposed to be adjacent to Cottam Road and Broad Lane (50m x 50m).

A Framework Construction Environmental Management Plan has been submitted with the application.

It is understood that a detailed CEMP will be submitted prior to construction. It is considered that it is inevitable that the construction of such a project is going to cause an increase in noise and disturbance to local amenity; however it is also accepted that this will be temporary in nature and once the cabling is in place this impact will be significantly reduced. The examiner is requested to ensure that the disruption to the local community in terms of noise and disruption is minimised so that it is in accordance with Policy DM4. The Council's Environmental Health Team has been consulted and comment as follows:

The major part of this development will take place within Lincolnshire, and West Lindsey District Council will be best placed to consider the likely noise impact from this element of the development.

The cabling route, however, will necessarily involve ground works within Bassetlaw as the proposed solar farm will connect into the National Electricity Grid at Cottam Power Station within Bassetlaw.

If we accept that the scheme will go ahead and a cabling route into the Cottam substation will take place, then we are accepting that there will be some level of disruption from noise to any resident or business immediately adjacent to the cabling route, and potentially to residents/businesses more widely.

In simple terms, my concerns would be that

1) Cabling work is undertaken in a timely manner so as to limit the duration of any noise nuisance to residents/businesses.

2) The cabling route chosen should have a significant noise impact on as few residential properties and businesses as possible within Bassetlaw, with the priority given to residential properties.

3) Detailed noise surveys should be undertaken to identify properties likely to be impacted by noise and effective mitigation measures are put in place.

4) *The developer liaise with the wider community, but especially closely with those residents and businesses likely to be most impacted by the development, to explain the likely impact and allay any concerns.*

5) *That at the highest level, possibly at Ministerial level, the various solar and other energy projects that are proposing to connect to the Cottam Substation are required to effectively collaborate to avoid the possibility of multiple different cabling routes being installed in the vicinity of Cottam, parallel routes being installed at different times, or developed cabling route being re-opened for additional cabling.*

The Environmental Health Officer has also commented on lighting as follows:

Flood lighting at the site of the cabling work, lighting servicing site compounds etc, or security lighting could have a significant negative impact on residents and businesses in the vicinity of the cabling route. Once the route is selected, care should be taken to ensure that all artificial lighting for the site both temporary and permanent should be of such a design and installed and sited/ angled in such a manner as to prevent glare or light shining directly into neighbouring residential properties or businesses.

In terms of low carbon the application has submitted a lifecycle greenhouse gas (GHG) impact assessment which considers the impact of GHG emissions arising over the lifetime of the Scheme on the climate. This concludes that over its 60-year operational lifetime, the Scheme will produce approximately 26.99 MWh of electricity, with an average operational carbon intensity value of 17.98 grams of carbon dioxide equivalent per kWh (gCO₂e/kWh). This demonstrates the Scheme's very low carbon attributes compared to other non-renewable forms of electricity generation, providing an overall major beneficial impact in relation to the UK meeting its carbon reduction targets and therefore represents a major beneficial effect on the climate. This is welcomed.

The submission confirms that the proposal will not see a loss in Grade 1 or 2 agricultural land.

The examiner is requested to consider the response from Nottinghamshire Council in respect of highway and traffic implications during the construction and operational periods and how this would impact on Bassetlaw residents. Nottinghamshire County Council as Local Lead Flood Authority and Environment Agency will also provide comments in respect of hydrological impacts.

In terms of climate change the Council's Climate Change Office has been consulted and any comments received will be reported verbally at the Committee as will any comments from Environmental Health comments relating to Policy DM10.

Other elements in respect of Policy DM10 are considered below.

Policy DM8 considers heritage assets Parts A and B are relevant and state:

POLICY DM8: THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

Support will be given to development proposals or regeneration schemes (particularly in central Worksop, Retford and Tuxford) that protect and enhance the historic environment and secure its long-term future, especially the District's Heritage at Risk. Support will also be given to proposals from the Welbeck Estate for the re-use of heritage assets, where these will result in the enhancement of the assets. Such proposals must recognise the significance of heritage assets as a central part of the development. They will be expected to be in line with characterisation studies, village appraisals, conservation area appraisals (including any site specific development briefs that may be found within them), archaeological reports and other relevant studies.

