

**Tillbridge Solar Project  
EN010142**

**Volume 9  
Statement of Common Ground with Lincolnshire  
Wildlife Trust**

**Final**

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**The Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010**

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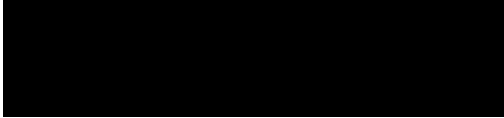
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# Statement of Common Ground

This Statement of Common Ground has been prepared and agreed by Tillbridge Solar Project and Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust.

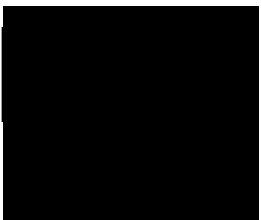
Luke Murray, Director on behalf of Tillbridge Solar Limited

Date:..... 

Signed:..... 14 October 2024.....

Ashley Reaney, Conservation Officer on behalf of Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust

Date:..... 15 October 2024.....

Signed:.....  .....

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Purpose of this Document

- 1.1.1 This Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) has been prepared to support the application ("the Application") for the Tillbridge Solar Project ("the Scheme") made by Tillbridge Solar Limited ("the Applicant"). The Application was submitted to the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero ("the Secretary of State") for a Development Consent Order (DCO) ("the Order") under section 37 of the Planning Act 2008 ("PA 2008") (Ref. 1) and accepted for examination on 8 May 2024.
- 1.1.2 This SoCG does not seek to replicate information which is available elsewhere within the Application documents. All documents are available in the deposit locations and/or on the Planning Inspectorate's website at <https://national-infrastructure-consenting.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/EN010142/documents>.
- 1.1.3 SoCGs are an established means in the planning process of allowing all parties to identify and focus on specific issues that may need to be addressed during the examination. This SoCG has been produced to confirm to the Examining Authority (ExA) where agreement has been reached between the parties and where agreement has not (yet) been reached. The SoCG will be progressed during the pre-examination and examination periods to reach a final position between the Parties and to clarify if any issues remain unresolved. This SoCG will be revised and updated as appropriate and/or required by the ExA at relevant examination deadlines.

## 1.2 Parties to this Statement of Common Ground

- 1.2.1 This SoCG has been prepared between (1) the Applicant and (2) Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust (jointly referred to as the Parties).
- 1.2.2 The Applicant is a joint venture between Tribus Clean Energy Limited and Recurrent Energy, a subsidiary of Canadian Solar, who are both experienced developers of renewable energy projects.
- 1.2.3 Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust (LWT) is an independent charity focussed on nature conservation within the county. Their role includes the management of nature reserves, engaging communities to enjoy and care for wildlife as well as campaigning on behalf of the environment. LWT's role in the DCO process derives from Section 42(1)(a) of the PA 2008 as a prescribed body and so has been consulted during the preparation of the Application and following its acceptance.

## 1.3 The Scheme

- 1.3.1 The Order, if granted, would authorise the construction, operation (including maintenance), and decommissioning of ground-mounted solar photovoltaic (PV) arrays. The Scheme will also include associated development to support the solar PV arrays.

- 1.3.2 The Scheme is made up of the Principal Site, the Cable Route Corridor and works to the existing National Grid Cottam Substation. The Principal Site comprises the solar PV arrays, electrical substations, grid balancing infrastructure, cabling and areas for landscaping and ecological enhancement.
- 1.3.3 The associated development element of the Scheme includes but is not limited to access provision; a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS), to support the operation of the ground mounted solar PV arrays; the development of on-site substations; underground cabling between the different areas of solar PV arrays; and areas of landscaping and biodiversity enhancement.
- 1.3.4 The Scheme also includes a 400kV underground Cable Route Corridor of approximately 18.5km in length connecting the Principal Site to the National Electricity Transmission System (NETS) at the existing National Grid Cottam Substation. The Scheme will export and import electricity to the NETS.

## 1.4 Terminology

- 1.4.1 Section 3 summarises the issues that are ‘agreed’, ‘not agreed’ or are ‘under discussion’.
- 1.4.2 These terms are used as follows:
- “Agreed” indicates where the issue has been resolved;
  - “Under discussion” indicates where these points will be the subject of on-going discussion wherever possible to resolve, or refine, the extent of disagreement between the parties;
  - “Not Agreed” indicates a final position where the Parties have agreed to disagree.

## 2. Record of Engagement

- 2.1.1 A summary of all meetings and correspondence that has taken place between the Parties in relation to the Application is outlined in **Table 1**. This includes email correspondence between the Parties to discuss sharing of information, arrangement of meetings and where appropriate to comment on draft documentation. **Table 1** reflects the key meetings and emails of note.

