

Springwell Solar Farm

Consultation Report

EN010149/APP/5.1
November 2024
Springwell Energyfarm Ltd

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



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List of abbreviations

Term	Abbreviation
Adequacy of Consultation Milestone	AoCM
Balance of Solar System	BoSS
Battery Energy Storage System	BESS
Blankney Estates Limited	BEL
Development Consent Order	DCO
Environmental Impact Assessment	EIA
Hectare	ha
His Majesty's Land Registry	HMLR
Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed Forms and Procedure) Regulations 2009	APFP Regulations
Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017	EIA Regulations
Land Interest Questionnaire	LIQ
Lincolnshire County Council	LCC
Megawatt	MW
Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project	NSIP
North Kesteven District Council	NKDC
Planning Act 2008	PA 2008
Planning Performance Agreement	PPA
Public Right of Way	PRoW
Residential Visual Amenity Assessment	RVAA
Section 42	s42
Section 44	s44

Section 47	s47
Section 48	s48
Section 51	s51
Statement of Common Ground	SoCG
Statement of Community Consultation	SoCC

Executive Summary

This Consultation Report (“the Report”) relates to the proposed Springwell Solar Farm project (the “Proposed Development”) and is submitted by Springwell Energyfarm Limited (the “Applicant”) in accordance with section 37(3)(c) of the Planning Act 2008 (“PA 2008”). The approach taken to pre-application and engagement was designed to ensure compliance with the legislative requirements set out in sections 42, 47, 48, 49 and 50 of the PA 2008, while also exceeding these minimum requirements to ensure best practice.

Pre-application consultation and engagement were key features of the evolution of the Proposed Development, enabling continuous improvements to the Applicant’s proposals and related assessments that form the basis of this application for development consent for the Proposed Development (the “Application”). This Report describes the pre-application consultation and engagement undertaken by the Applicant, summarises the responses received, and explains how the Applicant has had regard to them to develop its proposals.

The Proposed Development

The Proposed Development is a new solar farm with battery storage located north of Sleaford, and within the administrative boundaries of North Kesteven District Council (“NKDC”) and Lincolnshire County Council (“LCC”) (“the host authorities”).

The Proposed Development has a grid connection agreement with National Grid allowing the export and import of 800 megawatts (“MW”) of electricity through a proposed new substation, owned and operated by National Grid. If granted consent, the Proposed Development has the potential to make an important contribution towards the government’s target to significantly scale up solar generation.

The Consultation Report

The Report sets out how pre-application consultation (both statutory and non-statutory) was undertaken in the development of the Proposed Development. The main stages of consultation were:

- Phase One Consultation: Early plans and proposals (Winter-Spring 2023) – a non-statutory consultation on early plans and proposals for the Proposed Development.
- Phase Two Consultation: Updated plans and proposals (Winter-Spring 2024) – a statutory consultation on updated proposals for the Proposed Development, carried out in accordance with a Statement of Community Consultation (“SoCC”) and relevant legislative requirements.
- Targeted consultation (Summer 2024) – a targeted consultation on proposed changes to the proposed Order Limits to accommodate highway and footpath improvements identified following Phase Two Consultation.

The Applicant has also undertaken a continuous programme of engagement since the launch of the Proposed Development in parallel with, and complementary to, its formal stages of pre-application consultation.

Outcomes of pre-application consultation

The Applicant's approach to pre-application consultation was designed to ensure that consultees had the opportunity to understand and share feedback on the proposals and feel satisfied that they had been able to engage with the process. The Applicant ensured that a range of engagement techniques were used, that materials were available in different formats and at appropriate levels and that the consultation was widely publicised.

Key outcomes of Phase One Consultation included:

- 6,318 newsletters delivered to homes and businesses
- 409 people visited a public event and 119 people visited the virtual exhibition
- 223 responses received

Key outcomes of Phase Two Consultation included:

- 11,835 letters sent to local homes and businesses
- 452 people visited a public event, 2,773 visitors to the Springwell Solar Farm website and 133 visitors to the virtual exhibition
- 248 responses received

The Applicant had regard to all responses received to consultation in finalising its proposals, with feedback from both phases of formal consultation, and targeted consultation on improvements to the highways and footpath network resulting in a number of changes being made to the Proposed Development. These changes, along with details of the ways in which the Applicant has complied with legislation, guidance and advice notes are explained in this Report.

1. Introduction

1.1. Purpose of this document

- 1.1.1. This Consultation Report (“Report”) relates to the proposed Springwell Solar Farm (the “Proposed Development”).
- 1.1.2. Springwell Energyfarm Ltd (the “Applicant”) has submitted an application (the “Application”) to the Planning Inspectorate acting on behalf of the Secretary of State for a Development Consent Order (“DCO”) for the Proposed Development.
- 1.1.3. In accordance with section 37(3)(c) and (7) of the Planning Act 2008 (“PA 2008”), the Applicant has submitted this Report as part of the Application.
- 1.1.4. This Report explains how the Applicant has complied with legislative requirements set out in the PA 2008 (as well as the Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed Forms and Procedure) Regulations 2009 (“APFP Regulations”) and the Infrastructure Planning: (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (“EIA Regulations”). It also summarises the responses received to formal phases of consultation and explains how the Applicant has had regard to these in developing the Application. It also provides information about non-statutory consultation and stakeholder engagement undertaken by the Applicant regarding the Proposed Development.

1.2. The Proposed Development

- 1.2.1. The Proposed Development is a new solar farm with battery storage at land north of Sleaford, close to the settlements of Blankney, Scopwick, Kirkby Green and Ashby de la Launde (the “Site”), within the administrative boundaries of North Kesteven District Council (“NKDC”) and Lincolnshire County Council (“LCC”) (the “host authorities”).
- 1.2.2. The Proposed Development has a grid connection agreement with National Grid allowing the export and import of 800 MW of electricity through a proposed new substation, owned and operated by National Grid (“National Grid Navenby Substation”).
- 1.2.3. The Proposed Development meets the criteria to be considered as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (“NSIP”) under section 15(2) of the PA 2008 as it is a proposed generating station which would be within England, does not generate electricity from wind, would not be offshore and would have a total generating capacity of more than 50 MW.

- 1.2.4. A full description of the Proposed Development is provided in **Environmental Statement Volume 1, Chapter 3: Proposed Development Description [EN010149/APP/6.1]**.
- 1.2.5. Refining the design and layout of the Proposed Development was an iterative process, guided by a programme of pre-application consultation and engagement, as well as the outputs of environmental assessments and technical work. The key stages of design and how they relate to the stages of formal pre-application consultation are summarised in the **Design Approach Document [EN010149/APP/7.3]**.

1.3. Overview of the consultation process

- 1.3.1. **Table 1-1** provides a summary of key pre-application consultation milestones and signposts where these activities are described in the Report. This is also shown in **Figure 1-1**.
- 1.3.2. The Applicant has undertaken a continuous programme of engagement in parallel with, and complementary to, its formal phases of pre-application consultation. The important distinction between consultation and engagement are as follows:
- Engagement relates to discussions between the Applicant, community and stakeholders outside formal phases of consultation. The programme of engagement undertaken by the Applicant outside of formal phases of consultation is detailed in **Chapter 3** of this Report.
 - Consultation relates to the formal stages of consultation (both non-statutory and statutory), the detail of which is provided in **Chapters 2, 5, 6 and 7** of this Report.

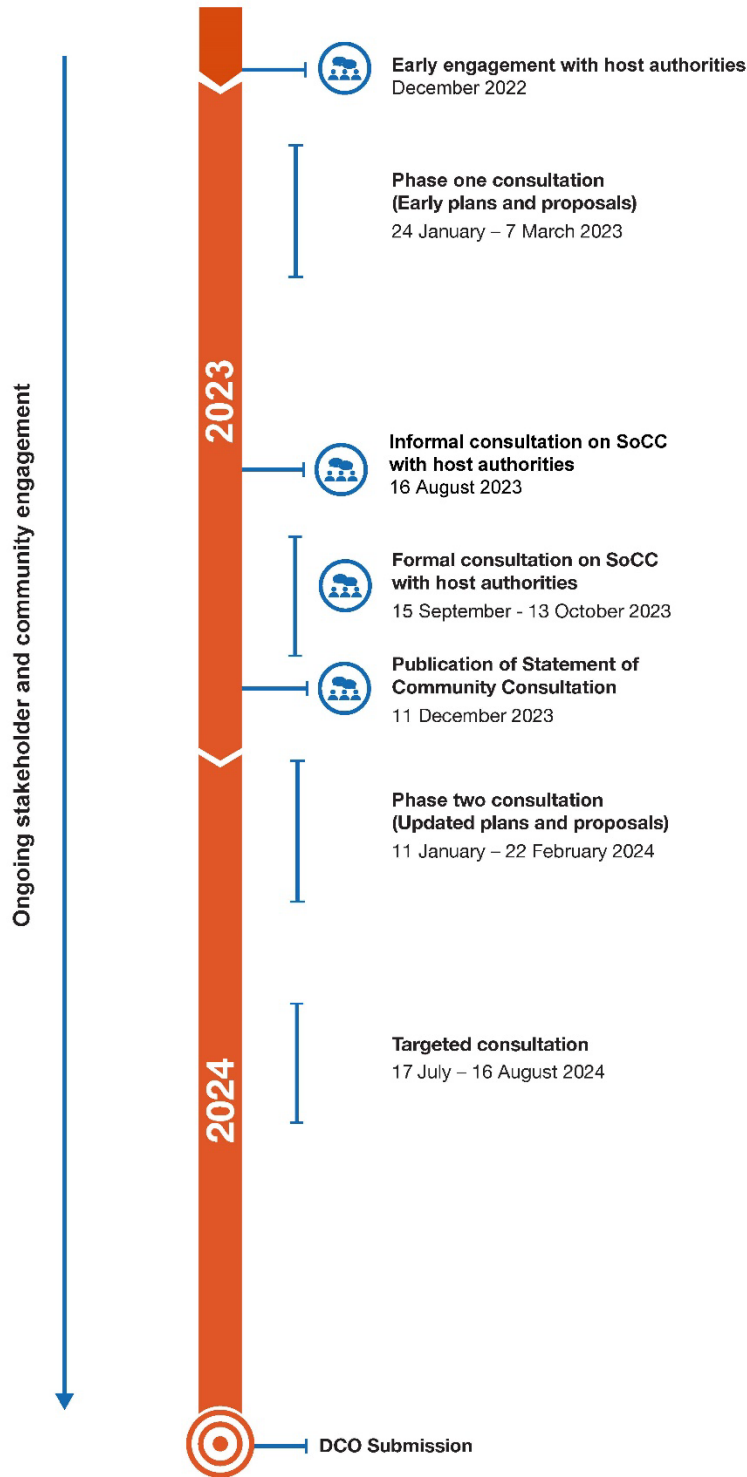
Table 1-1: Summary of pre-application consultation and engagement activities

Activity	Date	Chapter of Report
Pre-Phase One Consultation: early engagement including with host authorities	December 2022	Chapter 3 (section 3.3)
Phase One Consultation: Early plans and proposals	24 January 2023 – 7 March 2023	Chapter 2
Pre-Phase Two Consultation: Stakeholder and near neighbour	March 2023 – January 2024	Chapter 3

Activity	Date	Chapter of Report
engagement to inform design development		
Development of the Statement of Community Consultation	April 2023 – December 2023	Chapter 4 (sections 4.5 to 4.8)
Consultation of host local authorities on the SoCC as prescribed by s47(6) of the PA 2008	15 September 2023 – 13 October 2023	Chapter 4 (section 4.7)
Publication of the SoCC	11 December 2023	Chapter 4 (section 4.8)
Notice of availability of SoCC in the vicinity of the proposal as prescribed by s47(6) of the PA 2008	11 December 2023	Chapter 4 (section 4.8)
SoCC made available in the vicinity of the proposal as prescribed by s47(6) of the PA 2008	11 December 2023 – 22 February 2024	Chapter 4 (section 4.8)
Notification of the Planning Inspectorate of proposed application as prescribed by s46 of the PA 2008 and EIA Regulations	08 January 2024	Chapter 5 (paragraphs 5.4.12-5.4.14)
Phase Two Consultation: Updated plans and proposals	11 January 2024 – 22 February 2024	Chapter 5
Proposed application publicised as prescribed by s48 of the PA 2008 and Regulation 13 of the EIA Regulations	11 January 2024	Chapter 5 (section 5.7)

Activity	Date	Chapter of Report
Consultation as prescribed under s42 of the PA 2008	11 January 2024 – 22 February 2024	Chapter 5 and 6 (section 5.4)
Consultation in accordance with the SoCC as prescribed under s47(7) of the PA 2008	11 January 2024 – 22 February 2024	Chapters 5 and 6
Post phase-two consultation: Stakeholder and near neighbour engagement to inform design development	March 2024 – October 2024	Chapter 3
Targeted consultation on changes to the proposed Site boundary and highways improvements	17 July 2024 – 16 August 2024	Chapter 7

Figure 1-1: Key pre-application consultation milestones



1.4. Report structure

1.4.1. This Report is structured as follows:

- **Executive summary:** provides an overview of this Report, detailing the background, the process and the outcomes of the steps undertaken.
- **Chapter 1 Introduction:** explains the purpose of this Report, describes the Proposed Development and summarises the key pre-application consultation milestones.
- **Chapter 2 Phase One Consultation 2023:** summarises non-statutory consultation undertaken on the Proposed Development from 24 January 2023 – 7 March 2023 ('Phase One Consultation'), including how the Applicant has had regard to feedback received and changes made as a result of consultation. It should be read alongside **Appendices A-1 to A-4 [EN010149/APP/5.2]**.
- **Chapter 3 Stakeholder and community engagement:** summarises non-statutory engagement undertaken with the local community, stakeholders and local authorities about the Proposed Development outside of formal consultation periods. It should be read alongside **Appendices B-1 to B-3 [EN010149/APP/5.2]**.
- **Chapter 4 Approach to statutory consultation and development of the SoCC:** explains the purpose, objectives and legal requirements for statutory consultation and details the preparation and publication of the Statement of Community Consultation. It should be read alongside **Appendices C-1 to C-4 and D-1 to D-4 [EN010149/APP/5.2]**.
- **Chapter 5 Phase Two Consultation 2024:** details the statutory consultation undertaken on the Proposed Development from 11 January 2024 – 22 February 2024 ('Phase Two Consultation'). It should be read alongside **Appendices E-1, F-1, G-1 to G-3, H-1 and I-1 [EN010149/APP/5.2]**.
- **Chapter 6 Responses to Phase Two Consultation:** summarises the responses received to Phase Two Consultation, including how the Applicant has had regard to feedback received and changes made as a result of consultation. It should be read alongside **Appendices J-1 and J-2 [EN010149/APP/5.2]**.
- **Chapter 7 Additional targeted consultation:** details the targeted consultation undertaken on changes to the Order Limits from 17 July 2024 – 16 August 2024 to enable highways improvements, including how the Applicant has had regard to feedback received and changes made as a result of consultation. It should be read alongside **Appendices K-1 to K-3 [EN010149/APP/5.2]**.

- **Chapter 8 Conclusion:** draws conclusions on the key themes of the consultation responses and the changes that the Applicant has made to the proposals as a result of feedback received. It should be read alongside **Appendices M-1** and **M-2 [EN010149/APP/5.2]**.

1.5. Covering letter and completed section 55 checklist

- 1.5.1. An **Application Covering Letter [EN010149/APP/1.1]** and completed **Section 55 Checklist [EN010149/APP/1.4]** are submitted with the Application documents.
- 1.5.2. The completed section 55 checklist signposts how the Applicant has complied with the pre-application consultation requirements within the PA 2008, AFPF Regulations, EIA Regulations and the Planning Inspectorate's pre-application guidance.

2. Phase One Consultation 2023

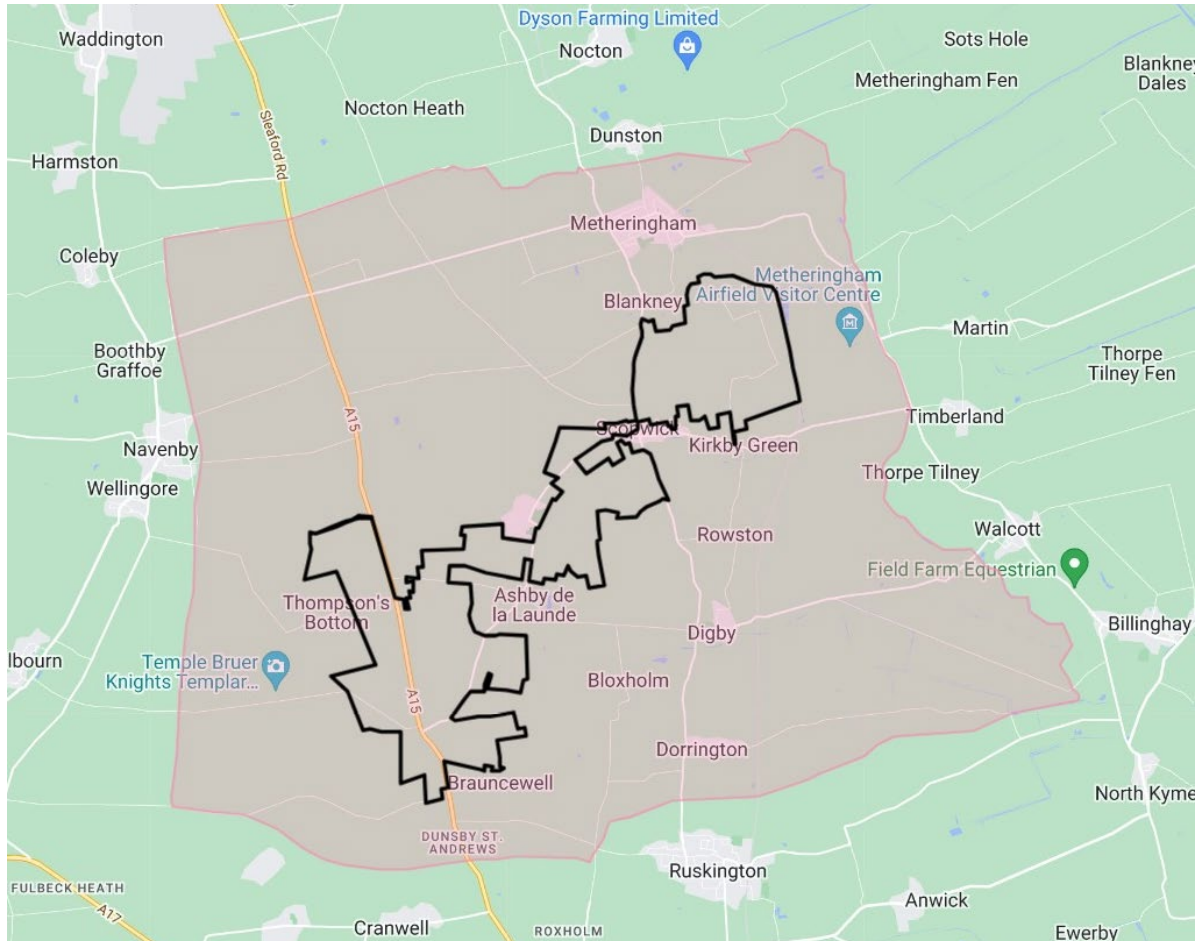
2.1. Overview

- 2.1.1. The Applicant conducted a period of non-statutory consultation ('Phase One Consultation: early plans and proposals') on the Proposed Development for six weeks between 24 January 2023 and 7 March 2023.
- 2.1.2. In preparing for the consultation, the Applicant designed a strategy to ensure that anyone with an interest in the Proposed Development could find out more and share their views. Key activities included:
- Delivering 6,318 newsletters to homes and businesses.
 - Holding four public events in locations around the proposed Site boundary, supported by a virtual exhibition and the Springwell Solar Farm website.
 - Placing copies of the consultation materials in locations around the proposed Site boundary for people to inspect and take away.
 - Writing to a number of stakeholders and community organisations to raise awareness of the consultation and provide more information about the proposals.
 - Providing a range of communication channels to enable anyone to find out more about the Proposed Development and share their feedback.
 - Conducting an advertising campaign which included print, digital and social media advertising.
- 2.1.3. The purpose of this period of non-statutory consultation was to gain feedback on the early design of the Proposed Development, the process of Environmental Impact Assessment ("EIA") and the Applicant's initial approach to community benefit. It also helped inform the Applicant's approach to statutory consultation, including the development of the Statement of Community Consultation.
- 2.1.4. The Applicant welcomed 409 people to public events about the Proposed Development and received 223 responses to its Phase One Consultation.
- 2.1.5. A detailed description of the activity carried out in support of the consultation is provided below, along with a summary of the feedback received.

