

Springwell Solar Farm

Planning Statement (Clean)

EN010149/APP/7.2.2
Revision 2
January 2025
Springwell Energyfarm Ltd

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



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1. Introduction

1.1. Background

- 1.1.1. This Planning Statement has been prepared on behalf of Springwell Energyfarm Limited (the Applicant) in relation to an application for a Development Consent Order (DCO) (the DCO Application) to be made to the Secretary of State (SoS) for the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, pursuant to the Planning Act 2008 (PA 2008).
- 1.1.2. The DCO Application is a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) for the installation of solar photovoltaic (PV) modules, battery energy storage system (BESS) and associated infrastructure which would allow for the generation and export of electricity (the Proposed Development). The **Location and Order Limits Plan [EN010149/APP/2.1]** shows the Order Limits for the Proposed Development, which is approximately 1280 hectares (Ha) of land, located within North Kesteven District Council (NKDC) and Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) (the Order Limits).
- 1.1.3. The Proposed Development includes infrastructure capable of generating more than 50 megawatts (MW) of renewable energy connecting to the National Electricity Transmission System (NETS) at the National Grid's proposed Navenby Substation. As shown below and in **ES Volume 2, Figure 1.1: Location Plan [EN010149/APP/6.2]**.

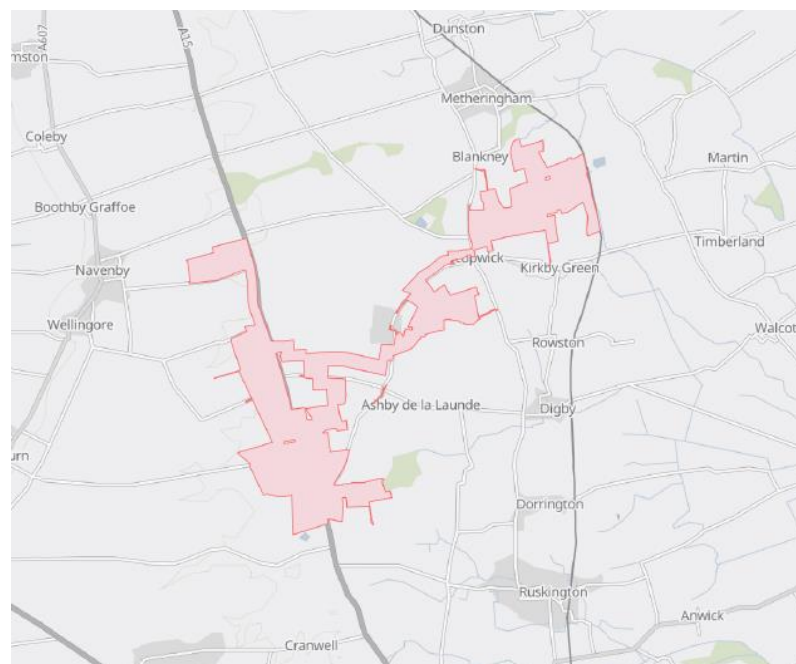


Figure 1: Location Plan and Order Limits

1.2. The Applicant

- 1.2.1. The Applicant is Springwell Energyfarm Limited, a joint venture between EDF Renewables and Luminous Energy.
- 1.2.2. EDF Renewables UK, part of the EDF Group, is one of the world's largest low-carbon electricity companies. EDF Renewables UK has an operating portfolio of 41 renewable energy sites, including solar, battery, onshore and offshore wind, and it provides much-needed affordable and low-carbon electricity. EDF's investment and innovation are reducing costs for customers and bringing significant benefits to communities. EDFR invests in projects and the communities where they operate for the long term. EDFR remains involved in projects over its lifetime, from development, construction, and operation all the way through to decommissioning.
- 1.2.3. Luminous Energy, founded in 2013, is an established UK-based renewable energy developer with projects in the UK, US, Chile, and Australia. Luminous Energy is regarded as a leading player in the market, having delivered 1GW of projects globally. The company's core of providing people around the world with affordable, renewable energy remain firmly at the heart of the business.

1.3. Legislative Context Review

- 1.3.1. Section 6 of this Planning Statement sets out the legislative context, including the relationship between the Planning Act 2008, relevant NPSs and the Proposed Development. Sections 6.3 and 6.4 set out the national policies against which the Proposed Development will be determined and other local and national policy that may be important and relevant matters for the SoS's decision. Section 6.5 outlines other national policy documents which are considered to be important and relevant to the determination of the DCO application.
- 1.3.2. In overview, the Proposed Development is classed as an NSIP as defined under section 15 of the PA 2008, as the capacity exceeds 50MW and, as such, must be consented by a DCO. The PA 2008 sets out that the SoS is responsible for determining whether to grant a DCO for the Proposed Development and under the PA 2008 there is the power to appoint an Examining Authority (ExA) of an appointed person(s) to manage and examine the Application on behalf of the SoS.
- 1.3.3. The ExA, appointed by the SoS in accordance with the provisions of the PA 2008, will make procedural decisions, examine the Application and make a recommendation to the SoS who will then decide whether to grant a DCO.
- 1.3.4. Section 104 of the Planning Act 2008 prescribes that DCO applications must be determined in accordance with any relevant NPS where the NPS

has effect in relation to development of the description to which the Application relates, subject to a number of specific exceptions.

1.3.5. The following NPSs (hereafter referred to as the NPSs or individually as EN-1, EN-3 or EN-5) have effect in relation to the Proposed Development and are therefore the primary policy basis for SoS's determination of the Application:

- Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy 2023 (EN-1) (NPS EN-1) [Ref: 1.1];
- National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy 2023 (EN-3) (NPS EN-3) [Ref: 1.2]; and
- National Policy Statement for Electricity Networks Infrastructure 2023 (EN-5) (NPS EN-5) [Ref: 1.3].

1.4. Pre-Application Consultation

1.4.1. The Planning Act 2008 requires applicants for DCOs to carry out Statutory pre-application consultation on their proposals. The Planning Act 2008 and related regulations set out the requirements for how this consultation must be undertaken and the Applicant has also undertaken non-statutory consultation as part of developing its proposals and seeking feedback from consultees.

1.4.2. The Applicant has adopted a two-stage approach to pre-application consultation. Non-statutory consultation (Phase One Consultation: Early plans and proposals) was carried out between 24 January and 07 March 2023. A Statutory consultation (Phase Two Consultation: Updates plans and proposals) in compliance with Sections 42, 47 and 48 of the Planning Act 2008 was undertaken between 11 January 2024 and 22 February 2024, supported by a Preliminary Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) in accordance with the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (the EIA Regulations).

1.4.3. In addition, additional targeted consultation took place between 17 July 2024 and 16 August 2024 on minor additions to the Order Limits to enable the Applicant to deliver improvements to the road and footpath network. This involved consultation with people with a legal interest in the additional land proposed to be included in the Order Limits and statutory bodies relevant to the proposed changes.

1.4.4. In addition to the three-stage approach outlined above, the Applicant has undertaken extensive engagement with NKDC and LCC, statutory prescribed persons, relevant statutory undertakers, those with an interest in the land, and those who may be affected by the Proposed Development throughout the development of the proposals. This ongoing engagement with the host authorities has comprised regular meetings where updates have been provided on the Proposed Development, including the design

development and technical meetings with the host local authorities technical specialists.

- 1.4.5. Following Phase One Consultation, the Applicant also conducted Residential Visual Amenity Assessments ('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 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 interest to them.
- 1.4.6. The workshops were facilitated by designers and involved residents sitting in small groups to discuss and provide their input to draft plans. The Applicant shared an early iteration of an updated design of the Proposed Development which reflected changes as a result of 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 other operational solar farms. Attendees discussed the particular areas 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. This input then informed the proposals that were consulted on at the Phase Two consultation.
- 1.4.7. The design workshops were held on the 12, 13 and 15 June 2023 and were attended by 47 people from 31 properties.
- 1.4.8. The pre-application consultation undertaken by the Applicant and how feedback from consultees has informed the Proposed Development is reported within the **Consultation Report [EN010149/APP/5.1]**.

1.5. [Supporting Documents](#)

- 1.5.1. The Proposed Development is 'EIA development' as defined by the EIA Regulations, which means that an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is required. An Environmental Statement (ES) has been prepared and is submitted with the DCO Application.
- 1.5.2. A summary of the description of the Proposed Development can be found in Section 3.1 of the **Environmental Statement (ES) Volume 1, Chapter 3: Proposed Development Description [EN010149/APP/6.1]**. The terminology used in this document is defined in the Glossary **[EN010149/APP/6.1]**.
- 1.5.3. The reports and plans accompanying the DCO Application are set out in the **Guide to the Application [EN010149/APP/1.2]**.
- 1.5.4. The Application is also supported by a **Site Selection Assessment**, which can be found in **Appendix 1** of this Planning Statement. This assessment

sets out the process for finding the Proposed Development Order Limits and the assessment undertaken in this process.

1.6. Purpose and Structure of Document

1.6.1. This document aims to provide an overview of the Proposed Development and its impacts and demonstrate the acceptability of the proposals when assessed against the provisions of the legislation and policies relative to the benefits of the Proposed Development.

1.6.2. The remainder of the Planning Statement is structured as follows:

- Section 2 describes the Design Approach that has informed the design development of the Proposed Development.
- Section 3 describes the need for the Proposed Development, highlighting the urgent need for renewable energy and the benefits of the Proposed Development.
- Section 4 describes the Order Limits, including its surrounding areas, and summarises the process of selecting the Site and relevant planning history within the Order limits.
- Section 5 provides an overview of the Proposed Development and its component parts
- Section 6 provides an overview of the decision-making framework, legislation, policy context, and other important and relevant considerations.
- Section 7 sets out the Applicant's key engagement to date and how it has helped inform the Proposed Development
- Section 8 provides an assessment of the Proposed Development and demonstrates the Proposed Development's compliance with all policy requirements, as outlined within the relevant NPSs and any other planning policy documents the Applicant considers may be both important and relevant.
- Section 9 presents the conclusions of the Planning Statement and the planning balance.

2. Design Approach

- 2.1.1. In accordance with policy requirements, the approach to achieving good design was considered at the outset of the project, and the Applicant developed a framework for good design which was then used to inform the proposals from an early stage.
- 2.1.2. Good design outcomes will be secured in the detailed design of the Proposed Development, in accordance with the ES assessment, via control documents secured by the **draft DCO [EN010149/APP/3.1]**. Adherence to the control documents will secure good design outcomes, secure mitigation to manage the Proposed Development in accordance with the conclusions of the ES, and provide flexibility. A full list of control documents is set out in the **Guide to the Application [EN010149/APP/1.2]**.
- 2.1.3. The Applicant adopted 10 Strategic Principles to guide the design of the Proposed Development at the early stages of the project, which the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and National Infrastructure Commission informed. These Strategic Principles are set out in section 4.3 of the **Design Approach Document [EN010149/APP/7.3]**.
- 2.1.4. These 10 Strategic Principles are the foundation on which project-level design principles (hereby referred to as 'Project Principles') were subsequently developed by the Applicant to facilitate the practical application of the Strategic Principles at the project level.
- 2.1.5. The Project Principles are based on an understanding of the Proposed Development's local context, the people it would affect, and the potential benefits and outcomes it can deliver. The Project Principles drive design-related decision-making throughout the Proposed Development's lifecycle and are continually tested and improved in response to further baseline survey work, design evolution, environmental assessment, and stakeholder feedback to secure the best outcomes at detailed design. All the Project Principles are described in section 4.4 of the **Design Approach Document [EN010149/APP/7.3]**.
- 2.1.6. Design Commitments have been developed to support the practical application of the Project Principles and to secure design features to control the Proposed Development when the detailed design is undertaken once consent has been granted. They are secured via requirement 5 in the **Draft DCO [EN010149/APP/3.1]**.
- 2.1.7. Design Commitments are needed to secure elements of the design that are not covered by other Control Documents. These commitments include commitments relating to the size, type, and colour of elements of the Proposed Development. A full list of commitments is set out in **Design Commitments [Ref EN010149/APP7.4]**.

- 2.1.8. Good design has been a fundamental consideration from the outset of the Proposed Development. The **Design Approach Document [EN010149/APP/7.3]** demonstrates how good design has been embedded in the Proposed Development via a clear set of project level design principles, termed Project Principles, how they have provided a shared understanding of desired outcomes for the Proposed Development, provided a framework for decision making, and ultimately driven good design outcomes that will be secured by the **Draft DCO [EN010149/APP/3.1]**.
- 2.1.9. The policy and guidance documents that have informed the Applicant's approach to good design include EN-1, EN-3 and the National Infrastructure Commission's (NICs) 'Design Principles for National Infrastructure' report **[Ref 1.4]**. **Section 5 and Appendix 3 Policy Compliance Assessment Tables** of this Planning Statement provide a comprehensive assessment against these policy and guidance documents. New advice on good design for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIP) **[Ref 8]** has been issued by the Planning Inspectorate shortly before submission of the DCO Application. The Applicant has undertaken an initial review of the advice and considers that the development of the Proposed Development broadly aligns with it
- 2.1.10. The diagram below sets out the design framework that has informed the design approach in diagrammatic form for ease of reference.:

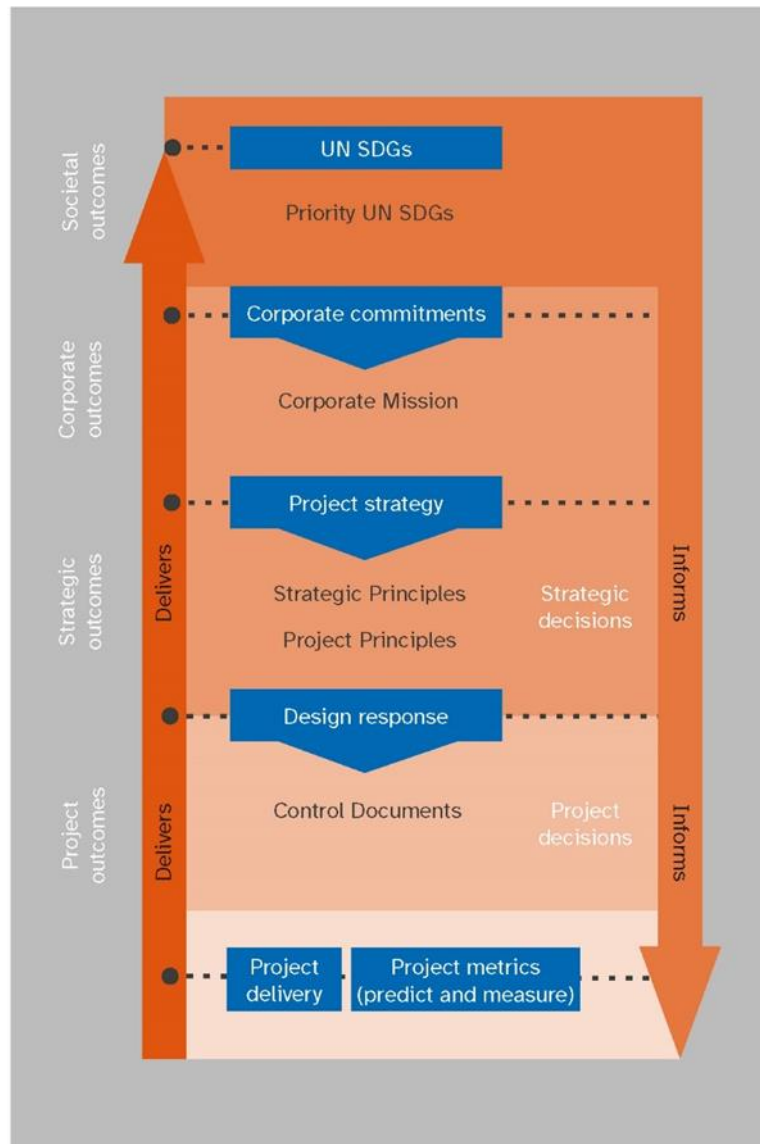


Figure 2: Design Framework

3. Need For and Benefits of the Proposed Development

3.1. Need for the Proposed Development

- 3.1.1. This section sets out the need for the Proposed Development and how it is supported by international and national legislation and policy. It summarises key points from the **Statement of Need [EN010149/APP/7.1]** and includes a summary of the other benefits delivered by the Proposed Development.
- 3.1.2. Urgent and unprecedented actions are required on a global scale to halt climate change. A rapid increase in the supply of low carbon electricity is needed for the UK to meet its legally binding climate change targets. Solar generation is a critical part of the UK's strategy to achieve net zero by 2050, a key step towards which is the government's national mission for 'Clean Power by 2030'. This is further explained within section 2.4 of the **Statement of Need [EN010149/APP/7.1]**.
- 3.1.3. The NPSs, which came into force in January 2024, established the policy need for new renewable energy generation. This section discusses the key drivers underpinning the need for renewable energy within the UK and the Government's policy that there is an urgent need for new energy NSIPs.
- 3.1.4. The NPSs confirm that large-scale ground-mounted solar farms have a critical role to play in achieving the government's aims and establishes a critical national priority (CNP) for low-carbon infrastructure, including large-scale solar farms, because of the decarbonisation, energy security and affordability benefits that they deliver.
- 3.1.5. The NPSs also confirm that assets that provide flexibility to the national electricity system, or the energy system generally, are also needed to achieve national decarbonisation and energy security aims. The NPSs state that the government supports solar energy, which is co-located with storage to maximise flexibility and land use efficiency. The Proposed Development, a large-scale solar plus energy storage scheme, fully aligns with the government's aims.
- 3.1.6. The NPSs explain that the availability of grid connection, suitable irradiance levels and local topography are key inputs to the selection of sites suitable for large-scale solar generation developments. The number of locations within the UK where large-scale solar generation is suitable is therefore likely to be limited, and this is a material issue when considering how the UK is to meet the urgent need for low-carbon generation as is set out in the NPSs. **Appendix 1** and **Appendix 3** of this Planning Statement provide a comprehensive assessment, which should be read in conjunction with this section.

- 3.1.7. The **Statement of Need [EN010149/APP/7.1]** concludes that the decarbonisation, security of supply and affordability benefits delivered by the Proposed Development to the national urgent need for low-carbon generation should be accorded very significant weight in the planning balance.
- 3.2. **National Policy Context**
- 3.2.1. The legal requirement to achieve net zero underpins the urgent need for the delivery of large capacities of consentable and affordable electricity generation schemes which make best use of Great Britain's natural low-carbon energy resources and available grid connection points.
- 3.2.2. Paragraph 4.2.1 of EN-1 sets out that the *"Government has committed to fully decarbonising the power system by 2035, subject to security of supply, to underpin its 2050 net zero ambitions"*. To fully decarbonise the power system within such timeframes, the Government has concluded, through paragraph 4.2.4 of EN-1, that *"there is a critical national priority (CNP) for the provision of nationally significant low carbon infrastructure"*.
- 3.2.3. The critical national priority for nationally significant low-carbon infrastructure, the definition of which includes solar PV, is set out in paragraph 4.2.5 of EN-1. The urgent national need for energy-generating stations set out in both N-1 and EN-3 is of great significance to the determination of the Proposed Development. Paragraph 3.3.63 of EN-1 explains that:
- 3.2.4. *"Subject to any legal requirements, the urgent need for CNP Infrastructure to achieving our energy objectives, together with the national security, economic, commercial, and net zero benefits, will in general outweigh any other residual impacts not capable of being addressed by application of the mitigation hierarchy. Government strongly supports the delivery of CNP Infrastructure and it should be progressed as quickly as possible"*
- 3.2.5. In addition to the recognised need to deploy nationally significant low carbon CNP infrastructure, EN-1 also recognises that the UK's energy security and Net Zero ambitions will *"only"* be delivered if we can enable the development of new low-carbon sources of energy at *"speed and scale."*
- 3.2.6. Paragraph 4.2.5 of EN-1 defines the relevant low carbon infrastructure that is captured by CNP policy. It states that for electricity generation this relates to *"all onshore and offshore generation that does not involve fossil fuel combustion"*. There is a presumption under the NPSs that the urgent need for CNP infrastructure will outweigh any residual effects in all but the most exceptional cases (paragraph 4.1.7 of EN-1). This presumption does not apply to residual impacts that present an unacceptable risk to, or interference with, human health and public safety, defence, irreplaceable habitats, or unacceptable risk to achieving net zero. Where no such

residual impacts exist, the presumption weighs in favour of the need for CNP infrastructure.

- 3.2.7. EN-3 reaffirms that the Government sees Solar Photovoltaic Generation as *“a key part of the government's strategy for low-cost decarbonisation of the energy sector”* (paragraph 2.10.9). Paragraph 2.10.10 states, *“Solar also has an important role in delivering the government's goals for greater energy independence. The British Energy Security Strategy states that government expects a five-fold increase in combined ground and rooftop solar deployment by 2035 (up to 70GW). It sets out that government is supportive of solar that is “co-located with other functions (for example, agriculture, onshore wind generation, or storage) to maximise the efficiency of land use”.*
- 3.2.8. Solar generation is expected to make an important contribution to the UK's renewable energy generating capacity towards 2050.
- 3.2.9. The NPSs demonstrate that:
- 3.2.10. The need for solar technology (as a renewable source) in GB is urgent and significant and has increased, with nationally significant solar technology now defined as CNP infrastructure (EN-1 Section 3.2 and paragraphs: 3.3.62, 4.2.4, 4.2.5, EN-3 paragraphs 2.10.9)
- Large-scale solar is technically and economically feasible EN-3 paragraph (2.10.14)
 - Large-scale solar can and will bring benefits for the UK (EN-3 paragraphs 2.10.11, 2.10.89) and
 - The demand for electricity is likely to increase significantly in the coming years (EN-1 paragraph 3.3.3)
 - Flexibility in energy supply is also needed (EN-1 paragraphs 3.3.3, 3.3.5 and 3.4.13)
- 3.2.11. The **Statement of Need [EN010149/APP/7.1]** explains that the development of large-scale solar generation reflects the national policy position that there is a critical national priority for nationally significant low-carbon infrastructure, including solar generation, and that solar is a key part of the national strategy for low cost decarbonisation of the energy sector. It builds upon the case made in the NPSs to demonstrate why the development such as the Proposed Development is urgently needed at the scale proposed, why the proposed location is highly suitable for such a scheme, and how the Proposed Development also addresses all relevant aspects of established and emerging government energy and climate change policy and commitments.

3.3. Other Benefits of the Proposed Development

3.3.1. The Proposed Development will deliver other benefits as well as significantly contributing to meeting policy commitments and legal decarbonisation targets for securing renewable energy. These benefits occur during different stages of the Proposed Development's lifetime. The Proposed Development includes the following other benefits:

- Proposed enhancements and improvements to the local footpath and cycle network including the provision of new PRowWs:
 - Linking RAF Digby to Scopwick.
 - Providing a connection between the existing PRow west of the A15 to New England Lane.
 - Providing a connection across the A15 by linking Temple Road to Bloxham Woods Car Park.
- The creation of four new permissive paths:
 - A new permissive path along the western edge of the Proposed Development linking New England Lane to Temple Road, north of Brauncewell (approx. length 4,130m).
 - A new permissive path connecting the B1191 (Heath Road) with the existing PRow between RAF Digby and Rowston (Rows/5/1) (approx. length 1,610m).
 - A new permissive path linking Bloxholm Wood to Brauncewell Village (approx. length 1,120m).
 - New permissive paths to provide a series of circular walking loops from Bloxholm Woods (approx. length 1,720m).
- A new community growing area to the north of Scopwick. The community growing area would be located adjacent to existing community facilities along Vicarage Lane (including Scopwick Cemetery, park and play area) and is adjacent to the Spires and Steeples Trail and Stepping Out Scopwick Loop. The community growing area would be secured via the **oLEMP [EN010149/APP/7.9]** and allows for permissive access 364 days a year to an area of up to 2ha for community use during the operation of the Proposed Development. The detailed design of the space would be developed post-DCO consent in conjunction with the Community Liaison Group.
- Providing a variety of biodiversity benefits including: new habitat for invertebrates, reptiles, amphibians, small mammals and birds; vegetated cover for foraging and dispersal, to maintain bat flight lines across the landscape, and provide a winter seed source for birds. Set out within the **oLEMP [EN01049/APP/7.9]**
- The Proposed Development commits to delivering a minimum Biodiversity Net Gain of 10% as secured within the **oLEMP [EN01049/APP/7.9]**. This has been assessed through the **ES Volume**

3, Appendix 7.14: Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment [EN010149/APP/6.3].

- Provision of an **Outline Employment, Skills and Supply Chain Plan [EN01049/APP/7.20]**, which will:
 - Increase direct and indirect employment and opportunities;
 - Lever potential of the Proposed Development and other similar schemes in the local area, to encourage the next generation to take up careers in the renewable energy sector and invest their futures in Lincolnshire;
 - Engage effectively with local businesses and wider supply chain, and
 - Assist in development and dissemination of local knowledge and skills relating to renewable energy infrastructure.
- The Applicant has an established record of adding legacy value through supply chains and has committed to promoting the delivery of economic benefits generated by the Proposed Development to residents and business. on the Proposed Development and catalysing increased capabilities and specialisms in green construction and manufacturing across Lincolnshire. This is set out within the **Outline Employment, Skills and Supply Chain Plan [EN01049/APP/7.20]**.

3.3.2. The Applicant considers that the contribution these benefits would make should carry significant weight in the planning balance. Section 8 of this Planning Statement sets out how this has been considered and the contribution that they make to the overall conclusion that development consent should be granted for the Proposed Development.

3.3.3. While not a consideration for the SoS, The Applicant is proposing a Community Fund of £400 per megawatt of installed capacity per year from the start of operation and lasting throughout the lifetime of the Proposed Development. It is envisaged that it would be managed by an independent third party and delivered in partnership with the local community. Local people would be able to advise on the fund strategy and spend, to prioritise issues that are important to the local area.

3.3.4. The total amount of funding would be based on the final installed capacity of the Proposed Development. The Community Fund would be index linked from the first payment, with the RPI base rate linked to the operation date of the Proposed Development and reviewed annually.

4. Site Context

4.1. Introduction

4.1.1. This section summarises the physical characteristics of the Site and its surrounding context, including policy allocations and designations.

4.1.2. The Proposed Development encompasses approximately 1,280 hectares (ha) located within the administrative areas of North Kesteven District Council and Lincolnshire County Council (the 'Site') as shown in **ES Volume 2, Figure 1.1: Location Plan [EN010149/APP/6.2]**.

4.1.3. The site is close to the settlements of Blankney, Scopwick, Kirkby Green, and Ashby de la Launde. The settlements of Metheringham, Ruskington, Navenby, and Digby are also within 3km of the Site.

4.2. Site Location

4.2.1. The Site contains three parcels of land: Springwell West, Springwell Central and Springwell East. These parcels are outlined in **ES Volume 2, Figure 1.2 [EN010149/APP/6.2]** and detailed further within paragraph 2.3.3 of **ES Volume 1, Chapter 2: Location of the Proposed Development [EN010149/APP/6.1]**.

4.2.2. The Site predominantly consists of agricultural fields interspersed with hedgerows, small woodland blocks, and farm access tracks. The hedgerows within the Site range between lengths of dense, tall vegetation (shrub and tree species) and thin lines of vegetation with sporadic shrubs and trees present.

4.2.3. The land within the Site is currently used for agriculture. The fields typically contain dried grass, lucerne, maize, spring barley, sugar beet, winter barley, vining peas and winter wheat.

4.2.4. There is variation in the features immediately surrounding each of the distinct land parcels within the Site, as presented below and illustrated on **ES Volume 2, Figure 2.1: Environmental Considerations [EN010149/APP/6.2]**:

- Springwell West: Springwell West forms the southernmost parcel of land within the Site and is intersected by the A15. This parcel is characterised by relatively open agricultural landscape and lies adjacent to the Bloxham Wood Nature Reserve in the south-east.
- Springwell Central: Springwell Central forms the central parcel of land within the Site, providing connectivity between Springwell West and Springwell East. This parcel is directly adjacent to RAF Digby and B1191 to the west, Ashby de la Launde to the south and relatively open agricultural fields to the east.

- Springwell East: Springwell East forms the northern and easternmost parcel of land within the Site. This parcel of land is bounded by the settlements of Scopwick to the south, Kirkby Green to the south-east, Blankney in the north, the B1188 to the west and the Peterborough - Lincoln railway line to the east.

4.2.5. The Site is intersected by the A15 Sleaford Road, which heads north to south within Springwell West. The adjoining B1191 lies west of Springwell Central and south of Springwell East, providing direct access to RAF Digby, Scopwick, and the surrounding villages.

4.2.6. The following roads can be found within and surrounding the Site:

- A15 - A principal two-way single carriageway road which forms part of the primary road network, running in a north to south direction, bisecting Springwell West;
- B1191 (Heath Road) - A two-way single carriageway road which splits Springwell West and Springwell Central in a south-west to north-east direction;
- B1188 - A two-way single carriageway road which splits Springwell Central and Springwell East in a north to south direction;
- B1202 (Metheringham Heath Lane) - A two-way single carriageway road which runs in a west to east direction between the A15 and B1188 just north of Metheringham; and
- Local minor roads:
 - Navenby Lane - A two-way single carriageway road;
 - Bloxholm Lane - A two-way single carriageway road which runs between the B1202 and the B1188;
 - Gorse Hill Lane - partly unsurfaced rural road which runs in an east to west direction from the A15 to Pottergate Road at the northern extent of Springwell West; and
 - Temple Road - a two-way single carriageway road which runs in an east to west direction from the A15 to Pottergate Road and A607 at the south of Springwell West.

4.2.7. There is an extensive network of public rights of way (PRoW) which link with the surrounding settlements. These are described as follows:

- Public Footpath (AshL/11/1) - Bloxham;
- Public Footpath (Rows/5/1) - RAF Digby;
- Public Footpath (AshL/4/1) - adjacent to the A15, south of Gorse Hill Lane;
- Restricted Byway (Scop/12/1) - West of Scopwick;

- Public Footpath (Scop/3/1) - North of Scopwick;
- Public Bridleway (Scop/1135/1, Scop/1135/2, Scop/1135/3, Scop/1136/1) - North of Scopwick (part of the Scopwick Loop);
- Restricted Byway (Scop/11/1, Scop/11/3, Scop/11/4) - North of Scopwick (part of the Scopwick Loop);
- Restricted Byway (Scop/10/2) - North of Scopwick (Trundle Lane);
- Public Footpath (Blan/737/1) - Scopwick/Blankney (part of the Spires and Steeples Trail);
- Public Footpath (Scop/7/1, Scop/7/2) - North of Kirkby Green (part of the Kirby Green Loop);
- Public Footpath (Blan/4a/1, Blan/4/2, Scop/7/3) - South of Blankney (part of the Blankney Circuit);
- Public Footpath (Scop/1134/1) - South of Blankney;
- Public Footpath (Blan/4/3) - East of Blankney;
- Public Footpath (Blan/5/1) - East of Blankney;
- Public Footpath (Scop/738/1, Scop/739/1) - North of Kirkby Green;
- Public Footpath (Scop/8/1) - North of Kirkby Green; and
- Public Footpath (Scop/8/2) - North of Kirby Green.

4.2.8. Further information related to access is presented within **ES Volume 1, Chapter 14: Traffic and Transport [EN010149/APP/6.1]**.

4.3. Designations and Allocations

4.3.1. The Site has been selected and designed to avoid designated areas. It is not covered by any statutory ecological designations and no ancient woodland. None of the land within the Site is covered by any statutory landscape designations, i.e., National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) or National Landscapes.

4.3.2. The Metheringham Heath Quarry Geological Site of Specific Scientific Interest (SSSI), designated for being the lower part of the Lincolnshire Limestone, is the closest statutory geological designation and is located 2km north of the Site.

4.3.3. The majority of the Site is within Flood Zone 1, with several fields at the north-eastern extent of Springwell East located in Flood Zones 2 and 3, as shown on **ES Volume 2, Figure 2.1: Environmental Considerations [EN010149/APP/6.2]**.

4.3.4. Four Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) are located within the Site, as illustrated in **ES Volume 2, Figure 2.1: Environmental Considerations [EN010149/APP/6.2]**.

- 4.3.5. There are three designated heritage assets, comprising one Grade II listed building, Mile Post (20m south of Ashby Farm Lodge), Brauncewell medieval village scheduled monument and Blankney conservation area are located within or partly within the Site. There are several designated heritage assets within 5km of the Site, as illustrated in **ES Volume 2, Figure 2.1: Environmental Considerations [EN010149/APP/6.2]**.
- 4.3.6. The Scopwick Conservation Area is directly adjacent the Order Limits. Three conservation Areas, Bloxham, Metherringham, and Martin, are located within 3km of the Site.
- 4.3.7. **ES Volume 1, Chapters 6 - 15 [EN010149/APP/6.1]** provides further details of the existing environmental baseline.
- 4.3.8. Part of the Site is located within a Mineral Safeguarding Area (MSA) through a Local Plan Policy requirement. **Appendix 2 Mineral Safeguarding Assessment** to this Planning Statement provides a comprehensive assessment on the impact of the Proposed Development on the MSA, which should be read in conjunction with this section.
- 4.4. **Relevant Planning History**
- 4.4.1. As an agricultural site, the relevant planning history of the land within the Order Limits is very limited with the principal exclusion to this relating to approval for development of a solar PV farm and associated infrastructure (NKDC reference: 14/0937/FUL) for land in Springwell East. The development also benefits from a Certificate of Lawful development confirming that the original planning permission has been technically commenced and, as such, is extant. A schedule of planning history is provided in **Appendix 4**. This indicates that there are no pending or extant planning permissions across the Order Limits.

5. Proposed Development

5.1. Introduction

5.1.1. This section provides an overview description of the Proposed Development, including its components and proposed construction, operation, and decommissioning activities. **ES Volume 1, Chapter 3: Proposed Development Description [EN010149/APP/6.1]** contains the full project description. **ES Volume 1, Chapter 2: Location of the Proposed Development [EN010149/APP/6.1]** provides an overview of the Proposed Development's location.

5.1.2. The Proposed Development is described in Schedule 1 of the **Draft DCO [EN010149/APP/3.1]**, where the "authorised development" is divided into work packages. The Work Numbers (Work No.) for those packages are identified below and are referred to throughout the ES and correspond to the **Works Plans [EN010149/APP/2.3]**.

5.2. Components of the Site

5.2.1. Springwell Solar Farm (the 'Proposed Development') is a proposed solar photovoltaic (PV) electricity generating and battery storage facility with associated infrastructure which would allow for the generation and export of electricity exceeding 50 megawatts (MW). The Proposed Development encompasses approximately 1,280 hectares (ha) located within the administrative areas of North Kesteven District Council and Lincolnshire County Council.

5.2.2. The area subject to the DCO Application (the Order Limits) where the Proposed Development will be carried out is shown as the Order Limits. The principal components of the Proposed Development include:

- Solar PV development including;
 - Ground-mounted Solar PV generating station. The generating station will include Solar PV modules and mounting structures;
 - Balance of Solar System (BoSS), which comprises inverters, transformers, and switchgear;
- 400kV Grid Connection Corridor to connect the Springwell Substation to the proposed National Grid Navenby Substation;
- Satellite Collector Compounds comprising switchgear, transformers, ancillary equipment and operation, maintenance, security and welfare units;
- A project substation (the 'Springwell Substation') compound, which will include the substation, main collector compound, switching and control equipment, office/control/welfare/security buildings, storage areas, and provisions for vehicular parking and material laydown;

- Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) compound, including batteries and associated inverters, transformers, switchgear and ancillary equipment and their containers, enclosures, monitoring systems, air conditioning, electrical cables, fire safety infrastructure and operation, maintenance, security and welfare facilities;
- Underground cabling will connect the Solar PV modules and BESS compound to the BoSS, collector compounds, and the Springwell Substation.
- Ancillary infrastructure works, including boundary treatments, security equipment, earthing devices, fencing, lighting, earthworks, surface water management, internal tracks and any other works identified as necessary to enable the development;
- Landscaping, habitat management, biodiversity enhancement and amenity improvements; and
- Works to facilitate vehicular access to the Site.

5.2.3. The **Design Approach Document [EN010149/APP/7.3]** provides further details of how the Proposed Development has fulfilled the requirement for good design. This includes the evolution and application of Project Principles, which have been used to inform the planning and design process to date and the **Design Commitments [EN010149/APP/7.4]** will continue to inform the design at later stages of the project.

5.3. Existing Site Features

5.3.1. The existing hedgerows, woodland, ditches, ponds and field margins will be retained within the Order Limits, with the exception of small breaks and/or crossings required for new access tracks, security fencing, cable routes and new access junctions. Any hedgerow or ditch crossings will be designed to use existing agricultural gateways/tracks or gaps in field boundaries (where practicable). The width of any new crossings will be kept to a minimum. Where a cable crosses a hedgerow and the hedgerow is removed, these will be reinstated post-construction.

5.3.2. To create the points of access, vegetation will need to be removed to either widen an existing field access or create a new point of access. The vegetation on either side of the point of access will need to be removed or managed to create visibility splays. Where vegetation removal/pruning is required for access and/or visibility splays, the works will be limited to the required amount to achieve the appropriate access/visibility. Pruning of vegetation will be preferred over removal wherever possible. Further details can be found in the **Outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan [EN010149/APP/7.9]**. A plan showing the locations of the primary and secondary access points and a plan showing the proposed areas of vegetation removal is provided in **ES Volume 2, Figure 3.4: Construction and Operational Access Parameter Plan**

[EN010149/APP/6.2] and Figure 3.11: Vegetation Removal Parameter Plan [EN010149/APP/6.2].

- 5.3.3. The existing PRowS that cross the Site have been retained and incorporated within multifunctional green corridors. The exact construction phasing and methodology are not currently known; therefore, there may be a need to temporarily divert PRowS during the construction phase for up to 6 months, as set out within the **Outline Public Rights of Way and Permissive Path Management Plan [EN010149/APP/7.12]** and **Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan [EN010149/APP/7.7]**. Works are shown on the **Streets, Rights of Way and Access Plans [EN010149/APP/2.4]**, which show the locations where existing routes may be affected. Measures will be implemented to maintain public safety, the details of which are set out within the **Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan [EN010149/APP/7.7]**.
- 5.4. **Flexibility and Development Capacity**
- 5.4.1. The Applicant wishes to retain flexibility regarding the design detail of certain components of the Proposed Development, as is acknowledged in EN-1 Part 4.3, Section 2.6 and Paragraph 2.10.70 of EN-3. The extent of flexibility sought by the Applicant is described in **ES Volume 1, Chapter 3: Proposed Development Description [EN010149/APP/6.1]**.
- 5.4.2. Paragraph 4.3.11 of EN-1 recognises that in some instances, it may not be possible at the time of the application for development consent for all aspects of the proposal to have been settled in precise detail. Paragraph 4.3.12 continues that where some details are still to be finalised, the ES should assess, to the best of the Applicant's knowledge, what the likely worst-case environmental, social, and economic effects of the Proposed Development will be.
- 5.4.3. Paragraph 2.10.70 of EN-3 states that not all aspects of the proposal for solar PV development may have been settled in precise detail at the point of application. Such aspects, including the type, number, and dimensions of panels, layout, and spacing, are among the aspects that are not settled down in a final design. It continues to state in paragraph 2.10.71 that applications may include a range of options based on different panel numbers, types, layouts, and whether storage will be installed (with the option to install further panels as a substitute).
- 5.4.4. It is important to note that the exact design details of the Proposed Development cannot be confirmed until consent is granted and the construction tendering process for the design has been completed. The local planning authority would be required to approve the detailed design in advance of any part of Works No. 1 to 6 and 9 commencing should development consent be granted. The detailed design must be in accordance with Requirement 5 of the **Draft DCO [EN010149/APP/3.1]** and the **Works Plans [EN010149/APP/2.3]**.

- 5.4.5. This is to allow for flexibility to accommodate changes in technological advancements. For example, the enclosure or building sizes may vary depending on the contractor selected, their specific configuration, and plant selection. This is particularly important to maintaining flexibility due to the rapid pace of change in solar PV and energy storage technologies, as technology that does not currently exist could be utilised. Therefore, sufficient flexibility has been sought for the final design within the DCO Application.
- 5.4.6. Establishing the maximum parameters enables a robust assessment of likely significant environmental effects to be undertaken within this ES for topics where the nature of the assessment requires a specific level of detail, such as maximum heights, massing, or noise levels. Thus, the assessment parameters form the basis of the assessment. The assessment parameters are detailed in the works descriptions below, which are linked to Schedule 1 within the **Draft DCO [EN010149/APP/3.1]** and are in full in **ES Volume 3, Appendix 3.1: Project Parameters [EN010149/APP/6.3]**, the **Works Plans [EN010149/APP/2.3]** and a number of Control Documents as listed with the **Guide to the Application [EN010149/APP/1.1]** and supported by the following figures presented in **ES Volume 2 [EN010149/APP/6.2]**:
- Figure 3.1: DCO Zonal Masterplan
 - Figure 3.2: Height Parameter Plan
 - Figure 3.3: Green Infrastructure Parameter Plan
 - Figure 3.4: Construction and Operational Access Parameter Plan
- 5.4.7. Solar panels generate electricity in direct current (DC) form. PV modules feed into inverters which convert electricity to alternating current (AC). Paragraph 2.10.50 of the EN-3 recognises that because the inverter is separate from the panels, the total capacity of a solar farm can be measured either in terms of the combined capacity of installed solar panels (measured in DC) or in terms of the combined capacity of installed inverters (measured in AC).
- 5.4.8. Paragraph 2.10.51 of EN-3 identifies that for the purposes of determining the capacity thresholds in Section 15 of the Planning Act 2008, all forms of generation other than solar are currently assessed on an AC basis, however a practice has developed previously whereby solar farms are assessed on their DC capacity. It continues that from the date of designation of the update of EN-3 (17 January 2024), for the purpose of Section 15 of the Planning Act 2008, the maximum combined capacity of the installed inverters measured in AC should be used for determining the solar site capacity.

Associated Development

- 5.4.9. From paragraph 3.1.4 and following in the Explanatory Memorandum, all aspects of the Proposed Development that comprise the associated development are considered against the relevant tests and examples provided in the above mentioned guidance.
- 5.4.10. In regard to the inclusion of BESS within the Proposed Development, the Applicant proposes to install BESS to provide aid in the integration of high levels of renewable generation into the electricity market. This is in response to a developing need for renewable energy. This provides a level of flexibility to the electricity network to manage demand.
- 5.4.11. Paragraph 3.3.25 of EN-1 recognises that storage has a key role to play in achieving net zero and providing flexibility to the energy system. Paragraph 3.3.26 continues to state that *"storage is needed to reduce the costs of the electricity system and increase reliability by storing surplus electricity in times of low demand to provide electricity when demand is higher"*.
- 5.4.12. The BESS is considered to form Associated Development, in accordance with the 'Planning Act 2008: Guidance on associated development applications or major infrastructure projects. The guidance sets out 4 principles related to Associated Development:
- (i) *The definition of associated development requires a direct relationship between associated development and the principal development. Associated development should therefore either support the construction or operation of the principal development, or help address its impacts.*
 - (ii) *Associated development should not be an aim in itself but should be subordinate to the principal development.*
 - (iii) *Development should not be treated as associated development if it is only necessary as a source of additional revenue for the applicant, in order to cross-subsidise the cost of the principal development. This does not mean that the applicant cannot cross-subsidise, but if part of a proposal is only necessary as a means of cross-subsidising the principal development then that part should not be treated as associated development.*
 - (iv) *Associated development should be proportionate to the nature and scale of the principal development. However, this core principle should not be read as excluding associated infrastructure development (such as a network connection) that is on a larger scale than is necessary to serve the principal development if that associated infrastructure provides capacity that is likely to be required for another proposed major infrastructure project. When deciding whether it is appropriate for infrastructure which is on a larger scale than is necessary to serve a project to be treated as*

associated development, each application will have to be assessed on its own merits. For example, the Secretary of State will have regard to all relevant matters including whether a future application is proposed to be made by the same or related developer as the current application, the degree of physical proximity of the proposed application to the current application, and the time period in which a future application is proposed to be submitted.

- 5.4.13. The proposed BESS will primarily support the solar development by storing generated electricity and exporting it to the National Grid at times of demand. It is intrinsically linked to the principal development in that it provides support to increase operational efficiency in a way that the principal development cannot achieve on its own. The BESS's primary function cannot exist without the principal development, however, the grid connection agreement does also allow for import, storage and redistribution of electricity from and to the National Grid. The capacity of the BESS is less than the potential peak generation of the Solar PV development. The Applicant considers the Associated Development tests set out above are met in terms of the inclusion of the BESS within the Proposed Development.

5.5. Lifetime of the Development

- 5.5.1. EN-3 discusses typical project lifetimes for solar photovoltaic generation projects in section 2.10. Paragraph 2.10.65 notes that an upper limit of 40 years is typical for a solar farm, although applicants may seek consent without a time-period or for differing time-periods of operation. Paragraph 2.10.68 goes on to note that decommissioning of solar PV panels can be achieved relatively easily and cheaply.
- 5.5.2. Impacts on the use of the land are assessed in the Environmental Statement. The Applicant is seeking a time limited consent across two phases (i.e. 40 years operation of each phase). The Proposed Development currently has two phased grid connection dates of 2028 and 2030.
- 5.5.3. As noted in EN-3, it is recognised that solar panel efficiency deteriorates over time, and the electrical infrastructure will have an operational lifespan, after which it will need to be replaced or removed. The service life of all assets is set out in **ES Volume 1, Chapter 3: Proposed Development Description [EN010149/APP/6.1]**. Assets with a service life of 40 years which comprises the majority of the components (excluding the BESS, switchgear and inverters) would not require any replacement unless damaged or faulty.
- 5.5.4. In line with paragraph 2.10.69 of EN-3, the ES sets out how the Proposed Development would be decommissioned at the end of the operational life of the generating station. The **Draft DCO [EN010149/APP/3.1]** includes a

requirement 19 that the Proposed Development must be decommissioned in accordance with the **oDEMP [EN010149/APP/7.13]**.

5.6. Construction, Operation and Decommissioning

Construction

- 5.6.1. The construction phase is anticipated to be split into two phases over a 48-month construction period and commissioning. Subject to being granted consent, the earliest construction is anticipated to start in 2027, which has been the basis for the purposes of all ES assessments. The final programme will depend on the detailed layout design and potential environmental constraints on the timing of construction activities.
- 5.6.2. The Proposed Development currently has phased grid connection dates of 2028 and 2030. Construction works are anticipated to commence as soon as possible in Q1 2027 and run until Q4 2030. As such, there is a potential likelihood of overlapping construction works on the different parts of the Sites. Details within Section 3.14 of **ES Volume 1, Chapter 3: Proposed Development Description [EN010149/APP/6.1]**.
- 5.6.3. An **Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (oCEMP) [EN010149/APP/7.7]** has been prepared to support the DCO Application and secured through Requirement 12 of the **Draft DCO [EN010149/APP/3.1]**. The oCEMP sets out the mitigation measures identified through the EIA process to be employed during the construction phase. The oCEMP will form the framework for a detailed CEMP that will be agreed with the NKDC, in consultation with Lincolnshire County Council and the Environment Agency, prior to the commencement of authorised development.
- 5.6.4. An **Outline Construction Traffic Management Plan (oCTMP) [EN010149/APP/7.8]** has been prepared to support the DCO Application and secured through Requirement 14 of the **Draft DCO [EN010149/APP/3.1]**. This includes details on construction logistics and construction worker travel, in addition to information that will guide the delivery of material, plant, equipment, and staff during this proposed construction phase. The oCTMP will form the framework for a detailed CTMP that will be agreed with the Lincolnshire County Council as the local highway authority prior to the commencement of the authorised development.

Operation

- 5.6.5. Onsite activities that are anticipated to be completed during the operational phase of the Proposed Development would include routine servicing, maintenance, and replacement of solar equipment as and when required, as well as management of mitigation and enhancement areas.

- 5.6.6. It is anticipated that up to 24 permanent staff per day would typically be onsite during the operational (including maintenance) phase, with additional staff attending when required for maintenance, replacement of solar equipment, vegetation management and cleaning.
- 5.6.7. In the event of the need to carry out non-routine maintenance works, such as repair and replacing any of the Proposed Development operational equipment, there may be a level of HGV activity required to complete these works within the Order Limits.
- 5.6.8. An **outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (oLEMP) [EN010149/APP/7.9]** has been prepared to support the DCO Application and secured through Requirement 8 of the **Draft DCO [EN010149/APP/3.1]**, which will focus on the management of both the landscape and ecological features. The oLEMP will form the framework for a detailed oLEMP that will be agreed upon with the NKDC, in consultation with Lincolnshire County Council, Natural England and the Environment Agency, prior to the commencement of the authorised development.

Decommissioning

- 5.6.9. The decommissioning phase would involve the removal of all of the Solar PV infrastructure, including the Ground Mounted Solar PV Generating Stations, Collector Compounds, Springwell Substation, BESS and ancillary infrastructure, including any on-site compounds. All concrete, hardstanding areas, foundations for the infrastructure and any internal tracks will be removed to a depth of up to 1m. All the below-ground cables will be left in situ.
- 5.6.10. The decommissioned materials will follow the waste hierarchy such that they will be reused where possible before recycling and disposal are considered. Solar PV modules comprise several materials, including a metal frame, of which approximately 99% can currently be recycled. When decommissioning, options to reuse or recycle available materials will be explored to ensure that as much of the materials as possible are recycled and diverted from landfills.
- 5.6.11. The Solar PV Site would be reinstated in accordance with a detailed Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan (DEMP),. The DEMP will be required to be in accordance with the **outline Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan (oDEMP) [EN010149/APP/7.13]** which has been prepared to support the DCO Application and secured through Requirement 19 of the **Draft DCO [EN010149/APP/3.1]**.
- 5.6.12. Decommissioning will be in accordance with relevant legislation, policy and guidance at the time of decommissioning, and the DEMP will be prepared in accordance with the **oDEMP [EN010149/APP/7.13]**.

- 5.6.13. Decommissioning would include removing any permissive paths and the land will be returned to the landowner. Landscape structural planting, including tree planting, hedgerows, scrub, etc., created to deliver biodiversity mitigation and enhancement associated with the Proposed Development would be left in situ when the Site is handed back to landowners, except for the planting within Tb2, which will be removed to facilitate the releveling and removal of the earth bund to allow the field to be returned to agricultural use. It is assumed that the remaining land would be returned to agricultural use when handed back to the landowner.
- 5.6.14. Decommissioning is expected to take approximately 24 months and may be undertaken in phases.

6. Legislation and Policy Framework

6.1. Overview

6.1.1. This section provides an overview of the legislative framework and the planning policy context for the Proposed Development. Section 8 outlines how the Proposed Development complies with this context where relevant.

6.2. Legislative Context

Planning Act 2008

6.2.1. The Planning Act 2008 established the legal framework for applying for, examining, and determining applications for NSIPs.

6.2.2. The Proposed Development constitutes a NSIP development, in accordance with the Planning Act 2008, as it comprises:

"The construction or extension of a generating station (Part 3, Section 14(1)(a) of the Planning Act 2008) with a generating capacity of more than 50MW (Part 3, Section 15(2)(c))".

6.2.3. In accordance with Part 4 of Planning Act 2008, development consent is required for development to the extent that it is or forms part of an NSIP.

6.2.4. Part 5 of Planning Act 2008 sets out that an application for an order granting development consent must be made to the SoS. 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 Planning Act 2008 while also exceeding these minimum requirements to ensure best practice. A **Consultation Report [EN010149/APP/5.1]** has been prepared that details compliance with sections 42, 47, 49, and 50 of Planning Act 2008.

6.2.5. Part 6 of Planning Act 2008 is to be applied when determining applications for orders granting development consent. Sections 103 to 107 provide the framework for decision-making, which in turn frames the focus of the examination of the application for a Draft Development Consent Order. Section 104 applies when a relevant NPS has effect for a specified NSIP.

6.2.6. In addition to the above, under section 104 (2) of the Planning Act 2008, the SoS must have regard to:

- any national policy statement which has effect in relation to development of the description to which the application relates, determined in
- any local impact report submitted;

- any matters prescribed in relation to development of the description to which the application relates; and
- any other matters which the SoS thinks are both important and relevant to the SoS's decision.

6.2.7. Section 104 (3) of Planning Act 2008 notes that the SoS must decide the Application in accordance with any relevant National Policy Statement(s), except to the extent that one or more of subsections (4) to (8) of section 104 apply which relate to:

(4) Where deciding an application in accordance with the relevant national policy statement would lead to the United Kingdom being in breach of any of its international obligations

(5) Where deciding an application in accordance with the relevant national policy statement would lead to the SoS being in breach of any duty imposed on themselves by or under any enactment

(6) Where deciding an application in accordance with the relevant national policy statement would be unlawful by virtue of any enactment

(7) Where the SoS is satisfied that the adverse impact of the proposed development would outweigh its benefits

(8) Where the SoS is satisfied that any condition prescribed for deciding an application otherwise than in accordance with a national policy statement is met.

6.2.8. The Applicant's response to the specific requirements of Section 104 in the Section 9 of this Planning Statement.

6.2.9. For the purpose of Section 104, the following NPSs have effect in relation to the Proposed Development:

- Overarching NPS for Energy (EN-1)
- NPS for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3); and
- NPS for Electricity Networks Infrastructure (EN-5).

6.2.10. None of the exceptions in subsections (4) to (8) apply in relation to the Proposed Development.

6.2.11. In addition, the Applicant considers that the following planning policy documents are both important and relevant to the SoS's decision and must, therefore, be regarded:

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2023;
- Lincolnshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan (Core Strategy and Development Management Policies) (adopted 2016);
- Joint Lincolnshire Flood Risk and Water Management Strategy 2019-2050;

- Local Transport Plan 5 (LTP 5) (adopted in 2022);
- Central Lincolnshire Local Plan 2018 - 2040 (adopted in 2023), and;
- Scopwick and Kirkby Green Neighbourhood Plan (adopted December 2022).

6.2.12. It is expected that NKDC and LCC will submit Local Impact Reports (LIRs) as the host authorities and the neighbouring authorities may also submit a LIR. The reports should give details of the likely impact of a project on the local authority's area. Sections 104(2)(b) of the Planning Act 2008 explains that the Examining Authority and the Secretary of State must have regard to any LIR submitted when deciding the application, as explained in the updated advice on Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: Advice for Local Authorities.

6.2.13. Finally, the Applicant considers that there are a number of other legislative and policy documents, as summarised below, that are important and relevant to the SoS's decision. **Appendix 3** Policy Compliance Assessment Tables provide a comprehensive assessment, which should be read in conjunction with this section.

6.3. National Policy Statements

6.3.1. The UK Government produces National Policy Statements, and the Energy NPSs (EN-1 to EN-6) set out the Government's policy for the delivery of energy infrastructure and provide the legal framework for planning decisions for major infrastructure projects.

6.3.2. EN-1, EN-3, and EN-5 provide the primary policy basis for deciding the DCO Application. EN-1 provides the overarching policy position and solar PV generation falls within the EN-1 definition of CNP infrastructure. EN-3 outlines the SoS's decision making for solar PV generation considerations.

6.3.3. There is a presumption under the NPSs that the urgent need for CNP infrastructure will outweigh any residual effects in all but the most exceptional cases. This presumption does not apply to residual impacts that present an unacceptable risk to, or interference with, human health and public safety, defence, irreplaceable habitats, or unacceptable risk to achieving net zero. Where no such residual impacts exist, the presumption weighs in favour of the need for CNP infrastructure where it has been demonstrated that the mitigation hierarchy has been applied.

6.3.4. Appendix 3 Policy Compliance Assessment Tables provides detailed evidence of compliance with relevant national and local policy documents and should be read in conjunction with this section.

Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1)

- 6.3.5. EN-1 sets out the national policy for the delivery of energy infrastructure, including solar renewable electricity generation.
- 6.3.6. Part 3 of EN-1 paragraph 3.1.1 explains that the UK Government sees a need for significant amounts of new large scale energy infrastructure to meet its energy objectives and why the UK Government considers that the need for such infrastructure is urgent.
- 6.3.7. The Overarching NPS for Energy EN-1 goes on to stress, through paragraph 4.2.4, that "there is a critical national priority (CNP) for the provision of nationally significant low carbon infrastructure." Low carbon infrastructure includes solar electricity generation that does not involve fossil fuel combustion.
- 6.3.8. Part 3.3 of EN-1 identifies the need for nationally significant energy infrastructure to address energy security objectives and carbon reduction requirements, replace closing generating capacity, and support an increase in renewables supply. The assessment principles (part 4) and generic impacts (part 5) provide a framework of considerations across energy technologies.

National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3)

- 6.3.9. EN-3 together with EN-1, provides the primary basis for decisions on renewable energy NSIPs.
- 6.3.10. The importance of the generation of electricity from renewable sources is stated in Paragraph 1.1.2 of EN-3:
- "Electricity generation from renewable sources of energy is an essential element of the transition to net zero and meeting out statutory targets for the sixth carbon budget (CB6). Our analysis suggests that demand for electricity is likely to increase significantly over the coming years and could more than double by 2050".*
- 6.3.11. EN-3 provides a framework for assessment and technology-specific information for specified renewable energy technologies. Solar PV is included in EN-3 under section 2.10, which includes relevant information on the technology to inform assessment and decision-making.

National Policy Statement for Electricity Networks Infrastructure (EN-5)

- 6.3.12. The NPS for Electricity Networks Infrastructure (EN-5) is the primary basis for decisions on transmission and distribution system NSIPs and associated infrastructure. EN-5's relevance to the Proposed Development is limited to the grid connection. EN-1 paragraph 4.11.4 on grid connection

refers to EN-5 for further guidance on relevant considerations, including the impact of electromagnetic fields (EMFs).

6.4. National Planning Policy Framework

6.4.1. The current NPPF was last updated on 20 December 2023. Paragraph 5 of the NPPF confirms that it does not contain specific policies for NSIPs but that the NPPF may be a relevant matter in decision making. Whilst not specifically addressing NSIPs, the NPPF does set out its objectives to achieve sustainable development by pursuing economic, social and environmental objectives in development.

6.4.2. Draft proposed changes to the current NPPF were published in July 2024. Table 4 of the Planning Policy Tables at Appendix 3 to this Planning Statement set out the Applicant's response to the proposed changes.

Lincolnshire County Council

6.4.3. The Proposed Development lies within the administrative areas of NKDC and LCC. Therefore, the local planning policies relevant to the Proposed Development comprise the following:

- The Lincolnshire Minerals and Waste Plan (Core Strategy and Development Management Policies adopted 2016 and Site Locations adopted 2017)
- Lincolnshire County Council Green Masterplan 2020 - 2025 (adopted 2020)
- Joint Lincolnshire Flood Risk and Water Management Strategy 2019-2050
- 4th Lincolnshire Local Transport Plan 2013/14-2022/23 (adopted April 2013)
- Lincolnshire County Council Highway and Flood Authority, Development Road and Sustainable Drainage Specification and Construction March 2021

North Kesteven District Council

- Central Lincolnshire Local Plan (Adopted April 2023)
- Scopwick and Kirkby Green neighbourhood plan (adopted December 2022)

Emerging Local Planning Policy

- LCC is preparing a new Minerals and Waste Plan, which is at a very early stage (at this stage, expected to be adopted in winter 2024).
- NKDC currently has no emerging planning policy.

- 6.4.4. Paragraphs 4.1.12 - 15 of EN-1 confirm that the SoS may consider development plan documents both important and relevant to their decision-making. This notwithstanding, EN-1 confirms that the NPSs constitute the primary policy documents and would take precedence in the event of a conflict between the NPSs and other matters, given the national significance of the infrastructure.

6.5. Other Policy and Legislation

The Climate Change Act 2008

- 6.5.1. The Climate Change Act set up a framework for the UK to achieve its long-term goals of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and to ensure steps are taken towards adapting to the impact of Climate Change. The Act committed the UK to reducing its greenhouse gas emissions by at least 80% by 2050 when compared with 1990 levels.

The Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) Order 2019

- 6.5.2. In June 2019, legislation was passed to amend the Climate Change Act to set a new ambitious target requiring the UK to bring all greenhouse gas emissions to net zero (i.e. 100% reduction by 2050, compared with the previous target of at least 80% reduction from 1990 levels).

A Green Future: Our 25-Year Plan to Improve the Environment

- 6.5.3. The 25-Year Environment Plan published in 2018 sets out the Government's 25-year plan to improve the environment within a generation. It aims to deliver cleaner air and water in our cities and rural landscapes, protect threatened species, and provide richer wildlife habitats. It calls for an approach to agriculture, forestry, land use and fishing that puts the environment first.
- 6.5.4. It sets out 10 goals which include the achievement of and management of pressure by providing: clean air, clean and plentiful water, thriving plants and wildlife, reduced risk of harm from environmental hazards like flooding and drought; the more sustainable and efficient use of resources from nature; enhanced beauty; heritage and engagement with the natural environment; mitigation and adaptation to climate change; minimisation of waste; management of exposure to chemicals; and enhanced biosecurity.

Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener

- 6.5.5. The Net Zero Strategy, published by the Government in October 2021, builds on the Government's commitments made in the Energy White Paper (2020) and sets out the long-term strategy, policy and proposals to keep the UK on track for future carbon budgets and sets the vision for a decarbonised economy by 2050. Key policies in the Strategy related to UK power generation include:

"By 2035 the UK will be powered entirely by clean electricity, subject to security of supply; [...] 40 GW of offshore wind by 2030, with more onshore, solar and other renewables - with a new approach to onshore and offshore electricity networks to incorporate new local carbon generation and demand in the most efficient manner that takes account of the needs of local communities [...]"

Net Zero: Opportunities for the Power Sector

- 6.5.6. In June 2019 the Government raised the UK's ambition on tackling climate change by legislating for a net-zero greenhouse gas emissions target for the whole economy by 2050. Decarbonising the power sector is integral to achieving this goal and requires major investment in proven technologies, such as solar, which are supported by planning policy at local and national levels.
- 6.5.7. The National Infrastructure Commission (NIC), the official advisor to the Government on infrastructure, has subsequently produced a report, 'NetZero: Opportunities for the Power Sector, in March 2020, which sets out the infrastructure required in order to meet the 2050 target, including the amount of new renewable energy development that would need to be deployed. Importantly, the NIC recommends that the generation mix is up to around 90% renewables. The report recommends that across all scenarios, significant solar, onshore wind, and offshore wind, with between 129-237 GW of renewable capacity, is in operation by 2050, including:
- 56-121 GW of Solar;
 - 18-27 GW of onshore wind; and
 - 54-86 GW of offshore wind.
- 6.5.8. The above requires an increase in installed capacity, including up to nine times more solar than is currently installed in the UK, which is presently around 14.1GW according to the Solar Photovoltaics deployment, August 2022 published by the Department for Business, Energy, & Industrial Strategy (BEIS).
- 6.5.9. Although the above figures are high-level, they demonstrate the amount of new infrastructure that is required. The scale of this need is such that it must be shared throughout the UK and in recognition that climate change is both a national and global issue.

National Infrastructure Strategy

- 6.5.10. The National Infrastructure Strategy (NIS) published in November 2020 sets out plans to transform UK infrastructure, with one of the aims being to put the UK on the path to meeting its net zero emissions target by 2050. The NIS acknowledges that the UK's commitment to achieving net zero emissions by 2050 will require profound changes that will provide huge

opportunities for the UK to build back better. The NIS identifies that to deliver net zero, the share of generation from renewables needs to dramatically increase, and notes that greater generation capacity will need to come from onshore wind and solar. To support this the government has included solar in the 2021/22 Contracts for Difference Allocation Round (AR4) to help *"deliver a diverse generation mix at low cost"* and to realise *"the rate and scale of new projects needed in the near-term to support decarbonisation of the power sector and meet the Net Zero commitment"* while providing other benefits such as diversity of supply through different resource requirements and a geographical separation from other significant renewable technologies.

Environment Act 2021

- 6.5.11. The Environment Act 2021 makes provisions about targets, plans and policies for improving the natural environment. Schedule 15 of the Environment Act 2021 explains biodiversity net gain in nationally significant infrastructure projects. Although these provisions are not yet in force, it is expected that they will come into force in 2025 at which point they will lead to an imposition of a requirement for the *"biodiversity value attributable to the development [to] exceed the pre-development biodiversity value of the on-site habitat by at least 10%"*.

British Energy Security Strategy

- 6.5.12. In April 2022, the Government published the British Energy Security Strategy, which demonstrates the need for secure, clean and affordable British energy for the long term. This states that the Government will be supportive of the effective use of land by encouraging large-scale projects to be located on previously developed or lower-value land, where possible, and to ensure projects are designed to avoid, mitigate, and, where necessary, compensate for the impacts of using greenfield sites. The Government will also support solar that is co-located with other functions (for example, agriculture, onshore wind generation, or storage) to maximise the efficiency of land use.

Powering up Britain (March 2023)

- 6.5.13. Powering up Britain sets out the government's plan to enhance the UK's energy security, seize economic opportunities in the transition and deliver on net zero commitments. The paper is focused on the transition between UK oil and gas to renewable energy sources. In order to meet its goal of quintupling its solar power by 2035, the paper states, regarding large-scale solar development. "Government seeks large scale solar deployment across the UK, looking for development mainly on brownfield, industrial and low/medium grade agricultural land. The Government will therefore not be making changes to categories of agricultural land in ways that might constrain solar deployment".