**Table 1: Record of Engagement**

Date	Form of Correspondence and attendees	Key topics discussed and key outcomes
14 June 2023	Teams Meeting LWT Conservation Officer Applicant’s consultancy team	Coordination of proposed mitigation and enhancement with local nature recovery strategies and biodiversity opportunity mapping.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Form of Correspondence and attendees</b>	<b>Key topics discussed and key outcomes</b>
16 October 2023	In person Workshop LWT Head of Conservation Applicant's consultancy team	Coordination of solar energy developments across Lincolnshire to develop and link proposed ecological mitigation and enhancement.
15 August 2024	Teams Meeting LWT Conservation Officer Applicant's consultancy team	Discussion of the work presented in the DCO submission relevant to LWT's comments on the Scheme provided during Non-Statutory Consultation and Statutory Consultation.

### 3. Areas of Discussion between the Parties

3.1.1 **Table 2** below details the areas of discussion and matters that are agreed, under discussion and not agreed between the Parties.

**Table 2 Areas of Discussion with Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust**

Ref.	Relevant Application Document	Description of Matter	Status
<b>Statutory Consultation</b>			
1.1	<p><b>Chapter 9: Ecology and Nature Conservation [APP-040]</b></p> <p><b>Appendix 9-7: Baseline report for Breeding birds [APP-087]</b></p> <p><b>Appendix 9-8: Baseline report for Non-breeding birds [APP-088]</b></p> <p><b>Chapter 18: Cumulative Effects and Interactions [APP-049]</b></p>	<p><b><u>LWT Comment:</u></b> Comments on the concern of displacing ground nesting birds, including Skylarks during the 2-year construction phase and further negatively impacting population levels across Greater Lincolnshire due to the cumulative effects of the other solar farm developments.</p> <p><b><u>Applicant's response:</u></b> Section 9.9 of <b>Chapter 9: Ecology and Nature Conservation [APP-040]</b> addresses the loss of arable farmland and embedded mitigation for Skylark during the construction phase, concluding that there will be a minor adverse to negligible effect, which is not significant, to the Skylark population as a result of the Scheme.</p> <p>In line with the <b>Works Plans [EN010142/APP/2.3(Rev02)]</b>, areas of undeveloped land have been embedded within the Scheme. These biodiversity zones will provide permanent habitat for ground-nesting birds such as Skylarks.</p> <p>See Table 9-2 of <b>Chapter 9: Ecology and Nature Conservation</b> of the ES <b>[APP-040]</b> for surveys undertaken and <b>Appendices 9-7: Baseline report for</b></p>	<p>Agreed – Applicant's Response accepted by LWT and LWT comment therefore treated as being resolved.</p>

Ref. Relevant Application Document	Description of Matter	Status
	<p><b>Breeding birds [APP-087] and 9-8: Baseline report for Non-breeding birds [APP-088].</b></p> <p>For full details of the methods used and assessment baseline see Table 9-11 of <b>Chapter 9: Ecology and Nature Conservation</b> of the ES [APP-040].</p> <p>The assessment of likely impacts and effects is included in Section 9.9 of <b>Chapter 9: Ecology and Nature Conservation</b> of the ES [APP-040].</p> <p>An assessment of cumulative effects is provided in <b>Chapter 18: Cumulative Effects and Interactions</b> of the ES [APP-049].</p>	
<p>1.2 <b>Chapter 9: Ecology and Nature Conservation [APP-040]</b></p> <p><b>Biodiversity Net Gain report [AS-062].</b></p>	<p><b><u>LWT Comment</u></b></p> <p>Comments referring to estimates over confirmation on the increase of biodiversity. Providing that the BNG units are retained solely for the Tillbridge scheme and not used to offset the impacts of other developments LWT have no further comments.</p> <p><b><u>Applicant's response</u></b></p> <p>The Scheme is committed to deliver biodiversity net gain, in accordance with the requirements of the <b>draft DCO [EN010142/APP/3.1(Rev03)]</b>. A <b>Biodiversity Net Gain report [AS-062]</b>. has been submitted as part of the DCO Application. Habitat data, required to calculate the BNG delivered by the Scheme has been collected during the original Phase 1 Habitat surveys and updated, as necessary, through subsequent surveys (such as arable flora and hedgerow surveys). This has ensured that a comprehensive baseline of data for the BNG assessment has been collected.</p> <p>DEFRA's Statutory Biodiversity Metric has been used to quantify gains and demonstrate developmental benefits. The approach to delivering BNG within the Scheme has been guided by the mitigation hierarchy that seeks to avoid</p>	<p>Agreed – Applicant's Response accepted by LWT and LWT comment therefore treated as being resolved.</p>