2.2. Zones of consultation

- 2.2.1. The consultation was open to anyone with an interest in the Proposed Development who the Applicant considered may be directly or indirectly impacted, or who had comments they would like to be considered.
- 2.2.2. The Applicant defined inner and outer zones of consultation to ensure that consultation activity was appropriate and proportionate to the potential effects of the Proposed Development. These are defined as:
- Inner zone: People living, working or studying closest to the Proposed Development and therefore likely to have a direct interest. The zone was drawn taking into account the proposed Site boundary, using existing boundaries such as rivers and roads to set the area. The inner zone totalled 44 square miles and included 3,159 properties. The inner zone is shown in **Figure 2-1**.
 - Outer zone: People living, working or studying within the administrative boundaries of NKDC.
- 2.2.3. Consultation activity and publicity was most intensive within the inner zone of consultation. The different techniques used to publicise the consultation are detailed in section 2.4.
- 2.2.4. At the same time as consulting the local community, the Applicant also consulted a wide range of stakeholders, using the prescribed consultee list set out in Schedule 1 of the APFP Regulations as guidance to ensure that stakeholders had sufficient opportunities to comment on the Proposed Development. It also considered additional organisations that could have an interest in the Proposed Development.
- 2.2.5. These groups included:
- The host and neighbouring local authorities.
 - Statutory bodies (such as the Environment Agency, Historic England, and Natural England).
 - Other community groups and organisations that may have an interest in the proposals (such as Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust and Lincolnshire Ramblers).

Figure 2-1: Inner zone: Distribution zone for the launch leaflet and consultation newsletter (pink) with the proposed Site boundary in black.



Consultation publicity

- 2.2.6. The Applicant launched the consultation and its early plans for Proposed Development on 10 January 2023 - two weeks ahead of the start of the consultation period - to ensure there was sufficient notice to participate in the consultation and attend public events.
- 2.2.7. The Applicant used a range of techniques to publicise the Phase One Consultation, which are summarised below and included in **Appendix A-1: Launch materials and advertising**:
- Sending a launch leaflet (**Appendix A-1.1**) on 10 January 2023 to 3,159 homes and businesses within the inner zone to provide information about the consultation, including the timings of the public events and the Applicant's contact details.

- Writing to stakeholders and elected representatives by recorded delivery and email on 10 January 2023 to introduce the Proposed Development and offer a briefing. This included parish councillors, district councillors, county councillors, and Members of Parliament within the inner zone. A sample email and letter are included in **Appendix A-1.2** and **Appendix A-1.3**.
 - Publishing a website with information about the Proposed Development and Phase One Consultation. Screenshots of the Springwell Solar Farm website at launch (10 January 2023) are provided in **Appendix A-1.4**.
 - Issuing a press release to approximately 50 local and energy industry publications (**Appendix A-1.5**). Five local publications covered the launch: Lincolnshire Live, Lincolnshire Today, Lincolnshire World, East Midlands Business Link and BBC Radio Lincolnshire as well as energy industry publications Renewables Now, Planning Resource and Solar Power Portal. A list of media interviews given during the launch and Phase One Consultation period is provided in **Table 2-1**.
 - Placing adverts in the print and digital editions of the Sleaford Target on 18 January 2023 and the Lincolnshire Echo on 19 January 2023, evidenced in **Appendix A-1.5**.
 - Sharing a post on the launch and consultation period on the EDF Renewables UK & Ireland LinkedIn account (c.87,000 followers), which received 13,467 impressions and 236 click throughs, a screenshot of which is included in **Appendix A-1.5**.
- 2.2.8. The Applicant gave advance notice to a number of stakeholders, including the host authorities, MP and near neighbours. This included a series of pre-briefings, as well as door knocking 80 properties identified as closest to the Proposed Development on 9 January 2023 (the day prior to launch). More information about pre-launch activity is available in **Chapter 3** of this Report.
- 2.2.9. Following the launch of the Proposed Development, a range of activities were included in the Phase One Consultation programme (24 January – 07 March 2023) to publicise the Proposed Development and ensure that the community could access the consultation information and respond.
- 2.2.10. These activities are summarised below and included in **Appendix A-2: Phase One Consultation materials and advertising**:
- Sending a newsletter to 3,159 homes and businesses within the inner zone to advertise the start of the consultation period on Tuesday 24 January 2023. This is provided in **Appendix A-2.1**.

- Writing to statutory consultees and elected representatives of people within the inner consultation zone, including parish councillors, district councillors, county councillors, and Members of Parliament by recorded delivery and email, notifying them of the consultation and offering them a briefing. A sample letter is included in **Appendix A-2.2**. Hard copies of the consultation booklet and consultation questionnaire were included in the letter.
- Issuing press releases (**Appendix A-2.6**) to approximately 50 local and energy industry publications. Coverage included Lincolnshire Live, The Lincolnite, LincsFM, ITV News Calendar, Lincolnshire World, BBC Look North East, BBC Radio Lincolnshire, reNews and Solar Power Portal on 24 January 2023 and 28 February 2023.
- Placing adverts in the print and digital editions of the Sleaford Target on 25 January 2023 and the Lincolnshire Echo on 26 January 2023, evidenced in **Appendix A-2.6**.
- Placing digital adverts on the online pages of Lincolnshire Live from 27 January 2023 to 3 February, geographically targeted to those in Lincolnshire. This received 250,010 impressions and 636 click throughs to the Springwell Solar Farm website. This is evidenced in **Appendix A-2.6**.
- Conducting two phases of Facebook advertising which targeted those within a 16km radius of Springwell. This advertising campaign reached 3,256 profiles. Sample adverts are provided in **Appendix A-2.6**.
- Updating the Springwell Solar Farm website with details of the consultation. Screenshots of the Springwell Solar Farm website during Phase One Consultation are provided at **Appendix A-3**.
- Sharing a ‘one week to go’ post on the EDF Renewables UK LinkedIn account (c.87,000 followers) on 28 February 2023, which received 3,910 impressions. A screenshot of the post is included at **Appendix A-2.6**.

Table 2-1: Media interviews given at launch and during Phase One Consultation

Interview	Date
BBC Radio Lincolnshire	Tuesday 10 January 2023
Lincolnshire FM	Tuesday 24 January 2023
BBC Radio Lincolnshire	Tuesday 24 January 2023
Lincolnshire World	Tuesday 31 January 2023

ITV News Calendar South

Friday 3 February 2023

BBC Radio Lincolnshire

Friday 3 February 2023

2.3. Scope of Phase One Consultation

2.3.1. Consultation was carried out between 24 January 2023 and 7 March 2023. As part of the Phase One Consultation, information was presented on:

- The background to the Proposed Development.
- The need for the Proposed Development.
- Information about the Applicant.
- The DCO process.
- The role of consultation.
- The location of the Proposed Development.
- Approach to design and early design principles.
- Early design of the Proposed Development.
- The technology that would be used for the Proposed Development, including its grid connection.
- The EIA process.
- Community benefits.
- How to participate in Phase One Consultation.
- The timeline for the Proposed Development and next steps.

2.3.2. The Applicant published information on the Proposed Development, including the early design and its approach to environmental assessments in a range of different materials as part of Phase One Consultation. These are listed below and provided in **Appendix A-2: Phase One Consultation materials and advertising** and **Appendix A-3: Screenshots of Phase One Consultation website and virtual exhibition**:

- Phase One Consultation booklet (**Appendix A-2.3**): an accessible, 36-page non-technical overview of the Proposed Development. The booklet also included information on the planning process, the Applicant, Phase One Consultation, the EIA process, and approach to community benefit.
- Phase One Consultation maps (**Appendix A-2.4**): A masterplan of the proposals, with separate maps showing each part of the Proposed Development (known as Springwell East, Springwell Central and

Springwell West) available in large scale at public events and on the Springwell Solar Farm website to provide alternative formats for people to understand the proposals.

- Phase One Consultation questionnaire: the main mechanism for collecting feedback (**Appendix A-2.5**).
- Phase One Consultation exhibition banners: an accessible summary of the Proposed Development, the EIA process, the consultation and planning process, approach to community benefit and next steps (**Appendix A-2.7**) shown at the public events and downloadable on the Springwell Solar Farm website.
- A virtual exhibition: containing the exhibition banners and a link to the online questionnaire and Springwell Solar Farm website (shown in **Appendix A-3**).

2.3.3. Through Phase One Consultation, the Applicant sought views on:

- The potential locations of the solar generation element of the Proposed Development, the potential areas for battery storage and general comments about the design of the Proposed Development.
- The potential to include environmental enhancements as part of the Proposed Development.
- Initial ideas for new public footpaths and suggestions for other improvements and additional routes.
- Any information about the area and local environment relevant to the Proposed Development.
- Any local initiatives that the Proposed Development could support and existing community funds and organisations operating in the area.

2.4. Consultation techniques

2.4.1. There were a range of means available for interested parties to find out more about the Proposed Development and ensure they had enough information to respond effectively to the consultation.

Springwell Solar Farm website and virtual exhibition

2.4.2. The Springwell Solar Farm website was updated with information about the consultation on 24 January 2023. The website included access to a summary of the proposals and online questionnaire, downloadable consultation materials, a link to a virtual exhibition, details of how to take part in the consultation and contact details.

- 2.4.3. The virtual exhibition contained digital versions of the exhibition banners that were available at the in-person public events, as well as links to the online questionnaire. The virtual exhibition was visited by 119 unique visitors at the close of Phase One Consultation. Screenshots of the virtual exhibition are provided in **Appendix A-3: Screenshots of Phase One Consultation website and virtual exhibition**.
- 2.4.4. All materials published as part of Phase One Consultation were made available on the website for the duration of the consultation period.

Public events

- 2.4.5. The Applicant held four public events within the consultation period. Venues for the events were chosen for their availability, size and accessibility, and proximity to the Proposed Development. Events were planned for a variety of times and days of the week to ensure that people with different schedules and commitments were able to attend.
- 2.4.6. A preview session was held for elected representatives and officers (1pm-2pm on 28 January 2023) at the first event at Blankney Old School to enable stakeholders to view the consultation materials and ask questions to the project team.
- 2.4.7. Each exhibition comprised 14 information boards, as well as large-scale maps. People were able to write their feedback at the event and deposit completed feedback in a secure box. Copies of the consultation materials were available to be taken away.
- 2.4.8. The locations, times and attendance figures for the exhibitions are included in **Table 2-2**.

Table 2-2: Public events held and attendance

Locations	Date	Attendance
Blankney Old School, Drury Street, Blankney, LN4 3AZ	Tuesday 28 January 2023 (2pm-7pm)	82
Scopwick Village Hall, Brookside, Scopwick LN4 3PA	Wednesday 1 February 2023 (2pm-7pm)	125
Ashby de la Launde Village Hall, Church Avenue, Ashby de la Launde, LN4 3JQ	Friday 3 February 2023 (11am-4pm)	81

Locations	Date	Attendance
Metheringham Village Hall, Fen Road, Metheringham, LN4 3AA	Saturday 4 February 2023 (11am-4pm)	121

Figure 2-3: Image of public event prior to opening on Saturday 4 February 2023



Deposit points

2.4.9. Copies of the Phase One Consultation booklet and questionnaire were made available at deposit points close to the Site for the duration of the consultation period. Checks were made throughout the consultation period to ensure the deposit points were stocked. The locations are detailed in **Table 2-3**.

Table 2-3: Deposit points

Locations	Address	Opening hours
Blankney Golf Club	Blankney Golf Club, Lincoln Road, Blankney LN4 3AZ	Monday-Friday: 9am-7pm Saturday-Sunday: 9am-9pm
Scopwick Village Hall	Scopwick Village Hall, Brookside, LN4 3PA	Opening hours vary.
Metheringham Community Library	Metheringham Community Library, High Street, Metheringham LN4 3DZ	Monday: Closed Tuesday: 3pm-5pm Wednesday: 10am-12pm Thursday: 10am-12pm Friday: 2pm-5pm Saturday: 10am-1pm Sunday: Closed

Stakeholder and community meetings

2.4.10. All stakeholders were offered briefings during the consultation period. A total of five were carried out during Phase One Consultation, which are detailed in **Table 2-4**.

Table 2-4: Stakeholders met during Phase One Consultation

Stakeholder	Summary of meeting	Date
Digby Church of England (CofE) Primary School	Virtual meeting to introduce the Proposed Development, including information about community benefit and approach to engagement.	Wednesday 15 February 2023
Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust	Virtual meeting to introduce the Proposed Development, discuss	Thursday 16 February 2023

Stakeholder	Summary of meeting	Date
	potential opportunities of the Proposed Development and discuss approach to environmental impact assessment.	
North Kesteven District Council Pre-Application Committee	Virtual presentation to NKDC's Pre-Application Committee with a Q&A session for councillors.	Tuesday 21 February 2023
Metheringham Bowls Club	In-person meeting to introduce the Proposed Development, including information about community benefit and approach to engagement.	Wednesday 1 March 2023
Metheringham Parish Council and Cllr Fran Pembery (Metheringham Rural, NKDC)	In-person meeting to introduce the Proposed Development and answer questions to inform the parish council's response.	Wednesday 1 March 2023

2.4.11. Several introductory conversations with community organisations and groups took place at the public events. These included the Lincolnshire Community Foundation, RAF Digby, Martin Parish Council, Timberland and Thorpe Tilney Parish Council, Brauncewell Quarry and Lincolnshire Ramblers.

2.4.12. The Applicant also held meetings with residents on request to enable them to raise any specific queries or concerns. All requests for meetings were accepted. The Applicant held six meetings with residents during the Phase One Consultation period, which included visiting seven residential properties in total. Details of these meetings are set out in **Table 2-5**.

Table 2-5: Residents met during Phase One Consultation

Stakeholder	Summary of meeting	Date
Near neighbours – Hill Top Farm and Barns (Rowston Top)	In-person meeting to discuss the Proposed Development, answer questions and arrange a Site visit.	28 January 2023
Near neighbours – Hill Top Farm and Barns (Rowston Top)	Home visit to four properties to see areas of specific concern.	1 February 2023
Near neighbour – Glebe Farm	Home visit to discuss the Proposed Development and see areas of specific concern.	2 February 2023
Near neighbour - Old School Cottage	Home visit to discuss the Proposed Development and see areas of specific concern.	2 February 2023
Near neighbour - Coach House	Home visit to discuss the Proposed Development and see areas of specific concern.	4 February 2023
Near neighbour - Woodview	Virtual meeting to discuss areas of concern.	6 March 2023

2.4.13. Throughout the consultation, dedicated communication channels were open for enquiries about the Proposed Development and to arrange meetings. Anyone could get in touch via a Freephone number (0800 038 3486), email address (info@springwellsolarfarm.co.uk) or writing to a Freepost address (Springwell Solar Farm, FREEPOST SEC Newgate UK Local).

2.5. Responding to the Phase One Consultation

2.5.1. Anyone could respond to the consultation by:

- Submitting comments or a hard-copy questionnaire by post using the freepost address Springwell Solar Farm, FREEPOST SEC Newgate UK LOCAL.
- Completing the online questionnaire by following links through the Springwell Solar Farm website (www.springwellsolarfarm.co.uk).

- Emailing feedback or a completed questionnaire to info@springwellsolarfarm.co.uk.
- Completing a questionnaire at the public events.

- 2.5.2. Printed copies of the questionnaire were made available at deposit points around the area (see **Table 2-3**), at the public events and were posted on request. The consultation questionnaire could also be downloaded on the Springwell Solar Farm website. Printed copies of the consultation questionnaire, along with the consultation booklet, were sent to all statutory consultees and elected representatives within the inner zone of consultation shown in **Figure 2-1** at the start of Phase One Consultation.
- 2.5.3. The feedback questionnaire comprised nine questions, including a three-part question. The first three questions, 1a, 1b and 1c, focused on the location of the solar panels and battery storage, as well as inviting respondents to provide general comments about the design of the Proposed Development.
- 2.5.4. Questions 2 and 3 asked respondents to share their thoughts on the environmental enhancements and new permissive pathways proposed as part of the Proposed Development.
- 2.5.5. Question 4 asked respondents to share any local knowledge of the surrounding area and environment which should be taken into account.
- 2.5.6. Questions 5 and 6 invited respondents to share suggestions about how the Proposed Development could help support local community initiatives and groups.
- 2.5.7. Finally, Question 7 gave respondents the opportunity to leave any further comments or suggestions.

2.6. Outcomes of Phase One Consultation

- 2.6.1. The Applicant received 223 responses from the community to Phase One Consultation by the consultation deadline of 7 March 2023.
- 2.6.2. The Applicant also received seven responses from bodies that would be classed as statutory consultees under s42(1)(a) or (b) of the PA 2008. These were:
- National Highways
 - Environment Agency
 - Scopwick and Kirkby Green Parish Council

- North Kesteven District Council
- Newark and Sherwood District Council
- Ministry of Defence
- Blankney Parish Council

2.6.3. The Applicant also received four consultation responses from bodies or people that would be classed as non-prescribed consultees. These were:

- Lincolnshire Ramblers
- Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust
- Welbourn Parish Council
- Dr Caroline Johnson MP

2.7. Sources of responses

2.7.1. The online questionnaire was by far the most popular method used to respond to the consultation, accounting for 74% of responses. The source of responses is shown in **Table 2-5** below.