A. Definition of Heritage Assets

Designated heritage assets in Bassetlaw include:

- i. Listed Buildings (including attached and curtilage structures)³⁵;*
- ii. Conservation Areas;*
- iii. Scheduled Monuments; and*
- iv. Registered Parks and Gardens.*

Non-Designated assets in Bassetlaw include:

- v. Buildings of Local Interest;*
- vi. Areas of archaeological interest;*
- vii. Unregistered Parks and Gardens; and*
- viii. Buildings, monuments, places, areas or landscapes positively identified as having significance in terms of the historic environment.*

B. Development Affecting Heritage Assets

There will be a presumption against development, alteration, advertising or demolition that will be detrimental to the significance of a heritage asset.

Proposed development affecting heritage assets, including alterations and extensions that are of an inappropriate scale, design or material, or which lead to the loss of important spaces, including infilling, will not be supported.

The setting of an asset is an important aspect of its special architectural or historic interest and proposals that fail to preserve or enhance the setting of a heritage asset will not be supported. Where appropriate, regard shall be given to any approved characterisation study or appraisal of the heritage asset. Development proposals within the setting of heritage assets will be expected to consider:

- i. Scale;*
- ii. Design;*
- iii. Materials;*
- iv. Siting; and*
- v. Views away from and towards the heritage asset.*

There is also a Supplementary Planning Guidance Document in respect of heritage assets – A guide to Heritage Impact Assessments Bassetlaw District Council which can be found at the following link: <https://www.bassetlaw.gov.uk/media/1132/heritage-impact-assessment-guidance-october-2013-update.pdf>

In terms of the built heritage it is understood that there are no designated heritage assets within the cable route (in Bassetlaw) per se although it is within close proximity to a Grade I and II Listed Buildings, non designated heritage assets and a Scheduled Ancient Monument. It is also important to note that whilst the main bulk of the development is within the adjoining District, the scale of this is such that it does have the potential to impact on the setting of heritage assets that are within Bassetlaw District.

The Council's Conservation Manager has been consulted on the proposal and wishes for the examiner to take into account the following points:

- The majority of the impact will be on the Lincolnshire side of the river. Within Bassetlaw, from an above-ground heritage point of view, an underground cable route would be very much preferred to an overhead one. The landscape in that part of Bassetlaw district, being adjacent

the Trent, is very flat and open, so overhead cabling and supporting structures would have a big visual impact for a considerable distance, and will undoubtedly affect the setting of a range of heritage assets along or close to the route.

- It was confirmed at pre application that an underground cable route through Bassetlaw would not require any new associated structures such as substations, fencing or cabins, other than temporary ones during the construction phase. This is very much welcomed.
- A buried cable option would require excavations of 1.4m depth. Archaeological work is ongoing including geophysical surveys of the affected areas and it was confirmed at pre application that we (myself and Matt Adams (archaeological advisor) will be copied in on the findings of that work.
- Consideration should be given to the Landscape impact including views from high points within Bassetlaw, both alongside the river and from further away (e.g. Sturton le Steeple, South Leverton, etc), especially having regard to vistas from both roads and public footpaths.
- Similarly, views of Bassetlaw assets from the east side of the river should also be fully assessed (e.g. Sturton le Steeple church spire). As we have recently found with several other solar farm proposals in Bassetlaw recently, those key views might extend several miles and be less obvious until seen on the ground.

In terms of archaeology the Council's Archaeological Advisor has been consulted and advises that the applicant has undertaken sufficient evaluation to inform an appropriate mitigation strategy for this project. The mitigation strategy for archaeology on the cable route (running through Bassetlaw District) is presented in Part 2 of the submitted document Archaeological Mitigation Strategy EN010131/APP/7.6. I can confirm that this is an acceptable approach and I'm happy to recommend agreement, subject to full implementation as detailed.