Ref. Relevant Application Document	Description of Matter	Status
	<p>impacts in the first instance and then minimise and offset residual impacts and will be in line with statutory metric guidance.</p> <p>As set out in the <b>Biodiversity Net Gain report [AS-062]</b> the Scheme is predicted to result in a net gain of 64.44% for area-based habitat units, 17.28% for hedgerow units, and 22.94% for watercourse units, based on the current plans.</p> <p>The Applicant confirms that BNG units are retained solely for the Scheme and will not be used, traded or sold to offset the impacts of other developments.</p> <p>Full details of the BNG assessment are provided in the <b>Biodiversity Net Gain report [AS-062]</b>.</p>	
<p>1.3 <b>Chapter 9: Ecology and Nature Conservation [APP-040]</b></p> <p><b>Framework CEMP [EN010142/APP/7.8 (Rev01)]</b></p>	<p><b><u>LWT Comment:</u></b> Comments concerning the impact of construction and vehicles of wildlife and flora communities of roadside verges, particularly the Local Wildlife Site (LWS) within the Cable Route Corridor.</p> <p><b><u>Applicant's Response:</u></b> Impacts on LWS are considered in <b>Chapter 9: Ecology and Nature Conservation</b> of the ES <b>[APP-040]</b> and details about the protection of LWS during construction are set out in the <b>Framework CEMP [EN010142/APP/7.8 (Rev01)]</b>. No likely significant effects on the LWS have been identified with mitigation in place, as set out within the <b>Framework CEMP [EN010142/APP/7.8 (Rev01)]</b>.</p> <p>Table 9-14 and Table 9-15 of <b>Chapter 9: Ecology and Nature Conservation</b> of the ES <b>[APP-040]</b> outlines potential impacts and effects on designated sites</p>	<p>Agreed – Applicant's Response accepted by LWT and LWT comment therefore treated as being resolved.</p>

Ref. Relevant Application Document	Description of Matter	Status
	and habitats and species and details the protection of LWS during construction are set out in the <b>Framework CEMP [EN010142/APP/7.8 (Rev01)]</b> .	
<p>1.4 <b>Chapter 9: Ecology and Nature Conservation [APP-040]</b></p> <p><b>Biodiversity Net Gain report [AS-062].</b></p>	<p><b><u>LWT Comment:</u></b> Comments encouraging the habitats to be described in all forthcoming documents to use the UKHab classification system as this is the nomenclature used in the DEFRA metric Biodiversity Calculation Tool used in Biodiversity Net Gain calculations and Phase 1 habitat types do not translate perfectly into UKHab style.</p> <p><b><u>Applicant's Response:</u></b> Habitats referenced within the ES follow Phase 1 Habitat nomenclature and the BNG calculations within the BNG assessment use the UKHab classification system.</p> <p>Phase 1 habitats are described in Table 9-10 of <b>Chapter 9: Ecology and Nature Conservation</b> of the ES <b>[APP-040]</b> and are presented on <b>Figure 9-3</b> of the ES <b>[APP-166]</b>. The UKHab map is presented within the <b>Biodiversity Net Gain report [AS-062]</b>.</p>	<p>Agreed – Applicant's Response accepted by LWT and LWT comment therefore treated as being resolved.</p>
<p>1.5 <b>Chapter 9: Ecology and Nature Conservation [APP-040]</b></p>	<p><b><u>LWT Comment:</u></b> Comments regarding the mitigation areas for farmland birds to exclude mammal passes to decrease the risk of predation.</p> <p><b><u>Applicant's Response:</u></b></p>	<p>Agreed – Applicant's Response accepted by LWT and LWT comment</p>

Ref. Relevant Application Document	Description of Matter	Status
<b>Framework LEMP [EN010142/APP/7.17(Rev02)]</b>	<p>This is noted. Where areas of undeveloped land are included within the Scheme for ground nesting birds, measures such as minimising access by ground predators has been incorporated.</p> <p>Section 9.8 of <b>Chapter 9: Ecology and Nature Conservation</b> of the ES <b>[APP-040]</b> details how security fencing surrounding targeted areas for farmland birds shall not contain passages for mammals. This is secured through compliance with the <b>Framework Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) [EN010142/APP/7.17(Rev02)]</b>, which has been updated at Deadline 1 to include this provision.</p>	therefore treated as being resolved.

## 4. References

- Ref. 1 His Majesty's Stationery Office (HMSO) (2008) Planning Act 2008. Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2008/29/contents> [Accessed 09/09/2024]