Table 2-5: Sources of responses

Source	Number
Online questionnaire	165
Email	41
Freepost	9
Returned at public events	8

Table 2-6: Responses by question in the consultation questionnaire

Question	Number of responses
Q1a: Do you have any comments on our early plans and proposals for the potential locations of the solar energy generation element of Springwell?	174
Q1b: Do you have any comments on our early plans and proposals for the areas we are looking at for the battery storage element of Springwell?	145

Question	Number of responses
Q1c: Do you have any comments on our early plans and proposals for any other elements of Springwell?	138
Q2: Are there any environmental enhancements you think we should include as part of our proposals?	156
Q3: Do you have any feedback on our proposals for new public footpaths or suggestions for other improvements or additional routes?	149
Q4: Do you have any other information about the area and local environment which you think we should take into account?	136
Q5: Do you have any ideas you would like to share about how Springwell could support local community initiatives?	139
Q6: Are you aware of any existing community funds or organisations that might be interested in partnering with Springwell?	120
Q7: Please leave any further comments or suggestions you have.	140

2.7.2. Responses were received, securely recorded and analysed by a consultancy specialising in public consultation and stakeholder engagement. The following process was utilised:

- When a response was received, the Applicant identified whether the response had been submitted by an individual or organisation.
- Each response was assigned a unique ID number, and their feedback was recorded against this number in a secure database.
- Hard copy questionnaires and letters were manually typed and recorded against the respondent's unique ID number.
- Responses were analysed at sentence level, using thematic coding to group together comments on similar topics, with unique ID numbers logged against comments to indicate frequency.
- An individual response was coded in as many layers as required to ensure that the entire sentiment was captured.
- The coding process enabled all responses to be indexed according to the issues raised by respondents and allowed a detailed summary to be prepared of the content by themes and topics raised.

2.8. Key themes raised to Phase One Consultation

2.8.1. **Tables 2-7 to 2-15** summarise community responses to each question received via the consultation questionnaire, including the frequency with which key themes were raised. **Table 2-16** sets out responses received from the community that did not follow the questionnaire format.

Table 2-7: Most common responses received to Question 1a

Theme	Frequency
The loss of high-grade agricultural land would threaten food security.	68
The proposed Site is too large.	48
There would be a negative impact on the rural nature of the area.	37
There would be a considerable impact on local wildlife.	31
I oppose the proposals.	31
The Proposed Development is too close to villages/residential properties.	21
My property would be surrounded by solar panels.	19
Property values would decrease as a result of the proposals.	17
Solar should be built on an appropriate land designation (i.e. brownfield land).	16
There are better locations to put the Proposed Development.	11
I don't have any comments on this aspect.	8

Table 2-8: Most common responses received to Question 1b

Theme	Frequency
I don't have any comments on this aspect.	17
Battery storage is unsafe due to the risk of fire.	15
The proposed battery storage element is too large.	15
The Proposed Development is too large.	13

Theme	Frequency
There would be health impacts from the battery storage.	12
The loss of high-grade agricultural land would threaten food security.	10
The battery storage would negatively impact the landscape and wildlife.	10
The battery storage should not be located near to villages or residential properties.	10
The Proposed Development would ruin the character of the countryside.	8
I do not want it.	8

Table 2-9: Most common responses received to Question 1c

Theme	Frequency
The proposed Site is too large.	22
The loss of high-grade agricultural land would threaten food security.	21
There would be a considerable impact on local wildlife and natural environment.	11
Solar should be located on brownfield land or rooftops.	9
I have no comments.	9
Property prices would fall as a result of the Proposed Development.	8
The Proposed Development should be located away from homes.	7
The developers and landowners are out for personal gain.	7

Table 2-10: Most common responses received to Question 2

Theme	Frequency
No enhancements to the environment would make the Proposed Development acceptable.	27
I oppose the Proposed Development.	14

Theme	Frequency
More trees, hedgerows and planting should be introduced in the surrounding area.	14
The Proposed Development should be cancelled.	11
Biodiversity should be enhanced as much as possible.	10
There should be more screening and better-quality footpaths created.	9
Do not fence off the solar panels for the deer.	8
I do not have any comments on this aspect.	7

Table 2-11: Most common responses received to Question 3

Theme	Frequency
No-one would want to use the footpaths because solar panels would ruin the landscape.	27
I do not have any comments on this aspect.	23
All existing footpaths should be retained.	22
I support the new footpath proposals.	20
The Proposed Development should be cancelled.	11
More screening should be introduced to hide solar panels from footpaths.	6
A cycle track would be nice.	6

Table 2-12: Most common responses received to Question 4

Theme	Frequency
The local area has an abundance of wildlife that needs to be protected.	33
The loss of high-grade agricultural land would threaten food security.	13

Theme	Frequency
I don't have any comments on this aspect.	11
The Proposed Development would harm biodiversity.	10
The Proposed Development would industrialise the rural landscape.	6
Concerns that the panels and fencing would restrict deer from accessing fields.	6
Solar panels should be on rooftops.	5
There has been no consideration of alternative sites.	5
Property prices would fall as a result of the Proposed Development.	5

Table 2-13: Most common responses received to Question 5

Theme	Frequency
Do not build it.	23
I do not have any comments on this aspect.	22
Residents should receive discounted electricity.	13
Nothing could compensate for the Proposed Development.	12
The community fund is a bribe.	7
There should be funding for village halls and churches in the area.	7
The most impacted residents should benefit from any funding.	6
Any benefits wouldn't outweigh impacts to the landscape.	5
Property prices would fall as a result of the proposals.	5

Table 2-14: Most common responses received to Question 6

Theme	Frequency
I do not have any comments on this aspect.	69

Theme	Frequency
I object to the Proposed Development.	10
No one would partner with the Applicant.	7
The whole community opposes the Proposed Development.	3
The community fund is a bribe.	3
The Applicant is motivated by profit.	3

Table 2-15: Most common responses received to Question 7

Theme	Frequency
The loss of high-grade agricultural land would threaten food security.	29
I object to the Proposed Development.	22
Solar should be built on an appropriate land designation (i.e. brownfield land).	16
The Applicant is motivated by profit.	13
Concerned that wildlife would be impacted.	13
The Proposed Development is too large.	13
The Proposed Development would industrialise the rural landscape.	11
I support the Proposed Development.	8
I don't have any comments on this aspect.	5

Table 2-16: Key themes raised and the frequency with which they were raised in feedback not following questionnaire format

Theme	Frequency
The loss of high-grade agricultural land would threaten food security.	26
The proposals would reduce the attractiveness of the area.	15

Theme	Frequency
Concerned that wildlife would be impacted.	14
Property values would fall as a result of the Proposed Development.	11
The visual impact of the Proposed Development would negatively impact surrounding villages.	10
The Proposed Development is too large.	7
The only winners are the developers and landowners.	6
There would be chaos on local roads due to construction traffic.	6
Solar should be built on an appropriate land designation (i.e. brownfield land).	5

- 2.8.2. The Applicant has set out how it has responded to key topics raised in feedback to Phase One Consultation in **Appendix A-4: Summary of responses to Phase One Consultation and consideration by topic.**
- 2.8.3. Following Phase One Consultation, the Applicant refined its proposals, informed by the feedback received, alongside outputs of early environmental assessments and technical work.
- 2.8.4. The Applicant also received confirmation from National Grid on 4 October 2023 that it was no longer considering locating the proposed National Grid Navenby Substation at the northern part of Springwell West, as was shown at Phase One Consultation.
- 2.8.5. Key changes made by the Applicant in response to feedback from consultation were:
- Reducing the area proposed for Solar PV development to 816ha (from 1,438ha shown as potentially suitable for solar development) where potential effects were identified, including:
 - Removal of fields located to the west of Spires and Steeples Trial to reduce impacts on the landscape character between Blankney and Scopwick and maintain a sense of rural separation between villages.
 - Removal of fields identified to have high residential amenity impacts, with bespoke offsets applied to each individual property.

- Removal of fields proposed for Solar PV development to the south of Scopwick and north between the village and Trundle Lane.
 - Removal of fields identified as having high archaeological potential and to consider the setting of heritage assets such as Ashby Walled Gardens and Braucewell Medieval Village
 - Removal of fields to provide areas for mitigation and habitat connectivity, including the provision of a green corridor within Springwell West.
 - Offsetting Solar PV development from either side of the B1191 between Ashby de la Launde and Scopwick. This included discounting Solar PV development from all land to the north of the B1191 between RAF Digby and Scopwick.
- Reducing the maximum proposed height of Solar PV modules from 4 metres to 3.5 metres in the majority of areas proposed for Solar PV development, with 4 metre Solar PV modules retained in limited areas of flood risk.
 - Identifying Springwell West as the preferred location for the Springwell Substation and BESS. The potential locations for the battery storage and Springwell Substation were refined from four locations to two.
 - Refining plans for proposed permissive footpaths, introducing a new proposed footpath between New England Lane to Braucewell in response to feedback from Ramblers, a loop connecting to the existing public footpath Rows/5/1 and a link between RAF Digby and Scopwick.
 - Developing initial proposals for mitigation planting, including buffer zones from LWS in consultation with Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust and screening along the A15 and B1191.
- 2.8.6. For more information about the design process and how the design developed following Phase One Consultation, see **Design Approach Document [EN010149/APP/7.3]**.
- 2.8.7. Feedback from Phase One Consultation also helped the Applicant develop its consultation programme for Phase Two Consultation and identify further opportunities for community and stakeholder engagement. For more information, see **Chapters 3 and 4** of this Report.

3. Stakeholder and community engagement

3.1. Introduction

3.1.1. This chapter provides an overview of the Applicant's engagement on the Proposed Development undertaken outside of formal consultation periods – from prior to its launch through to submission of the DCO application.

3.1.2. The Applicant's continuous programme of engagement has run in-parallel with, and complementary to, its formal phases of pre-application consultation. The distinction between consultation and engagement are as follows:

- Engagement relates to the discussions between the Applicant, community and stakeholders outside formal public consultation. Pre-application engagement undertaken by the Applicant is detailed in this Chapter of this Report.
- Consultation relates to the formal stages of consultation, the detail of which is provided in **Chapters 2, 5, 6 and 7** of this Report.

3.1.3. Engagement with key stakeholders, including the host authorities, near neighbours and community organisations has helped to inform the design of the Proposed Development and the Applicant's approach to assessing environmental effects. A summary of engagement by stakeholder type, and how engagement has influenced the Proposed Development is provided in sections 3.2-3.5.

3.1.4. A record of stakeholder meetings undertaken by the Applicant outside of formal stages of pre-application consultation can be found at **Appendices B-1: Summary of community engagement undertaken outside of formal consultation** and **B-2: Summary of stakeholder engagement undertaken outside of formal consultation** covering:

- Pre-Phase One Consultation – December 2022 to January 2023
- Pre-Phase Two Consultation – March 2023 to December 2023
- Post-Phase Two Consultation – February 2024 to October 2024

3.2. Engagement with the community

3.2.1. The Applicant used a range of methods to engage with the local community and promote awareness of the Proposed Development outside of formal phases of pre-application consultation. This included ongoing meetings, updates to the Springwell Solar Farm website and engagement relating to on-site survey works, as well as maintaining its communication

channels (a Freephone, email address and Freepost address) throughout the pre-application consultation period.

Near neighbours

- 3.2.2. The Applicant recognised that levels of potential impact, and interest in the Proposed Development, vary with distance to the proposed Site boundary. The Applicant sought to engage with those closest to the proposed Site boundary from the outset of its pre-application consultation and engagement activity.

Pre-Phase One Consultation (December 2022 to January 2023)

- 3.2.3. Prior to launch of the proposals, the Applicant gave advance notice to properties closest to the proposed Site and tenants of the primary landowner, Blankney Estates Limited (“BEL”) by knocking on the doors of 80 properties on 9 January 2023. The list of properties was compiled using desk-top research, Royal Mail postal data, and advice from BEL.
- 3.2.4. The purpose of the door knocking was to discuss the proposals with residents and signpost how to get in touch with members of the project team. The Applicant spoke to residents of 39 properties in total, leaving a letter with the Applicant’s contact details at the remaining properties.
- 3.2.5. In addition, residents from 37 properties identified as tenants and neighbours of BEL received invitations to a meeting in the evening of 9 January 2023 to discuss the proposals in further detail. This was organised by BEL and attended by the Applicant. Residents from eight properties attended the meeting.
- 3.2.6. The Applicant also held follow-up meetings with near neighbours from three properties prior to Phase One Consultation. A summary of these meetings is included in **Appendix B-1: Summary of community engagement undertaken outside of formal consultation.**

Pre-Phase Two Consultation (March 2023 to December 2023)

- 3.2.7. Following Phase One Consultation, the Applicant conducted a Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (‘RVAA’) at 33 properties in proximity to the proposed Site boundary. Recognising that it was important to provide feedback on the outcome of these assessments and how they would help to inform the design of the Proposed Development, the Applicant invited all those offered an RVVA to attend a design workshop focused on the area of the Proposed Development likely to be of greatest interest to them.

- 3.2.8. The workshops were facilitated by designers and involved residents sitting in small groups to discuss and work on draft plans. The Applicant shared an early iteration of the updated design of the Proposed Development which reflected changes as a result of the Phase One Consultation feedback, as well as early outputs of technical work and environmental assessments. In addition, the Applicant shared a constraints map of the Site and example photography of buffers and offsets from operational solar farms. Attendees discussed the particular area of the Proposed Development relevant to them with members of the project team and provided feedback verbally, using post it notes and drawing directly on the updated plans.
- 3.2.9. The design workshops were held on the 12, 13 and 15 June 2023 and were attended by 47 people from 31 properties.

Table 3-1: Resident design workshops

Design workshop	Attendance
Springwell East	8
Springwell Central	19
Springwell West	20

- 3.2.10. The outputs of the workshops were taken into account to inform the ongoing design of the Proposed Development. The following changes were made as a result of the workshops:
- Removal of a field from potential solar development in Springwell East in consideration of views from a neighbouring property.
 - Removal of half of a field from potential solar development in Springwell Central in consideration of views from neighbouring properties and the amenity of a footpath.
 - Removal of a field from potential solar development in Springwell West in consideration of views from neighbouring properties.
 - Extension of proposed tree belt planting along the northern edge of Heath Road to screen views from neighbouring properties.
- 3.2.11. Following the design workshops, the Applicant wrote to district ward councillors to offer a briefing on the design process, the updated layout of the Proposed Development and the role that the resident workshops had played in it. The Applicant held a meeting with Cllr Amelia Bailey (NKDC) on 27 July 2023.

Wider community engagement

- 3.2.12. The Applicant also sought to engage with elected representatives, community organisations and the wider community outside of formal pre-application consultation.

Pre-Phase One Consultation (December 2022 to January 2023)

- 3.2.13. Prior to launch of Phase One Consultation, the Applicant notified the host authorities about the proposals in December 2022 and offered to brief members of the host authorities' executive committees.
- 3.2.14. One councillor briefing was undertaken on 5 January 2023 with Cllr Tom Dyer (Waddington and Hykeham East, LCC), the Assistant Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, Environment and Planning.
- 3.2.15. Following the public launch of the Proposed Development, the Applicant also met with one of the ward councillors for the area in which the Proposed Development is located, Cllr Amelia Bailey (NKDC) to brief her on the Proposed Development.

Pre-Phase Two Consultation (March 2023 to December 2023)

- 3.2.16. Following the close of Phase One Consultation, the Applicant maintained its communication channels, which included a Freephone, email address and Freepost address, and continued to respond to enquiries that it received.
- 3.2.17. The Applicant met with the following elected representatives, local businesses, community and government organisations between Phase One and Phase Two Consultation:
- RAF Digby
 - Lincolnshire Community Foundation
 - Metheringham Primary School
 - Digby the Tedder Primary School
 - Dr Caroline Johnson MP
 - Cllr Amelia Bailey
- 3.2.18. The dates, organisations represented, and a summary of topics discussed is included in **Appendix B-1: Summary of community engagement undertaken outside of formal consultation.**

3.2.19. In addition, the Applicant published an 'On-site surveys' page (<https://www.springwellsolarfarm.co.uk/category/surveys/>) on the Springwell Solar Farm website on 15 March 2023 that was regularly updated to keep the community informed about survey work taking place on and near to the Site, through the following posts:

- Topographical surveys (15 March 2023)
- Breeding bird surveys (15 March 2023)
- Ground investigation works (12 April 2023)
- Baseline noise monitoring (1 June 2023)
- Traffic surveys (13 June 2023)
- Land referencing (7 August 2023)
- Wintering bird surveys (20 November 2023)
- Trial trenching (15 January 2024)
- Trial trenching (23 May 2024)
- Summer ecological surveys (3 June 2024).

3.2.20. Where survey work was expected to potentially be disruptive, the Applicant also wrote to nearby residents to give advance notice of works. This involved writing to 456 addresses on 12 April 2023 to give advance notice of ground investigation works. The Applicant also notified residents closest to trial trenching sites by phone and email on 19 January 2024, 1 March 2024, and 23 May 2024.

Post-Phase Two Consultation (February 2024 to October 2024)

3.2.21. Following Phase Two Consultation, the Applicant has continued to meet with elected representatives, community organisations and the wider community on request. This includes regular meetings with one of the ward councillors for the area in which the Proposed Development is located, Cllr Amelia Bailey, as well as engagement with technical stakeholders on the contents of their consultation responses.

3.2.22. The dates, organisations represented, and a summary of topics discussed is included in **Appendix B-1: Summary of community engagement undertaken outside of formal consultation**.

3.2.23. The Applicant also maintained its communication channels, which included a Freephone, email address and Freepost address, and continued to respond to enquiries that it received. The Applicant also kept

the 'On-site surveys' page updated with any survey work taking place following Phase Two Consultation.

3.3. Stakeholder engagement

- 3.3.1. The Applicant has engaged with a range of prescribed and non-prescribed consultees throughout the pre-application stage of the Proposed Development. This included ongoing meetings with a number of stakeholders including the host authorities, statutory undertakers, Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust, Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue, and the Environment Agency.
- 3.3.2. A summary of the Applicant's approach to engagement with stakeholders (host authorities, other statutory consultees and the Planning Inspectorate) is provided below. A summary of meetings is provided in **Appendix B-2: Summary of stakeholder engagement undertaken outside of formal consultation**. Where engagement is relevant to EIA, further detail is provided in the appropriate chapter of the **Environmental Statement Volume 1, Chapters 5-17 [EN010149/APP/6.1]**.

Engagement with host authorities

- 3.3.3. The Applicant built long-term working relationships with officers of the host authorities. This included holding regular meetings focused on planning and communications, scheduled fortnightly, from the close of Phase One Consultation on 7 March 2023 to the submission of the Application.
- 3.3.4. The primary purpose of the Planning and Communications meetings were to provide regular updates on the progress of the Proposed Development (including consultation and engagement activities), collect feedback on the evolving plans and highlight any concerns to ensure these could be addressed proactively through the design and assessment process.
- 3.3.5. In parallel, the Applicant entered a planning performance agreement with the host authorities through the pre-application period. This was to ensure engagement with specialist technical and planning officers was available during the pre-application stage of the Proposed Development. The Applicant expects to enter into further planning performance agreements at subsequent stages of the DCO process.
- 3.3.6. Engagement with the host authorities has also helped to develop the EIA for the Proposed Development. Where meetings discussed EIA development, these are referenced within **Appendix B-2: Summary of stakeholder engagement undertaken outside of formal consultation** and covered in more detail within the relevant topic chapters of the

Environmental Statement Volume 1, Chapters 5-17 [EN010149/APP/6.1].