Policy DM9 considers Biodiversity, Green Infrastructure and Open Space it states:

**POLICY DM9: GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE; BIODIVERSITY & GEODIVERSITY;
LANDSCAPE; OPEN SPACE AND SPORTS FACILITIES**

A. Green Infrastructure

Development proposals will be expected to support the Council's strategic approach to the delivery, protection and enhancement of multi-functional Green Infrastructure, to be achieved through the establishment of a network of green corridors and assets (please refer to the Council's Green Infrastructure work for a full list of Green Corridors and Nodes within, and running beyond, the District) at local, sub-regional and regional levels. Particular support will be given to proposals that will further the development of:

*The Idle Valley Project;
The Trent Vale Partnership;
Sherwood Forest Regional Park.*

Development proposals will be expected to demonstrate, in line with the Council's Green Infrastructure work, that:

- they protect and enhance green infrastructure assets affected by the development and take opportunities to improve linkages between green corridors;*
- where they overlap with or will affect existing green infrastructure nodes or corridors, such assets are protected and enhanced to improve public access and use;*
- where opportunities exist, development proposals provide improvements to the green infrastructure network that benefit biodiversity through the incorporation of retained habitats and by the creation of new areas of habitat; and*
- they provide robust delivery mechanisms for, and means of ensuring the long-term*

management of, green infrastructure

Development that will result in the loss of existing green infrastructure may be supported where replacement provision is made that is considered to be of equal or greater value than that which will be lost. Where new development may have an adverse impact on green infrastructure, alternative scheme designs that minimise impact must be presented to the Council for consideration before the use of mitigation measures (e.g. off-site or through financial contributions for improvements elsewhere) is considered.

B. Biodiversity and Geodiversity

Development proposals will be expected to take opportunities to restore or enhance habitats and species' populations and to demonstrate that they will not adversely affect or result in the loss of features of recognised importance, including:

- i. Protected trees and hedgerows;*
- ii. Ancient woodlands;*
- iii. Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)*
- iv. Regionally Important Geodiversity Sites;*
- v. Local Wildlife Sites (Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC));*
- vi. Local and UK Biodiversity Action Plan Habitats (including Open Mosaic Habitats on Previously Developed Land); and*
- vii. Protected Species*

Development that will result in the loss of such features may be supported where replacement provision is made that is considered to be of equal or greater value than that which will be lost and which is likely to result in a net gain in biodiversity. Where new development may have an adverse impact on such features, alternative scheme designs that minimise impact must be presented to the Council for consideration before the use of mitigation measures is considered. Where sufficient mitigation measures cannot be delivered, compensation measures must be provided as a last resort.

C. Landscape Character

New development proposals in and adjoining the countryside will be expected to be designed so as to be sensitive to their landscape setting. They will be expected to enhance the distinctive qualities of the landscape character policy zone in which they would be situated, as identified in the Bassetlaw Landscape Character Assessment⁴⁴. Proposals will be expected to respond to the local recommendations made in the Assessment by conserving, restoring, reinforcing or creating landscape forms and features accordingly.

D. Open Space and Sports Facilities

Development proposals will be expected to demonstrate that they will not adversely affect or result in the loss of open spaces and sports facilities. Exceptions may be made if the open spaces or facilities are identified as surplus to demand in a given location and that alternative provision, or a contribution towards new or improved facilities elsewhere, would be preferable. Alternative scheme designs that minimise impact should be considered before the use of mitigation (on-site, off-site or through contributions as appropriate).

New development proposals will be expected to provide functional on-site open space and/or sports facilities, or to provide contributions towards new or improved facilities elsewhere locally, as well as contributions for on-going maintenance, to meet any deficiencies in local provision (when assessed against locally defined standards) that will be caused by the development.

Areas of protected open space will be identified in the Site Allocations Development Plan Document.

In terms of landscape the Bassetlaw Landscape Character Assessment can be found at the following link: <https://www.bassetlaw.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-services/planning-policy/core-strategy-and-development-policies/core-strategy-adopted-development-plan/background-studies/landscape-character-assessment-lca/>

The majority of the cable routing is found in the Trent Washlands Character Zone predominately in zones 21,22 and 47 where the policy is to conserve and reinforce.

Rampton Thorns is an inventory of trees and woodland which is just on the boundary of the corridor route. The Council's Tree Officer has commented on this application and advises that as Bassetlaw only has the cable route this does minimise the impact on trees. The Western boundary falls short of a number of TPO'd trees further to the West at Rampton. It also circumnavigates a square block of woodland that is outside the existing substation at Cottam, on the Rampton side. Similarly avoiding a wooded area to the North on the Bassetlaw side of the bank opposite Trent Port, by passing below the Southern boundary of the trees. The Tree Officer is satisfied that sufficient measures have been taken to avoid trees and woodlands as best as possible by due consideration of the routes. It is important that adequate tree protection and hedgerow protection measures are put in place to ensure minimal impact on trees and hedgerows during construction.