7. Engagement

- 7.1.1. The Applicant has undertaken a range of engagement activities over the course of developing the Proposed Development. Further information on this is set out in paragraphs 1.2.2 to 1.2.5 of this document, and the submitted **Consultation Report [EN010149/APP/5.1]**.
- 7.1.2. As part of this in-depth engagement, several Statements of Common Ground (SoCGs) have been submitted and drafted as part of this Proposed Development. The SoCGs have adopted a standard format to ensure consistency in the approach taken to document matters both agreed, ongoing discussion and not agreed. The SoCGs are supplemented by a **Statement of Commonality [EN010149/APP/7.26]** which sets out the current areas of agreement across the various parties. This is a live document and will be updated throughout the course of the Examination.
- 7.1.3. The SoCGs which are submitted with the application include the following draft statements:
- Anglian Water
 - Cadent Gas Ltd
 - Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue Service
 - Exolum
 - National Grid Electricity Transmission (NGET)
- 7.1.4. Alongside those submitted, other SoCGs will be progressed over the course of the examination, which will likely include SoCGs with:
- Lincolnshire County Council
 - North Kesteven District Council
 - Environment Agency
 - Historic England
 - Natural England
 - Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust

8. Planning Assessment

8.1. Overview

- 8.1.1. This section considers how the Proposed Development complies with relevant policy. Emphasis is placed on the Energy NPSs, which are the primary policy basis for the SoS's decision. However, reference has been made to the NPPF and local planning policies where they could form important and relevant considerations to the SoS's decision.
- 8.1.2. This section assesses the Proposed Development against Part 4 of EN-1 (Assessment Principles), Part 2.10 of EN-3 (solar photovoltaic generation) and the relevant parts of EN-5. It provides a summary of the Proposed Development's compliance with the key relevant policy(s) on a topic-by-topic basis. This Planning Statement should, therefore, be read alongside the Application's **Appendix 3** Policy Compliance Assessment Tables, the purpose of which is to provide a comprehensive assessment of the Proposed Development's compliance against each relevant national and local planning policy.

Assessment Principles

- 8.1.3. Paragraph 4.1.3 of EN-1 states that, given the level and urgency of the need for infrastructure projects of the types covered by the NPSs, the SoS will start with a presumption in favour of granting consent for applications for energy NSIPs, and that presumption applies unless any more specific and relevant policies set out in the relevant NPSs clearly indicate that consent should be refused.
- 8.1.4. When weighing the adverse impacts against the benefits of energy NSIPs, paragraph 4.1.5 of EN-1 states that the Secretary of State should take into account both the potential benefits, including the contribution to meeting the need for energy infrastructure, job creation, ecological enhancements, and any long-term or wider benefits; any potential adverse impacts, including on the environment, and any long-term and cumulative adverse impacts, as well as any measures to avoid, reduce, mitigate, or compensate for any adverse impacts. Paragraph 4.3.8 advises that any reference to the terms effects, impacts or benefits in EN-1 should be understood to mean significant likely effects, benefits or impacts.
- 8.1.5. Paragraph 4.1.6 of the EN-1 brings to the attention of the SoS that environmental, social, and economic benefits and adverse impacts both nationally, regionally and locally should be taken into account.
- 8.1.6. Paragraph 4.1.7 of the EN-1 sets out that the technology specific NPSs require applicants to mitigate particular impacts as far as possible but should residual adverse effects remain, the Secretary of State should weigh those against the benefits of the Proposed Development. Critically, it goes on to state that for CNP projects (which includes solar and BESS

projects) *"it is likely that the need case will outweigh the residual effects in all but the most exceptional cases"*. Further detail on compliance with the policies for CNP infrastructure is provided later below.

- 8.1.7. Paragraph 4.1.11 confirms that the suite of Energy NPSs have taken into account the NPPF and PPG. EN-1 confirms that the NPS is the primary policy document and would take precedence in the event of a conflict between it and other policy documents that are important and relevant matters, given the national significance of the infrastructure.
- 8.1.8. Section 6.4 of this document sets out the local policy context for the Proposed Development, and tables 5-7 of **Appendix 3** of the Planning Statement provides an assessment of compliance of the Proposed Development with the NPPF and relevant local planning policy. The Applicant agrees with the list of relevant policies set out in the host authorities' response to Statutory Consultation. All relevant policies are addressed in **Appendix 3** to this Planning Statement.
- 8.1.9. EN-1 (paragraph 4.1.18) explains that the SoS may also decide to take into account any development consent obligations under section 106 of the TCPA as amended by section 174 of the Planning Act 2008 that the Applicant agrees with the local authorities.
- 8.1.10. Paragraph 4.1.21 of the EN-1 requires applicants to have considered both the financial and technical viability of the Proposed Development. For the Proposed Development, the Applicant has given due consideration to commercial and financial matters which have informed the decision to proceed with the Proposed Development. The **Funding Statement [EN010149/APP/4.2]** gives consideration to the proposed costs of the development and sets out how the Proposed Development may be funded as well as including details of the financial position of the Applicant.
- 8.1.11. Paragraph 4.1.19 of EN-1 emphasises the importance of early engagement with stakeholders of the Proposed Development. This process of engagement with both public regulators and statutory bodies, alongside those likely to have an interest in the application, is set out within the submitted **Consultation Report [EN010149/APP/5.1]**. In addition, Section 7 of this Planning Statement outlines the Applicant's key engagement undertaken to date.

Part 4.2 of EN-1 Critical national priority for low carbon infrastructure

- 8.1.12. Paragraph 4.2.2 explains that ensuring a smooth transition to abundant, low carbon energy generation will ensure the UK is energy independent, resilient and secure. It identifies the criticality of the deployment of *"new low carbon sources of energy at speed and scale"* in terms of our energy security and net zero ambitions.

- 8.1.13. Paragraph 4.2.4 is fundamental in highlighting the government's position on the criticality of the delivery of low carbon energy generation. It states that the government has *"concluded there is a critical national priority (CNP) for the provision of nationally significant low carbon infrastructure"*.
- 8.1.14. Paragraph 4.2.5 relates to definitions of low carbon infrastructure for the purposes of the CNP policy. It states that *"for electricity generation, all onshore and offshore generation that does not involve fossil fuel combustion"* is included. This confirms that NSIP scale solar PV development is CNP. It also advises the infrastructure relating to the electricity grid is covered, including *"network reinforcement and upgrade works, and associated infrastructure such as substations"*.
- 8.1.15. Paragraph 4.2.6 expands further on how low carbon energy infrastructure should be considered, and references earlier paragraphs in the NPS, namely 3.2.6 to 3.2.8 which confirm that applications for NSIPs covered by EN-1 should be assessed *"on the basis that the government has demonstrated that there is a need for those types of infrastructure which is urgent"*. Paragraph 3.2.7 goes on to state that the SoS has *"determined that substantial weight should be given to this need when considering applications for development consent"*. Paragraph 3.2.8 further advises that there is no requirement on the SoS to consider separately the specific contribution of any individual project in satisfying the need established in EN-1.
- 8.1.16. Paragraph 4.2.7 advises that the CNP policy *applies "following the normal consideration of the need case, the impacts of the project, and the application of the mitigation hierarchy"*. It points out that it is therefore relevant during SoS decision making and with particular reference to any residual impacts that have been identified and should be given consideration by the ExA when making its recommendation to the SoS.
- 8.1.17. Paragraphs 4.2.10 - 4.2.12 cover the applicant's assessment and require the applicant to show how their proposals meet the requirements of the NPS, applying the mitigation hierarchy and any other relevant legal requirements. Applicants are required to *"apply the mitigation hierarchy and demonstrate that it has been applied" and demonstrate that all "residual impacts are those that cannot be avoided, reduced or mitigated"*. It further advises applicants to demonstrate, as far as possible, how residual effects may be compensated for to the extent that the relevant topic specific policy requires compensation.
- 8.1.18. Paragraph 4.2.15 refers to SoS decision making. It states that *"where residual non-HRA or non-MCZ impacts remain after the mitigation hierarchy has been applied, these residual impacts are unlikely to outweigh the urgent need for this type of infrastructure. Therefore, in all but the most exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely that consent will be refused on the basis of these residual impacts"*.

- 8.1.19. Section 4.2 of EN-1 is fundamental to the consideration of this Application. It applies the CNP designation to solar PV development and sets out the framework for decision making with the presumption strongly in favour of the development. This framework includes an onus on the Applicant to demonstrate how the mitigation hierarchy has been applied and that residual impacts should exist only when they have been subject to application of the hierarchy. Where such residual impacts exist following the application of the mitigation hierarchy, EN1 states that they will only outweigh need in the most exceptional of cases. This section of the Planning Statement alongside relevant chapters from the **ES Volume 1, Chapters 6 to 15 [EN010149/APP/6.1]** and the **Design Approach Document [EN010149/APP/7.3]** sets out how potential impacts are addressed including the measures taken to avoid, minimise and mitigate such impacts. The instances where CNP is required to be relied upon due to residual significant effects is in relation to the topics of Landscape and Visual, and Land, Soils and Groundwater, which are considered further below and in the planning balance at Section 9.

Part 4.2 of EN-1 - Habitats and Species Regulations

- 8.1.20. Paragraph 4.2.19 of EN-1 states that, *"where, following Appropriate Assessment, CNP Infrastructure has residual adverse impacts on the integrity of sites forming part of the UK national site network, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, the Secretary of State will consider making a derogation under the Habitats Regulations."*
- 8.1.21. Under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, consideration should be given as to whether a project may have a significant effect on a protected site or any site to which the same degree of protection is applied as a matter of policy, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects. Applicants are required to supply such information as the 'competent authority' may reasonably require for the purposes of the assessment or to enable it to determine whether an Appropriate Assessment is required.
- 8.1.22. Paragraph 4.1.19 of EN-1 confirms that applicants should seek early engagement from the appropriate Statutory Nature Conservation Bodies (SNCB). The report concludes that there are no likely pathways to the single receptor, The Wash (SAC/PA/RAMSAR/SSSI), which lies approximately 35km east of the Site, and as such no Appropriate Assessment at Stage 2 of the HRA process is required. During the consultation Natural England agreed with this conclusion. This is recorded in the **Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) No Significant Effects Report [EN010149/APP/7.17]**.

Part 4.3 of EN-1 - Environmental Effects/Considerations

- 8.1.23. Paragraphs 4.3.1 and 4.3.2 of the EN-1 discuss the requirement that project proposals are required to be accompanied by an Environmental

Statement (ES) describing the aspects of the environment likely to be significantly affected by the project, if the project is subject to the Infrastructure Planning (EIA) Regulations 2017. Paragraph 4.3.3 specifies the range of effects, their duration, and measures for avoiding or mitigating significant effects that must be considered at all project stages.

- 8.1.24. An ES has been submitted with this DCO Application for the Proposed Development. The scope of the submitted ES is in accordance with the **ES Volume 3, Scoping Opinion at Appendix 5.2, [EN010149/APP/6.3]**. In accordance with EN-1, the ES has been structured to enable a clear understanding of the Proposed Development's construction, operational, and decommissioning phases. In addition, it has been prepared in accordance with the policy contained in paragraphs 4.3.1 and 4.3.4 of EN-1.
- 8.1.25. Paragraph 4.3.11 acknowledges that it may not be possible for all elements of an application to be settled in precise detail at the time of submission and that the Applicant should explain where details are yet to be finalised. 4.3.12 goes on to state that where details are still to be finalised, the ES should assess likely worst-case environmental, social and economic effects of the proposed development. This is also known as the application of the 'Rochdale Envelope' approach. Section 3.2 of **Environmental Statement: Volume 1, Chapter 3: Proposed Development Description [EN010149/APP/6.1]** sets out the Applicant's approach which involves: specifying parameter ranges; including details of the maximum and, where relevant, the minimum, size (footprint, width, and height relative to above ordnance datum (AOD)); technology, and; locations of the different elements of the Proposed Development, where flexibility needs to be retained.

Part 4.3 of EN-1 and Part 2.3 of EN-3 - Alternatives and Site Selection

- 8.1.26. **Environmental Statement: Volume 1, Chapter 4: Reasonable Alternatives Considered [EN010149/APP/6.1]**, sets out the Applicant's approach to Alternatives. **The Site Selection Report at Appendix 1** to this Planning Statement demonstrates a consideration of the relevant policy and its applicability to the site selection process that the Applicant has undertaken.
- 8.1.27. Paragraph 4.3.9 of the EN-1 states that: "*...the relevance or otherwise to the decision-making process of the existence (or alleged existence) of alternatives to a proposed development is in the first instance matter of law.*"
- 8.1.28. It goes on to state that "*This NPS does not contain any general requirement to consider alternatives or to establish whether the proposed project represents the best option from a policy perspective. Although there are specific requirements in relation to compulsory acquisition and*

habitats sites, the NPS does not change requirements in relation to compulsory acquisition and habitats sites".

- 8.1.29. Paragraph 4.3.15 advises that applicants are *"obliged to include in their ES, information about the reasonable alternatives they have studied. This should include an indication of the main reasons for the applicant's choice, taking into account the environmental, social and economic effects and including, where relevant, technical and commercial feasibility"*.
- 8.1.30. EN-1 paragraphs 4.3.16 and 4.3.17 further note that: *"In some circumstances, the NPSs may impose a policy requirement to consider alternatives."* And that where *"there is a policy or legal requirement to consider alternatives, the applicant should describe the alternatives considered in compliance with these requirements."*
- 8.1.31. Paragraph 4.3.22 helps set the framework for decision making around alternatives and provides the key principles which should be considered when attributing weight:
- The consideration of alternatives in order to comply with policy requirements should be carried out in a proportionate manner; and
 - Only alternatives that can meet the objectives of the proposed development need to be considered.
- 8.1.32. Paragraph 4.3.23 advises the SoS should be guided by whether there is a *"reasonable prospect of the alternative delivering the same infrastructure capacity... in the same timescale as the proposed development"*. Paragraph 4.3.24 importantly recognises that the SoS should not *"refuse an application for development on one site simply because fewer adverse impacts would result from developing similar infrastructure"*. The paragraph continues to say that the SoS should have regard to the possibility that *"all suitable sites for energy infrastructure of the proposed type may be needed by future proposals"*. There are also specific circumstances where there is a requirement to consider alternatives. The circumstances relating to when they are required and the Applicant's response to these circumstances is set out, below:
- a) Where a scheme would involve the compulsory acquisition of land or interests in land (EN-1 paragraph 4.3.9). The DCO Application is seeking compulsory acquisition powers. Please see the **Statement of Reasons [EN010149/APP/4.1]**, the **Environmental Statement: Volume 1, Chapter 4: Reasonable Alternatives Considered [EN010149/APP/6.1]** and **Appendix 1** to this Planning Statement regarding consideration of alternatives.
 - b) Where a scheme would be located near a sensitive receptor site for air quality (EN-1 paragraph 5.2.7). The Proposed Development is not within an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) nor are there any

AQMAs declared within the North Kesteven District Council administrative area.

- c) Where a scheme would lead to significant harm to biodiversity and geological conservation interests (EN-1 section 5.4). The Proposed Development would not likely give rise to significant harm on such receptors, as reported in **Environmental Statement Volume 1, Chapter 7: Biodiversity, Chapter 11: Land, Soils and Groundwater and Chapter: 15 Water [EN010149/APP/6.1]**.
- d) Where a scheme would result in an adverse effect on the integrity of a European site that cannot be avoided (EN-1 section 5.4.6). A **HRA No Significant Effects Report [EN010149/APP/7.17]** has been submitted alongside the DCO Application which confirms the Proposed Development would not result in an adverse impact on the integrity of a European Site, therefore there is no requirement to consider alternatives.
- e) Where a scheme would be located within, or partially within, Flood Zone 2 or Flood Zone 3 (EN-1 section 5.8). In this case the Sequential Test should be undertaken. If following application of the Sequential Test, it is not possible for the project to be located in areas of lower flood risk the Exception Test can be applied, which provides a method of allowing necessary development to go ahead in situations where suitable sites at lower risk of flooding are not available. With regard to applying the Sequential Test, paragraph 5.8.23 of EN-1 sets out that consideration of alternative sites should take account of the policy on alternatives described in section 4.3 of EN-1. The majority of the Order Limits is within Flood Zone 1 with a small area of Springwell East comprising some Flood Zone 2 and Flood Zone 3. The **Flood Risk Assessment [EN010149/APP/7.16]** and Section 8.5, below in this Planning Statement advises how the Sequential Test has been met.
- f) Where a development would be located within a National Park, the Broads or an AONB (now National Landscape) (EN-1 section 5.10). The Proposed Development is not located within any of these designations, therefore no further consideration of alternatives in this regard is required.

8.1.33. The policy is clear that work should be undertaken on a proportionate basis and any alternative would need to be a reasonable alternative and so it would be expected to deliver the same capacity in the same timeframes. Indeed, there is acknowledgement that other sites may exist which potentially have lesser impacts than that proposed but that they may equally be required for further energy infrastructure in the future (EN-1 paragraph 4.3.24). This goes to the core of the approach to planning in England and Wales, which is that applications should be judged on their own merits.

- 8.1.34. In terms of legislative requirements on alternatives, Regulation 14(2)(d) of the EIA Regulations 2017 states that an ES *should "include a description of the reasonable alternatives studied by the applicant, which are relevant to the proposed development and its specific characteristics, and an indication of the main reasons for the option chosen, taking into account the effects of the development on the environment."*
- 8.1.35. The Applicant has considered reasonable alternatives that could realistically achieve the objectives for the Proposed Development. This is set out in **ES Volume 1, Chapter 4: Reasonable Alternatives Considered [EN010149/APP/6.1]**. A **Site Selection Report** has also been prepared and is included in **Appendix 1** to this Planning Statement. These reports should also be read in conjunction with the **Statement of Need [EN010149/APP/7.1]**.
- 8.1.36. The reports conclude there were no alternative technologies or sites studied by the Applicant that could deliver the project objectives. From an alternative technology perspective, the following conclusions were drawn:
- The Site is not considered suitable for onshore wind generation due to the likely visual impact given the relatively flat topography in the area.
 - The use of hydrogen technology would not deliver the project objectives which are to generate electricity (specifically from solar power) to export to the National Grid, rather than create electricity to deliver something different, for example, hydrogen
 - Offshore/marine based technologies were not considered due to the location of the capacity and point of connection within the transmission network
 - From an alternative solar technology perspective, east/west facing and tracker panels (at 4m height) have both been explored by the Applicant, and excluded on the basis of:
 - Technology financial uncertainty (tracker);
 - Potential for greater landscape & visual impact;
 - Potential for greater glint and glare impact;
 - Potential for greater noise impact (tracker);
 - Potential for greater cultural heritage impact (tracker);
 - Operational and maintenance considerations.
- 8.1.37. Alternative sites were considered during the site selection process and the Applicant engaged in discussions with four other landholdings on sites which met the original site selection criteria (see Section 3 of **Appendix 1** to this Planning Statement) across Lincolnshire, Rutland and Cambridgeshire. The land at Blankney Estate, which is the subject of this Application, performed favourably across the site selection criteria in comparison to the other sites considered. Further, given the progression of

discussions and the ability of the Applicant to voluntarily acquire the land, the other landholdings were no longer considered as reasonable alternatives. The **Site Selection Report at Appendix 1** to this Planning Statement sets out the Applicant's approach and findings in greater detail.

Part 4.4 of EN-1 and Part 4.3 of the EN-3 - Health

- 8.1.38. Paragraph 4.4.1 of EN-1 highlights that energy infrastructure has the potential to impact the health and well-being of the population. EN-1 goes on to state that where development has the potential to affect human beings, the ES should assess those effects for each element of the project, identifying any adverse health impacts and measures to avoid, reduce, or compensate for the impacts as appropriate.
- 8.1.39. Paragraph 4.4.7 of EN-1 advises that the aspects of energy infrastructure which are *"most likely to have a significantly detrimental impact on health are subject to separate regulation (for example air pollution) which will constitute suitable mitigation of them, so that it is unlikely that health concerns will either by themselves constitute a reason to refuse consent or require specific mitigation"*. Paragraph 4.4.8 continues, however, to advise that not all potential sources of health impacts will be mitigated in such a way and the "SoS may want to take account of health concerns when setting requirements relating to a range of impacts such as noise".
- 8.1.40. Health was scoped out of the Environmental Statement as an individual topic, however, impacts upon health are assessed across **ES Volume 1 Chapters 6: Air Quality, Chapter 10: Landscape and Visual, Chapter 12: Noise and Vibration, Chapter 13: Population, Chapter 14: Traffic and Transport [EN010149/APP/6.1]** in addition to the **ES; Volume 3, Glint and Glare Study, Appendix 5.4 [EN010149/APP/6.3]**.
- 8.1.41. In regard to health impacts in relation to **ES Volume 1 Chapter 6: Air Quality [EN010149/APP/6.1]**, reports on potential impacts on human health in relation to dust and particulate matter emissions during construction and decommissioning phases, including the operation of equipment. The chapter concludes there is negligible risk of impact and therefore no significant residual effects are expected. In terms of human health impacts as a result of road traffic exhaust emissions during construction, operation and decommissioning, the ES again reports that, following the implementation of additional mitigation, residual impacts are not significant.
- 8.1.42. In regard to Landscape and Visual health related impacts, **ES Volume 1, Chapter 10: Landscape and Visual [EN010149/APP/6.1]**, identifies potential impacts during construction and decommissioning on health and wellbeing of residents and users of the PRow and minor road network which passes through and within 3km of the Site (including the Spires and Steeples PRow). Visual mitigation is primarily delivered through embedded mitigation (such as planting) while mitigation from the impacts

of construction itself is secured within the **oCEMP [EN010149/APP/7.7]** which also requires the production of a Health and Safety Plan. In addition the **outline Public Rights of Way and Permissive Path Management Plan (oPRoWPPMP) [EN010149/APP/7.12]** includes measures to ensure safety of the PRoW and permissive path network users such as: minimising crossing points where possible; application of best practice in terms of signage and other information to maintain visitor enjoyment and safety, and minimising the requirement for temporary path closures. There is no assessment of the significance of impacts on health and wellbeing as an individual receptor, however, the impacts are addressed across a range of receptors set out within **Environmental Statement: Volume 1, Chapter 10: Landscape and Visual [EN010149/APP/6.1]**.

- 8.1.43. In regard to noise impacts with respect to health, the conclusions of **ES Volume 1, Chapter 12: Noise and Vibration [EN010149/APP/6.1]** advise that while there are minor adverse impacts in relation to noise from construction activities, construction traffic, from the proposed operational development, from decommissioning activities and decommissioning traffic, these impacts are not significant. The embedded design mitigation measures, for example, barriers around BESS compound and 250m offsets from infrastructure such as the Springwell Substation and Inverters (full list set out in Chapter 12) are supplemented by additional mitigation as set out in the **oCEMP [EN010149/APP/7.7]**, **oCTMP [EN010149/APP/7.8]** and **oDEMP [EN010149/APP/7.13]**. The additional mitigation focusses on best practicable means and source specific measures which do not form part of the design and therefore there are not anticipated to be any noise effects which would result in significant adverse effect on health and quality of life from noise.
- 8.1.44. In regard to Population related health impacts, **Chapter 13** of the **ES [EN010149/APP/6.1]** identifies potential beneficial health impacts during operation on mental and physical health and wellbeing of the users of the new proposed PRoWs, permissive paths and community growing area.
- 8.1.45. In regard to Traffic and Transport related impacts, **Chapter 14 [EN010149/APP/6.1]** identifies potential impacts during construction and decommissioning relating to health and wellbeing caused by disruption to amenity or safety (e.g. related to fear and intimidation on and by road users). It also identifies potential impacts on health and wellbeing where community links and access to facilities and employment may be materially changed (i.e. via severance of communities, driver and passenger delay). On both of these impacts, the **oCTMP [EN010149/APP/7.8]** provides mitigation to address potential disruption and implications on the wider transport network, for example by way of specific construction traffic routing. Chapter 14 identifies that there are no significant residual health related impacts.
- 8.1.46. In regard to Glint and Glare, a technical assessment is included in **ES Volume 3, Appendix 5.4 [EN010149/APP/6.3]** and identifies glint and

glare as a potential nuisance to occupiers of nearby residential properties. However, the assessment concludes that for 103 of the potential residential receptors no solar reflections will be experienced, with the remaining four receptors being subject to a low impact from marginal views from above ground floor levels for less than three months per year and less than 60 minutes in any given day. These impacts are assessed as being not significant.

- 8.1.47. The above demonstrates that health impacts have been considered across the Proposed Development and, with the application of suitable mitigation measures, are not significant. It is therefore considered that, in terms of paragraph 4.4.7 there is no reason that health concerns associated with the Proposed Development present a reason for refusal. In terms of paragraph 4.4.8 of EN-1, that there is no evidence to suggest that additional requirements relating to health need to be added to the DCO if the application for development consent be granted. It is therefore considered that the Proposed Development complies with the aims and intentions of the EN-1 policy requirements in regard to health.

Part 4.6 of the EN-1 - Environmental and Biodiversity Net Gain

- 8.1.48. Paragraph 4.6.1 of EN-1 states that applicants should go beyond mitigating and compensating harms and also consider opportunities for enhancements.
- 8.1.49. Paragraph 4.6.2 explains how BNG is an essential component of environmental net gain. Projects in England are encouraged to consider and seek to incorporate improvements in natural capital, ecosystem services and the benefits they deliver when planning how to deliver biodiversity net gain.
- 8.1.50. Paragraph 4.6.3 requires that the SoS should *"give appropriate weight to environmental and biodiversity net gain, although any weight given to gains provided to meet a legal requirement (for example under the Environment Act 2021) should be limited"*.
- 8.1.51. Project Principle 3.6, as set out in the **Design Approach Document [EN010149/APP/7.3]**, requires that the Proposed Development deliver a substantial Biodiversity Net Gain beyond the minimum of 10%. The **oLEMP [EN010149/APP/7.9]** carries this commitment forward to detailed design stage and the delivery stage. It includes a series of Management Objectives which set a framework for the operational management of Green Infrastructure within the Proposed Development. Management Objective 8 requires the Applicant to deliver a biodiversity net gain beyond the minimum of 10%.
- 8.1.52. The summary above confirms that the Proposed Development is compliant with current policy requirements. A mandatory 10% BNG

requirement for DCOs comes into force in November 2025 (as set out in Section 4.6 of EN-1).

- 8.1.53. Paragraph 4.6.6 of EN-1 advises that applications for development consent should be accompanied by a statement demonstrating how opportunities for delivering wider environmental net gains have been considered and, where appropriate, incorporated into the project's design (including any relevant operational aspects). Opportunities to deliver wider environmental gains are outlined by topic in the relevant sections of the **ES [EN010149/APP/6.1]**, the **oLEMP [EN010149/APP/7.7]** and **Design Approach Document [EN010149/APP/7.3]**.

Part 4.7 of EN-1 and 2.5 of EN-3 - Criteria for "Good Design" for Energy Infrastructure

- 8.1.54. The Applicant's Design Approach is summarised in Chapter 2 of this Planning Statement.
- 8.1.55. EN-1 Paragraph 4.7.2 states, *"Applying good design to energy projects should produce sustainable infrastructure sensitive to place, including impact on heritage, efficient in the use of natural resources, including land-use, and energy used in their construction and operation, matched by an appearance that demonstrates good aesthetic as far as possible."*
- 8.1.56. Paragraph 4.7.4 of EN-1 states that design principles should be established during the early stages of the project lifecycle. Footnote 122 of EN-1 states that *"Design principles should take into account any national guidance on infrastructure design, this could include for example the Design Principles for National Infrastructure published by the National Infrastructure Commission"*.
- 8.1.57. EN-1 paragraph 4.7.6 states that applicants may have very limited choice in the physical appearance of some energy infrastructure. However, given the importance the Planning Act 2008 places on good design and sustainability, the SoS needs to ensure that energy infrastructure development is as attractive, durable, and adaptable as possible.
- 8.1.58. Paragraph 4.7.6 of EN-1 also states that applicants should seek to embed opportunities for nature-inclusive design within the design process. Paragraph 4.7.7 of EN-1 requires applicants to demonstrate in their application how the design process was conducted and how the proposed design evolved.
- 8.1.59. Paragraphs 2.5.2 of EN-3 refer to part 4.7 of EN-1 and emphasise that proposals for renewable energy infrastructure should demonstrate good design with respect to landscape and visual amenity, and in the design of the project to mitigate impacts such as noise and effects on ecology.

- 8.1.60. Regarding solar development itself, paragraph 2.10.60 of EN-3 notes that applicants should consider several factors when designing and laying out the proposed sites. These include proximity to available grid capacity to accommodate the scale of generation, orientation, topography, previous land use, and the ability to mitigate environmental impacts and flood risk.
- 8.1.61. Further detail is set out in Section 2 of this Planning Statement and in the **Design Approach Document [EN010149/APP/7.3]** which set out in detail the Applicant's actions which demonstrate compliance with the design related policy within EN-1.

Part 4.11 of EN-1 and 2.10 of EN-3- Network Connection

- 8.1.62. Paragraph 4.11.1 of EN-1 notes that the grid connection point of a generating station to the electricity network is an important consideration for applicants.
- 8.1.63. Paragraph 2.10.21 of EN-3 notes that applicants should consider issues relating to network connection in Section 4.11 of EN-1 and in EN-5. In particular, and where appropriate, applicants should proceed in a manner consistent with the regulatory regime for offshore transmission networks.
- 8.1.64. The **Grid Connection Statement [EN010149/APP/7.6]** submitted with the DCO Application confirms that the Applicant has secured a connection to the Navenby Substation. Paragraph 4.11.4 of EN-1 states "*that transmission infrastructure, and related network reinforcement and upgrade work, associated with low carbon infrastructure is considered CNP infrastructure*".
- 8.1.65. Paragraph 4.11.7 of EN-1 encourages applications for generating stations and related infrastructure to be submitted in tandem or prepared in an integrated way. Paragraph 4.11.8 advises that where the situation arises that applications cannot be coordinated the Applicant should include information on the other elements and confirm there are no obvious reasons why other elements may be refused.
- 8.1.66. At non-statutory consultation, the Applicant envisaged that the National Grid substation may be consented under the same application as what is now the Proposed Development. However, National Grid Electricity Transmission (NGET) has confirmed its preference to seek consent for the proposed Navenby Substation by way of an application under the Town and Country Planning Act (1990), partly because the new substation is also proposed to provide connection to other energy development. National Grid has confirmed that it intends to submit an application for the proposed Navenby Substation in Spring 2025. On this basis, the Proposed Development maintains sufficient flexibility to allow for any changes in the design of the Substation up to and throughout the consideration of National Grid's application.

- 8.1.67. Paragraph 4.11.4 of EN-1 states “*that transmission infrastructure, and related network reinforcement and upgrade work, associated with low carbon infrastructure is considered CNP infrastructure*”. Therefore, although not the primary policy tool for determining any future Navenby Substation application under the Town and Country Planning Act (1990), the NPS may be a material consideration (as confirmed by paragraph 1.2.1 of EN-1) and substantial weight may be attributed to its CNP designation during decision making.
- 8.1.68. Paragraph 4.11.12 advises that the SoS “*should be satisfied that appropriate network connections are/will be in place for a given project regardless of whether one or multiple (linked) applications are submitted*”. The Applicant has a contractual grid connection offer at the proposed Navenby Substation which, although it currently does not have consent, is at a mature stage of development with an application anticipated to be submitted in Spring 2025. The Applicant considers that the principle of the proposed Navenby Substation development is strongly supported in and pending outcomes of other relevant assessment works considers there to be no obvious impediments to the grant of planning consent.

Part 4.12 of EN-1- Pollution Control and Other Environmental Regulatory Regimes

- 8.1.69. Paragraph 4.12.1 of EN-1 states that “*discharges or emissions from a proposed project which lead to other direct or indirect impacts on terrestrial, freshwater, marine, onshore, and offshore environments, or which include noise and vibration may be subject to separate regulation under the pollution control framework or other consenting and licencing regimes*”.
- 8.1.70. Paragraph 4.12.9 of EN-1 advises that the SoS should focus on whether the development itself is an acceptable use of the land and on the impact of that use rather than the control of processes, emissions, and discharges themselves. This continues into paragraph 4.12.10, which notes that the SoS should work on the assumption that the relevant pollution control regime and other environmental regulatory regimes will be properly applied and enforced by the relevant regulator. The SoS should act to complement but not seek to duplicate them.
- 8.1.71. The DCO Application is accompanied by an **Other Consents and Licences Document [EN010149/APP/3.3]**. This document outlines the other environmental consents, permits and licences required to facilitate the Proposed Development. The Applicant acknowledges the preference set out in paragraph 4.12.8 for applicants to submit applications for other necessary consents at the same time as seeking development consent from the SoS, however, the level of detail required to obtain such permits and licenses is not available at this stage. The Other Consents and Licences Document sets out the status of discussions with relevant regulators with, notably, the vast majority of engagement and subsequent

applications expected to be undertaken by the relevant contractor at detailed design stage when the relevant information becomes available, should DCO consent be granted.

- 8.1.72. The Proposed Development's construction phase environmental impacts would be managed through the implementation of a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP). An **oCEMP [EN010149/APP/7.7]** submitted with the DCO Application sets out a series of measures, based on best-practice guidance, to control the environmental effects of construction of the Proposed Development. These measures are expected to form an important part of efforts to control construction phase impacts.
- 8.1.73. Ongoing impacts arising from the operational phase of the Proposed Development are assessed to be to be few and minor. However, any arising impacts will be controlled through a detailed Operational Environmental Management Plan that would be prepared in accordance with the **outline Operational Environmental Management Plan (oOEMP) [EN010149/APP/7.10]** should DCO consent be granted. Similarly, a Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan prepared in accordance with the **outline Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan (oDEMP) [EN010149/APP/7.13]** would control environmental effects as identified in the ES during the decommissioning of the Proposed Development.
- 8.1.74. In terms of paragraph 4.12.16 of EN-1, based on the above, the Applicant considers there should be no reason for the SoS to believe that any operational pollution permits, licenses and/or other consents will not be granted.

Part 4.13 of EN-1 - Safety

- 8.1.75. Paragraph 4.13.1 of EN-1 explains that the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is the independent regulator responsible for enforcing a range of occupational health and safety legislation, some of which is relevant to the construction, operation and decommissioning of energy infrastructure. Paragraph 4.13.3 confirms that some energy infrastructure will be subject to the Control of Major Accident Hazards (COMAH) Regulations 2015. As per Section 3 of these Regulations, Solar and BESS development is not applicable to the regime and therefore no further response is required. As the Proposed Development is not subject of the COMAH Regulations, paragraphs 4.13.7 and 4.13.8 of EN-1 are not engaged.
- 8.1.76. In regard to other safety matters, the DCO Application is accompanied by an **Outline Battery Safety Management Plan (oBSMP) [EN010149/APP/7.14]**, which sets out the key fire safety provisions for the BESS including measures to reduce fire risk and fire protection measures.

Part 4.14 of EN-1 - Hazardous Substances

- 8.1.77. Paragraph 4.14.1, EN-1 states that all establishments wishing to hold stocks of certain hazardous substances above a certain threshold require Hazardous Substances Consent (HSC).
- 8.1.78. There is no requirement for storage or use of hazardous substances at or above Controlled Quantities for the Proposed Development, and HSC is not required. Pollution prevention and control measures with management prescriptions set out in the **oCEMP [EN010149/APP/7.7]**, which is secured by requirement in the **Draft DCO [EN010149/APP/3.1]**.

Part 4.15 of EN-1- Common Law Nuisance and Statutory Nuisance

- 8.1.79. Paragraph 4.15.5 requires that at application stage, "possible sources of nuisance under section 79(1) of the EPA 1990 and how they may be mitigated or limited should be identified by the applicant so that appropriate requirements can be included in any subsequent order granting consent". Paragraph 4.15.6 of continues to advise that at the application stage of an energy NSIP, it is important that the SoS consider possible sources of nuisance under Section 79(1) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and how they may be mitigated or limited so that appropriate requirements can be included in any subsequent DCO.
- 8.1.80. The Applicant has prepared and submitted a **Statutory Nuisance Statement [EN010149/APP/7.5]** as is required under APFP Regulation 5(2)(f) and paragraph 4.15.5 of EN-1. Measures including obtaining section 61 consent for control of noise on construction sites, which would include agreed construction noise limits for nearby noise-sensitive receptors, are set out in the **oCEMP [EN010149/APP/7.7]** and **oDEMP [EN010149/APP/7.13]** and are secured through requirements 12 and 19, respectively, in the DCO.
- 8.1.81. The Applicant at Article 7 of the **Draft DCO [EN010149/APP/3.1]** deals with defence to proceedings in respect of statutory nuisance and provides that no person is able to bring statutory nuisance proceedings under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 in respect of noise, if the noise is created in the course of carrying out construction, maintenance or decommissioning of the authorised development and for which notice has been given under section 60 or consent obtained under section 61(9) of the Control of Pollution Act 1974 or which cannot be reasonably avoided as a consequence of the authorised development. This approach is precedented in all made solar DCOs to date, including the recently made Gate Burton Energy Park Order 2024, the Mallard Pass Solar Farm Order 2024 and the Sunnica Energy Farm Order 2024.

Part 4.16 of EN-1 and Part 2.10 of EN-3 - Security Considerations

- 8.1.82. Paragraph 4.16.1 of EN-1 explains that national security considerations apply across all national infrastructure sectors. Paragraph 4.16.2 of EN-1 notes that DESNZ works closely with Government security agencies,

including the Centre for the Protection of National Infrastructure (CPNI) and the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC), to provide advice to the most critical infrastructure assets on terrorism and other national security threats and risk mitigation.

- 8.1.83. Paragraph 4.16.4 of EN-1 states that Government policy is to ensure that proportionate protective security measures are designed into new infrastructure projects at an early stage. Paragraph 4.16.6 states that where *"national security implications have been identified, the applicant should consult with relevant security experts from NPSA, ONR (for civil nuclear) and/or DESNZ to ensure that security measures have been adequately considered in the design process and that adequate consideration has been given to the management of security risks"*.
- 8.1.84. Paragraph 2.10.47 of EN-3 notes that applicants need to assess the visual impact of any security measures and their impacts on local residents, including issues relating to intrusion from CCTV and light pollution in the vicinity of the Site.
- 8.1.85. The Applicant has not identified any relevant considerations relating to national security in relation to the Proposed Development. Security requirements have, however, been embedded into the design of the proposals from the outset and are considered proportionate. Fencing and CCTV are employed across the Order Limits to secure and monitor solar infrastructure and the assessment of the visual impact is included in the **ES Volume 1, Chapter 10: Landscape and Visual [EN010149/APP/6.1]**.
- 8.1.86. Paragraph 4.16.8 states that if *"NPSA, ONR (for civil nuclear) and/or DESNZ are satisfied that security issues have been adequately addressed in the project when the application is submitted to the Secretary of State, it will provide confirmation of this to the Secretary of State. The Secretary of State should not need to give any further consideration to the details of the security measures in its examination."* The Applicant considers that no further consideration is therefore required on security matters.

Part 5.5 of EN-1 Civil and Military Aviation and Defence Interests

- 8.1.87. Paragraph 5.5.5 of EN-1 states that is *"essential that new energy infrastructure is developed collaboratively alongside aerodromes, aircraft, air systems and airspace so that safety, operations and capabilities are not adversely affected by new energy infrastructure. Likewise, it is essential that aerodromes, aircraft, air systems and airspace operators work collaboratively with energy infrastructure developers essential for net zero"*.
- 8.1.88. Paragraph 5.5.8 discusses safeguarding of certain civil aerodromes and aviation sites in order to ensure that their safety and operation are not compromised by new development. Paragraph 5.5.9 advises a similar safeguarding applies to all military aerodromes, defence surveillance sites,

and other defence assets. The Proposed Development falls partially within the Ministry of Defence (MOD) technical safeguarding zone, at RAF Digby. The Proposed Development is also within the aerodrome height safeguarding zones and aerodrome statutory birdstrike safeguarding ones for RAF Barkston Heath, RAF Cranwell and RAF Waddington.

- 8.1.89. Paragraph 5.5.35 states that “it is important that new energy infrastructure does not unacceptably impede or compromise the safe and effective use of any defence assets or operations”. 5.5.39 continues to require applicants to consult the MOD, Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), National Air Traffic Services (NATS) and any aerodrome where it likely to be affected by the Proposed Development.
- 8.1.90. The MOD have been consulted through the preparation of the Application. The Applicant received responses from the MOD at both Phase One and Phase Two Consultation and received feedback in relation to RAF Digby.
- 8.1.91. The Applicant has had ongoing engagement with the MOD following Phase Two Consultation. Following further discussions, additional technical information has been provided to the MOD for consideration by their subject matter experts and discussions are ongoing with the MOD.
- 8.1.92. The Applicant has amended the scheme in response to MOD specific requests, for amendments within the technical safeguarding zone. As set out in **Design Approach Document [EN010149/APP/7.3]**, solar PV development was removed from 5no. parcels of land to the north of Navenby Lane, to respond to MOD Defence Infrastructure Organisation consultation feedback. Based on all engagement to date, and having made changes to the Proposed Development in response to MOD feedback, the Applicant considers there are no adverse effects from the Proposed Development on the MOD operations. The Applicant will continue engaging with the MOD in this respect, in particular to ensure it has the information it requires. Further engagement is also continuing with RAF Air Command in relation to nearby base operations and above ground design of fencing, lighting and CCTV in proximity to the RAF Digby boundary.
- 8.1.93. In regard to aerodrome height safeguarding, the Applicant is continuing to engage with the MOD, however the Applicant’s position, based on its assessments, is that the height of the Proposed Development does not pose an issue for the safe operation of the aerodromes, as the Proposed Development is well below the MOD height consultation threshold of above 45.7m, to the closest aerodrome (RAF Cranwell). Likewise, the Applicant does not consider that the SuDS design alongside other elements of the Proposed Development would result in an increased risk to bird strike, as per the requirements of 5.5.41 of EN-1.
- 8.1.94. Paragraph 5.5.50 requires the SoS to be satisfied that proposals have been developed, where possible, “to minimise adverse impacts on the

operation and safety of aerodromes”. Paragraph 5.5.60 concludes that provided the SoS is “satisfied that the impacts of proposed energy developments do not present risks to national security and physical safety, and where they do, provided that the Secretary of State is satisfied that appropriate mitigation can be achieved, or appropriate requirements can be attached to any Development Consent Order to secure those mitigations, consent may be granted.”

- 8.1.95. The Applicant is not aware of any matter that would result in the Proposed Development presenting a safety or security related impact to the MOD and its assets. The Applicant considers the Proposed Development is compliant with requirements of paragraph 5.5.60 of EN-1.

Generic Impacts

8.2. Air Quality

- 8.2.1. This section reviews the Proposed Development in the context of the relevant planning policies relating to Air Quality. This section should be read in conjunction with the policy accordances tables included in **Appendix 3** of this Planning Statement.
- 8.2.2. EN-1 Paragraph 5.2.8 requires development that is likely to have adverse effects on air quality to undertake an assessment of the impacts of the proposed project as part of the ES. An air quality assessment has been undertaken and the impacts of the Proposed Development are reported in **ES Volume 1, Chapter 6: Air Quality [EN010149/APP/6.1]**.
- 8.2.3. EN-1 Paragraph 5.2.9 describes what ES Chapters should include with regard to air quality. The content of EN-1 Paragraph 5.2.16 states that the SoS should give substantial weight where a project would lead to a deterioration of air quality.
- 8.2.4. **ES Volume 1, Chapter 6: Air Quality [EN010149/APP/6.1]** concludes that there would be no likely significant residual effects on air quality.
- 8.2.5. The nature of the Proposed Development means that the operational phase is very unlikely to result in any significant emissions to the air. Traffic-related to operation and maintenance is minimal, as described in **ES Volume 1, Chapter 6: Air Quality [EN010149/APP/6.1]**. There will also be no combustion plant on Site. As such, there are no likely significant environmental effects from the operational phase of the Proposed Development upon Air Quality.
- 8.2.6. The construction and decommissioning phases have the potential to cause some emissions to the air and in relation to the transportation of required materials into and from the Order Limits, and from dust generating activities that are required during the lifetime of the Proposed Development.

- 8.2.7. The **outline Construction Traffic Management Plan (oCTMP) [EN010149/APP/7.8]**, **outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (oCEMP) [EN010149/APP/7.7]**, and **outline Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan (oDEMP) [EN010149/APP/7.13]** prepared in support of the DCO Application sets out measures to manage any potential air quality effects that may arise from construction and decommissioning activities. The oCEMP and oDEMP sets out the requirement for a Dust Management Plan (DMP) to be prepared as part of the detailed CEMP, prior to the construction of the Proposed Development proceeding.
- 8.2.8. As concluded in **ES Volume 1, Chapter 6: Air Quality [EN010149/APP/6.1]**, on the basis that the application of appropriate mitigation measures is in place, there are expected to be no likely significant effects on air quality, either in isolation or in combination with other projects.
- 8.2.9. In summary, the Proposed Development is not anticipated to have any residual adverse effects on air quality during the construction, operational and decommissioning phases. Therefore, there is no requirement for substantial weight to be afforded against the Proposed Development in the planning balance as per the advice within paragraph 5.2.16 of EN-1. Furthermore, the Proposed Development is not located near a sensitive receptor site as defined in paragraph 5.2.16 of EN-1. It is considered that there are no implications in terms of the tests required to be applied by the SoS in decision making as set out in paragraphs 5.2.15 - 5.2.19 of EN-1.
- 8.3. **Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Climate Change**
- 8.3.1. This section reviews the Proposed Development in the context of climate change. This section should be read in conjunction with policy accordance tables included in **Appendix 3** of this Planning Statement.
- 8.3.2. The potential impacts of the Proposed Development on climate change, as well as the vulnerability of the Proposed Development to the effects of climate change, are considered in **ES Volume 1, Chapter 8: Climate [EN010149/APP/6.1]** which has been prepared in accordance with the relevant policy.
- 8.3.3. In summary, however, the Proposed Development is expected to result in a significant beneficial impact on greenhouse gas emissions with 9.6 million tCO₂e saved over the 40 year operational lifetime of the Project in comparison to if the same quantity of electricity were produced by Combined Cycle Gas Turbine. As set out in Chapter 8 of the ES in the absence of any more appropriate identified methodology, this assessment considers that this approach, i.e. a comparison to Combined Cycle Gas Turbine emissions, is a robust and appropriate method to understand the level of GHG savings from the Proposed Development.

- 8.3.4. As set out in the above sections of this Planning Statement, paragraph 2.2.1 of EN-1 notes the legally binding targets upon the UK Government to cut greenhouse gas emissions, the challenging nature of the transition, and the major investment in new technologies required. The resulting urgent need for new nationally significant electricity infrastructure projects is set out in paragraph 3.3.1 of EN-1. Section 3.3 of EN-1 sets out the resulting need of solar at paragraph 3.3.20 to 3.3.24. The **Statement of Need [EN010149/APP/7.1]** refers to the relevant NPS and demonstrates the role of the Proposed Development in contributing to net zero and reducing GHG emissions.
- 8.3.5. Section 2.4 of EN-3 notes climate change adaptation and resilience confirming that solar development sites need to be resilient to increased risk of flooding and also the impact of higher temperatures on the planet.
- 8.3.6. NPPF paragraph 157 states the planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future and shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. Paragraph 163 of the NPPF states that local planning authorities should not require applicants to demonstrate the overall need for renewable or low carbon energy and recognise that even small-scale projects provide a valuable contribution to cutting greenhouse emissions. **Appendix 3** of this Planning Statement includes a policy compliance table which addresses NPPF policy.
- 8.3.7. At the local level, the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan notes at policy S20 'Resilient and Adaptable Design', applicants should design proposals to be adaptable to future social, economic, technological, and environmental requirements to make designs to be adaptable and mitigate against climate change.
- 8.3.8. Policy S14 'Renewable Energy' of the aforementioned Local Plan notes that the *"Central Lincolnshire Joint Strategic planning Committee is committed to supporting the transition to a net zero carbon future and will seek to maximise appropriately located renewable energy generated in Central Lincolnshire (such energy likely being solar based)"*.
- 8.3.9. The following sections set out the specific responses to the relevant Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Climate policy with EN-1 and EN-3.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

- 8.3.10. While renewable energy generating stations such as the Proposed Development make a meaningful contribution to decarbonisation, paragraph 5.3.1 of EN-1 acknowledges that the construction, operation, and decommissioning of energy infrastructure will itself lead to GHG emissions. Paragraph 5.3.4 of EN-1 states that all proposals for energy infrastructure should include a GHG assessment as part of their ES. This should include:

- A whole life GHG assessment showing construction, operational and decommissioning GHG impacts, including impacts from change of land use.
- An explanation of the steps that have been taken to drive down the climate change impacts at each of those stages.
- Measurement of embodied GHG impact from the construction stage.
- How reduction in energy demand and consumption during operation has been prioritised in comparison with other measures.
- How operational emissions have been reduced as much as possible through the application of best available techniques for that type of technology.
- Calculation of operational energy consumption and associated carbon emissions.
- Whether and how any residual GHG emissions will be (voluntarily) offset or removed using a recognised framework.
- Where there are residual emissions, the level of emissions and the impact of those on national and international efforts to limit climate change, both alone and where relevant in combination with other developments at a regional or national level, or sector level, if sectoral targets are developed. whole life carbon assessment showing construction, operational and decommissioning carbon impacts;

8.3.11. In accordance with the above requirements **ES Volume 1, Chapter 8: Climate [EN010149/APP/6.1]** and, **ES Volume 3, Appendix 8.1 [EN010149/APP/6.3]** includes a carbon assessment that considers the effects of GHG emissions generated at all stages of the Proposed Development, i.e. construction, operation, and decommissioning.

8.3.12. In response to paragraph 5.3.5 series of measures are included to minimise and offset the GHG footprint of the Proposed Development which are detailed in the **oCEMP [EN010149/APP/7.7]**, **oLEMP [EN010149/APP/7.9]** and **Outline Employment, Skills and Supply Chain Plan [EN010149/APP/7.20]**. Some of the key measures are summarised below:

- All members of the supply chain will provide a carbon reduction plan where feasible
- Lean design will be employed to minimise use of construction materials
- Any vegetation cleared for the project will be compensated by a planting scheme that equals or exceeds current levels of vegetation
- Responsible sourcing of materials and infrastructure

- Promotion of measures to decrease GHG emissions during the construction process stage, such as reducing emissions from fuel use and commuting

8.3.13. Paragraph 5.3.8 of EN-1 requires the SoS to be satisfied that the applicant has "as far as possible assessed the GHG emissions of all stages of the development". Section 8 of **ES Volume 1, Chapter 8: Climate [EN010149/APP/6.1]** provides a comprehensive breakdown of all relevant legislation, policy and guidance which has been taken into consideration when undertaking the assessment. It states that the assessment includes the addition of GHG emissions directly from construction, operational (including maintenance) and decommissioning activities undertaken within the Order Limits, including project fuel consumption (during construction and decommissioning). It also extends to include emissions which will occur outside the Order Limits, but related to the activities of the Proposed Development, including those from:

- the extraction, manufacture, and transportation of materials to the construction site (construction and operation (including maintenance));
- the transportation of workers to the Site (construction and operation (including maintenance)); and
- Off-site transport and disposal of waste materials (construction, operation (including maintenance) and decommissioning).

8.3.14. Paragraph 5.3.9 of EN-1 requires that the SoS "should be content that the applicant has taken all reasonable steps to reduce the GHG emissions of the construction and decommissioning stage of the development". The **oCEMP [EN010149/APP/7.7]**, **oLEMP [EN010149/APP/7.9]**, **oDEMP [EN010149/APP/7.13]**, **oCTMP [EN010149/APP/7.8]** and **oESSCP [EN010149/APP/7.20]** include the Applicant's additional mitigation measures to reduce GHG emissions. These measures include those set out in paragraph 8.5.11, above in addition to a suite of other controls designed to maximise possible GHG emission reductions.

8.3.15. Paragraph 5.3.10 of EN-1 requires the SoS to give "appropriate weight to projects that embed nature-based solutions or technological processes to mitigate or offset the emissions of construction and decommissioning". The paragraph continues to recognise, however, that the SoS must accept the reality of some residual emissions given the vital role energy infrastructure plays in decarbonisation. As per 8.5.11, above, the Proposed Development includes a commitment in the **oLEMP [EN010149/APP/7.9]** to replace vegetation removed by a planting scheme that equals or exceeds the current levels of vegetation which ensures no carbon sequestration loss. In addition, Project Principle 2.1 which has informed the design of the Proposed Development to date has ensured that existing vegetation has been retained wherever reasonably possible. The measure is secured as Management Objective 1 within the **oLEMP [EN010149/APP/7.9]** to ensure the principle is secured during the

construction, operation and decommissioning phases of the project. The implementation of these measures demonstrates compliance with 5.3.10 although there is recognition that the contribution to a reduction in emissions by virtue of nature-based solutions will be negligible in comparison to the wider GHG savings as a result of the operation of the Proposed Development.

- 8.3.16. Paragraphs 5.3.11 - 5.3.12 advise that operational emissions will be addressed through carbon budgets and other commitments and the SoS is not required to assess individual applications and their contribution to such budgets and commitments.

Climate Change

- 8.3.17. Paragraph 4.10.8 of EN-1 states that applicants must consider the direct and indirect impacts of climate change when planning the location, design, build, operation and, where appropriate, decommissioning of new energy infrastructure. Paragraph 4.10.5 of EN-1 states that applications should take reasonable steps to maximise the use of nature-based solutions which can also result in biodiversity benefits as well as increasing absorption of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere in adapting to climate change.
- 8.3.18. EN-1 continues at paragraph 4.10.13 to advise that the SoS "*should be satisfied that applicants for new energy infrastructure have taken into account the potential impacts of climate change*". At 4.10.15 it continues to state that SoS should "*be satisfied that there are not features of the design of new energy infrastructure critical to its operation which may be affected by more radical changes to the climate beyond that projected by the latest set of UK climate projections*".
- 8.3.19. Paragraph 2.4.11 of EN-3 discusses the introduction of solar photovoltaics and how they are typically proposed within low-lying exposed sites. For these types of proposals, applicants should consider how the equipment is resilient to increased risk of flooding and the impact of higher temperatures.
- 8.3.20. Paragraph 2.3.2 of EN-5 requires the consideration of the effects of flooding (particularly on substations that are vital for the electricity transmission and distribution network), winds and storms (on overhead lines), higher average temperatures (leading to increased transmission losses), earth movement or subsidence caused by flooding or drought (on underground cables) and coastal erosion (for the landfall of offshore transmission cables and their associated substations in the inshore and coastal locations respectively).
- 8.3.21. Building resilience in changing climate has been one of the 10 strategic principles employed during the design of the Proposed Development. As set out in the **Design Approach Document [EN010149/APP/7.3]** the

Strategic Principles were developed by EDF Renewables UK and are informed by the UN SDGs and NIC guidance. They are intended to bring multiple disciplines together through a common set of principles to deliver sustainable development outcomes. Each Strategic Principle is mapped to the UN SDGs and includes a series of actions that all projects are expected to comply with. At the project level, “Project Principle 9.1 is to Design for resilience and adaption to future climate change”. This is complemented by “Project Principle 7.2: Apart from Solar PV modules, no built structures (central inverters, substation and collector compounds) will be located within Flood Zones 2 or 3. Solar PV modules will be above the maximum flood height”.

- 8.3.22. The supporting text to Project Principle 7.2 sets out 'Apart from Solar PV development, the Applicant has developed the design of the Proposed Development to ensure that no built structures (central inverters, Springwell substation and Collector Compounds) would be located within Flood Zones 2 or 3. It was discussed with the Environment Agency that potentially vulnerable infrastructure (i.e., central inverters, Springwell substation and Collector Compounds) would be located outside of Flood Zones 2 and 3, which was informed by the approach to the extant planning permission (NKDC reference: 14/0937/FUL) located in this area of the Proposed Development, where a condition was imposed to ensure this. This is secured in the Project Description set out in **ES Volume 1, Chapter 3: Proposed Development Description [EN010149/APP/6.1]**. Once attached to the mounting structure, the minimum height of the lowest part of the Solar PV modules will be 0.8m above the existing ground level (AGL). This will be above the calculated flood height level for the maximum credible scenario as assessed within the **Flood Risk Assessment [EN010149/APP/7.16]**. Therefore, Solar PV modules within Flood Zone 2 or 3 are flood risk resilient as they are designed to avoid flooding.
- 8.3.23. The supporting text to Project Principle 9.1 explains that one of the major risks posed to new developments regarding climate change is flood risk. The Applicant has opted to locate potentially vulnerable infrastructure (i.e., Substation and BESS units) in the northwestern region of the Site, where flood risk is considered to be 'very low'. Design Commitment F1, as per **Design Commitments [EN010149/APP/7.4]** sets out that all BoSS equipment will be located in Flood Zone 1.
- 8.3.24. The design measures adopted by way of the Project Principles demonstrate how the Applicant has proactively sought to avoid areas of higher flood risk. Where such areas are included they have only been done so by reducing the risk to the vulnerability of the infrastructure by ensuring that only compatible technology is located within those areas. Indeed, Annex 3 to the NPPF advises that, subject to the Exception Test being passed, solar farms are considered essential infrastructure and may be permitted in areas of higher flood risk. As set out above, the equipment to be used in Flood Zone 3 will be located above the calculated flood level

height for the maximum credible scenario. The Applicant therefore considers that its approach is compliant with the NPS requirements outlined in paragraphs 9.1.62 - 9.1.65 above.

Summary

8.3.25. The Proposed Development provides a significant beneficial effect in terms of impacts on greenhouse gas emissions and the type of infrastructure that is defined as urgent by the UK Government and has been defined as a Critical National Priority. The ES concludes that 9.6 tCO₂e will be saved over the operational lifetime of the project in comparison to the same electricity generated by a combined-cycle gas turbine. It is considered that the Proposed Development strongly complies with the relevant policy set out in EN-1 and EN-3 and that the beneficial impact attracts substantial weight in the planning balance.

8.4. Ecology and Biodiversity

8.4.1. This section reviews the Proposed Development in the context of planning policy for biodiversity and nature conservation. This section should be read in conjunction with policy accordance tables in **Appendix 3** of this Planning Statement.

8.4.2. Paragraph 5.4.39 of the EN-1 states that the SoS should have regard to the aims and goals of the government's Environmental Improvement Plan 2023 and any statutory targets set under the Environment Act (2021) or elsewhere, recognising that failure to address the challenge of climate change will result in significant adverse impacts to biodiversity. EN-3 paragraph 2.3.7 also refers to the ambition set out in the Environmental Improvement Plan 2023 and any targets set under the Environment Act (2021) or elsewhere in the context of maintaining or extending existing habitats and potentially creating new habitats.

8.4.3. As explained in the **Statement of Need [EN010149/APP/7.1]**, the Proposed Development has the potential to deliver significant amounts of low-carbon electricity and make a material contribution to help meet the UK's commitments to decrease carbon emissions and reach net zero by 2050. Failure to deliver infrastructure projects that deliver low carbon electricity would, in effect, materially damage the UK's prospects of meeting its target to address climate change and result in substantial adverse impacts to biodiversity.

8.4.4. Paragraph 5.4.17 of EN-1 states that projects should include an ES that clearly sets out any effects on internationally, nationally, and locally designated sites of ecological or geological conservation importance, on protected species and on habitats and other species identified as being of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity.

- 8.4.5. The biodiversity and nature conservation impacts of the Proposed Development are considered in **ES Volume 1, Chapter 7: Biodiversity [EN010149/APP/6.1]**. The Chapter sets out all the designated sites (international, national, and local) of ecological and geological conservation importance; protected species; and habitats and other species identified as being of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity within the study area for ecology and biodiversity.
- 8.4.6. EN-3 Paragraph 2.5.2 states proposals for renewable energy infrastructure should demonstrate good design to mitigate impacts such as noise and effects on ecology. From the outset of the site selection exercise the Proposed Development has sought to embed good design into its approach. One of the key considerations at site selection stage, as set out in the **Site Selection Report at Appendix 1** to this Planning Statement, was to avoid land which contained sensitive ecological and biodiversity related designations and the Project was successful in this regard, with no international or national statutory designations being potentially impacted by the Proposed Development.
- 8.4.7. EN-1 paragraph 5.4.19 states that applicants should show how projects have taken opportunities to conserve and enhance biodiversity conservation interests. Paragraph 5.4.21 of the EN-1 adds that the design process *"should embed opportunities for nature-inclusive design. Energy infrastructure projects have the potential to deliver significant benefits and enhancements beyond Biodiversity Net Gain, which result in wider environmental gains"*.
- 8.4.8. In response, biodiversity conservation considerations have informed the design of the Proposed Development from the outset and are embedded into the layout of the Site as identified in the submitted **oLEMP [EN010149/APP/7.9]** which is secured in the DCO application. In addition, the **Design Approach Document [EN010149/APP/7.3]** sets out a number of Project Principles which have informed and guided the design development to date. Of relevance to the ecology and biodiversity are the following principles:
- Principle 3.1 Extend and enhance existing local wildlife sites and priority habitats, including the creation of calcareous grassland adjacent to the A15.
 - Principle 3.2 Create a mosaic of habitats, such as new grassland and arable margins, to support farmland birds such as skylark and grey partridge and species such as brown hare.
 - Principle 3.3 Use locally native species wherever possible to create new habitats, increase the number of pollinator species and create food sources for birds such as skylark and yellow hammer during winter months.

- Principle 3.4 Use land under and between solar panels to deliver biodiversity benefit for pollinators and farmland birds.
- Principle 3.5 Establish new planting and landforms at the earliest practicable opportunity.
- Principle 3.6 Deliver a substantial biodiversity net gain beyond the minimum of 10%

- 8.4.9. **A Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment** is included at **Appendix 7.14 to the ES Volume 3 [EN010149/APP/6.3]**. This sets out that the Proposed Development will achieve a minimum BNG of 10% which is secured in the **oLEMP [EN010149/APP/7.9]** which is secured through requirement 7 of the **Draft DCO [EN010149/APP/3.1]**
- 8.4.10. **ES Volume 1, Chapter 7: Biodiversity [EN010149/APP/6.1]** outlines the surveys completed that informed the DCO application. A description of the ecological baseline conditions identified is set out in the submitted **Preliminary Ecological Appraisal at Appendix 7.1 to the ES; Volume 3 [EN010149/APP/6.3]**.
- 8.4.11. The embedded mitigation is described in section 7.6 of **ES Volume 1, Chapter 7: Biodiversity [EN010149/APP/6.1]** and includes a comprehensive suite of measures to both limit potential impact but also improve quality of habitats on Site. Measures specifically relate to the following receptors:
- Hedgerows
 - Notable arable (non-crop) flora
 - Ground nesting birds
 - Wintering birds
 - Barn owls
 - Bats
- 8.4.12. Paragraph 5.4.4 of the EN-1 notes that important sites for biodiversity are those identified through international conventions and the Habitats Regulations. Paragraph 5.4.49 of EN-1 confirms the SoS must "*consider whether a project may have a significant effect on a protected site which is part of the National Site Network (a habitat site), a protected marine site, or on any site which the same protection is applied as a matter of policy, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects*". The Proposed Development does not impact on any site or species protected under the aforementioned regulations. A **Habitats Regulations Assessment No Significant Effects Report [EN010149/APP/7.17]** which sets out the reasoning for and confirms this position.

- 8.4.13. The submitted **oCEMP [EN010149/APP/7.7]** and **oDEMP [EN010149/APP/7.13]** include specific measures to manage and avoid any potential further impact on the local areas of biodiversity and ecological importance from accidental damage and other indirect effects during construction or decommissioning. Four Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) are within the Order Limits and comprise grassland verges on the side of roads or farm tracks **ES Volume 2, Figure 7.1: Indicative Location of LWSs [EN010149/APP/6.2]**. The LWSs are designated for and qualify as calcareous grassland and are of County importance. They are:
- Green Man Road to Cuckoo Lane LWS
 - A15, Slate House Farm to Dunsby Pit Plantation LWS
 - Temple Road Verges, Welbourn to Brauncewell; and
 - Navenby Heath Road Verges, LWS
- 8.4.14. Paragraph 5.4.12 of EN-1 advises that sites of "regional and local biodiversity and geological interest, which include... Local Wildlife Sites, are of substantive nature conservation value and make an important contribution to ecological networks and nature's recovery". At paragraph 5.4.17 it sets out requirements that the applicant should ensure that "the ES clearly sets out any effects on internationally, nationally, and locally designated sites of ecological or geological importance". **ES Volume 1, Chapter 7: Biodiversity [EN010149/APP/6.1]** and the **Local Wildlife Site Verges Survey at ES Volume 3, Appendix 7.9 [EN010149/APP/6.3]** provide details of the survey work undertaken and the full assessment of potential effects.
- 8.4.15. During construction, sections of the four LWS grassland verges would require removal to accommodate passing bays or create highways access. The total length of the four LWSs grassland verges to be removed comprises approximately 593m which represents less than 5% of the total length of the LWSs. The LWSs are generally narrow (0.5metre – 3metre) strips of land which are not proposed to be used for any other purpose than that identified above. The ES notes that these verges are already fragmented and that new calcareous grassland field margins are proposed to compensate any LWS grassland lost. The ES identifies that this represents an adverse effect although it is at local level and not significant. Despite the overall value of the habitats there were no species of principal importance for conservation identified during surveys.
- 8.4.16. Paragraph 5.4.32 of EN-1 sets out the policy for ancient woodlands and veteran trees. **ES Volume 1, Chapter 7: Biodiversity [EN010149/APP/6.1]** confirms that there are no ancient woodlands contained within the Order Limits. However, there is one (Long Wood) within 2km from the Site. Six veteran trees have been identified near Scopwick only one of which is within the Order Limits. The tree in question is over 250m from any built development and will not be directly affected

and measures are outlined in the **oCEMP [EN010149/APP/7.7]**, **oLEMP [EN010149/APP /7.9]**, **oOEMP [EN010149/APP /7.10]** and **oDEMP [EN010149/APP/7.13]** to ensure protection of the tree (and other trees) during the lifetime of the Project.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

- 8.4.17. Paragraph 4.6.1 explains that "biodiversity net gain is an approach to development that aims to leave the natural environment in a measurably better state than beforehand. Projects should therefore not only avoid, mitigate and compensate harms, following the mitigation hierarchy, but also consider whether there are opportunities for enhancements".
- 8.4.18. Paragraph 4.6.6 explains that energy NSIP proposals should seek opportunities to contribute to and enhance the natural environment by providing net gains for biodiversity where possible and, paragraph 4.6.7, encourages applicants to use the most current version of the DEFRA biodiversity metric to calculate their biodiversity baseline and inform their biodiversity net gain outcomes and to present this data as part of their application.
- 8.4.19. Paragraph 4.6.10 adds that BNG should be "applied after compliance with the mitigation hierarchy and does not change or replace existing environmental obligations, although compliance with those obligations will be relevant to the question of the baseline for assessing net gain and if they deliver an additional enhancement beyond meeting the existing obligation, that enhancement will count towards net gain. "
- 8.4.20. Paragraph 2.3.7 of the EN-3 advises proposed enhancements should aim to achieve environmental and biodiversity net gain in line with the ambition set out in the Environmental Improvement Plan 2023 and any statutory targets set under the Environment Act (2021) or elsewhere.
- 8.4.21. EN-1 Paragraph 5.4.46 discusses opportunities for building in beneficial biodiversity or geological features as part of good design, EN-1 paragraph 5.4.20 adds that this can help towards delivering biodiversity net gain, and that wider ecosystem services and benefits of natural capital should also be considered when designing enhancement measures.
- 8.4.22. The **Design Approach Document [EN010149/APP/7.3]** sets out the design process, which resulted in the indicative layout of the Proposed Development being designed to maximise the opportunities around enhancing and conserving biodiversity and geological conservation interests. A key aspect of this design process has been around identifying and retaining landscape features which are beneficial to the layout of the Proposed Development.
- 8.4.23. The Proposed Development will include the retention of strategic areas within the Site, which will be managed as suitable habitat for ground

nesting birds, as secured in the **oLEMP [EN010149/APP/7.9]**. Additionally, there will be a creation of additional habitat for both the ground nesting birds and foraging bats present. Finally, there are proposals to protect the woodlands, hedgerows and trees; as well as new hedgerows to be created for habitats and enhancements. This approach is secured in the Management Objectives set out in the **oLEMP [EN010149/APP/7.9]**.