Engagement with statutory consultees

- 3.3.7. In identifying the relevant environmental bodies and organisations to engage with, the Applicant considered what environmental impacts may arise, statutory functions that may be impacted by the provisions within the **Draft DCO [EN010149/APP/3.1]**, future consents or licences that may be required, as well as guidance set out within the Planning Inspectorate's Advice Note Eleven: Working with public bodies in the infrastructure planning process, which sets out expectations for working with such organisations.
- 3.3.8. The Applicant took a proactive approach to engagement with key technical stakeholders to help refine its proposals. This included ongoing meetings with a number of stakeholders outside of formal consultation periods, including the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust, National Grid, Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue, Natural England and the Environment Agency.
- 3.3.9. The Applicant also entered into a cost recovery agreement with Natural England to facilitate engagement with specialist and technical officers during the pre-application stage of the Proposed Development.
- 3.3.10. A summary of meetings held outside of formal consultation is provided in **Appendix B-2: Summary of stakeholder engagement undertaken outside of formal consultation**. Where engagement is relevant to EIA, more detail is provided within the relevant topic chapters of the **Environmental Statement Volume 1, Chapters 5-17 [EN010149/APP/6.1]**.

Engagement with the Planning Inspectorate

- 3.3.11. The Applicant has held regular meetings with the Planning Inspectorate throughout the pre-application stage since its Inception Meeting on 24 January 2023. The purpose of these meetings has been to provide updates on the Proposed Development and seek advice on aspects of the Application (detailed in **Appendix B-2: Summary of stakeholder engagement undertaken outside of formal consultation**).
- 3.3.12. A summary of the advice given by the Planning Inspectorate during the pre-application stage ("s51 advice") and how the Applicant has had regard to it in preparing the Application is detailed in **Table 3-2** below.

Table 3-2: Summary of s51 advice given and regard had by the Applicant

Date	Advice	Regard had
23 May 2023	<p>The Inspectorate advised that if the Preliminary Environmental Information Report ('PEIR') is lighter on detail, the Applicant should allow sufficient time in their programme after receiving feedback on the PEIR to discuss issues in greater detail with stakeholders ahead of submission.</p>	<p>The Applicant continued to engage with stakeholders on the PEIR and feedback received following Phase Two Consultation. A summary of engagement undertaken outside of formal consultation periods in support of developing the EIA is provided within the relevant topic chapters of the Environmental Statement Volume 1, Chapters 6-17 [EN010149/APP/6.1] and summarised in Appendix B-2: Summary of stakeholder engagement undertaken outside of formal consultation.</p> <p>Prior to submission, the Applicant has engaged with the following organisations to develop Draft Statements of Common Ground [EN010149/APP/7.21-7.25] that have been submitted as part of the Application:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anglian Water Services Ltd • Cadent Gas Ltd • National Grid Electricity Transmission • Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue Service • Exolum Pipeline System Ltd <p>The Applicant also intends to engage with the following organisations over the course of the examination to develop SoCGs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LCC • NKDC

- Environment Agency
- Historic England
- Natural England
- Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust

23 May
2023

The Inspectorate advised the Applicant to clearly establish across their suite of application documents what the design parameters are and how these have been secured.

The assessment parameters are detailed in the **Environmental Statement Volume 3, Appendix 3.1: Project Parameters [EN010149/APP/6.3]**, the Works Plans **[EN010149/APP/2.3]** and supported by the **Environmental Statement Volume 2, Figures 3.1-3.4 [EN010149/APP/6.2]**.

The **Design Commitments [EN010149/APP/7.4]** additionally sets out Design Commitments for the detailed design of the Proposed Development, which is secured by a Requirement in the **Draft DCO [EN010149/APP/3.1]**.

10 August
2023

The Inspectorate advised the Applicant to consider the implications for its statutory consultation of the outcomes of the National Grid substation site selection process.

The Applicant provided details on how it proposed to connect to the National Grid through the proposed National Grid Navenby Substation as part of its Phase Two Consultation, noting that this is being developed separately by National Grid, and does not form part of the Proposed Development.

The Applicant explained the relationship between the Proposed Development and the proposed National Grid Navenby Substation in its Phase Two Consultation materials – including the exhibition boards, updated layout, consultation booklet and PEIR (see **Appendix G-2: Phase Two Consultation materials and**

advertising and Appendix L-1: Preliminary Environmental Information Report of the Consultation Report). At public events, contact information for National Grid was available for anyone who wished to find out more about the proposed National Grid Navenby Substation.

National Grid published information about the proposed National Grid Navenby Substation in September 2024.

7
November
2023

The Inspectorate advised to clearly detail the project's evolution within the application, explaining any changes to the project description since the Scoping Report was drafted, and whether the scope of the Environmental Statement (ES) had changed to account for these. This can be included in the ES or annexed but the Applicant must ensure it is signposted and clear in the DCO submission.

The Applicant has provided an overview of how the design of the Proposed Development has evolved in the **Design Approach Document [EN010149/APP/7.3]** submitted as part of the Application. Information about how the Applicant has approached EIA is provided in **Environmental Statement Volume 1, Chapter 5: Approach to the EIA [EN010149/APP/6.1]**.

Further information about the scope of assessment and how this has changed from that presented in the EIA Scoping Report is further provided in the relevant topic chapters of the **Environmental Statement Volume 1, Chapters 6-17 [EN010149/APP/6.1]** and **ES, Volume 3, Appendix 5.3: Scoping Opinion Response Matrix [EN010149/APP/6.3]**.

7
November
2023

The Inspectorate recommended looking at the Examining Authority's questions from other

The Applicant has continued to review the status of relevant DCO applications, including issues raised in questions on other solar

	solar farm DCO applications in Examination.	farm DCO applications in examination.
7 November 2023	The Inspectorate advised the Applicant to be mindful of the summer holiday period when submitting its DCO application, to allow local planning authorities sufficient time to reply with their Adequacy of Consultation Response.	The Applicant's intention is to submit its application in Q4 2024, ensuring that the acceptance stage does not fall over the Christmas holiday period. In addition, the Applicant has engaged with the host authorities on some aspects of Adequacy of Consultation ahead of submitting its Application. More information is provided in paragraphs 3.3.13-3.3.15 and Appendix B-3: Early engagement with Adequacy of Consultation.
13 March 2024	'The Applicant is aware of potential plans for convening a forum for regional approaches to biodiversity for solar projects for which it is anticipated that Solar Energy UK may take a leading role and is participating in the process...' '...The Inspectorate noted the potential challenges for the Applicant in attempting to incorporate any regional/strategic approaches so late in their project programme and highlighted the associated risks at examination stage. The Inspectorate encouraged ongoing engagement with the forum as it develops.'	The Applicant has continued to engage with a number of stakeholders. This includes ongoing discussions with Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust and other solar developers on the potential to develop a regional approach to biodiversity. The outcomes of these discussions do not form part of the Applicant's approach to biodiversity as set out in the Environmental Statement Volume 1, Chapter 7: Biodiversity [EN010149/APP/6.1] .

3.4. Adequacy of Consultation

3.4.1. The Applicant reviewed updated guidance on the pre-application process published by the Planning Inspectorate in April 2024, following completion of Phase One and Phase Two Consultations. The updated guidance

included the requirement for an early adequacy of consultation milestone (“AoCM”).

- 3.4.2. While it is understood that the AoCM is expected to apply to projects that have not yet commenced formal consultation, the Applicant acknowledged the value in engagement with host authorities on some elements of the AoCM prior to submitting the Application.
- 3.4.3. Pre-submission engagement for the AoCM focused on confirming a record of engagement undertaken with host authorities up to August 2024 and confirming that the Applicant had complied with its commitments set out in the SoCC - including how feedback from host authorities helped to shape the SoCC.
- 3.4.4. The Applicant wrote to the host authorities on 10 September 2024 setting out the Applicant’s proposed approach to engagement on the AoCM, ahead of a meeting on 12 September 2024. Following the meeting, the Applicant shared a draft of **Appendix D-4: Compliance with the SoCC** with the host authorities on 13 September 2024.
- 3.4.5. The Applicant received letters from the host authorities on 26 and 27 September 2024 confirming that, based on the draft documents provided and engagement undertaken to date, consultation undertaken on the Proposed Development was adequate and met the commitments set out in the SoCC.
- 3.4.6. The letter to the host authorities, and copies of the letters received from the host authorities is included at **Appendix B-3: Early engagement on Adequacy of Consultation**.

3.5. Future engagement

- 3.5.1. Prior to submission, the Applicant has engaged with the following organisations to develop **Draft Statements of Common Ground [EN010149/APP/7.21-7.25]** that have been submitted as part of the Application:
 - Anglian Water Services Ltd
 - Cadent Gas Ltd
 - National Grid Electricity Transmission
 - Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue Service
 - Exolum Pipeline System Ltd

- 3.5.2. The Applicant agreed with NKDC and LCC on 17 October 2024 that SoCGs would be prepared and agreed during examination to allow host authorities to review the contents of the Application.
- 3.5.3. The Applicant also intends to engage with the Environment Agency, Historic England, Natural England and Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust over the course of the examination to develop SoCGs.
- 3.5.4. The **Statement of Commonality [EN010149/APP/7.26]** provides the Examining Authority (ExA) with the position on Statements of Common Ground (SoCG) between the Applicant and relevant statutory consultees and Interested Parties in relation to the proposed Springwell Solar Farm. It will be updated throughout the course of the Examination.

4. Approach to statutory consultation and development of the SoCC

4.1. Purpose of statutory consultation

- 4.1.1. Following Phase One Consultation, and in parallel with its programme of ongoing stakeholder engagement, the Applicant continued to develop its proposals for the Proposed Development.
- 4.1.2. The Applicant undertook statutory consultation ('Phase Two Consultation') on its updated proposals between 11 January 2024 – 22 February 2024 in accordance with sections 42, 47 and 48 of the PA 2008 (see **Chapters 5 and 6**). A targeted consultation on minor additions to the Order Limits to facilitate improvements to the local road and footpath network was also undertaken between 17 July 2024 – 16 August 2024 (see **Chapter 7**).

4.2. Objectives for statutory consultation

- 4.2.1. The Applicant's approach to pre-application consultation was designed to ensure that consultees had the opportunity to understand and share feedback on the proposals and feel satisfied that they had been able to engage with the process. The key objectives for achieving this through pre-application consultation were:
- Ensuring thorough, open and transparent engagement and consultation on our proposals.
 - Ensuring proposals are clearly presented, and easily understood.
 - Providing sufficient opportunities for interested parties to understand and influence our plans.
 - Gathering high quality responses to, and feedback on, our plans to help inform proposals.
 - Delivering consultation that meets the legal requirements and best practice for a DCO application.

4.3. Legal requirements for statutory consultation

- 4.3.1. The statutory pre-application consultation for the Proposed Development was designed to comply with statutory requirements in:
- PA 2008
 - AFPP Regulations
 - EIA Regulations

- 4.3.2. The Applicant has ensured that its pre-application consultation accords with the applicable legal framework and provides a high-quality, meaningful process of consultation with the local community, land interests, elected representatives and statutory consultees.
- 4.3.3. A table setting out the statutory requirements with an explanation of how the Applicant has complied with each requirement and identifying where further information can be found is included in **Appendices M-1: Compliance with PA 2008: Guidance on the pre-application stage for NSIPs, April 2024** and **M-2: Compliance with the Planning Inspectorate’s Advice Note Fourteen: Compiling the Consultation Report, August 2024**. More details about how the Applicant has carried out its Phase Two Consultation is presented in **Chapter 5** of this Report.

4.4. EIA Scoping

- 4.4.1. On 22 March 2023, the Applicant submitted an EIA Scoping Report and a request for a Scoping Opinion to the Planning Inspectorate (on behalf of the Secretary of State) under the provisions of the EIA Regulations. This described the scope and methodology for the technical studies proposed to provide an assessment of the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development and, where necessary, described suitable mitigation measures. It also described topics and sub-topics proposed to be scoped out of the EIA process, and the justification for doing so.
- 4.4.2. The EIA Scoping Report was developed following consultation with a number of statutory consultees. Meetings that took place as part of this process are set out in more detail in the relevant topic chapters of the **Environmental Statement, Volume 1, Chapters 5-17 [EN010149/APP/6.1]**.
- 4.4.3. Following consultation with statutory bodies, the Planning Inspectorate (on behalf of the Secretary of State) adopted a Scoping Opinion (see **Environmental Statement, Volume 3, Appendix 5.2: Scoping Opinion [EN010149/APP/6.3]**) on 2 May 2023. The Environmental Statement is based on the Scoping Opinion.
- 4.4.4. Key issues raised in the Scoping Opinion and the Applicant’s response are set out in the **Environmental Statement, Volume 3, Appendix 5.3: Scoping Opinion Response Matrix [EN010149/APP/6.3]**. All issues have been considered during the EIA process.
- 4.4.5. Following the adoption of the Scoping Opinion, consultation was undertaken with relevant statutory consultees in the preparation of the PEIR (see **Appendix L-1: Preliminary Environmental Information Report**) and has also been considered in the preparation of the

Environmental Statement (including where required by the Scoping Opinion).

- 4.4.6. The Applicant additionally reviewed the list of consultees contacted by the Planning Inspectorate as part of its consultation on its Scoping Opinion to ensure that all organisations contacted by the Planning Inspectorate were included in subsequent consultation activity. All consultees included in Appendix 1 and 2 of the Scoping Opinion were consulted as part of Phase Two Consultation.
- 4.4.7. The Applicant was not notified of any additional consultation bodies under Regulation 11(1)(c) of the EIA Regulations.
- 4.4.8. A copy of the Scoping Report is available in the **Environmental Statement, Volume 3, Appendix 5.1: Scoping Report [EN010149/APP/6.3]**.

4.5. Statement of Community Consultation (“SoCC”)

- 4.5.1. As prescribed by section 47(1) of the PA 2008, the Applicant prepared a SoCC setting out how it proposed to consult people living in the vicinity of the proposed Site boundary. In accordance with section 47(2) of the PA 2008, the Applicant consulted each local authority within section 43(1) of the PA 2008 (i.e. the host authorities) on the contents of the SoCC.

4.6. Development of the SoCC

- 4.6.1. In preparing the draft SoCC, the Applicant considered best practice, guidance from the Planning Inspectorate, engagement with the host authorities and feedback from Phase One Consultation (see **Chapter 2** of this Report).
- 4.6.2. Feedback from the host authorities helped to inform the development of the SoCC. The Applicant held informal discussions with the host authorities on 27 April 2023 to agree its approach to consultation on the draft SoCC. At this meeting, it was agreed that a draft SoCC would be provided for informal feedback prior to formal consultation.
- 4.6.3. In August 2023, the Applicant shared a draft SoCC (see **Appendix C-1: Informal consultation on the draft SoCC**) with the host authorities for informal comment. The host authorities provided written feedback on the draft SoCC on 15 August 2023, ahead of a meeting on 16 August 2023 to discuss the contents of the draft SoCC and informal feedback received. Topics discussed included: boundary of the inner zone, locations of deposit points, public events, seldom heard groups and the date of formal SoCC consultation.

4.7. Formal consultation on the draft SoCC

- 4.7.1. The Applicant formally consulted the host authorities on the draft SoCC from Friday 15 September 2023 to 11:59pm on Friday 13 October 2023, in accordance with section 47(3) of the PA 2008.
- 4.7.2. The Applicant's covering letter is included at **Appendix C-3.1: Letters inviting host authority feedback on draft SoCC** and a copy of the draft SoCC issued to the host authorities is included at **Appendix C-3.2: Draft SoCC for formal consultation**. The Applicant received responses to the draft SoCC from both host authorities on 12 October 2023.
- 4.7.3. The Applicant had regard to the responses from the host authorities as required by section 47(5) of PA 2008, and then finalised the SoCC for publication.
- 4.7.4. Tables listing feedback received to both informal and formal consultation and how the Applicant had regard to that feedback in preparing the final version of the SoCC are provided in **Appendix C-2: Regard had to host authority informal feedback on draft SoCC** and **C-4: Regard had to host authority formal feedback on draft SoCC**.
- 4.7.5. Key changes made in response to feedback from the host authorities included:
- Revising the boundary of the inner zone to follow a 2km buffer around the proposed Site boundary, extending in some areas to consider the wider effects of the Proposed Development.
 - Changing the location of a deposit point from Waddington Bar Library to The Venue, Navenby.
 - Adding an additional public event at The Venue, Navenby.
 - Moving four public events forward to week two of the consultation.
- 4.7.6. Following formal consultation on the SoCC, the Applicant was unable to confirm that Metheringham Library could accommodate the consultation materials. Therefore, the Applicant removed Metheringham Library as a deposit point in the final SoCC.

4.8. Publication of the SoCC

- 4.8.1. The SoCC was published on 11 December 2023 (see **Appendix D-1: Final SoCC**) and made available for inspection by the public free of charge in accordance with section 47(6) of the PA 2008 on the Springwell Solar Farm website (**Appendix D-3: Screenshot of Springwell Solar**

Farm website with availability of the SoCC) and by depositing a printed copy at each location listed in **Table 4-1**. Hard copies of the SoCC were available to inspect at these locations between 11 December 2023 and 22 February 2024.

- 4.8.2. Hard copies of the SoCC were available on request free of charge from 11 December 2023 and could be requested using the Applicant’s communication channels. No requests for hard copies of the SoCC were received.

Table 4-1: Locations where the SoCC was made available for public inspection

Deposit location	Opening hours
<p>Sleaford Library, 13 - 16 Market Place, Sleaford NG34 7SR</p>	<p>Monday: 9 am–5 pm Tuesday: 9 am–5 pm Wednesday: 9 am–5 pm Thursday: 9 am–6 pm Friday: 9 am–5 pm Saturday: 9 am–1 pm Sunday: Closed</p>
<p>The Venue, Grantham Road, Navenby LN5 0JJ</p>	<p>Opening times may vary, please contact venue to arrange access. Monday - Thursday: 9am – 6pm Friday: opening times may vary. Saturday: opening times may vary. Sunday: opening times may vary.</p>

- 4.8.3. The Applicant also publicised the SoCC’s availability in a newspaper circulated in the vicinity of the land, as prescribed by section 47(6) of PA 2008.
- 4.8.4. The Applicant published a section 47 notice in the Lincolnshire Echo on Thursday 14 December 2023. The Lincolnshire Echo was chosen as it has the highest average circulation figure (3,903) of local newspapers with a distribution area covering both zones of consultation (defined in section 5.5). A copy of this notice as published, which confirms the name of the publication and the date it was published, is provided in **Appendix D-2: Section 47 notice**.