The grid connection area crosses the River Trent Main Green Corridor. The application states that during construction the River Trent will be crossed using underground techniques.

The grid connection area also passes through a small section of Cow Pasture Lane Drains Local Wildlife Site. The application states that the drain and hedge will be avoided during construction with crossing methods to lay cabling using non intrusive methods and with a set backs of 10m from the centre line of the drain to protect habitats. These measures are formalised in the Construction Environmental Management Plan which would be secured via any consent.

The applicant appears to have done a thorough analysis in respect of ecology and biodiversity; however the Council does not have professional in house expertise in this regard. We would therefore request that the examiner seeks analysis from Natural England and Environment Agency in respect of this issue.

Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust has been consulted and commented as follows:

"We note that the project involves the installation of solar photovoltaic (PV) generating panels and on-site energy storage facilities within Lincolnshire and associated infrastructure for connection to the national grid at Cottam substation in Nottinghamshire. Our comments, therefore, will largely focus on the grid connection route within Nottinghamshire.

We have assessed EN010131/APP/3.1 Environmental Statement Volume 1 Chapter 8: Ecology and Nature Conservation

We can confirm that the ecology work undertaken to date and the proposed ecological survey work and methodologies relating to the cable route are satisfactory. We note that ecology surveys will be on-going through 2023 and this may identify further ecological features that will be assessed as part of the ES submitted with the DCO application.

Mitigation Measures

The Grid Connection Corridor passes through Cow Pasture Lane Drain Local Wildlife Site (LWS 2/470). If a route through the LWS is required the cable should be installed using HDD methods to lay cabling, therefore avoiding impacts to the drain and hedge. A buffer of at least

10m from the centerline of the drain is to be established which is considered sufficient to mitigate for potential hazards such as chemical and silt deposition into the watercourse and avoid potential direct impacts to the LWS and riparian habitats. Access for construction of the Grid Connection Corridor will utilise an existing access track that runs alongside Cow Pasture Lane Drains LWS. However, where there is a need to cross the LWS, this will be via bailey bridge, rather than culvert to minimise negative impacts. Construction compounds will be setback from this LWS with a minimum 10m from the centre line of the watercourse. Furthermore, measures to ensure incursion into this LWS does not occur will be put in place, e.g. security fencing, which will be implemented at an early stage. With respect to Cow Pasture Lane Drains and Coates Wetlands LWSs, the Framework CEMP [EN010131/APP/7.3] specifies requirements for the safe storage of chemicals / other hazardous materials (e.g. fuel) reaching watercourses during flood events during construction. Any lighting that is required for the construction of the Scheme should be directed away from existing retained and sensitive habitats to minimise light disturbance to species associated with these habitats. We are satisfied with the proposed mitigation measures. They should be secured through the planning system.

Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) are a local, non-statutory designation, that sits below (but complements) the national suite of statutorily designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). They are of substantive value for the conservation of biodiversity and are home to Protecting Wildlife for the Future rare and scarce species or represent the best surviving examples of habitats that were once widespread and typical of the Nottinghamshire landscape. Collectively, these sites form an essential ecological network and act as wildlife corridors and steppingstones, allowing species to migrate and disperse between sites. The continued existence of these sites is vital to safeguard wildlife from the pressures of development, intensive agriculture, and climate change. The LWS network is comprehensive (meaning that every site which qualifies as a LWS is designated as one), whereas SSSIs are representative of the best sites in an area, such that that not all sites which meet the SSSI selection criteria have been, or will be, designated as a SSSI. Because of this, a number of LWS would potentially qualify as SSSIs, meaning that LWS are best described as sites that are of at least county-level importance for their flora and/or fauna. There should, therefore, be a presumption against development activity within sites of county biodiversity value. LWS receive protection within the NPPF (2021) and the Draft Bassetlaw Local Plan.