Mitigation and Management

- 8.4.24. EN-1 paragraph 5.4.35 refers to appropriate mitigation measures as an integral part of the proposed development. Paragraph 5.4.36 states applicants should consider producing and implementing a Biodiversity Management Strategy as part of their development proposals and paragraph 5.4.44 indicates that appropriate requirements should be attached to any consent to ensure any mitigation measures are delivered and maintained. Paragraph 2.10.90 of the EN-3 states applicants should consider enhancement, management, and monitoring of biodiversity.
- 8.4.25. Paragraph 5.4.42 of EN-1 states that “*As a general principle, and subject to the specific policies below, development should, in line with the mitigation hierarchy, aim to avoid significant harm to biodiversity and geological conservation interests, including through consideration of reasonable alternatives (as set out in Section 4.3 above). Where significant harm cannot be avoided, impacts should be mitigated and as a last resort, appropriate compensation measures should be sought.*” As set out in the **Site Selection Report at Appendix 1** to this Planning Statement, the Applicant sought from an early stage to seek to avoid sensitive ecological designations. The Proposed Development avoids all internationally and nationally designated sites, however, 4 LWSs remain partially within the Order Limits. Impacts on the LWSs have been reduced as far as practicable with mitigation proposed, as set out above, to help address impact.
- 8.4.26. To ensure the beneficial effects of the newly created habitats are fully realised an **outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan [EN010149/APP/7.9]** forms part of the control documents submitted alongside this Application. The **oLEMP [EN010149/APP/7.9]** sets the framework for the detailed LEMP which will be required to be submitted and approved by North Kesteven District Council and will set out how the newly created and retained habitats onsite will be managed throughout the operational phase of the Proposed Development.
- 8.4.27. The DCO Application is also accompanied by an **outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (oCEMP) [EN010149/APP/7.7]**, and **outline Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan (oDEMP) [EN010149/APP/7.13]**. These include mitigation measures which are intended to avoid negative impacts during the construction and decommissioning phases. The oCEMP and oDEMP set out locations of sensitive and retained features, and the measures for the protection of

these features. The detailed versions of the CEMP and DEMP are secured via requirements 12 and 19 respectively under the **Draft DCO [EN010149/APP/3.1]** and they will need to be approved by the relevant local planning authority prior the relevant stage of either construction or decommissioning. Some examples of the types of measures included in the oCEMP and oDEMP include management of earthworks associated with the construction compounds, access roads, and cable trenching.

Summary

- 8.4.28. From the outset of the Project the Applicant has sought to ensure that the Proposed Development is guided by the environment. This is evident at site selection phase, where the Applicant purposefully sought land which did not include any highly sensitive ecological/biodiversity related designations. The Site does, however, contain four LWSs and a number of notable species for which it is important the Applicant provides suitable protection, mitigation and, where possible, enhancement.
- 8.4.29. Paragraph 5.4.39 requires the SoS to have regard to the aims and goals of the Environmental Improvement Plan 2023. The proposed development contributes positively to a number of the goals set out within the plan, notably in reference to this section, goal 9 'Enhancing Biodiversity' as well as future targets relating to BNG under the Environment Act (2021).
- 8.4.30. Paragraph 5.4.41 confirms that the SoS may take demonstrable net benefits into account in decision making. The Applicant has committed to a minimum 10% Biodiversity Net Gain which is secured within the **oLEMP [EN010149/APP/7.9]**.
- 8.4.31. In accordance with the aims and intentions of paragraphs 5.4.42 and 5.4.43 the Proposed Development has avoided significant harm to the key biodiversity interests within the Order Limits, namely the four LWSs. There are, however, adverse local level effects although not significant predicted on the LWSs. The impact to the LWSs occurs during construction where segments of grassland verges are required to be removed to provide passing places and highways access, and is proposed to be mitigated by way of calcareous grassland planting in field margins. Conversely, once embedded mitigation in the form of wildflower grassland, hedgerow and tree planting adjacent to the LWSs have established a beneficial impact is predicted.
- 8.4.32. In terms of paragraph 5.4.49, the Applicant confirms and demonstrates by way of the **HRA No Significant Effects Report [EN010149/APP/7.17]** that there is no likely significant effect on any European protected site (or other site which benefits from the same protection). Equally there are no effects anticipated on any SSSIs nor are there any within 2km of the Order Limits, which were scoped out of the assessment in **ES; Volume 1, Chapter 7: Biodiversity [EN010149/APP/6.1]** given the distance from the Order Limits.

- 8.4.33. Paragraph 5.4.52 requires the SoS to give due consideration to local designations but recognises that *"given the need for new nationally significant infrastructure, these designations should not be used in themselves to refuse development consent"*. Further, and in reference to 5.4.53 and 5.4.55, the Proposed Development does not result in the loss of any irreplaceable habitats nor does it result in any residual adverse impacts on any species and habitats. Accordingly, the SoS should grant consent on this basis.
- 8.4.34. In addition to the compliance with the relevant NPS tests, set out above, the embedded mitigation measures proposed are wide ranging and respond directly to the type of species and habitats that exist on Site. The ES concludes that with mitigation, the Proposed Development is expected to have an overall significant beneficial impact as a result of measures being applied to key receptors, notably:
- Targeted areas of notable arable (non-crop) fauna which would be retained and managed for arable wildflowers. This would also mean that herbicides would not be used except for spot treatment of weeds
 - Habitat creation and improvement for ground nesting birds to compensate for the habitat loss during construction. Additional measures are also proposed to increase the amount of foraging habitat for birds
 - Habitat creation and improvement to increase foraging and roosting habitat for wintering birds, including the provision of bird nest boxes
- 8.4.35. As demonstrated above, the Applicant considers that the Proposed Development is compliant with the relevant policy requirements in regard to ecology and biodiversity.
- 8.5. **Flood Risk and Drainage**
- 8.5.1. This section reviews the Proposed Development in the context of the relevant planning policies relating to flood risk. This section should be read in conjunction with the policy accordance tables included in **Appendix 3** of this Planning Statement.
- 8.5.2. EN-1 Paragraph 5.8.13 states that applications for energy projects of 1 hectare or greater in Flood Zone 1 in England and all proposals for energy projects located in Flood Zone 2 and 3 in England should be accompanied by a flood risk assessment (FRA). The Proposed Development is predominantly within Flood Zone 1 with a small area of the Site in the east of Springwell East being a mixture of Flood Zone 2 and 3. The only operational element of the Proposed Development in Flood Zone 3a and 3b is Solar PV modules. Once attached to the mounting structure, the minimum height of the lowest part of the Solar PV modules will be 0.8m above the existing ground level (AGL). This will be secured via the Project

Parameters and **Design Commitments [EN010149/APP/7.4] (ref. F1)** and as discussed and agreed with the Environmental Agency.

- 8.5.3. An **FRA [EN010149/APP/7.16]** is provided with the Application and has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of paragraphs section 5.8 of EN-1 (and the NPPF). The likely effects of the Proposed Development associated with flood risk have been assessed in **ES Volume 1, Chapter 15: Water [EN010149/APP/6.1]**. The FRA concludes that the risk of the Proposed Development flooding from all sources is negligible and can be effectively managed via drainage measures identified in the **Outline Drainage Strategy (oDS) (Appendix to the FRA) [EN010149/APP/7.16]**, and the Proposed Development is not considered to give rise to any adverse flood effects either within, or outside of the Order Limits.
- 8.5.4. Paragraph 5.8.15 of EN-1 sets out the minimum criteria for FRAs. The criteria are set out in full in Table 1 of Appendix 3 which also confirms that the FRA has been prepared in full accordance with NPS requirements.
- 8.5.5. Paragraph 5.8.36 of EN-1 sets out the criteria with regard to flood risk that the SoS should be satisfied is addressed when determining the DCO Application. The full criteria are set out in **Appendix 3** of this Planning Statement. The **FRA [EN010149/APP/7.16]** has been prepared in accordance with EN-1 and the NPPF requirements. This is further requested within paragraph 2.10.84 of EN-3, which notes that where a flood risk assessment has been carried out, this must be submitted alongside the Applicant's ES and must consider the impact of drainage. The Applicant considers that the FRA satisfies the relevant provision within paragraph 5.8.36.
- 8.5.6. In terms of the Sequential Test, paragraph 5.8.21 of EN-1 sets out the basic process relating to the sequential test; in summary advising that development should work through sites on a hierarchical basis (low, medium then high risk). The **Site Selection Report in Appendix A** of this document sets out the process and criteria through which the Applicant determined appropriate sites to deliver its objective. Site selection requires the balancing up of a number of different criteria, many of which are subject to their own policy tests within the NPS. None of the sites identified at the site selection stage were identified as showing high risk in relation to flooding i.e. the vast majority of all sites was shown to be in Flood Zone 1 with smaller areas of higher risk in each instance.
- 8.5.7. As set out in the **Design Approach Document [EN010149/APP/7.3]**, the design evolution on the land which is available for development has been shaped by the Project Principles and has responded to the environmental assessment process, consultation feedback and engagement with stakeholders via an iterative design process. The Applicant undertook a systematic process to determine a suitable area for the Proposed Development, which was identified on a macro level using principles of

good design and the other elements described in the Site Selection Report, including grid capacity, topography and available land. Flood risk was not a differentiating factor at the site selection stage, although consideration was also given when determining the Order Limits, as discussed below.

- 8.5.8. The Applicant considers that the due consideration outlined above during site selection stage satisfies paragraph 5.8.36 of EN-1 to the extent that the Sequential Test has been applied and satisfied as part of site selection.
- 8.5.9. Paragraph 5.8.23 advises that *"all projects should apply the Sequential Test to locating development within the site."* Paragraph 5.8.29 continues on the theme of design, advising that the sequential approach should be applied to layout and design. It states that *"vulnerable aspects of development should be located on parts of the site at lower risk and residual risk of flooding"*.
- 8.5.10. The Applicant applied a sequential approach to the layout and design of the Proposed Development. Flood Zone 1 covers the vast majority of the Order Limits with a small area of a mixture of Flood Zones 2 and 3 in the east of Springwell East. An area of Springwell West formerly included land in Flood Zones 2 and 3 at non-statutory consultation but was subsequently removed on the basis of a combination of its flood risk and BMV land status.
- 8.5.11. The sequential approach has resulted in all electrical infrastructure and the majority of the solar PV development being located in Flood Zone 1. There is one area in east of Springwell East within Flood Zones 2 and 3 where solar PV development is proposed. The Applicant has considered other locations within the available land within Flood Zone 1 to accommodate solar PV development, however, these land parcels were less suitable when other environmental, planning and design factors were considered, for instance proximity to communities and landscape and visual. For example, through the design evolution process, Solar PV development within Springwell Central was discounted from land to the south of Scopwick to reduce the potential impacts on the setting of the village, residential properties, and the Scopwick Conservation Area. Further, Solar PV development was removed from all land north of the B1191 (Heath Road) between RAF Digby and Scopwick. This was designed to reduce potential impacts on local settlements, residential properties, users of local roads and footpaths, and Scopwick Mill and help maintain a sense of rural separation between villages. All this removed land is Flood Zone 1; with the understanding that areas of Flood Zones 2 and 3 can be mitigated through different engineering approaches and detailed design of the Solar PV modules. Given the Environment Agency's position that solar panels were acceptable within the areas of Flood Zones 2 and 3, and could be accommodated without an increased risk of flooding on the site or elsewhere, together with the fact that part of the Flood Zone 2 and 3 area already benefits from planning permission for solar PV development,

which shows that principle of this type of development is capable of being made acceptable in this location, it is considered reasonable to give appropriate weight to the other important factors when consenting Critical National Priority for the provision of nationally significant low carbon infrastructure.

- 8.5.12. If Flood Zones 2 and 3 were to be excluded from solar development, this would not make the best use of land, or maximise the energy generation of the Site, which is in line with government policy. In understanding the extent to which flooding could impact this particular area of the Proposed Development the Applicant committed to ensure that only solar PV modules may be developed outside of Flood Zone 1, in accordance with **Design Commitment F1 [EN010149/APP/7.4]**. In addition, and as set out in the **ES Volume 1, Chapter 3: Proposed Development Description [EN010149/APP/6.1]** and secured in the **ES Volume 3, Appendix 3.1 Project Parameters [EN010149/APP/6.3]** the lowest height of any solar PV Modules would be above the maximum flood height level. This level is 0.8m above the existing ground level and above the calculated flood level for the maximum credible flooding scenario from all sources.
- 8.5.13. To this end the Applicant considers that it has demonstrated compliance with the relevant sections of paragraph 5.8.36 in relation to the Sequential Test.
- 8.5.14. Following the completion of the Sequential Test and in accordance with the requirements of paragraph 5.8.9 of EN-1, the Applicant has applied the Exception Test to the proposed solar PV development within Flood Zone 3. In accordance with paragraph 5.8.10 of EN-1, the Applicant considers it appropriate to apply the Exception Test as the Sequential test has demonstrated that, at a site specific level, there are no reasonably available lower risk sites to locate the required solar PV development that would deliver the same amount of renewable energy in the same time period. The **Flood Risk Assessment [EN010149/APP/7.16]** sets out that in the NPPF the Exception Test needs to be passed in order for essential development to be considered acceptable in Flood Zone 3. EN-1 paragraph 5.8.11 further replicates the tests set out in Paragraph 170 of the NPPF which state that:
- development that has to be in a flood risk area will provide wider sustainability benefits to the community that outweigh flood risk, and
 - the development will be safe for its lifetime taking account of the vulnerability of its users, without increasing flood risk elsewhere, and, where possible, will reduce flood risk overall.
- 8.5.15. In relation to the first bullet point, above, the Applicant considers that the substantial benefits that the Proposed Development would deliver, as set out in Section 3 of this Planning Statement and considered further in the planning balance at Section 9, would clearly outweigh the flood risk, particularly given that this risk would be entirely removed through design

(see below). As articulated in the **Statement of Need [EN010149/APP/7.1]**, these are considered to be sustainability benefits to the wider community because significant renewable energy schemes at scale are required to be able to meet the legal binding commitment to Net Zero and make energy more affordable and reliable for all. The Proposed Development also delivers local community benefits through the additional proposed PRow and permissive paths, biodiversity net gain and environmental enhancements (see section 3 of this Planning Statement).

- 8.5.16. In relation to the second bullet point, above, the location of solar PV arrays within Flood Zone 3 do not materially alter the ability of the Flood Zone to act as a functional flood plain given the height of the panels above the maximum credible flooding scenario (from all sources) and the type of mounting structures proposed which will allow flood water to pass freely beneath it. Furthermore, the Applicant has committed through the design of the Proposed Development to ensure that no built structures (central inverters, Springwell substation and Collector Compounds) would be located within Flood Zones 2 or 3. It was discussed and agreed with the Environment Agency during the pre-application stage that potentially vulnerable infrastructure equipment would be located outside Flood Zones 2 and 3. The FRA concludes that the Proposed Development will not increase flood risk elsewhere. The Applicant therefore considers that the Proposed Development complies with the Exception Test requirements set out in paragraph 5.8.11 of EN-1. It is considered also noteworthy that the areas of the Site which are in Flood Zones 2 and 3 benefit from an extant permission for a solar farm (NKDC reference 14/0937/FUL) and no objection from the Environmental Agency, and therefore, as a realistic fallback, that development could be carried out in this location. In any case, the Applicant considers that its approach to site selection and the design level site selection demonstrates compliance with the requirements of paragraphs 5.8.21, 5.8.23 and 5.8.29 in EN-1.
- 8.5.17. The Applicant also considers that the Proposed Development is aligned with the aims and intentions of the Lincolnshire Flood Risk and Water Management Strategy, although it is noted that the strategy sets out a more strategic framework for flood management within the county. The Applicant considers that it is compliant with the relevant section of 5.8.36 in this regard.
- 8.5.18. In reference to the section of paragraph 5.8.36 that requires the Proposed Development to provide safe access and escape routes as part of an emergency plan, the **oCEMP [EN010149/APP/7.7]**, **oOEMP [EN010149/APP/7.10]** and **oDEMP [EN010149/APP/7.13]** each set out a requirement for an Emergency Response Plan and Health and Safety Plan which both specifically require flood risk to be addressed. These documents are all secured by way of requirement in the **Draft Development Consent Order [EN010149/APP/3.1]**. The Applicant therefore considers that it is compliant with the relevant section of 5.8.36.

- 8.5.19. The Proposed Development includes an **Outline Drainage Strategy [EN010149/APP/7.14]** which sets out how the detailed drainage design and strategy will utilise SuDS. The Applicant therefore considers that it is compliant with the relevant section of 5.8.36.
- 8.5.20. Paragraph 5.8.41 of EN-1 also goes on to state that “*energy projects should not normally be consented within Flood Zone 3b, or Zone C2 in Wales, or on land expected to fall within these zones within its predicted lifetime. This may also apply where land is subject to other sources of flooding (for example surface water). However, where essential energy infrastructure has to be located in such areas, for operational reasons, they should only be consented if the development will not result in a net loss of floodplain storage, and will not impede water flows.*”
- 8.5.21. The Proposed Development includes 11.8ha of solar panels which fall within Flood Zone 3b. The Applicant notes the following in relation to this paragraph:
- The Environment Agency has confirmed that it is supportive of locating solar panels (but not vulnerable infrastructure as noted above) within Flood Zone 3b, provided that the minimum height of the lowest part of the Solar PV modules is 0.8m above the existing ground level (AGL). This will be secured via the Project Parameters and Design Commitments [EN010149/APP/7.4] (ref. F1).
 - The majority of areas of Flood Zone 3b where solar is proposed fall within areas that have already been consented for solar development by virtue of the extant consent (ref: 14/0937/FUL). They could, therefore, be developed as a realistic fallback position under this extant consent, and therefore, the principle of solar PV development in these areas has been established.
 - As explained above for the rest of Flood Zone 3, areas outside of Flood Zone 3b were considered by the Applicant, but excluded on the basis that there were other planning and environmental considerations that made them less suitable than the areas in Flood Zone 3b. The lower risk areas were appropriately discounted, accounting for the wider sustainable development objectives in accordance with paragraph 5.8.10.
 - The areas of Flood Zone 3b cover small portions of fields the majority of which fall within Flood Zone 1, including in some cases, small parts of the centre of fields which are very suitable for solar development. In this case, it would not be maximising the renewable energy generation of the Proposed Development, by excluding small areas of fields, the rest of which fall outside areas at risk of flooding.
- 8.5.22. Paragraph 5.8.41 makes an allowance for some energy projects to be consented to in Flood Zone 3b, on the basis that the wording is that energy project should not *normally* be consented. The Applicant

acknowledges that many types of energy development would not be suitable for flood zone 3b because of the nature of the technical equipment, however, the solar panels are suitable because the design is resilience to flood risk. In this case, there are good reasons for including land in Flood Zone 3b, as explained above. The Proposed Development is also an essential energy infrastructure that has to be located where it can be connected to the grid. It will not result in a net loss of floodplain storage or impede water flows, and through project parameters and design commitment for unsuitable development vulnerable to flooding, for example, central inverters or collector compounds are to be outside of these areas. On this basis, the Proposed Development is considered to comply with paragraph 5.8.41 as an acknowledged exception.

Summary

8.5.23. The Applicant considers that the section above demonstrates the Applicant's compliance with the key policy tests and requirements from EN-1, notably paragraph 5.8.36, in relation to Flood Risk. It is considered that the site selection process has had due regard to the Sequential Test and that the design and layout has considered the flood risk characteristics of the site and followed a sequential approach, which is predominantly Flood Zone 1. The Applicant has committed through the design of the Proposed Development to ensure that potentially vulnerable infrastructure (central inverters, Springwell substation and Collector Compounds) would be located within Flood Zones 2 or 3. The only operational elements of the Proposed Development in Flood Zone 3a and 3b is Solar PV modules. Once attached to the mounting structure, the minimum height of the lowest part of the Solar PV modules will be 0.8m above the existing ground level (AGL). The Applicant considers that the Proposed Development is acceptable in flood risk terms and is compliant with planning policy.

8.6. Cultural Heritage

8.6.1. This section considers the Proposed Development in the context of the relevant planning policies relating to Cultural Heritage. **Appendix 3: Policy Compliance Assessment Tables** provide a comprehensive assessment, which should be read in conjunction with this section.

8.6.2. **ES Volume 1, Chapter 9: Cultural Heritage [EN010149/APP/6.1]** includes a Cultural Heritage Assessment of the construction, operation, and decommissioning phases of the Proposed Development, encompassing assessment of archaeological and historical development, including the potential effect on heritage assets resulting from changes in their setting, including designated and non-designated heritage assets. In accordance with EN-1 paragraphs 5.9.9 - 5.9.15 and NEN-3 section 2.10.

8.6.3. Paragraph 5.9.10 of EN-1 states that *"as part of the ES, the applicant should provide a description of the significance of the heritage assets*

affected by the Proposed Development and the contribution of their setting to that significance". Paragraph 5.9.11 goes on to highlight that "where a site on which development is proposed includes, or the available evidence suggests it has the potential to include, heritage assets with an archaeological interest, the applicant should carry out appropriate desk-based assessment and where such desk-based research is insufficient to properly assess the interest, a field evaluation".

- 8.6.4. The sources of information, including relevant historical records, used to inform the heritage assessment are set out in **ES; Volume 3, Appendices 9.1 - 9.5 [EN010149/APP/6.3]**. **ES; Volume 1, Chapter 9: Cultural Heritage [EN010149/APP/6.1]** notes that there are a number of historic assets, both non-designated and designated, within the Order Limits and wider surrounding area.
- 8.6.5. **ES; Volume 1, Chapter 9: Cultural Heritage [EN010149/APP/6.1]** confirms that the known heritage assets within the Site are three designated heritage assets, and 79 non-designated heritage assets.
- 8.6.6. Three designated heritage assets within the Site were identified during the assessment:
- The Brauncewell medieval village scheduled monument (NHLE 1018397) is partly within the Site at the southern edge where a permissive path is proposed (included in Order Limits by reason of adjacent permissive path).
 - The Blankney Conservation Area includes a portion around St Oswald's Church that extends south of Oswald's Lane into the Site (included in Order Limits by reason of proposed improvements to adjacent PRoW).
 - The Grade II listed milepost on the A15 (NHLE1061824) lies within the Site and is of medium importance for its architectural and historic interest (included in Order Limits due to requirement for land adjacent A15).
- 8.6.7. A total of 79 non-designated heritage assets within the Site were identified during the assessment. However, only a limited number of these non-designated historic assets are considered to be potentially affected by the Proposed Development, as stated in **ES Volume 1, Chapter 9: Cultural Heritage [EN010149/APP/6.1]**:
- Milepost 20 metres south of Ashby Lodge Farm, Grade II Listed Building (NHLE 106184).
 - WWII aeroplane crash sites - Avro Lancaster Crash Site (Lincolnshire County Council HER MLI25416) and Hawker Hurricane Crash Site (Lincolnshire County Council HER ref. MLI125417).
 - Three potential archaeological below ground sites.

- One of the Roman finds (Lincolnshire County Council HER Ref: MLI84520) was from within 600m of the route of a Roman road.
- One of which (Lincolnshire County Council HER Ref: MLI86164) was within an area of cropmarks recorded by the HER as prehistoric (Lincolnshire County Council HER Ref: MLI83188) and where the geophysical survey revealed anomalies interpreted as settlement over a larger area than the cropmark.
- One of the prehistoric flints (a Palaeolithic hand axe (Lincolnshire County Council HER Ref: MLI60508) was found within a field in which the HER records cropmarks (Lincolnshire County Council HER Ref: MLI87443 and MLI87444) which correspond with geophysical anomalies.

- 8.6.8. Part 4.7 of EN-1 and Part 2.5 of EN-3 refer to the Criteria for "Good Design" for Energy Infrastructure and the importance of responding sensitively to context, including heritage assets. In this context, it is important to consider the mitigation measures and bespoke design solutions that have been implemented and note that the site selection exercise sought to avoid high-value heritage assets. Given the land required to deliver the Proposed Development and its associated benefits, these assets were not excluded from the Order Limits, (the reason for the inclusion of the three designated assets is set out in paragraph 8.6.6, above). However, the limited number and ability of the project to implement mitigation around those that do exist indicates a robust site selection process.
- 8.6.9. Paragraph 5.9.13 of EN-1 encourages applicants, where opportunities exist, to prepare proposals that can positively contribute to the historic environment. Paragraph 2.10.116 of EN-3 states that applications should take account of the results of historic environment assessments in their design.
- 8.6.10. In response to paragraphs 5.9.13 - 5.9.14 of EN-1, opportunities to enhance the historic features have been embedded into the design of the Proposed Development. For example, including mitigation throughout the layout of the Proposed Development. In addition, hedgerow planting will screen the panels from the Brauncewell medieval village scheduled monument and designated assets.
- 8.6.11. Retention and management of these landscape features, as detailed in the **outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (oLEMP) [EN010149/APP/7.9]**, would minimise the effect of the Proposed Development on the contribution made by setting to the significance of designated and non-designated heritage assets within the Order Limits.
- 8.6.12. EN-1 paragraph 5.9.13 sets out the desirability of enhancing heritage assets. As stated above, the design of the Proposed Development includes setbacks and retained and enhanced planting measures to

minimise potential impacts. The Proposed Development aims to make a positive contribution to the historic environment through information boards and permissive pathways leading to heritage assets that benefit the local community.

- 8.6.13. In accordance with paragraph 5.9.24- 26 in EN-1, the Proposed Development has avoided or minimised conflict between the historic environment, where possible as set out in **Design Approach Document [EN010149/APP/7.3]**. The
- 8.6.14. As set out above, the Applicant has sought to approach cultural heritage in a positive and proactive way. From an early stage, key design moves were made to ensure that Solar PV Development would not be located in places where there were cultural heritage sensitivities both directly and in terms of setting. To summarise, the embedded mitigation measures proposed include:
- Avoidance of areas of known or suspected ground archaeological deposits
 - Amendments to the layout of the Proposed Development, including removal of solar PV modules from notably sensitive areas which contribute to the significance of heritage assets.
 - Proposed additional screening.
 - Access points on A15 specifically selected to avoid works in proximity to the listed milepost.
 - Non-intrusive construction methods (e.g. concrete feet) used within archaeological mitigation areas, where necessary (as set out in the **oCEMP [EN010149/APP/7.7]**, and Design Commitment D6 of the **Design Commitments [EN010149/APP/7.4]**).
 - Routing HGV construction away from Blankney and the centre of Scopwick also avoids the conservation areas located within those settlements and therefore removes the potential for traffic-related impacts on cultural heritage.
- The following additional mitigation is also proposed:
- Outline Written Scheme of Investigation **[EN010149/APP/7.15]** to set out methods for identifying currently unknown archaeological remains and inform the detailed design.
- 8.6.15. During operation the siting of solar panels within the Order Limits has the potential to result in a change to the setting of surrounding designated and non-designated assets. However, the key elements of the asset's values, derived from their surviving historic fabric and form, and from where they are experienced, would be preserved. Mitigation measures have been embedded into the design and layout to reduce any potential effects and

include the retention of existing vegetation screening and the inclusion of open space to preserve the settings of heritage assets.

- 8.6.16. In summary, **ES Volume 1, Chapter 9: Cultural Heritage [EN010149/APP/6.1]** states that there are no significant residual effects arising from the Proposed Development from a cultural heritage perspective.

Harm Assessment

- 8.6.17. EN-1 requires applicants to carefully consider their proposal's impacts on the historic environment. The NPPF makes clear that where a proposal will lead to less than substantial harm, such harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
- 8.6.18. EN-1 paragraph 5.9.27 sets out the importance given to harm caused by loss of significance and the level of justification required for varying degrees of harm to designated heritage assets and their setting. EN-1 paragraph 5.9.33 refers to the process for assessing non-designated heritage assets.
- 8.6.19. EN-1 requires the Applicant to carefully consider their proposals' impacts on the historic environment. The paragraph 5.9.32 of EN-1 makes clear that where a proposal leads to less than substantial harm, such harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the Proposed Development. This is particularly noted in paragraph 5.9.19 of EN-1, which sets out the importance given to harm caused by loss of significance and the level of justification required for varying degrees of harm to designated heritage assets and their setting.
- 8.6.20. NPPF Paragraph 200 requires an application to describe the significance of any heritage asset affected by development applications, including any contribution made by their setting. Paragraph 199 states that when considering the impact of the proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. Paragraphs 206-208 set out how levels of harm to designated heritage assets should be considered and weighed, with paragraph 209 setting out the process for non-designated heritage assets. The detailed policy response to these paragraphs is provided in Table 4 Appendix 3.
- 8.6.21. At the local level, Central Lincolnshire Local Plan - Policy S57: The Historic Environment, stipulates that all development proposals should protect, conserve and, where possible, seek opportunities to enhance the historic environment of Central Lincolnshire and their settings, maintain local distinctiveness and the character of identified asset, in keeping with the NPPF. The detailed policy response to these paragraphs is provided in Table 6 Appendix 3.

- 8.6.22. Appendix 5, Heritage Harm Statement, is part of this document and draws upon the information presented in the **ES [EN010149/APP/6.1]**. In the context of EIA, **Volume 1, Chapter 9: Cultural Heritage [EN010149/APP/6.1]** identifies significant impact/ effect, and the potential extent of the harm is further explored in Appendix 5 and summarised below.
- 8.6.23. The summary of the assessment is set out in Table 9.9, **ES Volume 1, Chapter 9: Cultural Heritage [EN010149/APP/6.1]**. This confirms that, due to the embedded mitigation measures designed into the layout of the Proposed Development, there will be no significant impact upon any above-ground designated or non-designated historic assets resulting from any phase of the Proposed Development. Annex 12 of **ES Volume 3, Appendix 9.1 [EN010149/APP/6.3]** provides full details of the predicted changes to the setting of designated heritage assets within the study area and the effects this would have on the significance of the assets. These historic assets within the study area of the Proposed Development will experience less than substantial harm as the impacts are assessed (within Annex 12 **ES Volume 3, Appendix 9.1 [EN010149/APP/6.3]**) as at most minor in magnitude, and therefore there is no requirement for the Applicant to demonstrate exceptional or wholly exceptional circumstances which would justify any such harm, as per the requirements of paragraphs 5.2.29 and 5.2.30 of EN-1.
- 8.6.24. For the majority of assets, the effect presented in the Environmental Statement has been assessed as being not significant. No impacts of major or moderate magnitude have been identified on any designated heritage assets. While there is no direct correlation between the significance of effect in EIA terms and the degree of harm referenced in national planning policy, it is acknowledged that assets identified as experiencing a significant adverse effect are more likely to experience substantial harm. This note, therefore, provides a further assessment of those heritage assets where significant effects have been identified to understand where on the harm spectrum this impact falls. As such, it is concluded that the harm caused to these assets falls within the less than substantial harm category. No physical harm will occur to any of these designated assets, only harm resulting from changes in their setting, which will be reversed following decommissioning.
- 8.6.25. Brauncewell Medieval Village (Scheduled Monument; NHLE 1018397) will experience both adverse and beneficial effects from the Proposed Development. The setting of the Scheduled earthwork remains of the former village of Brauncewell (NHLE 1018397) will experience changes due to the siting of solar arrays in the wider agricultural surroundings that contribute to its overall significance. The impact has been minimised through embedded mitigation such as design modifications and additional vegetation planting, however the medieval village remains affected by introducing modern infrastructure within a formerly agricultural landscape. The Proposed Development is also reversible, and upon

decommissioning, the landscape can revert to its current form. As a whole, the changes do not constitute substantial harm to the significance of the asset as a whole. Therefore, the Harm statement confirms it is at the lower end of less than substantial harm to the significance of the asset as a result of the Proposed Development is concluded and the assessment is set out in Appendix 5 of this document.

- 8.6.26. The results of this assessment show that the Proposed Development has appropriately mitigated potential effects in relation to the construction, operation and maintenance, and decommissioning of the Proposed Development on the historic environment and prevented any substantial harm on assets.
- 8.6.27. NPS EN-1 paragraphs 5.9.28 – 5.9.33 requires consideration of the harm to, or loss of, the heritage significance of an asset, asking (in the case of designated heritage assets) if the harm is substantial, or less than substantial, and sets up tests depending on the value/importance of the asset. This follows the tests established within the NPPF. There is no direct correlation between the results and terminology of the NPPF / NPS process and those of the EIA process, and no current published guidance on this matter.
- 8.6.28. All of the impacts on designated heritage assets identified with regard to the Proposed Development have been assessed as representing less than substantial harm to the significance of those assets. None of the identified impacts would represent substantial harm as this is a particularly high test, as explained in the NPPG.
- 8.6.29. With regard to non-designated buried archaeological remains, it is possible that limited impacts (not significant) that can only be partially mitigated may be experienced as a result of the Proposed Development.
- 8.6.30. The Proposed Development design has been carefully considered to avoid, reduce, or mitigate potentially significant effects on cultural heritage and archaeology assets as set out in **Design Approach Document [EN010149/APP/7.3]**. This resulted in a Proposed Development that avoids direct physical impact on any designated heritage assets. Whilst there will be some residual impacts resulting from changes to the setting of some designated heritage assets, these have been assessed to result in 'less than substantial harm' as the assessment in **ES; Volume 3, Appendix 9.1 [EN010149/APP/6.3]**.
- 8.6.31. Regarding the potential impacts upon buried archaeological remains, EN-1 paragraph 5.9.33 and Paragraph 209 of the NPPF are engaged. The policies state that a balanced judgement is required, considering the scale of any harm or loss of significance to non-designated heritage assets. Table 9.9 of **ES Volume 1, Chapter 9: Cultural Heritage [EN010149/APP/6.1]** confirms that both the scale of the impact and significance of the potentially affected non-designated assets is 'limited'.

The limited harm to non-designated heritage assets is outweighed by the substantial public benefits that would only be realised if the Proposed Development was delivered.

- 8.6.32. In recognising that the Proposed Development will result in harm of a 'less than substantial' nature, the key policy test (as per paragraph 5.9.32 of EN-1) as set out in Appendix 5 of this document. That such harm is weighted against the public benefits. Given the clear and urgent need to deploy renewable energy at speed and scale, the Proposed Development demonstrably gives rise to substantial public benefits, which outweigh the less than substantial harm identified.

Summary

- 8.6.33. The Proposed Development is not likely to result in any significant effects on cultural heritage. The design development has sensitively considered the key receptors throughout, and appropriate mitigation measures are embedded into the design. By implementing Good Design at the early stages of the process, the Proposed Development has avoided and minimised conflict with designated and non-designated heritage assets. Through the implementation of mitigation measures, all residual effects are assessed as not significant and equate to less than substantial harm on all designated and non-designated heritage assets impacted by the Proposed Development, as per the requirements of paragraph 5.9.32 of EN-1 and paragraph 209 of the NPPF, respectively.
- 8.6.34. In accordance with EN-1 paragraph 5.9.32 (and taking account of the principles set out by 4.2.16 and 4.2.17 of EN-1), the substantial public benefits and need for the Proposed Development as set out in Sections 3 and 6 of this Planning Statement, including the delivery of CNP infrastructure to contribute towards meeting national energy security objectives and carbon reduction commitments, clearly and demonstrably outweigh the less than substantial harm to designated heritage assets and policy tests relating to substantial harm are therefore not triggered.
- 8.6.35. Paragraph 5.9.36 states that *“when considering applications for development affecting the setting of a designated heritage asset, the Secretary of State should give appropriate weight to the desirability of preserving the setting such assets and treat favourably applications that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to, or better reveal the significance of, the asset. When considering applications that do not do this, the Secretary of State should give great weight to any negative effects, when weighing them against the wider benefits of the application. The greater the negative impact on the significance of the designated heritage asset, the greater the benefits that will be needed to justify approval.”* The Proposed Development results in minor changes to the setting of the remains of the former village of Brauncewell and proposes additional vegetation planting to screen panels from view which results in a negligible adverse effect which is not

significant. Given the temporary and limited nature of the potential effect, the Applicant considers that the substantial benefits of the Proposed Development outweigh the impact in this regard.

8.6.36. The Proposed Development is therefore considered to comply with relevant policy aims and intentions in relation to cultural heritage matters.

8.7. Landscape and Visual

8.7.1. This section of the Planning Statement reviews the Proposed Development within the context of the relevant planning policies relating to landscape and visual impacts. This section should be read in conjunction with the policy accordances tables noted in **Appendix 3** of this Planning Statement.

8.7.2. Paragraphs 5.10.16 - 5.10.17 of EN-1 and 2.10.97 of EN-3 refer to the requirement for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments (LVIA), which consider the impacts of the construction and operational phases of development, including consideration of cumulative effects. A summary of the effects presented within **ES Volume 1, Chapter 10: Landscape and Visual [EN010149/APP/6.1]** is set out, below:

Landscape Character

8.7.3. The ES sets out that effects during operation (including maintenance) on landscape character would typically arise from:

8.7.4. The introduction of new energy infrastructure into existing agricultural fields;

- Earth bunds (up to 5 metres in height) in the vicinity of Springwell Substation;
- Incremental growth of newly established mitigation planting (hedgerows and woodland);
- Establishment of new wildflower rich grassland in open fields and field margins; and
- Regular maintenance visits and operations including habitat management.

8.7.5. Additional effects during the construction phase on landscape character would arise from:

- Short-term change of farmland to a construction site including the formation of temporary construction compounds (with associated temporary night time lighting) and access tracks;
- Increased vehicular movement and personnel in the landscape delivering and erecting the component parts of Springwell Solar Farm;

- Highways works and management;
- Underground cable installation; and
- Changes to landscape from vegetation removal.

8.7.6. Effects during decommissioning would be similar to those during construction. In addition to these, during construction the following potential effects are anticipated:

- Short-term change of farmland to a construction site including the formation of temporary construction compounds (with associated temporary night time lighting) and access tracks;
- Increased vehicular movement and personnel in the landscape delivering and erecting the component parts of Springwell Solar Farm;
- Highways works and management;
- Underground cable installation; and
- Changes to landscape from vegetation removal.

8.7.7. Effects during decommissioning would be similar to those during construction.

Visual Impact

8.7.8. The ES identifies the following key receptor groups in relation to visual impact:

- Residents (at isolated farmsteads and dwellings);
- Users of public rights of way (footpaths and bridleways); and
- Users of main roads and minor country lanes.

8.7.9. The villages of Scopwick, Kirkby Green and Blankney lie just beyond the Site near Springwell East. Vegetation which surrounds these settlements would screen any view of Springwell Solar Farm from within them. It has been assessed that there would be no view of any element of Springwell Solar Farm during construction, operation (including maintenance) or decommissioning from any location within these villages. Similarly, no views would exist of the Proposed Development from residential properties or communal parts of Ashby-de-la-Launde. There would be the potential for glimpses of the Proposed Development from the residential barracks at RAF Digby but any potential impact in this regard is considered to be negligible.

8.7.10. Effects during operation (including maintenance) on visual amenity would typically arise from views of:

- New energy infrastructure including ancillary structures;

- Earth bunds (up to 5 metres in height) in the vicinity of Springwell Substation;
- Newly established mitigation planting (hedgerows and woodland);
- New wildflower rich grassland in open fields and field margins; and
- Regular maintenance operations including habitat management.

Additional effects during construction on visual amenity would typically arise from views of:

- Temporary construction compounds;
- Highways work and management;
- The movement of vehicles and delivery of components to Site; and
- The movement of plant and personnel within the site installing Springwell Solar Farm.

- 8.7.11. Effects during decommissioning would be similar to those during construction.
- 8.7.12. To understand in detail the potential impacts on residential properties, a **residential visual amenity assessment** has been undertaken and its detailed findings are presented in **ES Volume 3, Appendix 10.5 [EN010149/APP/6.3]**. The RVAA included the Applicant contacting all properties within 500m of the Order Limits and extending an invitation to have their property visited by a landscape architect in order to understand the individual circumstances of each property.
- 8.7.13. The Applicant visited 33 properties to undertake the RVAA and provided feedback to residents on the outcome of these assessments and how they would help inform the design of the Proposed Development by way of a design workshop focused on the areas of the Proposed Development likely to be of interest to them.
- 8.7.14. Three workshops were held in June 2023 and attended by 47 people from 31 of the 33 properties that were visited. These 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 an updated design of the Proposed Development which reflected changes as a result of 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. The sessions were interactive, for example annotating plans directly and with members of the project team present to assist and respond to any questions.
- 8.7.15. The RVAA provides detailed assessment for each relevant property in Table A10.5.4. The assessment describes the: location; details of survey; baseline visual amenity information; effect of Proposed Development on

visual amenity; scale of change, magnitude of effect and significance of effect; and, RVAA judgement.

- 8.7.16. The RVAA covers operational phase only, however, it is assumed that any significant effects would also occur for construction. In total it is assessed that residents of 31 dwellings would experience significant adverse visual effects. Table 10.12 in **ES Volume 1, Chapter 10: Landscape and Visual [EN010149/APP/6.1]** sets out the specific properties at which significant effects are expected to occur. Significant residual effects are, however, not expected at year 10 once mitigation has become established aside from the Windmill on Heath Road where a moderate/minor effect that is significant is expected to remain. The impacts at the Windmill remain due to the tall nature of the structure, its location within a plateau within the landscape and the extent of the Proposed Development. To mitigate visual impact completely would necessitate the removal of large areas of solar PV arrays which would be to the detriment of the energy generating capacity of the Proposed Development.
- 8.7.17. The hedgerow removal is typically modest (10m - 30m) with some larger sections (approx. 50m) being required to facilitate highway works such as that on the A15 and Heath Road. The adverse impacts occur during construction and early years of operation. By year 10, however, the new planting would have become established and the effect would be moderate beneficial and significant. The hedgerow removal amounts to 1,249 metres in total however, the Proposed Development includes proposals for 15,563 metres of new hedgerow.

Policy Assessment and Mitigation

- 8.7.18. Paragraphs 2.10.93 - 2.10.101 of EN-3 note that part 5.10 of EN-1 is where the generic impacts relating to Landscape and Visual are covered. However, paragraph 2.10.98 confirms the following:
- 8.7.19. *"Applicants should follow the criteria for good design set out in Section 4.7 of EN-1 when developing projects and will be expected to direct considerable effort towards minimising the landscape and visual impact of solar PV arrays especially within nationally designated landscapes".*
- 8.7.20. Specific landscape and visual matters are set out under 'Impacts' in paragraphs, 2.10.93 - 2.10.101 of EN-3. 2.10.94 advises that solar farms are likely to be in low lying areas of good exposure as such may have a wider zone of visual influence than other types of energy infrastructure. A series of ZTVs is presented in the **ES; Volume 2 Figures 10.5-10.9 [EN010149/APP/6.2]** covering different elements of the scheme to demonstrate a thorough understanding of the visual reach of the Proposed Development. The ZTVs are as follows:
- Figures 10.5a-d: Solar PV standard ZTV;
 - Figures 10.6a-d: Solar PV detailed screening ZTV;

- Figures 10.7a-c: Satellite Collector Compound ZTVs;
 - Figure 10.8: Siting zone for BESS ZTV; and
 - Figure 10.9: Siting zone for Springwell Substation and Main Collector Compound ZTV.
- 8.7.21. At 2.10.59, applicants are advised to follow criteria for good design set out in Chapter 4.7 of EN-1. This states that "Applicants should consider the criteria for good design set out in Section 4.7 of EN-1 at an early stage when developing projects." Paragraph 5.10.37 of EN-1 states that the SoS should consider if the project has been designed carefully, taking account of environmental effects to minimise harm to the landscape, including by reasonable mitigation.
- 8.7.22. The NKDC Local Plan states in Policy S14 'Renewable Energy' that proposals for renewable energy schemes will be supported if the cumulative, direct, indirect, and individual impacts are considered in terms of landscape character. Policy S53 (Design and Amenity) states that "all development, including extensions and alterations to existing buildings, must achieve high quality sustainable design that contributes positively to local character landscape and townscape, and supports diversity, equality and access for all".
- 8.7.23. Section 4.7 of EN-1 places emphasis on the positive contribution good design can make to place and surrounding sensitive receptors while accepting that energy infrastructure is primarily of functional design. Paragraph 4.7.6 it is advised that applicants are still able to demonstrate good design even where infrastructure may be of a particular physical form by way of appropriate siting relative to landscape character, form and vegetation.
- 8.7.24. At a macro level, the site selection approach (as set out in the **Site Selection Report at Appendix 1** to this Planning Statement) has instilled principles of good design at early stage. By seeking to locate the Proposed Development away from sensitive landscape designations, the Applicant is having due regard to paragraph 5.10.4 of EN-1 which acknowledges that landscape sensitivity plays a part in considering landscape effects.
- 8.7.25. Equally it is considered that the approach to site selection demonstrates compliance with EN-1 paragraph 5.10.19, which places an emphasis on the importance of the applicant considering landscape and visual matters at early stages of siting and design, where site choices and design principles are being established.
- 8.7.26. The Applicant's approach to design is summarised in Chapter 2 of this document and clearly set out in the **Design Approach Document [EN010149/APP/7.3]** which illustrates the guiding principles which have framed the design to date and how the mitigation and enhancement

measures proposed are appropriate in their context and all play important roles within the framework of the Site. The **Design Approach Document [EN010149/APP/7.3]** demonstrates compliance with paragraph 4.7.7 of EN-1 which requires applicants to document how the design process was conducted and how the design has evolved.

8.7.27. The following Project Principles, as set out in the **Design Approach Document [EN010149/APP/7.3]**, demonstrate the types of embedded design mitigation which have been applied to the Proposed Development:

- Principle 2.1 Retain existing vegetation wherever reasonably possible to retain the fabric of the site and aid assimilation of development into its context.
- Principle 2.2 Design the development to respond to the distinctive and unique local character of the site, informed by relevant local studies such as North Kesteven landscape character assessment.
- Principle 3.5 Establish new planting and landforms at the earliest practicable opportunity.
- Principle 4.2 All internal access tracks and cable routes will use existing tracks, crossings and / or gaps in the hedgerows wherever practicable
- Principle 4.3 Grid connection route should comprise below ground cables - cabling routes will run alongside access tracks as much as possible to avoid wider excavations.
- Principle 5.2 Protect the amenity of the Spires and Steeples Trail, avoiding any Solar PV Development between the trail and the B1188 (Lincoln Road).
- Principle 5.3 Consider sequential views and the experience of people using the Stepping Out Walks and other local footpaths.

8.7.28. As both EN-1 and EN-3 recognise, a project of the scale of Springwell is unlikely to assimilate itself seamlessly into any rural landscape but the process through which the design has evolved and the principles it has followed have and will ensure that impacts have been avoided and then reduced as far as reasonably practicable. It is also important to acknowledge that the measures taken to limit impacts are appropriate and respond to local context. Paragraph 5.10.5 of EN-1 is particularly relevant in this regard, stating that "virtually all nationally significant energy infrastructure projects will have adverse effects on the landscape, but there may also be beneficial landscape character impacts arising from mitigation". To this end, where the design has not been able to avoid impacts, mitigation is set out in the **Outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan [EN010149/APP/7.9]** and secured by Requirements 5 and 7 of the **Draft DCO [EN010149/APP/3.1]**, respectively.

8.7.29. These mitigation measures include:

- New hedgerow planting
- Structural native woodland planting
- Establishment of wildflower rich grassland
- Earthworks to help create screening
- Minimum 15m offset from built development to existing woodland and 10m to all retained existing hedgerows
- Minimum 15m offsets from existing or proposed PRow (except where crossings are necessary)

8.7.30. Looking forward towards future design, the **Design Commitments [EN010149/APP/7.4]** continue to provide a framework for design decisions and set specific requirements which will be secured by way of requirement 5 of the **Draft DCO [EN010149/APP/3.1]**. These commitments are multi-purpose i.e. their designed benefit stretches over more than one topic area. In terms of those which are of relevance from a landscape and visual perspective, the following are considered relevant and comprise secured mitigation:

- A1. Springwell Substation, BESS, Collector Compounds and ITS will be offset at least 250m from residential properties.
- D1. Internal access tracks and cable routes will use existing tracks, crossings and / or gaps in the hedgerows wherever possible.
- D2. Cabling routes will run alongside access tracks as much as possible avoiding wider excavations.
- D9. String inverters will be mounted below the Solar PV modules and shall not exceed the height of the Solar PV modules.
- D19. BESS containers and transformer units will be grey or green in colour.
- E1. Perimeter fencing surrounding the Solar PV Development will be offset at least 15m from either side of existing and proposed PRow
- E2. Independent Outdoor Equipment (transformer, switchgear and central inverters) and ITS will be offset at least 50m from all existing and proposed PRow.

8.7.31. Section 5.3 of the **Design Approach Document [EN010149/APP/7.3]** sets out the key design changes at the various stages of the design development and illustrates how greater understanding of the Order Limits and context has led to iterations and the implementation of mitigation measures to either avoid or if this was not possible, help reduce and/or mitigate the potential impact of the Proposed Development. These design changes are referenced against the relevant Project Principle in the **Design Approach Document [EN010149/APP/7.3]** and provide a more detailed response to individual circumstances which the Applicant has

considered and made positive changes to seek to address potential impacts of the Proposed Development, for example:

- Discounting solar PV development from fields around Rowston Top in response to more detailed understanding of potential impacts on residential properties and users of adjacent roads.
- Discounting solar PV development to land south and east of Heath Road where the land is more visually prominent.
- Provision of structural planting to provide screening and integrate Proposed Development with the landscape, inclusive of new hedgerow planting adjacent to Spires and Steeples Trails, Stepping Out Walks and other local footpaths.
- Refinement of potential locations for Springwell Substation and BESS and increased offset from A15 to limit potential impacts on residential properties.

8.7.32. The above provides an example of the types of design changes which were adopted at various phases of the design development to avoid, reduce and/or mitigate potential impacts. This detailed process demonstrates a robust approach to design and consideration of the policy implications set out in EN-1 and EN-3. While the Applicant recognises that some impacts are unavoidable, as per the acknowledgement in EN-1 paragraph 5.10.5, it is documented throughout the Application the steps that have been made to avoid, reduce and/or mitigate the impact on landscape and visual appearance. It is also considered important to recognise that the nature of the potential effects is predominantly temporary, albeit the impact is over a notable period. EN-3 at para. 2.10.66 accepts that the temporary definition is appropriate for time-limited consents, such as that proposed within this Application.

8.7.33. This approach to mitigation, through control documents and appropriate management plans is consistent with the aims of para. 5.10.24 of EN-1.

Residual Effects

8.7.34. The ES concludes, however, that a number of significant residual impacts would remain. From a landscape perspective during construction and up to year 10 of operation there would be a significant adverse effect on vegetation structure of the landscape due to the removal of hedgerows. The removal is typically modest (10m - 30m) with some larger sections (approx. 50m) being required to facilitate highway works such as that on the A15 and Heath Road. The adverse impacts occur during construction and early years of operation. By year 10, however, the new planting would have become established and the effect would be moderate beneficial and significant. The hedgerow removal amounts to 1,249 metres in total however, the Proposed Development includes proposals for 15,563m of new hedgerow.

- 8.7.35. There would be a significant adverse effect on landscape character across part of Landscape Character Areas 7: Limestone Heath during construction, operation (including maintenance) and decommissioning. This would be limited to a defined tract of the landscape as follows:
- 8.7.36. From Heath Lane in the north to just south of Dunston Pit Plantation and extending west of the A15 as far as Wellingore Heath, Temple Bruer and Brauncewell;
- 8.7.37. To the east of the A15, potentially extending up to Heath Road as far as Royal Air Force Digby;
- 8.7.38. On the eastern side of Heath Road extending up to a series of plantations to the east (Bloxham Woods, Ashby Thorns, Rowston Covert); and,
- 8.7.39. Across the tract of land between Royal Air Force Digby, Scopwick, the B1188 and Rowston Covert.
- 8.7.40. There would also be a significant adverse effect on landscape character across part of Landscape Character Areas 11: Central Clays and Gravels during construction, in the early years of operation (up to year 10) and during decommissioning. This would be limited to a tightly defined tract of the landscape as follows:
- Between the railway line which defines the eastern boundary of Springwell East;
 - The B1188 to the west;
 - Blankney Walks Lane to the north; and
 - Trundle Lane and public rights of way Scop/739/1 to the south.
- 8.7.41. In terms of visual impact, the ES reports that, in total, residents of 25 dwellings would experience significant adverse visual effects during year 1 of operation, but in most cases by year 10, these effects would reduce in magnitude due to the establishment of mitigation planting and by year 10 would be not significant. It is considered likely that significant adverse visual effects would only remain at the Windmill on Heath Road, reflecting the fact that views are available from elevated rooms within the converted mill.
- 8.7.42. During construction, the residents of 31 dwellings would experience significant adverse visual effects but during decommissioning this would be reduced to four.
- 8.7.43. Aside from residents, users of the following roads and public rights of way would experience significant adverse visual effects during construction and in the early years of operation and maintenance:

- Public rights of way between Blankney, Scopwick and Kirkby Green extending up to Blankney Walks Lane and the railway on the eastern area of the Site (including several local promoted 'Stepping Out' walks and a section of the Spires and Steeples Trail);
- Public rights of way between Royal Air Force Digby and B1188 (Footpath R5/1);
- Bloxholm Woods Local Nature Reserve Footpath;
- Minor Roads to Temple Bruer and Thompsons Bottom Farm;
- Public rights of way and lanes north-west between A15 and Wellingore Heath including New England Lane and Gorse Hill Lane;
- A15; and
- B1191 (Heath Road).

8.7.44. Over a number of years, proposed mitigation planting would soften or screen many of these views and by year 10 of operation, it has been assessed that significant adverse visual effects would only remain in the following locations:

- Some sections of the public rights of way between Blankney, Scopwick and Kirkby Green extending up to Blankney Walks Lane and the railway east of the Site on the basis that it is not possible to screen the Proposed Development from every location along the PRoW network between Blankney, Scopwick and Kirkby Green extending up to Blankney Walks Lane and the railway east of the Order Limits.
- A15, on the basis that the road undulates along its length throughout the Order Limits and, as such would enable occasional views across proposed roadside hedgerows. In addition, the substation and BESS compounds are also taller in elevation than that which can be mitigated by plating in the medium term. Through consultation with NKDC it was determined that roadside hedgerows were preferable to dense tree belts and higher bunds that were not considered appropriate in the context of the baseline landscape.

Landscape/Visual Cumulative effects

8.7.45. Paragraph 2.10.157 of EN-3 states the visual impacts and impacts upon landscape character should be considered together with the possible cumulative effect with any existing or proposed development. Cumulative effects are covered in **ES; Volume 1, Chapter 16: Cumulative Effect [EN010149/APP/6.1]**. In regard to cumulative landscape and visual effects, the Chapter provides an assessment of potential impacts if the Proposed Development was constructed in parallel with the proposed National Grid Navenby Substation. The Chapter concludes that during construction and operation (years 1 and 10) in landscape terms, the existing major/moderate residual adverse effect, which is considered to be

significant, would likely extend further north (within Landscape Character Area 7) and encompass the following receptors:

- From the B1202 in the north to just south of Dunston Pit Plantation and extending west of the A15 as far as Wellingore Heath, Temple Bruer and Brauncewell;
- To the east of the A15, potentially extending up to Heath Road as far as RAF Digby;
- On the eastern side of Heath Road extending up to a series of plantations to the east (Bloxham Woods, Ashby Thorns, Rowston Covert); and
- Across the tract of land between RAF Digby, Scopwick, the B1188 and Rowston Covert.

- 8.7.46. The chapter confirms that additional mitigation in the form of an **oLEMP [EN010149/APP/7.9]** has already been proposed for the Proposed Development. It is assumed that a similar commitment would be agreed in relation to the proposed National Grid Navenby Substation. It is further assumed that any landscape mitigation proposals implemented around the National Grid Navenby Substation would mature over approximately the same timeframe as that proposed around the Springwell Substation and BESS. No further additional mitigation has therefore been proposed to mitigate inter-project cumulative effects between the two developments.
- 8.7.47. In terms of impacts on visual receptors, it is advised that during construction visual effects would extend north, up to approximately the B1202, on views from the A15 which would result in a moderate adverse cumulative residual effect. During operation it is assessed that there would be no significant simultaneous or in combination visual effects. There would be a sequential cumulative visual effect when travelling along the A15 but no further mitigation is proposed. As set out above, the Proposed Development on its own is predicted to result in major/moderate adverse effect in year 1 of operation but by year 10 this is reduced to moderate which is still significant. In both instances the effects are considered significant. If the proposed National Grid Navenby Substation was developed together with the Proposed Development, during operation, there would be a major/moderate adverse cumulative residual effect in year 1 and a moderate adverse cumulative residual effect on views from the A15 in year 10 which is considered to be significant in both cases.
- 8.7.48. The Applicant considers that it has sought to avoid, reduce and mitigate potential impacts as far as reasonably practicable and there are no additional controls or opportunities that are available to the Applicant to minimise potential cumulative effects beyond that proposed to mitigate the effects of the Proposed Development itself.
- 8.7.49. Chapter 16 also considers three additional cumulative scenarios to assess the likelihood of giving rise to additional cumulative effects:

- The Proposed Development with the proposed National Grid Navenby Substation and Navenby Heath BESS;
- The Proposed Development with the proposed National Grid Navenby Substation and the proposed RAF Digby office and training building; and
- The Proposed Development with the proposed National Grid Navenby Substation, Navenby Heath BESS and the proposed RAF Digby office and training building.

8.7.50. No additional significant inter-project cumulative effects beyond those noted above for National Grid Navenby Substation are identified and therefore no further mitigation is proposed.

Summary

8.7.51. The Proposed Development presents a new type of built form within a predominantly rural landscape. The form of development, while temporary, has the potential to alter the way in which the landscape is experienced and viewed. **ES; Volume 1, Chapter 10: Landscape and Visual [EN010149/APP/6.1]** considers the extent and significance of the potential impacts on key receptors and concludes that, with mitigation, significant impacts are expected to occur across all stages of the development albeit not simultaneously nor at all receptors. Indeed, residual effects for the majority of the lifetime of the proposed development are limited, with significant effects from year 10 of operation up to the start of decommissioning only being predicted at two receptor groups. Para. 3.1.2 of EN-1 recognises this point stating that *"it will not be possible to develop the necessary amounts of such infrastructure without some significant adverse impacts"*.

8.7.52. On the general matter of impact, at 5.10.14 it is advised that the SoS will be required to make a judgement about whether the visual effects on sensitive receptors outweigh the benefits of the proposal. As set out above, the number and significance of potential impacts has been greatly reduced by way of the application of the mitigation hierarchy in the Applicant's design, seeking to avoid, then reduce and lastly adopting the provision of appropriate mitigation measures. This is a matter for the planning balance and is reflected in paragraph 5.10.35 of EN-1 which states that the *"scale of energy projects means that they will often be visible across a very wide area. The Secretary of State should judge whether any adverse impact on the landscape would be so damaging that it would not be offset by the benefits (including need) of the project"*. It is important that this is considered in the context of the CNP designation of the Proposed Development and the provision within EN-1 paragraph 4.2.15 which advises that should residual effects remain after the mitigation hierarchy has been applied, which it has been rigorously done, then any such impacts are *"unlikely to outweigh the urgent need for this type of infrastructure"*.

- 8.7.53. Section 5.3 of the **Design Approach Document [EN010149/APP/7.3]** explains how the design of the project has responded over time to increased understanding of the Site and its context as well as in response to consultation feedback including how the relevant Project Principles have helped frame that design. This approach includes the general approach but also the specific design approach to individual properties, PRoW and other landscape related factors and responds directly to the requirements of EN-1 paragraph 5.10.6 which sets out that projects *"need to be designed carefully, taking account of the potential impact on the landscape... the aim should be to minimise harm to the landscape, providing reasonable mitigation where possible and appropriate"*.
- 8.7.54. EN-1 at paragraph 5.10.5 recognises that all proposed energy infrastructure is likely to have visual effects for many receptors around the proposed development. It also considers that the scale of energy projects means they will often be visible across a wide area and the Secretary of State (SoS) should balance whether the proposed impact would be offset by the benefit of the proposed development. Critically the SoS should consider how well designed a project is and whether an Applicant has genuinely sought to minimise harm to the landscape including by way of use of appropriate mitigation. EN-3 expands on this point and advises applicants to minimise landscape and visual impacts through screening.
- 8.7.55. It is considered that while a significant effect remains for the lifetime of the Proposed Development, the Applicant has demonstrated a thorough, environment led and robust design process. This process has had due regard to local constraints and sensitive receptors and has proactively sought to address potential significant impacts. The success of the approach is demonstrated in the lowering of significance of effects for the vast majority of the receptors from a landscape and visual impact perspective. It is therefore considered that the Proposed Development is compliant with the aims and intentions of the relevant NPS, NPPF and local policy, as set out above.
- 8.8. **Land Soil and Groundwater**
- 8.8.1. This section reviews the Proposed Development in the context of planning policy for agricultural land and soils. This section should be read in conjunction with policy accordance tables 1-7 included in **Appendix 3** of this Planning Statement.
- 8.8.2. **ES Volume 1, Chapter 11: Land, Soil and Groundwater [EN010149/APP/6.1]** assesses the impact of the Proposed Development on Land, Soil and Groundwater. The Chapter is supported by **ES Volume 3, Appendix 11.1a - 11.1c [EN010149/APP/6.3]** which is an Agricultural Land Classification assessment for the Site.

- 8.8.3. Agricultural land quality is graded by the system of Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) decided by Natural England. The ALC system divides land into five grades 1 to 5, with grade 3 subdivided into 3a and 3b.
- 8.8.4. Paragraph 5.11.12 of EN-1 states that applicants should seek to minimise impacts on the Best and Most Versatile (BMV) agricultural land (defined as land in grades 1, 2 and 3a of the ALC) and preferably use land in areas of poorer quality (grades 3b, 4 and 5).
- 8.8.5. Paragraph 5.11.34 advises that the Secretary of State should ensure that applicants *"do not site their scheme on the best and most versatile agricultural land without justification"*. EN-1 needs to be read in the context of the more specific focus in relation to ground mounted solar PV projects in EN-3. Paragraph 2.10.30 of EN-3 notes that *"development of ground mounted solar arrays is not prohibited on Best and Most Versatile agricultural land"*. This approach is also reflected in the 2024 Written Ministerial Statement: Solar and protecting our Food Security and Best and Most Versatile Land (BMV) Land (2024 WMS) which emphasises that BMV land should be avoided where possible and that due weight be given to proposed use of such land when considering whether planning consent should be granted for solar developments.
- 8.8.6. The NPPF (2023) requires, in paragraph 180b, that the economic and other benefits of the BMV agricultural land be recognised in planning decisions. In the context of plan making, footnote 62 to paragraph 181 of the NPPF requires plan makers to seek to use poorer quality land in preference to that of a higher quality.
- 8.8.7. The Central Lincolnshire Joint Strategic Plan notes at policy S14: Renewable Energy supports the principle of renewable energy development where specific criteria relating to potential impacts of development are met. The policy also refers specifically to solar and states a presumption in favour for ground based photovoltaics unless: demonstrable significant harm arises; the land is BMV and justification/need is not demonstrated (in accordance with Policy S67 of the Local Plan), or; allocated for another use.

Best and Most Versatile Land - Site Selection

- 8.8.8. EN-3 sets out that agricultural land classification and type is one of the likely factors that will influence site selection. Both paragraphs 5.11.12 of EN-1 and 2.10.29 of EN-3 state that the use of lower grade agricultural land is preferred to the use of BMV with the position in EN-3 being that applicants should seek to utilise, where possible, *"suitable previously developed land, brownfield land, contaminated and industrial land"*. The significant caveat to this is that paragraph 2.10.29 of EN-3 states that *"land type should not be a predominating factor in determining the suitability of the site location"*. Paragraph 2.10.30 of EN-3 further states that *"the development of ground mounted solar arrays is not prohibited on*

Best and Most Versatile agricultural land" while 2.10.31 recognises that at NSIP scale, *"it is likely that applicants' development will use some agricultural land"*. However, both EN-1 and EN-3 are clear that the Applicant is required to justify the use of agricultural land within projects. In summary therefore, BMV is an important (but not predominant) factor influencing site selection, however, with justification for its use, policy is supportive in principle of its inclusion within projects.