- 4.8.5. The publication of the SoCC ran in parallel with the launch of the Applicant's Phase Two Consultation (which commenced 31 days later on 11 January 2024). This involved:
- Sending a letter to all addresses within the inner zone of consultation (5,772 addresses) on Monday 11 December 2023 to publicise the availability of the SoCC and the upcoming consultation. It also included the times, dates and locations of the public events. A copy of this letter is included in **Appendix G-2.1: Phase Two Consultation launch letter**.
 - Issuing a press release (**Appendix G-2.7: Phase Two Consultation advertising**) to approximately 50 journalists and media outlets on 11 December 2023 to publicise the availability of the SoCC and start of Phase Two Consultation. The press release listed the times, dates and locations of the public events. Coverage included Lincolnshire Live, Lincolnshire World, Solar Power Portal, ReNews and Energy Magz.
 - Placement of adverts in physical editions of Lincolnshire Echo and Louth Leader (which the Sleaford Times became an edition of in October 2023) on Thursday 4 January 2024 (**Appendix G-2.7: Phase Two Consultation advertising**).
 - Sharing a post on the launch of the consultation period on the EDF Renewables UK LinkedIn account (c. 87,000 followers), which received 4,574 impressions (**Appendix G-2.7: Phase Two Consultation advertising**).
- 4.8.6. The Applicant subsequently carried out local community consultation in accordance with the SoCC. The Applicant has listed the requirements of the SoCC, and how it has carried out the consultation in accordance with each requirement in **Appendix D-4: Compliance with the SoCC**. Details of activity carried out as part of the consultation can be found in **Chapter 5** of this Report.

5. Phase Two Consultation 2024

5.1. Overview

- 5.1.1. The Applicant conducted statutory consultation (Phase Two Consultation: updated plans and proposals) on the Proposed Development in accordance with the PA 2008, APFP Regulations and EIA Regulations between 11 January 2024 and 22 February 2024.
- 5.1.2. To ensure that anyone with an interest in the Proposed Development could find out more and share their views, the Applicant designed a consultation strategy comprising a mix of techniques, including:
- Issuing 11,835 letters to local homes and businesses.
 - Holding six events in locations around the proposed Site boundary, (five public events alongside an additional event at RAF Digby), supported by a virtual exhibition available through the Springwell Solar Farm website.
 - Placing copies of the consultation materials – including the PEIR – in locations in the vicinity of the proposed Site boundary for people to inspect. Copies of the consultation booklet, consultation questionnaire and USBs containing the consultation materials were also available to take away from these locations.
 - Writing to a number of stakeholders and community organisations to raise awareness of the consultation.
 - Providing a range of communication channels to enable anyone to find out more about the Proposed Development and share their feedback.
 - Conducting statutory and non-statutory advertising campaigns, including print, digital and social media advertising.
- 5.1.3. The purpose of the consultation was to seek feedback on the updated plans and proposals for Springwell Solar Farm, including the PEIR.
- 5.1.4. During Phase Two Consultation, 452 people attended events about the Proposed Development, with 2,773 visitors to the Springwell Solar Farm project website. The Applicant received 248 responses to the consultation.
- 5.1.5. A detailed description of the activity carried out in support of the consultation is provided below, along with a summary of the feedback received. Key themes from consultation, along with how the Applicant has had regard and responded to the feedback received are provided at **Appendices J-1: Summary of s42(1)(a), (b) and (d) responses to Phase Two Consultation and consideration by topic** and **J-2:**

Summary of s47 responses to Phase Two Consultation and consideration by topic.

5.2. Scope of Phase Two Consultation

5.2.1. Consultation was carried out for six weeks (42 days) between Thursday 11 January 2024 and Thursday 22 February 2024, above the statutory 28-day minimum prescribed in section 45(2) of the PA 2008 and Regulation 4(3)(i) of the AFPP Regulations. Feedback was sought on the key elements of the Proposed Development, including:

- The design of the Proposed Development, including the preferred location of each of its elements and proposed environmental enhancements and mitigation.
- The PEIR, which presented an initial account of the likely significant environmental effects of the Proposed Development during construction, operation and decommissioning, as well as preliminary details on mitigation measures that could be introduced to avoid, prevent, reduce or, if possible, offset any potentially significant adverse effects.
- How the Proposed Development could contribute to the local community, including the development of a community benefit package.

5.2.2. Information on the Proposed Development and preliminary environmental assessment was published for consultation in a range of different materials and formats: These are listed below and provided in **Appendices G-2: Phase Two Consultation materials and advertising, G-3: Screenshots of Phase Two Consultation website and virtual exhibition** and **L-1: Preliminary Environmental Information Report**:

- Phase Two Consultation booklet (**Appendix G-2.3**): an accessible, 36-page non-technical overview of the Proposed Development. It also included information on the planning process, the consultation process (including how to find out more and respond to Phase Two Consultation) and the Applicant's approach to community benefit.
- Phase Two Consultation maps (**Appendix G-2.4**): the updated operational layout for Springwell Solar Farm, with separate maps showing each part of the Proposed Development (known as Springwell East, Springwell Central and Springwell West) to provide alternative formats for people to understand the proposals, as well as a map showing the proposed construction routes, access points and construction compounds.
- Phase Two Consultation questionnaire (**Appendix G-2.5**): the main mechanism for collecting feedback.

- Phase Two Consultation exhibition banners (**Appendix G-2.6**): an accessible summary of the Proposed Development, EIA process, the consultation and planning process, approach to community benefit and next steps.
- Virtual exhibition (**Appendix G-3**): a virtual exhibition hall which contained the exhibition banners, consultation questionnaire, and a digital interactive portal to enable users to view 3D visualisations of the Proposed Development from key views around the proposed Site boundary.
- The PEIR (**Appendix L-1**): the initial results of environmental assessments carried out in support of the Proposed Development, as well as preliminary information on measures to avoid, prevent, reduce or if possible, offset any likely significant adverse effects. The PEIR included a non-technical summary of the preliminary assessment of effects.

5.3. Responding to Phase Two Consultation

5.3.1. All consultees were able to respond to the consultation by:

- Completing an online questionnaire on the Springwell Solar Farm website: www.springwellsolarfarm.co.uk
- Submitting feedback or completed questionnaire by email to info@springwellsolarfarm.co.uk
- Posting a completed questionnaire or submitting comments to the Freepost address: Springwell Solar Farm, FREEPOST SEC Newgate UK LOCAL
- Returning a completed questionnaire at the public events (detail provided in paragraphs 5.6.10 – 5.6.15).

5.4. Consultation with statutory consultees and notification to the Secretary of State (section 42 and section 46)

Section 42

5.4.1. Consultation letters were delivered to statutory consultees on 11 January 2024 to statutory consultees (see **Appendix F-1: Sample letters sent to consultees under s42(1)(a), (b) and (d) and non-prescribed consultees**). The letters notified consultees about Phase Two Consultation and set out where to find out more information about the Proposed Development, including the times and dates of the public events and how to access the consultation materials. It also identified them as a statutory consultee under s42 of the PA 2008, set out the ways in which

respondents could share their feedback and get in contact with the project, and confirmed the deadline for receipt of feedback, 11:59pm on 22 February 2024 (in accordance with s45 of the PA 2008).

- 5.4.2. There are different categories of consultee under s42 of the PA 2008. The sections below set out how the Applicant identified the consultees in each category. A full list of the section 42(a) and (b) consultees is provided at **Appendix E-1: List of prescribed consultees consulted under section 42(1)(a) and (b) during Phase Two Consultation**. A full list of persons falling within section 44 of the PA 2008 is included in **the Book of Reference [EN010149/APP/4.3]** submitted with the Application

Section 42(1)(a): such persons as may be prescribed

- 5.4.3. The Applicant identified prescribed consultees with reference to Schedule 1 of the APFP Regulations 2009 (noting that Phase Two Consultation preceded introduction to updated regulations which came into force on 30 April 2024), Advice Note Three: EIA Notification and Consultation and the list of consultation bodies in Appendix 1 of the EIA Scoping Opinion (see **Environmental Statement Volume 3, Appendix 5.2: Scoping Opinion [EN010149/APP/6.3]**) dated 2 May 2023.
- 5.4.4. The Applicant did not consult the Marine Management Organisation as the Proposed Development is not considered likely to affect any of the areas specified in subsection 2 of s42 of the PA 2008 (e.g. tidal or offshore areas) or Schedule 1 of the APFP Regulations.

Section 42(1)(b): each local authority that is with in section 43

- 5.4.5. The Applicant consulted with local authorities identified in s43 of the PA 2008 as prescribed by s42(1)(b) of the PA 2008. The local authorities consulted for the purposes of the Proposed Development are identified in **Table 5-1**. The administrative boundaries of the local authorities are shown in **Figure 5-1** and **Figure 5-2**. The four categories of local authority are set out below:
- 'A' is a neighbouring local authority (s43(2)) that shares a boundary with a unitary council or lower-tier district 'B' council within whose area development is situated
 - 'B' is either a unitary council or a lower-tier district council in which the development is situated – a host authority
 - 'C' is an upper-tier county council in which the development is situated – a host authority

- 'D' is either a unitary council or an upper tier county council which shares a boundary with a host 'C' authority – a neighbouring local authority (s43(2A))

Table 5-1: Section 42 (1)(b) local authorities

Local authority	Category within Section 43 of PA 2008
North Kesteven District Council	B
Lincolnshire County Council	C
Boston Borough Council	A
City of Lincoln Council	A
East Lindsey District Council	A
Newark and Sherwood District Council	A
South Holland District Council	A
South Kesteven District Council	A
West Lindsey District Council	A
Peterborough City Council	D
Cambridgeshire County Council	D
Leicestershire County Council	D
Norfolk County Council	D
North East Lincolnshire Council	D
North Lincolnshire Council	D
North Northamptonshire Council	D
Nottinghamshire County Council	D
Rutland County Council	D

Figure 5-1: Administrative boundaries of A and B category local authorities with an indicative location of the Proposed Development shown in red

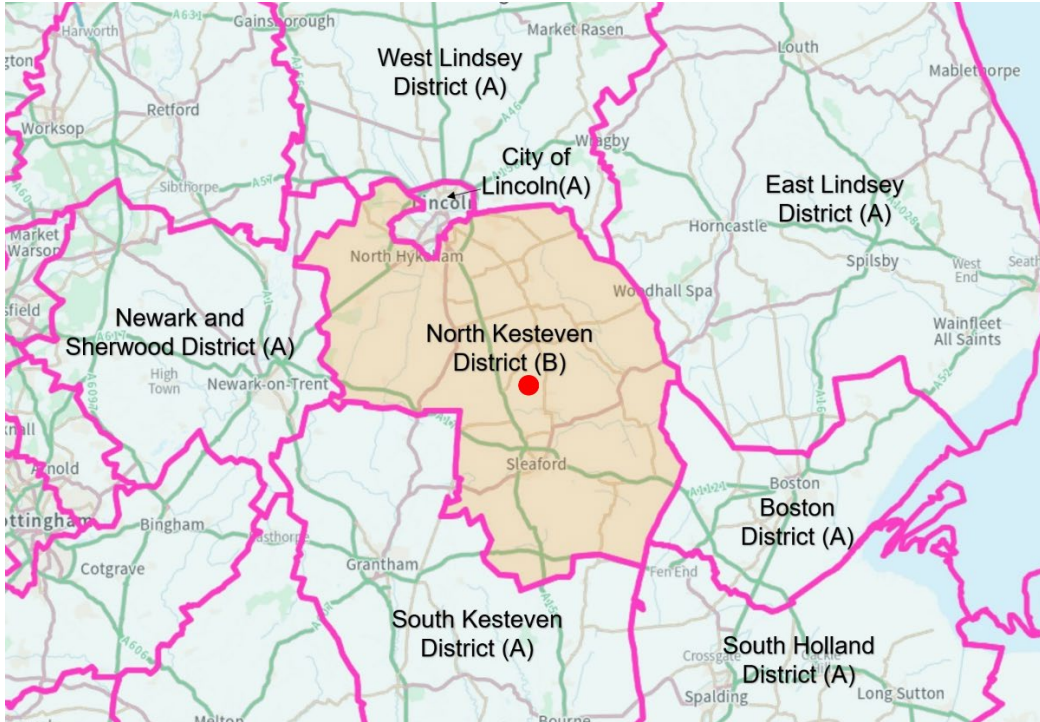
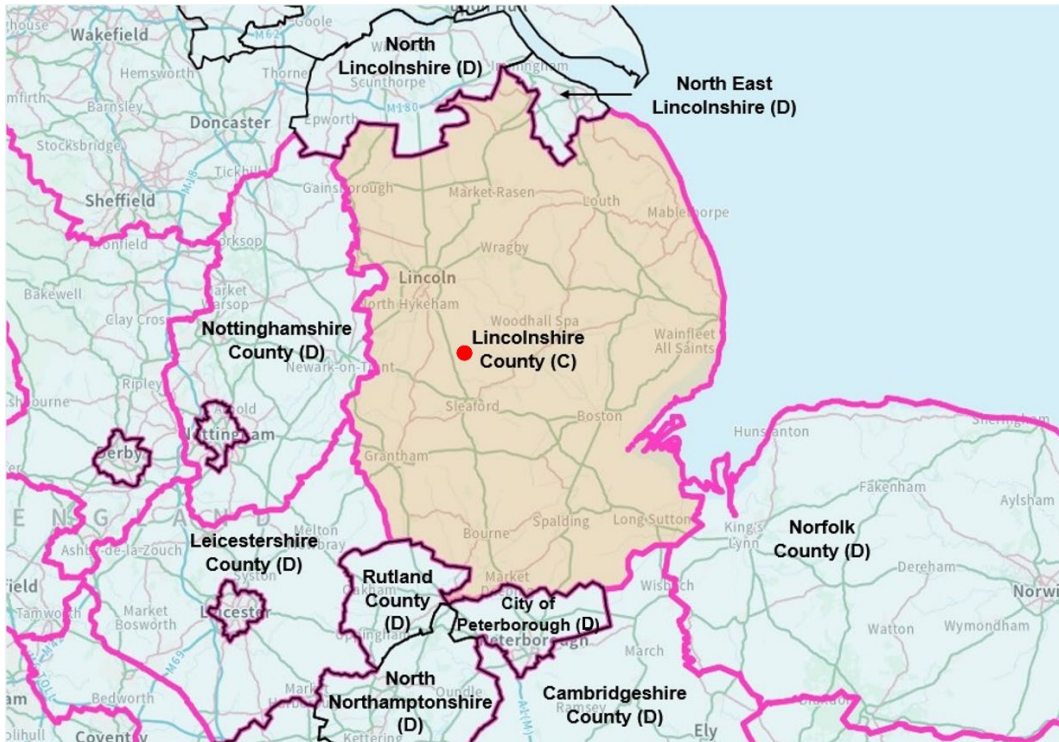


Figure 5-2: Administrative boundaries of C and D category local authorities with an indicative location of the Proposed Development shown in red



Section 42(1)(c): Greater London Authority

- 5.4.6. The Proposed Development is not located within or in an adjacent authority to the Greater London Authority and therefore the Applicant did not consult the Greater London Authority as part of its s42 consultation.

Section 42(1)(d): each person who is within one or more of the categories set out in section 44

- 5.4.7. S42(1)(d) of the PA 2008 requires the Applicant to consult each person who is within one or more categories set out in s44 of the PA 2008. The categories are:

- Category 1: A person is within Category 1 if the Applicant, after making diligent inquiry, knows that the person is an owner, lessee, tenant or occupier of the land.
- Category 2: A person is within the Category 2 if the Applicant, after making diligent inquiry, knows that the person is interested in the land, or has the power to sell and convey the land or to release the land.
- Category 3: A person is within the Category 3, if the Applicant, after making diligent inquiry, considers they would or might be entitled to make a 'relevant claim' as a result of (a) the implementing of the DCO, (b) the DCO having been implemented or (c) use of the land once the DCO has been implemented. There are three types of relevant claim: a claim under section 10 of the Compulsory Purchase Act 1965; a claim under Part 1 of the Land Compensation Act 1973; and a claim under section 152(3) of the PA 2008.

- 5.4.8. Land Referencers were appointed by the Applicant to complete the process of diligent inquiry prior to, throughout, and following Phase Two Consultation to identify relevant persons with an interest in land. The diligent inquiry process included the following methods described below and is set out in more detail in the **Statement of Reasons [EN010149/APP/4.1]**:

- Title information: His Majesty's Land Registry ('HMLR') registers and title plans were used to identify all parties that fall into one or more of the categories set out in paragraph 5.4.7. Additional desk top activities were undertaken to validate the information, including using Royal Mail address finder, TraceSmart and Companies House. HMLR spatial polygons and title plans were used to create geo-referenced landownership parcels which were given a unique reference number. Information extracted from Registers was recorded against the relevant landownership parcel on the secure Land Referencing database Metis. To ensure any new interests were identified, refreshes of HMLR

Registers were conducted every six months, or at a significant milestone in the pre-application stage (e.g., Phase Two Consultation), whichever came first.

- **Environmental Impact Assessment:** As part of the preparation of the PEIR, the Applicant's environmental specialists and Land Referencing teams collaborated in identifying receptors potentially impacted by the Proposed Development with a view to understand whether there were any 'Category 3' persons who might have a 'relevant claim' as defined by section 44(6) of the PA 2008.
- **Land Interest Questionnaires ("LIQs"):** HMLR Register information was further verified using LIQs. These were issued to all identified land interests, both within the Order Limits and those identified outside the Order Limits as potential Category 3 interests. The LIQs asked respondents to confirm that the information extracted from the HMLR Register was correct and provide additional information not publicly available e.g., tenancy agreements and informal rights of access. Where new interests were found, LIQs were issued and the process outlined above was followed to verify their details, supplemented by desktop referencing and the use of publicly available information.

Where LIQs were not returned, contact was sought with interested parties through a variety of methods to confirm their land interest. This included LIQ reminder letters, phone calls and emails if the information was held on record. Where no contact information was held, site visits were conducted to speak to interested parties in person.

- **Unregistered site notices:** Unregistered site notices were not utilised due to the desktop and contact research methods successfully confirming the owners of unregistered land. Where land is unregistered under roads, ad medium filum has been assumed and the adjacent landowners included as subsoil interests.

5.4.9. The Applicant consulted with all parties identified under s42(1)(d) and s44 of the PA 2008 at that time. For Phase Two Consultation, there were 117 Category 1 and 2 consultees along with 154 consultees in Category 3. Sample letters for each category are included in **Appendix F.1: Sample letters sent to consultees under s42(1)(a), (b) and (d) and non-prescribed consultees**.

5.4.10. The Applicant continued to undertake diligent inquiry throughout the Phase Two Consultation period, which led to a land interest being identified on Thursday 25 January 2024. The Applicant wrote to the land interest on Friday 26 January 2024 to inform them of the consultation. To enable the consultee sufficient time to consider the proposals, the

Applicant extended the consultation deadline to 8 March 2024 for the land interest and offered a briefing on the Proposed Development.