Habitat Reinstatement

Following installation of the cable the working area should be restored to a high standard. Cabling operations should be carried out according to a PMW or Ecological Method Statement in the presence of an Ecological Clerk of Works to supervise and advise during the process to avoid direct impacts upon protected and notable species.

Monitoring

A monitoring programme should be implemented to ensure that new habitats delivered as part of the Scheme are established successfully.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

BNG aims to leave the district's biodiversity assets in a better state than currently exists. Reflecting the principles and definitions of the Environment Act 2021, all new development will be expected to secure at least 10% net gain in biodiversity so that the biodiversity value of the development exceeds the pre-development on site habitat value by at least 10%. Habitats should be as close to the proposed development site and secured for at least 30 years via obligations/conservation covenant. The mitigation hierarchy still applies of avoidance, mitigation and compensation for biodiversity loss.

Appropriate site-specific recommendations will be required for providing enhancements specific for Nottinghamshire BAP species and Section 41 Species and habitats of Principal Importance (NERC Act 2006)."

Policy DM12 considers flood risk, it states:

POLICY DM12: FLOOD RISK, SEWERAGE AND DRAINAGE

A. Flood Risk

Proposals for the development of new units in Flood Zones 2, 3a and 3b that are not defined by national planning guidance⁴⁷ as being suitable for these zones will not be supported while development sites remain available in sequentially superior locations across the District. Reference should be made to the Council's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment when making assessments about likely suitability. Site specific Flood Risk Assessments will be required for all developments in flood risk areas, even where flood defences exist, as defined on the Proposals Map.

Where suitable redevelopment opportunities arise, the Council will require, in liaison with the Environment Agency, the opening up of culverts, notably in Worksop and Retford, in order to reduce the blocking of flood flow routes. Particular support will be given to the Flood Alleviation Scheme for Retford Beck.

B. Sewerage and Drainage

Proposals for new development (other than minor extensions) in:

- i. Beckingham*
- ii. Claborough and Hayton*
- iii. East Drayton*
- iv. East Markham*
- v. Harworth Bircotes*
- vi. North Leverton*
- vii. North Wheatley*
- viii. Misterton*
- ix. South Wheatley*
- x. Sturton-le-Steeple*
- xi. Welham*
- xii. Walkeringham*

will only be supported where it is demonstrated to the Council's satisfaction that the proposed development will not exacerbate existing land drainage and sewerage problems in these areas.

All new development (other than minor extensions) will be required to incorporate Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and provide details of adoption, ongoing maintenance and management. Proposals will be required to provide reasoned justification for not using SuDS techniques, where ground conditions and other key factors show them to be technically feasible.

Preference will be given to systems that contribute to the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity and green infrastructure in the District.

Nottinghamshire County Council is the Local Lead Flood Authority and therefore it is requested that the examiner assesses the response from Nottinghamshire County Council against the above policy.

Likewise it is understood that the Environment Agency and other interested bodies such as Natural England will have submitted representations which again should be considered against Policy DM12.

In terms of contamination the Council's EHO has commented as follows:

"We would like to see means of mitigating land contamination and intrusive site investigations taking place where there is reasonable possibility of existing land contamination in line with LCRM guidance"

Policy DM13 considers Sustainable Transport, it states:

POLICY DM13: SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT

A. General Principles

Development proposals will be expected to:

- i. Minimise the need to travel by private car;*
- ii. Provide linkages, or develop new, footways, cycle paths and bridleways giving access, to key local facilities (especially town centres); and*
- iii. Provide appropriate facilities to support access to high-quality public transport.*

Optimisation of the highway network and highway capacity improvements should only be considered once the above criteria have been addressed.

B. Nottinghamshire Local Transport Plan

Development proposals will be required to be consistent with, and contribute to the implementation of, the Nottinghamshire Local Transport Plan. Proposals will not be supported where they will prevent the implementation of schemes identified in the Nottinghamshire Local Transport Plan. Reference should be made to this Plan when considering new proposals.

C *should be provided in line with the 6Cs Highway Design Guide adopted by Nottinghamshire County Council on 1 April 2009.*

A reduction in parking provision will be considered where it is demonstrated that this will not impact adversely on the surrounding area (notably in relation to an increase in on-street parking) and is in the interest of sustainable development, especially in terms of encouraging the use of walking, cycling and/or public transport.