- 8.8.9. The Applicant's **Site Selection Report** is set out at **Appendix 1** to this Planning Statement and explains the Applicant's approach to selection of an appropriate site to take forward as part of an application for a NSIP scale solar project. The report explains that initially there are three fundamental attributes required to develop NSIP scale solar: suitable irradiance and topography; a connection to the National Grid, and; available land. These three attributes identified locations which may be suitable for such solar development and focussed the Applicant's search on sites within Lincolnshire, Rutland and Cambridgeshire along the West Burton to Bicker Fen and Cottam to Eaton Socon OHLs (where the Applicant was aware there was capacity in the National Grid infrastructure). Once the search area was determined, the Applicant applied specific environmental search criteria, including agricultural land grade to find appropriate land which would be able to deliver its objectives. The Applicant required a site with a minimum size of 1,000 acres but with a preference for a larger landholding under single ownership to maximise the potential energy generation and to assist with deliverability and management of potential impacts of a proposed solar development.
- 8.8.10. In terms of context, it is worthy of note that the Natural England technical advice note predicts that 42% of agricultural land within England is of BMV quality. Within Lincolnshire the proportion rises to 71.2%, thereby increasing the likelihood that higher quality agricultural land will be encountered.
- 8.8.11. The Applicant used the provisional and predictive mapping data produced by Department for Rural Affairs and Agriculture (DeFRA) and Natural England, respectively to seek to identify land with lower or no agricultural classification. Extracts from the mapping data used are illustrated in Figures 3 and 4, below:

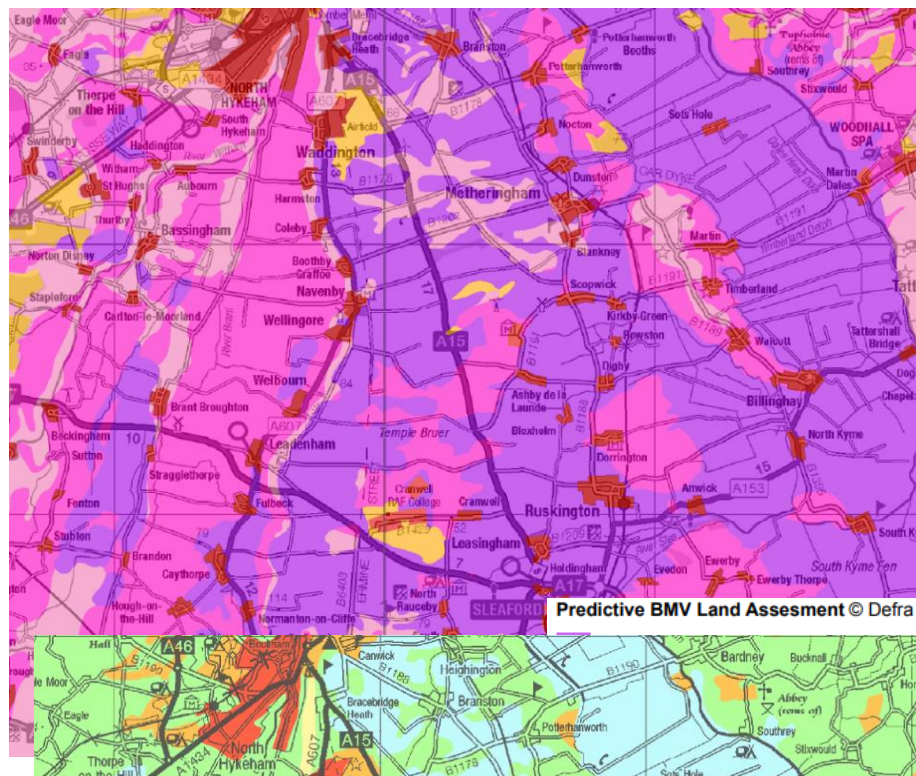


Figure 3: DeFra Predictive BMV Map extract



Figure 4: Natural England Provisional ALC Map extract

8.8.12. Natural England produce Predictive Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land maps to help identify the likelihood of BMV agricultural land (Agricultural Land Classification Grades 1, 2 and 3a). The mapping divides land into "high (>60% area BMV)", "medium (20 - 60% area BMV)" and "low (<20% area BMV)" likelihood categories. The size of the land required and other factors (as set out in Section 3 of **Appendix 1** to this Planning Statement), such as the proximity to potential connection points resulted in the Applicant identifying five potential sites adjacent both to Bicker Fen and Cottam to Eaton Socon OHL. The Applicant's initial assessment work identified that each of the five sites presented similar land type and ALC

grading characteristics i.e. a mixture of ALC Grade 2 and 3 and therefore there was no obvious preference for a particular site on the basis of the ALC search criteria. The Applicant was equally aware that land quality was one of several important factors in the site selection exercise and had to be considered in the round with other environmental and technical considerations.

BMV - Site selection and design

- 8.8.13. The Applicant's understanding of the land in and around the now Order Limits was also supplemented by initial conversations with Blankney Estate regarding the quality and viability of the Order Limits for agriculture. This understanding helped direct the availability of the land within the landholding and also subsequent site selection at a micro level during design development. The information which has been provided to the Applicant sets out yield data across the Order Limits on a field by field basis from the last 13 years as well as the landowner's own consideration of the productivity of individual parcels and their preference for continued agricultural use, whilst acknowledging that there would be a balancing of continued use for farming purposes versus the need to deliver a commercially viable project. While this information is valuable, policy requirements within EN-1 and EN-3 refer specifically to ALC grading, however, as set out below, the understanding of landowner preference helped shape the way the design evolved in tandem with understanding of the ALC status of the land.
- 8.8.14. To determine the precise agricultural grade of the Order Limits an Agricultural Land Classification survey was undertaken in 2023, at a semi-detailed level. The method of survey was agreed with Natural England and is in accordance with technical advice note TIN049.
- 8.8.15. The following tables set out:
- ALC grades across the Order Limits
 - ALC grades in Solar PV development areas
 - ALC grades by type of temporary/permanent infrastructure

Agricultural land classification grade	Area (ha)	Percentage (%)
Grade 1	6.0	0.5
Grade 2	80.1	6.3
Grade 3a	455.1	35.6
Grade 3b	582.6	45.5
Grade 4	4.2	0.3
Unsurveyed land (field verges, internal tracks, etc)	152.0	11.8

Agricultural land classification grade	Area (ha)	Percentage (%)
Total BMV	541.2	42.3
Total non-BMV	586.8	45.9
Total	1280.0	100.00

Table 1: Agricultural land classification results of the Order Limits

Agricultural land classification grade	Area (ha)	Percentage (%)
Grade 1	0	0
Grade 2	14.3	2.4
Grade 3a	196.4	33.2
Grade 3b	376.4	63.7
Grade 4	4.2	0.7
Total BMV	210.7	35.6
Total non-BMV	380.6	64.4
Total	591.3	100.00

NB: The percentage column indicates the percentage of agricultural land classification grade within the Solar PV development area, not the percentage of agricultural land classification grade within the Order Limits.

Table 2: Agricultural land classification results of the area of Solar PV development

- 8.8.16. At a site design level, the Applicant has sought to, where possible, reduce the use of BMV land, however, due to the nature of the land quality within the Order Limits and the general classification both locally and at a wider scale in Lincolnshire it has not been possible to avoid it entirely. The steps which the Applicant has taken therefore to avoid, reduce and subsequently mitigate impacts on BMV are explained below.
- 8.8.17. The **Design Approach Document [EN010149/APP/7.3]** sets out Project Principles which have framed the development of the design of the Proposed Development to date.
- Principle 8.1 All fields comprising solely of Grade 1 or 2 land within the site will remain available for arable production.
 - Principle 8.2 Prioritise the use of BMV land for arable production where practicable.
 - Principle 8.3 Prioritise the use of non-BMV land for habitat creation where practicable.
- 8.8.18. Section 6 of the Design Approach Document explains in greater detail how design measures were incorporated and changes were made during design development in relation to each of the Project Principles. It explains that the Applicant discounted all fields comprising solely Grade 1 or Grade 2 agricultural land from the proposed built development. Fields By18 (Grade 2) and By27 (Majority Grade 1 approximately 25% Grade 2) are retained in the Order Limits and remain available for arable production and are included primarily to allow for underground cable routes and/or use of

existing access tracks as indicated on the **Works Plans [EN010149/APP/2.3]**.

- 8.8.19. Where practicable Grade 2 land within the Order Limits has also been discounted from Solar PV development, as explained in this paragraph. There are some smaller areas of Grade 2 which form part of a larger field of a lesser agricultural grade which are still included within the proposed Solar PV development area. This is evident in Fields By10, By11, By22, By24, Bk02, Bk08, Bk10, Bk11 and E1. In each case the extent of Grade 2 land is less than the Solar PV development area and it would be impracticable and an inefficient use of land to exclude either the parcel of Grade 2 itself or the fields entirely. In all cases aside from Fields Bk08 and Bk11, the Grade 2; and represents approximately 30% or less of the field area. Elsewhere where larger extents of Grade 2 exist in fields with lesser agricultural grade, they are proposed to be retained for arable production. This is reflected in Fields Lf03, Bcd082 and Md06.
- 8.8.20. Tracts of Grade 3a land are present throughout the Order Limits and are scattered across all three land parcels. In general, the concentration of Grade 3a land in Springwell West is less than Springwell Central and Springwell East and this has been one of the determining factors in proposing a higher proportion of Solar PV development in Springwell West. It is not practicable to exclude all Grade 3a land from Solar PV development due to the way it is distributed across the Order Limits, often forming fragments of individual field parcels. In order to minimise the use of BMV land, the use of Grade 3a land for Solar PV development has been carefully considered by the Applicant on balance with other environmental factors and only proposed where it is considered to be appropriate. As a result, Grade 3a land accounts for 33.2% (196.4ha) of the total area proposed for Solar PV development. As can be seen in the **ES; Volume 3, Appendix 11 - Agricultural Land Classification Reports [EN010149/APP/6.3]** there is a greater predominance of lower Grade and non BMV land in Springwell West which was a determining factor in locating a higher proportion of proposed solar PV Development in the area.
- 8.8.21. As per Project Principle 8.3, the Applicant also sought to prioritise the use of non-BMV land for habitat creation and this is demonstrated in Fields By20, Bcd079, Bcd114, Bcd115 and Tb2. However, in some instances this alignment has not been practicable and has been informed by other environmental factors. For example, Fields Bcd140 and Bcd141 contain sensitive below ground archaeology and, through consultation with the landowner, have been deemed not suitable for arable use despite the presence of BMV land. As a result, these fields are proposed for grassland creation where they will complement the Bloxholm Woods LWS. Similarly, Fields Bk06, Bk07 and Bk15 are also proposed for grassland creation despite the presence of majority BMV agricultural land. In this instance the decision to propose habitat creation in these fields has been informed

through consultation with the landowner, taking into account the productivity and accessibility of these fields.

- 8.8.22. The design changes set out above show how the Applicant has sought to avoid and reduce the amount of BMV used for Solar PV (and other hard infrastructure) development. Out of the 1280ha of land within the Order Limits, 231.7ha is BMV which is proposed to be utilised for hard infrastructure i.e. collector compounds, Springwell Substation, Solar PV development, and BESS. This represents use of 42.8% of the total BMV within the Order Limits. The Solar PV development area represents use of 35.6% of the total BMV within the Order Limits.
- 8.8.23. In terms of further context to the figures outlined above, it is noteworthy that there are several fields within the Order Limits that will be required for the installation of cabling, as outlined in **ES Volume 2, Figure 3.1: DCO Zonal Masterplan [EN010149/APP/6.2]**, which will be retained for agricultural use once the cable route has been installed. In total 58ha of Grade 1 and 2 land within Order Limits is proposed to be available for arable use while 207.9ha of Grade 3a land is also available for arable or use. This amounts to 266ha (or 49%) of BMV land out of a total of 541.2ha of BMV land (within Order Limits) that is available for continued arable use.
- 8.8.24. While recognising the amount of BMV included which will remain free from development, it has not been possible to remove all BMV land from the Order limits or from the installation of Solar PV Arrays. To do so would reduce renewable energy generation capability in a location where there is available grid capacity, and at a time when the need for such development is urgent. This is a critical point and is consistent with Paragraph 2.10.30 of EN-3 which explains that solar farm developments are not prohibited on 'best and most versatile' agricultural land and that *"it is recognised that at this scale, it is likely that applicants' developments may use some agricultural land"*. This point is further demonstrated by the limited availability of poorer grade land in the areas surrounding the Site.
- 8.8.25. It is also important to recognise that BMV is one of several factors which influence the way design develops in the same way it is one of several criteria used in site selection. As set out earlier in this section the EN-3 is very clear that land type should not be a predominating factor in site selection. The Applicant considers this is relevant in both the site selection and design development process. Neither EN-1 nor EN-3 place a higher policy emphasis on the use of agricultural land in comparison to other environmental considerations but require the Applicant to justify its use.
- 8.8.26. The other critical factor in the consideration of impacts on BMV is the degree of impact which it is deemed to have. The Proposed Development has an operational life of 40 years after which time all hard infrastructure above ground and below ground to a depth of 1metre, with the exception of cabling, would be removed from the land (as secured within the **oDEMP**

[EN010149/APP/7.13]). For the vast majority of the site, this equates to the removal of solar PV arrays which are mounted on narrow piles and which have no demonstrable impact on the quality or condition of the ground below. This is explained further below.

Impacts on BMV land

- 8.8.27. As set out above, the Applicant has sought to avoid and reduce the amount of BMV land used for hard infrastructure associated with the Proposed Development. However, given the context of the quality of land locally and within the Order Limits it has not been practicable to remove all BMV. Within the Order limits, a total of 231.7ha of BMV land are proposed to accommodate Solar PV arrays or associated infrastructure. This is land which will not be available as an agricultural resource, aside from potential use as grazing land for a period of approximately (excluding construction and decommissioning) 40 years.
- 8.8.28. The table below, sets out other DCO solar developments (both consented and in recommendation stage) and their associated use of BMV (within order limits) in quantum and as a percentage of the overall site. This demonstrates a range of values both above and below that of the Proposed Development. Of the recent decisions, Mallard Pass Solar Farm is the most similar in terms of percentage BMV. The SoS in their decision letter ascribe the loss of this resource/impact on BMV moderate negative weight in the planning balance while acknowledging the applicant had sufficiently justified the use of the BMV within the proposed development. The implication in this regard is the decision aligns with the tone within EN-3: it is preferred that BMV is not used, however, with robust justification and commitments to good soil management practice (as discussed, below), the benefits of the proposed development outweigh the negative weight that is ascribed in regard to loss of BMV and impact on soil.

	Site size (ha)	BMV (ha)	BMV (%)
Cottam	1180	50	4%
Gate Burton	652	80	12%
Heckington Fen	524	257	49%
Little Crow	225	37	16%
Longfield	637	265	41%
Mallard Pass	852	360	42%
Sunnica	981	37	4%

West Burton	758	200	26%
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Table 3: Selected solar NSIP BMV quantum and percentage of site size

- 8.8.29. In this context i.e. the impact of the temporary use of land for the purposes of hard infrastructure, Chapter 11 of the ES reports that there would be the following residual effects on soil and agricultural land:
- Moderate adverse effect on soil and agricultural land (grade 1 and 2 land) from damage during construction
 - Moderate adverse effect on soil and agricultural land (grade 1 and 2 land) from damage during operation (including maintenance) during operation
- 8.8.30. The Applicant has also sought to reduce the amount of BMV land used for permanent green infrastructure (e.g. woodland planting, new hedgerows). The Proposed Development includes proposed green infrastructure on 77 ha of BMV land. This has been assessed in the ES as presenting a permanent significant adverse effect on the basis that more than 20 hectares of land is impacted (as per IEMA guidance). This represents the only permanent adverse effect on soil and agricultural land, and is directly related to the Applicant's desire to reduce potential landscape and visual effects through planting and deliver a minimum BNG of 10%. In addition, the permanent use of land for green infrastructure is assessed as having a large/very large beneficial impact which is significant on soil quality.
- 8.8.31. In the context of the Proposed Development's impact on the wider BMV resource, the Applicant notes that in England, agricultural land represents between 69-70% of the total land within the country. Natural England estimates that around 42% of agricultural land within England is of BMV quality (with a roughly even split of 21% as Grades 1 and 2 and 21% Grade 3a) with the proportion of BMV in Lincolnshire rising to 71.2%, which is significantly above the national average. Therefore, in the context of the county, BMV land is abundant.
- 8.8.32. The 'county scale' BMV soils maps available are the Provisional ALC maps which do not differentiate between Grade 3a and Grade 3b. Therefore, accurately estimating the BMV for Lincolnshire is difficult. As such, a review of the available maps and the other cumulative solar DCOs progressing within Lincolnshire has been undertaken to provide a consistent number against which to assess; some refer to total agricultural land (e.g. Heckington Fen Solar Park) whilst others provide an estimate of BMV from the mapping available (e.g. Beacon Fen Energy Park).
- 8.8.33. The area of BMV agricultural land within Lincolnshire is therefore estimated to be over 410,000ha. In this context, the Proposed Development occupies approximately 0.13% of the BMV land in Lincolnshire, of which 0.002% is assessed as being permanently used as green infrastructure.

- 8.8.34. In this regard the Applicant considers that the: significant benefit associated with the delivery of BNG; the nature of the permanent loss to green and not hard infrastructure and the resulting significant beneficial impact; the relative negligible quantity of impact on the wider BMV resource in Lincolnshire, and; the Applicant's compliance as far as practicable in applying the mitigation hierarchy and the weight that is associated with a CNP project, provides robust justification for the impact in terms of that required by way of paragraph 5.11.34 of the EN-1.
- 8.8.35. It is also noted that there are no national or local planning policies, or policies in other areas of legislation, that require agricultural land (BMV or otherwise) to be farmed, or to be farmed in a particular way (e.g. arable cropping, although it is recognised that the grading of land relates to the flexibility of the soil resource to grow particular crops). Indeed, agri-environmental and farm support generally provide economic recompense for farming land less intensively and for providing environmental benefits. Therefore, there is no guarantee, as such, that the land would be used for productive arable use should the Proposed Development not be granted consent.

Soil Impacts and Management

- 8.8.36. Paragraph 5.11.13 of EN-1 states that applicants should identify any effects and seek to minimise impacts on soil quality, taking into account any mitigation measures proposed. Paragraph 5.11.14 states that *"Applicants are encouraged to develop and implement a Soil Management Plan which could help minimise potential land contamination"*.
- 8.8.37. The Natural England Technical Information Note TIN049 (2012) also provides guidance related to land quality and soils management in relation to non- agricultural uses. It notes that *"Non-agricultural afteruse, for example for nature conservation or amenity, can be acceptable even on better quality land if soil resources are conserved and the long-term potential of best and most versatile land is safeguarded by careful land restoration and aftercare."*
- 8.8.38. **ES Volume 1, Chapter 11: Land, Soil and Groundwater [EN010149/APP/6.1]** specifically identifies the impacts of the Proposed Development upon soils and identifies suitable mitigation measures and management regimes to minimise that impact. These measures include:
- Specification of PV foundation depths and design type specified in the **Design Commitments [EN010149/APP/7.4]**
 - Procedures to minimise damage to, or erosion of, soil during work and details for handling/trafficking soil at suitable times/ in suitable conditions secured in the **outline Soil Management Plan [EN010149/APP/7.11]**

- Procedures to restore soil after temporary works or at decommissioning. Restoration to be undertaken using soil retained on-site in managed bunds; or with imported topsoil. Areas will be restored to their original agricultural land classification grade secured in the **oSMP [EN010149/APP/7.11]**
- The topsoil removed during the construction process will be placed temporarily in a low-level bund or bunds on land outside the compound. These bunds are short-term storage areas for the topsoil, which will be used in restoration of these areas once construction is complete. Topsoil mounds will be shaped to repel water and if they will be in place for more than 6 months they will be sown with a low maintenance grass seed mix as secured in the **oSMP [EN010149/APP/7.11]**
- Stripped soil will be stored in managed designated bunds and will continue to be managed in accordance with the **oSMP [EN010149/APP/7.11]** during the operation (including maintenance) phase.
- Access routes for the importation of construction materials, plant and equipment will be determined in advance to avoid inappropriate soil tracking as secured in the **oSMP [EN010149/APP/7.11]**
- During the decommissioning phase, all concrete, hardstanding areas, foundations for the infrastructure and any internal tracks will be removed to a depth of up to 1 m. It is assumed that all the below ground cables will be left in situ as these are likely to be located at a depth greater than 1m as secured within the **oDEMP [EN010149/APP/7.13]**

8.8.39. The land management around and beneath the panels during the operational phase will involve maintaining a green cover for use by grazing animals. However, it should be noted that while the conditions which would allow for grazing would be delivered, the Applicant is unable to make a commitment that grazing will occur as the usual process would be for a farmer with animals to graze to approach a landowner to seek agreement to graze animals on their land, not the other way around.

8.8.40. Ground cover planting has been identified to increase biodiversity without impacting soil quality negatively. The management of the landscape and ecological features will be undertaken in accordance with a detailed Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (LEMP) that is secured via a requirement in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO [EN010149/APP/3.1]**. An **outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (oLEMP) [EN010149/APP/7.9]** in support of the DCO Application has been submitted.

8.8.41. The construction process for the Solar PV Site involves piling support poles into the ground. Importantly, the land is not sealed. The legs occupy a small area and are inserted into the ground under pressure. These legs are lightweight, profiled metal legs and are inserted into the ground using a pneumatic hammer action. There is no requirement for any lifting or

mixing of soil, and once driven in and the panels have been connected, there is no requirement for trafficking. The process is similar to that of knocking in a fence post and, consequently, the soil around the legs is not disturbed and moves laterally once the post is knocked in. It is important to recognise that this does not result in any change to the soil profile and that the soil resource, and the inherent land quality, is not affected. This is consistent with paragraph 5.11.13 of EN-1 which requires applicants to seek to minimise impact on soil quality.

Groundwater

- 8.8.42. Paragraph 5.16.1 of EN-1 notes that *"Infrastructure development can have adverse effects on the water environment, including groundwater..."*. As a result of this, it is asked that applicants consider protective measures to control the risk of pollution to groundwater beyond those outlined in River Basin Management Plans and Groundwater Protection Zones as per paragraph 5.16.6 of EN-1.
- 8.8.43. Construction activities including piling activities, earthworks, access tracks formation and excavation could lead to minor damage to field drains which may affect the localised drainage of the agricultural land and the groundwater quality of the underlying aquifer and Source Protection Zone (SPZ). As a result of this and given a section of the Site lying within a principle aquifer of high vulnerability, alongside a small area of the Site adjacent to Scopwick being located within Zone 1 of a SPZ for a groundwater abstraction well for a potable water supply borehole, a number of mitigation measures, for example specification of PV foundation depths and design type specified in the **Design Commitments [EN010149/APP/7.4]** have been applied. Other measures are included within the **oCEMP [EN010149/APP/7.7]** It is considered that the application of these measures will ensure compliance with paragraph 5.16.1 of EN-1.

Food security and economic benefit of BMV

- 8.8.44. Food security is not an issue which is raised within the suite of Energy NPSs, the NPPF or Local Development Plan policies whilst it is recognised to be a source of national debate and has been raised in response to consultation. It is, however, referred to in the WMS 2024 which sets out that food security is an important part of our national security. Whilst food security is referenced in the 2024 WMS, nothing in that statement changes existing EN-1 and EN-3 policy with respect to BMV, nor does it introduce any additional policy tests or requirements with respect to food security. The existing agricultural land use for the Proposed Development is predominantly for growing a wide range of arable crops for human consumption, animal feed and energy production. Given the absence of any specific policy requirement no further consideration of this matter is provided. Reference is further made to the use of BMV in the 2015 Written Ministerial Statement: Planning Update

(WMS 2015). The WNS 2015 is now almost ten years old and pre-dates more recent expressions of Government policy, in particular the 2023 NPSs. The Applicant considers that the demonstration of compliance with the EN-3 tests also satisfies the requirements of the 2015 WMS, albeit, the WMS should be given very limited weight. Paragraph 2.10.145 of EN-3 advises that the SoS should “*take into account the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile land*”. In this context, the Order Limits comprise agricultural landholdings, with a mixture of arable output used for various purposes as set out above both on BMV and non-BMV land. The proposed extent of the solar development represents a proportion of the wider landholding. In fact, the amount of BMV which would be required to be used for hard infrastructure (231.7ha), represents just over 4% of the wider Blankney Estate’s landholding (5665ha). No key infrastructure, such as main agricultural buildings, is impacted and the Proposed Development has been designed to ensure that it does not conflict with the wider business functions. However, there will inevitably be changes in the day-to-day farm management and operation given the extent of the land required for the Proposed Development. The income the landholding would receive from the land rental will play an important role in securing the ongoing viability of the estate and a form of diversification which will help secure the estate’s long-term future.

Summary

- 8.8.45. EN-3 records the preference for NSIP scale solar development to be located on non-agricultural or previously developed/brownfield land in the first instance and where such land is not available to seek to use non BMV land. However, EN-3 is cognisant of the general land characteristics which are likely to suit NSIP scale solar development and acknowledges that, at scale “*it is likely that applicants’ developments will use some agricultural land*”.
- 8.8.46. Paragraph 5.11.34 of EN-1 requires that the SoS “*should ensure that applicants do not site their scheme on the best and most versatile agricultural land without justification*”. “*Where schemes are to be sited on best and most versatile agricultural land the Secretary of State should take into account the economic and other benefits of that land.*” The paragraph continues to advise that “*where development of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary, areas of poorer quality land should be preferred to those of higher quality*”. This requirement is reflected in the later part of paragraph 2.10.29 of EN-3 as well as paragraph 2.10.145.
- 8.8.47. This section of the Planning Statement sets out how the Applicant considered agricultural land, and particularly, BMV land, in its site selection process, noting that of the sites identified which met the Applicant’s objectives, all presented similar or higher quantities of BMV in comparison to the Proposed Development. It is also important to recognise that while ALC was an important consideration in site selection, it was one of several factors which were balanced to determine a favoured site. Given that the

other sites identified by the Applicant during site selection displayed similar ALC qualities, this was not a determining factor in the choice of site location. This is consistent with paragraph 2.10.29 of EN-3 which advises that *"land type should not be a predominating factor in determining the suitability of the site"*.

- 8.8.48. The Proposed Development is located in a county where BMV is the predominating quality of agricultural land, with 71.2% of agricultural land considered to be Grade 1 - 3a. The Site is located within an area which, according to the provisional Natural England mapping, is a general mix of Grades 2 and 3. The **ALC survey** undertaken as part of the **ES; Volume 3, Appendix 11 [EN010149/APP/6.3]** reports that the total amount/proportion of BMV within the Order Limits is 541.2 ha/42.3%. The total amount/proportion of BMV proposed to be used for Solar PV development is 210.7ha/35.6%. This is important context because the Applicant has demonstrated that although there is a predominance of BMV quality land within Lincolnshire, it has both selected a site and developed a design that utilises a proportion of BMV (35.6%) for built infrastructure which is half that of the county-wide figure (71.2%). This demonstrates the Applicant's rigorous approach to avoid and reduce the amount of BMV land used within the Proposed Development, particularly built infrastructure. As set out in paragraphs above, a large quantity of the BMV land within Order Limits is also proposed to be retained in arable use, including land proposed for use as cable corridors. Indeed, just under 50% of the BMV land within Order Limits will not be subject to any above ground development or proposed Green Infrastructure, and so is able to remain in arable use.
- 8.8.49. The later requirement of paragraph 2.10.145 of EN-3 sets out that the SoS should be satisfied that the Applicant *"has put forward appropriate mitigation measures to minimise impacts on soil resources"*. As explained in paragraphs 8.7.40 - 8.7.43, the Applicant has developed robust measures to ensure impacts on soils or soil resources which are secured in the **oCEMP [EN010149/APP/7.7]**, **oDEMP [EN010149/APP/7.13]** and **oSMP [EN010149/APP/7.11]**. **ES Volume 1, Chapter 11: Land, Soil and Groundwater [EN010149/APP/6.1]** has assessed that there will be temporary significant adverse impacts on soil and agricultural land by way of impacts during construction and the availability of agricultural land in areas of permanent land use. Paragraph 2.10.66 of EN-3 confirms that a time limited consent is defined as temporary while 2.10.150 advises that the *"time limited nature of a solar farm is likely to be an important consideration for the Secretary of State"*.
- 8.8.50. From a policy compliance perspective, the Applicant considers that it has demonstrated both above and in the **Site Selection Report at Appendix 1** to this Planning Statement, that there are no suitable other options available to the Applicant to deliver the project objectives and that the use of BMV has been robustly justified. While acknowledging the preference for non-agricultural and subsequently lower grade agricultural land to be

prioritised, EN-3 makes it clear that there is scope, with justification, for agricultural land including BMV, to be used in large scale solar development. Indeed EN-3 acknowledges this is a potential outcome and that such development is not prohibited on BMV land. The Applicant considers that it is therefore compliant with the relevant policy regarding agricultural land.

8.9. Noise

- 8.9.1. This section considers the noise and vibration impact of the Proposed Development in the context of the relevant planning policies related to noise and vibration. This section should be read in conjunction with policy in the accordance tables included in **Appendix 3** of this Planning Statement.
- 8.9.2. Paragraph 5.12.5 of EN-1 identifies the factors that will determine the likely noise and vibration impacts of proposed NSIPs which, in summary include; inherent operational noise, proximity to sensitive noise receptors, proximity to 'quiet places' and potential impacts upon wildlife. Paragraph 5.12.6 of EN-1 sets out the specific requirements for noise and vibration assessments and the policy response is set out at Table 1 of **Appendix 3** of the Planning Statement.
- 8.9.3. **ES Volume 1, Chapter 12: Noise and Vibration [EN010149/APP/6.1]** includes a noise assessment of the Proposed Development which was prepared in accordance with the requirements set out in paragraph 5.12.6 of EN-1. The assessment considers the noise generating activities during each phase of the Proposed Development and assesses the worst-case scenario in terms of duration of impact, time of day/night it could potentially occur and proximity of the activity to sensitive receptors.
- 8.9.4. The predicted impacts of noise generated from the Proposed Development are considered in **ES Volume 1, Chapter 12: Noise and Vibration [EN010149/APP/6.1]**. This chapter summarises that the greatest potential noise effects are predicted to occur during the construction and decommissioning phases of the development, with operational noise generally limited to the BESS, Springwell Substation and Balance of Solar System (BoSS).
- 8.9.5. Paragraph 2.5.2 of EN-3 notes how the design of renewable energy infrastructure projects should seek to mitigate impacts such as noise and vibration effects on ecology and heritage assets. Similarly, paragraph 5.12.15 of EN-1 advises that projects should demonstrate good design through the selection of the quietest or most acceptable cost-effective plant available; containment of noise within buildings where possible; optimisation of plant layout to minimise noise emissions; and, where possible, the use of landscaping, bunds or noise barriers to reduce noise transmission.

- 8.9.6. Specific measures to mitigate noise and vibration impacts are embedded into the design of the Proposed Development and further management of potential impacts is secured through measures identified in the **oCEMP [EN010149/APP/7.7]**, **oCTMP [EN010149/APP/7.8]**, **oOEMP [EN010149/APP/7.10]**, and **oDEMP [EN010149/APP/7.13]**. These all include standard good practice measures such as use of Best Practical Means to reduce disturbance associated with noise and vibration during construction as far as reasonably practicable, with relevant guidance in BS 5228. Specific measures that have been developed in response to the infrastructure proposed include:
- 4m high acoustic barrier around BESS Compound, secured in the **Design Commitments [EN010149/APP/7.4]**.
 - 6m high absorbent barrier positioned around west, north and east faces of Springwell Substation transformers, secured in the **Design Commitments [EN010149/APP/7.4]**.
 - Minimum 15m offset from Proposed Development to existing woodlands.
 - Minimum 10m offset from the Proposed Development to all existing hedgerows.
 - Minimum 15m offset from the Proposed Development to locally designated sites
 - Minimum 50m offset of Balance of Solar System (BoSS), which comprises inverters, transformers and switchgear from PRoW.
 - Minimum 15m set backs either side of existing or proposed PRoW from Proposed Development (excluding new landscaping where appropriate).
- 8.9.7. These measures accompany a comprehensive siting approach to minimise potential impacts on residential receptors. For example, Stage Two of the pre-application design stages (as reported in the **Design Approach Document [EN010149/APP/7.3]**) identified changes which included preferences for locating Springwell Substation and BESS to the north area of Springwell West. Further refinement occurred at Stage 3 design with further understanding of the potential impacts and noise profile and the Springwell Substation and BESS were sited entirely within the field directly south of Gorse Hill Lane and offset to the A15.
- 8.9.8. Paragraph 5.12.8 of EN-1 states that noise impacts of ancillary activities, including increased traffic should be considered. The noise impact of the construction traffic is based on the assessment of the projected changes in traffic flow as set out in the **ES Volume 1, Chapter 14: Traffic and Transport [EN010149/APP/6.1]** and decommissioning traffic data presented in the **ES Volume 1, Chapter 14: Traffic and Transport [EN010149/APP/6.1]** The noise assessment in **ES Volume 1, Chapter 12:**

Noise and Vibration [EN010149/APP/6.1] confirms that there are no significant residual noise effects predicted.

- 8.9.9. Paragraph 5.12.13 of EN-1 refers to the consideration of the need for mitigation measures both for operational and construction noise over and above any which may form part of the project application. Paragraph 5.12.16 of the EN-1 refers to a requirement to take into account guidance in the NPPF with regard to setting requirements to secure appropriate additional mitigation.
- 8.9.10. As a result of the outcome of the noise and vibration assessment, it is not anticipated that the Secretary of State will need to consider additional mitigation measures above those already embedded within the design of the Proposed Development and proposed as part of the suite of management plans secured in the **Draft Development Consent Order [EN010149/APP/3.1]**. With the mitigation outlined in place, the ES does not predict any significant adverse noise effects at any stage of the Proposed Development.
- 8.9.11. Paragraph 180(e) of the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should prevent new development from contributing to unacceptable levels of noise pollution. Paragraph 191 of the NPPF also requires new development to mitigate, and reduce to a minimum, potential adverse impacts resulting from noise and to avoid significant adverse impacts of noise on health and quality of life. Appendix 3 includes a policy response to the NPPF.
- 8.9.12. The Central Lincolnshire Joint Strategic Local Plan notes at Policy S14 (Renewable Energy) that as a committee they are committed to support the transition to net zero. However, applications should meet a number of tests including ensuring there is limited impact on air quality for the amenity of sensitive neighbouring uses to a site.
- 8.9.13. Paragraph 5.12.17 of EN-1 states that consents should not be granted unless development proposals meet with following aims:
- Avoid significant adverse impacts on health and quality of life from noise;
 - Mitigate and minimise other adverse impacts on health and quality of life from noise; and
 - Where possible, contribute to improvements to health and quality of life through the effective management and control of noise.

Summary

- 8.9.14. The Applicant's assessment has been undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the NPS and the Proposed Development incorporates a wide ranging suite of mitigation but also more bespoke responses that can

be seen through the design development set out in the **Design Approach Document [EN010149/APP/7.3]**. The measures embedded in the design and the additional mitigation secured in the **oCEMP [EN010149/APP/7.7]**, **oOEMP [EN010149/APP/7.10]**, and **oDEMP [EN010149/APP/7.13]**, result in there being no significant residual effects and the Proposed Development is therefore considered to comply with the relevant tests set out in EN-1.

8.9.15. The Applicant considers therefore that the Proposed Development is compliant with the required test set out in paragraph 5.12.17 of EN-1.

8.10. Population

8.10.1. This section reviews the Proposed Development in the context of the relevant planning policies relating to socio-economic impact. This section should be read in conjunction with the policy accordence tables included in **Appendix 3** of this Planning Statement.

8.10.2. Paragraph 5.13.2 of EN-1 states that applicants should undertake and include in their application an assessment of socio-economic impacts where the project is likely to have impacts at a local and regional level.

8.10.3. In response, the potential impact of the Proposed Development on the local economy during the construction, operation and decommissioning phases is assessed in detail in **ES Volume 1, Chapter 13: Population [EN010149/APP/6.1]**.

8.10.4. EN-1 paragraph 5.13.4 outlines that the assessment should consider all relevant socio-economic impacts. The full wording of the paragraph, along with the detailed project response, is set out in **Appendix 3** of this Planning Statement.

8.10.5. **ES Volume 1, Chapter 13: Population [EN010149/APP/6.1]**, considers the potential effects of the Proposed Development on employment. The assessment finds that the majority of socio-economic impacts experienced during the construction and decommissioning phases relate to the creation of employment opportunities and increased spend on local services. Once operational, impacts on local labour market arising from operational and maintenance jobs would be more limited.

8.10.6. The estimated duration of the decommissioning phase is expected to be approximately 24 months and may occur over phases, and it is anticipated that the employment effects over this period will be similar to the construction phase, although over a shorter term. These impacts are assessed as having minor beneficial impacts on the local economy.

8.10.7. **ES Volume 1, Chapter 13: Population [EN010149/APP/6.1]**, concludes that recreation and tourism impacts of the Proposed Development are not

significant at any phase and can be effectively mitigated through implementation of management plans secured in the DCO application.

- 8.10.8. Overall, **ES Volume 1, Chapter 13: Population [EN010149/APP/6.1]**, concludes that the construction phase of the Proposed Development will deliver a neutral/slight beneficial effect, which is not significant, to the local economy in terms of employment generation. The implementation of the proposed **outline Employment, Skills, and Supply Chain Plan [EN010149/APP/7.20]** is aimed at maximising these benefits for the study area economy. There could also be negligible - minor adverse effects on the local tourism and recreation economy, although these are likely to be limited to the Order Limits and immediate surroundings and are not significant.
- 8.10.9. Paragraph 5.13.8 of EN-1 refers to the possible requirement to mitigate adverse socio-economic effects. Mitigation measures to manage and minimise potential socio-economic effects are set out in the **outline Construction Environmental Management Plan [EN010149/APP/7.7]**, the **outline Landscape Environmental Management Plan [EN010149/APP/7.9]**, the **outline Decommissioning Management Plan [EN010149/APP/7.13]**, and the **outline Employment, Skills, and Supply Chain Plan [EN010149/APP/7.20]**.
- 8.10.10. Paragraph 5.13.9 notes that SoS should have regard to potential "socio-economic impacts of new energy infrastructure identified by the applicant and from any other sources that the Secretary of State considers to be both relevant and important to its decision". Paragraph 5.13.11 requires the SoS to consider relevant positive provisions the applicant has made or is proposing to make to mitigate impacts and any legacy benefits that may arise".
- 8.10.11. Good design is embedded into the Proposed Development as set out in the Green Infrastructure Strategy included in the **oLEMP [EN010149/APP/7.9]** which includes a combination of setbacks and screening, and introduces new networks of permissive paths, to help mitigate the impacts of the Proposed Development. The **outline Employment, Skills, and Supply Chain Plan [EN010149/APP/7.20]** is aimed at maximising local economic benefits and both are secured by way of requirement in the **Draft Development Consent Order [EN010149/APP/3.1]**.
- 8.10.12. The Applicant considers that the commitments made within the **outline Employment, Skills and Supply Chain Plan [EN010149/APP/7.20]** align with the intentions of paragraph 5.13.12 of EN-1. This paragraph advises that the SoS may wish to include a requirement of such a plan which details *"arrangements to promote local employment and skills development opportunities, including apprenticeships, education, engagement with local schools and colleges and training programmes to be enacted"*. The oESSCP addresses each of the matters detailed in

5.13.12 and therefore the Applicant considers the Proposed Development to be compliant with the requirements of the policy in this regard.

- 8.10.13. Paragraph 38 of the NPPF advises that developments that seek to improve the economic, social, and environmental conditions of an area should be supported. **Appendix 3** to this Planning Statement includes a policy response to the NPPF. It is considered that the results of the assessment of socio-economic effects included in **ES Volume 1, Chapter 13: Population [EN010149/APP/6.1]**, accords with the NPPF with regard to socio-economic impacts.

Summary

- 8.10.14. **ES Volume 1, Chapter 13: Population [EN010149/APP/6.1]** sets out the proposed impacts in relation to Population and identifies a number of slight beneficial effects around PRowS (including user groups), the employment and skills labour market, increased occupancy rates of local accommodation and workforce spending, GVA and supply chain. However, it is also noted that beneficial impacts aren't identified as being significant in EIA terms.
- 8.10.15. Paragraph 5.13.10 advises that the SoS may conclude that limited weight is given to assertions of socio-economic impacts that are not supported given the importance of energy infrastructure (i.e. the benefits of proposed energy infrastructure development on a national scale). The Applicant considers that the benefits secured are tangible, however, recognises that the weight that may be attributed to such benefits in comparison to that which may be attributed to the contribution of energy generation and the CNP designation is on a wholly different scale. In any event, the Applicant considers the Proposed Development to be compliant with the aforementioned requirements relating to socio-economic effects in EN-1 and acceptable in this regard.
- 8.11. **Traffic and Transport**
- 8.11.1. This section reviews the Proposed Development in the context of planning policies related to traffic and transport. This section should be read in conjunction with the policy accordance tables included in **Appendix 3** of this Planning Statement.
- 8.11.2. In accordance with Paragraph 5.14.5 of EN-1, **ES Volume 1, Chapter 14: Traffic and Transport [EN010149/APP/6.1]** assess the impact of the Proposed Development on traffic and transport, including a transport appraisal. **Appendix 14.1 of the ES Volume 3 [EN010149/APP/6.3]** includes a **Transport Assessment**.
- 8.11.3. Paragraph 5.14.7 of EN-1 states the applicant should prepare a travel plan including demand management measures to mitigate transport impacts. An **outline Travel Plan (oTP)** is submitted as **Appendix 1** to the outline

Construction Traffic Management Plan (oCTMP) [EN010149/APP/7.8], which will be secured by way of Requirement 14 within the **Draft DCO [EN010149/APP/3.1]**.

- 8.11.4. EN-1 Paragraph 5.14.18 notes that new NSIPs may give rise to substantial impacts on surrounding transport infrastructure and that applicants should seek to mitigate these impacts, including during the construction phase of the Proposed Development.
- 8.11.5. The nature of the Proposed Development is such that the greatest impact is likely to occur during both the construction and decommissioning phases. This is acknowledged in Paragraph 2.10.161 - 162 of the EN-3, which confirms that once solar farms are in operation, traffic movements to and from the Order Limits are generally 'very light'. All road users during the operational phase have been scoped out of the ES assessment as agreed in the Scoping Opinion due to the impacts of the local road system being minimal during the operational phase, as stated in **ES Volume 1, Chapter 14: Traffic and Transport [EN010149/APP/6.1]**.
- 8.11.6. In response to EN-1 Paragraph 5.14.18, the mitigation measures that have been integrated into the design of the Proposed Development are set out in table 1 at **Appendix 3** of this Planning Statement. In summary, the embedded mitigation measures include:
- Upgrade A15/B1191/Temple Road: Provide improvement to existing conditions for all users inclusive of a non-motorised user crossing point.
 - A15/Gorse Hill Lane: Improved surfacing for all users and junction infrastructure.
 - B1191/RAF Digby and Ashby de la Launde widening: Improved passing opportunities for all HGVs.
 - Vehicle passing bays along Temple Road: Ensure safe passage of vehicles and AILs during construction.
- 8.11.7. Table 14.37 Assessment Summary of **ES Volume 1, Chapter 14: Traffic and Transport [EN010149/APP/6.1]** is split into three sections: links, junctions, and closures and concludes that following mitigation, the potential for adverse traffic and transport related effects arising from the Proposed Development would be direct, short to medium term, temporary, and not significant. This is due to the embedded mitigation measures listed in section 8.11.7 and additional mitigation secured through the **oCTMP [EN010149/APP/7.8]**.
- 8.11.8. Paragraph 5.14.11 of EN-1 states where mitigation is needed possible demand management measures must be considered before requirements for provisions of new infrastructure to deal with any remaining transport related impacts. Paragraph 5.14.15 states: the SoS should have regard to the cost-effectiveness of demand management measures.

- 8.11.9. In response, as concluded in **ES Volume 1, Chapter 14: Traffic and Transport [EN010149/APP/6.1]** the impacts of the Proposed Development are such that provision of new transport infrastructure, beyond the minor improvements is not required. Required mitigation is embedded into the design of the Proposed Development and set out in the **oCTMP and Appendix outline Travel Plan [EN010149/APP/7.8]**. The objectives of the oCTMP are to:
- Facilitate the safe and efficient movement of people and materials during the construction phase as far as reasonably practicable;
 - Minimise freight and construction, including HGVs and staff vehicles during network peaks to reduce the impact on the highway network during busy periods;
 - Minimise the impact and disruption to the local communities;
 - Set a framework for continued monitoring, review and subsequent evolution of the detailed CTMP(s) and mitigation measures over time;
 - Limit the impacts of the Strategic Road Network (SRN) and the Local Road Network (LRN), and;
 - Limit the impacts on the natural and built environment, such as air quality and heritage assets, where practicable.
- 8.11.10. Paragraph 5.14.12 states that, as part of encouraging a modal shift for transport, maritime and inland waterway transport methods or rail transport are preferred over road transport at all stages of the project, where cost-effective. However, given the location of the Order Limits, duration of the construction and decommissioning phases and the limited impact upon the LRN as concluded in **ES Volume 1, Chapter 14: Traffic and Transport [EN010149/APP/6.1]**, it is considered that rail and/or water transport methods are not considered suitable.
- 8.11.11. Paragraph 5.14.14 of EN-1 refers to requirements that the SoS may attach to a consent where there is likely to be substantial HGV traffic to control the timing of these movements. The **oCTMP [EN010149/APP/7.8]** sets out that the Principal Contractor will coordinate deliveries and collections associated with the Proposed Development to optimise the frequency of deliveries, reduce congestion and make efficient use of delivery vehicles.
- 8.11.12. EN-1 paragraph 5.14.21 states that the SoS should only consider refusing the Proposed Development on 'highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe, or it does not show how consideration has been given to the provision of adequate active public or shared transport access and provision.' **ES Volume 1, Chapter 14: Traffic and Transport [EN010149/APP/6.1]** states that there are no significant residual effects and no unacceptable impacts on highway safety. It is also

not expected to have a significant effect on the strategic or local highway networks in terms of their capacity and highway safety.

- 8.11.13. EN-3 paragraph 2.10.35 states that applicants need to consider the suitability of access routes and that access for the delivery of solar arrays and associated infrastructure during construction can be a significant consideration for solar farm siting. The **Site Selection Report in Appendix 1** of this Planning Statement explains how the location of the Proposed Development was selected. The proximity to the A15 of the Oder Limits has represented a positive attribute of the location of the Proposed Development from an accessibility perspective. In addition, as part of defining the Order Limits the Applicant considered the suitability of access roads and the ease and practicality of using existing public accesses where possible. The proposed routing of construction traffic is set out in Section 4 of the **oCTMP [EN010149/APP/7.8]** and outlined in **ES Volume 2, Figure 14.4: Transport routing and existing highway network [EN010149/APP/6.2]**. HGV construction traffic must adhere to the routes set out in the oCTMP. As part of the control and monitoring measures, any deviation from approved routes will result in enforcement procedures and penalties, as discussed in Section 4 of the **oCTMP [EN010149/APP/7.8]**.
- 8.11.14. Paragraphs 2.10.120 - 2.10.126 of the EN-3 refer to construction impacts, including traffic and transport, in addition to general traffic and transport impacts set out in EN-1. Paragraph 2.10.125 of the EN-3 states that the applicant should assess whether the access roads are suitable for the transportation of components, which will include whether they are sufficiently wide for the proposed vehicles, or bridges sufficiently strong for the heavier components to be transported to the Site. The road network proposed to be used by HGVs will be subject to a condition survey by the Principal Contractor. Any damage attributed to the construction activities will be remediated to the same condition as before the Proposed Development to the reasonable satisfaction of the Local Highway Authority (LHA).
- 8.11.15. In response to EN-3 paragraph 2.10.125, **ES Volume 1, Chapter 14: Traffic and Transport [EN010149/APP/6.1]** assesses the suitability of the accessibility of the Site and appraises different options to select a route which minimises adverse effects. Route options have been appraised to establish the preferred route to the temporary compounds for construction traffic, including any necessary abnormal loads. With the exception of locally sourced materials, all HGVs are expected to travel from the SRN onto the LRN to reach the Proposed Development construction Site.
- 8.11.16. Careful consideration has been given to whether the highway network can accommodate the required abnormal indivisible loads (AIL). An access route survey feasibility report has been undertaken, identifying that the preferred route would utilise the heavy load routes HR144 and HR226 (defined by National Highways).

- 8.11.17. The transport of abnormal loads will be timed to avoid peak traffic hours to minimise disruption. These deliveries will be pre-arranged and meet the requirements of the Police, the Local Highway Authority and National Highways., as set out in the **oCTMP [EN010149/APP/7.8]**.
- 8.11.18. EN-3 paragraph 2.10.126 refers to cumulative impacts of traffic and transportation. Cumulative effects related to transport and traffic are considered in **ES Volume 1, Chapter 16: Cumulative Effects [EN010149/APP/6.1]**, which confirms there are no relevant existing or approved developments to consider in relation to the cumulative effects of the Proposed Development relating to traffic and transport. This is based on the extent of the local road network including: B1202, B1188, B1191, A15 and Gorse Hill Lane. This is based on the extent of the LRN affected by the construction, operation (including maintenance) and decommissioning phases, as well as any identified sensitive receptors.
- 8.11.19. Paragraph 2.10.139 of the EN-3 states that in some cases, the local highways authority may request that the SoS impose controls on the number of vehicle movements to and from the Site in a specified period during its construction and, possibly, on the routing of such movements particularly by heavy vehicles. Paragraph 2.10.141 of EN-3 refers to residential amenity and potential cumulative impacts of traffic and transport during construction.
- 8.11.20. The NPPF, in paragraph 108, also expects consideration and mitigation of transport impacts of development, including the environmental impacts and impacts on transport networks. NPPF paragraphs 114-115 note that development should only be prevented or refused on highway grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe. Table 4 in Appendix 3 includes a policy response to the NPPF. It is considered that the mitigation measures outlined above and the results of the transport assessment are in accordance with the NPPF in regard to transport impacts.
- 8.11.21. The Central Lincolnshire Local Plan Policy S47 (Accessibility and Transport) that Development proposals should seek to improve the strategic highway infrastructure and widen road infrastructure to benefit the local communities.
- 8.11.22. The Proposed Development includes permanent works to the highway network which will remain for future use and benefit the local community, with passing bays proposed on Temple Road to support two-way construction traffic.
- 8.11.23. The proposed improvements to Gorse Hill Lane and the A15 junction will be retained permanently for future use and benefit future road users.

8.11.24. Improvements are proposed to the B1191 to facilitate two-way articulated HGV's passing each other in discrete locations. Localised widening of the B1191 is proposed on the outside of a bend south of Ashby-de-la-Launde. At the Navenby Lane junction at Ashby-de-la-Launde the give way markings layout will be revised to improve the width of road available to HGV's. Similarly at the entrance to RAF Digby on the B1191 the give way markings are proposed to be set back to improve the width of road available to HGV's. These works are permanent and will be retained for the future benefit of road users.

Public Rights of Way

8.11.25. **ES Volume 1, Chapter 14: Traffic and Transport [EN010149/APP/6.1]** also includes an assessment of Public Rights of Way. The visual impacts on these receptors is considered in the Landscape and Visual Section, above whereas the Chapter 14 considers the traffic related impacts on the PRow's. To summarise, the chapter concludes that there are no significant adverse impacts on PRow's from a traffic and transport related perspective.

8.11.26. The Proposed Development includes new PRow's and permissive paths, designed to enhance the local network and provide a greater degree of optionality, safety and connectivity. The enhancements proposed includes three new PRow's, four new permissive paths as well as improvements to existing PRow's. During construction there would be only temporary closures to PRow's and no permanent closures.

8.11.27. Three new PRow would be created:

- A new PRow linking RAF Digby to Scopwick (approx. length 1,670m).
- A new PRow connecting the existing PRow (AshL/4/1) west of the A15 (near Navenby Lane) to New England Lane. (approx. length 830m).
- A new PRow from Temple Road (north of Brauncewell) to the Bloxham Woods Car Park to provide a connection across the A15 (approx. length 990m).

8.11.28. Four new permissive paths would be created:

- A new permissive path along the western edge of the Proposed Development linking New England Lane to Temple Road, north of Brauncewell (approx. length 4,130m).
- A new permissive path connecting the B1191 (Heath Road) with the existing PRow between RAF Digby and Rowston (Rows/5/1) (approx. length 1,610m).
- A new permissive path linking Bloxholm Wood to Brauncewell Village (approx. length 1,120m).

- New permissive paths to provide a series of circular walking loops from Bloxholm Woods (approx. length 1,720m).
- 8.11.29. The Proposed Development would also include a permanent upgrade to the existing PRow between Scopwick and Blankney to bridleway status (approx. length 2,090m). This would include an upgrade of the existing surface conditions of the trail to better allow user access and enjoyment to 'all-weather' standard allowing year-round accessibility for all users.
- 8.11.30. EN-3 in paragraph 2.10.44 states that applicants should consider and maximise opportunities to facilitate enhancements to the public rights of way and the inclusion, through site layout and design of access, of new opportunities for the public to access and cross proposed solar development sites (whether via the adoption of new public rights of way or the creation of permissive paths), taking into account, where appropriate, the views of landowners.
- 8.11.31. The provision of these enhancements demonstrates compliance with Paragraphs 2.10.44 - 45. From an assessment perspective, the proposed enhancements present a significant beneficial impact. These will be designed to retain and enhance recreational connectivity across the Site, as set out within the **Outline Public Rights of Way and Permissive Path Management Plan [EN010149/APP/7.12]**.

Summary

- 8.11.32. The assessment concludes that no significant adverse effect are likely for traffic and transport; therefore, it is in accordance with EN-1 5.14.18 - 19..
- 8.11.33. Paragraph 5.14.18 acknowledges a new energy NSIP may give rise to substantial impacts on surrounding transport infrastructure. **ES Volume 1, Chapter 14: Traffic and Transport [EN010149/APP/6.1]** concludes that there are no significant adverse effects anticipated in relation to the Proposed Development and therefore the requirements of the SoS in regard of this paragraph of the EN-1 are not engaged.
- 8.11.34. Mitigation has been considered and embedded into the design of the Proposed Development with physical changes embedded into the design to ensure that the network can accommodate the required traffic movements and provide enhanced accessibility for non-motorised road users. The **oCTMP [EN010149/APP/7.8]**, which includes an **oTP** and responds to paragraphs EN-3 2.10.139 - 144.
- 8.11.35. Similarly, paragraph 5.14.19 is not engaged as the nature of the Proposed Development and mitigation measures proposed within the are sufficient to ensure there are no adverse impacts on the transport network. The **oCTMP [EN010149/APP/7.8]** and **Outline Public Rights of Way and Permissive Path Management Plan [EN010149/APP/7.12]** set the framework for additional mitigation and the specific way in which the day-

to-day management of project-related traffic and safety measures relating to Public Rights of Way will be delivered.

- 8.11.36. Paragraph 5.14.21 advises that the SoS should only consider “*refusing development on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, residual cumulative impacts on the road network that would be severe*”. There are no grounds relating to highways impacts in this regard and therefore the Applicant considers that it is compliant with the relevant policy tests in this regard.
- 8.11.37. In addition, the proposed enhancements, including new PRowWs and permissive paths, comprise a significant beneficial effect that responds directly to paragraph 2.10.44 of EN-3.

8.12. Waste Management

- 8.12.1. This section reviews the Proposed Development in the context of planning policy related to waste management. This section should be read in conjunction with the policy accordancy tables included in **Appendix 3** of this Planning Statement.
- 8.12.2. Paragraph 5.15.2 of EN-1 states sustainable waste management is implemented through the "waste hierarchy", which sets out the priorities that must be applied when managing waste.
- 8.12.3. Sections 3.14 - 3.17 of **ES Volume 1, Chapter 3: Proposed Development Description [EN010149/APP/6.1]** considers waste streams during the construction, operation, and decommissioning phases of the Proposed Development.
- 8.12.4. The waste hierarchy principles are embedded into the **outline Site Waste Management Plan (oSWMP)**, append to the **oCEMP [EN010149/APP/7.7]** that forms part of the DCO. Waste management during operation is secured through the **Outline Operational Environmental Management Plan [EN010149/APP/7.10]**.
- 8.12.5. The decommissioned materials will follow the waste hierarchy and will be reused where possible before recycling and disposal are considered in accordance with the **Outline Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan [EN010149/APP/7.13]**.
- 8.12.6. These documents include measures to control and manage waste onsite in line with the waste hierarchy, as per paragraph 5.15.2 of EN-1, and are secured by Requirement in the **Draft Development Consent Order [EN010149/APP/3.1]**.
- 8.12.7. Paragraph 5.15.8 of the EN-1 requires development proposals to set out waste management arrangements. An outline Site Waste Management Plan is appended to the **oCEMP [EN010149/APP/7.7]**.

- 8.12.8. The nature of the Proposed Development means there are very few waste streams that are arising from the operational phase. No materials are required to be processed, and the Solar PV Arrays do not produce any waste while in operation. The only waste arising from the operational phase is expected to be related to any ad-hoc maintenance and replacement of components that may arise. The details of how the aforementioned waste will be dealt with are set out within the **oOEMP [EN010149/APP/7.10]**.
- 8.12.9. The Proposed Development is to be operational for a period of 40 years. The Proposed Development will require decommissioning; this would involve the removal of all of the Solar PV infrastructure, including the Ground Mounted Solar PV Generating Stations, Collector Compounds, Springwell Substation, BESS and ancillary infrastructure, including any on-site compounds.
- 8.12.10. Solar PV modules comprise several materials, including a metal frame, of which approximately 99% can currently be recycled. When decommissioning, options to reuse or recycle available materials will be explored to ensure that as much of the materials as possible are recycled and diverted from landfills. This includes measures to maximise the recyclability of site components by segregating decommissioning waste to be re-used and recycled as reasonably practicable. This is secured in the **oDEMP [EN010149/APP/7.13]**.
- 8.12.11. The EN-1 paragraph 5.15.12 states that applicants are encouraged to source materials from recycled or reused sources and use low-carbon materials, local supplies, and sustainable sources. To ensure that material is reused or recycled onsite where possible, construction best practices are proposed to be followed.
- 8.12.12. Paragraph 8 of the NPPF states the planning system has three overarching objectives in order to achieve sustainable development: an economic objective, a social objective, and finally, an environmental objective. The environmental objective is based on protecting and enhancing the natural, built, and historic environment, by, among other things, minimising waste and pollution. Table 4 at Appendix 3 includes a policy response to the NPPF. It is considered that the results of the assessment of waste effects included in **ES Volume 1 Chapters: 6 Air Quality, 10 Land, Soil and Groundwater, 12 Land, Soil and Groundwater, and 15 Water [EN010149/APP/6.1]** and the management measures provided in the **Outline Site Waste Management Plan (oSWMP), appended to the oCEMP [EN010149/APP/7.7], oOEMP [EN010149/APP/7.10] and oDEMP [EN010149/APP/7.13]** accord with the NPPF.
- 8.12.13. Central Lincolnshire Local Plan discusses at Policy S53 (Design and Amenity) that proposed developments must minimise the need for

resources both in construction and operation and be easily adaptable to avoid unnecessary waste.

Summary

8.12.14. In summary, through the application of the measures set out in the suite of relevant management plans, as set out above, the Proposed Development complies with the relevant requirements set out in paragraph 5.15.15 of EN-1, namely that:

- Waste will be properly managed on and off-site
- Waste generated can be dealt with by the relevant infrastructure and arisings should not have an adverse impact on capacity of existing waste management facilities
- Adequate steps have been taken to minimise volume of arisings

8.13. Water Quality and Resources

8.13.1. This section reviews the Proposed Development in the context of planning policy related to the water environment. This section should be read in conjunction with the policy accordance tables included in **Appendix 3** of this Planning Statement.

8.13.2. Paragraph 5.16.3 of the EN-1 requires the applicant to undertake an assessment of the existing status of and impacts of the Proposed Development on water quality, water resources, and physical characteristics of the water environment as part of the ES. Paragraph 5.16.7 lists what should be included within **ES Volume 1, Chapter 15: Water [EN010149/APP/6.1]**, and the full assessment is set out in Table 1 at **Appendix 3** of this Planning Statement.

8.13.3. Paragraph 5.16.12 of EN-1 notes that impacts on the water environment will generally be given more weight where a project would have an adverse effect on the achievement of the environmental objectives established under the Water Framework Directive. In response, section 15.9 of the **ES Volume 1, Chapter 15: Water [EN010149/APP/6.1]** assesses the likely significant effects on the WFD waterbody (Metheringham Beck), which is ultimately concluded to be not significant. Additionally, following the consultation response from the Environment Agency and submission of the **ES Volume 3, Appendix 15.1 WFD Waterbodies Stage 1 Screening Technical Note [EN010149/APP/6.3]**, it was concluded there would be no requirement for a Stage 2 Scoping or Stage 3 WFD assessment. In conclusion, with the implementation of mitigation measures, no adverse effects on the water environment are anticipated to occur during the lifetime of the proposed development, including the construction and decommissioning phases.

- 8.13.4. Paragraph 5.16.14 of EN-1 states that a proposal should have regard to the River Basin Management Plans and meet the Water Framework Directive Regulations 2017 requirement. It adds the overall aim of development should be to prevent deterioration in the status of water bodies to support the achievement of the objectives in the River Basin Management Plans and not to jeopardise the future achievement of good status or good potential for any affected water bodies.
- 8.13.5. It is further discussed within EN-3 paragraph 2.10.154 that *"water management is a critical component of site design for ground mount solar plants"*. Particularly discussing that where previous management of the Site has involved intensive agricultural practices, solar sites can deliver significant ecosystem services value in the form of drainage, flood attenuation, natural wetland habitat, and water quality management.
- 8.13.6. **ES Volume 1, Chapter 15: Water [EN010149/APP/6.1]** assesses all potential effects of the Proposed Development upon the water bodies within the study area. The analysis from these findings is set out in further detail within section 15.5 of **ES Volume 1, Chapter 15: Water [EN010149/APP/6.1]**. The ES identifies three receptor groups: water quality of watercourses, water resources, and; WFD waterbody - Metheringham Brook. **ES Volume 1, Chapter 15: Water [EN010149/APP/6.1]** concludes that due to embedded mitigation and measures identified within the outline Drainage Strategy (which forms an appendix to the **Flood Risk Assessment [EN010149/APP/7.16]**) the Proposed Development is not expected to result in the deterioration of any local water bodies.
- 8.13.7. Paragraph 5.16.8 of EN-1 states the SoS should consider whether mitigation measures are needed over and above any which may form part of the project application. In response, **ES Volume 1, Chapter 15: Water [EN010149/APP/6.1]** concludes that no additional mitigation is required.
- 8.13.8. Paragraph 5.16.9 of EN-1 states *"the risk of impacts on the water environment can be reduced through careful design to facilitate adherence to good pollution control practice"*.
- 8.13.9. In response to Paragraph 5.16.9 of EN-1, the Proposed Development has employed good design including avoidance measures in order to minimise the risk of impacts on the water environment. In addition, the following Project Principles within the **Design Approach Document [EN010149/APP/7.3]** have been applied throughout the design development:
- Principle 7.1 Slow the flow of water within the Site to improve flood resilience.
 - Principle 7.2 Apart from Solar PV modules, no built structures (central inverters, substation and collector compounds) will be located within

Flood zones 2 or 3. Solar PV modules will be above the maximum flood height level.

- 8.13.10. Embedded mitigation also includes minimum 6m offsets from ditches/watercourses (**Design Commitment [EN010149/APP/7.4]**), while the **oLEMP [EN010149/APP/7.9]** includes measures such as vegetation management and the **Outline Drainage Strategy [EN010149/APP/7.16]** provides further measures for ensuring the protection of the water environment.
- 8.13.11. The NPPF paragraph 1805(e) states that planning policies and decision should *"contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by...preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability"*. Table 4 at Appendix 3 concludes the Applicant's response to the policy noted in the NPPF. It is considered that the results of the assessment of water environment affects included **ES Volume 1, Chapter 15: Water [EN010149/APP/6.1]**. accords with the NPPF in regard to water environment impacts.
- 8.13.12. Central Lincolnshire Local Plan discusses within Policy 21 (Flood Risk and Water Resources) that *"development must contribute positively to the water environment and its ecology where possible and does not adversely affect surface and ground water quality in line with the requirements of the Water Framework Directive"*.

Summary

- 8.13.13. The approach to the water environment presents a strict test within paragraph 5.16.12 - 15 NPS EN-1 where the water body falls under the Water Framework Directive. The Metheringham Beck is the sole WFD waterbody, and with mitigation, the likely impact is considered negligible (not significant). The other receptor groups assessed (Water Quality of water resources and Water Resources) record similarly negligible and not significant impacts. The Proposed Development is considered to be in compliance with EN-1, EN-3, NPPF, and with the relevant local planning policy, as set out above.
- 8.14. **Glint and Glare**
- 8.14.1. This section reviews the Proposed Development in the context of planning policies related to glint and glare. This section should be read in conjunction with policy accordance tables included in **Appendix 3** of this Planning Statement.
- 8.14.2. Paragraph 2.10.27 of the EN-3 states utility scale solar farms are large sites that may have a significant zone of visual influence. Accordingly, the two main impact issues that determine distances to sensitive receptors are

likely to be visual amenity and glint and glare. A **Glint and Glare Study** which is included as **ES Volume 3, Appendix 5.4 [EN010149/APP/6.3]** has been undertaken as well as a **Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA) ES Volume 3, Appendix 10.5 [EN010149/APP/6.3]** has been undertaken to consider the significance of effects on the private views of the surrounding properties and the acceptability of living conditions.