- 5.4.11. Following the receipt by the Applicant of a 'Return to Sender' letter, the Applicant re-wrote to a land interest on Tuesday 12 February to inform them of the consultation. To enable the consultee sufficient time to consider the proposals, the Applicant extended the consultation deadline to 26 March 2024 for the land interest and offered a briefing on the Proposed Development.
- 5.4.12. Following Phase Two Consultation, the Applicant continued to refine its proposals for the Proposed Development, which removed 68 Category 1 and 2 persons and all 154 persons consulted solely under Category 3 at Phase Two Consultation.
- 5.4.13. The Applicant has undertaken statutory consultation pursuant to section 42(1)(d) with all people falling within section 44 of the PA 2008, based on the Order Limits for the Application. A full list of the 56 persons falling within section 44 of the PA 2008 is included in the **Book of Reference [EN010149/APP/4.3]** submitted with the Application. This includes 49 persons identified at Phase Two Consultation and 7 persons identified at targeted consultation (see **Chapter 7** of this Report for more information).

Notification to the Secretary of State (section 46)

- 5.4.14. In accordance with s46 of the PA 2008, the Applicant wrote to the Secretary of State on 5 January 2024 in advance of s42 consultation commencing on 11 January 2024 to provide notification of the consultation and signpost where consultation documents could be accessed. A copy of this letter is provided in **Appendix G-1.1: Section 46 notification**.
- 5.4.15. The letter provided details of where the consultation materials could be accessed and enclosed:
- A copy of the section 48 notice
 - Sample cover letters sent to consultees pursuant to sections 42(1)(a) and (b) and cover letters sent to consultees pursuant to section 42(1)(d), which included a copy of the plan showing the proposed Site boundary of the Proposed Development.
- 5.4.16. The Applicant received an acknowledgement of receipt of information concerning the proposed application from the Planning Inspectorate on 8 January 2024. A copy of this letter is provided in **Appendix G-1.2: Acknowledgement of receipt of s46 notification**.

5.5. Consultation with the local community (section 47)

5.5.1. The Applicant consulted with the local community in accordance with the SoCC provided in **Appendix D-1: Final SoCC**, as prescribed by section 47(7) of the PA 2008 and in parallel with its section 42 consultation and section 48 publicity.

Definition of consultees

5.5.2. The consultation was open to anyone with an interest in the Proposed Development who had feedback that they wanted to be considered. The Applicant used a mix of techniques to ensure that there were a range of ways to find out more about the Proposed Development and remove barriers to engagement.

5.5.3. To ensure consultation activity was targeted towards those living, working, studying, or otherwise using areas most likely to be affected by the Proposed Development, the Applicant defined two geographic zones – an inner zone and an outer zone – for the purposes of community consultation. Consultation activity was most intensive within the inner zone.

5.5.4. The inner zone covered people living, working and studying closest to the Proposed Development (and likely to be directly affected by the proposals), and their political representatives. This zone included all addresses within two kilometres of the proposed Site boundary, extending in some areas to consider potential wider effects of the Proposed Development and human geographic boundaries (e.g., ensuring all addresses within a settlement were included). A map of this zone in relation to the proposed Site boundary is shown in **Figure 5-3**.

5.5.5. The outer zone covered those living, working and studying outside of the inner zone who may be affected by or have an interest in the Proposed Development due to it being proposed within their local authority. This zone followed the local authority boundary of NKDC and is shown in relation to the proposed Site boundary in **Figure 5-4**.

Figure 5-3: Map of the inner consultation zone (pink) in relation to the proposed Site boundary (black)

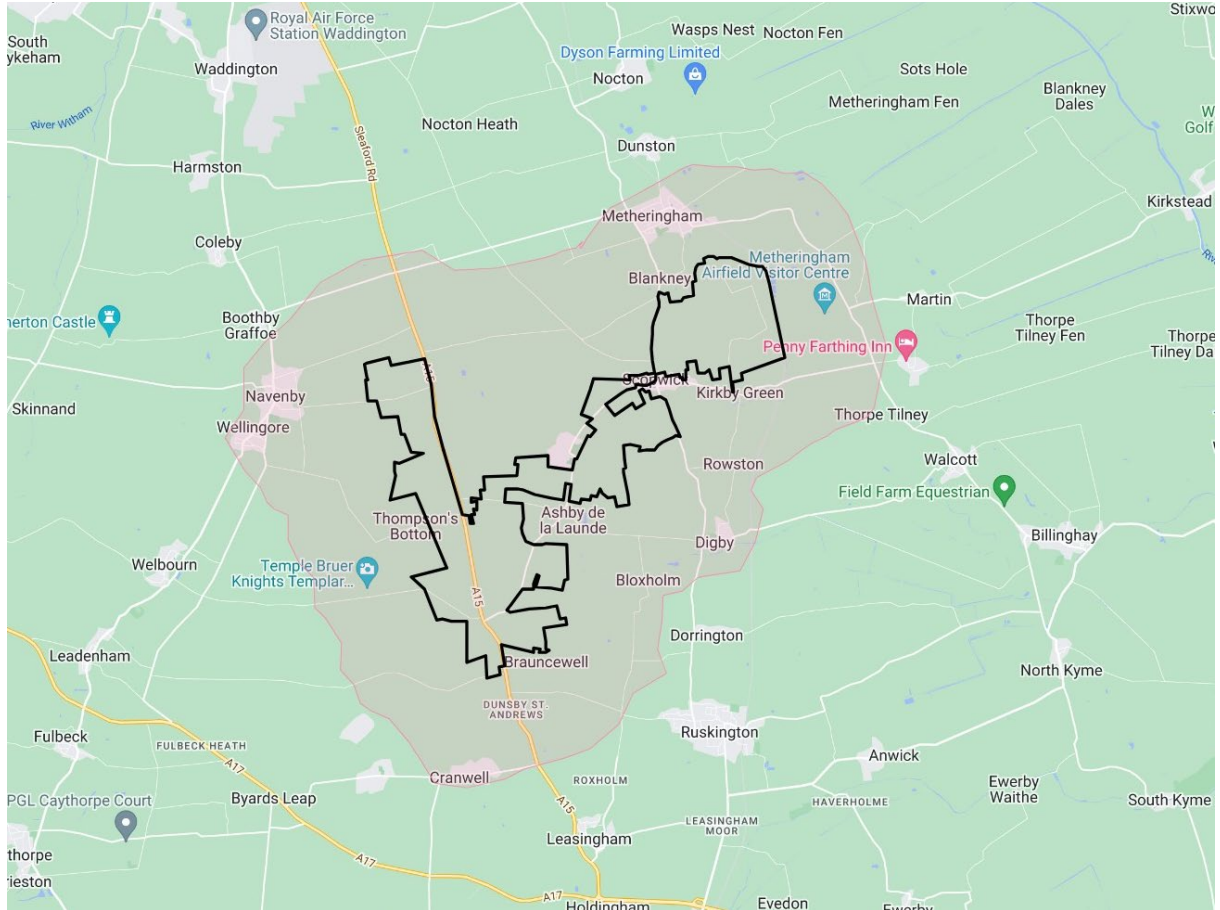
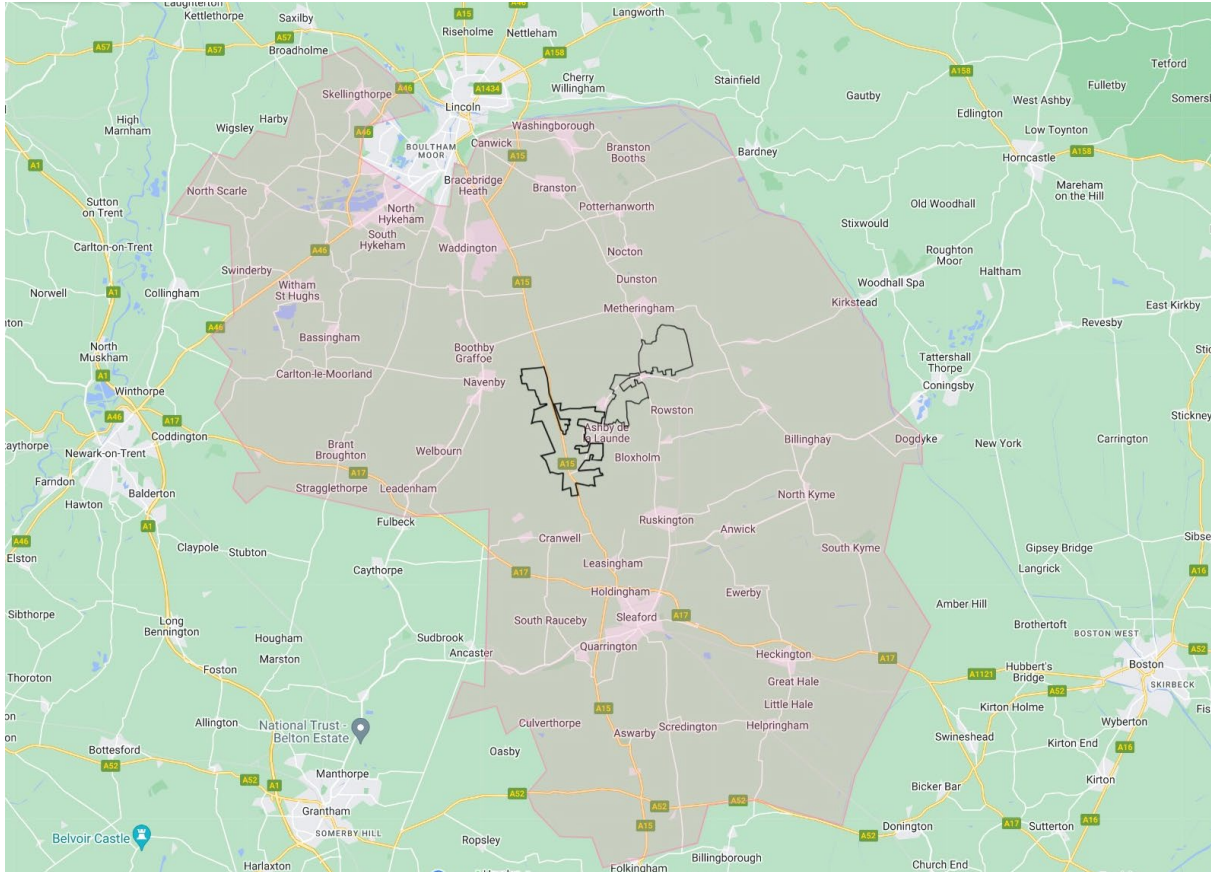


Figure 5-4: Map of the outer consultation zone (pink) in relation to the proposed Site boundary (black)



5.5.6. The Applicant also consulted a wide range of non-prescribed consultees due to their representative function, local knowledge and potential interest in the Proposed Development. This included neighbouring parish councils, community and seldom heard groups, education providers, business representative groups and local interest organisations (including ecology, heritage and walking groups). A list of all non-prescribed consultees is included in **Appendix H-1: List of non-prescribed consultees and community organisations consulted during Phase Two Consultation**.

Availability of consultation materials

5.5.7. Consultation materials were available to inspect in printed form throughout the consultation period at two deposit locations, listed in **Table 5-2**. The SoCC was available to inspect at each location from 11 December 2023, with the remaining consultation materials available from the beginning of the consultation period on 11 January 2024. As well as a printed copy of the PEIR and SoCC to inspect, each location was sent copies of the consultation booklet and consultation questionnaires for people to take

away. USBs containing the consultation materials – including the PEIR – were also available for people to take away. Regular checks (phone calls, emails and physical checks) were made of the deposit points to ensure materials remained available. Images of the deposit points clearly showing the materials available are provided in **Figures 5-5** and **5-6**.

Table 5-2: Location of deposit points¹

Location	Opening hours
Sleaford Library, 13 - 16 Market Place, Sleaford NG34 7SR	Monday-Wednesday: 9 am–5 pm Thursday: 9 am–6 pm Friday: 9 am–5 pm Saturday: 9 am–1 pm Sunday: Closed
The Venue, Grantham Road, Navenby LN5 0JJ	Opening times may vary, please contact venue to arrange access. Monday - Thursday: 9am – 6pm Friday: opening times may vary. Saturday: opening times may vary. Sunday: opening times may vary

- 5.5.8. All consultation materials were available to view and download from 11 January 2024 from the Springwell Solar Farm website. Anyone could get in touch to request (free of charge) printed copies of the consultation booklet, consultation questionnaire as well as USBs containing the consultation materials. Nine copies of the consultation booklet and questionnaire were posted out following requests received through the Applicant’s communication channels. No requests for the PEIR were received by the Applicant during the consultation period.
- 5.5.9. The consultation materials were available in alternate formats and languages upon request. This was advertised in the SoCC and Phase Two Consultation booklet. No requests for alternative formats/languages were received.

¹ Where opening times were variable, the Applicant encouraged people to contact the venue to arrange access. Contact details for The Venue were provided on consultation publicity, including the consultation booklet, consultation newsletter, consultee letters and the s48 notice.

- 5.5.10. Copies of the consultation materials were also available at the public events. Printed copies of the consultation booklet and questionnaire were available to attendees to take away along with USBs containing the full set of consultation materials. Printed copies of the PEIR and SoCC were available to inspect.

Figure 5-5: Consultation materials available at Sleaford Library



Figure 5-6: Consultation materials available at The Venue



5.6. Consultation materials and activities

Newsletter

- 5.6.1. As described in paragraph 4.8.5, the launch of the Applicant's Phase Two Consultation ran in parallel with the publication of the SoCC. On 11 December 2023, a letter (**Appendix G-2.1: Phase Two Consultation launch letter**) was sent to the inner zone to publicise the availability of the SoCC and give advance notice of Phase Two Consultation which would begin 31 days later on 11 January 2024.
- 5.6.2. A consultation newsletter (**Appendix G-2.2: Phase Two Consultation newsletter**) was distributed to 5,772 addresses within the inner consultation zone to arrive on 11 January 2024. The newsletter was also made available on the Springwell Solar Farm website.
- 5.6.3. The newsletter publicised the consultation, including the dates, times and locations of the public events as well as the addresses and opening times of the deposit points. It also set out how people could access consultation materials, find out further information (e.g. by visiting the Springwell Solar Farm website or contacting the Applicant using its communications channels), and how to respond to the consultation.

Springwell Solar Farm website and virtual exhibition

- 5.6.4. The Springwell Solar Farm website hosted all of the consultation information throughout the consultation period, including a virtual exhibition with 3D indicative visualisations showing where Solar PV development was proposed. Screenshots of the website and virtual exhibition are included at **Appendix G-3: Screenshot of Phase Two Consultation website and virtual exhibition**.
- 5.6.5. The website hosted a document library which contained the following:
- SoCC
 - Consultation booklet
 - Consultation questionnaire (with an online version of the questionnaire linked on the website)
 - Exhibition banners summarising the proposals available at the public events
 - Consultation maps of the Proposed Development
 - PEIR
 - Consultation newsletter

- Section 48 notice
- 5.6.6. The website was kept up to date for the duration of the Phase Two Consultation. Following the first four public events, the Applicant uploaded photomontages available at the public events to the Springwell Solar Farm website as this was requested by attendees. The website continued to host the consultation materials for reference following Phase Two Consultation.
- 5.6.7. Between publication of the SoCC and the day before the consultation started, there were 693 visitors to the Springwell Solar Farm website who spent an average of 1 minute 27 seconds on the website. At this time, the website contained information about the Proposed Development, materials available at Phase One Consultation and a copy of the SoCC that could be viewed and downloaded.
- 5.6.8. During the consultation period, there were 2,080 visitors to the Springwell Solar Farm website. Visitors to the website were most likely to visit the document library (494), with 120 clicking through to the virtual exhibition and 213 visiting the consultation questionnaire page.
- 5.6.9. The interactive virtual exhibition provided an alternative format for people to learn about the Proposed Development. It included exhibition banners on display at the public events, plans of the Proposed Development, links to the online questionnaire and Springwell Solar Farm website, as well as a link to a digital interactive portal. The digital interactive portal contained 3D indicative visualisations of the Proposed Development from different viewpoints around the proposed Site boundary. There were also two videos showing visualisations of the Proposed Development from the local road network. The virtual exhibition had 133 unique users within the consultation period.

Public events

- 5.6.10. Six public events were held within the consultation period - one more than the five committed to within the SoCC due to the addition of an event at RAF Digby for personnel living and working there. Venues for the events were chosen for their availability, size, accessibility and proximity to the Proposed Development.
- 5.6.11. Events were planned at a variety of different times and days of the week to accommodate the varying schedules and commitments of consultees. A preview session to enable elected representatives and officers to view the event and meet the project team took place between 3-4pm prior to the first event at Scopwick Village Hall.

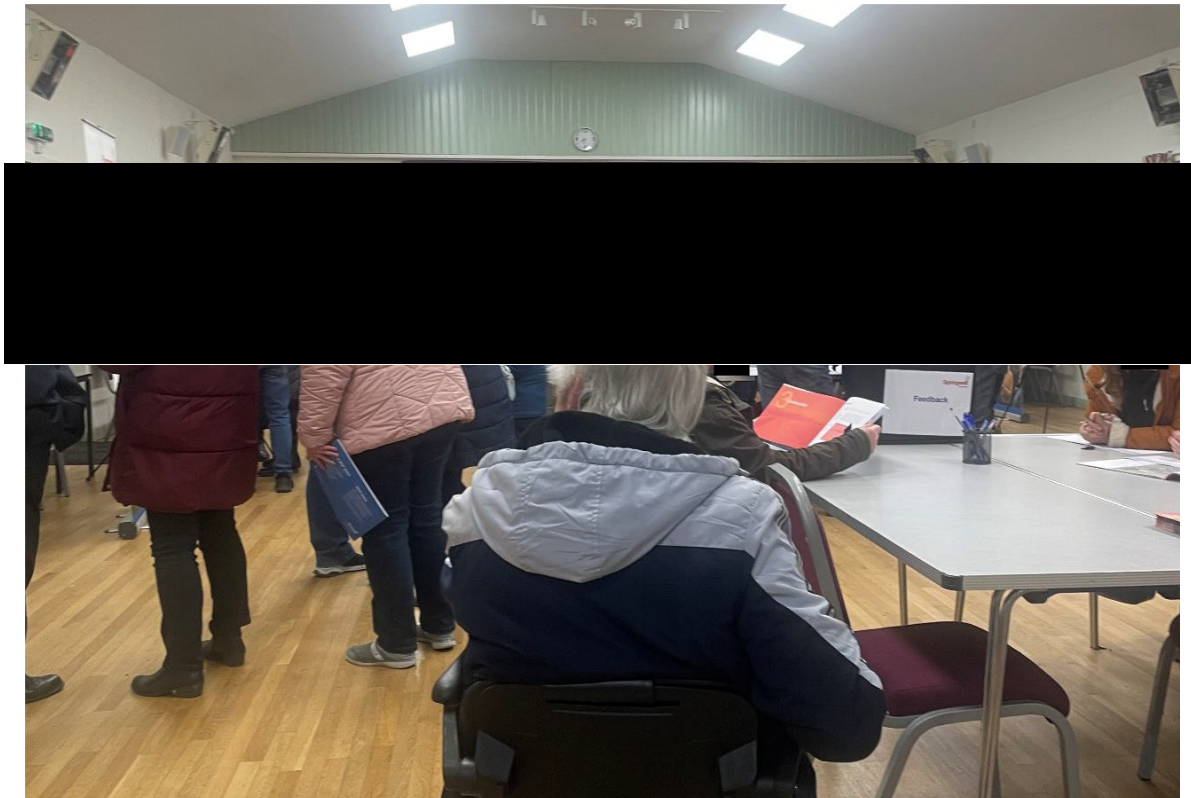
- 5.6.12. Each exhibition comprised 12 information boards, with large-scale copies of the updated layout of the Proposed Development, Phase Two Consultation maps and photomontages. Copies of the SoCC and PEIR were available to inspect, with copies of the consultation booklet and questionnaire available to be taken away. People were able to write their feedback at the event and deposit completed feedback in a secure box.
- 5.6.13. A digital 3D model was also available at the public events and showed indicative visualisations of the Proposed Development. The 3D model was operated by a company specialising in 3D modelling using a computer and television monitor, with attendees able to request to see indicative visualisations of the solar panels from different locations. It also showed how planting could be utilised to screen areas of the Proposed Development and the existing baseline, as well as the proposed locations of the BESS and Springwell Substation.
- 5.6.14. An additional public event was added at RAF Digby for personnel living and working on the base. This was offered by the Applicant in response to feedback that people on the base were not likely to leave the base to attend public events in nearby villages. Details of the event were confirmed on 19 January 2024 and promoted on RAF Digby’s internal communication and social media channels.
- 5.6.15. The locations, times and attendance figures for the exhibitions are included in **Table 5-3**. In total, 452 people attended the six events.