Nottinghamshire County Council as Highway Authority is the main advisor for the District and has been consulted on the proposals and comments as follows (this response may also be replicated in Notts County Council response):

"The solar project is entirely within Lincolnshire. It is only the grid connection corridor that involves works within Nottinghamshire. The traffic impact of the development on the Nottinghamshire highway network is otherwise unlikely to be significant, particularly as most of the traffic would be limited to the construction and decommissioning of the solar farm.

It is understood that the main construction phase is predicted to last 24 to 36 months between 2025 and 2027. There is an expected daily peak of 25 construction workers for the grid connection corridor who will be transported to and from the solar farm site by minibus. There will also be a daily peak of 16 light goods vehicles and 12 heavy goods vehicles associated with the grid connection that will be split across multiple accesses in both Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire. The HGV route in Nottinghamshire from the A57 would be via the C2 Laneham Road/Rampton Road onto Cottam Road, Outgang Lane,

Town Street and Headstead Bank. A 24.6m long lorry (abnormal indivisible load) will be used to transport the cable drums. Accesses to the grid connection corridor would be located on Cottam Road and Headstead Bank. There would also be an HGV crossing on Cow Pasture Lane (South Leverton Byway 16) and access to the grid connection corridor via Cottam Road for LGVs. An emergency access is also proposed on the northern side of Torksey Ferry Road. The West Burton, Cottam, and Tillbridge solar projects are likely to require similar access arrangements. Access via the Cottam railway line and the River Trent should be considered.

It is suggested (CTMP para.6.1.2) that the accesses to the grid connection corridor will be retained to facilitate occasional maintenance and repairs. The need for access is likely to be very infrequent and unlikely to involve vehicles as large as the cable drum transporter. If there is a genuine need to retain these accesses, they should be reduced in size suitable for the largest vehicle likely to visit to reduce the possibility of them being used as unintended laybys or areas that would attract fly tipping as they are not likely to be well observed.

A Delivery Management System (CTMP para.7.4.4) will be implemented to control bookings of HGV deliveries from the start of the construction period. How will that be coordinated with the West Burton, Cottam, and Tillbridge solar projects that potentially will require access to the grid connection corridor at the same time? The most practical solution is for the grid connections to each solar project to be carried out in a single operation where they share the same corridor (CTMP para 7.6.1). Volume 1, Chapter 16: Cumulative Effects and Interactions Document Reference: EN010131/APP/3.3 Table 16.4 states that the other schemes are not likely to contribute to the effects on transport and access receptors including on Cottam Road, Headstead Bank, Broad Lane, Cow Pasture Lane, and Town Street. If not properly coordinated, they all might as access is required from single track roads and a narrow byway where vehicles would have limited opportunities to pass.

Is it likely that sufficient temporary accommodation (CTMP 7.5.9) exists in the suggested residential centres to make the use of a shuttle bus service viable, particularly as employees from the other solar projects may be competing for the same accommodation?"

There are 2 Neighbourhood Plans which should be considered as part of this development:

There is a strong tradition of community-led planning in Bassetlaw, most evidently manifest in the uptake of neighbourhood planning. Communities have welcomed the opportunity to supplement district and national planning legislation with their own, locally-specific policies. The positive attitude towards neighbourhood planning is notably evident in the eastern side of the District, where the proposals under consideration are located. All three of the parishes intersected by the proposed grid connection corridor are engaged in neighbourhood planning, as follows:

- **[South Leverton](#)**: neighbourhood area designated, and work currently underway to evidence a potential neighbourhood plan.
- **[Treswell and Cottam](#)**: Neighbourhood Plan adopted February 2019, with work currently underway on first review.
- **[Rampton and Woodbeck](#)**: Neighbourhood Plan adopted May 2021.

The proactive attitude of communities towards understanding and managing their local area is clear, and this should be respected by any proposals being made. To this effect, meaningful, place-specific dialogue with the impacted communities is essential, but also provides a

powerful opportunity to better understand and respond to local issues. Specific details about the two adopted neighbourhood plans noted above are detailed below.

Treswell with Cottam Neighbourhood Plan

- **Statement of Intent (page 12)**

- The Plan encourages those submitting proposals within the Parish to actively engage with the Parish Council, residents, and local stakeholders, and employ the guidelines included as Appendix 1 (page 52).

