

Technical Memorandum 5 (AAH TM05)

Lincolnshire County Council, Gate Burton Energy Park Project: Valued Landscape Response

Introduction

An Issue Specific Hearing (ISH), as part of the Gate Burton Energy Park DCO Application Examination, was held on the 23rd August 2023 focusing on landscape and land use. At the ISH the Examining Authority asked whether the Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV) in which the proposed Gate Burton Energy Park is located is a 'valued landscape'. Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) stated at the ISH that it was considered that this was a 'valued landscape' in terms of the NPPF.

Subsequently, the applicant has produced the document: *Gate Burton Energy Park: Valued Landscape Technical Note (EN010131/APP/ 8.1 6) September 2023*, which concludes that the landscape in which the Gate Burton Energy Park is situated is valued by the local community but not a 'valued landscape' in NPPF terms.

Valued Landscape Comments

AAH Consultants, on behalf of LCC, have reviewed the *Gate Burton Energy Park: Valued Landscape Technical Note (EN010131/APP/ 8.1 6) September 2023 (Valued Landscape Technical Note)*, and have authored this Technical Memorandum (AAH TM05) in response to this document, and also provide additional information in regards to the judgement that the AGLV in which the proposed Gate Burton Energy Park is located, in the opinion of LCC, is a 'valued landscape' in terms of the NPPF.

The Valued Landscape Technical Note provides a detailed background on the definition and judgement of 'Valued Landscapes' and while we generally agree with the statement within paragraph 3.2.2 that the "landscape character of the study area including the physical location of the Scheme is rural but not out of the ordinary", it has been read that the Valued Landscape Technical Note is taking the entirety of the DCO redline area and LVIA study area (some 3km west and 5km to the north, east and south of the order limits) as the baseline for this judgement. This may be considered to dilute the value rating of higher value landscape areas, specifically the WLDC AGLV. Whereas, the area that LCC judge to be a 'valued landscape' is aligned with the WLDC AGLV boundary, not the entirety of the study area.

The landscape of the site and surrounding landscape to the west of the railway line clearly is of a higher value to that located to the east, which aligns with the WLDC AGLV designation. This is evident on site, with this western area being more intimate in character; well-structured vegetation and woodland cover with stronger field boundaries; in good condition with evidence of positive maintenance; reduction in visual detractors; having a general sense of tranquillity. It is clearly different in character than adjacent areas to east, which is a much more open landscape with much larger scale arable fields and less vegetation cover.

This higher landscape value to the west of the railway line is acknowledged and reflected in the applicants LVIA in the assessment of Local Landscape Character Areas (LLCA) in this area (LLCA 01 and LLCA 02 which both lie within the AGLV) assessed as being of higher value:

- *LLCA 01 Gate Burton Estate*: Assessed as High Value; and

- *LLCA 02 Ancient Woodland Ridge*: Assessed as Medium Value.

The Valued Landscape Technical Note correctly references the Landscape Institute *Technical Guidance Note 02/21: Assessing landscape value outside national designations (TGN 02/21)* as a resource to guide judgements on landscape value and subsequently 'Valued Landscapes'. TGN 02/21 clarifies that: "A 'valued landscape' is an area identified as having sufficient landscape qualities to elevate it above other more everyday landscapes."

TGN 02/21 goes on to provide further guidance, and of note is the statement that: "The character and quality of landscapes across England are variable and what may be defined as reaching the 'valued landscape' threshold/criteria in one part of the Country may be considered to be an 'everyday landscape' in another."

Therefore, we judge that the WLDC AGLV that would be impacted by the development would be a 'Valued Landscape' in NPPF terms. It contains multiple qualities that clearly distinguish and elevate it above the adjacent and wider, more every day, landscape in this part of Lincolnshire, particularly the more open landscape to the east. This area has demonstrable valuable physical attributes that elevate it from the more ordinary landscape to the east, which is reinforced by the local designation as an AGLV.

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