Table 5-3: Public events held and attendance

Locations	Date	Attendance
Scopwick Village Hall, Brookside, Scopwick, LN4 3PA	Wednesday 24 January 4pm-8pm	126
Ashby de la Launde Village Hall, Church Avenue, Ashby de la Launde, LN4 3JQ	Thursday 25 January 3pm-7pm	46
The Venue, Grantham Road, Navenby, LN5 0JJ	Friday 26 January 12pm-4pm	137
Metheringham Village Hall, Fen Road, Metheringham, LN4 3AA	Saturday 27 January 11am-3pm	67
HIVE @ RAF Digby, Lincolnshire, LN4 3LH	Thursday 8 February, 3pm-7pm	6

Locations	Date	Attendance
Blankney Old School, Drury St, Blankney, LN4 3AZ	Tuesday 20 February 3pm- 7pm	70

Figure 5-7: Public event at Scopwick Village Hall on Wednesday 24 January 2024



Stakeholder meetings

5.6.16. Eight meetings with interested stakeholders were held during the consultation period, along with two programmed Planning and Communications calls (described in section 3.3 of this Report) with officers from NKDC and LCC.

Table 5-4: Stakeholder meetings held during Phase Two Consultation

Stakeholder	Summary of meeting	Date
Lincolnshire County Council Planning Committee	Presentation to LCC Planning Committee members on the updated plans, consultation period and planning process.	08 January 2024

Host authorities	Planning and Communications fortnightly call, including discussion of Phase Two Consultation.	11 January 2024
Natural England	Review of the consultation materials and survey update.	15 January 2024
Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue Services	Update on consultation period and proposals.	23 January 2024
Site visit to Slate House Farm	Site visit to Slate House Farm following request at consultation event.	27 January 2024
Cllr Amelia Bailey	Meeting to discuss consultation and answer questions from residents.	01 February 2024
National Grid	Meeting to discuss proposed National Grid Navenby Substation.	06 February 2024
Host authorities	Planning and Communications fortnightly call, including an update on progress of Phase Two Consultation.	08 February 2024
Cllr Amelia Bailey	Meeting to discuss consultation and answer questions from residents.	15 February 2024
Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust	Call to discuss updated proposals and Phase Two Consultation.	21 February 2024

Seldom heard groups

5.6.17. The Applicant sought to ensure that its consultation programme was inclusive and accessible to people seldom heard in consultation activity by:

- Writing to local authorities and organisations representing seldom heard individuals and groups to ensure our consultation activity and materials are appropriate and remove barriers to engagement.
- Choosing accessible venues for deposit points and public events.
- Publicising the consultation in digital editions of local newspapers and on social media.
- Holding public events at a variety of times, including evenings and weekends to enable participation by people with different time commitments.
- Making provision for people without internet access through the consultation programme. This included sending a launch letter and consultation newsletter to every address within the inner zone, holding public events in the area, publicising the consultation in print editions of local newspapers and making hard copies of consultation materials available on-request and at deposit points.
- Providing materials in alternative formats on request (e.g. different languages, large-print or easy read). Contact details to request materials in alternative formats were published on the Springwell Solar Farm website, in the consultation booklet and newsletter.
- Providing a variety of communication channels including a freephone number, email address and Freepost for those seeking further information

5.6.18. In addition, the Applicant wrote to 40 gateway organisations and 23 education providers (see **Appendix H-1: List of non-prescribed consultees and community organisations consulted during Phase Two Consultation**) on 11 January 2024, to let them know about the consultation, offer them a briefing and support them to promote the consultation on their own communications channels. A graphic was sent to all organisations where an email address was found during desktop research.

5.6.19. The Applicant emailed gateway organisations and education providers on 16 February 2024 to remind them of the consultation, offer a meeting with the project team and share a poster showing key updates and changes made since Phase One Consultation (**Appendix G-2.7**) to publicise the consultation.

Communication channels

5.6.20. The consultation freephone (0800 038 3486) enabled anyone to get in touch to find out more about the consultation, request printed copies of the

consultation materials and USBs, and speak to a member of the project team about the proposals. The freephone line was answered during normal business hours (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5:30pm) and received eleven calls over the consultation period.

- 5.6.21. Outside of these hours, callers could leave a message and request a call back. Two people left messages on the answer phone and received a call back.
- 5.6.22. Alternatively, people could email info@springwellsolarfarm.co.uk with questions or requests for documents or USBs, with 57 emails received at this address during the consultation period. This resulted in nine copies of the consultation booklet and questionnaire being sent out.

5.7. Publicising the consultation

- 5.7.1. Advertising took place across the inner and outer zone to publicise the consultation. Methods included newspaper advertising, social media and issuing press releases.

Section 48

- 5.7.2. The Applicant published notices containing the prescribed details in the newspapers and on the dates set out in **Table 5-5** pursuant to section 48 of the PA 2008 and regulation 4 of the APFP Regulations.

Table 5-5: Details of newspaper publication of section 48 notice

Newspaper	Date of advertisement
Lincolnshire Echo	Thursday 11 January and Thursday 18 January 2024
The Guardian	Thursday 11 January 2024
London Gazette	Thursday 11 January 2024

- 5.7.3. A copy of the notices as published is provided in **Appendix I-1: Newspaper notices published in compliance with s48 of PA 2008.**
- 5.7.4. The Proposed Development is an EIA development, and therefore in accordance with Regulation 13 of the EIA Regulations on 11 January 2024 the Applicant enclosed a copy of the section 48 notice to the consultation bodies as part of the section 42 consultation letters.

Newspaper and social media advertising

- 5.7.5. In addition to the statutory notices, the Applicant sought to publicise the consultation through an advertising campaign encompassing local newspapers, digital advertising and social media advertising. The purpose of the campaign was to reach people within the inner and outer zone (**Figures 5-3** and **5-4**) to raise awareness of the consultation, including the times and dates of the public events and where people could find out more about the Proposed Development.
- 5.7.6. Advertising during the Phase Two Consultation period was supplemented by advertising to publicise the launch of Phase Two Consultation and the availability of the SoCC (11 December 2023 – 11 January 2024), which is described in paragraph 4.8.5.
- 5.7.7. The Applicant advertised the consultation, including the dates, times and locations of the public events, and where people could find out more information about the Proposed Development in print and digital versions of the Lincolnshire Echo and Sleaford Standard (which became an edition of the Louth Leader in October 2023) on 3 January 2024. Copies of the adverts are available in **Appendix G-2.7: Phase Two Consultation advertising**.
- 5.7.8. Digital advertising on the Lincolnshire Live website took place between 10 January and 17 January 2024 which included click throughs to the website and dates of the consultation. The campaign reached 250,007 users, with a total in-view time of 1,642 hours, with 424 users clicking through to the Springwell Solar Farm website.
- 5.7.9. In addition, the Applicant sought to promote the consultation in local newsletters where publication timelines allowed. Information about the final public event was included in the Heart of Lincolnshire February 2024 newsletter which is promoted by NKDC.
- 5.7.10. A media release was issued to approximately 50 journalists and media outlets on 11 January 2024 to update on the start of the consultation period. Information about the consultation was covered by Energy Live News, Lincolnshire Online, Lincolnshire World, Lincolnshire Live and Lincolnshire Echo (including an interview with the Applicant).
- 5.7.11. Further information about the Proposed Development and the Phase Two Consultation was also published during the consultation period by BBC Lincolnshire, Lincolnshire World and Solar Power Portal.
- 5.7.12. The Applicant used social media advertising to reach as many people as possible. Advertisements were run on Facebook and LinkedIn platforms to

promote the consultation and encourage those with an interest to submit their feedback.

- 5.7.13. A post was shared on the EDF Renewables UK & Ireland LinkedIn account (c. 87,000 followers) on 11 December 2023 to publicise the launch of the consultation, which received 4,574 impressions. A second post on 11 January 2024 to publicise the commencement of Phase Two Consultation received 4,534 impressions.
- 5.7.14. Facebook advertisements set out the dates of the consultation period, information about the public events and how people could find out more information and share their feedback. The Applicant targeted users living within 25 kilometres of the proposed Site boundary between 16 January - 22 January 2024 and 16 February – 22 February 2024, reaching 15,898 users, with 159 users interacting with the adverts.

5.8. Outcomes of Phase Two Consultation

- 5.8.1. The Applicant received 248 responses to Phase Two Consultation by the consultation deadline of 22 February 2024. Chapter 6 of this Report provides an overview of responses received from consultees under s42, s47 and s48 of the PA 2008, and how the Applicant has had regard and responded to feedback received.

6. Responses to Phase Two Consultation

6.1. Overview

- 6.1.1. A total of 248 “relevant responses” for the purposes of s49 of the PA 2008 were received in response to Phase Two Consultation. **Table 6-1** includes a breakdown of responses by response type, **Table 6-2** shows responses by stakeholder type and **Table 6-3** shows the number of responses to each of the questions in the consultation questionnaire.

Table 6-1: Number of responses received by method

Method of response submission	Total
Email	143
Online questionnaire	90
Questionnaires submitted at event	11
Returned by Freepost	4

Table 6-2: Number of responses received by stakeholder type²

Consultee type	Total
Section 42(1)(a) or (b)	33
Section 42(1)(d)	17
Section 47	198

Table 6-3: Responses by question in the consultation questionnaire

Question	Number of responses
Q1: Do you have any comments on our updated proposals for Springwell Solar Farm? <i>Please specify if your comments are about a specific location (Springwell East, Springwell Central or Springwell West) or a specific</i>	93

² There are some instances where consultee types overlap - these have only been counted once (e.g. where a consultee is prescribed under S42(1)(a) and has been identified as a land interest under S42(1)(d)).

Question	Number of responses
<i>element of Springwell (e.g. solar panels, battery storage or our proposed mitigation measures)</i>	
Q2: Do you have any feedback on our updated proposals for new public footpaths or suggestions for other improvements or additional routes?	67
Q3: Do you have any comments on our on-going assessment of potential environmental effects?	72
Q4: Do you have any comments on our approach to moving materials, including any information about the local area which you think we should take into account?	81
Q5: Do you have any comments on our approach to moving construction workers, including any information about the local area which you think we should take into account?	57
Q6: Please leave any further comments or suggestions you have on our updated proposals (for example, our approach to community benefit or the consultation process).	84

6.1.2. Responses were received, securely recorded and analysed by a consultancy specialising in public consultation and stakeholder engagement. The following process was utilised:

- When a response was received which provided identifying details (e.g., a postcode, company name), the Applicant identified whether the response had been submitted by an individual or organisation under s42, s47 or s48.
- Each response was assigned a unique ID number, and their feedback was recorded against this number in a secure database.
- Hard copy questionnaires and letters were manually typed and recorded against the respondent's unique ID number.
- Responses were analysed at sentence level, using thematic coding to group together comments on similar topics, with unique ID numbers logged against comments to indicate frequency.
- An individual response was coded in as many layers as required to ensure that the entire sentiment was captured.

- The coding process enabled all responses to be indexed according to the issues raised by respondents and allowed a detailed summary to be prepared of the content by themes and topics raised.

6.2. Responses received to section 42 consultation

6.2.1. The Applicant received 33 responses from consultees prescribed under section 42(1)(a) or (b) to Phase Two Consultation. All respondents opted to email comments that did not follow the format of the consultation questionnaire, due to the detailed and specific nature of their comments.

6.2.2. Respondents included:

- Ashby de la Launde Parish Council
- Environment Agency
- Historic England
- Lincolnshire County Council
- Ministry of Defence
- National Highways
- Natural England
- Navenby Parish Council
- North Kesteven District Council
- Rowston Parish Meeting
- Scopwick and Kirkby Green Parish Council
- Welbourn Parish Council

6.2.3. The Applicant received a request from the Ministry of Defence on Thursday 22 February 2024 to extend the deadline for accepting feedback, which the Applicant accepted. The Applicant received feedback from the Ministry of Defence relating to RAF Digby on Wednesday 15 May 2024.

6.2.4. The Applicant received 17 responses to Phase Two Consultation from consultees who were identified as consultees under s42(1)(d). Most (11) chose to send written responses via email, with the remaining six opting to use the online questionnaire.

6.2.5. **Appendix J-1: Summary of s42(1)(a), (b) and (d) responses to Phase Two Consultation and consideration by topic** sets out feedback received from s42 consultees by theme and topic, along with the regard had by the Applicant's and whether the feedback resulted in a change to the Proposed Development.

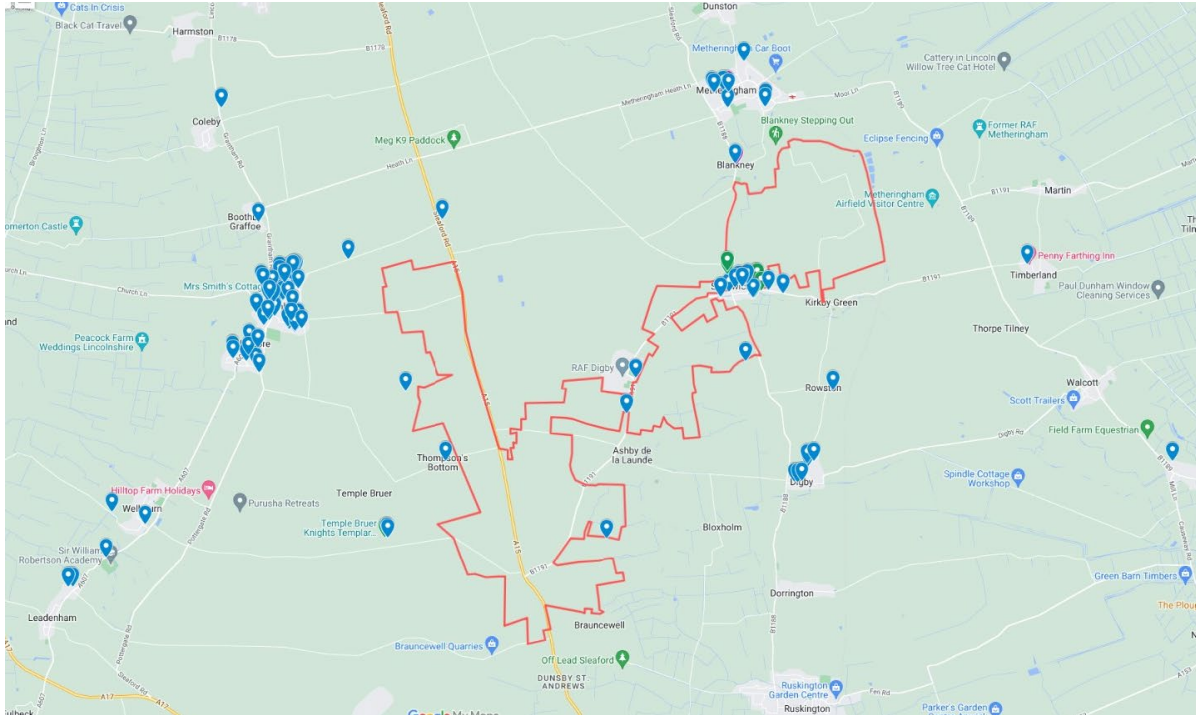
6.3. Responses received to section 47 consultation

- 6.3.1. This section sets out “relevant responses” for the purposes of s49 of the PA 2008 received from the local community, including a summary of the most common topics raised in feedback received.
- 6.3.2. The Applicant received 198 responses to the s47 consultation between 11 January 2024 and 22 February 2024, with most responses received via email (51%) and the online questionnaire (42%). The methods available to respond to the consultation are set out in section 5.3.
- 6.3.3. A total of 128 respondents provided a postcode as part of their consultation response, and responses received by village are shown in **Table 6-4**. All postcodes have been mapped in **Figure 6-1**.
- 6.3.4. Almost half (46%) of respondents who provided a postcode were from Navenby, followed by 18% of respondents from Scopwick.

Table 6-4: Responses received by village

Village	Total
Navenby	59
Scopwick	24
Wellingore	10
Digby	7
Metheringham	6
Ashby de la Launde	4
Welbourn	4
Temple Bruer	4
Blankney	2
Rowston	2

Figure 6-1: Geographical location of responses which provided a postcode in relation to the proposed Site boundary (red)



6.3.5. **Tables 6-5 to 6-10** summarise the most common themes raised in response to each question received via the consultation questionnaire, and the frequency with which they were raised. **Table 6-11** sets out most common themes in responses that did not follow the questionnaire format.

6.3.6. **Appendix J-2: Summary of s47 responses from Phase Two Consultation and consideration by topic** sets out feedback received from s47 consultees by theme and topic, along with the regard had to the feedback by the Applicant and whether the feedback resulted in a change to the Proposed Development.