- **Policy 6: Design Principles (page 36)**

- Integral to the design policy, section b) requires that all development should be designed to sustain significant views that contribute to the character and appearance of the area. These views include (but not limited to) those identified on figures 8 and 5, and applications shall include an assessment of the impact of the proposal on the positive qualities of such views, explaining the rationale of design choices used.

- **Aspiration 1: Road Safety and Traffic (page 49)**

- It is noted in the Neighbourhood Plan that there is an issue with road safety in the Parish, specifically in Treswell village.

- **Character Assessment**

- The Neighbourhood Plan is supplemented by a [Character Assessment](#), which provides a detailed portrayal and analysis of the features that define the Parish.

Rampton and Woodbeck Neighbourhood plan

- **Objective 4: Natural environment (page 15)**

- The Plan aims to “manage new development so it respects and enhances our natural environment and our natural assets such as the River Trent and its associated wildlife, the wider countryside and biodiversity of the area”.

- **Policy 5: Development Principles (page 37)**

- The Policy requires consideration of the features identified in the Rampton and Woodbeck Character Assessment (see below), including key views.

- **Policy 10: The Protection of the Parish Landscape (Page 48)**

- This Policy identifies a range of considerations that should be incorporated into development proposals, including visual impact, the opportunities for appropriate screening, and the protection of important frontages (Map 11) and identified wildlife sites (Map 12).

- **Character Assessment**

- As above, the Neighbourhood Plan is supplemented by a [Character Assessment](#), which provides a detailed portrayal and analysis of the features that define the Parish.

In terms of the emerging local plan the Bassetlaw Local Plan 2020-2038 is in Examination year, with the Council anticipating moving towards modifications in late summer 2023. At the present time, the Council is attaching limited weight to its policies; however once the Inspectors Main Modifications is received the weighting given to the policies is likely to change.

This will be undertaken in accordance with the criteria in the National Planning Policy Framework, paragraph 48.

The Council is expecting to adopt the Local Plan by the end of 2023.

The following comments are made with reference to the submitted Local Plan position <https://www.bassetlaw.gov.uk/media/7007/sub-010.pdf> It should be noted that the content of policies may change as modifications to the Plan are identified.

Given the strategic nature of this proposal it would be remiss not to take into account the emerging plan specifically in relation to the Former Cottam Power Station site. The site is identified by Policy ST6: Cottam Priority Regeneration Area.

The site boundary in Figure 11 is taken from the landowners submission to the Council's Land Availability Assessment 2022 <https://www.bassetlaw.gov.uk/media/6884/final-laa-housing-paper-may-2022.pdf> It is the land in their ownership that they consider could be made available for development in the future.

The Local Plan is not allocating the site for development. The site is identified as a broad location where growth could go in the future subject to the various constraints identified being addressed satisfactorily through the provisions of Policy ST6. This position will be re-visited as part of any future Local Plan review (by 2028). So the site is not being relied upon in this Local Plan for either housing or employment provision.

The landowners Local Plan hearing statement contains an initial concept plan https://www.bassetlaw.gov.uk/media/7299/matter4_edf-geraldeva.pdf The hearing statement also contains a constraints map. That aligns with the Council's current understanding of the constraints on site.

As such, the Council request that the provisions of Policy ST6 be considered in relation to this proposal, and that the proposal does not prejudice the ability of this site to come forward appropriately in a comprehensive manner in the future.

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

See table above.

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

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

Local transport patterns and issues

Nottinghamshire County Council is the Highway Authority for the District. It is therefore requested that the examiner refers to their comments in respect of highway and transport issues, including public rights of way.

Site and area constraints

The site within Bassetlaw lies 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

The designated sites have been outlined above in the Policy Section.

The Council does not have in 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

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.

Public rights of way are another important consideration for Bassetlaw and advice should be obtained from Nottinghamshire County Council's public rights of way officer. It is anticipated that as the cabling is underground that the main disruption to public rights of way would be during the construction phase.

In terms of minerals and waste the examiner should consider the response from Nottinghamshire County Council.

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

This is welcomed.

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.

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

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

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

It is requested that the examiner considers the time period for the life of the project. 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.

The Council has no further comment to make under this heading.

Yours faithfully



Development Team Manager