- 8.14.3. Regarding glint and glare, paragraph 2.10.102 of the EN-3 defines 'glint' as a momentary flash of light that may be produced as a direct reflection of the sun in the solar panel. 'Glare' is a continuous source of excessive brightness typically experienced by a stationary observer located in the path of reflected sunlight from the face of the panel. The effect occurs when the solar panel is stationed between or at an angle of the sun and the receptor.
- 8.14.4. Paragraphs 2.10.102 - 2.10.106 of the EN-3 sets out the specific assessment impact considerations for solar PV development with regard to glint and glare.
- 8.14.5. As per the requirement in EN-3 Paragraph 2.10.105, the assessment has considered the relevant panel specific design i.e. fixed south facing. The full assessment method is included in the **Glint and Glare Study, ES Volume 3, Appendix 5.4 [EN010149/APP/6.3]** EN-3 Paragraph 2.10.158 confirms that solar PV panels are designed to absorb, not reflect, irradiation, and states that assessment should consider the potential impact of glint and glare on “*nearby homes, motorists, public rights of way, and aviation infrastructure*”.
- 8.14.6. Pedestrians/observers along PRow have not been assessed in this assessment as no significant effects are predicted.
- 8.14.7. Based on professional experience, pedestrians/observers along PRow are low-sensitivity receptors. This is due to the following reasons:
- The typical density of pedestrians on a PRow is low in a rural environment;
 - Any resultant effect is much less serious and has far lesser consequences than, for example, solar reflections experienced towards a road network, whereby the resultant impacts of solar reflect can be serious to safety;
 - Glint and glare effects towards receptors on a PRow are transient and time and location sensitive, where a pedestrian could move beyond the solar reflection zone with ease and little impact upon safety or amenity;
 - There is no safety hazard associated with reflections towards an observer on a footpath.

- 8.14.8. Furthermore, it is determined that any likely effect will have a low magnitude due to the following reasons:
- It is likely that the existing and the proposed screening is predicted to significantly reduce and in some instance remove the visibility of the Proposed Development for PRow users;
 - The reflection intensity is similar for solar panels and still water (and significantly less than reflections from glass and steel) which is frequently a feature of the outdoor environment surrounding PRow. Therefore, the reflections are likely to be comparable to those from common outdoor sources whilst navigating the natural and built environment on a regular basis.
- 8.14.9. Paragraph 2.10.134 of the EN-3 states that applicants should consider using, and in some cases the SoS may require, solar panels to be of a non-glare/non-reflective type and the front face of the panels to comprise of (or be covered) with a non-reflective coating for the lifetime of the permission. The assessment of PV Arrays within the **Glint and Glare Study** in **ES Volume 3, Appendix 5.4 [EN010149/APP/6.3]** has modelled solar panels with a surface material of smooth glass with an anti-reflective/anti glare coating.

Road Users

- 8.14.10. Significant screening in the form of existing vegetation and proposed screening planting is predicted to significantly obstruct views of the reflecting panels from those on the local highways. This includes advance planting along a 700m section of the A15 which will be supplemented by temporary mitigation which will be hoarding or other suitable mitigation and will be confirmed by way of a detailed LEMP secured by requirement 8 in the **Draft DCO [EN010149/APP/3.1]** which will be in place until the area has grown to sufficient density and height to mitigate impacts. Therefore, road users along the surrounding major national, and regional roads are not predicted to be subjected to any significant impacts.
- 8.14.11. A combination of setbacks and screening via existing hedgerows means that road users along the surrounding local roads would not be subject to significant adverse impacts.

Dwellings

- 8.14.12. Solar reflections are geometrically possible towards 103 dwellings. Existing and proposed vegetation, buildings, terrain or other screening, is predicted to obstruct views for 99 of these dwellings to the extent that solar reflections will not be experienced.
- 8.14.13. For the remaining four dwellings, marginal views from above ground floor levels are considered possible. The duration of effects are predicted to be experienced for less than three months per year and less than 60 minutes

on any given day. Therefore, in accordance with the assessment methodology, a low impact is predicted for these dwellings and not considered significant. No further mitigation is required.

Aviation Receptors

- 8.14.14. Paragraph 2.10.159 of EN-3 advises that while there is some evidence that glint and glare from solar farms can be experienced by aviation receptors in certain conditions there is no evidence it results insignificant impairment on aircraft safety. The paragraph continues to state that *"unless a significant impairment can be demonstrated, the Secretary of State is unlikely to give any more than limited weight to claims of aviation interference because of glint and glare from solar farms"*
- 8.14.15. **ES Volume 1, Chapter 3: Proposed Development Description [EN010149/APP/6.1]** confirms that the Solar PV modules would consist of a series of photovoltaic cells beneath a layer of toughened glass with an anti-glare/anti-reflective coating. In addition, Design Commitment D7, **Design Commitments [EN010149/APP/7.4]** requires that solar PV mounting structures will be steel frames while D8 states that Solar PV modules will be dark blue or black in colour and held with a metallic frame structure.
- 8.14.16. The **Glint and Glare Study ES Volume 3, Appendix 5.4 [EN010149/APP/6.3]** concludes that solar reflections (yellow glare – or potential for temporary after-image) are geometrically possible to four aviation receptors. The impacts are explained in more detail on a case by case basis within the Glint and Glare Study and summarised below:
- 8.14.17. RAF Cranwell is assessed as being subject to a maximum of 2,683 minutes per year of yellow glare. The yellow glare is expected between 05:00 - 06:00. The published flying hours for RAF Cranwell are between 08:00 - 17:00 therefore it is anticipated that the potential for glare impacts will not arise as flying does not occur at these times and so this is operationally accommodatable.
- 8.14.18. Temple Bruer Airfield is assessed as being subject to a maximum of 8,072 minutes per year of yellow glare between the hours of 06:00 - 07:00.
- 8.14.19. Cottage Farm Airfield assessed as being subject to a maximum of 10,647 minutes per year of yellow glare between the hours of 16:00 - 18:30.
- 8.14.20. Hill Top Farm Airfield assessed as being subject to a maximum of 3,592 minutes per year of yellow glare between the hours of 05:00 - 06:00.
- 8.14.21. The Glint and Glare Study sets contextual commentary to the potential 'yellow glare' related impacts:
- The yellow glare is predicted at times when the sun is low in the sky beyond the reflecting panels. This means the pilot would likely have a

view of both the sun and panels at the same point. Given the sun is a far more significant source of light, the glare originating from the panels would be less significant.

- The 'yellow' glare only marginally exceeds the threshold of intensity above that which is determined 'green' glare, which has a low potential for temporary after image.
- Effects would be fleeting due to short duration and restricted size of reflecting panels.
- Yellow glare would not occur for more than 30 minutes in any day at any receptor and so any impacts could be accommodated operationally.
- Expected volume of air traffic is considered to be low at the airfields.
- The weather would have to be clear and sunny at the specific times when the glare is possible to be experienced and so the potential for impacts will not arise every day.

8.14.22. The **Glint and Glare Study, ES Volume 3, Appendix 5.4 [EN010149/APP/6.3]** concludes that the potential impact from yellow glare is operationally accommodatable. The Applicant is in dialogue with each of the operators of the receptors and an update will be reported by the Applicant in the post-acceptance stage (should the Application be accepted for Examination).

Summary

8.14.23. Paragraph 2.10.159 sets out that there is no evidence that glint and glare from solar farms results in significant impairment on aircraft safety. Therefore *"unless a significant impairment can be demonstrated, the Secretary of State is unlikely to give any more than limited weight to claims of aviation interference because of glint and glare from solar farms"*. The **Glint and Glare Study, ES Volume 3, Appendix 5.4 [EN010149/APP/6.3]** concludes there are not significant glint and glare impacts and so there is no potential for significant impairment on aircraft safety from glint and glare. In addition, the implication from the context which supports the study is that the potential for users of the aforementioned receptors to actually experience yellow glare is limited and, should the yellow glare be experienced, it would be for fleeting moments. On this basis the Applicant considers it is compliant with the requirements of paragraph 2.10.159 on EN-3.

8.14.24. The Applicant is further committing to anti-reflective/anti-glare coating in accordance with paragraph 2.10.134. As set out above, the Applicant is proposing further screening measures along the A15, and will consider further potential mitigation measures such as tilt of panel, in accordance with paragraphs 2.10.135 – 2.10.136, at detailed design stage.

- 8.14.25. Paragraph 2.10.158 of EN-3 requires the SoS to assess potential impact on nearby homes, motorists, public rights of way and aviation infrastructure. This section sets out the findings of the Glint and Glare Study and reports that the Proposed Development does not result in any unacceptable impacts on motorists, nearby homes or aviation infrastructure.

9. Conclusion and Planning Balance

- 9.1.1. The Proposed Development is required to be determined in accordance with Section 104 of the Planning Act 2008. As set out in Section 6 of this Planning Statement, the relevant Section, 104(2) of the Planning Act 2008 requires that in deciding an application for development consent the Secretary of State must have regard to:
- a) Any relevant national policy statement;
 - b) The appropriate marine policy documents;
 - c) Local impact reports;
 - d) Prescribed matters, and;
 - e) Any other matters which the Secretary of State thinks are both important and relevant to the Secretary of State's decision.
- 9.1.2. In respect of part a), above the national policy statements which have effect in relation to the Proposed Development are:
- EN-1 Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy;
 - EN-3 National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure; and
 - EN-5 National Policy Statement for Electricity Network Infrastructure.
- 9.1.3. In regard to point b), above, there are no relevant marine policy documents to the Proposed Development therefore the SoS is not required to consider this matter.
- 9.1.4. In regard to point c), above, Local Impact Reports (LIRs) are expected to be submitted by the host authorities, namely North Kesteven District Council and Lincolnshire County Council. The Proposed Development is in accordance with the relevant local policy, as set out in **Appendix 3** to this Planning Statement.
- 9.1.5. In regard to point d), above, it has been demonstrated that a decision to grant a DCO for the Proposed Development would have regard to the matters prescribed by Regulation 3 and 7 of the Infrastructure Planning (Decisions) Regulations 2010 (as amended) (Ref 15). The Proposed Development has regard to preserving heritage assets and their setting as set out in Section 8 of this Planning Statement and **ES Volume 1, Chapter 9: Cultural Heritage [EN010149/APP/6.1]**. Biodiversity and conservation enhancement is also addressed in Section 8 of this Planning Statement and **ES Volume 1, Chapter 7: Biodiversity [EN010149/APP/6.1]**.
- 9.1.6. Section 104(3) of the Planning Act 2008 requires that applications for development consent must be determined by the SoS in accordance with

any relevant national policy statement except to the extent that one or more of subsections 104(4) to 104(8) apply.

- 9.1.7. None of the limited exceptions in subsections 104(4) to 104(8) of Planning Act 2008 are engaged, for the reasons summarised below.
- 9.1.8. Section 104(4) applies if deciding an application in accordance with any relevant national policy would lead to the UK being in breach of any of its international obligations. There is no evidence to suggest that the granting of the DCO for the Proposed Development would lead to the UK being in breach of any of its international obligations.
- 9.1.9. Section 104(5) applies if deciding an application in accordance with any relevant national policy would lead to the Secretary of State being in breach of any duty imposed on the Secretary of State by or under any enactment. There is no evidence to suggest that the granting of the DCO for the Proposed Development would lead the Secretary of State to be in breach of any such duty.
- 9.1.10. Section 104(6) applies if deciding an application in accordance with any relevant national policy would be unlawful by virtue of any enactment. There is no evidence to suggest that the granting of the DCO for the Proposed Development would be unlawful by virtue of any enactment.
- 9.1.11. Section 104(7) applies if the adverse impact of a proposed development would outweigh its benefits. Section 8 of this Planning Statement sets out how the Scheme is in accordance with EN-1, EN-3 and EN-5 and relevant local policy. The overall planning balance of the Proposed Development is considered below. The limited adverse impacts of the Proposed Development are not considered to outweigh its substantial benefits.
- 9.1.12. Section 104(8) applies if any condition prescribed for deciding an application otherwise in accordance with a NPS is met. There is no evidence to suggest that any condition is met in relation to the Proposed Development.
- 9.1.13. This Planning Statement sets out how the Proposed Development complies with the relevant planning policy and other matters that the Applicant considers to be important and relevant to the Secretary of State's decision as to whether to grant development consent.
- 9.1.14. At the heart of the policy and framework delivered in the Energy NPSs is the legally binding requirement for the UK to achieve Net Zero by 2050. Net Zero by 2050 is the ultimate target but the target milestones ahead of that are perhaps even more critical as they establish the pathway to ensure that Net Zero is achievable. Section 2.0 of the **Statement of Need [EN010149/APP/7.1]** sets out the wider policy context and the progress which is being made towards the targets. Critically, it shows that urgent action is required to meet the 2030 and 2035 emissions targets and

illustrates the urgency of need for low carbon generating infrastructure such as the Proposed Development and the timeframe in which it is able to start contributing to the national energy supply.

- 9.1.15. Section 8 of this Planning Statement and the Policy Tables at **Appendix 3** to this Planning Statement have considered the Proposed Development and its potential impacts against the detailed policy criteria set out in EN-1, EN-3 and EN-5.
- 9.1.16. The **Environmental Statement [EN010149/APP/6.1-4]** provides a robust assessment of the potential impacts of the Proposed Development and finds that there are limited significant adverse residual effects remaining after mitigation which are:
- Landscape and Visual in relation to existing vegetation structure of the landscape (temporary), landscape character of LCA 7 (temporary), landscape character of LCA 11 (temporary), visual effects from a number of dwellings (temporary), and users of some PRowS and roads (temporary). These impacts predominantly occur during construction, up to year 10 of operation, and decommissioning and therefore are not present for the majority of the overall lifetime of the Proposed Development.
 - Cumulative landscape and visual effects with the National Grid Navenby Substation.
 - Permanent loss of soils and agricultural land relating to permanent use of land for green infrastructure.
- 9.1.17. Significant beneficial effects are likely on receptors in relation to:
- Climate in relation to greenhouse gas emissions.
 - Landscape in relation to effect on vegetation infrastructure (once planting is established).
 - Biodiversity in relation to habitat for notable arable flora (for targeted managed areas), and ground nesting birds (once habitats are established).
 - Cultural Heritage in relation to the scheduled remains of the former medieval village of Brauncewell.
 - Traffic and Transport in relation to new PRow.
 - Construction jobs as a cumulative effect during overlapping construction period with Navenby Substation
- 9.1.18. It is clear that there is a compelling case for the need for the Proposed Development which will deliver national economic and social benefits in line with the Government's objective of delivering sustainable development.

- 9.1.19. Section 3 of this Planning Statement sets out the demonstrable benefits that will be delivered by the Proposed Development should consent be granted. In addition to the generation of a significant quantity of low carbon energy which makes a meaningful contribution to the UK's legally binding net zero commitment and is a source of domestic energy security that limits UK consumers exposure to volatile energy prices, the Project will also deliver:
- The provision of battery storage which maximises efficiency of the land and grid capacity, as encouraged by EN-3
 - Ecological enhancement measures that will result in a secured commitment to deliver a minimum of 10% in Biodiversity Net Gain
 - Provision of new PRoWs:
 - Linking RAF Digby to Scopwick.
 - Providing a connection between the existing PRoW west of the A15 to New England Lane.
 - Providing a connection across the A15 by linking Temple Road to Bloxham Woods Car Park.
 - Provision of new permissive paths:
 - Along the western edge of the Proposed Development linking New England Lane to Temple Road, north of Brauncewell (approx. length 4,130m).
 - Connecting the B1191 (Heath Road) with the existing PRoW between RAF Digby and Rowston (Rows/5/1) (approx. length 1,610m).
 - Linking Bloxholm Wood to Brauncewell Village (approx. length 1,120m).
 - Providing a series of circular walking loops from Bloxholm Woods (approx. length 1,720m).
 - Significant new tree and hedgerow planting (approximately 15,563m).
 - New community growing area of up to approximately 2ha
 - At peak construction time, creation of approximately 650 construction jobs with average of 400 FTEs for four years
 - Creation of 24 operational jobs.
 - Provision of outline Employment, Skills and Supply Chain Plan which will:
 - Increase direct and indirect employment and opportunities
 - Lever potential of the Proposed Development and other similar schemes in the local area, to encourage the next generation to take up careers in the renewable energy sector and invest their futures in Lincolnshire

- Engage effectively with local businesses and wider supply chain, and
- Assist in development and dissemination of local knowledge and skills relating to renewable energy infrastructure.

9.1.20. The combined nature of these additional benefits is considered to carry substantial weight in favour of the Proposed Development.

The Planning Balance

9.1.21. The Applicant set out with the objective to deliver a significant quantity of renewable energy, of NSIP scale, to the National Grid and contribute to the UK's wider decarbonisation of energy supply. Through the careful selection of an appropriate site which benefited from suitable topography and irradiance and connection to the National Grid through to the detailed design measures the Applicant has developed a proposal which is sensitive to local context. EN-1, at paragraph. 4.1.3, notes that given the urgency for the type of infrastructure covered in the energy NPSs, the Secretary of State will start with a presumption in favour of granting consent to applications for energy NSIPs.

9.1.22. The need for such development is such that the UK Government has concluded that there is a critical national priority (CNP) for the provision of nationally significant low carbon infrastructure (para. 4.2.4 of EN-1). Para. 4.2.5 confirms that solar development falls within the category of CNP by stating that low carbon infrastructure for the purposes of that policy means all onshore and offshore electricity generation that does not involve fossil fuel combustion.

9.1.23. The designation of such infrastructure as CNP subsequently engages paragraph 3.3.63 of EN-1 which states that "*subject to any legal requirements, the urgent need for CNP infrastructure to achieving our energy objectives, together with the national security, economic, commercial and net zero benefits, will in general outweigh any other residual impacts not capable of being addressed by the application of the mitigation hierarchy*".

9.1.24. The policy landscape set by the Energy NPSs illustrates the Government's position in a very clear way and confirms that the principle of the development is not just accepted, it is of critical importance and priority at a national level. This landscape paves the way for well-considered projects to receive favourable recommendations from the Planning Inspectorate and an eventual grant of consent by the Secretary of State. However, despite the strength of the policy it does not immediately imply that all proposals for such infrastructure will receive approval. There are a number of tests and justification required to be demonstrated by the Applicant as to why a chosen site is an appropriate location for the proposed infrastructure and that any adverse environmental impacts have been mitigated as far as practicable with the application of the mitigation

hierarchy. EN-1 also places significant emphasis on the importance of good design throughout the NSIP process. This means more than sensitive siting of infrastructure and includes consistent decision making based on sound environmentally led principles.

- 9.1.25. Good design has been embedded into the Proposed Development from the outset of the site selection process with the search process seeking to avoid areas of higher landscape sensitivity. In this context the first tier of the mitigation hierarchy, has been applied as there are no local or national landscape designations which would be impacted by the Proposed Development. At a site specific level a comprehensive mitigation package has been embedded into the design of the Proposed Development to date with further commitments made to minimise any likely significant impacts. However, the nature of the Proposed Development, the sensitivity of receptors and the existing rural context mean that there are some impacts which cannot be mitigated. The Applicant considers given the acute need for the Proposed Development it has taken all reasonable measures to minimise these likely significant effects.
- 9.1.26. In a policy context, paragraph 5.10.5 of EN-1 accepts that there will likely be some impact in terms of landscape and visual effects as a result of DCO scale energy projects, stating: *Virtually all nationally significant energy infrastructure projects will have adverse effects on the landscape, but there may be beneficial landscape character impacts arising from mitigation.*
- 9.1.27. On land use, the Applicant acknowledges that there will be approximately 231.7 hectares of BMV land that will be temporarily used for the purposes of accommodating Solar PV Development and associated infrastructure. 77 hectares is permanently impacted as a result of the delivery of green infrastructure across the Proposed Development. It is important to recognise the context of this significant impact as the green infrastructure is designed to deliver beneficial impacts and mitigation from other related topic areas and is not hard infrastructure used for electricity generation.
- 9.1.28. As with landscape impact, the general nature of the type of land that lends itself to large scale solar development is rural and often in agricultural use. Nevertheless, the Applicant has sought to limit the amount of higher grade agricultural land within the Order Limits and once the Order Limits were defined and the detailed characteristics of the soil quality were understood, the Applicant sought to avoid the use of BMV, where possible.
- 9.1.29. EN-3, while setting a preference for the type of land to be used for solar development, is clear the land type should not be a predominating factor in determining the suitability of a site. It goes further to accept that it is likely that agricultural land will form part of an applicant's proposals, and that ground mounted solar PV development is not prohibited on BMV. It is also important to note that there is no planning policy which requires agricultural land to be farmed. Indeed, farmers are actively encouraged to

take land out of arable use to help regenerate soil and combat the biodiversity crisis.

- 9.1.30. With the exception of the agricultural land required for green infrastructure, the land to be used will be used temporarily with the land being returned to agricultural use at the end of the Proposed Development's lifetime. Nevertheless, the ES has confirmed that significant effects are encountered, despite the context of that loss relating to green infrastructure, and limited weight may be applied against the Proposed Development in the planning balance.
- 9.1.31. The Proposed Development makes a significant contribution towards the UK's solar targets for reaching Net Zero. The Applicant is well resourced and in a strong position to deliver the Project and within a timeframe that means the generation of low carbon energy will also occur in a timely manner and contribute to 2030 and 2035 pathway targets.
- 9.1.32. As a CNP project, the Proposed Development benefits from the strongest policy position set out in national planning policy. EN-1 sets out a presumption in favour of energy related development. This Planning Statement confirms that the Proposed Development complies with EN-1, EN-3 EN-5, the NPPF and Local Plans. Where significant adverse effects have been identified the Applicant has demonstrated its application of the mitigation hierarchy and careful consideration of design. However, impacts on landscape and visual receptors and soils and agricultural land which cannot be avoided, reduced or mitigated, as per paragraph 4.2.11 of EN-1, remain. Cumulative impacts are also considered, as per the requirements of paragraph 4.2.12 of EN-1, and identify a significant impact which cannot be avoided, reduced or mitigated in relation to landscape and visual receptors.
- 9.1.33. Paragraph 4.2.15 of EN-1 is therefore engaged. This states "*where residual non-HRA or non-MCZ impacts remain after the mitigation hierarchy has been applied, these residual impacts are unlikely to outweigh the urgent need for this type of infrastructure. Therefore, in all but the most exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely that consent will be refused on the basis of these residual impacts*".
- 9.1.34. The residual effects in this case are limited to temporary landscape and visual effects, before planting has matured, which are, in all but one instance, then reduced to not significant by year 10 and permanent loss of BMV agricultural land as a result of mitigation and enhancement. It is considered that these residual impacts do not meet the "*exceptional circumstances*" test and therefore do not warrant refusal. Furthermore, there is no unacceptable interference with human health and public safety, defence (particularly in relation to MOD assets), irreplaceable habitats or unacceptable risk to the achievement of net zero. Accordingly, the balance is firmly in favour of approval

- 9.1.35. In addition, there are a significant number of additional benefits that would be achieved by the Proposed Development, as outlined above.
- 9.1.36. The Proposed Development is a well-considered and effectively designed proposal that responds to the locality and is sensitive to the local environment. It is therefore concluded that Development Consent should be granted.

Appendix 1 - Site Selection Report



1. Introduction

1.1. Background

- 1.1.1. This report provides an overview of the site selection process undertaken by the Applicant to identify the location of the Proposed Development and the specific criteria to help define the potential use of land parcels within the Proposed Development.
- 1.1.2. As explained later in this report, in this project's case, there is no legal or policy requirement to demonstrate that the Proposed Development is the best location for a solar farm, however it is an appropriate location for a solar farm and there are certain policy preferences, for instance regarding considering lower quality agricultural land before higher quality land and previously developed land before greenfield land. This report explains the process undertaken by the Applicant in having regard to these important factors.
- 1.1.3. There are also certain legal tests regarding the consideration of alternative sites, for instance where there would be an adverse effect on the integrity of a European protected site, which is not engaged in this case, or where land was proposed to be acquired compulsorily. In this case, the Applicant has secured the principal land parcels to deliver the solar farm by voluntary agreement, although CPO powers are still being sought to ensure deliverability.

1.2. Proposed Development

- 1.2.1. The Proposed Development is defined as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) and will require a Development Consent Order (DCO) from the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero due to its generating capacity exceeding 50 megawatts (MW).
- 1.2.2. The main features of the Proposed Development will consist of the following:
 - Solar PV development comprising;
 - Ground-mounted Solar PV generating station. The generating station will include Solar PV modules and mounting structures;
 - Balance of Solar System (BoSS), which comprises inverters, transformers, and switchgear;
 - 400kV Grid Connection Corridor to connect the Springwell Substation and proposed National Grid Navenby Substation;
 - Collector Compounds comprising switchgear, transformers, ancillary equipment and operation, maintenance, security and welfare units;
 - A Project substation ('Springwell Substation') compound, which will include substation, switching and control equipment, office/control/welfare/security buildings, storage areas, and provisions for vehicular parking and material laydown;

- Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) compound, including batteries and associated inverters, transformers, switchgear and ancillary equipment and their containers, enclosures, monitoring systems, air conditioning, electrical cables, fire safety infrastructure and operation, maintenance, security and welfare facilities;
- Underground cabling will connect the Solar PV modules and BESS compound to the BoSS, collector compounds, and the Springwell Substation.
- Ancillary infrastructure works, including boundary treatments, security equipment, earthing devices, fencing, lighting, earthworks, surface water management, internal tracks and any other works identified as necessary to enable the development;
- Landscaping, habitat management, biodiversity enhancement and amenity improvements; and
- Works to facilitate vehicular access to the Site.

1.3. Purpose of this Report

- 1.3.1. The purpose of this report is to present the reason why the Proposed Development and Order Limits are located in this particular location.
- 1.3.2. **Environmental Statement (ES) Volume 1, Chapter 4: Reasonable Alternatives Considered [EN010149/APP/6.1]** explains the legal and policy background to the consideration of alternatives and background to the design development.
- 1.3.3. The **Planning Statement [EN010149/APP/7.2]** explains the planning tests and policy background to the consideration of alternatives and the need for the project is explained within the **Statement of Need [EN010149/APP/7.1]** and summarised below for general context.
- 1.3.4. The **Design Approach Document [EN010149/APP/7.3]** discusses the ongoing evolution of the Proposed Development from the selection of the site.

2. Planning Policy

2.1. National Planning Policy

Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1)

- 2.1.1. The compliance of the Proposed Development with planning policy is set out in the main body, notably, Section 7, of the Planning Statement to which this Site Selection Report is an Appendix. This section sets out the policy from EN-1 and EN-3 that is relevant to the consideration of matters relating to site selection.
- 2.1.2. There is a strong relationship between the site selection and consideration of alternatives. Site selection sets out the process which an applicant has followed in order to determine the appropriate location for a proposed development. It should demonstrate a trail of logical steps followed in order to determine a location that will deliver the objectives of the project. These steps will normally be driven by a number of technical and environmentally led criteria. This allows an applicant to propose development in a location which is able to accommodate functional requirements but which has also been subject to robust consideration of environmental constraints and sought to avoid areas of highest sensitivity.
- 2.1.3. The application of these steps will generally lead to a number of options, or alternative sites, which an applicant will then consider and determine a favoured option to pursue. In this regard, paragraph 4.3.9 of EN-1 states that "*this NPS does not contain any general requirement to consider alternatives or to establish whether the proposed project represents the best option from a policy perspective*".
- 2.1.4. However, EN-1 at paragraph 4.3.15 states that: "*Applicants are obliged to include in their ES, information about the reasonable alternatives they have studied. This should include an indication of the main reasons for the applicant's choice, taking into account the environmental, social and economic effects and including, where relevant, technical and commercial feasibility.*" **ES Volume 1, Chapters 4: Reasonable Alternative Considered [EN010149/APP/6.1]** addresses the matter of alternatives from an EIA Regulations compliance perspective but also provides consideration against NPS policy, where considered relevant
- 2.1.5. The process of site selection is therefore implicit in determining alternative sites. Given the intrinsic link, this section identifies policies which are relevant to both alternatives and site selection but recognises that each are subject to their own considerations and policy compliance requirements.
- 2.1.6. Paragraph 4.3.15 does also note that there are certain times that policy does require the consideration of alternatives.
- 2.1.7. The circumstances relating to when they are required and the Applicant's response to these circumstances are set out, below:
 - *Where a scheme would involve the compulsory acquisition of land or interests in land (EN-1 paragraph 4.3.9).* The DCO Application is seeking compulsory acquisition powers. Please see the Statement of

Reasons [EN010149/APP/4.1] and **ES Volume 1, Chapters 4: Reasonable Alternative Considered [EN010149/APP/6.1].**

- *Where a scheme would be located near a sensitive receptor site for air quality (EN-1 paragraph 5.2.7).* The Proposed Development is not within an AQMA nor are there any AQMAs declared within the North Kesteven District Council administrative area.
 - *Where a scheme would lead to significant harm to biodiversity and geological conservation interests (EN-1 section 5.4).* The Proposed Development would not likely give rise to significant harm on such receptors, as reported in **ES Volume 1, Chapters 7 Biodiversity, 11 Land, Soils and Groundwater and 15 Water [EN010149/APP/6.1].**
 - *Where a scheme would result in an adverse effect on the integrity of a European site that cannot be avoided (EN-1 section 5.4.6).* An **HRA No Significant Effects Report [EN010149/APP/7.17]** has been submitted alongside the DCO Application which confirms the Proposed Development would not result in an adverse impact on the integrity of a European site, therefore there is no requirements to consider alternatives.
 - *Where a scheme would be located within, or partially within, Flood Zone 2 or Flood Zone 3 (EN-1 section 5.8).* In this case the Sequential Test should be undertaken. If following application of the Sequential Test, it is not possible for the project to be located in areas of lower flood risk the Exception Test can be applied, which provides a method of allowing necessary development to go ahead in situations where suitable sites at lower risk of flooding are not available. With regard to applying the Sequential Test, paragraph 5.8.23 of EN-1 sets out that consideration of alternative sites should take account of the policy on alternatives described in section 4.3 of EN-1. The majority of the Order Limits is within Flood Zone 1 with a small area of Springwell East comprising some Flood Zone 3. The **Flood Risk Assessment [EN010149/APP/7.16]**, and section 8 of this Planning Statement advises how the Sequential Test has been met.
 - *Where a development would be located within a National Park, the Broads or an AONB (now National Landscape) (EN-1 section 5.10).* The Proposed Development is not located in or near these designations, therefore no further consideration of alternatives in this regard is required.
- 2.1.8. Paragraph 4.3.22 advises that, in considering alternatives, the SoS should be guided by the following principles:
- *"The consideration of alternatives in order to comply with policy requirements should be carried out in a proportionate manner; and*
 - *Only alternatives that can meet the objectives of the proposed development need to be considered."*
- 2.1.9. The practical application of the second bullet point above is that effectively smaller scale projects should not be considered as a reasonable alternative since they would not be able to deliver the scale of energy

generation set out by the Applicant (as set out in the following Section of this report).

- 2.1.10. Paragraph 4.2.24 states that the SoS *"should not refuse an application for development on one site simply because fewer adverse impacts would result from developing similar infrastructure on another suitable site and should have regard as appropriate to the possibility that all suitable sites for energy infrastructure of the type proposed may be needed for future proposals."* In a similar sense to paragraph 4.3.9, this paragraph recognises that a proposed development does not have to articulate that it is the best option, moreover, that it is acceptable within the context of the relevant policy provisions. This also recognises that alternative sites may come forward under other applications but also, critically, that proposals should be determined on their individual merits in accordance with relevant policy which is the basis for decision making in planning in England and Wales.
- 2.1.11. Paragraph 4.2.25 states that alternatives *"not among the main alternatives studied by the applicant (as reflected in the ES) should only be considered to the extent that the Secretary of State thinks they are both important and relevant to the decision"*.
- 2.1.12. Paragraph 5.8.21 advises that *"the Sequential Test ensures that a sequential, risk-based approach is followed to steer new development to areas with the lowest risk of flooding, taking all sources of flood risk and climate change into account. Where it is not possible to locate development in low-risk areas, the Sequential Test should go on to compare reasonably available sites with medium risk areas and then, only where there are no reasonably available sites in low and medium risk areas, within high-risk areas"*. The Sequential Test and its implications in relation to site selection are addressed in Section 8 of the Planning Statement.

National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3)

- 2.1.13. EN-3 provides technology specific policy in relation to solar PV development which includes guidance on site selection matters. These matters are dealt with in greater detail in Section 3 of this report, however, the context of the policy is summarised here.
- 2.1.14. EN-3 sets out that there are a number of factors which are likely to influence site selection, namely:
- Irradiance and topography
 - Network Connection
 - Proximity of a site to dwellings
 - Agricultural land classification and land type
 - Accessibility
 - Public rights of way
 - Security and lighting

- 2.1.15. Paragraphs 2.10.19 - 2.10.20 advise that irradiance will be a key consideration for applicants as it will impact the amount of electricity that can be generated and that irradiance can be influenced by topography.
- 2.1.16. Paragraphs 2.10.21 - 2.10.26 discuss mostly technical matters relating to the network connection. Importantly at 2.10.14 and 2.10.25 it recognises that distance to a connection can have a significant effect on project viability and that applicants may *"may choose a site based on a nearby available grid export capacity"*.
- 2.1.17. Paragraph 2.10.27 explains that NSIP scale development may have a significant zone of visual influence recognising that likely impacts relate to visual amenity and glint and glare. These topics are considered in detail in Section of this Planning Statement.
- 2.1.18. Paragraphs 2.10.28 - 2.10.34 relate to agricultural land classification and land type. It sets out a preference for the use of non or lower grade agricultural land but accepts that: land type should not be a predominating factor in site selection; that solar development is not prohibited on BMV, and; that large scale solar is likely to include some agricultural land. A detailed response to these paragraphs is set out in the following Section of this report and Section 8 of the Planning Statement.
- 2.1.19. Paragraphs 2.10.35 - 2.10.39 discuss matters relating to accessibility and recognises that NSIP scale solar is likely to be located in rural areas and access is likely to be a significant factor in site selection. This is dealt with in Section 3 of this report and under Traffic and Transport in Section 8 of the Planning Statement.
- 2.1.20. Paragraphs 2.10.40 - 2.10.45 discuss public rights of way. It acknowledges temporary closures may be required but efforts should be made to ensure continued use during construction and operation. It also advises that applicants should seek to ensure continued recreational use while seeking opportunities to facilitate enhancements. It requires that applications include a Public Rights of Way Management Plan, one of which is included within this application **Outline Public Rights of Way and Permissive Paths Management Plan [EN010149/APP/7.12]**. Consideration of impacts on PRow from a planning policy perspective are set out in Section 8 of the Planning Statement, however, there are no guidelines set out in these paragraphs of the EN-3 about how these should be considered from a site selection perspective, it is more focused on how PRows are addressed within an application and so there is no further assessment of these within this report.
- 2.1.21. Paragraphs 2.10.46 - 2.10.48 advise that security may be a key consideration for applicants and that natural features of a landscape may assist in site security as well as items such as CCTV and perimeter fencing. The nature of the landscape of the Proposed Development is such that natural features which may assist in security measures are less available, noting that it is a relatively flat or gently undulating topography. No further consideration is provided on this matter.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 2.1.22. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in March 2012 and last updated in December 2023. The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are to be applied, including in respect of the development of agricultural land and renewable energy.
- 2.1.23. Paragraph 180b states that planning policies and decisions should take into account the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land. Furthermore, where significant development of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary, local planning authorities should seek to use areas of poorer quality land in preference to that of a higher quality.
- 2.1.24. An updated version of the NPPF is currently out for consultation, as per August 2024. This consultation is focused on achieving sustainable growth in the planning system, while also altering the policy proposals in relation to increasing planning fees, local plan intervention criteria and appropriate thresholds for certain Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects.

Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

- 2.1.25. The policies contained within the NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework) are expanded upon and supported by the PPG which was originally published in March 2014 and has been updated periodically since with the most recent update being February 2024.
- 2.1.26. With regards to the location of solar farms, paragraph 013 (Ref: 5-013 20150327) cites the following factors that local planning authorities should consider:
- encouraging the effective use of land by focusing large-scale solar farms on previously developed and non-agricultural land, provided that it is not of high environmental value;
 - where a proposal involves greenfield land, whether the proposed use of any agricultural land has been shown to be necessary and poorer quality land has been used in preference to higher quality land.

Local Planning Policy

- 2.1.27. Other planning policies may be considered by the Secretary of State as important and relevant considerations in relation to the site selection process for the Proposed Development. As with the NPPF, Development Plan Documents are prepared to guide decision-making on planning applications submitted to Local Planning Authorities, rather than DCO applications for energy NSIPs which are to be decided by the Secretary of State, however, they have been considered insofar as they may assist with the site selection.

The development plans of the host authorities do not identify any specific areas for renewable energy development. While they do not identify any specific policies on this, they also do not hold any relevant planning policies about choosing a site for NSIP scale solar development.

3. Site Selection Assessment

3.1. Site Selection Principles

- 3.1.1. This section sets out the background and approach to the site selection process which the Applicant has undertaken and has resulted in the land that is subject of the Proposed Development being brought forward.
- 3.1.2. Section 2 of this report sets out the relationship between the site selection process and consideration of alternatives. **ES Volume 1, Chapters 4: Reasonable Alternative Considered [EN010149/APP/6.1]** sets out the Applicant's response in relation to the latter.
- 3.1.3. The report should be read in conjunction with the **Statement of Need [EN010149/APP/7.1]** which presents further detail on the need for the Proposed Development, its locational value and its contribution to meeting the UK's decarbonisation requirements.
- 3.1.4. In determining a suitable location for the Proposed Development, the Applicant sought to develop a single new Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) generating a minimum of 250 - 500MW (based on a site comprising a minimum of 1,000 acres) which:
 - Would contribute to meeting the UK's urgent need for low carbon energy generation;
 - Would be in close proximity to an available grid connection or part of the transmission network in which capacity exists;
 - Would avoid impacts on sensitive landscapes and environments as far as practicable;
 - Would be readily accessible from existing strategic road network to facilitate; construction access
 - Would be delivered on land which could be acquired voluntarily thereby avoiding the need for large scale compulsory acquisition.
- 3.1.5. It is generally acknowledged that large scale solar developments require three fundamental attributes. EN-3 identifies these core attributes, amongst other considerations:
 - Existence of sufficient land to deliver the project and meet the scale of the Proposed Development's aims;
 - Availability and capacity of a suitable Point of Connection to the National Electricity Transmission System (NETS); and
 - Solar irradiation levels to support the development's potential to produce an efficient and economic energy yield.
- 3.1.6. There are limited locations in the UK that satisfy all three of the above core site selection requirements (land availability and suitability, feasible irradiation levels and grid connection availability). For example, high population density and a large extent of designated land limits opportunities for large-scale solar development in the South East of England. The need for proximity to existing and available grid connection

capacity limits opportunities in the South West and East Anglia (where irradiation is also high).

- 3.1.7. Therefore, it cannot be expected that large-scale solar is located only where irradiation is highest in the UK, only where suitable land is available, or in close proximity to existing grid substations with available capacity. Developments will therefore be proposed at locations which have a blend of the required characteristics albeit unlikely that each of the required characteristics will be at their most advantageous in a single location.

3.2. Regional Site Selection

- 3.2.1. As set out in **ES Volume 1, Chapters 4: Reasonable Alternative Considered [EN010149/APP/6.1]**, in setting out its site selection exercise, the Applicant considered general factors associated with irradiance and site topography and found that much of the East Midlands distribution network region is characterised by large swathes of flat or undulating land (which is highly suitable for solar generation) as well as suitably high levels of irradiation to support the commercial viability of such development.
- 3.2.2. The Applicant started engagement with the National Grid Electricity System Operator (NGESO) in November 2020 to discuss the potential opportunities for a new connection offer within the target region identified above. Existing grid connection points / National Grid substations with spare capacity are finite. No grid connection offer was available to the Applicant at existing substations due to capacity restrictions in the target region. Indeed, as set out in Section 7 of the **Statement of Need [EN010149/APP/7.1]** there is no capacity at any existing NGESO infrastructure within 50km of the Order Limits to accommodate new connections of Springwell's magnitude before 2033. This is somewhat inevitable given the urgent national need for renewable energy (specifically solar), as developments have already been proposed to use existing substation capacity where it occurs.
- 3.2.3. Further to meeting with NGESO in November 2020, the Applicant prioritised its searches for sites around two 400kV overhead lines (OHL): the West Burton to Bicker Fen line and the Cottam to Eaton Socon line. This is because engagement with NGESO identified both OHLs as having available capacity due to the decommissioning of the coal plants at Cottam and West Burton. As the fossil fuel heavy power generating infrastructure is phased out, capacity within the existing OHLs is created, which allows for new connections to be made without major upgrades to the circuits. However, while capacity existed in the OHLs there were no available connection points at locations which were considered suitable for solar (see para. 4.1.27 and Section 7 of the **Statement of Need [EN010149/APP/7.1]**). The Applicant understood this meant that there would be a need for more entry/exit points, to make the most of such capacity and that National Grid would deliver new infrastructure, i.e., a 400kv substation to enable connections near demand centres, for example, near Navenby to meet needs for connections in this area, including the project.

- 3.2.4. The Applicant considered the fundamental attributes required for NSIP scale solar PV development (as set out in 3.1.4) to be sufficiently favourable to pursue potential sites in this region.
- 3.2.5. The Applicant undertook a site search along the 400kv lines for suitable areas of land for NSIP scale solar development. The site search criteria, set out in para. 3.2.8, drew on the principles that were later enshrined in the draft and subsequently adopted policy in EN-3 and provided a framework within which site selection was developed. These were not absolute tests but laid the foundation for the balancing of different constraints and opportunities in order to both identify an appropriate site but also guide how the site will be designed over time.
- 3.2.6. The Applicant initially set out a minimum requirement for land of 1,000 acres but with a preference for larger sites on the premise that more suitable land would enable greater low carbon energy generation. A site area of 1,000 acres could provide a project with an output in the range 250MW - 500MW, commensurate with the Applicant's desire to develop a NSIP scale proposal (using the rule of thumb set out in para 2.10.17 of EN-3 of 2-4 acres per 1 MW output).
- 3.2.7. In addition, the Applicant sought land which had a maximum of two landowners, but ideally an individual landowner willing to voluntarily enter into agreement. It is a significant benefit in the site selection process to seek a site which has fewer landowners. Having fewer landowners removes much of the complexities associated with the ability to deliver large scale solar development. The simplicity of a single landowner on a large holding helps reduce barriers to site assembly, allowing more flexibility in micro-siting and provides the Applicant with the opportunity to maximise efficiencies of land use across the Site. It also means, in principle, that there is potential to minimise the impacts of the temporary loss of land on the existing landholding by, for example, seeking to make use of available land which may be considered less productive from an arable perspective.
- 3.2.8. Following an investigative land ownership exercise that sought to identify landholdings with a minimum 1,000 acres and a maximum of two landowners, the Applicant set out high-level criteria to evaluate the characteristics of a site. The criteria that formed part of this initial high-level exercise were:
- Grid Security (capacity within the OHL line)
 - Proximity of OHL to site (no further than 3km from OHL)
 - Accessibility (readily accessible from major roads with appropriate connections to local road network)
 - Available acreage within landholding (minimum 1,000 acres)
 - ALC grade (preference for non-agricultural or lower grade ALC)
 - Flood Zone (preference for Flood Zone 1)
 - Cultural heritage assets (avoidance of statutory assets)
 - Visual Impact (capability of solar PV development to be broken up/hidden in landscape)

- Regularity of field parcels (preference for larger regular field parcels for ease of construction and layout)
 - Landowner appetite (preference for landowner to express desire to be part of proposal and ease of reaching voluntary agreement)
- 3.2.9. The Applicant's search generated five landholdings across Lincolnshire, Rutland and Cambridgeshire, including the now Order Limits, which performed sufficiently well against the criteria listed in 3.2.8 to warrant the Applicant engaging in exploratory discussions with the relevant landowners. Each of these sites had either a single or a maximum of two landowners and in all but one case were located directly adjacent to either the Cottam - Eaton Socon or Bicker Fen - West Burton OHL. The general location and size of the available landholding of the other potential sites was:
- Land north-east of Sleaford (approx. 2250 acres total)
 - Land south-east of Grantham (approx. 1200 acres total)
 - Land south of Rutland Water (approx. 1000 acres); and
 - Land south-west of Peterborough (approx. 3500 acres)
- 3.2.10. From an early stage the land at Blankney Estate performed extremely well against key considerations; it represented the largest landholding of all sites considered with a highly regular field pattern, favourable topography, good accessibility and limited environmental constraints.
- 3.2.11. In addition, discussions around voluntary acquisition of these other potential sites did not materially progress, meanwhile negotiations with Blankney Estate were constructive and provided the Applicant with sufficient confidence to bring the Proposed Development forward. Once the Applicant had secured an exclusivity agreement with Blankney Estate a connection application was made to National Grid. A grid connection offer for Navenby Substation was subsequently issued in December 2021 and accepted by the Applicant in April 2022. The size of the available land at Blankney Estate enabled the Applicant to seek a connection for 800MW which is reflected in the grid offer which allows the export and import of 800MW of electricity to the National Electricity Transmission System via a connection at Navenby Substation.
- 3.2.12. This general approach to site selection follows the same principles as, for example, the recently granted Mallard Pass Solar Farm DCO, Gate Burton Energy Park DCO and Sunnica DCO. As set out, above, such connections are finite and there are no existing pieces of infrastructure within a 50km radius of the Order Limits which could offer the same connection within the same timeframes. The principle of the site selection approach for the Proposed Development differs only to the extent that capacity was available in the 400kV Cottam to Eaton Socon overhead line, rather than in an existing substation as was the case at, for example, Mallard Pass. In the SoS decision letter, it is stated that that the SOS is satisfied with the approach to site selection and the Examining Authority's Report similarly concludes that the Applicant has met the requirements of national policy.

- 3.2.13. In terms of policy compliance, it is important to set the context of the policy framework at the time of the Applicant's search and how this overlapped with the emerging draft Energy National Policy Statements. The first draft of the updated EN-3 which included policy relating to site selection for NSIP scale solar development was published in March 2021 with the final version coming into force in January 2024. The Applicant had laid out its initial site search criteria prior to the draft NPS being published, however, the principles which were enshrined within EN-3 were broadly consistent with the criteria which the Applicant had adopted in its own search. The Applicant's response to those key site selection policy criteria set out in EN-3 is set out below:

3.3. Specific Site Selection Principles

Irradiance and topography

- 3.3.1. EN-3 notes at paragraph 2.10.19 that *"Irradiance will be a key consideration for the applicant in identifying a potential site as the amount of electricity generated on site is directly affected by irradiance levels. Irradiance...will in turn be affected by surrounding topography..."*.
- 3.3.2. As outlined above, the East Midlands distribution network region and more specifically Lincolnshire is generally flat with some areas of gently undulating topography, which has been confirmed to be suitable and beneficial for solar developments. This increases the likelihood of being able to identify a suitable site that can produce a large amount of electricity.
- 3.3.3. As a whole, irradiance in Lincolnshire is sufficiently high to support solar development. As set out in the **Statement of Need [EN010149/APP/7.1]** the Proposed Development is located in an area with solar irradiation levels above average for the UK, and initial studies suggest that an average annual load factor before degradation at the site is at least as high as, if not higher than, the current national average.
- 3.3.4. Topographically, the land which is the subject of the Proposed Development is considered highly suitable for solar development. The land around Springwell West is largely flat with an open, almost prairie-like appearance, particularly west of the A15. Land around Springwell Central sits within a marginally more undulating landscape where land rises from the south side of Heath Road and around Rowston Top. The rise in gradient in Springwell Central is gentle but perceptible yet remains favourable for solar development. The land around Springwell East is similarly favourable with a very gentle rise in slope predominantly running north-south on the eastern side of Lincoln Road.
- 3.3.5. The favourable nature of the irradiance and topography, in combination with other elements outlined below, makes the area an appropriate location for solar development.

Proximity of site to dwellings

- 3.3.6. EN-3 advises in section 2.10 that large-scale utility solar farms may have a significant zone of visual influence with the likely impacts to sensitive receptors being that of residential amenity and glint and glare.
- 3.3.7. The considerable landholding at Blankney Estate provides a mixture of highly rural land as well as land that encompasses local settlements such as Blankney, Scopwick, RAF and Ashby-de-la-Launde. Settlements are reasonably well dispersed with clear breaks between. There are also a relatively small number of individual dwellings/farmsteads in close proximity to the Order Limits. The Applicant considered that there was sufficient land available to be able to provide offsets to residential receptors through a combination of setbacks, natural screening as well as existing and proposed landscape improvements.
- 3.3.8. During site selection a minimum offset of 100m was assumed from residential properties in the knowledge that once the Applicant understood more about the specific nature of the now Order Limits, bespoke mitigation could be provided.

Network Connection

- 3.3.9. The East Midlands has for decades been at the hub of energy production for the UK. However, as the carbon intensive power production, such as coal and gas, has been turned off, the capacity in the National Grid infrastructure to collect and transfer the power remains. The Applicant initially looked at opportunities to deliver a project of similar scale as the Proposed Development at substations where capacity existed, however, no such capacity was available with a connection date prior to 2033. As Section 7 of the **Statement of Need [EN010149/APP/7.1]** sets out, the lack of viable alternative connections extends to a 50km radius from the boundary of the Proposed Development.
- 3.3.10. As set out in para.3.2.2, the Applicant engaged with NGENSO and understood that the 400kV OHLs within the East Midlands had capacity. The Applicant also understood that there would be a need for more entry/exit points, to make the most of such capacity and that National Grid would deliver new infrastructure, i.e., a 400kv substation to enable connections near demand centres, for example, near Navenby to meet needs for connections in this area.
- 3.3.11. Further to the Applicant's engagement with NGENSO and upon successful conclusion of a land agreement with Blankney Estate, a grid connection was received, as recorded out above in paragraph 3.2.11.
- 3.3.12. Since receipt of the grid connection offer, the Applicant has worked closely with NGENSO to determine where a new substation may be located. While a new substation is outwith the Applicant's control, the importance of a new NETS substation locally is significant. The National Grid TEC register identifies up to 4.2GW of connection offers at Navenby substation which represents a significant contribution to the required increase in solar energy to help reach the Government's target of tripling solar generation by 2030 and helping set a realistic path for the UK towards achieving Net

Zero by 2050. National Grid have advised that there are 8 committed connections at the new Navenby Substation.

- 3.3.13. In terms of the location of the new Navenby Substation, NGET is in the process of preparing and submitting a Planning Application to North Kesteven District Council. The Applicant understood NGET's preferred location for the Navenby Substation in advance of the Applicant's Statutory Consultation, which is demonstrated by a potential cable corridor being identified within the Applicant's masterplan presented at that stage.
- 3.3.14. NGET is conducting a consultation on their proposal to build a substation in the Navenby area. The proposed Navenby Substation is located at Heath Lane, Navenby LN5 0AY, approximately 1.4km from the village of Navenby. National Grid's substation planning application will be submitted in Spring 2025 to the North Kesteven District Council and section 37 to DESNZ. Subject to approval, National Grid advise their plans are to start construction in summer 2026, the construction of the four new pylons in spring/summer 2028, and the completion of the Navenby Substation in late 2029.
- 3.3.15. Further detail on the locational value of Springwell in terms of flows of electricity is set out in Section 7.4 of the **Statement of Need [EN010149/APP/7.1]**.
- 3.3.16. It is worthy of note that EN-1 states that *"transmission network infrastructure, and related network enforcement and upgrade works, associated with nationally significant low carbon infrastructure is considered as CNP infrastructure"*, thereby placing further emphasis on the urgency of delivery.

Agricultural land classification and land type

- 3.3.17. EN-3 places emphasis on large scale solar utilising either previously developed land, brownfield land, contaminated land, industrial land or lower grade (3b, 4 or 5) land and, where possible, avoiding Best and Most Versatile (BMV) agricultural land. Importantly, however, it goes on to state that *"land type should not be a predominating factor in determining the suitability of the site location"*. It continues to acknowledge that solar development is not prohibited on BMV land, land recognised for its natural beauty or ecological or archaeological importance and that it is recognised that, at scale, developments may use some agricultural land. However, applicants should explain site selection noting a preference for development on brownfield and non-agricultural land.
- 3.3.18. The Applicant considered whether sufficient previously developed land would be available to develop a utility scale solar development, however, as the North Kesteven District Council brownfield register illustrates, there are currently only five available sites, none of which would have the capability of meeting the project objectives. Four of these sites have either full planning permission or outline planning permission for housing development. The list of these sites, their size and status is set out below:

Site Name	Size (ha)	Status
The Hoplands Depot, Boston Road, Sleaford	1.84	No planning permission
Land off Moor Lane, Swinderby	8.29	Outline permission for residential development
Land off West Street, Billingham	1.4	Outline planning permission for residential development
Land at Former Lafford School	0.98	No planning permission
Land at former Ordhard House, Rauceby Hospital, Greylees	1.95	Full planning permission for residential development

Table 1: Sites identified on NKDC Brownfield Land Register

- 3.3.19. None of the above sites were pursued given the inability to meet any of the project objectives.
- 3.3.20. Of the landholdings identified by the Applicant with sufficient acreage to deliver project objectives, all were predominantly rural and agricultural in nature, with no differing land types available that had a lesser agricultural grade than Springwell. That is to say nothing was identified by the Applicant that presented non-agricultural, for example, contaminated or industrial, characteristics. All sites identified by the Applicant (see para. 4.1.15) were identified on the provisional ALC (DeFRA) mapping as Grade 2 or 3.
- 3.3.21. At a local level, according to the provisional and predictive ALC mapping (DeFRA and Natural England), this area (i.e. in proximity to Springwell) of Lincolnshire has a mixture of largely Grade 2 and Grade 3 land. The Applicant has taken into account agricultural land quality when identifying the Solar PV Site, based on publicly available information and the extent to which this played a part in site selection decision making is explained further in paras. 4.1.44 - 4.1.48, below. This approach to considering ALC values, in terms of the use of provisional and predictive mapping, has been considered as both satisfactory and proportionate by the Examining Authorities in relation to, for example, the Gate Burton Energy Park DCO and Mallard Pass Solar Farm DCO.
- 3.3.22. Notwithstanding the predictive mapping experience elsewhere in developing/identifying sites for ground based solar it is important to carry out detailed site-specific assessment work to inform design development. The wider Lincolnshire area is not mapped, therefore for an indication of the distribution the Applicant also considered the 1970s 'provisional' maps. The location of the Site in a wider context is shown below. An extract of the relevant provisional map is set out below. This shows provisional agricultural land classification, however, does not differentiate between sub-grades 3a and 3b.

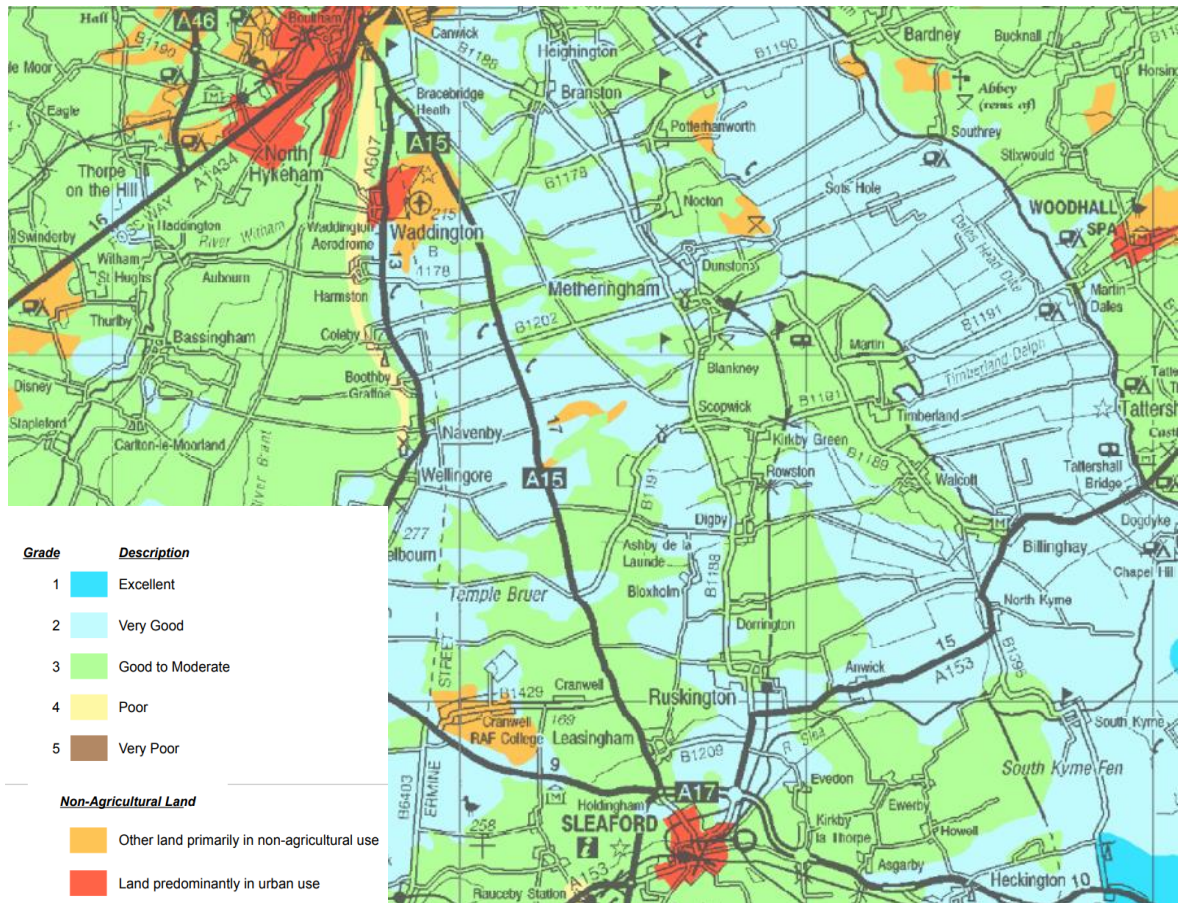


Figure 1: Natural England Provisional ALC Map extract (East Midlands)

3.3.23. When looking at the Site in a wider context, it can be shown that:

- Natural England estimate that 42% of agricultural land in England is of BMV quality; and
- Across Lincolnshire, the proportion of BMV rises to 71.2%.

3.3.24. Consideration was given as to whether alternative land could be found with less impacts to agricultural land in proximity to the OHLs. However, from the research and the map shown in Figure 1 above, the same type of grading is surrounding the Site and demonstrates that there are not many areas, if any, that could have less of an impact when looking for a parcel of land the size Springwell requires. In the context of the location of the Proposed Development and the surrounding land type characteristics, the provisional Defra mapping, as displayed in Figure 1 above, shows Grade 2 land is in general abundance in areas adjacent to the Site, notably a large swathe to the east within the River Witham's flood plain and either side of the A15, north of Metherringham and narrower stretch running south from adjacent Scopwick to Ruskington. Further south-east towards Boston and the east coast, the Defra mapping shows a predominance of Grade 1 land. It is notable that much of the West Burton to Bicker Fen 400kV, particularly, east of Springwell falls on predominantly higher grade land, with a mixture of Grade 2 and Grade 3 as the line moves north-west past Navenby.

- 3.3.25. The Site was considered favourable because it was identified as predominantly Grade 3 on the provisional Defra mapping, offering the potential for Grade 3b land subject to further survey, with areas of Grade 2. This was also supplemented by initial conversations with the landowners over the quality and viability of the Site for agriculture.
- 3.3.26. While EN-3 does not prohibit the use of BMV and recognises that Nationally Significant scale solar is likely to include some agricultural land, the preference is that poorer quality land is prioritised. The Applicant has sought to identify available land of lower grade adjacent the West Burton to Bicker Fen 400kV line which met the project objectives; however, as the provisional mapping demonstrates, there is an abundance of both Grade 3 and Grade 2 land in relative proximity to the Proposed Development and that in order to deliver the proposed capacity, not only is it likely that a significant percentage of BMV land would be required, but that the Site represents a better than characteristic snapshot of the predominating land mix, and certainly significantly less BMV than the county wide mix of ALC grades. EN-3 states at paragraph 2.10.29, applicants should avoid the use of BMV "where possible", and that is what the Applicant has achieved in its site selection process.
- 3.3.27. On that basis, the Proposed Development has taken the approach that is consistent with the EN-3 where it discusses that development on BMV agricultural land is not prohibited but recognition for the choice of site, noting there was no other suitable land, needs to be noted in the application.

Accessibility

- 3.3.28. EN-3 advises that *"Applicants will need to consider the suitability of the access routes to the proposed site for both the construction and operation of the solar farm"*.
- 3.3.29. Accessibility to land was one of the Applicant's original search criteria (as per para. 4.1.13). Sites were required to have a strong link to the strategic road network which to enable delivery of a project without the need for significant new highway infrastructure and subsequent potential environmental impacts.
- 3.3.30. The Proposed Development lies in an area of high accessibility by the road network. It is accessible from the A15, a major arterial road running north - south through Lincolnshire and beyond. The rural road network is strong and is capable of providing good access to the available land which is not immediately accessible from the A15. It is considered that from an accessibility perspective the Site performs well and contains the relevant infrastructure from which it would be possible to develop a large scale solar farm.

Environmental Constraints

- 3.3.31. The Applicant also had regard to several important environmental considerations when determining the location of the Proposed Development.

- 3.3.32. A key principle in the site search was to seek to avoid areas of particular environmental and landscape sensitivity in order to avoid or minimise potential adverse impacts, as part of the application of the mitigation hierarchy. This is both from a natural and built environment perspective, including matters such as ecology and biodiversity, landscape, water resources and cultural heritage. On a site of the size of Springwell it is, however, not possible to avoid all designations and/or assets. The approach taken was therefore effectively on a sliding scale, in the first instance seeking to avoid designations of highest sensitivity, such as SPA and SACs, as well as those at National scale (including National Landscapes, SSSIs, Grade I Listed Buildings) and Regional/Local. In this regard Springwell performs well as:
- it is not covered by any statutory ecological designations and there are 4 local wildlife sites within the boundary
 - no ancient woodland within the site boundary
 - majority of the site is within Flood Zone 1
 - Site predominantly falls outside of any Source Protection Zone
 - One Grade II listed milepost within the site boundary (by reason of location on land adjacent the A15 required to deliver the Proposed Development), one Conservation Area partly within the Site (by reason of improvements to adjacent PRoW) and adjacent one Conservation Area (where no impact is predicted)
- 3.3.33. In terms of flood risk, none of the sites identified were identified as showing high risk in relation to flooding i.e. the vast majority of all sites was shown to be in Flood Zone 1 with smaller areas of higher risk in each instance. The characteristics of each site relating to flooding were even and so flood risk did not become a determining factor during site selection.
- 3.3.34. It was therefore considered that the Site presented an appropriate location in terms of the lack of environmental constraints.

Summary of Findings

- 3.3.35. Section 2 of this report provides the policy framework and the Applicant's general approach to site selection and, where relevant, details relating to compliance with policy. Section 3 has reported on the detail of the site selection process itself based on its project objectives. It has responded directly to the key policy requirements and tests. It demonstrates that the Applicant has followed a logical and robust process in determining the location for the Proposed Development from the selection of an appropriate region within the UK to focus an initial search on to the reasoning for seeking consent on land which is subject to this Application.
- 3.3.36. In consideration of the merits of the Applicant's approach it is important to reiterate the context of the relevant NPS policy. Paragraph 4.3.9 of EN-1 states that it is not for the SoS to establish whether the proposed project represents the best option from a policy perspective. Further at 4.2.24, EN-1 states that the SoS should not refuse an application for development on one site simply because fewer adverse impacts would result from developing similar infrastructure on another suitable site and should have

regard as appropriate to the possibility that all suitable sites for energy infrastructure of the type proposed may be needed for future proposals".

3.3.37. The Applicant considers it has demonstrated that its site selection process is robust and that the location of the proposed development is suitable from a policy perspective. The Site was selected because it presents the physical characteristics which are highly supportive in terms of the ability to deliver a NSIP scale solar development. The Site:

- has a grid connection offer which will see energy transported to the national transmission network by 2030
- lies within an area of suitable irradiance and favourable topography
- includes a proportion of BMV land which is characteristic of the predominating mix in the general locality and less than the Lincolnshire average
- has sufficient land to enable the grid connection offer to be maximised while maintaining sufficient offsets to sensitive residential receptors
- is located away from key environmental and cultural heritage related designations
- is on land which is available and may be voluntarily acquired with a single landowner enabling efficiencies in delivery
- is accessible from the road network and has suitable access to land not immediately adjacent the strategic road network

3.3.38. The Applicant therefore considers that it has demonstrated compliance with the relevant site selection criteria set out in EN-1 and EN-3.