Table 6-5: Most common responses received to Question 1

Theme	Frequency
Oppose use of agricultural land.	29
The Proposed Development is too large.	26
General statement of opposition.	14
The location of the Proposed Development is inappropriate.	10

Theme	Frequency
The solar panels would have a negative visual impact on the landscape.	9
Alternatives – brownfield industrial sites.	9
The Applicant is only motivated by profit.	8
Alternatives – rooftops.	8
The magnitude of the development's landscape and visual impact is in conflict with current planning policy.	6
Concerns over a potential negative impact on food security.	6
Climate change will result in greater crop failure and therefore the UK will need more land for agriculture.	6
There would be an impact on property prices.	6
No improvements would better the proposals/the changes have not improved the Proposed Development.	4
The Proposed Development would turn the area into an industrial landscape.	4

Table 6-6: Most common responses received to Question 2

Theme	Frequency
New footpaths through the Proposed Development are pointless/ People use footpaths to be in the countryside not to be within an industrial development.	17
The Proposed Development would have a negative visual impact.	10
General statement of objection.	8
The Proposed Development would negatively impact people's enjoyment of the countryside.	8
The Proposed Development would deter people from visiting to walk around the area due to visual impact, irrespective of the new routes provided.	7

Theme	Frequency
New footpaths would not be needed to compensate for the Proposed Development if it didn't exist.	5

Table 6-7: Most common responses received to Question 3

Theme	Frequency
Object to use of agricultural land.	10
There would be a negative impact on wildlife.	7
The Zone of Influence for the cumulative assessment should be expanded to account for all proposed solar NSIPs in Lincolnshire.	6
There would be an impact on the environment.	5

Table 6-8: Most common responses received to Question 4

Theme	Frequency
The local road network is too small/narrow to accommodate the size and volume of the construction traffic proposed.	11
The local road network is already overburdened, and this would be exacerbated.	10
There would be four years of traffic disruption for local residents.	10
There would be damage to the local road network which is already in disrepair.	9
General statement of opposition.	7
There would be noise impacts from the construction traffic.	7
The large construction compound proposed in Springwell West cannot readily be accessed other than by use of Temple Road (unclassified road off A15).	6
Temple Road is already close to capacity and unsuitable for any increased movements due to the inability of vehicles to pass one another without technically trespassing onto privately owned verges.	6

Theme	Frequency
Some of the satellite construction compounds are likely to prompt high volumes of traffic outside of the primary construction routes.	6
The A15 is already dangerous, and this would be exacerbated.	6
This would impact small villages.	5

Table 6-9: Most common responses received to Question 5

Theme	Frequency
The local area would be negatively impacted by additional traffic.	12
General statement of opposition.	9
The number of vehicles would have a significant impact on traffic.	8
The road network has a high number of accidents, and this would be exacerbated.	7
Due to the locations of the construction compounds, it is unlikely that the 600 staff would be able to avoid using some of the unsuitable rural road network.	6
There would be a negative impact on the local community.	5

Table 6-10: Most common responses received to Question 6

Theme	Frequency
General statement of opposition.	18
There are no benefits to the local community.	15
Object to the loss of agricultural land.	12
Alternatives - solar should be on rooftops.	11
The Proposed Development is too large.	9
There would be a negative impact on the local community.	9
The Applicant is motivated by profit.	7

Theme	Frequency
Use of the rural highway network should be restricted.	6
The land is needed for food production and loss would harm food security.	6
Substantially more screening tree belt planting should be introduced in depth along all boundaries.	6
There should be a comprehensive reduction of the development scale in Springwell West by a minimum of 80% (and comparable reduction across entire application site) to make the Proposed Development acceptable.	6
Construction activities limited to the hours of 07:30 to 18:00.	6
Construction activities should exclude weekends/public holidays.	6
Support renewable energy in principle but not the Proposed Development.	6
The location of the Proposed Development is inappropriate.	6
Alternatives - brownfield sites.	5
The Proposed Development would blight the countryside.	5

Table 6-11: Most common themes received not following questionnaire format

Theme	Frequency
General statement of objection.	74
Oppose the loss of agricultural land from the Proposed Development.	70
The Proposed Development is too large.	65
Solar should be installed on rooftops before ground-mounted solar farms.	59
The Proposed Development is profit motivated (Applicant).	58
The land would not be able to return to agriculture after decommissioning.	56

Theme	Frequency
The proposed screening is insufficient because it would take too long to grow to the required height.	56
The BESS poses a fire safety risk.	56
The Proposed Development would have an impact on property prices in the local area.	55
There would be an increase in traffic during the construction phase.	55
There would be a loss of the area's tranquillity.	55
There is a risk of damage to and pollutants entering aquifer affecting drinking water which would affect health of rivers and the drinking water of residents.	53
There should be more transparency about the National Grid Substation in the consultation materials.	53
There is a pollution risk from BESS.	52
There would be no benefit for the community from the Proposed Development.	52
It is a long time before the solar panels become carbon neutral.	52
The Proposed Development is profit motivated (landowner).	51
The Proposed Development would increase flood risk in Scopwick.	51
There would be damage to local roads during the construction phase.	51
The local flora and fauna would be damaged.	51
The consultation materials are misleading.	51
The Proposed Development is corporate vandalism due to impact on wildlife.	50
The Proposed Development would negatively impact mental health once operational.	49

Theme	Frequency
Oppose the location of the main construction compound in Springwell East as it is too close to Scopwick.	49
The Proposed Development is already having an impact on mental health.	48
There would be carbon emitted during the construction phase and therefore the Proposed Development is not 'green' - this is ingenuous.	48
There are lots of airbases and airfields close to the Proposed Development and the impact of glint and glare needs to be examined.	47
The proposed mitigation and enhancements for wildlife is marketing and is not genuine.	46
There would be a visual impact from the construction compounds.	45
There is concern about the proximity of Chinese infrastructure to RAF Digby.	43
Food security/production should be prioritised over energy security/production.	15
There would be an impact on the rural landscape.	11
This location is unsuitable for the Proposed Development.	10

6.4. Responses received to section 48 consultation

- 6.4.1. The Applicant sought responses from s48 consultees (see section 5.7). None of the consultation responses specified that they had submitted under s48.

6.5. Changes to the Proposed Development following Phase Two Consultation

- 6.5.1. In response to the feedback received, the following changes were introduced to the design of the Proposed Development:
- Reducing the Order Limits from 1,772ha to 1,280ha, with the area proposed for Solar PV development reduced from 816ha to 594ha. The

following key areas were removed from proposed Solar PV development in response to consultation feedback:

- A field closest to Scopwick to increase the distance between the village and the Proposed Development to provide a visual break and reduce visual impacts from public rights of way (“PRoW”).
 - Fields located in Springwell East, including to the west of the Spires and Steeples Trail, Blankney Circuit PRoW and Trundle Lane to reduce visual impacts on PRoW in this area.
 - Fields to reduce visibility from Heath Road and Scopwick Mill to reduce visual and cultural heritage impacts and to maintain a sense of rural separation between villages.
 - Eight fields in part due to potential impacts on residential amenity, with bespoke offsets applied to each individual property.
 - Five fields south of RAF Digby in consultation with the Ministry of Defence.
- Reducing the maximum proposed height of Solar PV modules from 3.5 metres to 3 metres in the majority of areas proposed for Solar PV development, with 3.5 metre Solar PV modules proposed in limited areas of flood risk (reduced from 4 metres).
 - Reducing the maximum proposed height of fencing around the Solar PV development across the majority of the Order Limits from 3 metres to 2.5 metres high.
 - Refining the proposed location of the BESS, Springwell Substation and Main Collector Compound to a single field within a single field in Springwell West, with a 250m offset provided to the A15. An Earth Bund is proposed to the east of Springwell Substation and BESS to support screening and integration of the Proposed Development, as well as proposed planting along the western, southern and eastern edges of the compound.
 - Refining the locations for Satellite Collector Compound to reduce potential visual impacts.
 - Developing planting proposals to improve screening and integration of the Proposed Development, including hedgerow planting either side of the A15, tree belt planting along the B1191 and along existing PRoW.
 - Developing proposals to enhance the local footpath network, including:
 - A new PRoW connecting Bloxholm Woods and Temple Road
 - A new PRoW connecting AshL/4/1 west of the A15 to New England Lane.

- A new PRow connecting RAF Digby and Scopwick.
- New permissive paths to provide circular walks at Bloxholm Woods and Brauncewell Village.
- Upgrades to the Spires and Steeples Trail between Scopwick and Blankney to bridleway status to support the ambitions within the Scopwick and Kirkby Green Neighbourhood Plan.
- Locating the proposed cable route away from residential properties to limit impacts on residential amenity.
- Refining the size and location of Primary and Satellite Construction Compounds and site access points. This included relocating the Primary Construction Compound proposed for Springwell East 500m north to reduce impacts on nearby properties, users of the B1188 and PRow. Site accesses were moved away from residential properties where practicable in Springwell West, Central and East.
- Refining the routes proposed to be used for HGV traffic, including discounting use of the B1202 and Bloxholm Lane, and proposing highways improvements where required (e.g. along the B1191, and A15/Gorse Hill Lane junction).
- Providing a ‘community growing area’ in a field north of Scopwick which would be available to the public throughout the lifetime of the Proposed Development.

6.5.2. For more information about the changes made following Phase Two Consultation, see **Design Approach Document [EN010149/APP/7.3]**.

6.5.3. In addition, feedback from Phase Two Consultation led to several changes being made to the approach to EIA. Key changes are summarised below and detailed within **Appendices J-1 and J-2 [EN010149/APP/5.2]**:

- Including consideration of early decommissioning (e.g. due to a force majeure event or as a result of operational issues) to identify any significant effects different to those identified at year 40 (see **ES Volume 1, Chapters 6: Air Quality and 14: Traffic and Transport [EN010149/APP/6.1]**).
- Scoping in a number of environmental receptors to biodiversity assessments, including wintering birds, notable arable flora, hedgerows and trees (see **ES Volume 1, Chapter 7: Biodiversity [EN010149/APP/6.1]**).
- Scoping in additional receptors within the **Glint and Glare Study (ES Volume 3, Appendix 5.4 [EN010149/APP/6.3])**.

- Undertaking a **High-Level Electromagnetic Field Assessment (ES Volume 3, Appendix 5.5 [EN010149/APP/6.3])**.
- Agreeing additional viewpoints for the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (see **ES Volume 1, Chapter 10: Landscape and Visual [EN010149/APP/6.1]**).

6.5.4. The Applicant has set out how it has approached the EIA in **ES Volume 1, Chapter 5: Approach to the EIA [EN010149/APP/6.1]**.

7. Additional targeted consultation

7.1. Purpose of consultation

- 7.1.1. Feedback received from Phase Two Consultation, along with ongoing environmental assessment and technical work, resulted in changes to the proposals.
- 7.1.2. Where changes required minor additions to the proposed Order Limits, the Applicant undertook targeted statutory consultation with affected land interests and consultation with relevant prescribed and non-prescribed consultees.
- 7.1.3. The changes requiring amendments to the proposed Order Limits and therefore subject to targeted consultation (“the proposed changes”) were improvements to the local highways and footpath network, as follows:
- Connecting the existing PRoW (Blan/737/1) with the B1188 to enhance walking routes to Blankney (Change A)
 - Extending the route of the proposed new footpath between RAF Digby and Scopwick along the B1191 to connect to the existing pavement at Scopwick (Change B)
 - Installation of road signage and realignment works close to RAF Digby (Changes C&D)
 - Realigning the Order Limits on Navenby Lane to match up to the highway boundary should any works be required to access the site (Change E)
 - Limited vegetation management to improve visibility, including close to Thompson’s Bottom (Change F)
 - Road widening and realignment works along and close to the B1191/Main Street junction near Ashby de la Launde (Change G)
- 7.1.4. These changes did not introduce any new or different potentially significant effects, as described in the PEIR published as part of Phase Two Consultation.

7.2. Identification of consultees

- 7.2.1. The Applicant undertook targeted consultation with affected s42(1)(d) consultees as required by the PA 2008. Land interests were identified through a process of diligent inquiry undertaken by the Applicant as described in paragraph 5.4.8 to ensure that any additional identified land interests were consulted.

- 7.2.2. This process identified 12 land interests who had previously been consulted on the Proposed Development as prescribed by section 42(1)(d), and 21 newly affected land interests who had not been consulted under section 42(1)(d), including 14 with correspondence addresses within the Phase Two inner zone of consultation. All 21 new land interests were given the opportunity to comment on the Proposed Development (including the PEIR) as presented at Phase Two Consultation and were offered briefings on the Proposed Development. No category 3 persons were identified.
- 7.2.3. Following targeted consultation, the Applicant continued to refine its proposals for the Proposed Development, which removed 14 Category 1 & 2 persons identified at targeted consultation.
- 7.2.4. A full list of the 56 persons falling within section 44 of the PA 2008 is included within the **Book of Reference [EN010149/APP/4.3]** submitted with the Application. This includes 7 persons identified at targeted consultation.
- 7.2.5. The Applicant also consulted with relevant prescribed consultees under s42(1)(a) and (b) and non-prescribed consultees on a precautionary basis. This included host local authorities, parish councils and organisations likely to have an interest in the proposed changes (e.g., those with an interest in highways and footpaths). In compiling the list of prescribed and non-prescribed consultees, the Applicant took into account the limited nature of the proposed changes, and that there were no new or different likely significant environmental effects expected as a result of the proposed changes.
- 7.2.6. In line with its commitments within the SoCC, the Applicant sought advice from on its approach with the host authorities. This included input on the list of prescribed and non-prescribed consultees through its regular Planning and Communications meeting on 27 June 2024 and by email on the same date. The Applicant included the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust, relevant Internal Drainage Boards and additional parish councils as consultees in response to feedback from the host authorities.
- 7.2.7. A full list of s42(1)(a) and (b) and non-prescribed consultees consulted during the targeted statutory consultation is included in **Appendix K-1: List of prescribed consultees consulted during targeted consultation.**

7.3. Consultation activity

- 7.3.1. The Applicant wrote by recorded delivery on Wednesday 17 July 2024 to all consultees to notify them of the changes and invite comment for a 29-day period between 18 July 2024 (the day after the letters landed) and 16

August 2024. Sample letters for existing land interests, new land interests and prescribed and non-prescribed consultees are included in **Appendix K-2: Targeted consultation materials**. All consultees received a copy of a plan showing the proposed Order Limits and proposed changes (**Appendix K-2.4: Targeted consultation map**). New and existing land interests received land interest plans relevant to the nature of their interest (see **Appendix K-2.5: Example land interest plan**).

- 7.3.2. The Applicant also wrote to members representing the wards and divisions in which the proposed Order Limits is located, offering a meeting to discuss the changes.
- 7.3.3. Noting that there could be wider community interest in the proposed changes, the Applicant published a post on the Springwell Solar Farm website which provided a written summary and map showing the proposed changes. A screenshot of this post on the Springwell Solar Farm website is included in **Appendix K-2.6: Screenshot of targeted consultation website post**.
- 7.3.4. Given the targeted nature of the consultation, the Applicant invited feedback on the proposed changes in writing via Freepost or email, rather than using a consultation questionnaire. New land interests were signposted to the Phase Two Consultation questionnaire should they wish to provide their comments on the Proposed Development in addition to the proposed changes.

7.4. Responses received to targeted consultation

- 7.4.1. The Applicant received seven responses to the targeted consultation, including from four consultees under s42(1)(a) and (b):
- Ashby de la Launde Parish Council
 - Lincolnshire County Council
 - North Kesteven District Council
 - Scopwick and Kirkby Green Parish Council
- 7.4.2. The other three responses were from s42(1)(d) consultees. Two were identified as new land interests, and one was identified as an existing land interest who had previously been consulted on the Proposed Development as part of Phase Two Consultation.
- 7.4.3. Key issues raised through the consultation included:

- Concern about speeding on the B1191 which could exacerbate existing safety concerns around RAF Digby, Ashby de la Launde and Scopwick.
- Support for provision of new footpaths.
- Request for more information about construction traffic generated by the Proposed Development.

7.4.4. A summary of issues raised by topic and the regard had to the feedback by the Applicant is included in **Appendix K-3: Summary of responses to targeted consultation and consideration by topic.**

7.5. Changes to the Proposed Development following targeted consultation

7.5.1. In response to the feedback received, the following changes were introduced:

- Additions to the proposed Order Limits to extend the route of the proposed new footpath between RAF Digby and Scopwick along the B1191 to connect to the existing pavement at Scopwick. A change to the speed limit from 60mph to 30mph along this section of the B1191 has also been proposed for safety.
- Additions to the proposed Order Limits to connect the existing PRow (Blan/737/1) with the B1188 to enhance walking routes to Blankney.
- Additions to the proposed Order Limits to facilitate road widening and realignment works along the B1191.
- Removal of an unidentified spur road from the proposed Order Limits to safeguard operations at a wastewater plant.

8. Conclusion

- 8.1.1. This Report forms part of the Application for the Proposed Development and is submitted in accordance with section 37(3)(c) of the PA 2008. This Report describes the pre-application consultation and engagement undertaken by the Applicant, summarises the responses received and explains how the Applicant had regard to them to develop its proposals.
- 8.1.2. It also demonstrates how the consultation has met and exceeded the requirements set out in sections 42, 47, 48,49 and 50 of the PA 2008 (as well as the requirements of the APFP Regulations and EIA Regulations) and that the Applicant has complied with guidance on the pre-application process and compiling the consultation report (see **Appendices M-1: Compliance with PA 2008: Guidance on the pre-application stage for NSIPs, April 2024** and **M-2: Compliance with the Planning Inspectorate’s Advice Note Fourteen: Compiling the Consultation Report, August 2024**).
- 8.1.3. Feedback from consultation and engagement was integral to developing the design of the Proposed Development, helping to shape the Applicant’s proposals from the outset. At each phase of consultation, the Applicant sought to involve and engage a wide range of stakeholders and the local community.
- 8.1.4. Phase One Consultation set out the Applicant’s early plans and proposals for the Proposed Development, including potential locations for different elements of the proposals.
- 8.1.5. Following Phase One Consultation, the Applicant made the following key changes to the Proposed Development including:
- Reducing the area proposed for Solar PV development to 816ha (from 1,438ha identified as potentially suitable for Solar PV development).
 - Refining the proposed locations of the BESS and Springwell Substation from four potential locations to two.
 - Refining plans for proposed footpaths, including introducing new proposed routes, including a footpath between New England Lane to Brauncewell in response to feedback from Ramblers, and a loop connecting to the existing public footpath Rows/5/1.
- 8.1.6. Phase Two Consultation sought feedback on the Applicant’s updated plans and proposals for the Proposed Development, along with the PEIR which contained the initial results of environmental assessments carried out in support of the Proposed Development, as well as preliminary

information on measures to avoid, prevent, reduce or if possible, offset any likely significant adverse effects

- 8.1.7. Following Phase Two Consultation, the Applicant made the following key changes to the Proposed Development including:
- Reducing the area proposed for Solar PV development from 816ha to 594ha.
 - Reducing the maximum proposed height of the Solar PV modules from 3.5 metres to 3 metres, with 3.5 metre panels proposed in areas of flood risk (from 4 metres).
 - Refining the proposed location of the BESS and Springwell Substation to a single field within Springwell West.
 - Refining the size and location of construction compounds and site access points, including the main construction compound proposed for Springwell East.
- 8.1.8. The Applicant also carried out an additional targeted consultation which sought feedback on minor additions to the proposed Order Limits to facilitate improvements to the local highways and footpath network.
- 8.1.9. Following targeted consultation, the Applicant made the following key changes to the Proposed Development including:
- Additions to the proposed Order Limits to facilitate improvements to the footpath network between RAF Digby and Scopwick and enhance walking routes to Blankney.
 - Additions to the proposed Order Limits to facilitate road widening and realignment works along the B1191 for safety during the construction phase.
- 8.1.10. Formal stages of pre-application consultation were complemented by a continuous programme of engagement with stakeholders, including the host authorities, prescribed consultees, near neighbours and the local community. In doing so, the Applicant has sought to exceed the minimum requirements set out in the PA 2008 and in the Applicant's SoCC.
- 8.1.11. The Applicant is very grateful to all those who have responded to the consultation and engaged with the project team to help shape the Proposed Development.



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