Appendix 2 - Mineral Safeguarding Report



1. Introduction

1.1. Background to the Proposed Development

- 1.1.1. This Minerals Assessment has been prepared on behalf of Springwell Solar Farm Limited (the 'Applicant') in relation to an application for a Development Consent Order (the 'Application') to be made to the Secretary of State (SoS) for Energy Security and Net Zero of the United Kingdom, pursuant to the Planning Act 2008 (PA 2008).
- 1.1.2. The Order Limits for the Proposed Development are shown on drawing **Location, Order Limits and Grid Coordinates Plan [EN010149/APP/2.1]**, which is approximately 1,280 hectares (ha) of land within North Kesteven District Council (NKDC) and Lincolnshire County Council (LCC).
- 1.1.3. The DCO application is a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) for the construction, operation and maintenance, and decommissioning of a solar photo-voltaic (PV) modules electricity generating facility with a total capacity exceeding 50 megawatts (MW) and export connection to the National Grid (the 'Proposed Development').
- 1.1.4. The design of the Proposed Development has evolved throughout the environmental assessment process to avoid or minimise environmental effects and in response to consultation and engagement feedback, where appropriate. The location of the Proposed Development is shown in **ES Volume 2, Figure 1.1: Location Plan [EN010149/APP/6.2]** and described in **ES Volume 1, Chapter 2: Location of the Proposed Development [EN010149/APP/6.1]**, with the consideration of alternatives and the evolution of the design of the Proposed Development presented in **ES Volume 1, Chapter 4: Reasonable Alternatives Considered [EN010149/APP/6.1]**.
- 1.1.5. The area subject to the DCO Application (the Order Limits) where the Proposed Development will be carried out is shown as the Order Limits. The principal components of the Proposed Development include:
 - Solar PV development including;
 - Ground-mounted Solar PV generating station. The generating station will include Solar PV modules and mounting structures;
 - Balance of Solar System (BoSS), which comprises inverters, transformers, and switchgear;
 - 400kV Grid Connection Corridor to connect the Springwell Substation and proposed National Grid Navenby Substation;
 - Satellite Collector Compounds comprising switchgear, transformers, ancillary equipment and operation, maintenance, security and welfare units;
 - A project substation (the 'Springwell Substation') compound, which will include substation, main collector compound, switching and control equipment, office/control/welfare/security buildings, storage areas, and provisions for vehicular parking and material laydown;
 - Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) compound, including batteries and associated inverters, transformers, switchgear and ancillary equipment and their containers, enclosures, monitoring systems, air conditioning, electrical

cables, fire safety infrastructure and operation, maintenance, security and welfare facilities;

- Underground cabling will connect the Solar PV modules and BESS compound to the BoSS, collector compounds, and the Springwell Substation.
- Ancillary infrastructure works, including boundary treatments, security equipment, earthing devices, fencing, lighting, earthworks, surface water management, internal tracks and any other works identified as necessary to enable the development;
- Landscaping, habitat management, biodiversity enhancement and amenity improvements; and
- Works to facilitate vehicular access to the Site.

1.1.6. The Project will be determined pursuant to section 104 of the PA 2008. On 17 January 2024, the Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (NPS EN-1), the NPS for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (NPS EN-3) and the NPS for Electricity Networks Infrastructure (NPS EN-5) came into force. These are the relevant National Policy Statements that affect the DCO application for the Project.

1.1.7. While the relevant NPSs are the primary basis for decisions on applications for development consent, the SoS may consider other matters important and relevant to decision-making, such as the development plan policies of the 'Host' local authorities.

1.1.8. This MSA has, therefore, been prepared with regard to NPS EN-1, NPS EN-3, NPS EN-5, and important and relevant considerations such as the Lincolnshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan Core Strategy and Development Management Policies DPD.

1.2. Minerals Context

1.2.1. Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) is the Minerals Planning Authority relevant to the area of the development boundary within the North Kesteven District.

1.2.2. The Order Limits is partially within areas that have been allocated by LCC as Mineral Safeguarding Areas (MSAs). Development within the MSAs is subject to the requirements of relevant Minerals policies, discussed further in Section 2. This includes a requirement to prepare a Minerals Assessment.

1.2.3. Consultation has been held with LCC with regard to the scope of the Minerals Assessment.

1.3. Purpose of the Report

1.3.1. The purpose of this Minerals Assessment is to address the requirement of national and local policies relating to Minerals and provides an assessment of the impact of the Proposed Development on the safeguarded minerals resource. The report is structured as follows:

- Section 2 provides a review of relevant national and local minerals policies;
- Section 3 provides an assessment of impact of the Proposed Development on minerals resource; and
- Section 4 presents the conclusions of the assessment.

2. Minerals Policy Review

- 2.1.1. The Proposed Development constitutes a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) development in accordance with the Planning Act 2008 (PA 2008), as it comprises:

The construction or extension of a generating station (Part 3, Section 14(1)(a) of the PA 2008) with a generating capacity of more than 50MW (Part 3, Section 15(2)(c)).

- 2.1.2. The Proposed Development will be determined pursuant to section 104 of PA 2008. On 17 January 2024, NPS EN-1, NPS EN-3, and NPS EN-5 came into force. These NPSs are the relevant National Policy Statements that affect the DCO application for the Project.
- 2.1.3. Paragraph 5.11.19 of NPS EN-1 states, "Applicants should safeguard any mineral resources on the proposed site as far as possible, taking into account the long-term potential of the land use after any future decommissioning has taken place".
- 2.1.4. While the relevant NPSs are the primary basis for decisions on applications for development consent, the SoS may consider other matters important and relevant to decision-making, such as the development plan policies of the "Host" local authority.
- 2.1.5. The relevant mineral safeguarding policies are contained within the Lincolnshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan Core Strategy and Development Management Policies DPD, adopted in June 2016.

2.2. National Policy Statements

Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1) (November 2023)

- 2.2.1. The Overarching NPS for Energy (EN-1) (November 2023), sets out the current national policy for delivering NSIP energy infrastructure in England and Wales.
- 2.2.2. NPS EN-1 Paragraph 5.11.19 states: '*Applicants should safeguard any mineral resources on the proposed site as far as possible, taking into account the long-term potential of the land use after any future decommissioning has taken place.*'
- 2.2.3. Paragraph 5.11.28 states: '*Where a proposed development has an impact upon a Mineral Safeguarding Area (MSA), appropriate mitigation measures to safeguard mineral resources should be put in place to safeguard mineral resources.*'

National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3) (November 2023)

- 2.2.4. The Revised NPS EN-3, published by the Department for Energy Security & Net Zero in November 2023, introduces a new section (Section 2.10) on solar photovoltaic generation. This section recognises that Solar Farms are one of the most established renewable electricity technologies in the UK and the cheapest form of electricity generation worldwide. There are no specific references to mineral safeguarding in NPS EN-3.

2.3. National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (December 2023)

- 2.3.1. Paragraph 215 of the NPPF highlights that 'it is essential that there is a sufficient supply of minerals to provide the infrastructure, buildings, energy and goods that the country needs. Since minerals are a finite natural resource, and can only be worked where they are found, best use needs to be made of them to secure their long-term conservation.'
- 2.3.2. To meet this objective, Paragraph 216 of the NPPF sets out that Minerals planning authorities (MPAs) should safeguard mineral resources by defining MSAs. Minerals planning authorities (MPAs) should also adopt appropriate policies so that known locations of specific minerals resources of local and national importance are not sterilised by non-mineral development, where this should be avoided. In addition, MPAs should set out policies to encourage the prior extraction of minerals, where practical and environmentally feasible, if it is necessary for non-mineral development to take place; and should safeguard existing, planned and potential sites for: 'the bulk transport, handling and processing of minerals; the manufacture of concrete and concrete products; and the handling, processing and distribution of substitute, recycled and secondary aggregate material' (para. 216(e) NPPF 2023).

2.4. National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

Minerals PPG (2014)

- 2.4.1. The Minerals PPG (2014) confirms that minerals 'make an essential contribution to the Country's prosperity and quality of life'. Paragraph 007 of the Minerals PPG states that: "Mineral planning authorities are encouraged to plan for minerals extraction using Ordnance Survey-based proposals maps and relevant evidence provided by the minerals industry and other appropriate bodies... This approach will allow mineral planning authorities to highlight areas where mineral extraction is expected to take place, as well as managing potentially conflicting objective for use of land."

2.5. Local Policy

Lincolnshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan Core Strategy and Development Management Policies DPD (June 2016)

- 2.5.1. The Lincolnshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan consists of two parts:
- Core Strategy and Development Management Policies (June 2016): This outlines the principles for the future winning and working of minerals and the form of waste management. It also provides the criteria under which we consider minerals and waste development applications.
 - Site Locations (adopted December 2017): This includes specific proposals and policies for the provision of land for mineral and waste.
- 2.5.2. Figure 1 of the Lincolnshire Minerals and Waste Core Strategy and Development Management Policies identifies the MSAs for sand and gravel, limestone and blown sand. This is reproduced in **Annex 1 – Proposed Development location within Mineral Safeguarding Area**.
- 2.5.3. Policy M11 'Safeguarding of mineral resources' seeks to protect MSAs from permanent sterilisation by other development. Applications for non-minerals

development in an MSA must be accompanied by a Minerals Assessment. Where proposed development in MSAs will not sterilise mineral resources or prevent future minerals extraction on neighbouring land, planning permission will be granted when: demonstrating that the development could not reasonably be sited elsewhere;

- *'The applicant can demonstrate to the MPA that prior extraction of the mineral would be impracticable and that the development could not be reasonably sited elsewhere; or*
- *The incompatible development is of a temporary nature and can be completed and the site restored to a condition that does not inhibit extraction within the timescale that the mineral is likely to be needed; or*
- *There is an overriding need for the development to meet local economic needs, and the development could not reasonably be sited elsewhere; or*
- *The development is of a minor nature which would have a negligible impact with respect to sterilising the mineral resource; or*
- *The development is, or forms part of, an allocation in the Development Plan'.*

2.5.4. Figure 1 of the Site Locations document comprises the Site Locations Policies Map (reproduced in **Annex 1 – Proposed Development location within Mineral Safeguarding Area**). This identifies the allocated minerals sites within LCC.

2.5.5. Policy M12 'Safeguarding of Existing Mineral Sites and Associated Minerals Infrastructure' seeks to protect existing 'Mineral Sites (excluding dormant sites) and associated Minerals infrastructure that supports the supply of minerals in the County will be safeguarded against development that would unnecessarily sterilise the sites and infrastructure or prejudice or jeopardise their use by creating incompatible land uses nearby.'

2.5.6. LCC recently undertook an in-depth review of the Lincolnshire Minerals and Waste Plan to assess whether its policies remain relevant and effective, and it was concluded that the plan should be updated as a whole. LCC are currently at an early stage of preparation for the new Minerals and Waste Local Plan. A consultation on the issues and options for updating the plan, along with a call for sites exercise, was undertaken from 28 June 2022 - 12 August 2022. Following this consultation, the mineral and waste local plan was updated based on the feedback from the previous issues and options consultation (June to August 2022) and the latest evidence. The Lincolnshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan, the preferred approach for updating the plan (July 2024), was consulted from 30 July 2024 to 24 September 2024.

Review of the Lincolnshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan (Feb 2021 and July 2024)

2.5.7. It should be noted that the plan review has demonstrated that Policy M11, in its current form, does not provide a practical or efficient approach to safeguarding mineral resources. The review states that the policy would, therefore, benefit from being updated. The policy is generating too many consultations that fall within the exemptions to the policy and could be considered too extensive in terms of the areas covered. The updated policy, as set out in policy SM15: Safeguarding of Mineral Resource, is taken from the approach adopted in the

local plans of the District, Borough, and City to ensure consistency. Policy SM15 has been drafted with the intention and purpose of the current policy M11.

2.6. Industry Guidance

Mineral Safeguarding in England: Good Practice Advice, British Geological Survey Open Report OR/11/046 (2011)

- 2.6.1. The Planning Practice Guidance (Paragraph: 003 Reference ID: 27-003-20140306) makes reference to the Mineral Safeguarding in England: Good Practice Advice for detailed advice on mineral safeguarding.
- 2.6.2. The Good Practice Advice guidance states that an MSA neither precludes other forms of development permitted nor conveys any presumption that the mineral will be worked. MSAs simply provide a policy tool which will be alert to the fact that minerals may be sterilised by the proposed non-mineral development and that this should be taken into account in the planning process.

3. Assessment of the Impact of the Proposed Development on Mineral Resources

- 3.1.1. This section identifies the mineral-related policy allocations relevant to the Order Limits. It considers the potential for the Proposed Development to impact on the supply of mineral reserves following a review of the local policy on landbanks. It then considers the potential impact of the Proposed Development on safeguarded minerals in line with policy requirements protecting MSAs.
- 3.1.2. The National Planning Policy Framework requires local authorities to define mineral safeguarding areas to protect the known locations of specific minerals from sterilisation. The local authority must also define mineral consultation areas based on the safeguarding areas. In this case Lincolnshire County Council has identified that the Scheme is within a Mineral Safeguarding Area (MSA) for sand and gravel. They advise that the potential sterilisation of mineral resources should therefore be addressed through a minerals assessment as part of the ES.

3.2. Minerals allocations relevant to the Order Limits

- 3.2.1. The relevant policies are retained within the Lincolnshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan Core Strategy and Development Management Policies DPD, June 2016 (Figure 1: Lincolnshire Mineral Safeguarding Areas Map), Appendix 1. It should be noted that the mapping in the Minerals Planning Authorities plans is provided at a relatively low resolution. As such, the accuracy of the boundaries for the MSAs shown in **Annex 1 – Proposed Development location within Mineral Safeguarding Area** may be affected.
- 3.2.2. Parts of the Order Limits are located within an MSA, and the Proposed Development is located on this land within the North Kesteven District (as allocated by the Lincolnshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan Core Strategy; see **Annex 1**). This MSA is designated for Limestone, and it extends in a north-south direction across the whole of Lincolnshire.

3.3. Impact on the supply of minerals

- 3.3.1. Consideration is given to the availability of permitted reserves of minerals in Lincolnshire in order to assess whether the Proposed Development may prevent a sufficient supply of minerals from coming forward.
- 3.3.2. A landbank is a stock of planning permissions for mineral extraction. The government requires MPAs to have landbanks for aggregates and raw industrial minerals such as limestone and clay for cement manufacture.
- 3.3.3. Landbanks are principally a monitoring tool to provide an early indication of possible disruption to the provision of an adequate and steady supply of minerals in the county and indicate when new permissions are likely to be needed. Government policy requires provision to be made for the maintenance of landbanks of at least 10 years for crushed rock and provision of a stock of permitted reserves to support the maintenance of cement production of at least 15 years for cement primary and secondary materials to maintain an existing plant.

3.4. Lincolnshire Landbank

3.4.1. The Lincolnshire Local Aggregates Assessment (July 2023) reported that there should be sufficient sand and gravel resources to last beyond the LMWLP period, which extends to the end of 2031.

3.4.2. In respect of limestone, the LAA reported the following:

'In 2022 there were 15 limestone quarries in the county (excluding dormant sites and sites that exclusively produce building stone), but five were either inactive or only produced non-aggregate that year. Sales of limestone aggregate amounted to 1.502mt, significantly higher than the 10-year average (0.967mt). There has been some sustained growth in sales, indicated by the three-year average sales figure which at 1.355mt represents a 37.9% increase over the 10-year average. This more recent increase in sales appears to have been in part driven by an increase in exports, evidenced by the sales distribution data recorded in 2019 that shows that up to 48% (0.69mt) of aggregates may have been exported from the county.

To reflect the higher level of demand, the method for calculating the landbank will continue to be calculated using the last 3-years average sales as opposed to the 10-year sales average. Using this approach, the permitted reserves of limestone (15.653mt) at the end of 2022 provides a landbank of 11.550 years. These reserves should last beyond the period of the Lincolnshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan.

There were two active chalk quarries in the county (excluding dormant and suspended sites) and one inactive site. To respect the confidentiality of information provided for chalk sales, annual sales information cannot be published. Furthermore, due to the limited data available it is not possible to calculate the landbank. However, with estimated reserves of 1.415mt, the landbank for this low quality aggregate with limited uses is likely to be over 10years and will probably last for the duration of the current plan period. No sites have been allocated for the extraction of chalk in the LMWLP.

3.5. Site-specific Minerals Safeguarding Sites

3.5.1. Two existing mineral sites adjoin the proposed development boundary, which are safeguarded by Policy M12: Safeguarding of Existing Mineral Sites and Associated Minerals Infrastructure. This includes a 250-metre buffer zone around the sites, as shown below in Figure 1 and Figure 2. This is to protect the sites' existing operation and any future use of land or associated infrastructure identified for mineral use.

Braucewell Quarry

3.5.2. The Braucewell Quarry directly adjoins Springwell West, is accessed off Long Lane, and is surrounded by mature trees. The Quarry is an active Lincolnshire Mineral Site, which is commodity limestone. Braucewell Quarry has been granted permission to extract 200,000 tonnes of Limestone aggregate a year and has an end date of 2042.

Figure 1 – Braucewell Quarry Site Specific Minerals Safeguarding Area

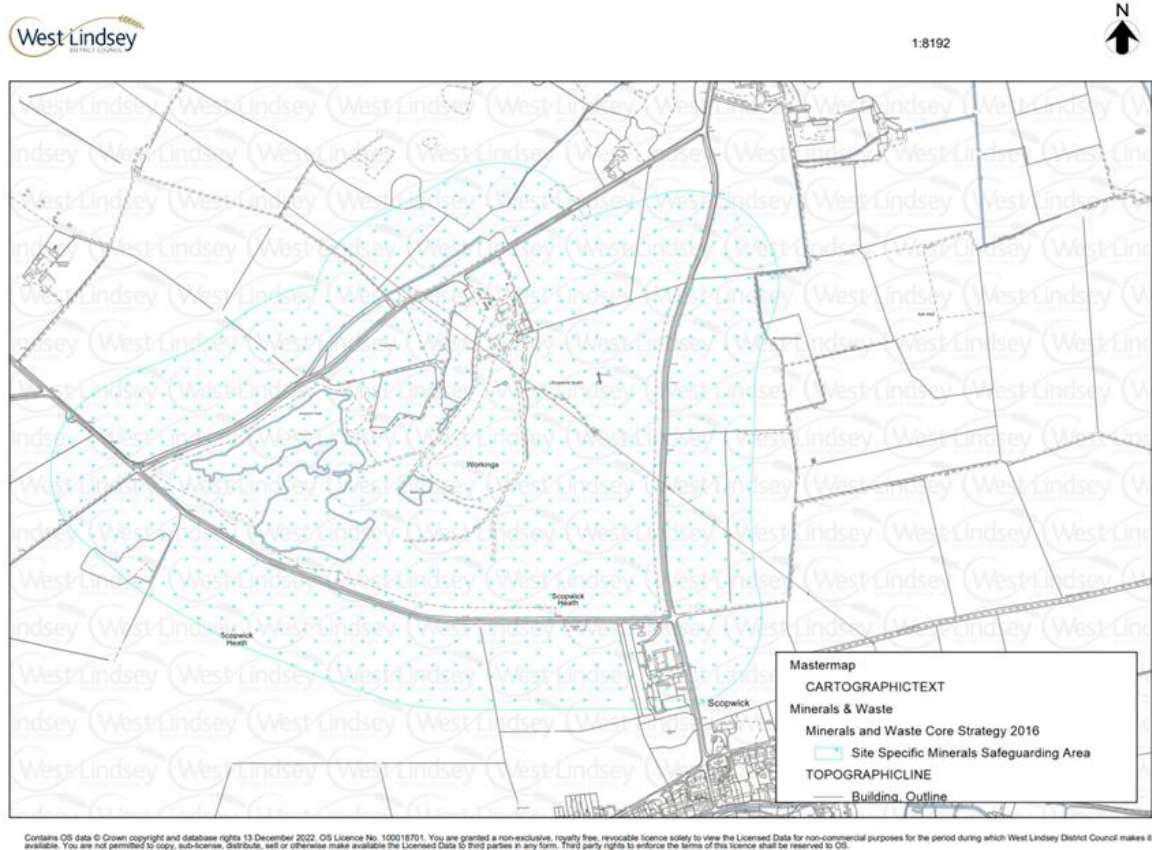


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Longwood Quarry

3.5.3. The Longwood Quarry adjoin Springwell East separated by the B1188, the site is accessed off Long Wood Lane and is surrounded by mature vegetation. The Quarry is an active Lincolnshire Mineral Site, which is commodity limestone.

Figure 2 – Longwood Quarry Site specific Minerals Safeguarding Area



3.5.4. As stated above, Brauncwell Quarry directly adjoins Springwell West, and Longwood Quarry adjoins Springwell East separated by the B1188. Both quarries are safeguarded by Policy M12, which includes a 250m Site-Specific Minerals Safeguarding buffer zone around the site, as shown in figures above and Appendix 1. The majority of the proposed land use within the Site-Specific Minerals Safeguarding buffer is proposed areas for Green Infrastructure, which will not impact the operation of either site. Along the north boundary of the Brauncwell Quarry, the proposed land use is for Solar PV Development. This form of development would not sterilise limestone mineral resources or impact its operations of the Quarry. The Proposed Development is of a reversible nature, and after 40 years, the land will be returned to its existing use. With the potential for the existing mineral sites to expand if permitted, the limestone mineral resources are not sterilised or jeopardised by the adjoining proposed land use.

3.6. Impact on Safeguarding Resource

3.6.1. As outline above, the Order Limits are located in part within MSAs. Paragraph 21604 of the NPPF as well as LCC’s Policies M11 and M12 require that

development must not permanently sterilise mineral resource in MSAs, plus ensuring that existing mineral sites and associated infrastructure are safeguarded to allow continues operational on site without constraints or impacts.

- 3.6.2. In addition to requiring developers to demonstrate that it will not sterilise minerals resources, Policy M11 also outlines further criteria where development impacting an MSA would be considered acceptable. The criteria include:
- demonstrating that prior extraction of the mineral would be impracticable and that the development could not be reasonably sited elsewhere;
 - or demonstrating that the development is temporary in nature and that the site can be restored to a condition that does not inhibit extraction within the timescale that the mineral is likely to be needed;
 - or demonstrating an overriding need for the development to meet local economic needs, and the development could not reasonably be sited elsewhere.
- 3.6.3. The Proposed Development is of a temporary nature and will be decommissioned after 40 years per phase. Therefore, the site will be restored to its current condition, allowing the ability to extract the minerals if needed after the operation of the Solar Farm.
- 3.6.4. The section below outlines how the Proposed Development can demonstrate that it will not sterilise mineral resources and demonstrate that it meets the additional criteria of Policy M11 and M12.

3.7. Sterilisation of Minerals Resource

- 3.7.1. This section outlines in detail how the Proposed Development will not result in the sterilisation of mineral resources designated under an MSA.
- 3.7.2. The Proposed Development is reservable and will not permanently sterilise resources or hinder future extraction, as the Solar PV Development can be removed and the land restored to its former use following its operational life.
- 3.7.3. The Proposed Development is expected to be operational for at least 40 years. Following this period, it will require decommissioning. This will involve removing all of the Solar PV infrastructure, including the Ground-Mounted Solar PV Generating Stations, Collector Compounds, Springwell Substation, BESS, and ancillary infrastructure, including any on-site compounds.
- 3.7.4. Therefore, the development will be decommissioned in the future, and any impacts caused by the Proposed Development related to land use are considered reversible and can be managed through a Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan, which is likely to be part of the application and used as a commitment once operation ceases.
- 3.7.5. For the purposes of assessing decommissioning with the ES, it has been assumed that the Proposed Development would take place at the end of the 40 years per phase.
- 3.7.6. As stated above, the Proposed Development is reservable by nature and, therefore, is in accordance with all relevant criteria with policies M11 and M12 of the Lincolnshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan Core Strategy and Development Management Policies DPD.

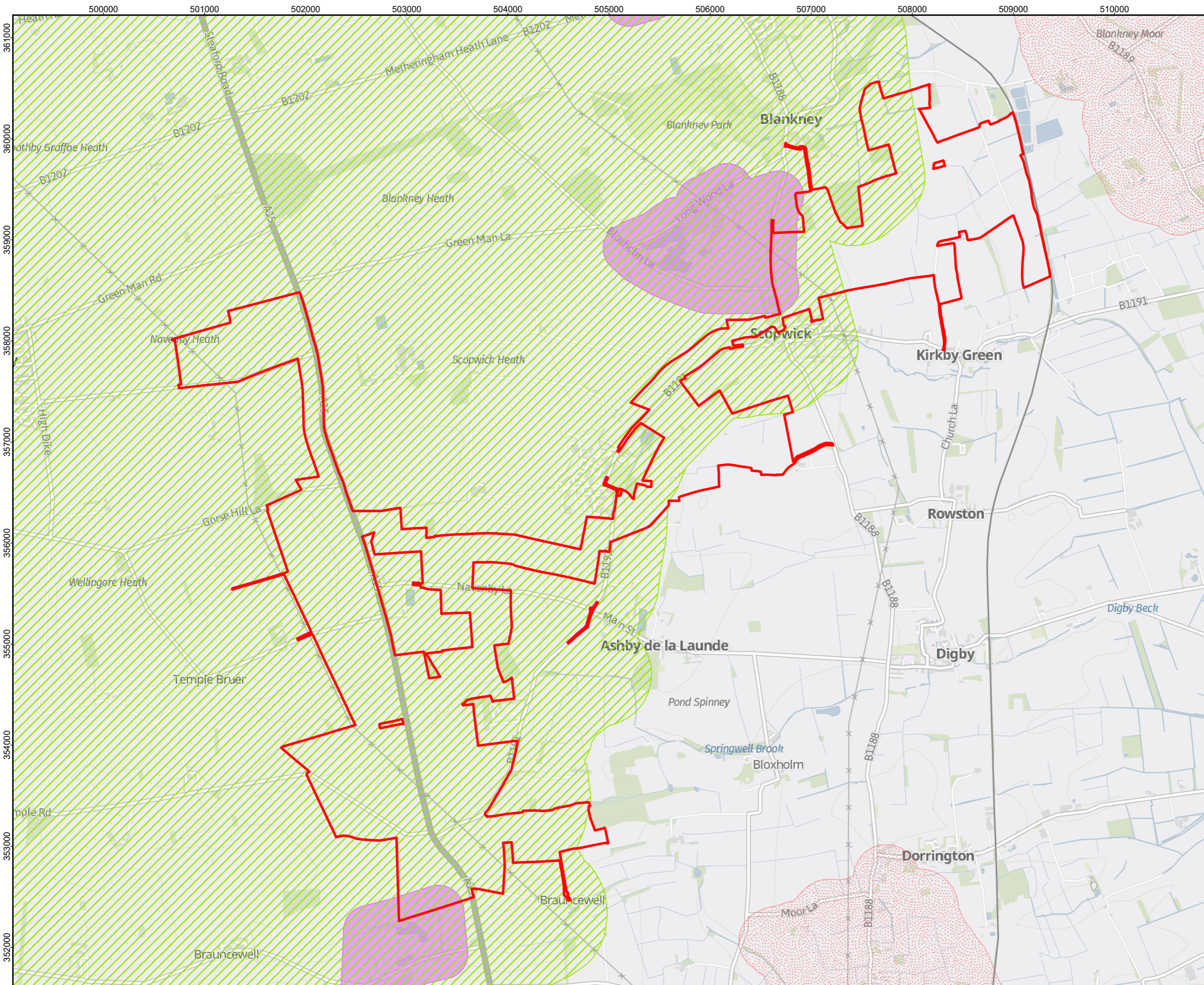
3.8. Need for Development and Site Selection

- 3.8.1. The **Statement of Need [EN010149/APP/7.1]** accompanying the DCO Application sets out a detailed case for why the Proposed Development is urgently required, concluding that it will be a critical part of the UK's portfolio of renewable energy generation, and required to decarbonise its energy supply quickly and provide secure and affordable energy supplies.
- 3.8.2. The **Site Selection Report in Appendix 1 to the Planning Statement [EN010149/APP/7.2]** provides an overview of the site selection process undertaken to identify the development site and presents the reason why the Proposed Development and Order Limits are located in this particular location. Section 3 of the **Planning Statement [EN010149/APP/7.2]** gives an overview of the principles and the technical and environmental requirements of a large-scale solar farm development project that have guided the site selection. Both demonstrate that there are limitations and external factors influencing the siting of the Proposed Development including the availability of a suitable grid connection with sufficient capacity, suitable topography of the land and a generally sparse settlement patterns once those criteria are met, meaning that there is opportunity to develop this site to a sufficient scale to deliver meaningful contributions towards meeting net-zero.

3.9. Summary of the Impact on Safeguarded Resource

- 3.9.1. As outlined above, the Proposed Development will be decommissioned after 40 years per phase, and any impacts caused by the Proposed Development related to land use are considered reversible and temporary. The minerals within the Order Limits will not be permanently sterilised, and post-decommissioning, the land could be worked for minerals.
- 3.9.2. This would involve the removal of all of the Solar PV infrastructure, including the Ground Mounted Solar PV Generating Stations, Collector Compounds, Springwell Substation, BESS and ancillary infrastructure, including any on-site compounds. All concrete, hardstanding areas, foundations for the infrastructure and any internal tracks will be removed to a depth of up to 1m. All the below-ground cables will be left in situ.
- 3.9.3. This decommissioning will include removing any permissive paths and the land will be returned to the landowner. Landscape structural planting, including tree planting, hedgerows, scrub, etc., created to deliver biodiversity mitigation and enhancement associated with the Proposed Development would be left in situ when the Site is handed back to landowners.
- 3.9.4. Therefore, the landowner has the right to use their land as they would now and any minerals would not be permanently sterilised and would be available to exploit if required at a future date. The minerals within the Order limits will not be permanently sterilised, and post-decommissioning, the land could be worked for minerals. The Proposed Development is reservable by nature, and therefore there is not considered to be any conflict with the mineral safeguarding policies.
- 3.9.5. The DCO Application demonstrates an overwhelming need for this Proposed Development and that the development could not reasonably be sited elsewhere, in line with paragraph 5.11.19 of NPS EN-1, the requirements of Policy M11 of the Lincolnshire Minerals and Waste Core Strategy and Development Management Policies.

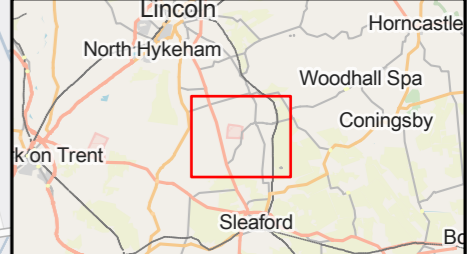
3.9.6. In light of the above, it is considered that the Proposed Development is in accordance with the NPS, NPPF and Local Mineral planning policies.



LEGEND:

- Order Limits
- Limestone MSA
- Sand & Gravel MSA
- Site Specific MSA

Coordinate System: British National Grid
 Projection: Transverse Mercator
 Datum: OSGB 1936
 Units: Meter



Rev	Date	Description	Drn	Chk	App
01	Nov 2024	DCO Submission	RSK	RSK	EDF

Springwell Solar Farm



DOCUMENT: MINERAL SAFEGUARDING ASSESSMENT REGULATION 5(2)(q)

TITLE:
 APPENDIX 1 - PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT LOCATION WITHIN MINERAL SAFEGUARDING AREA

PINS REFERENCE NUMBER:
 EN010149/APP/7.2

Scale: 1:35,000 @ A3

REV 01

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Appendix 3 - Policy Compliance Assessment Tables



Springwell Solar Farm

Table 1 Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1) – Table of Compliance

National Policy Statement for Overarching Energy (EN-1)		
Generic Impacts - The generic impacts set out in Part 5 of EN-1 (2023) are considered below.		
Part	EN-1 Policy Text	Assessment
5.2 Air Quality and Emissions <i>Applicant Assessment</i>	5.2.8 Where the project is likely to have adverse effects on air quality the applicant should undertake an assessment of the impacts of the proposed project as part of the ES.	Chapter 6: Air Quality of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] assesses the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development on local air quality. The assessment provides an overview of the existing baseline conditions for the study area, followed by an assessment of likely significant effects arising from the construction, operation (including maintenance), and decommissioning stages of the Proposed Development on air quality.
	5.2.9 The ES should describe: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> existing air quality concentrations and the relative change in air quality from existing levels; any significant air quality effects, mitigation action taken and any residual effects, distinguishing between the project stages and taking account of any significant emissions from any road traffic generated by the project; the predicted absolute emissions, concentration change and absolute concentrations as a result of the 	Chapter 6: Air Quality of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] includes a desk-based review to determine the air quality baseline within the study area. The baseline data sources are sufficient to provide an assessment of potential air quality impacts arising from the Proposed Development and have been agreed upon with North Kesteven District Council and Lincolnshire County Council during technical consultation. Chapter 6: Air Quality of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] provides an assessment of the air quality impacts and potential for likely significant effects due to the construction, operation (including maintenance) and decommissioning stages of the Proposed Development, including those associated with road traffic exhaust emissions.

	<p>proposed project, after mitigation methods have been applied; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> any potential eutrophication impacts. 	<p>The Applicant has committed to the following embedded mitigation measures, which are secured within the Design Commitments [EN010149/APP/7.4] for this topic:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Built development will be offset at least 20m from Local Wildlife Sites except for highways improvement works; Perimeter fencing surrounding the Solar PV development will be offset at least 15m from existing woodlands; and Springwell Substation, BESS, Collector Compounds, Standalone Inverter, Transformer and Switchgear and ITS will be offset at least 250m from residential properties. <p>Based upon the outcomes of the assessment, Section 6.8 of Chapter 6: Air Quality of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] outlines additional mitigation measures to mitigate the air quality impacts of the Proposed Development. Including additional mitigation measures, no significant residual effects were identified. There will be no potential eutrophication impacts.</p> <p>Mitigation measures to be documented within and secured by the Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (oCEMP) [EN010149/APP/7.7], the Outline Operational Environmental Management Plan (oOEMP) [EN010149/APP/7.10], the Outline Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan (oDEMP) [EN010149/APP/7.13] and the Outline Construction Traffic Management Plan (oCTMP) [EN010149/APP/7.8].</p>
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	<p>5.2.10 In addition, applicants should consider the Environment Targets (Fine Particulate Matter) (England) Regulations 2022 and associated Defra guidance.</p>	<p>A qualitative assessment of the likely significant effects of construction and decommissioning phase dust and particulate matter at sensitive receptors have been undertaken following. The Environment Targets (Fine Particulate Matter) (England) Regulations 2023 and Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) Local Air Quality Management Technical Guidance. Three separate potential dust impacts have been considered in Chapter 6: Air Quality of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1]:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annoyance due to dust soiling; • The risk of health effects due to an increase in exposure to PM₁₀; and • Harm to ecological receptors. <p>The effect of construction dust and particulate matter from the Proposed Development on human receptors and designated sites is considered not significant with the implementation of site-specific mitigation measures, which are secured by the oCEMP [EN010149/APP/7.7], the oDEMP [EN010149/APP/7.13] and the oCTMP [EN010149/APP/7.8].</p>
	<p>5.2.11 Defra publishes future national projections of air quality based on estimates of future levels of emissions, traffic, and vehicle fleet. Projections are updated as the evidence base changes and the applicant should ensure these are current at the point of an application. The applicant's assessment should be consistent with this but may include more detailed modelling and</p>	<p>In 2023, the Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP) outlined updates to the PM_{2.5} Air Quality Objective for future years. These are a long-term target of 10 µg/m³ by 2040 and an interim target of 12 µg/m³ by 2028.</p> <p>In 2028, the first anticipated year of operation, Defra predicted background concentrations of PM_{2.5} were between 7.9 – 8.2 µg/m³ across the order limits, which is comfortably below the 12 µg/m³ interim target. No future projections have been made by Defra past 2030, so it is not possible to</p>

<p>evaluation to demonstrate local and national impacts. If an applicant believes they have robust additional supporting evidence, to the extent they could affect the conclusions of the assessment, they should include this in their representations to the Examining Authority along with the source.</p>	<p>consider concentrations up to 2040, when the long-term target of 10 µg/m³ should be achieved. However, there are not expected to be significant sources of PM_{2.5} when the solar farm is operational.</p> <p>At the time of writing there had been no further updates to relevant Air Quality Objectives for other pollutants considered in the Air Quality ES Chapter.</p>
<p>5.2.12 Where a proposed development is likely to lead to a breach of any relevant statutory air quality limits, objectives or targets, or affect the ability of a non-compliant area to achieve compliance within the timescales set out in the most recent relevant air quality plan/strategy at the time of the decision, the applicant should work with the relevant authorities to secure appropriate mitigation measures to ensure that those statutory limits, objectives or targets are not breached.</p>	<p>The Proposed Development would not lead to a breach of any relevant statutory air quality thresholds or affect the ability of a non-compliant area to achieve compliance.</p>
<p>5.2.13 The Secretary of State should consider whether mitigation measures are needed both for operational and construction emissions over and above any which may form part of the project application. A construction management plan may help codify mitigation at this stage. In doing so the Secretary of State should have regard to the Air Quality Strategy in England, or the Clean Air Plan for Wales in Wales, or any</p>	<p>Chapter 6: Air Quality of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] conducts a qualitative assessment of the likely significant effects of construction and decommissioning phase dust and particulate matter at sensitive receptors have been undertaken following the Defra Local Air Quality Management Technical Guidance and PM_{2.5} Target Guidance. The assessment concludes that there are no anticipated significant residual effects on air quality as a result of the Proposed Development.</p>

	<p>successors to these and should consider relevant advice within Local Air Quality Management guidance and PM2.5 targets guidance</p>	<p>Mitigation measures following IAQM guidance are presented in the oCEMP [EN010149/APP/7.7], the oDEMP [EN010149/APP/7.13], and the oCTMP [EN010149/APP/7.8].</p>
	<p>5.2.14 The mitigations identified in Section 5.14 on traffic and transport impacts will help mitigate the effects of air emissions from transport.</p>	<p>When the Proposed Development is operational, activities will be limited to maintenance and the associated transport to the infrastructure elements of the Proposed Development. As planned maintenance will be minimal and would comprise limited planned site visits, the effects associated with operational road traffic exhaust emissions are considered to be not significant in terms of the EIA Regulations.</p> <p>Any effects on air quality from traffic during the construction and decommissioning of the Proposed Development will be temporary (i.e. during the construction/decommissioning period only) and can be suitably controlled by the employment of mitigation measures. Documented within the oCTMP [EN010149/APP/7.8], which has been prepared and is submitted in support of the DCO Application.</p> <p>No specific operational phase mitigation measures are required for road traffic exhaust emissions during operation (including maintenance). Nevertheless, best practice mitigation measures can be considered to further reduce any residual effects on air quality. An oOEMP [EN010149/APP/7.10] has been prepared and is submitted in support of the DCO Application.</p>
<p><i>Secretary of State decision making</i></p>	<p>5.2.15 Many activities involving air emissions are subject to pollution control. The considerations set out in Section 4.12 on the interface between planning and pollution</p>	<p>Air quality impacts on human receptors during the construction phase have been assessed in full and are detailed in Chapter 6: Air Quality of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1]. This assesses potential significant</p>

	<p>control therefore apply. The Secretary of State must also consider duties under other legislation including duties under the Environment Act 2021 in relation to environmental targets and have regard to policies set out in the Government's Environmental Improvement Plan 2023.</p>	<p>effects from the Proposed Development during the construction phase on human receptors.</p> <p>The assessment has identified that the Proposed Development could have the potential to affect human receptors during the construction phase. Therefore, site-specific mitigation measures have been proposed to minimise the impacts of construction dust and exhaust emissions.</p> <p>Any effects on air quality and human receptors during the construction of the Proposed Development can be suitably controlled by the mitigation measures listed within the oCEMP [EN010149/APP/7.7] and oCTMP [EN010149/APP/7.8].</p> <p>Therefore, the residual effects of the Proposed Development on air quality and human receptors during the construction phase following the implementation of additional mitigation measures are considered to be not significant.</p> <p>Embedded mitigation measures for air quality have been detailed in Chapter 6: Air Quality of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1]. This includes the function for each embedded mitigation measure together with the securing mechanism. Relevant embedded mitigation measures include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Built development will be offset at least 20m from Local Wildlife Sites except for highways improvement works
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Perimeter fencing surrounding the Solar PV development will be offset at least 15m from existing woodlands. - Springwell substation, BESS, Collector Compounds, Standalone Inverter, Transformer and Switchgear and ITS will be offset at least 250m from residential properties. <p>These embedded mitigation measures have been established based on the Institute of Air Quality Management (IAQM) Guidance on the Assessment of Dust from Demolition and Construction v2.2 (2024) to minimise the dust and exhaust emission impacts from the Proposed Development.</p> <p>Mitigation measures following IAQM guidance are presented in the oCEMP [EN010149/APP/7.7], the oDEMP [EN010149/APP/7.13], the oOEMP [EN010149/APP/7.10] and the oCTMP [EN010149/APP/7.8].</p>
	<p>5.2.16 The Secretary of State should give air quality considerations substantial weight where a project would lead to a deterioration in air quality. This could for example include where an area breaches any national air quality limits or statutory air quality objectives. However, air quality considerations will also be important where substantial changes in air quality levels are expected, even if this does not lead to any breaches of statutory limits, objectives or targets.</p>	<p>Chapter 6: Air Quality of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] concludes that there are no anticipated significant residual effects on air quality as a result of the Proposed Development.</p> <p>Mitigation measures following IAQM guidance are presented in the oCEMP [EN010149/APP/7.7], the oDEMP [EN010149/APP/7.13], the oOEMP [EN010149/APP/7.10] and the oCTMP [EN010149/APP/7.8].</p>

	<p>5.2.17 The Secretary of State should give air quality considerations substantial weight where a project is proposed near a sensitive receptor site, such as an education or healthcare facility, residential use or a sensitive or protected habitat.</p>	<p>As demonstrated through Figure 6.4: Location of Sensitive Air Quality Receptors, of the ES Volume 2 [EN010149/APP/6.2], the Site is located in a rural area but close to a number of settlements, and as a consequence, there are a large number of high sensitivity receptors in proximity to the Site, such as residential properties, that may be impacted by works associated with the Proposed Development.</p> <p>Seven designated sites, being Local Wildlife Sites (LWSs), have been identified within or adjacent to the Order Limits, comprising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Blankney Brick Pit LWS;• Temple Road Verges, Welbourn to Brauncewell 2 LWS;• A15, Slate House Farm to Dunsby Pit Plantation 1 LWS;• A15, Green Man Road to Cuckoo Lane 2 LWS;• Bloxholm Wood LWS/Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust reserve;• Gorse Hill Lane LWS; and• Navenby Heath Road Verges LWS. <p>Chapter 6: Air Quality of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] concludes that the construction, operation and decommissioning of the Proposed Development will not have a significant effect on air quality. The residual effects of dust and particulate matter emissions during construction and decommissioning and the road traffic exhaust emissions during construction, operation and decommissioning on human receptors and LWSs following the implementation of</p>
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		<p>additional mitigation measures are considered to be not significant.</p>
	<p>5.2.18 Where a project is proposed near to a sensitive receptor site for air quality, if the applicant cannot provide justification for this location, and a suitable mitigation plan, the Secretary of State should refuse consent.</p>	<p>As demonstrated through Figure 6.4: Location of Sensitive Air Quality Receptors, of the ES Volume 2 [EN010149/APP/6.2], the Site is located in a rural area but close to a number of settlements, and as a consequence, there are a large number of high sensitivity receptors in proximity to the Site, such as residential properties, that may be impacted by works associated with the Proposed Development.</p> <p>However, the implementation of mitigation measures identified within the oCEMP [EN010149/APP/7.7], the oOEMP [EN010149/APP/7.10], the oDEMP [EN010149/APP/7.13], and the oCTMP [EN010149/APP/7.8] is expected to prevent any significant impacts on human health from occurring. Residual effects are therefore assessed as being not significant.</p>
	<p>5.2.19 In all cases, the Secretary of State must take account of any relevant statutory air quality limits, objectives and targets. If a project will lead to non-compliance with a statutory limit, objective or target the Secretary of State should refuse consent.</p>	<p>The Proposed Development would not lead to non-compliance with any statutory air quality limit, objective or target.</p>

<p>5.3 Greenhouse Gas Emission <i>Applicant Assessment</i></p>	<p>5.3.4 All proposals for energy infrastructure projects should include a GHG assessment as part of their ES (See Section 4.3). This should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A whole life GHG assessment showing construction, operational and decommissioning GHG impacts, including impacts from change of land use. • An explanation of the steps that have been taken to drive down the climate change impacts at each of those stages. • Measurement of embodied GHG impact from the construction stage. • How reduction in energy demand and consumption during operation has been prioritised in comparison with other measures. • How operational emissions have been reduced as much as possible through the application of best available techniques for that type of technology. • Calculation of operational energy consumption and associated carbon emissions. • Whether and how any residual GHG emissions will be (voluntarily) offset or removed using a recognised framework. 	<p>Chapter 8: Climate of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] presents a greenhouse gas (GHG) assessment over the lifetime of the Proposed Development. It concludes that renewable energy generation from the Proposed Development during the first year of operation is estimated to be between 840,000 – 1,090,000 MWh, and the total energy generation from the proposed 40-year operational life is approximately 35,736,262 MWh. Total operational emissions over the design life of the Proposed Development are estimated at 3,004,796 tCO₂e, which gives a total lifecycle carbon intensity value of 84.1 gCO₂e/kWh.</p> <p>The GHG impact during construction, operation and decommissioning is assessed as having a significant beneficial effect as it will contribute to achieving the rate of transition required by nationally set policy commitments and supporting the trajectory towards net zero.</p> <p>GHG savings as part of the operation of the Proposed Development and the displacement of fossil-fuel-derived electricity within the national electricity network are expected to be considerable.</p> <p>Chapter 8: Climate of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] conducted the GHG assessment of construction emissions by calculating the life cycle emissions for the building materials and systems, accounting for their embodied emissions, construction, maintenance, repair and replacement emissions.</p> <p>Measures have been taken to drive down the climate change at the construction, operation and decommissioning.</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where there are residual emissions, the level of emissions and the impact of those on national and international efforts to limit climate change, both alone and where relevant in combination with other developments at a regional or national level, or sector level, if sectoral targets are developed. 	<p>Operational emissions have been reduced as much as possible through embedded mitigation measures. GHG mitigation measures are outlined in section 8.6 Embedded Mitigation of Chapter 8: Climate of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] which are secured within the oLEMP [EN010149/APP/7.9] and the oCEMP [EN010149/APP/7.7].</p> <p>Embedded Mitigations include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any vegetation cleared for the Proposed Development will be compensated by a planting scheme that equals or exceeds the current levels of vegetation; and Lean design to minimise use of concrete, steel, aggregates, etc. <p>Chapter 8: Climate of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] sets out that the expected emissions of the change in land use from grassland to agriculture following decommissioning are expected to be less than 1% of total emissions and, therefore, are not considered further.</p> <p>Emissions from the construction, operation (including maintenance) and decommissioning of the Proposed Development total 3,004,796tCO₂e, and the operation of the Proposed Development displaces 12.7 million tCO₂e that may have otherwise been emitted from gas-generated electricity. The net GHG savings, compared against equivalent gas-fired electricity generation, are therefore over 9.6 million tonnes of CO₂e. There is an anticipated significant beneficial effect. An oCEMP [EN010149/APP/7.7] and oLEMP [EN010149/APP/7.9] have been prepared to</p>
<i>Migration</i>	<p>5.3.5 A GHG assessment should be used to drive down GHG emissions at every stage of the proposed development and ensure that emissions are minimised as far as possible for the type of technology, taking into account the overall objectives of ensuring our supply of energy always remains secure, reliable and affordable, as we transition to net zero.</p>	

	<p>5.3.6 Applicants should look for opportunities within the proposed development to embed nature-based or technological solutions to mitigate or offset the emissions of construction and decommissioning</p>	<p>accompany the DCO application. These identify a range of mitigation measures that have been embedded into the Proposed Development to limit the GHG impact.</p> <p>Steps taken to minimise and offset emissions are demonstrated within the Green Infrastructure Parameters [EN010149/APP/6.2] and Vegetation Removal Parameters [EN010149/APP/6.2].</p>
<p>5.3.7 Steps taken to minimise and offset emissions should be set out in a GHG Reduction Strategy, secured under the Development Consent Order. The GHG Reduction Strategy should consider the creation and preservation of carbon stores and sinks including through woodland creation, hedgerow creation and restoration, peatland restoration and through other natural habitats.</p>		
<p><i>Secretary of State decision making</i></p>	<p>5.3.8 The Secretary of State must be satisfied that the applicant has as far as possible assessed the GHG emissions of all stages of the development.</p>	<p>Chapter 8: Climate of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] presents a greenhouse gas (GHG) assessment over the lifetime of the Proposed Development.</p> <p>The GHG assessment of construction emissions has calculated the life cycle emissions for the building materials and systems, accounting for their embodied emissions, construction, maintenance, repair and replacement emissions. The total construction GHG emissions are 1,865,557 tCO₂e, with 93% comprising those from the product stages and 7% from construction processes.</p> <p>GHG emissions from the decommissioning phase of the Proposed Development are estimated to total 184,765 tCO₂e. This phase includes emissions from decommissioning fuel use, transport of materials to disposal</p>
	<p>5.3.9 The Secretary of State should be content that the applicant has taken all reasonable steps to reduce the GHG emissions of the construction and decommissioning stage of the development.</p>	
	<p>5.3.10 The Secretary of State should give appropriate weight to projects that embed nature-based or technological processes to mitigate or offset the emissions of</p>	

	<p>construction and decommissioning within the proposed development. However, in light of the vital role energy infrastructure plays in the process of economy wide decarbonisation, the Secretary of State must accept that there are likely to be some residual emissions from construction and decommissioning of energy infrastructure.</p>	<p>sites and emissions associated with recycling and landfill. These emissions are subject to a high level of uncertainty, as the decommissioning conditions cannot be predicted with any confidence 40 years into the future.</p> <p>Renewable energy generation from the Proposed Development during the first year of operation is estimated to be between 840,000 – 1,090,000MWh, and the total energy generation from the proposed 40-year operational life is approximately 35,736,262MWh. Total operational emissions over the design life of the Proposed Development are estimated at 3,004,263tCO₂e, which gives a total lifecycle carbon intensity value of 84.1gCO₂e/kWh.</p> <p>A reasonable, worst-case scenario has been adopted throughout this assessment, including assumptions concerning source countries of components, method of component manufacture, and associated transportation.</p> <p>When assessed against operational emissions, the Proposed Development has an emissions payback period of three years. When assessed against whole lifecycle emissions, the Proposed Development has an emissions payback period of ten years. The payback period of the Proposed Development is included in Chapter 8: Climate of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1]. The GHG impact during construction, operation and decommissioning is assessed as having a significant beneficial effect as it will play a part in achieving the rate of transition required by nationally set policy commitments and supporting the trajectory towards net zero.</p>
	<p>5.3.11 Operational GHG emissions are a significant adverse impact from some types</p>	<p>To assess the GHG savings of the Proposed Development, operational emissions from a Combined Cycle Gas Turbine</p>

	<p>of energy infrastructure which cannot be totally avoided (even with full deployment of CCS technology). Given the characteristics of these and other technologies, as noted in Part 3 of this NPS, and the range of non-planning policies that can be used to decarbonise electricity generation, such as the UK ETS (see Section 2.4), government has determined that operational GHG emissions are not reasons to prohibit the consenting of energy projects or to impose more restrictions on them in the planning policy framework than are set out in the energy NPSs (e.g. the CCR requirements). Any carbon assessment will include an assessment of operational GHG emissions, but the policies set out in Part 2, including the UK ETS, can be applied to these emissions.</p>	<p>have been used as a comparison, as it is currently the most carbon-efficient fossil-fueled technology available. The carbon intensity of a Combined Cycle Gas Turbine is 354 gCO₂e/kWh. So the Proposed Development would emit 270 g fewer CO₂e per kWh than if the same electricity were generated by a gas fired Combined Cycle Gas Turbine, representing savings of 76%. This is not a direct comparison, as the 84.1 gCO₂e/kWh calculated here is a lifecycle carbon intensity value and the carbon intensity of the Combined Cycle Gas Turbine is assumed to represent operational emissions (not including maintenance, replacement and repair of components). As set out in Chapter 8 of the ES in the absence of any more appropriate identified methodology, this assessment considers that this approach, i.e. a comparison to Combined Cycle Gas Turbine emissions, is a robust and appropriate method to understand the level of GHG savings from the Proposed Development.</p>
	<p>5.3.12 Operational emissions will be addressed in a managed, economy-wide manner, to ensure consistency with carbon budgets, net zero and our international climate commitments. The Secretary of State does not, therefore need to assess individual applications for planning consent against operational carbon emissions and their contribution to carbon budgets, net zero and our international climate commitments.</p>	<p>The Proposed Development will provide electricity to the national grid that may otherwise be generated by processes with higher carbon intensities, and the benefit of the Proposed Development, with regards to climate, is to replace the electricity generation from fossil fuels. Therefore, to assess the GHG savings of the Proposed Development, operational emissions from a Combined Cycle Gas Turbine have been used as a comparison, as it is currently the most carbon-efficient fossil-fuelled technology available.</p> <p>In the July 2024 Decision Letter for Gate Burton Energy Park the Secretary of State commented that it considered a Combined Cycle Gas Turbine an inappropriate baseline for</p>

		<p>these comparisons as “<i>2011 NPS EN-1 requires all combustion power stations with a capacity over 300MW to be constructed Carbon Capture Ready</i>”. The future energy baseline is uncertain, and whilst there are requirements for all combustion power stations with a capacity over 300 MW to be constructed to be ‘Carbon Capture Ready’, this does not guarantee the application of carbon capture technology, nor the timeframes to which it may be applied. The need for carbon abatement is immediate and technologies that can do so in the short-term, such as the Proposed Development, play a vital role in the pathway to Net Zero. As such, and in the absence of any more appropriate identified methodology, this assessment maintains that a comparison to Combined Cycle Gas Turbine emissions is a robust and appropriate method to understand the level of GHG savings from the Proposed Development.</p> <p>The carbon intensity of a Combined Cycle Gas Turbine is 354 gCO₂e/kWh, and so the Proposed Development would emit 270 g fewer CO₂e per kWh than if the same electricity were generated by a gas fired Combined Cycle Gas Turbine, representing savings of 76%. This is not a direct comparison, as the 84.1 gCO₂e/kWh calculated here is a lifecycle carbon intensity value and the carbon intensity of the Combined Cycle Gas Turbine is assumed to represent operational emissions (not including maintenance, replacement and repair of components). This results in a conservative assessment of emissions savings for the Proposed Development</p>
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<p>5.4 Biodiversity and Geological Conservation</p> <p><i>Applicant Assessment</i></p>	<p>5.4.17 Where the development is subject to EIA, the applicant should ensure that the ES clearly sets out any effects on internationally, nationally, and locally designated sites of ecological or geological conservation importance (including those outside England), on protected species and on habitats and other species identified as being of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity, including irreplaceable habitats.</p>	<p>The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal in ES Volume 3, Appendix 7.1: Preliminary Ecological Appraisal [EN010149/APP/6.3] sets out all the designated sites of ecological conservation importance; ancient woodland; habitats; protected and notable species; and important ecological features, within the relevant ecological Zone of Influence of the Proposed Development. Section 7.4 of Chapter 7: Biodiversity of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] sets out the identified receptors, including Local Wildlife Sites, which could potentially be affected by the Proposed Development.</p> <p>Section 7.7 of Chapter 7: Biodiversity of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] sets out the potential likely effects on the identified receptors during the construction, operation and decommissioning of the Proposed Development.</p> <p>Following the application of mitigation measures set out in Sections 7.9 of Chapter 7: Biodiversity of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1], no significant adverse effects are effects have been identified during the construction, operation or decommissioning of the Proposed Development. A significant beneficial impact has been identified on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hedgerows and hedgerow trees; • notable arable (non-crop) flora; • county ground-nesting birds: habitat creation and improvement to compensate for habitat loss during construction and additional improvement measures to increase the amount of foraging habitat for birds;
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • wintering birds: habitat creation and improvement to increase foraging and roosting habitat, as well as provision of a variety of bird nest boxes; and • barn owl. <p>Which are secured within the oCEMP [EN010149/APP/7.7], and oLEMP [EN010149/APP/7.9].</p>
	<p>5.4.19 The applicant should show how the project has taken advantage of opportunities to conserve and enhance biodiversity and geological conservation interests.</p>	<p>The Design Approach Document [EN010149/APP/7.3] sets out the Design Evolution of the Proposed Development and how the extent of the Order Limits and area proposed for the development has evolved and reduced over time to reduce impacts on biodiversity.</p>
	<p>5.4.20 Applicants should consider wider ecosystem services and benefits of natural capital when designing enhancement measures.</p>	<p>Chapter 4: Reasonable Alternatives and Chapter 7: Biodiversity of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] explains that the Proposed Development has been designed to avoid all sites statutorily designated for their biodiversity importance and to avoid or minimise impacts on sites that are non-statutorily designated for their biodiversity importance.</p>
	<p>5.4.21 As set out in Section 4.7, the design process should embed opportunities for nature inclusive design. Energy infrastructure projects have the potential to deliver significant benefits and enhancements beyond Biodiversity Net Gain, which result in wider environmental gains (see Section 4.6 on Environmental and Biodiversity Net Gain). The scope of potential gains will be dependent on the type, scale, and location of each project.</p>	<p>Measures embedded within the Proposed Development design will ensure that designated sites are not significantly adversely impacted during construction, operation or decommissioning, and are secured within the Design Commitments [EN010149/APP/7.4], oCEMP [EN010149/APP/7.7], and oLEMP [EN010149/APP/7.9].</p> <p>The minimum offsets from the perimeter fencing surrounding the Solar PV development as set out in Chapter 3: Proposed Development Description and secured within the Design Commitments [EN010149/APP/7.4]. The offsets will apply to existing features within the Order Limits, with the exception of where access tracks, security fencing and/or</p>

		<p>cable routes are required to cross an existing feature. Based on best practices, these offsets have been established as a minimum distance. They will be used to deliver additional planting of diverse habitats to either increase habitat connectivity and structural diversity through combinations of hedgerow, scrub, grass/wildflower planting.</p> <p>In addition to the above, Chapter 7: Biodiversity of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] sets out that the Proposed Development has been designed to avoid key nature conservation and ecological features present within or adjacent to the Order limits. Accordingly, minimum buffers have been applied where practicable, which are secured through Design Commitments [EN010149/APP/7.4]</p> <p>As set out in oLEMP [EN010149/APP/7.9]., the Proposed Development would provide extensive new tree and hedgerow planting and improvement of existing hedgerows by bolstering with a diversity of appropriate native species and 'gapping-up' where required. These will provide a valuable habitat, forming important wildlife corridors and re-enforcing existing ones.</p> <p>The oLEMP [EN010149/APP/7.9] ensures the provision of barn owl nest boxes and a variety of other bird boxes and bat boxes to be installed on trees in key locations to improve nesting and roosting opportunities.</p> <p>The oLEMP [EN010149/APP/7.9] contains details of all ecological mitigation and enhancements.</p> <p>The Proposed Development will meet a minimum 10% BNG, consistent with the terms of Appendix 7.14 of the ES</p>
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		<p>Volume 3, Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment, [EN010149/APP/6.3] and aligned with the proposals in the Outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (oLEMP) [EN010149/APP/7.9]. The Appendix 7.14 of the ES Volume 3, Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment, [EN010149/APP/6.3] demonstrates that the Proposed Development is committed to achieving significant biodiversity net gain on-site.</p> <p>The Proposed Development has, therefore, taken advantage of opportunities to conserve and enhance biodiversity and accords with this policy.</p>
	<p>5.4.22 The design of energy NSIP proposals will need to consider the movement of mobile/migratory species such as birds, fish and marine and terrestrial mammals and their potential to interact with infrastructure. As energy infrastructure could occur anywhere within England and Wales, both inland and onshore and offshore, the potential to affect mobile and migratory species across the UK and more widely across Europe (transboundary effects) requires consideration, depending on the location of development.</p>	<p>As set out in Chapter 7: Biodiversity of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1], the Proposed Development has considered the impact on the movement of mobile species, such as birds and badgers.</p> <p>Breeding bird survey data, detailed in ES Volume 3, Appendix 7.3: Breeding Bird Survey [EN010149/APP/6.3], was used to estimate the number of skylark territories that would require compensation due to the placement of Solar PV modules.</p> <p>Chapter 7: Biodiversity of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] acknowledges that construction and operation of the Proposed Development will result in the loss of arable farmland used by breeding skylarks and other ground-nesting birds.</p> <p>The proposed mitigation and enhancement measures set out in the oLEMP [EN010149/APP/7.9] include primary mitigation to compensate for habitat loss which would be the</p>

		<p>creation of c. 100 ha of calcareous or neutral grassland managed for the benefit of ground nesting birds, in key, open and connected areas. The area of land retained is smaller than the area which would be developed, however habitat creation and enhancement measures would enhance the quality of nesting and foraging habitat considered sufficient to support the existing number of skylark territories and the existing farmland bird assemblage. As well as primary mitigation to compensate for habitat loss, there will also be improvement measures to increase both invertebrate and seed biomass for foraging ground and other nesting bird species. As such, although there would be an adverse effect on birds from habitat loss and disturbance during construction this is anticipated to be relatively short-term and is not considered likely to be significant. Once created and enhanced habitats have established there is anticipated to be a significant beneficial effect on ground nesting and wintering birds at the local level.</p> <p>Overall, the assessment concludes that, due to the embedded design and mitigation measures, no significant adverse effects are anticipated to arise on any protected species and habitats as a result of the construction, operation or decommissioning of the Proposed Development.</p>
<p><i>Habitats Regulations</i></p>	<p>5.4.25 The applicant should seek the advice of the appropriate SNCB and provide the Secretary of State with such information as the Secretary of State may reasonably require, to determine whether an HRA Appropriate Assessment (AA) is required.</p>	<p>A Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) No Significant Effects Screening Report (NSER) [EN010149/APP/7.17] has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (Habitats Regulations) to set out whether the Proposed Development is likely to have any significant effect on</p>

<p>Applicants can request and agree ‘Evidence Plans’ with SNCBs, which is a way to record upfront the information the applicant needs to supply with its application, so that the HRA can be efficiently carried out. If an AA is required, the applicant must provide the Secretary of State with such information as may reasonably be required to enable the Secretary of State to conduct the AA. This should include information on any mitigation measures that are proposed to minimise or avoid likely significant effects.</p>	<p>European designated sites. This report is submitted in support of the Development Consent Order (DCO) Application for the Proposed Development.</p> <p>The HRA NSER concludes there will be no significant effects to European Sites either from the construction, operation and decommissioning of the Proposed Development or in combination with other plans and projects, such that an appropriate assessment is not required.</p>
<p>5.4.26 If, during the pre-application stage, the SNCB indicate that the proposed development is likely to adversely impact the integrity of habitat sites, the applicant must include with their application such information as may reasonably be required to assess a potential derogation under the Habitats Regulations</p>	<p>Should the SNCB later conclude that adverse effects on the integrity of European Site(s) cannot be avoided or mitigated, appropriate information will be provided to confirm that the Proposed Development meets the three derogation tests (No Reasonable Alternatives, Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest and adequate compensation).</p>
<p>5.4.27 If the SNCB gives such an indication at a later stage in the development consent process, the applicant must provide this information as soon as is reasonably possible and before the close of the examination. This information must include assessment of alternative solutions, a case for Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest</p>	

	(IROPI) and appropriate environmental compensation.	
	5.4.28 Provision of such information will not be taken as an acceptance of adverse impacts and if an applicant disputes the likelihood of adverse impacts, it can provide this information as part of its application 'without prejudice' to the Secretary of State's final decision on the impacts of the potential development. If, in these circumstances, an applicant does not supply information required for the assessment of a potential derogation, there will be no expectation that the Secretary of State will allow the applicant the opportunity to provide such information following the examination.	
	5.4.29 It is vital that applicants consider the need for compensation as early as possible in the design process as 'retrofitting' compensatory measures will introduce delays and uncertainty to the consenting process.	A HRA NSER [EN010149/APP/7.17] concluded that there will be no significant effects to European sites either from the construction, operation and decommissioning of the Proposed Development or in combination with other plans and projects. Therefore, there are no environmental compensation requirements to be considered.
	5.4.30 Applicants should work closely at an early stage in the pre-application process with SNCB and Defra/Welsh Government to develop a compensation plan for all protected sites adversely affected by the development. Applicants should engage with the relevant Local Planning Authority at an early stage	Natural England has been consulted during the pre-application process and does not consider that any internationally designated sites would be affected by the Proposed Development. Details of engagement with Natural England are presented in ES Volume 1, Chapter 7: Biodiversity [EN010149/APP/6.1] .

	<p>regarding the proposed location of compensatory measures. Applicants should also take account of any strategic plan level compensation plans in developing project level compensation plans.</p>	<p>The Wash Special Area of Conservation (SAC)/Special Protection Area (SPA)/Ramsar is approximately 35km east of the Site. The Wash is a considerable distance from the Site but was considered due to the mobility of bird species for which the SPA/Ramsar is designated for. However no qualifying species of the Wash SPA/Ramsar were recorded using the Site during the bird surveys, with a single flyover Pink-footed goose (<i>Anser brachyrhynchus</i>) flock being the only qualifying species observed.</p> <p>Natural England considered it 'highly unlikely that the Site is functionally linked to the Wash SPA/Ramsar' and agreed that the surveys carried out in November, December 2023 and January 2024 were sufficient and did not consider that an additional wintering bird survey in February 2024 would be necessary to inform the assessment of impacts of the Proposed Development on wintering birds.</p> <p>As a result, in conjunction with the large distance between the site and the SPA (c. 35km), it was not considered likely that the area within the Order Limits and surrounding area is functionally linked to the Wash SPA. Details are provided in the HRA NSER [EN010149/APP/7.17] which supports the DCO Application.</p>
<p><i>Ancient woodland, ancient trees, veteran trees and other irreplaceable habitats</i></p>	<p>5.4.32 Applicants should include measures to mitigate fully the direct and indirect effects of development on ancient woodland, ancient and veteran trees or other irreplaceable habitats during both construction and operational phases.</p>	<p>Chapter 7: Biodiversity of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] concludes there would be no loss of woodland or veteran trees as a result of the Proposed Development.</p> <p>The Arboricultural Impact Assessment, which forms Appendix 7.12 [EN010149/APP/6.3] to Chapter 7: Biodiversity of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1], explains that the individual trees recorded many had habitat features that</p>

		<p>are valuable wildlife resources. Five had sufficient qualities and features to be considered veteran trees: T118, T119, T175, T180 (now outside the Order Limits) and T124 (a hedgerow tree within the revised Order Limits).</p> <p>Embedded design measures to be secured in the Design Commitments [EN010149/APP/7.4] are proposed to ensure that hedgerows/hedgerow trees and woodlands will be protected through buffering and a minimum 10m and 15m offset, respectively.</p> <p>Although the design has sought to avoid impact to hedgerows, several sections of hedgerow would need to be removed to facilitate cable installation and access. Chapter 7: Biodiversity of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] considers that this hedgerow loss would be a temporary adverse effect that is not significant. New hedgerow and tree planting proposals are considered likely to have a significant beneficial effect at the local level once established.</p> <p>Measures to protect retained trees and hedgerows will be put in place and secured through a detailed CEMP, DEMP and LEMP as Requirements of the DCO. These measures will need to be substantially in accordance with the measures set out in the oCEMP [EN010149/APP/7.7], oDEMP [EN010149/APP/7.13] and oLEMP [EN010149/APP/7.9] to ensure that impacts are minimised and that the Proposed Development is implemented in accordance with the detailed management plans.</p>
<i>Protection and enhancement</i>	5.4.33 Applicants should consider any reasonable opportunities to maximise the restoration, creation, and enhancement of	The Appendix 7.14 of the ES Volume 3, Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment, [EN010149/APP/6.3] will be informed by the detailed design of the Proposed

<p><i>of habitats and species</i></p>	<p>wider biodiversity, and the protection and restoration of the ability of habitats to store or sequester carbon as set out under Section 4.6.</p>	<p>Development, including landscape proposals, construction methods and the Proposed Development timescale. Based upon these parameters, the Appendix 7.14 of the ES Volume 3, Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment, [EN010149/APP/6.3] will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Result in an increase of 934.32 habitat units, which equates to a 30.6% biodiversity net gain; • Result in an increase of 108.04 hedgerow units, which equates to a 19.67% biodiversity net gain; and • Result in no change in watercourse units, which is equated to no net loss.
<p><i>Mitigation</i></p>	<p>5.4.35 Applicants should include appropriate avoidance, mitigation, compensation and enhancement measures as an integral part of the proposed development. In particular, the applicant should demonstrate that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • during construction, they will seek to ensure that activities will be confined to the minimum areas required for the works; • the timing of construction has been planned to avoid or limit disturbance; • during construction and operation best practice will be followed to ensure that 	<p>Embedded design and mitigation measures are outlined in Section 7.6 of Chapter 7: Biodiversity of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] and are set out within the Design Commitments [EN010149/APP/7.4], oCEMP [EN010149/APP/7.7] and oLEMP [EN010149/APP/7.9]. These include habitat avoidance, mitigation, creation and replacement measures; mitigation relating to protected and notable species; and standard mitigation measures that comply with industry good practice and environmental legislation. The design has been led by the mitigation hierarchy to avoid impact or at least mitigate where possible.</p> <p>Production of a final CEMP, OEMP and DEMP will be secured via a requirement within the DCO. Best practice</p>

	<p>risk of disturbance or damage to species or habitats is minimised, including as a consequence of transport access arrangements;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • habitats will, where practicable, be restored after construction works have finished; • opportunities will be taken to enhance existing habitats rather than replace them, and where practicable, create new habitats of value within the site landscaping proposals. Where habitat creation is required as mitigation, compensation, or enhancement, the location and quality will be of key importance. In this regard habitat creation should be focused on areas where the most ecological and ecosystems benefits can be realized; and • mitigations required as a result of legal protection of habitats or species will be complied with. 	<p>monitoring requirements to avoid harm to for habitats and species, such as nesting bird checks, badger checks and pollution prevention control measures, are also documented and secured within the oCEMP [EN010149/APP/7.7, oLEMP [EN010149/APP/7.9] and oDEMP [EN010149/APP/7.13].</p> <p>Section 7.10 of Chapter 7: Biodiversity of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] outlines mitigation measures pertaining to habitat avoidance, creation and replacement measures that comply with this part of the policy.</p>
	<p>5.4.36 Applicants should produce and implement a Biodiversity Management Strategy as part of their development proposals. This could include provision for biodiversity awareness training to employees and contractors so as to avoid unnecessary</p>	<p>The oLEMP [EN010149/APP/7.9] sets out a framework for the Applicant's approach to ensuring the successful establishment of landscape and ecological measures, both in the short term and during the operation of the Proposed Development. In addition, the oCEMP [EN010149/APP/7.7] includes the requirement for contractors to provide training</p>

	adverse impacts on biodiversity during the construction and operation stages.	on relevant matters which could include, for example, biodiversity awareness.
<i>Secretary of State decision making</i>	5.4.39 The government's 25 Year Environment Plan and the Environment Act 2021 mark a step change in ambition for wildlife and the natural environment. The Secretary of State should have regard to the aims and goals of the government's Environmental Improvement Plan 2023, and in Wales the objectives of the Nature Recovery Plan, and any relevant measures and targets, including statutory targets set under the Environment Act or elsewhere.	<p>Chapter 7: Biodiversity of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] has been produced with regard to the aims of the 25-Year Environment Plan, as evidenced by the extensive habitat to be provided pursuant to the oLEMP [EN010149/APP/7.9].</p> <p>The Applicant has also considered the Environment Act 2021, as evidenced by Appendix 7.14 of the ES Volume 3, Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment, [EN010149/APP/6.3] and the Applicant's commitment to achieving BNG through the Proposed Development. It is therefore considered the Proposed Development is compliant with this aspect of the policy.</p> <p>The Proposed Development has the potential to deliver significant amounts of low-carbon electricity and make a material contribution to help meet the UK's commitments to decrease carbon emissions and reach net zero by 2050, which in turn is beneficial for biodiversity and geological conservation interests.</p>
	5.4.41 The benefits of nationally significant low carbon energy infrastructure development may include benefits for biodiversity and geological conservation interests and these benefits may outweigh harm to these interests. The Secretary of State may take account of any such net benefit in cases where it can be demonstrated.	<p>The Proposed Development has the potential to deliver biodiversity benefits as a result of its embedded mitigation and enhancement measures, as set out in the oLEMP [EN010149/APP/7.9], oCEMP [EN010149/APP/7.7] and Design Commitments [EN010149/APP/7.4].</p> <p>In addition, with these measures implemented, there are no significant adverse impacts expected on biodiversity features.</p>

		<p>The Proposed Development will meet a minimum 10% BNG, which is secured via the oLEMP [EN010149/APP/7.9]. The Appendix 7.14 of the ES Volume 3, Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment, [EN010149/APP/6.3] demonstrates that the Proposed Development has the potential to achieve significant biodiversity net gain on-site.</p> <p>The Proposed Development has, therefore, taken advantage of opportunities to conserve and enhance biodiversity and accords with this policy.</p>
	<p>5.4.42 As a general principle, and subject to the specific policies below, development should, in line with the mitigation hierarchy, aim to avoid significant harm to biodiversity and geological conservation interests, including through consideration of reasonable alternatives (as set out in Section 4.3 above). Where significant harm cannot be avoided, impacts should be mitigated and as a last resort, appropriate compensation measures should be sought.</p>	<p>As set out in Chapter 7: Biodiversity of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] with the application of embedded design and mitigation measures, no significant adverse effects have been identified on designated ecological sites, habitats or protected species during construction, operation or decommissioning of the Proposed Development.</p> <p>Embedded mitigation measures are outlined in Section 7.6 of Chapter 7: Biodiversity of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] and additional mitigation measures are set out in Section 7.8 of Chapter 7: Biodiversity of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1].</p>
	<p>5.4.43 If significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (for example through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then the Secretary of State will give significant weight to any residual harm.</p>	<p>Mitigation measures are also set out in the oLEMP [EN010149/APP/7.9], oCEMP [EN010149/APP/7.7] and Design Commitments [EN010149/APP/7.4]. These include habitat avoidance, mitigation, creation and replacement measures; mitigation relating to protected and notable species; and standard mitigation measures that comply with industry good practice and environmental legislation.</p>

		Production of a final CEMP, OEMP and DEMP will be secured via requirements within the Draft DCO [EN010149/APP/3.1] .
	5.4.44 The Secretary of State should consider what appropriate requirements should be attached to any consent and/or in any planning obligations entered into, in order to ensure that any mitigation or biodiversity net gain measures, if offered, are delivered and maintained. Any habitat creation or enhancement delivered including linkages with existing habitats for compensation or biodiversity net gain should generally be maintained for a minimum period of 30 years, or for the lifetime of the project, if longer.	The oLEMP [EN010149/APP/7.9] , oCEMP [EN010149/APP/7.7] , Appendix 7.14 of the ES Volume 3, Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment, [EN010149/APP/6.3] and Design Commitments [EN010149/APP/7.4] set out measures to mitigate and habitat management for a period of at least 30 years to achieve biodiversity net gain. These will be developed into detailed documents and secured by a requirement in the DCO.
	5.4.45 The Secretary of State will need to take account of what mitigation measures may have been agreed between the applicant and the SNCB and the MMO/NRW (where appropriate). The Secretary of State will also need to consider whether the SNCB or the MMO/NRW has granted or refused, or intends to grant or refuse, any relevant licences, including protected species mitigation licences.	Section 7.3 of Chapter 7: Biodiversity of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] sets out the stakeholder engagement conducted in relation to biodiversity. Appendix A-4, J-1, J-2 and K-3 of the Consultation Report [EN010149/APP/5.2] , which is submitted in support of the DCO Application, sets out the feedback received during non-statutory, statutory and targeted consultation and how regard has been afforded by the Applicant to each matter raised. Natural England was consulted on mitigation measures on 15 January 2024. The biodiversity mitigation strategy was discussed and Natural England remained positive on the design and mitigation proposals and confirmed that the mitigation measures were appropriate for the Proposed

		<p>Development. Natural England recommended tree sparrow boxes due to the presence of sparrows identified during the breeding bird surveys as secured in the oLEMP [EN010149/APP/7.9].</p>
	<p>5.4.46 Development proposals provide many opportunities for building-in beneficial biodiversity or geological features as part of good design. The Secretary of State should give appropriate weight to environmental and biodiversity enhancements, although any weight given to gains provided to meet a legal requirement (for example under the Environment Act 2021) is likely to be limited.</p>	<p>As detailed in the Design Approach Document [EN010149/APP/7.3], the Proposed Development has undergone an iterative design process which has resulted in the delivery of a functional and efficient design which will deliver a large amount of renewable and low carbon electricity while being sensitive to the local context and surrounding area, avoiding and minimising impacts on the environment as far as practicable.</p> <p>The design process and Project Principles are described in the Design Approach Document [EN010149/APP/7.3] and Design Commitments [EN010149/APP/7.4].</p>
	<p>5.4.47 When considering proposals, the Secretary of State should maximise such reasonable opportunities in and around developments, using requirements or planning obligations where appropriate. This can help towards delivering biodiversity net gain as part of or in addition to the approach set out at Section 4.6.</p>	<p>The Proposed Development will meet a minimum 10% BNG, as secured in the oLEMP [EN010149/APP/7.9]. The Appendix 7.14 of the ES Volume 3, Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment, [EN010149/APP/6.3] demonstrates that the Proposed Development is committed to achieving significant biodiversity net gain on-site.</p> <p>The Proposed Development has, therefore, taken advantage of opportunities to conserve and enhance biodiversity.</p>
	<p>5.4.48 In taking decisions, the Secretary of State should ensure that appropriate weight is attached to designated sites of international, national, and local importance; protected species; habitats and other species</p>	<p>Appropriate weight has been attached designated sites of international, national and local importance; protected species; habitats and other species of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity; and to biodiversity and geological interests within the wider environment, with an</p>

	of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity; and to biodiversity and geological interests within the wider environment.	assessment of the Proposed Development's impact on these set out in Chapter 7: Biodiversity of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] .
<i>Secretary of State decision making – Habitats Regulations</i>	5.4.49 The Secretary of State must consider whether the project is likely to have a significant effect on a protected site which is part of the National Site Network (a habitat site), a protected marine site, or on any site to which the same protection is applied as a matter of policy, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.	<p>A Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) No Significant Effects Screening Report (NSER) [EN010149/APP/7.17] has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of The Habitats Regulations to set out whether the Proposed Development is likely to have any significant effect on European designated sites. This report is submitted in support of the DCO Application for the Proposed Development.</p> <p>The HRA concludes there will be no significant effects to European Sites either from the construction, operation and decommissioning of the Proposed Development or in combination with other plans and projects, such that an appropriate assessment is not required.</p>
<i>Secretary of State decision making – Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)</i>	5.4.50 The Secretary of State should use requirements and/or planning obligations to mitigate the harmful aspects of the development and, where possible, to ensure the conservation and enhancement of the site's biodiversity or geological interest.	<p>There are five statutory designated sites within 10km of the Order Limits boundary, including: Metheringham Heath Quarry SSSI, High Dyke SSSI, Tattershall Old Gravel Pits SSSI, Tattershall Carrs SSSI.</p> <p>Chapter 7: Biodiversity of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] justifies the decision to scope out the SSSIs as given the distance of the Proposed Development to statutory sites, the nature of the Proposed Development and lack of any direct hydrological connection or other obvious impact pathway, no significant effects are expected to arise from the Proposed Development.</p>

<p><i>Secretary of State decision making – Regional and Local Sites</i></p>	<p>5.4.52 The Secretary of State should give due consideration to regional or local designations. However, given the need for new nationally significant infrastructure, these designations should not be used in themselves to refuse development consent.</p>	<p>Figure 7.1: Local Wildlife Sites and Areas Proposed for Vegetation Removal in ES Volume 2 [EN010149/APP/6.2] shows the areas where four Local Wildlife Sites (LWSs) will potentially be affected by the Proposed Development, which have been surveyed, as detailed in ES Volume 3, Appendix 7.9: Local Wildlife Site Verges Survey [EN010149/APP/6.3]. These LWSs are all calcareous grassland road verges. The areas surveyed were up to c. 200 m lengths of these grassland road verges for each LWS, which were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A15, Green Man Road to Cuckoo Lane LWS; • A15, Slate House Farm to Dunsby Pit Plantation LWS; • Temple Road Verges, Welbourn to Brauncewell; and • Navenby Heath Road Verges LWS. <p>Sections of the four LWSs grassland road verges will need to be removed during the construction phase for highways access, either to create passing bays or to create highways access for internal access roads with visibility splays. There is anticipated to be a temporary, medium-term adverse effect from a small amount of habitat loss during the construction phase until the new calcareous grassland field margins, as compensation, become fully established. This is considered to be an adverse effect at the local level and not significant.</p>
<p><i>Secretary of State decision making – Ancient woodland, ancient trees,</i></p>	<p>5.4.53 The Secretary of State should not grant development consent for any development that would result in the loss or deterioration of any irreplaceable habitats, including ancient woodland, and ancient and veteran trees unless there are wholly</p>	<p>Chapter 7: Biodiversity of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] concludes there would be no loss of ancient woodland or veteran trees as a result of the Proposed Development.</p> <p>The Arboricultural Impact Assessment, which forms Appendix 7.12 [EN010149/APP/6.3] to Chapter 7:</p>

<p><i>veteran trees and other irreplaceable habitats</i></p>	<p>exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists.</p>	<p>Biodiversity of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] explains that of the individual trees recorded many had habitat features that are valuable wildlife resources. Five had sufficient qualities and features to be considered veteran trees: T118, T119, T175, T180 (now outside the Order Limits) and T124 (within the revised Order Limits).</p> <p>Mitigation measures to be secured in the CEMP are proposed to ensure that tree roots will be protected through buffering and a minimum 15m offset. Measures to protect retained trees and hedgerows will be put in place and secured through a detailed CEMP, DEMP and LEMP as requirements of the DCO. These measures will need to be substantially in accordance with the measures set out in the oLEMP [EN010149/APP/7.9], oCEMP [EN010149/APP/7.7] and Design Commitments [EN010149/APP/7.4]. to ensure that impacts are minimised and that the Proposed Development is implemented in accordance with the detailed management plans.</p>
<p><i>Secretary of State decision making – Protection and enhancement of habitats and species</i></p>	<p>5.4.54 The Secretary of State should ensure that species and habitats identified as being of importance for the conservation of biodiversity are protected from the adverse effects of development by using requirements, planning obligations, or licence conditions where appropriate.</p>	<p>Chapter 7: Biodiversity of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] sets out that there would be no residual significant adverse effects on any species and habitats as a result of the Proposed Development.</p> <p>From the surveys undertaken and avoidance in the design of the Proposed Development, no protected species licenses are anticipated to be required. However, should it be found that any protected species licences are required, i.e. following further update surveys for mobile species such as badgers and bats, then they would be protected by the</p>

		appropriate methods and timings of works as per license conditions.
	5.4.55 The Secretary of State should refuse consent where harm to a protected species and relevant habitat would result, unless there is an overriding public interest and the other relevant legal tests are met. In this context the Secretary of State should give substantial weight to any such harm to the detriment of biodiversity features of national or regional importance or the climate resilience and the capacity of habitats to store carbon, which they consider may result from a proposed development.	<p>Chapter 7: Biodiversity of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] sets out that there would be no residual significant adverse effects on any species and habitats as a result of the Proposed Development.</p> <p>The Proposed Development will meet a minimum 10% BNG, as secured in the oLEMP [EN010149/APP/7.9]. The Appendix 7.14 of the ES Volume 3, Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment, [EN010149/APP/6.3] demonstrates that the Proposed Development is committed to achieving significant biodiversity net gain on site.</p>
5.5 - Civil and military aviation and defence interests <i>Applicant Assessment</i>	5.5.37 Where the proposed development may affect the performance of civil or military aviation CNS, meteorological radars and/or other defence assets an assessment of potential effects should be set out in the ES (see Section 4.3).	<p>ES Volume 3 Appendix 5.4: Solar photovoltaic glint and glare study [EN010149/APP/6.3] to Chapter 5: Approach to EIA of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] has undertaken an assessment of the potential impacts of glint and glare on surrounding road users, railway operations, dwellings, PRoW, bridleways and aviation activity.</p>
	5.5.38 The requirement for ATC and non-cooperative surveillance – i.e. radar/tracking technologies – forms part of the environmental baseline for proposed developments.	<p>The Applicant has considered all relevant guidance in relation to glint and glare and further detail on the guidance and methodology used for the assessment is set out below. Guidelines exist in the UK (produced by the Civil Aviation Authority) and in the USA (produced by the Federal Aviation Administration) with respect to solar developments and aviation activity. The UK CAA guidance is relatively high-level and does not prescribe a formal methodology. There is</p>
	5.5.39 The applicant should consult the MOD, Met Office, Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), NATS and any aerodrome – licensed	

	<p>or otherwise – likely to be affected by the proposed development in preparing an assessment of the proposal on aviation, meteorological or other defence interests.</p>	<p>railway guidance with respect to signal sighting; however, no guidance with respect to glint and glare from solar developments upon railway operations and infrastructure has been specifically produced. Pager Power has, however, produced guidance for glint and glare and solar photovoltaic developments which was published in early 2017, with the fourth edition published in 2022. This methodology defines a comprehensive process for determining the impact upon railway infrastructure and operations, and aviation activity and this has been used to inform the glint and glare assessment provided in ES Volume 3, Appendix 5.4 [EN010149/APP/6.3].</p> <p>The following guidance is not relevant and has not informed the assessment.</p> <p>The BRE guidelines on daylight and sunlight provides guidance surrounding shadowing effects upon properties, this is not relevant to glint and glare.</p> <p>The CAA guidance documents explain that glare should be a safeguarding consideration for aerodromes and that the responsibility of safeguarding lies with the aerodrome. The glint and glare study has assessed the potential safety impacts upon surrounding aviation activities and operations, and consultation is ongoing with aerodromes where appropriate.</p> <p>The MOD have been consulted through the preparation of the Application. The Applicant received responses from the MOD at both Phase One and Phase Two Consultation and received feedback in relation to RAF Digby.</p>
	<p>5.5.40 Any assessment of effects on aviation, meteorological or other defence interests should include potential impacts of the project upon the operation of CNS infrastructure, flight patterns (both civil and military), generation of weather warnings and forecasts, other defence assets (including radar) and aerodrome operational procedures. It should also assess the demonstratable cumulative effects²⁰¹ of the project with other relevant projects in relation to aviation, meteorological and defence.</p>	

		<p>The Applicant accepts the site partially falls within the MOD technical safeguarding zone.</p> <p>The Applicant is not aware of any adverse effect from the Proposed Development but will continue to work with the MOD in this respect.</p> <p>Further engagement continues in relation to RAF Air Command, for nearby airbase operations, and above ground design of lighting, fencing and CCTV in proximity to the RAF Digby boundary.</p>
	<p>5.5.41 In addition, consideration of developments near aerodromes should take into account the following factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bird Strike Risk – Aircraft are vulnerable to wildlife strike, in particular bird strike. Birds and other wildlife may be attracted to the vicinity of an aerodrome by various types of development, for example, large buildings with perching/roosting opportunities for birds. It is therefore important that infrastructure, buildings and other elements from energy installations, as well as environmental mitigation are designed in such a way so as not to increase the bird strike risk to the airport for developments within 13km (this can vary). • Building Induced Turbulence – If a significant building or structure is 	<p>Chapter 7: Biodiversity of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] considers the impacts to birds. There is not anticipated to be an increase in risk of bird strike due to the Proposed Development as there are no proposals to create wetland or significant areas of woodland or scrub which would attract significant assemblages of birds.</p> <p>The Proposed Development does not propose significant buildings or structures; therefore, turbulence has not been assessed.</p> <p>Thermal Plume Turbulence is not considered relevant as the Proposed Development does not propose dry cooling systems.</p>

	<p>proposed close to the airport/runways, there is potential for building induced turbulence/wind shear to be created which has the potential to impact on aircraft on take-off and landing.</p> <p>Studies may be required to identify the extent of any turbulence resulting from the energy infrastructure.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thermal Plume Turbulence – This is caused under certain conditions by the release of hot air from a power plant equipped with a dry cooling system. The plumes generated by these facilities have the potential to create invisible turbulence that can affect the manoeuvrability of aircraft. 	
	<p>5.5.42 If any relevant changes are made to proposals during the pre-application and determination period, it is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that the relevant aviation, meteorological and defence consultees are informed as soon as reasonably possible.</p>	<p>The Consultation Report [EN010149/APP/5.1] sets out that the MOD have been consulted through the preparation of the DCO application. The MOD were consulted during Phase One Consultation, Phase Two Consultation and Section 42 Consultation. As a part of Section 42 Consultation, the Applicant received feedback from the Ministry of Defence relating to RAF Digby on Wednesday 15 May 2024. The Applicant has ongoing engagement with the MOD following Phase Two Consultation. And following further discussions, additional technical information has been provided to the MOD for further technical assessment by their SMEs. The Applicant has been advised the MOD is the only body able to undertake the relevant technical assessment, to ensure there is no impact to military operations or capability.</p>

		Engagement with the MOD will continue through examination and post-consent.
<i>Mitigation</i>	5.5.43 The applicant should include appropriate mitigation measures as an integral part of the proposed development.	<p>The Design Approach Document [EN010149/APP/7.3] sets out that Solar PV development was discounted from land to the north of Navenby Lane to respond to consultation feedback (including MOD Defence Infrastructure Organisation), technical requirements of the cable corridor study and to reduce potential impacts on residential properties and BMV agricultural land. This resulted in the removal of additional land from the Order Limits in line with design principle 1.2, providing appropriate offsets to local settlements and dwellings on a case-by-case basis, respecting their individual amenity.</p> <p>The Applicant is not aware of any adverse effect from the Proposed Development but will continue to work with the MOD in this respect.</p> <p>Further engagement continues in relation to RAF Air Command, for nearby airbase operations, and above ground design of lighting, fencing and CCTV in proximity to the RAF Digby boundary.</p>
	<p>5.5.44 litigation for infringement of OLS may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> agreed changes to operational procedures of the aerodromes in accordance with relevant guidance, provided that safety assurances can be provided by the operator that are acceptable to the CAA where the changes are proposed to a civilian 	<p>ES Volume 3 Appendix 5.4: Solar photovoltaic glint and glare study [EN010149/APP/6.3] to Chapter 5: Approach to EIA of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] has undertaken an assessment of the potential impacts of glint and glare on surrounding road users, railway operations, dwellings, PRow, bridleways and aviation activity.</p> <p>Based on the result of its technical assessment, the Applicant considers that the potential for yellow glare is</p>

	<p>aerodrome. Applicants should engage airport operators at an early stage of the planning process to understand the potential impacts of development on aviation operations and develop mitigations if appropriate; or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • installation of obstacle lighting and/or by notification in Aeronautical Information Service publications 	<p>operationally accommodatable at the identified airfields. Prior to submission of the DCO Application, the Applicant has engaged with the Ministry of Defence and the Civil Aviation Authority on the results of its Glint and Glare Assessment, Appendix 5.4: Solar photovoltaic glint and glare study [EN010149/APP/6.3]. This has also involved seeking engagement with three private airfields (of General Aviation use) to understand their operations and discuss the results of the assessment. The Applicant will continue to engage with these airfields following the submission of the Application. The Applicant is in ongoing engagement with the MOD regarding the outcomes noted at RAF Cranwell.</p> <p>While the potential for yellow glare occurs outside of its published hours of flying, the Applicant shared the results of its Glint and Glare Assessment in October 2024 and continues to welcome further engagement to discuss the assessment in more detail.</p>
<p><i>Secretary of State decision making</i></p>	<p>5.5.49 The Secretary of State should be satisfied that the effects on meteorological radars, civil and military aerodromes, aviation technical sites and other defence assets or operations have been addressed by the applicant and that any necessary assessment of the proposal on aviation, NSWWS or defence interests has been carried out.</p>	<p>ES Volume 3 Appendix 5.5: Solar photovoltaic glint and glare study [EN010149/APP/6.3] to Chapter 5: Approach to EIA assessment of the potential impacts of glint and glare on surrounding road users, railway operations, dwellings, PRow, bridleways and aviation activity.</p> <p>As set out in Appendix J1-J2 of the Consultation Report [EN010149/APP/5.2] Following consultation and engagement with the MoD, the requested receptors including the 2-mile approach path, ATC Tower and visual circuits have been assessed within the Solar photovoltaic glint and glare study [EN010149/APP/6.3].</p>

		<p>RAF Cranwell: From the geometric assessment, solar reflections are geometrically possible towards the 2-mile approach path for threshold 19 and occur outside a pilot's primary field-of-view, therefore not considered significant. A low impact is predicted. Solar reflections with intensities 'potential for temporary after'-image' are predicted towards sections of the circuit for 01/19. Glare occurs outside the published hours of flying and therefore deemed operationally accommodatable and not significant. A low impact is predicted and mitigation is not required. Solar reflections are not geometrically possible towards the Air Traffic Control (ATC) Tower, or 2-mile approach paths for threshold 01, 08 and 26. No impact is predicted, and mitigation is not required</p> <p>RAF Waddington: Solar reflections towards the approach path for threshold 02 occur outside a pilot's field-of-view therefore not considered significant. A low impact is predicted. Solar reflections with intensities 'low potential for temporary after-image' are predicted towards sections of the circuit for runway 02/20. The glare intensity is considered acceptable and therefore not considered significant. A low impact is predicted. Solar reflections are not geometrically possible towards the ATC Tower and 2-mile approach paths for threshold 20. No impact is predicted.</p>
	<p>5.5.50 In particular, the Secretary of State should be satisfied that the proposal has been designed, where possible, to minimise adverse impacts on the operation and safety of aerodromes and that realistically achievable mitigation is carried out on existing surveillance systems such as</p>	<p>Appendix J-1-J2 of the Consultation Report [EN010149/APP/5.2] sets out the MOD's comments pertaining to glint and glare. The MOD commented that the Proposed Development has the potential to produce glint and glare effects which could be hazardous to aircraft and air traffic control towers. The MOD requested for a geometric aviation glint and glare assessment to consider any effects</p>

	<p>radar/tracking technologies. It is incumbent on Operators of aerodromes to regularly review the possibility of agreeing to make reasonable changes to operational procedures.</p>	<p>upon air traffic control towers, aircraft using operational runways, circuit patterns and any other applicable air traffic procedures at RAF Cranwell and RAF Waddington.</p> <p>ES Volume 3 Appendix 5.5: Solar photovoltaic glint and glare study [EN010149/APP/6.3] to Chapter 5: Approach to EIA of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] has undertaken an assessment of the potential impacts of glint and glare. Following consultation and engagement with the MoD, the requested receptors including the 2-mile approach path, ATC Tower and visual circuits have been assessed within the Solar Photovoltaic Glint and Glare Study [EN010149/APP/6.3].</p>
	<p>5.5.51 When assessing the necessity, acceptability, and reasonableness of operational changes to aerodromes, the Secretary of State should be satisfied that they have the necessary information regarding the operational procedures along with any demonstrable risks or harm of such changes, taking into account the cases put forward by all parties. When making such a judgement in the case of military aerodromes, the Secretary of State should have regard to interests of defence and national security.</p>	<p>The Applicant is not aware of any adverse effect from the Proposed Development but will continue to work with the MOD in this respect.</p> <p>Further engagement continues in relation to RAF Air Command, for nearby airbase operations, and above ground design of lighting, fencing and CCTV in proximity to the RAF Digby boundary.</p>

	<p>5.5.53 If there are conflicts between the government's energy and transport policies and military interests in relation to the application, the Secretary of State should expect the relevant parties to have made appropriate efforts to work together to identify realistic and pragmatic solutions to the conflicts. In so doing, the parties should seek to protect the aims and interests of the other parties as far as possible, recognising simultaneously the evolving landscape in terms of the UK's energy security and the need to tackle climate change, which necessitates the installation of wind turbines and the need to maintain air safety and national defence and the national weather warning service.</p>	<p>Appendix J-1-J2 of the Consultation Report [EN010149/APP/5.2] sets out the MOD's comments pertaining to glint and glare. The MOD commented that the Proposed Development has the potential to produce glint and glare effects which could be hazardous to aircraft and air traffic control towers. The MOD requested for a geometric aviation glint and glare assessment to consider any effects upon air traffic control towers, aircraft using operational runways, circuit patterns and any other applicable air traffic procedures at RAF Cranwell and RAF Waddington.</p> <p>ES Volume 3 Appendix 5.5: Solar photovoltaic glint and glare study [EN010149/APP/6.3] to Chapter 5: Approach to EIA of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] has undertaken an assessment of the potential impacts of glint and glare. Following consultation and engagement with the MoD, the requested receptors including the 2-mile approach path, ATC Tower and visual circuits have been assessed within the Solar Photovoltaic Glint and Glare Study [EN010149/APP/6.3].</p>
	<p>5.5.54 There are statutory requirements concerning lighting to tall structures. Where lighting is requested on structures that goes beyond statutory requirements by any of the relevant aviation and defence consultees, the Secretary of State should be satisfied of the necessity of such lighting taking into account the case put forward by the consultees. The effect of such lighting on the landscape and ecology may be a relevant consideration.</p>	<p>Chapter 3: Proposed Development Description of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] outlines the security measures, including lighting, incorporated in the design of the Proposed Development's design.</p> <p>The Proposed Development's security and lighting have been designed to respond sensitively to ecology and landscape features.</p>

	<p>5.5.55 Lighting must also be designed in such a way as to ensure that there is no glare or dazzle to pilots and/or ATC, aerodrome ground lighting is not obscured and that any lighting does not diminish the effectiveness of aeronautical ground lighting and cannot be confused with aeronautical lighting. Lighting may also need to be compatible with night vision devices for military low flying purposes.</p>	<p>ES Volume 3 Appendix 5.4: Solar photovoltaic glint and glare study [EN010149/APP/6.3] to Chapter 5: Approach to EIA of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] has undertaken an assessment of potential impacts of glint and glare on surrounding road users, railway operations, dwellings, PRoW, bridleways and aviation activity.</p>
	<p>5.5.57 Where suitable technological solutions have not yet been developed or proven, the Secretary of State will need to consider the likelihood of a solution becoming available within the time limit for implementation of the Development Consent Order.</p>	<p>ES Volume 3 Appendix 5.4: Solar photovoltaic glint and glare study [EN010149/APP/6.3] to Chapter 5: Approach to EIA of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] assessment of the potential impacts of glint and glare on surrounding road users, railway operations, dwellings, PRoW, bridleways and aviation activity.</p> <p>The landscape planting proposals are secured within the oLEMP [EN010149/APP/7.9], and further details on the glint and glare assessment is detailed in ES Volume 3, Appendix 5.4 [EN010149/APP/6.3].</p> <p>The glint and glare assessment presented in ES Volume 3, Appendix 5.4: Glint and Glare Study [EN010149/APP/6.3] has undertaken the assessment based on the technical assumption that the angle of the panels is set at 13 degrees above the horizontal. Changes to the angle within the parameters of 10 to 30 degrees are not expected to affect the modelling results and would be comparable to the effects that have been identified. Therefore, variable angles of the solar panels have not been considered in the assessment.</p>

	<p>5.5.58 Where a proposed energy infrastructure development would significantly impede or compromise the safe and effective use of civil or military aviation, meteorological radars, defence assets and/or significantly limit military training, the Secretary of State may consider the use of ‘Grampian conditions’, or other forms of requirement which relate to the use of current or future technological solutions, to mitigate impacts on legacy CNS equipment.</p>	<p>Appendix J-1-J2 of the Consultation Report [EN010149/APP/5.2] sets out CAA’s comments pertaining to glint and glare. CAA commented that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • glare from solar panels has the potential to cause disturbance to pilot’s eyesight particularly on approach to land and departure from a runway; • regard should be had to Aviation 2050 and GA Strategy 2015 which sets out the need to protect a national network of airfields, as well as NPS EN-1 which highlights the need to develop renewable energy infrastructure in collaboration with aviation receptors; • Hill Top Farm Microlights was not considered in any assessment despite its proximity to the Proposed Development and this should be included as part of the ES; and • RAF Digby is not listed as an aviation receptor in the Glint and Glare Assessment. <p>Engagement has been held with Hill Top Farm Microlights and the Civil Aviation Authority following the Phase Two Consultation and this receptor has been included within the Glint and Glare assessment. RAF Digby ceased flying in 1953 and the base is used by the tri-service Joint Service Signals Organisation, part of the Joint Forces Intelligence Group. This is not an active aviation base. Therefore, this receptor has not been included in the Glint and Glare assessment.</p> <p>ES Volume 3 Appendix 5.4: Solar photovoltaic glint and glare study [EN010149/APP/6.3] to Chapter 5: Approach</p>
<p>5.5.59 Where, after reasonable mitigation, operational changes, obligations and requirements have been proposed, the Secretary of State should consider whether:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a development would prevent a licensed aerodrome from maintaining its licence and the defence, or result in substantial local/national economic loss, or emergency service needs • it would cause harm to aerodromes’ training or emergency service needs • the development would impede or compromise the safe and effective use of defence assets or unacceptably limit military training • the development would have a negative impact on the safe and efficient provision of en-route air traffic 		

	<p>control services for civil aviation, in particular through an adverse effect on CNS infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the development would compromise the effective provision of weather warnings by the NSWWS, or flood warnings by the UK's flood agencies 	<p>to EIA of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] has undertaken an assessment of the potential impacts of glint and glare. Aviation safety has been considered within the glint and glare study.</p>
	<p>5.5.60 Provided that the Secretary of State is satisfied that the impacts of proposed energy developments do not present risks to national security and physical safety, and where they do, provided that the Secretary of State is satisfied that appropriate mitigation can be achieved, or appropriate requirements can be attached to any Development Consent Order to secure those mitigations, consent may be granted.</p>	<p>The Applicant is not aware of any matter in the Proposed Development that would present a safety or security related compromise to the MOD and its assets. However, engagement on specific matters, as set out above and within Appendix J-1-J2 of the Consultation Report [EN010149/APP/5.2], to the extent that information is available to be shared, will continue and will be reported to the Examining Authority, should the application be accepted, during Examination. To this end, the Application considers the Proposed Development is compliant with requirements.</p>
<p>5.7 - Dust, odour, artificial light, smoke, steam and insect infestation <i>Applicant Assessment</i></p>	<p>5.7.5 The applicant should assess the potential for insect infestation and emissions of odour, dust, steam, smoke, and artificial light to have a detrimental impact on amenity, as part of the ES.</p> <p>5.7.6 In particular, the assessment provided by the applicant should describe:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the type, quantity, and timing of emissions; aspects of the development which may give rise to emissions; 	<p>Chapter 6: Air Quality of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] assesses the effects of the Proposed Development on emissions of dust. An Air Quality Assessment is provided as ES Volume 3 Appendix 6.2: Air Quality Assessment of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.3]. A Plume Assessment [EN010149/APP/7.19] considers the potential impacts of a venting incident in relation to the BESS units. It concludes that the likelihood of an incident is once every 7,700 years. The outline Battery Safety Management Plan [EN010149/APP/7.14] sets out the safety measures proposed to be installed to reduce fire risk as well as fire protection measures.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> premises or locations that may be affected by the emissions; effects of the emission on identified premises or locations; measures to be employed in preventing or mitigating the emissions. 	<p>The Proposed Development is not anticipated to cause any effects from insect infestation steam, smell or other effluvia. Construction and decommissioning activities will be undertaken using best practice measures to minimise air emissions, as set out in the Statutory Nuisance Statement [EN010149/APP/7.5].</p> <p>These good site practice mitigation measures are incorporated into the oCEMP [EN010149/APP/7.7]. They are considered to be embedded mitigation and represent good industry practices that are part of the Proposed Development. The mitigation measures proposed for implementation during construction will also be appropriate for decommissioning as set out in the oDEMP [EN010149/APP/7.13].</p> <p>ES Volume 3 Appendix 5.4: Solar photovoltaic glint and glare study [EN010149/APP/6.3] to ES Volume 1 Chapter 5: Approach to EIA assessment of the potential impacts of glint and glare on surrounding road users, railway operations, dwellings and aviation activity.</p>
	<p>5.7.7 The applicant is advised to consult the relevant local planning authority and, where appropriate, the EA about the scope and methodology of the assessment.</p>	<p>As detailed in Chapter 6: Air Quality of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] and in the Consultation Report [EN010149/APP/5.1], the Applicant has been in consultation with the North Kesteven District Council Environmental Health Officer and Lincolnshire County Council Environmental Health Officer.</p>
<p><i>Mitigation</i></p>	<p>5.7.8 Mitigation measures may include one or more of the following:</p>	<p>Chapter 6: Air Quality of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] considers the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development on air quality and sets out measures for mitigation specific for each phase of the Proposed</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • engineering: prevention of a specific emission at the point of generation; control, containment and abatement of emissions if generated; • lay-out: adequate distance between source and sensitive receptors; reduced transport or handling of material; • administrative: limiting operating times; restricting activities allowed on the site; implementing management plans. 	<p>Development. These include but are not limited to, proper preparation and maintenance of the Site, sustainable travel, waste management, setbacks from woodlands, residential properties and Local Wildlife Sites, continued communication with the community and relevant stakeholders, site management and site monitoring/inspections.</p> <p>Mitigation measures are documented within and will be secured by the oCEMP [EN010149/APP/7.7], the oDEMP [EN010149/APP/7.13], ES Volume 3 Appendix 5.4: Solar photovoltaic glint and glare study [EN010149/APP/6.3] to Chapter 5: Approach to EIA of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] has undertaken an assessment of potential impacts of glint and glare on surrounding road users, railway operations, dwellings, PRow, bridleways and aviation activity. The assessment concludes that no impact is predicted from glint and glare; therefore, no mitigation measures are proposed.</p>
<p>5.7.9 Construction should be undertaken in a way that reduces emissions, for example the use of low emission mobile plant during the construction, and demolition phases as appropriate, and consideration should be given to making these mandatory in Development Consent Order requirements.</p>	<p>Chapter 6: Air Quality of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] considers the likely significant effects of construction and decommissioning and from demolition works (during construction and decommissioning phases) of the Proposed Development. A detailed dust risk assessment for the construction and decommissioning phases is presented in Appendix 6.2: Air Quality Assessment of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.3].</p>
<p>5.7.10 Demolition considerations should be embedded into designs at the outset to enable demolition techniques to be adopted that remove the need for explosive demolition.</p>	<p>Mitigation measures are documented within and will be secured by the oCEMP [EN010149/APP/7.7], oDEMP [EN010149/APP/7.13], the Design Approach Document [EN010149/APP/7.3] and Design Commitment [EN010149/APP/7.4].</p>

	<p>5.7.11 A construction management plan may help clarify and secure mitigation.</p>	<p>The DCO application includes an oCEMP [EN010149/APP/7.7]. Design Commitments [EN010149/APP/7.4] secures embedded mitigation measures and best practices related to air quality. More broadly, the DCO application includes an oCEMP [EN010149/APP/7.7] to secure both additional and embedded mitigation, which will be further developed into a detailed CEMP prior to the commencement of the construction phase.</p>
<p><i>Secretary of State decision making</i></p>	<p>5.7.12 The Secretary of State should satisfy itself that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an assessment of the potential for artificial light, dust, odour, smoke, steam and insect infestation to have a detrimental impact on amenity has been carried out • that all reasonable steps have been taken, and will be taken, to minimise any such detrimental impacts 	<p>Chapter 6: Air Quality of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] assesses the effects of the Proposed Development on emissions of dust. An Air Quality Assessment is provided as Appendix 6.2: Air Quality Assessment of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.3].</p> <p>The Proposed Development will not emit any odour. Construction and decommissioning activities will be undertaken with the use of best practice measures applied, as set out in the oCEMP [EN010149/APP/7.7] and oDEMP [EN010149/APP/7.13].</p> <p>As set out in the Design Approach Document [EN010149/APP/7.3], the Applicant recognises the importance of new planting and bunding to mitigate the Proposed Development.</p> <p>All relevant assessments covering artificial light, dust, odour, smoke, steam and insect infestation have been considered across the Environmental Statement [EN010149/APP/6.1].</p>
	<p>5.7.13 If development consent is granted for a project, the Secretary of State should</p>	<p>The Statutory Nuisance Statement [EN010149/APP/7.5] concludes that the only matters addressed by the EPA 1990</p>

	<p>consider whether there is a justification for all of the authorised project (including any associated development) to be covered by a defence of statutory authority against nuisance claims. If the Secretary of State cannot conclude that this is justified, the Secretary of State should disapply in whole or in part the defence through a provision in the Development Consent Order.</p>	<p>which have been assessed as potentially being significant for the Proposed Development are those associated with noise, dust, health, light and vibration. However, it is demonstrated in this Statement that the Proposed Development would not have significant effects following the implementation of the identified mitigation measures.</p>
	<p>5.7.14 Where the Secretary of State believes it appropriate, the Secretary of State may consider attaching requirements to the development consent, to secure certain mitigation measures.</p>	<p>The Applicant considers that all relevant mitigation has been secured via appropriate mechanisms within the draft Development Consent Order [EN010149/APP/3.1].</p>
	<p>5.7.15 In particular, the Secretary of State should consider whether to require the applicant to abide by a scheme of management and mitigation concerning insect infestation and emissions of odour, dust, steam, smoke, and artificial light from the development. The Secretary of State should consider the need for such a scheme to reduce any loss to amenity which might arise during the construction, operation and decommissioning of the development. A construction management plan may help codify mitigation at that stage.</p>	<p>No such effects are anticipated within the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1]. The Applicant considers that all relevant mitigation has been secured via appropriate mechanisms within the draft Development Consent Order [EN010149/APP/3.1].</p>
<p>Part 5.8 - Flood Risk</p>	<p>5.8.12 Development should be designed to ensure there is no increase in flood risk</p>	<p>Chapter 15: Water of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] confirms that flood risk during construction and at decommissioning</p>

	<p>elsewhere, accounting for the predicted impacts of climate change throughout the lifetime of the development. There should be no net loss of floodplain storage and any deflection or constriction of flood flow routes should be safely managed within the site. Mitigation measures should make as much use as possible of natural flood management techniques.</p>	<p>will be managed through the CEMP and DEMP, which will be secured by the DCO and required to be in substantial accordance with the oCEMP [EN010149/APP/7.7] and the oDEMP [EN010149/APP/7.13], respectively.</p> <p>As the Site is predominantly low-risk from flooding from all sources, the reasonable 'worst case' is limited to the placement of Solar PV modules and string inverters mounted on the panels within Flood Zone 2 and Flood Zone 3 towards the east of the Site.</p> <p>The residual flood risk will be negligible once mitigation is included. This will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A minimum offset of 6 m from ditches/ watercourses; • An Outline Drainage Strategy [Appendix to the FRA EN010149/APP/7.16]; • Anglian Water potable mains water supplies for welfare facilities for domestic use only; • Private supply of non-potable water to the Springwell Substation, BESS and other compounds (either via rainwater harvesting, private irrigation supplies, or provided via a bowser); • Vegetation Management; and • Foul water drainage via package treatment works. <p>The only operational elements of the Proposed Development in Flood Zones 3a and 3b are Solar PV modules. Once attached to the mounting structure, the minimum height of the lowest part of the Solar PV modules will be 0.8m above the existing ground level (AGL). This will be secured via the</p>
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		<p>Design Commitments [EN010149/APP/7.4] and as discussed and agreed with the Environmental Agency.</p> <p>Opportunities for environmental enhancement in relation to water are detailed in the Design Approach Document [EN010149/APP/7.3]</p> <p>Chapter 15: Water of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] assesses flood risk and drainage in the context of EIA. This concludes that with the proposed mitigation measures to be implemented as part of the CEMP and DEMP, no significant effects will arise in relation to water. Given the design mitigation secured through the OEMP, no significant adverse effects will be predicted on receptors with regard to flood risk during the operation of the Proposed Development.</p> <p>An Outline Drainage Strategy, which forms an appendix to the Flood Risk Assessment of the ES [EN010149/APP/7.16], has been prepared setting out how surface water will be managed across the Proposed Development to avoid an increase in flood risk elsewhere. The Outline Surface Water Drainage Strategy concludes that runoff will be attenuated via the local ditch/watercourse network (subject to infiltration testing and ditch network connectivity survey) within the Order Limits as per the existing conditions. A detailed Surface Water Drainage Strategy will be secured by a requirement of the draft DCO [EN010149/APP/3.1].</p>
<i>Application Assessment</i>	5.8.13 A site-specific flood risk assessment should be provided for all energy projects in Flood Zones 2 and 3 in England or Zones B and C in Wales. In Flood Zone 1 in England	The Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) [EN010149/APP/7.16] provides an assessment of flood risk to and from the Proposed Development from all sources of flooding. The FRA demonstrates how residual flood risk will be managed

	<p>or Zone A in Wales, an assessment should accompany all proposals involving:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sites of 1 hectare or more • land which has been identified by the EA or NRW as having critical drainage problems • land identified (for example in a local authority strategic flood risk assessment) as being at increased flood risk in future • land that may be subject to other sources of flooding (for example surface water) • where the EA or NRW, Lead Local Flood Authority, Internal Drainage Board or other body have indicated that there may be drainage problems. 	<p>during the construction, operation and decommissioning of the Proposed Development. The FRA meets all requirements set out within the policy.</p> <p>The Applicant has applied the Exception Test to the proposed Solar PV Development within Flood Zones 3a and 3b. The Applicant considers it appropriate to apply the Exception Test as the Sequential test has demonstrated that, at a site-specific level, there are no reasonably available lower-risk sites to locate the required solar PV development that would deliver the same amount of renewable energy in the same time period.</p>
	<p>5.8.14 This assessment should identify and assess the risks of all forms of flooding to and from the project and demonstrate how these flood risks will be managed, taking climate change into account.</p>	<p>The Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) [EN010149/APP/7.16] assesses flood risk to and from the Proposed Development from all sources of flooding. The FRA demonstrates how residual flood risk will be managed during the construction, operation and decommissioning of the Proposed Development and how the requirements of the Sequential Test and Exceptions Test are satisfied.</p>
	<p>5.8.15 The minimum requirements for Flood Risk Assessments (FRA) are that they should:</p>	<p>The Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) [EN010149/APP/7.16] provides an assessment of flood risk to and from the Proposed Development from all sources of flooding. The FRA demonstrates how residual flood risk will be managed during construction, operation and decommissioning of the</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be proportionate to the risk and appropriate to the scale, nature and location of the project; • consider the risk of flooding arising from the project in addition to the risk of flooding to the project; • take the impacts of climate change into account, across a range of climate scenarios, clearly stating the development lifetime over which the assessment has been made; • be undertaken by competent people, as early as possible in the process of preparing the proposal; • consider both the potential adverse and beneficial effects of flood risk management infrastructure, including raised defences, flow channels, flood storage areas and other artificial features, together with the consequences of their failure and exceedance; • consider the vulnerability of those using the site, including arrangements for safe access and escape; • consider and quantify the different types of flooding (whether from natural and human sources and including joint and cumulative effects) and include information on flood likelihood, speed- 	<p>Proposed Development and how the requirements of the Sequential Test and Exceptions Test are satisfied.</p> <p>The FRA meets all requirements set out within the policy.</p>
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	<p>of-onset, depth, velocity, hazard and duration;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• identify and secure opportunities to reduce the causes and impacts of flooding overall, making as much use as possible of natural flood management techniques as part of an integrated approach to flood risk management;• consider the effects of a range of flooding events including extreme events on people, property, the natural and historic environment and river and coastal processes;• include the assessment of the remaining (known as 'residual') risk after risk reduction measures have been taken into account and demonstrate that these risks can be safely managed, ensuring people will not be exposed to hazardous flooding;• consider how the ability of water to soak into the ground may change with development, along with how the proposed layout of the project may affect drainage systems. Information should include:<ul style="list-style-type: none">i. Describe the existing surface water drainage arrangements for the site	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">ii. Set out (approximately) the existing rates and volumes of surface water run-off generated by the site. Detail the proposals for restricting discharge ratesiii. Set out proposals for managing and discharging surface water from the site using sustainable drainage systems and accounting for the predicted impacts of climate change. If sustainable drainage systems have been rejected, present clear evidence of why their inclusion would be inappropriateiv. Demonstrate how the hierarchy of drainage options has been followed.v. Explain and justify why the types of SuDS and method of discharge have been selected and why they are considered appropriate.vi. Explain how sustainable drainage systems have been integrated with other aspects of the development such as open space or green infrastructure, so as to ensure an efficient use of the site	
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	<p>vii. Describe the multifunctional benefits the sustainable drainage system will provide</p> <p>viii. Set out which opportunities to reduce the causes and impacts of flooding have been identified and included as part of the proposed sustainable drainage system</p> <p>ix. Explain how run-off from the completed development will be prevented from causing an impact elsewhere</p> <p>x. Explain how the sustainable drainage system been designed to facilitate maintenance and, where relevant, adoption. Set out plans for ensuring an acceptable standard of operation and maintenance throughout the lifetime of the development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• detail those measures that will be included to ensure the development will be safe and remain operational during a flooding event throughout the development's lifetime without increasing flood risk elsewhere;• identify and secure opportunities to reduce the causes and impacts of	
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<p>flooding overall during the period of construction; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be supported by appropriate data and information, including historical information on previous events. 	
<p>5.8.16 Further guidance can be found in the Planning Practice Guidance Flood Risk and Coastal Change section which accompanies the NPPF, TAN15 for Wales or successor documents.</p>	<p>Chapter 15: Water of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] considers relevant sections of the Planning Practice Guidance, the NPPF, and the government’s associated planning guidance on water.</p>
<p>5.8.17 Development (including construction works) will need to account for any existing watercourses and flood and coastal erosion risk management structures or features, or any land likely to be needed for future structures or features so as to ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access, clearances and sufficient land are retained to enable their maintenance, repair, operation, and replacement, as necessary • Their standard of protection is not reduced • Their condition or structural integrity is not reduced 	<p>Chapter 15: Water of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] presents the assessment of the likely significant effects on surface water bodies (e.g. rivers, streams, ditches, canals, lakes and ponds) proposed mitigation measure to offset a minimum of 6 m from ditches/ watercourses to ensure no erosion of the banking of the watercourses which could result in degradation of water quality.</p> <p>The oCEMP, oOEMP and oDEMP include measures to protect watercourses.</p> <p>The submitted Outline Surface Water Drainage Strategy [EN010149/APP/7.16] sets out the framework for the detailed drainage scheme to ensure that surface water runoff is attenuated to greenfield runoff rates and managed, including dealing with risk management associated with potentially contaminated water associated with fire water runoff. The Outline Surface Water Drainage Strategy [EN010149/APP/7.16] also sets out details with respect to future management and maintenance.</p>

		<p>It is predicted that there would be a negligible impact on any receiving water feature from surface water runoff or any land likely to be needed for future structures or features. The Proposed Development would not adversely impact any of these features.</p>
	<p>5.8.18 Applicants for projects which may be affected by, or may add to, flood risk should arrange pre-application discussions before the official pre-application stage of the NSIP process with the EA or NRW, and, where relevant, other bodies such as Lead Local Flood Authorities, Internal Drainage Boards, sewerage undertakers, navigation authorities, highways authorities and reservoir owners and operators.</p>	<p>In preparing the FRA and the ES, the Applicant has considered advice and taken account of feedback received through consultation with key bodies, including the Environment Agency (EA), the Lead Local Flood Authorities (LLFAs) and the Internal Drainage Boards (IDBs). Listed below are the statutory consultees and stakeholders that have provided comments in relation to the water environment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environment Agency; • Witham First Internal Drainage Board; • Lead Local Flood Authority (Lincolnshire County Council); and • North Kesteven District Council.
	<p>5.8.19 Such discussions should identify the likelihood and possible extent and nature of the flood risk, help scope the FRA, and identify the information that will be required by the Secretary of State to reach a decision on the application when it is submitted. The Secretary of State should advise applicants to undertake these steps where they appear necessary but have not yet been addressed.</p>	<p>The Consultation Report [EN010149/APP/5.1] sets out that a key changes made by the Applicant in response to feedback from Phase One consultation was the removal of fields in Springwell West located within area of Flood Zones 2 and 3. Changes to the Proposed Development following Phase Two consultation including deducing the maximum proposed height of the solar panels from 3.5 metres to 3 metres, with 3.5 metre panels proposed in areas of flood risk (from 4 metres).</p>
	<p>5.8.20 If the EA, NRW or another flood risk management authority has reasonable concerns about the proposal on flood risk grounds, the applicant should discuss these concerns with the EA or NRW and take all</p>	<p>The only operational element of the Proposed Development in Flood Zone 3a and 3b is Solar PV development. Once</p>

	<p>reasonable steps to agree ways in which the proposal might be amended, or additional information provided, which would satisfy the authority's concerns.</p>	<p>attached to the mounting structure, the minimum height of the lowest part of the Solar PV modules will be 0.8m above the existing ground level (AGL). This will be secured via the Design Commitments [EN010149/APP/7.4] and as discussed and agreed with the Environmental Agency.</p> <p>The Applicant therefore considers that the Proposed Development complies with the Exception Test requirements set out in paragraph 5.8.11 of EN-1. It is considered also noteworthy that the areas of the Site which are in Flood Zones 2 and 3 benefit from an extant permission for a solar farm (NKDC reference 14/0937/FUL) and no objection from the Environmental Agency.</p>
	<p>5.8.21 The Sequential Test ensures that a sequential, risk-based approach is followed to steer new development to areas with the lowest risk of flooding, taking all sources of flood risk and climate change into account. Where it is not possible to locate development in low-risk areas, the Sequential Test should go on to compare reasonably available sites with medium risk areas and then, only where there are no reasonably available sites in low and medium risk areas, within high-risk areas.</p>	<p>The Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) [EN010149/APP/7.16] demonstrates that a sequential approach has been applied in selecting the land for the Proposed Development and to the subsequent layout and design of the solar infrastructure within the Site.</p> <p>The sequential approach has resulted in all electrical infrastructure and the majority of the solar PV development being located in Flood Zone 1. There is one area east of Springwell East within Flood Zones 2 and 3 where solar PV development is proposed. The Applicant has considered other locations within the available land within Flood Zone 1 to accommodate solar PV development; however, these land parcels were less suitable when other environmental, planning, and design factors were considered, for instance, proximity to communities and landscape and visual.</p> <p>The only operational element of the Proposed Development in Flood Zone 3a and 3b is Solar PV modules. Once</p>

		<p>attached to the mounting structure, the minimum height of the lowest part of the Solar PV modules will be 0.8m above the existing ground level (AGL).</p> <p>Whilst these parts could be excluded from solar development, this would not make the best use of land, or maximise the energy generation of the Site, in line with government policy. In understanding the extent to which flooding could impact this particular area of the Proposed Development, the Applicant committed to ensuring that only solar PV modules may be developed outside of Flood Zone 1, in accordance with Design Commitment F1 [EN010149/APP/7.4].</p> <p>The Site Selection Report in Appendix A of this document sets out the process and criteria through which the Applicant determined appropriate sites to deliver its objective. Site selection requires the balancing up of a number of different criteria, many of which are subject to their own policy tests within the NPS. None of the sites identified at the site selection stage were identified as showing high risk in relation to flooding, i.e. the vast majority of all sites were shown to be in Flood Zone 1 with smaller areas of higher risk in each instance. In a similar scenario as the level of BMV across other considered sites, the characteristics of each site relating to flooding were even. So, flood risk was not a differentiating factor at the site selection stage. The Applicant considers that the Sequential Test has been properly applied in relation to site selection.</p>
	5.8.22 The technology specific NPSs set out some exceptions to the application of the	The Applicant applied a sequential approach to the layout and design of the Proposed Development. Flood Zone 1

	<p>Sequential Test. However, when seeking development consent on a site allocated in a development plan through the application of the Sequential Test, informed by a strategic flood risk assessment, applicants need not apply the Sequential Test, provided the proposed development is consistent with the use for which the site was allocated and there is no new flood risk information that would have affected the outcome of the test.</p>	<p>covers the vast majority of the Order Limits with a small area of a mixture of Flood Zones 2 and 3 in the east of Springwell East. The Applicant therefore considers that the Proposed Development complies with the Exception Test requirements set out in paragraph 5.8.11 of EN-1. It is considered also noteworthy that the areas of the Site which are in Flood Zones 2 and 3 benefit from an extant permission for a solar farm (NKDC reference 14/0937/FUL) and no objection from the Environmental Agency, and therefore, in theory, that development could be carried out in this location.</p>
	<p>5.8.23 Consideration of alternative sites should take account of the policy on alternatives set out in Section 4.3 above. All projects should apply the Sequential Test to locating development within the site.</p>	<p>As part of the Design Evolution for the Proposed Development, as set out in more detail in the Design Approach Document [EN010149/APP/7.3], the land which is available for development has been shaped by the Project Principles. In addition, it has responded to the environmental assessment process, consultation feedback and engagement with stakeholders via an iterative design process. The Applicant undertook a systematic process to determine suitable sites for the Proposed Development, which was framed at a macro level using principles of good design. An area of Springwell West formerly included land in Flood Zones 2 and 3 at non-statutory consultation but was subsequently removed on the basis of a combination of its flood risk and BMV land status.</p> <p>The sequential approach has resulted in all electrical infrastructure and the majority of the solar PV development being located in Flood Zone 1. There is one area in the east of Springwell East within Flood Zones 2 and 3 where solar PV development is proposed. The Applicant has considered other locations within the available land within Flood Zone 1</p>

		<p>to accommodate solar PV development, however, these land parcels were less suitable when other environmental, planning and design factors were considered, for instance proximity to communities and landscape and visual. Whilst these parts could be excluded from solar development, this would not make the best use of land, or maximise the energy generation of the Site, in line with government policy. In understanding the extent to which flooding could impact this particular area of the Proposed Development the Applicant committed to ensure that only solar PV modules may be developed outside of Flood Zone 1, in accordance with Design Commitment F1 [EN010149/APP/7.4]. In addition, and as set out in the Project Description in Chapter 3 to the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] and secured in the Project Parameters, Appendix 3.1 [EN010149/APP/6.3] the lowest height of any solar PV Modules would be above the maximum flood height level. This level is 0.8m above the existing ground level and above the calculated flood level for the maximum credible flooding scenario from all sources.</p>
<p><i>Mitigation</i></p>	<p>5.8.24 To satisfactorily manage flood risk, arrangements are required to manage surface water and the impact of the natural water cycle on people and property.</p>	<p>Chapter 15: Water of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] considers the potential impacts on water quality of watercourses, water quality, Water Framework Directive waterbody – Metheringham Beck, and water resources. Section 15.6 of the Proposed Development sets out the mitigation measures set out to manage surface water and flood risk including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perimeter fencing surrounding the Solar PV development will be offset at least 6m either side from all existing ditches where crossing is not required,

		<p>secured through Design Commitments [EN010149/APP/7.4];</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An Outline Drainage Strategy, secured through Flood Risk Assessment [EN010149/APP/7.16]; and • Vegetation Management, secured through oLEMP [EN010149/APP/7.9].
	<p>5.8.25 In this NPS, the term SuDS refers to the whole range of sustainable approaches to surface water drainage management including, where appropriate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • source control measures including rainwater recycling and drainage • infiltration devices to allow water to soak into the ground, that can include individual soakaways and communal facilities • filter strips and swales, which are vegetated features that hold and drain water downhill mimicking natural drainage patterns • filter drains and porous pavements to allow rainwater and run-off to infiltrate into permeable material below ground and provide storage if needed • basins, ponds and tanks to hold excess water after rain and allow controlled discharge that avoids flooding 	<p>The proposed surface water drainage design set out in the Outline Drainage Strategy which forms an appendix to the FRA of the ES [EN010149/APP/7.16] demonstrates that sustainable drainage techniques have been designed into the Proposed Development and will be maintained by the Applicant, or another private operator to be confirmed and secured through the DCO [EN010149/APP/3.1].</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • flood routes to carry and direct excess water through developments to minimise the impact of severe rainfall flooding 	
<p>5.8.26 Site layout and surface water drainage systems should cope with events that exceed the design capacity of the system, so that excess water can be safely stored on or conveyed from the site without adverse impacts.</p>	<p>Chapter 15: Water of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] assesses flood risk and drainage in the context of EIA. This concludes that with the proposed mitigation measures to be implemented as part of the CEMP and DEMP, there will be no significant effects arising in relation to water. Given the design mitigation secured through the OEMP, there will be no significant adverse effects predicted upon receptors with regard to flood risk during the operation of the Proposed Development.</p>
<p>5.8.27 The surface water drainage arrangements for any project should, accounting for the predicted impacts of climate change throughout the development's lifetime, be such that the volumes and peak flow rates of surface water leaving the site are no greater than the rates prior to the proposed project, unless specific off-site arrangements are made and result in the same net effect.</p>	<p>An Outline Drainage Strategy which forms an appendix to the FRA [EN010149/APP/7.16] has been prepared, accounting for predicted impacts of climate change, setting out how surface water will be managed across the Proposed Development to avoid an increase in flood risk elsewhere. The Outline Drainage Strategy concludes that runoff will be attenuated via local ditch / watercourse network (subject to infiltration testing and ditch network connectivity survey) within the Order Limits as per the existing conditions. A detailed Drainage Strategy will be secured by a requirement of the draft DCO [EN010149/APP/3.1].</p> <p>The proposed surface water drainage design set out in the Outline Drainage Strategy demonstrates that sustainable drainage techniques have been designed into the Proposed Development and will be maintained by the Applicant, or</p>

		<p>another private operator to be confirmed and secured through the DCO.</p>
	<p>5.8.28 It may be necessary to provide surface water storage and infiltration to limit and reduce both the peak rate of discharge from the site and the total volume discharged from the site. There may be circumstances where it is appropriate for infiltration facilities or attenuation storage to be provided outside the project site, if necessary through the use of a planning obligation.</p>	<p>An Outline Drainage Strategy which forms an appendix to the FRA of the ES [EN010149/APP/7.16] has been prepared setting out how surface water will be managed across the Proposed Development to avoid an increase in flood risk elsewhere. The Outline Drainage Strategy concludes that runoff will be attenuated via local ditch / watercourse network (subject to infiltration testing and ditch network connectivity survey) within the Order Limits as per the existing conditions. A detailed Drainage Strategy will be secured by a requirement of the draft DCO [EN010149/APP/3.1].</p> <p>The proposed surface water drainage design set out in the Outline Drainage Strategy which forms an appendix to the FRA of the ES [EN010149/APP/7.16] demonstrates that sustainable drainage techniques have been designed into the Proposed Development and will be maintained by the Applicant, or another private operator to be confirmed and secured through the DCO.</p>
	<p>5.8.29 The sequential approach should be applied to the layout and design of the project. Vulnerable aspects of the development should be located on parts of the site at lower risk and residual risk of flooding. Applicants should seek opportunities to use open space for multiple purposes such as amenity, wildlife.</p>	<p>The Applicant applied a sequential approach to the layout and design of the Proposed Development. Flood Zone 1 covers the vast majority of the Order Limits with a small area of a mixture of Flood Zones 2 and 3 in the east of Springwell East. An area of Springwell West formerly included land in Flood Zones 2 and 3 at non-statutory consultation but was subsequently removed on the basis of a combination of its flood risk and BMV land status.</p> <p>The sequential approach has resulted in all electrical infrastructure and the majority of the solar PV development</p>

		<p>being located in Flood Zone 1. There is one area in the east of Springwell East within Flood Zones 2 and 3 where solar PV development is proposed. The Applicant has considered other locations within the available land within Flood Zone 1 to accommodate solar PV development. However, these land parcels were less suitable when other environmental, planning and design factors were considered, for instance, proximity to communities and landscape and visual. Whilst these parts could be excluded from solar development, this would not make the best use of land, or maximise the energy generation of the Site, in line with government policy. In understanding the extent to which flooding could impact this particular area of the Proposed Development the Applicant committed to ensure that only solar PV modules may be developed outside of Flood Zone 1, in accordance with Design Commitment F1 [EN010149/APP/7.4]. In addition, and as set out in the Project Description in Chapter 3 to the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] and secured in the Project Parameters [EN010149/APP/6.3], the lowest height of any solar PV Modules would be above the maximum flood height level. This level is 0.8m above the existing ground level and above the calculated flood level for the maximum credible flooding scenario from all sources.</p>
	<p>5.8.30 Where a development may result in an increase in flood risk elsewhere through the loss of flood storage, on-site level-for-level compensatory storage, accounting for the predicted impacts of climate change over the lifetime of the development, should be provided.</p>	<p>The Proposed Development would not result in an increase in flood risk elsewhere and will not materially remove floodplain volume and not require compensatory storage to be provided.</p> <p>A requirement of the DCO will ensure that the detailed design is substantially in accordance with the Design</p>

<p>5.8.31 Where it is not possible to provide compensatory storage on site, it may be acceptable to provide it off-site if it is hydraulically and hydrologically linked. Where development may cause the deflection or constriction of flood flow routes, these will need to be safely managed within the site.</p>	<p>Approach Document [EN010149/APP/7.3] and Design Commitment [EN010149/APP/7.4].</p>
<p>5.8.32 Where development may contribute to a cumulative increase in flood risk elsewhere, the provision of multifunctional sustainable drainage systems, natural flood management and green infrastructure can also make a valuable contribution to mitigating this risk whilst providing wider benefits.</p>	<p>Chapter 15: Water of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] sets out that there is the potential for cumulative effects during construction. However, with the embedded mitigation measures in place, and considering there are no significant effects identified for the Site, it is considered that there are no significant cumulative overall effects on the water environment receptors.</p>
<p>5.8.33 The receipt of and response to warnings of floods is an essential element in the management of the residual risk of flooding. Flood Warning and evacuation plans should be in place for those areas at an identified risk of flooding.</p>	<p>As set out in Chapter 15: Water of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] the Contractor and the Applicant will be required to produce an oCEMP [EN010149/APP/7.7], oOEMP [EN010149/APP/7.10], and oDEMP [EN010149/APP/7.13], which ensure that site managers are registered with the Environment Agency's Flood Warning system to provide adequate forewarning in the event of a predicted flood for site personal within the northeastern region of the Site to evacuate to an area of safe refuge, upgradient, to the west.</p>
<p>5.8.34 The applicant should take advice from the local authority emergency planning team, emergency services and, where appropriate, from the local resilience forum when producing an evacuation plan for a manned energy project as part of the FRA. Any emergency planning documents, flood warning and evacuation procedures that are required should be identified in the FRA.</p>	

	<p>5.8.35 Flood resistant and resilient materials and design should be adopted to minimise damage and speed recovery in the event of a flood.</p>	<p>The Proposed Development has been designed to safeguard the water environment through being resilient to flooding now and in the future, as set out in the Design Approach Document [EN010149/APP/7.3] and Design Commitment [EN010149/APP/7.4].</p>
<p><i>Secretary of State decision making</i></p>	<p>5.8.36 In determining an application for development consent, the Secretary of State should be satisfied that where relevant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the application is supported by an appropriate FRA • the Sequential Test has been applied and satisfied as part of site selection • a sequential approach has been applied at the site level to minimise risk by directing the most vulnerable uses to areas of lowest flood risk • the proposal is in line with any relevant national and local flood risk management strategy • SuDS (as required in the next paragraph on National Standards) have been used unless there is clear evidence that their use would be inappropriate • in flood risk areas the project is designed and constructed to remain safe and operational during its lifetime, without increasing flood risk elsewhere 	<p>The FRA is provided [EN010149/APP/7.16] and demonstrates how the Proposed Development meets the requirements of the Sequential Test and Exception Tests. It concludes that the Proposed Development would not result in any increase in flood risk from all sources to and from the Proposed Development.</p> <p>The FRA [EN010149/APP/7.16] demonstrates that a sequential approach has been applied in selecting the land for the Proposed Development and to the subsequent layout and design of the solar infrastructure within the Site. This demonstrates that the Sequential Test has been met with respect to the Site, which is predominantly located in Flood Zone 1, with a region in the northeastern corner of the Site that lies within Flood Zone 2 and 3. The test is deemed to have been passed.</p> <p>The Exception Test has been passed in relation to the Site owing to the wider sustainability benefits that the Proposed Development will deliver and the fact that it will remain safe throughout its lifetime without increasing flood risk elsewhere.</p> <p>The FRA has been undertaken in accordance with NPPF and the methodology and criteria provided for the application of the Sequential Test and Exception Test within the PPG. It</p>

	<p>(subject to the exceptions set out in paragraph 5.8.42)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the project includes safe access and escape routes where required, as part of an agreed emergency plan, and that any residual risk can be safely managed over the lifetime of the development land that is likely to be needed for present or future flood risk management infrastructure has been appropriately safeguarded from development to the extent that development would not prevent or hinder its construction, operation or maintenance 	<p>is also consistent with the Local Planning Authority requirements with regard to flood risk.</p> <p>The FRA considers measures incorporated into the Proposed Development to allow for safe access and ensures that any residual risk can be managed over the lifetime of the Proposed Development.</p> <p>An Outline Drainage Strategy, which forms an appendix to the FRA [EN010149/APP/7.16], has been prepared, setting out how surface water will be managed across the Proposed Development to avoid an increase in flood risk elsewhere. Surface water runoff generated by the Proposed Development will be attenuated and discharged to an appropriate location, using Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and following the drainage hierarchy where possible. The Outline Drainage Strategy concludes that runoff will be attenuated via local ditch/watercourse network (subject to infiltration testing and ditch network connectivity survey) within the Order Limits as per the existing conditions. A detailed Surface Water Drainage Strategy will be secured by a requirement of the draft DCO [EN010149/APP/3.1].</p> <p>The design evolution of the Proposed Development applied a sequential approach to the layout and design of infrastructure within the Principal Site, which involved locating vulnerable infrastructure that is critical to maintaining the supply of electricity in areas with the lowest risk of flooding from any source. As the Site is at predominantly low risk from flooding from all sources, the reasonable 'worst case' that is assessed on ES Volume 1 Chapter 15: Water [EN010149/APP/6.1] is limited to the placement of Solar PV</p>
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		<p>modules and string inverters mounted on the panels within Flood Zone 2 and Flood Zone 3 towards the east of the Site. Given the above, the Sequential Test, has, where relevant, been met for site selection and design with the Proposed Development being in accordance with NPS EN-1, the NPPF and associated PPG with respect to flood risk.</p> <p>To the best of the Applicant's knowledge, there is no requirement for any of the land within the Order Limits to be safeguarded for future flood risk management.</p>
	<p>5.8.37 For energy projects which have drainage implications, approval for the project's drainage system, including during the construction period, will form part of the development consent issued by the Secretary of State. The Secretary of State will therefore need to be satisfied that the proposed drainage system complies with any National Standards published by Ministers under paragraph 5(1) of Schedule 3 to the Flood and Water Management Act 2010.</p>	<p>An Outline Drainage Strategy, which forms an appendix to the FRA [EN010149/APP/7.16], has been prepared, setting out how surface water will be managed across the Proposed Development to avoid an increase in flood risk elsewhere. Surface water runoff generated by the Proposed Development will be attenuated and discharged to an appropriate location, using Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and following the drainage hierarchy where possible. A detailed Drainage Strategy will be secured as DCO Requirement 10.</p> <p>Chapter 15: Water of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] has considered the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 in its assessment of the Proposed Development.</p>
	<p>5.8.38 In addition, the Development Consent Order, or any associated planning obligations, will need to make provision for appropriate operation and maintenance of any SuDS throughout the project's lifetime. Where this is secured through the adoption of</p>	<p>An Outline Drainage Strategy, which forms an appendix to the FRA [EN010149/APP/7.16], has been prepared, setting out how surface water will be managed across the Proposed Development to avoid an increase in flood risk elsewhere. The Outline Drainage Strategy concludes that runoff will be attenuated via local ditch/watercourse network (subject to infiltration testing and ditch network connectivity survey)</p>

<p>any SuDS features, any necessary access rights to property will need to be granted.</p>	<p>within the Order Limits as per the existing conditions. A detailed Drainage Strategy will be secured by a requirement of the draft DCO [EN010149/APP/3.1].</p>
<p>5.8.39 Where relevant, the Secretary of State should be satisfied that the most appropriate body is being given the responsibility for maintaining any SuDS, taking into account the nature and security of the infrastructure on the proposed site. Responsible bodies could include, for example the landowner, the relevant lead local flood authority or water and sewerage company (through the Ofwat approved Sewerage Sector Guidance), or another body, such as an Internal Drainage Board.</p>	<p>The recommendations set out in the Outline Drainage Strategy which forms an appendix to the Flood Risk Assessment [EN010149/APP/7.16] include that all SuDS features to be designed in accordance with the CIRIA C753 SuDS Manual, to ensure that surface water runoff discharged from the Site will be of an acceptable standard by following best design practices.</p>
<p>5.8.40 If the EA, NRW or another flood risk management authority continues to have concerns and objects to the grant of development consent on the grounds of flood risk, the Secretary of State can grant consent, but would need to be satisfied before deciding whether or not to do so that all reasonable steps have been taken by the applicant and the authority to try to resolve the concerns.</p>	<p>The Applicant considers that there is no flood risk related grounds that may trigger this clause.</p>
<p>5.8.41 Energy projects should not normally be consented within Flood Zone 3b, or Zone C2 in Wales, or on land expected to fall within these zones within its predicted lifetime. This</p>	<p>The FRA [EN010149/APP/7.16] and Chapter 15: Water of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] demonstrate that Site is at predominantly low risk from flooding from all sources, the reasonable 'worst case' is limited to the placement of Solar</p>

	<p>may also apply where land is subject to other sources of flooding (for example surface water). However, where essential energy infrastructure has to be located in such areas, for operational reasons, they should only be consented if the development will not result in a net loss of floodplain storage, and will not impede water flows.</p>	<p>PV modules and string inverters mounted on the panels within Flood Zone 2 and Flood Zone 3 towards the east of the Site. As shown in Plate 3.7 within Appendix B.7 of the Flood Risk Assessment.</p> <p>The Proposed Development includes 11.8ha of solar panels which fall within Flood Zone 3b. The Applicant notes the following in relation to this paragraph:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Environment Agency has confirmed that it is supportive of locating solar panels (but not built structures as noted above) within Flood Zone 3b provided that the minimum height of the lowest part of the Solar PV modules is 0.8m above the existing ground level (AGL). This will be secured via the Project Parameters and Design Commitments [EN010149/APP/7.4] (ref. F1). - The areas of Flood Zone 3b where solar is proposed fall within areas that have already been consented for solar development by virtue of the extant consent (ref: 14/0937/FUL). They could therefore be developed as a realistic fallback position under this extant consent. - As explained above for the rest of Flood Zone 3, areas outside of Flood Zone 3b were considered by the Applicant, but excluded on the basis that there were other planning and environmental considerations that made them less suitable than the areas in Flood Zone 3b. - The areas of Flood Zone 3b cover small portions of fields the majority of which fall within Flood Zone 1, including in some cases, small parts of the centre of fields which are very suitable for solar development. In
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		<p>this case, it would not be maximising the renewable energy generation of the Proposed Development, by excluding small areas of fields the rest of which fall outside areas at risk of flooding.</p> <p>This paragraph makes an allowance for some projects to be consented in Flood Zone 3b, on the basis that the wording is that they should not normally be consented. In this case, there are good reasons for including land in Flood Zone 3b, as explained above. The Proposed Development is also essential energy infrastructure which has to be located where it can be connected to the grid and will not result in a net loss of floodplain storage or impede water flows. On this basis, the Proposed Development is considered to comply with paragraph 5.8.41, as an acknowledged exception.</p> <p>The residual flood risk will be negligible once mitigation is included, and the Proposed Development will not result in a net loss of floodplain storage and will not impede water flows.</p>
	<p>5.8.42 Exceptionally, where an increase in flood risk elsewhere cannot be avoided or wholly mitigated, the Secretary of State may grant consent if they are satisfied that the increase in present and future flood risk can be mitigated to an acceptable and safe level and taking account of the benefits of, including the need for, nationally significant energy infrastructure as set out in Part 3 above. In any such case the Secretary of State should make clear how, in reaching</p>	<p>Chapter 15: Water of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] confirms that the Proposed Development would not result in an increase in flood risk elsewhere.</p> <p>The Proposed Development will provide wider sustainability benefits to the community, including job creation in the local area during construction and decommissioning, that outweigh its impacts on flood risk. Through the generation of renewable and low carbon electricity, the Proposed Development is considered nationally significant and will contribute to the critical and urgent need to decarbonise electricity generation and contribute to the UKs obligations</p>

	<p>their decision, they have weighed up the increased flood risk against the benefits of the project, taking account of the nature and degree of the risk, the future impacts on climate change, and advice provided by the EA or NRW and other relevant bodies.</p>	<p>for Net Zero. Appropriate mitigation measures have been considered to ensure the Proposed Development is safe for its lifetime.</p>
<p>Part 5.9 - Historic Environment <i>Applicant Assessment</i></p>	<p>5.9.9 The applicant should undertake an assessment of any likely significant heritage impacts of the proposed development as part of the EIA, and describe these along with how the mitigation hierarchy has been applied in the ES (see Section 4.3). This should include consideration of heritage assets above, at, and below the surface of the ground. Consideration will also need to be given to the possible impacts, including cumulative, on the wider historic environment. The assessment should include reference to any historic landscape or seascape character assessment and associated studies as a means of assessing impacts relevant to the proposed project.</p>	<p>Chapter 9: Cultural Heritage of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] provides an assessment of the Proposed Development on the historic environment, including above, at, and below ground assets.</p> <p>It concludes that there will be no significant impacts to any designated or non-designated heritage assets, including Listed Buildings or Historic Landscape Character as a result of the Proposed Development. There would be a significant beneficial effect of the Proposed Development on Scheduled remains of former village of Brauncewell as a result of the creation of permissive path to improve access to monument.</p> <p>Chapter 9: Cultural Heritage of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] concludes there would be no significant impacts to any designated or non-designated heritage assets as a result of the Proposed Development once embedded and additional mitigation measures are implemented. The significance of heritage assets within the study area (including the contribution made by setting) is set out in Appendix 9.1: Archaeological Desk-based Assessment and Stage 1 Setting Assessment.</p>
	<p>5.9.10 As part of the ES the applicant should provide a description of the significance of the heritage assets affected by the proposed development, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the importance of the heritage assets and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact</p>	

<p>of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum, the applicant should have consulted the relevant Historic Environment Record (or, where the development is in English or Welsh waters, Historic England or Cadw) and assessed the heritage assets themselves using expertise where necessary according to the proposed development's impact.</p>	
<p>5.9.11 Where a site on which development is proposed includes, or the available evidence suggests it has the potential to include, heritage assets with an archaeological interest, the applicant should carry out appropriate desk-based assessment and, where such desk-based research is insufficient to properly assess the interest, a field evaluation. Where proposed development will affect the setting of a heritage asset, accurate representative visualisations may be necessary to explain the impact.</p>	<p>An ES Volume 1 Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment forms Appendix 9.1 [EN010149/APP/6.3] of Chapter 9: Cultural Heritage of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1].</p> <p>Archaeological trial trench evaluation has been undertaken for the Proposed Development and potential impacts to buried archaeological features confirmed as being present within the Order limits is included within Chapter 9: Cultural Heritage of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1]. The trial trench report is submitted alongside the application as Appendix 9.5 of the ES Volume 3 [EN010149/APP/6.3].</p> <p>Appendix 9.1 also includes a stage 1 setting assessment identifying the contribution of setting to the significance of heritage assets within the study area and those assets where the Proposed Development would result in changes to their setting that could lead to likely significant effects.</p>
<p>5.9.12 The applicant should ensure that the extent of the impact of the proposed development on the significance of any heritage assets affected can be adequately understood from the application and</p>	<p>Chapter 9: Cultural Heritage of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] provides an assessment of the Proposed Development on the historic environment, including at and below ground assets.</p>

	<p>supporting documents. Studies will be required on those heritage assets affected by noise, vibration, light and indirect impacts, the extent and detail of these studies will be proportionate to the significance of the heritage asset affected.</p>	<p>It concludes that there will be no significant impacts to any designated or non-designated heritage assets, including Listed Buildings or Historic Landscape Character as a result of the Proposed Development. There would be a significant beneficial effect of the Proposed Development on Scheduled remains of former village of Brauncewell as a result of the creation of permissive path to improve access to monument.</p> <p>Chapter 9: Cultural Heritage of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] concludes there would be no significant impacts to any designated or non-designated heritage assets as a result of the Proposed Development once embedded and additional mitigation measures are implemented. The assessment is supported by studies in Volume 3 [EN010149/APP/6.3] of the ES, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appendix 9.1 Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment; • Appendix 9.2 Desk-Based Geoarchaeological Deposit Modelling Report; • Appendix 9.3 Aerial Investigation Report; • Appendix 9.4 Grid Connection Route, Lincolnshire: Geophysical Survey Report; • Appendix 9.5 Geophysical Survey; and • Appendix 9.6 Archaeological Trial Trenching Report.
	<p>5.9.13 The applicant is encouraged, where opportunities exist, to prepare proposals which can make a positive contribution to the historic environment, and to consider how their scheme takes account of the</p>	<p>Section 9.6 of ES Volume 1 Chapter 9: Cultural Heritage outlines the mitigation measures embedded within the Proposed Development design in relation to cultural heritage.</p>

	<p>significance of heritage assets affected. This can include, where possible:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enhancing, through a range of measures such a sensitive design, the significance of heritage assets or setting affected • considering where required the development of archive capacity which could deliver significant public benefits • considering how visual or noise impacts can affect heritage assets, and whether there may be opportunities to enhance access to, or interpretation, understanding and appreciation of, the heritage assets affected by the scheme 	<p>It details that the Proposed Development design has been carefully considered to avoid, reduce or mitigate potentially significant effects on the cultural heritage and archaeological assets. Heritage mitigation measures which have been embedded into the design of the Proposed Development include avoidance, where possible, of heritage assets or archaeological remains.</p> <p>The construction and decommissioning of the Proposed Development has been designed to take into account the impacts of haulage and access, noise generation, dust generation and lighting on heritage assets.</p> <p>The Draft Order limits have been designed to avoid or minimise potential changes to the setting of designated heritage assets including Scheduled Monuments, Grade I, Grade II and Grade II* listed buildings.</p> <p>Mitigation measures have included avoiding areas with known or suspected below-ground archaeological deposits and avoiding changes to the setting of designated and non-designated heritage assets through amendments to the Proposed Development layout including exclusion of Solar PV modules from areas which contribute to the significance of heritage assets and proposed additional vegetation screening.</p> <p>As set out in the oLEMP [EN010149/APP/7.9] the Proposed Development takes into consideration the surrounding landscape character to screen views to or from some heritage assets, respecting historic field boundaries and patterns.</p>
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	<p>5.9.14 Careful consideration in preparing the scheme will be required on whether the impacts on the historic environment will be direct or indirect, temporary, or permanent.</p>	<p>Chapter 9: Cultural Heritage of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] assesses the likely impacts of the Proposed Development on cultural heritage, including direct and indirect, and temporary or permanent effects. There would be no significant adverse effects on designated or non-designated heritage assets. There would be a significant beneficial effect of the Proposed Development on Scheduled remains of former village of Brauncewell as a result of the creation of permissive path to improve access to monument.</p>

	<p>5.9.15 Applicants should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably.</p>	<p>There are no World Heritage Sites affected by the Proposed Development.</p> <p>Chapter 9: Cultural Heritage of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] identifies the Scopwick and Blankney Conservation Areas as relevant cultural heritage receptors for the impacts of the construction and operation of the Proposed Development.</p> <p>Mitigation measures documented within and secured by the Works Plans [EN010149/APP/2.3], oCTMP [EN010149/APP/7.8] and the oCEMP [EN010149/APP/7.7] will ensure that construction phase impacts on the conservation areas will be avoided.</p> <p>Visibility of the Proposed Development within the wider rural surroundings of the conservation areas would result in a minor reduction in their significance this impact would be further reduced by proposed planting which is detailed in Figure 3.3: Green Infrastructure Parameter Plan of the ES Volume 2 [EN010149/APP/6.2] and will be secured within the oLEMP [EN010149/APP/7.9]. These potential effects are not considered to be significant.</p> <p>The Proposed Development would not lead to any significant adverse effects on any of these conservation areas. The Proposed Development, therefore, does not lead to significant adverse effects to a World Heritage Site or Conservation Area, in accordance with this policy</p>
<i>Mitigation</i>	<p>5.9.16 A documentary record of our past is not as valuable as retaining the heritage asset, and therefore the ability to record</p>	<p>The archaeological investigation is secured by a DCO requirement and set out in the Outline Written Scheme of Investigation [EN010149/APP/7.15] and is required to be</p>

<p>evidence of the asset should not be a factor in deciding whether such loss should be permitted, and whether or not consent should be given.</p>	<p>agreed with Lincolnshire County Council. Where necessary targeted areas of archaeological investigation and recording would be detailed in a task-specific WSI to off-set any likely pre-mitigation effects.</p>
<p>5.9.17 Where the loss of the whole or part of a heritage asset's significance is justified, the Secretary of State will require the applicant to record and advance understanding of the significance of the heritage asset before it is lost (wholly or in part). The extent of the requirement should be proportionate to the asset's importance and significance and the impact. The applicant should be required to publish this evidence and to deposit copies of the reports with the relevant Historic Environmental Record. They should also be required to deposit the archive generated in a local museum or other public repository willing to receive it.</p>	<p>A programme of further archaeological investigation secured by a DCO requirement and set out in the Outline Written Scheme of Investigation [EN010149/APP/7.15] would ensure that areas of archaeological features not detected by the geophysical survey are identified at detailed design stage and appropriate mitigation measures (including non-intrusive construction methods where necessary; and targeted excavation or watching brief where preservation in situ is not necessary) will be put in place to avoid significant effects and to offset any residual effects. Following implementation of mitigation measures to be secured through a DCO requirement for further archaeological trial trenching and a CEMP, significant effects will be avoided through detailed design of the Proposed Development or will be offset through a programme of archaeological work.</p>
<p>5.9.18 Where appropriate, the Secretary of State will impose requirements on the Development Consent Order to ensure that the work is undertaken in a timely manner, in accordance with a written scheme of investigation that complies with the policy in this NPS and which has been agreed in writing with the relevant local authority, and to ensure that the completion of the exercise is properly secured.</p>	<p>A written scheme of archaeological investigation, which must accord with the Outline Written Scheme of Investigation [EN010149/APP/7.15], will be secured by DCO Requirement 11.</p>

<p>5.9.19 Where the loss of significance of any heritage asset has been justified by the applicant on the merits of the new development and the significance of the asset in question, the Secretary of State should consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • imposing a requirement in the Development Consent Order • requiring the applicant to enter into an obligation 	<p>Chapter 9: Cultural Heritage of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] assesses the likely impacts of the Proposed Development on cultural heritage, including direct and indirect, and temporary or permanent effects. There would be no significant adverse effects on designated or non-designated heritage assets. There would be a significant beneficial effect of the Proposed Development on Scheduled remains of former village of Brauncewell as a result of the creation of permissive path to improve access to monument. A written scheme of archaeological investigation, which must accord with the Outline Written Scheme of Investigation [EN010149/APP/7.15], will be secured by DCO Requirement 11.</p>
<p>5.9.20 That will prevent the loss occurring until the relevant part of the development has commenced, or it is reasonably certain that the relevant part of the development is to proceed.</p>	
<p>5.9.21 Where there is a high probability (based on an adequate assessment) that a development site may include, as yet undiscovered heritage assets with archaeological interest, the Secretary of State will consider requirements to ensure appropriate procedures are in place for the identification and treatment of such assets discovered during construction.</p>	<p>There is a slight risk that further currently unknown archaeological remains may be present within the Site. Such remains are likely to be small, discrete features not detectable by geophysical survey, and are considered more likely in proximity to the known assets. The limited ground intrusion caused by foundations for the Solar PV modules means that the risk of the Solar PV module supports / frame interacting with such features is negligible.</p> <p>A programme of further archaeological investigation secured by a DCO requirement and set out in the Outline Written Scheme of Investigation [EN010149/APP/7.15] would ensure that areas of archaeological features not detected by the geophysical survey are identified at detailed design stage</p>

		and appropriate mitigation measures (including non-intrusive foundations and above ground cabling put in place) to avoid significant effects and to off-set any likely pre-mitigation effects.
<i>Secretary of State decision making</i>	<p>5.9.22 In determining applications, the Secretary of State should seek to identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by the proposed development, including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset (including assets whose setting may be affected by the proposed development), taking account of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • relevant information provided with the application and, where applicable, relevant information submitted during the examination of the application • any designation records, including those on the National Heritage List for England, or included on Cof Cymru for Wales. • historic landscape character records • the relevant Historic Environment Record(s), and similar sources of information • representations made by interested parties during the examination process • expert advice, where appropriate, and when the need to understand the 	<p>Table 9.5 of Chapter 9: Cultural Heritage of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] sets out the criteria for assessing the importance of heritage assets. The importance of a heritage asset is the overall value assigned to it reflecting its statutory designation or, in the case of non-designated assets, the professional judgement of the assessor with reference to national and local guidance and the planning policy tests. Historic England guidance also refers to an asset’s “level of significance” which in this usage has the same meaning as importance. The significance of heritage assets within the study area is detailed in Appendix 9.1: Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment and Stage 1 Setting Assessment ES Volume 3 [EN010149/APP/6.3]</p>

	<p>significance of the heritage asset demands it</p>	
	<p>5.9.23 The Secretary of State must also comply with the requirements on listed buildings, conservation areas and scheduled monuments, set out in Regulation 3 of the Infrastructure Planning (Decisions) Regulations 2010.</p>	<p>It has been demonstrated that a decision to grant a DCO for the Proposed Development would have regard to the matters prescribed by Regulation 3 and 7 of the Infrastructure Planning (Decisions) Regulations 2010 (as amended) (Ref 15). The Proposed Development has regard to preserving heritage assets and their setting as set out in Section 8 of the Planning Statement [EN010149/APP/7.2] and Chapter 9 of the ES: Cultural Heritage [EN010149/APP/6.1].</p>
	<p>5.9.25 The Secretary of State should consider the desirability of sustaining and, where appropriate, enhancing the significance of heritage assets, the contribution of their settings and the positive contribution that their conservation can make to sustainable communities, including to their quality of life, their economic vitality, and to the public's enjoyment of these assets.</p>	<p>Chapter 9: Cultural Heritage of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] assesses the likely impacts of the Proposed Development on cultural heritage, including direct and indirect, and temporary or permanent effects. There would be no significant adverse effects on designated or non-designated heritage assets. There would be a significant beneficial effect of the Proposed Development on Scheduled remains of former village of Brauncewell as a result of the creation of permissive path to improve access to monument.</p>
	<p>5.9.26 The Secretary of State should also consider the desirability of the new development making a positive contribution to the character and local distinctiveness of the historic environment. The consideration of design should include scale, height, massing, alignment, materials, use and landscaping (for example, screen planting).</p>	<p>There will be a minor beneficial impact, compared to the 'Do Nothing' scenario, of recovering any remains of the crashes at the WWII aeroplane crash sites (non-designated heritage assets MLI25416 and MLI25417) within the Satellite Collector Compound area and preserving the remainder from further disturbance by ploughing during the operational period of the Proposed Development.</p>

<p>5.9.27 When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, the Secretary of State should give great weight to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss, or less than substantial harm to its significance.</p>	<p>The Proposed Development is not likely to result in any significant adverse effects on cultural heritage. The design development has sensitively considered the key receptors throughout, and appropriate mitigation measures are embedded into the design. By implementing Good Design at the early stages of the process, the Proposed Development has avoided and minimised conflict with designated and non-designated heritage assets. Through the implementation of mitigation measures, all residual effects are assessed as not significant and equate to less than substantial harm on all designated and non-designated heritage assets impacted by the Proposed Development as set out in Appendix 5 – Heritage Harm Statement of this Planning Statement.</p>
<p>5.9.28 The Secretary of State should give considerable importance and weight to the desirability of preserving all heritage assets. Any harm or loss of significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting) should require clear and convincing justification.</p>	<p>The Proposed Development design has been carefully considered to avoid, reduce, or mitigate potentially significant effects on cultural heritage and archaeology assets as set out in Design Approach Document [EN010149/APP/7.3]. This resulted in a Proposed Development that avoids direct physical impact on any designated heritage assets. Whilst there will be some residual impacts resulting from changes to the setting of some designated heritage assets, these have been assessed to result in 'less than substantial harm' as the assessment in ES Volume 3, Appendix 9.1 [EN010149/APP/6.3].</p>
<p>5.9.29 Substantial harm to or loss of significance of a grade II Listed Building or a grade II Registered Park or Garden should be exceptional.</p>	<p>Impacts upon the setting of heritage assets have been minimised by design modifications, with additional vegetation planted in the screen panels, so any residual effect is not significant and the harm to significance is considered to be less than substantial. The Proposed Development would cause harm to designated heritage assets by introducing</p>
<p>5.9.30 Substantial harm to or loss of significance of assets of the highest significance, including Scheduled Monuments; Protected Wreck Sites; Registered Battlefields; grade I and II* Listed Buildings; grade I and II* Registered Parks and Gardens; and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.</p>	<p>Impacts upon the setting of heritage assets have been minimised by design modifications, with additional vegetation planted in the screen panels, so any residual effect is not significant and the harm to significance is considered to be less than substantial. The Proposed Development would cause harm to designated heritage assets by introducing</p>

<p>5.9.31 Where the proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset the Secretary of State should refuse consent unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm to, or loss of, significance is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all the following apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site • no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation • conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible • the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use 	<p>changes within their setting, which will affect how the asset is experienced and understanding of the archaeological assets below ground. However, it confirms that the identified harm would be less than substantial harm based on the assessment set out in ES Volume 3, Appendix 9.1 [EN010149/APP/6.3].</p> <p>The Proposed Development results in minor changes to the setting of the remains of the former village of Brauncewell and proposes additional vegetation planting to screen panels from view which results in a negligible adverse effect which is not significant. Given the temporary and limited nature of the potential effect, the Applicant considers that the substantial benefits of the Proposed Development outweigh the impact in this regard.</p> <p>In recognising that the Proposed Development will result in harm of a 'less than substantial' nature, the key policy test is that such harm is weighted against the public benefits. Given the clear and urgent need to deploy renewable energy at speed and scale, the Proposed Development demonstrably gives rise to substantial public benefits, which outweigh the less than substantial harm identified. Further, the substantial public benefits and need for the Proposed Development, as set out in the Planning Statement, including the delivery of Critical National Priority (CNP) infrastructure to contribute towards meeting national energy security objectives and carbon reduction commitments, clearly and demonstrably</p>
<p>5.9.32 Where the proposed development will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of the designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including,</p>	

	<p>where appropriate securing its optimum viable use.</p>	<p>outweigh the less than significant harm to cultural heritage assets.</p>
	<p>5.9.33 In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.</p>	
	<p>5.9.34 Not all elements of a Conservation Area or World Heritage Site will necessarily contribute to its significance. Loss of a building (or other element) which makes a positive contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site should be treated either as substantial harm under paragraph 5.9.30 or less than substantial harm under paragraph 5.9.32, as appropriate, considering the relative significance of the element affected and its contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site as a whole.</p>	<p>There are no World Heritage Sites affected by the Proposed Development.</p> <p>Chapter 9: Cultural Heritage of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] identifies the Scopwick and Blankney Conservation Areas as relevant cultural heritage receptors for the impacts of the construction and operation of the Proposed Development.</p> <p>Mitigation measures documented within and secured by the oCTMP [EN010149/APP/7.8] and the oCEMP [EN010149/APP/7.7] will ensure that construction phase impacts on the conservation areas will be avoided.</p> <p>Visibility of the Proposed Development within the wider rural surroundings of the conservation areas would result in a minor reduction in their significance this impact would be further reduced by proposed planting which is detailed in Figure 3.3: Green Infrastructure Parameter Plan of the ES Volume 2 [EN010149/APP/6.2] and will be secured within the oLEMP [EN010149/APP/7.9]. These potential effects (which would equate to less than substantial harm) are not considered to be significant.</p>

		<p>The Proposed Development would not lead to any significant adverse effects on any of these conservation areas. The Proposed Development therefore does not lead to significant adverse effects to a World Heritage Site or Conservation Area, in accordance with this policy</p>
	<p>5.9.35 Where there is evidence of deliberate neglect of, or damage to, a heritage asset, the Secretary of State should not take its deteriorated state into account in any decision.</p>	<p>Chapter 9: Cultural Heritage of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] concludes there would be no significant impacts to any designated or non-designated heritage assets as a result of the Proposed Development once embedded and additional mitigation measures are implemented. Further, the proposed planting, that is designed to preserve open views, would contribute to the significance of the conservation area. There would be a significant beneficial effect of the Proposed Development on Scheduled remains of former village of Brauncewell as a result of the creation of permissive path to improve access to monument.</p>
	<p>5.9.36 When considering applications for development affecting the setting of a designated heritage asset, the Secretary of State should give appropriate weight to the desirability of preserving the setting such assets and treat favourably applications that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to, or better reveal the significance of, the asset. When considering applications that do not do this, the Secretary of State should give great weight to any negative effects, when weighing them against the wider benefits of the application. The greater the negative impact on the significance of the designated heritage asset, the greater the benefits that will be needed to justify approval.</p>	
	<p>5.10.5 Virtually all nationally significant energy infrastructure projects will have</p>	

<p>Part 5.10 - Landscape and Visual</p>	<p>adverse effects on the landscape, but there may also be beneficial landscape character impacts arising from mitigation.</p>	<p>Chapter 10: Landscape and Visual of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] assesses the visual impact of the Proposed Development.</p>
<p><i>Applicant Assessment</i></p>	<p>5.10.6 Projects need to be designed carefully, taking account of the potential impact on the landscape. Having regard to siting, operational and other relevant constraints the aim should be to minimise harm to the landscape, providing reasonable mitigation where possible and appropriate.</p>	<p>Chapter 10: Landscape and Visual of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] concludes that during construction, operation (year 1) and decommissioning, residual significant effects are anticipated on LCA 7: The Limestone Heath and LCA 11: Central Clays and Gravels. During operation (year 10), significant effects are anticipated on LCA 11: Central Clays and Gravels.</p> <p>Chapter 10: Landscape and Visual of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] also concludes that during operation (year 10) and decommissioning, significant beneficial impacts are expected on the landscape fabric.</p> <p>It is considered that the wider benefits of the Proposed Development, including the delivery of a significant level of low carbon energy generation and biodiversity net gain and the provision of permissive footpaths and outweigh these impacts and that the Proposed Development is considered acceptable in terms of overall landscape, visual and residential amenity impacts and the nature of the visual impacts are not considered to outweigh the benefits of the Proposed Development.</p>
	<p>5.10.7 National Parks, the Broads and AONBs have been confirmed by the government as having the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and natural beauty. Each of these designated areas has specific statutory purposes.</p>	<p>Chapter 10: Landscape and Visual of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] concludes that no part of the Site or its immediately surrounding context falls within a statutorily designated landscape. The nearest National Park or National Landscape (formerly known as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) to the Site is the Lincolnshire Wolds National</p>

<p>Projects should be designed sensitively given the various siting, operational, and other relevant constraints. For development proposals located within designated landscapes the Secretary of State should be satisfied that measures which seek to further purposes of the designation are sufficient, appropriate and proportionate to the type and scale of the development.</p>	<p>Landscape, located more than 20km to the north-east and this would not be affected by the Proposed Development.</p>
<p>5.10.8 The duty to seek to further the purposes of nationally designated landscapes also applies when considering applications for projects outside the boundaries of these areas which may have impacts within them. In these locations, projects should be designed sensitively given the various siting, operational, and other relevant constraints. The Secretary of State should be satisfied that measures which seek to further the purposes of the designation are sufficient, appropriate and proportionate to the type and scale of the development.</p>	
<p>5.10.11 Development within a Heritage Coast (that is not also a National Park, The Broads or an AONB) is unlikely to be appropriate, unless it is compatible with the natural beauty and special character of the area.</p>	<p>Chapter 10: Landscape and Visual of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] concludes that no part of the Site or its immediately surrounding context falls within a Heritage Coast.</p>
<p>5.10.12 Outside nationally designated areas, there are local landscapes that may be highly</p>	<p>Chapter 10: Landscape and Visual of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] identifies that there are no local</p>

	<p>valued locally. Where a local development document in England or a local development plan in Wales has policies based on landscape or waterscape character assessment, these should be paid particular attention. However, locally valued landscapes should not be used in themselves to refuse consent, as this may unduly restrict acceptable development.</p>	<p>landscape designations covering any part of the Site. The nearest local designation is the Lincoln Cliff Area of Great Landscape Value; an escarpment west of and parallel to the A607 between Grantham and Lincoln.</p>
	<p>5.10.13 All proposed energy infrastructure is likely to have visual effects for many receptors around proposed sites.</p>	<p>Chapter 10: Landscape and Visual of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] assesses the visual impact of the Proposed Development. ES Volume 2 Figures 10.3a-d: Visual Receptors of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.2] demonstrate the landscape and visual receptors of the Proposed Development.</p>
	<p>5.10.14 The Secretary of State will have to judge whether the visual effects on sensitive receptors, such as local residents, and other receptors, such as visitors to the local area, outweigh the benefits of the project.</p>	<p>Chapter 10: Landscape and Visual of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] assesses the visual impact of the Proposed Development.</p> <p>It is considered that the wider benefits of the Proposed Development, including the delivery of a significant level of low carbon energy generation and biodiversity net gain and the provision of permissive footpaths and outweigh these impacts and that the Proposed Development is considered acceptable in terms of overall landscape, visual and residential amenity impacts and the nature of the visual impacts are not considered to outweigh the benefits of the Proposed Development.</p>
	<p>5.10.16 The applicant should carry out a landscape and visual impact assessment and</p>	<p>A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment has been undertaken and included within Chapter 10: Landscape</p>

<i>Applicant assessment</i>	report it in the ES, including cumulative effects (see Section 4.3). Several guides have been produced to assist in addressing landscape issues.	and Visual of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] in accordance with paragraph 5.10.16. It also includes references to local and national landscape character assessments and associated studies as a means of assessing landscape impacts.
	5.10.17 The landscape and visual assessment should include reference to any landscape character assessment and associated studies as a means of assessing landscape impacts relevant to the proposed project. The applicant's assessment should also take account of any relevant policies based on these assessments in local development documents in England and local development plans in Wales.	The cumulative effects of the Proposed Development on landscape and visual are assessed within Chapter 16: Cumulative Effects of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] .
	5.10.18 For seascapes, applicants should consult the Seascape Character Assessment and the Marine Plan Seascape Character Assessments, and any successors to them.	There are no Seascape Character Assessment and the Marine Plan Seascape Character Assessments relevant to the Proposed Development.
	5.10.19 The applicant should consider landscape and visual matters in the early stages of siting and design, where site choices and design principles are being established. This will allow the applicant to demonstrate in the ES how negative effects have been minimised and opportunities for creating positive benefits or enhancement have been recognised and incorporated into	Chapter 10: Landscape and Visual of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] assesses the visual impact of the Proposed Development. The study area for the LVIA has been informed through a combination of Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) analysis and site work. A series of ZTVs for different elements of the Proposed Development are presented in Figures 10.5a-10.9 of the ES Volume 2 [EN010149/APP/6.2] .

<p>the design, delivery and operation of the scheme.</p>	<p>Potential landscape and visual effects and mitigation measures have been considered from the outset of the Proposed Development. This included early landscape and visual feasibility appraisal which fed into the site selection.</p>
<p>5.10.20 The assessment should include the effects on landscape components and character during construction and operation. For projects which may affect a National Park, The Broads or an AONBs the assessment should include effects on the natural beauty and special qualities of these areas.</p>	<p>Options appraisals helped to avoid adverse landscape and visual effects where possible and appropriate. Landscape and visual considerations have been one of the critical drivers for design decisions at all stages of the project. Landscape and visual matters have been addressed in the design as set out in the Design Approach Document [EN010149/APP/7.3].</p> <p>Chapter 10: Landscape and Visual of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] concludes that during construction, operation (year 1) and decommissioning, significant effects are anticipated on LCA 7: The Limestone Heath and LCA 11: Central Clays and Gravels. During operation (year 10), significant effects are anticipated on LCA 11: Central Clays and Gravels. It is considered that the wider benefits of the Proposed Development, including the delivery of significant level of low carbon energy generation and biodiversity net gain and the provision of permissive footpaths and outweigh these impacts and that the Proposed Development is considered acceptable in terms of overall landscape, visual and residential amenity impacts and the nature of the visual impacts are not considered to outweigh the benefits of the Proposed Development.</p>
<p>5.10.21 The assessment should include the visibility and conspicuousness of the project during construction and of the presence and operation of the project and potential impacts</p>	<p>Chapter 10: Landscape and Visual of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] assesses the visual impact of the Proposed Development.</p>

	<p>on views and visual amenity. This should include light pollution effects, including on dark skies, local amenity, and nature conservation.</p>	<p>Through consultation with the relevant stakeholders, 40 assessment viewpoints were selected. The assessment viewpoint locations were agreed with North Kesteven District Council and Lincolnshire County Council to represent the main landscape and visual receptors found in the study area. The Site is not in a recognised dark sky landscape. A night time assessment of effects on views has not been undertaken as a lighting assessment is not available.</p> <p>These representative viewpoints are illustrated in Figure 10.4: Assessment viewpoint and photomontage locations of the ES Volume 2 [EN010149/APP/6.2].</p>
	<p>5.10.22 The assessment should also address the landscape and visual effects of noise and light pollution, and other emissions (see Section 5.2 and Section 5.7), from construction and operational activities on residential amenity and on sensitive locations, receptors and views, how these will be minimised.</p>	<p>Chapter 3: Proposed Development Description of the ES Volume 1 [EN010149/APP/6.1] outlines the security measures incorporated in the design of the Proposed Development design. Efforts have been made to reduce the impact of security fencing and lighting, as set out in detail in the oLEMP [EN010149/APP/7.9], oCEMP [EN010149/APP/7.7], oOEMP [EN010149/APP/7.10] and oDEMP [EN010149/APP/7.13]. Final versions of these documents will be produced and secured as part of the DCO.</p> <p>Chapter 12: Noise and Vibration of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] considers the effects of the impact of noise and vibration of the Proposed Development.</p>
	<p>5.10.24 Applicants should consider how landscapes can be enhanced using landscape management plans, as this will help to enhance environmental assets where</p>	<p>The DCO will secure a detailed Landscape and Ecological Management Plan based on the oLEMP [EN010149/APP/7.9] which would be implemented, and this would cover the establishment and long-term management of all new structural planting as well as other habitats.</p>

	they contribute to landscape and townscape quality.	Chapter 10: Landscape and Visual of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] concludes that during operation (year 10) and decommissioning, significant beneficial impacts are expected on the landscape fabric.
	5.10.25 In considering visual effects it may be helpful for applicants to draw attention, in the supporting evidence to their applications, to any examples of existing permitted infrastructure they are aware of with a similar magnitude of impact on equally sensitive receptors. This may assist the Secretary of State in judging the weight they should give to the assessed visual impacts of the proposed development.	Section 10.5 of Chapter 10: Landscape and Visual of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] establishes an environmental baseline for the Landscape Visual Impact Assessment, including existing OHE lines, quarries and road infrastructure in the landscape.
<i>Mitigation</i>	5.10.26 Reducing the scale of a project can help to mitigate the visual and landscape effects of a proposed project. However, reducing the scale or otherwise amending the design of a proposed energy infrastructure project may result in a significant operational constraint and reduction in function – for example, electricity generation output. There may, however, be exceptional circumstances, where mitigation could have a very significant benefit and warrant a small reduction in function. In these circumstances, the Secretary of State may decide that the benefits of the mitigation to reduce the	The Design Approach Document [EN010149/APP/7.3] demonstrates how the Applicant has developed the design of the Proposed Development in accordance with the criteria for good design. This has included the establishment of Project Principles from the early stages of Proposed Development to guide decision making, provide a sensitive response to the local environment and reduce potential impacts via an iterative design process. With regard to landscape and visual effects, the design of the Proposed Development has been informed by a broad range of Project Principles including: the provision of appropriate offsets to local settlements and dwellings on a case-by-case basis (Principle 1.2); considering the views and the

	<p>landscape and/or visual effects outweigh the marginal loss of function.</p>	<p>experience of people using the local roads (Principle 1.3); responding to the distinctive and unique local character of the site (Principle 2.2); maintaining the rural separation between the villages of Ashby de la Launde, RAF Digby, Scopwick, Kirkby Green and Blankney (Principle 2.3); and considering the views and the experience of people using local footpaths (Principle 5.3). A full list of Project Principles is provided in the Design Approach Document [EN010149/APP/7.3] together with a summary of how the operational design of the Proposed Development has responded to each of them.</p> <p>ES Volume 1, Chapter 10: Landscape and Visual [EN010149/APP/6.1] describes how the design of the Proposed Development responds to policy requirements, published landscape character assessments, stakeholder consultation and fieldwork analysis. It provides a full assessment of the landscape and visual effects of the Proposed Development and describes the embedded mitigation that has been incorporated into the design to reduce potential impacts. This includes offsets to sensitive receptors, provision of visual screening (in the form of new planting and an Earth Bund), landscape management prescriptions, and design commitments (colours and materials) in relation to the detailed design of the Proposed Development.</p> <p>Embedded mitigation would be secured by control documents contained within the Draft DCO [EN010149/APP/3.1] including: the spatial extents shown on the Works Plans [EN010149/APP/2.3] and Green Infrastructure Parameters shown in Appendix 1 of the</p>
	<p>5.10.27 Adverse landscape and visual effects may be minimised through appropriate siting of infrastructure within its development site and wider setting. The careful consideration of colours and materials will support the delivery of a well-designed scheme, as will sympathetic landscaping and management of its immediate surroundings.</p>	

		oLEMP [EN01049/APP/7.9], the management prescriptions set out within the oLEMP [EN01049/APP/7.9], and the Design Commitments [EN010149/APP/7.4] .
	5.10.28 Depending on the topography of the surrounding terrain and areas of population it may be appropriate to undertake landscaping off site. For example, filling in gaps in existing tree and hedge lines may mitigate the impact when viewed from a more distant vista.	The Proposed Development will not undertake any landscaping off site as this is not considered necessary to mitigate the impacts of the Proposed Development
<i>Secretary of State decision making</i>	5.10.29 The Secretary of State should take into consideration the level of detailed design which the applicant has provided and is secured in the Development Consent Order, and the extent to which design details are subject to future approvals.	<p>The applicant wishes to retain flexibility regarding the design detail of certain components of the Proposed Development. The extent of flexibility required is described in Chapter 3: Proposed Development Description of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] and set out in the Design Approach Document [EN010149/APP/7.3] and Design Commitments [EN010149/APP/7.4].</p> <p>Good design outcomes will be secured in the detailed design of the Proposed Development, in accordance with the ES assessment, via Control Documents contained within the draft DCO [EN010149/APP/3.1]. Adherence to the Control Documents will secure good design outcomes, uphold the conclusions of the ES, and provide flexibility. A full list of Control Documents is set out in the Guide to the Application [EN010149/APP/1.2].</p>
	5.10.30 The Secretary of State should be satisfied that local authorities will have sufficient design content secured to ensure	Good design outcomes will be secured in the detailed design of the Proposed Development, in accordance with the ES assessment, via Control Documents contained within the

	<p>future consenting will meet landscape, visual and good design objectives.</p>	<p>draft DCO [EN010149/APP/3.1]. These documents provide sufficient certainty about the size and scale of the Proposed Development.</p> <p>Adherence to the Control Documents will secure good design outcomes, uphold the conclusions of the ES and provide for flexibility. A full list of Control Documents is set out in the Guide to the Application [EN010149/APP/1.2].</p>
	<p>5.10.31 When considering visual impacts of thermal combustion generating stations, the Secretary of State should presume that the adverse impacts would be less if a hybrid or direct cooling system is used. The Secretary of State should therefore expect information in the application justifying BAT for the use of a cooling system that involves visible steam plumes or has a high visible structure, such as a natural draught cooling tower, and be satisfied that the application of modern hybrid cooling technology or other technologies is not reasonably practicable before giving consent to a development with natural draught cooling towers.</p>	<p>The Proposed Development is not a thermal combustion generating station.</p>
	<p>5.10.32 When considering applications for development within National Parks, the Broads and AONBs the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty should be given substantial weight by the Secretary of State in deciding on applications for development consent in these areas. The</p>	<p>No part of the Site or its immediate surrounding context falls within a statutory designated landscape. The nearest National Landscape (formerly Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)) or National Park to the Site is the Lincolnshire Wolds National Landscape which is located</p>

	<p>Secretary of State may grant development consent in these areas in exceptional circumstances. Such development should be demonstrated to be in the public interest and consideration of such applications should include an assessment of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the need for the development, including in terms of national considerations, and the impact of consenting or not consenting it upon the local economy;• the cost of, and scope for, developing all or part of the development elsewhere outside the designated area or meeting the need for it in some other way, taking account of the policy on alternatives set out in Section 4.3; and• any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated.	<p>more than 20km to the northeast. The Proposed Development will have no impact on these locations.</p>
	<p>5.10.33 For development proposals located within designated landscapes the Secretary of State should be satisfied that measures which seek to further purposes of the designation are sufficient, appropriate and proportionate to the type and scale of the development. The Secretary of State should</p>	

	<p>ensure that any projects consented in these designated areas should be carried out to high environmental standards, including through the application of appropriate requirements where necessary.</p>	
	<p>5.10.34 The duty to seek to further the purposes of nationally designated landscapes also applies when considering applications for projects outside the boundaries of these areas, which may have impacts within them. The aim should be to avoid harming the purposes of designation or to minimise adverse effects on designated landscapes, and such projects should be designed sensitively given the various siting, operational, and other relevant constraints. The fact that a proposed project will be visible from within a designated area should not in itself be a reason for the Secretary of State to refuse consent.</p>	
	<p>5.10.35 The scale of energy projects means that they will often be visible across a very wide area. The Secretary of State should judge whether any adverse impact on the landscape would be so damaging that it is not offset by the benefits (including need) of the project.</p>	<p>It is considered that the wider benefits of the Proposed Development, including the delivery of a significant level of low carbon energy generation and biodiversity net gain and the provision of permissive footpaths and outweigh these impacts and that the Proposed Development is considered acceptable in terms of overall landscape, visual and residential amenity impacts and the nature of the visual impacts are not considered to outweigh the benefits of the Proposed Development.</p>

<p>5.10.36 In reaching a judgement, the Secretary of State should consider whether any adverse impact is temporary, such as during construction, and/or whether any adverse impact on the landscape will be capable of being reversed in a timescale that the Secretary of State considers reasonable.</p>	<p>Construction and decommissioning stage impacts will be for a relatively short duration, and operational effects beginning at Year 1 will reduce over time as mitigation planting establishes. The change to the landscape character, via the introduction of solar panels and associated infrastructure is considered to be localised. The reduction of effects over time and the reversibility of effects should be taken into consideration when reaching a judgement on the Application.</p> <p>All operational effects will be reversed following 40 years of operation which will be secured by the DCO, and all adverse landscape and visual effects identified during the construction and decommissioning phases are short term and temporary.</p> <p>The Proposed Development has sought to minimise impacts through design iteration. The substantial benefits and need for the Proposed Development as set out in Section 3 of the Planning Statement [EN010149/APP/7.2], including the delivery of Critical National Priority (CNP) Infrastructure to contribute towards meeting national energy objectives outweighs the residual landscape effects when applying the planning balancing exercise to the Proposed Development with no requirement to demonstrate exceptional circumstances given that the presumption for allowing the DCO.</p>
<p>5.10.37 The Secretary of State should consider whether the project has been designed carefully, taking account of environmental effects on the landscape and siting, operational and other relevant</p>	<p>The Proposed Development has been designed taking into account the environmental effects on the landscape, siting, operational and other relevant constraints, to minimise adverse impacts on the landscape, including by appropriate mitigation. This is outlined in Chapter 10: Landscape and</p>

	<p>constraints, to minimise harm to the landscape, including by appropriate mitigation.</p>	<p>Visual Amenity of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] and the Outline LEMP [EN010149/APP/7.9].</p>
	<p>5.10.38 The Secretary of State should consider whether requirements to the consent are needed requiring the incorporation of particular design details that are in keeping with the statutory and technical requirements for landscape and visual impacts.</p>	<p>The Design Commitments [EN010149/APP/7.4] and the Outline LEMP [EN010149/APP/7.9] will secure the design of the Proposed Development through the DCO, in line with statutory and technical requirements</p>
<p>Part 5.11 Land Use, Including Open Space, Green Infrastructure, and Green Belt <i>Applicant Assessment</i></p>	<p>5.11.8 The ES (see Section 4.3) should identify existing and proposed land uses near the project, any effects of replacing an existing development or use of the site with the proposed project or preventing a development or use on a neighbouring site from continuing. Applicants should also assess any effects of precluding a new development or use proposed in the development plan. The assessment should be proportionate to the scale of the preferred scheme and its likely impacts on such receptors. For developments on previously developed land, the applicant should ensure that they have considered the risk posed by land contamination and how it is proposed to address this.</p>	<p>Chapter 13: Population of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] identifies the existing land uses within the Order limits, confirming that majority of the land is under agricultural use.</p> <p>The Planning Statement [EN010149/APP/7.2] identifies the Local Development Plan allocations and designations within and adjacent to the end Order limits. The site has been selected and designed to avoid designated areas. A proportion of the Site is located within a Mineral Safeguarding Area (MSA) through a Local Plan Policy requirement. Appendix 2 and Appendix 3 of the Planning Statement provide a comprehensive assessment, which should be read in conjunction with this section.</p> <p>The surrounding land is also predominantly agricultural. The Proposed Development is not considered to impact the continued use of this land for agricultural purposes.</p> <p>A community growing area is proposed north of Scopwick. The community growing area will improve access to green open space which has associated physical and mental health</p>

		and wellbeing benefits. The area also has the potential to increase sense of place and community and reduce severance by bringing the community together over a mutual interest.
	5.11.9 Applicants will need to consult the local community on their proposals to build on existing open space, sports or recreational buildings and land. Taking account of the consultations, applicants should consider providing new or additional open space including green and blue infrastructure, sport or recreation facilities, to substitute for any losses as a result of their proposal. When considering proposals for green infrastructure, Applicant's should refer to the Green Infrastructure Framework.	The Proposed Development does not impact any open space, sports or recreational buildings or land.
	5.11.10 Applicants should use any up-to-date local authority assessment or, if there is none, provide an independent assessment to show whether the existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land is surplus to requirements.	
	5.11.11 During any pre-application discussions with the applicant the LPA should identify any concerns it has about the impacts of the application on land use, having regard to the development plan and relevant applications and including, where relevant, whether it agrees with any	Appendix J1-J2 of the Consultation Report [EN010149/APP/5.2] sets out the discussions between the applicant and the LPA about land use.

	<p>independent assessment that the land is surplus to requirements.</p>	
	<p>5.11.12 Applicants should seek to minimise impacts on the best and most versatile agricultural land (defined as land in grades 1, 2 and 3a of the Agricultural Land Classification) and preferably use land in areas of poorer quality (grades 3b, 4 and 5).</p>	<p>The Applicant has developed the design of the Proposed Development to prioritise the use of BMV land for arable production where practicable. This has been assessed through the Chapter 11: Land, Soil and Groundwater of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] and has included amendments to the Order Limits and potential areas for Solar Development.</p> <p>The Planning Statement [EN010149/APP/7.2] sets out how the Applicant has sought to avoid and reduce the amount of BMV land used for hard infrastructure associated with the Proposed Development. However, given the context of the quality of land locally and within the Order Limits it has not been practicable to remove all BMV. Within the Order limits, a total of 231.7ha of BMV land are proposed to accommodate Solar PV arrays or associated infrastructure. This is land which will not be available as an agricultural resource, aside from potential use as grazing land for a period of approximately (including construction and decommissioning) 40 years. As secured within the oDEMP [EN010149/APP/7.13] all of this infrastructure would be removed at commissioning stage. The Applicant has also sought to reduce the amount of BMV land used for permanent green infrastructure (e.g. woodland planting, new hedgerows). The Proposed Development includes proposed green infrastructure on 77ha of BMV land. Chapter 4: Reasonable Alternatives of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] sets out that agricultural land quality was a key consideration in the Applicant's site selection process. Design Approach</p>

		<p>Document [EN010149/APP/7.3] and Design Commitment [EN010149/APP/7.4] establish the agricultural land design principles that incorporate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fields comprising solely of Grade 1 or 2 land within the Site will remain available for arable production; • Prioritise the use of BMV land for arable production where practicable; and • Prioritise the use on non-BMV land for habitat creation where practicable.
	<p>5.11.13 Applicants should also identify any effects and seek to minimise impacts on soil health and protect and improve soil quality taking into account any mitigation measures proposed.</p>	<p>Chapter 11: Land, Soil and Groundwater of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] identifies any effects on soil health and sets out the embedded mitigation measures which minimise impacts on soil health protect and improve soil quality.</p> <p>An outline Soil Management Plan [EN010149/APP/7.11]</p>
	<p>5.11.14 Applicants are encouraged to develop and implement a Soil Management Plan which could help minimise potential land contamination. The sustainable reuse of soils needs to be carefully considered in line with good practice guidance where large quantities of soils are surplus to requirements or are affected by contamination.</p>	<p>has been prepared which sets out the measures to manage any potential impacts to the soil (and agricultural land) during the construction, operational (including maintenance) and decommissioning phases, and will be secured by DCO requirement.</p> <p>The outline Soil Management Plan identifies those areas within the Site which may be more susceptible to damage, for example, the temporary access tracks, construction compounds and steep slopes and qualities of the soil, for example when it is wet or after periods of heavy rainfall or high winds and it will advise on when soils are suitable for being handled or trafficked.</p> <p>The outline Soil Management Plan also details measures for soil management and follow the principles of best practice</p>

		to maintain the physical properties of the soil, with the aim of restoring the land to its pre-construction condition following the temporary construction use and at the end of the lifetime of the Proposed Development.
	5.11.15 Developments should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by preventing new and existing developments from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability.	<p>The effects of Proposed Development on the natural and local environment considered in the Chapters 6 to 16 of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1].</p> <p>The Proposed Development does not anticipate any adverse or beneficial significant effects in its own right or cumulatively with other developments on air quality, noise, water resources, land contamination or land instability.</p>
	5.11.16 Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans.	<p>Opportunities for environmental enhancement are further detailed in the Design Approach Document [EN010149/APP/7.3] and will be secured by the oLEMP [EN010149/APP/7.9], oCEMP [EN010149/APP7.7], oOEMP [EN010149/APP/7.10] and oDEMP [EN010149/APP/7.13].</p>
	5.11.17 Applicants should ensure that a site is suitable for its proposed use, taking account of ground conditions and any risks arising from land instability and contamination.	<p>Chapter 11: Land, Soil and Groundwater of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] assesses the impact on ground conditions. There is not expected to be any likely significant effects associated with ground conditions. Best practice and bespoke mitigation measures will be carried out during construction, operation and decommissioning to reduce nuisance impacts from dust generation, soil removal and waste generation and avoid impact on ground conditions.</p>
	5.11.18 For developments on previously developed land, applicants should ensure that they have considered the risk posed by land contamination, and where contamination	<p>Chapter 11: Land, Soil and Groundwater of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] outlines that the Site has largely remained undeveloped throughout its entire history, except for localised construction of minor structures, tracks, paths</p>

	<p>is present, applicants should consider opportunities for remediation where possible. It is important to do this as early as possible as part of engagement with the relevant bodies before the official pre-application stage.</p>	<p>and access roads. Numerous stone pits, gravel pits and small quarries are shown to be distributed across the Site.</p>
	<p>5.11.19 Applicants should safeguard any mineral resources on the proposed site as far as possible, taking into account the long-term potential of the land use after any future decommissioning has taken place.</p>	<p>The Planning Statement [EN010149/APP/7.2] identifies that a proportion of the Site is located within a Mineral Safeguarding Area (MSA). A Mineral Safeguarding Report is provided as Appendix 4 to the Planning Statement [EN010149/APP/7.2].</p> <p>The Proposed Development will be decommissioned after 40 years of operation, and any impacts caused by the Proposed Development related to land use are considered reversible and temporary. The minerals within the Order limits will not be permanently sterilised, and post-decommissioning, the land could be worked for minerals.</p>
<p><i>Mitigation</i></p>	<p>5.11.23 Although in the case of most energy infrastructure there may be little that can be done to mitigate the direct effects of an energy project on the existing use of the proposed site (assuming that some of that use can still be retained post project construction) applicants should nevertheless seek to minimise these effects and the effects on existing or planned uses near the site by the application of good design principles, including the layout of the project and the protection of soils during construction.</p>	<p>The existing use of the site is mainly agricultural land. Agricultural land quality was a key consideration in the Applicant's site selection process.</p> <p>The Applicant has developed the design of the Proposed Development to prioritise the use of BMV land for arable production where practicable. This has been assessed through the Chapter 11: Land, Soil and Groundwater of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] and has included amendments to the Order Limits and potential areas for Solar Development.</p>

		<p>Agricultural land quality was a key consideration in the Applicant's site selection process as set out in the Design Approach Document [EN010149/APP/7.3] and Design Commitment [EN010149/APP/7.4]. The agricultural land design principles incorporate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All fields comprising solely of Grade 1 or 2 land within the site will remain in arable production; • Prioritise the use of BMV land for arable production where practicable. All Grade 1 land within the Order Limits has been discounted from Solar PV Development and would remain in arable production; and • Prioritise the use of non-BMV land for habitat creation where practicable. <p>Although the Proposed Development is to be operational for a long term, it will be temporary with a Requirement in Schedule 2 of the draft DCO [EN010149/APP/3.1] securing a time limited consent for 40 years.</p>
	<p>5.11.24 Where green infrastructure is affected, the Secretary of State should consider imposing requirements to ensure the functionality and connectivity of the green infrastructure network is maintained in the vicinity of the development and that any necessary works are undertaken, where possible, to mitigate any adverse impact and, where appropriate, to improve that network and other areas of open space including</p>	<p>The Proposed Development would incorporate a number of green infrastructure proposals, as set out in the Outline LEMP [EN010149/APP/7.9]. The green infrastructure proposed is illustrated in Figure 3.3: Green Infrastructure Parameters Plan of the ES Volume 2 [EN010149/APP/6.2].</p> <p>A number of existing PRoW traverse the Proposed Development and are presented in Table 14.18, Chapter 14: Traffic and Transport of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] and have been illustrated in ES Volume 3, Appendix 14.1:</p>

	<p>appropriate access to National Trails and other public rights of way and new coastal access routes.</p>	<p>Transport Assessment [EN010149/APP/6.3] and Outline Public Rights of Way and Permissive Path Management Plan [EN010149/APP/7.12].</p> <p>The Outline Public Rights of Way and Permissive Path Management Plan [EN010149/APP/7.12] has been prepared in support of the DCO application. The Outline Public Rights of Way and Permissive Path Management Plan sets out the mitigation, management, and monitoring measures for PRow affected by construction which may require temporary diversion/closure, or alternative routing where the former is not possible.</p> <p>The Proposed Development includes opportunities for enhancement such as proposals to provide three new PRow and four permissive paths, as well as improvements to existing PRow.</p>
	<p>5.11.27 Existing trees and woodlands should be retained wherever possible. In the EIP, the Government committed to increase the tree canopy and woodland cover to 16.5% of total land area of England by 2050. The applicant should assess the impacts on, and loss of, all trees and woodlands within the project boundary and develop mitigation measures to minimise adverse impacts and any risk of net deforestation as a result of the scheme. Mitigation may include, but is not limited to, the use of buffers to enhance resilience, improvements to connectivity, and improved woodland management. Where woodland</p>	<p>Chapter 10: Landscape and Visual of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] sets out that vegetation clearance will be limited as the Site has been designed to leave an offset from existing vegetation. The chapter confirms that woodland, tree and hedgerow vegetation within the Order Limits would be retained. The oCEMP [EN010149/APP7.7] will ensure that all existing hedgerows, trees and woodland will be retained and protected during construction, except where removal is indicated on the vegetation removal plans shown in ES Volume 3 Figure 3.11: Vegetation Removal Parameters [EN010149/APP/6.2]. The oDEMP [EN010149/APP7.13] will ensure that existing and established hedgerows, trees and woodland will be retained</p>

	<p>loss is unavoidable, compensation schemes will be required, and the long-term management and maintenance of newly planted trees should be secured</p>	<p>and protected during decommissioning (except where removal is required to facilitate decommissioning).</p> <p>Chapter 10: Landscape and Visual of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] conducts an assessment of the visual impact of the Proposed Development, including assessing the impacts on, and loss of, all trees and woodlands. In terms of vegetation removal, a worst- case assumption has been made that all vegetation shown as in ES Volume 3 Figure 3.11: Vegetation Removal Parameters [EN010149/APP/6.2] would be removed. It is assumed that all other woodland, tree and hedgerow vegetation within the Order Limits would be retained.</p> <p>The oLEMP [EN010149/APP/7.9] sets out mitigation measures including that all internal access tracks and cable routes will use existing tracks, crossings and / or gaps in the hedgerows wherever practicable and that the proposed development is committed to replacement of all trees that are lost post-construction.</p> <p>Design Commitments [EN010149/APP/7.4] sets out mitigation measures including a minimum 15m offset from the Proposed Development to existing woodland and a minimum 10m offset from the Proposed Development to all retained existing hedgerows.</p>
	<p>5.11.28 Where a proposed development has an impact upon a Mineral Safeguarding Area (MSA), the Secretary of State should ensure that appropriate mitigation measures have</p>	<p>The Planning Statement [EN010149/APP/7.2] identifies that a proportion of the Site is located within a Mineral Safeguarding Area (MSA). A Mineral Safeguarding Report</p>

	<p>been put in place to safeguard mineral resources.</p>	<p>is provided as Appendix 2 to the Planning Statement [EN010149/APP/7.2].</p>
	<p>5.11.29 Where a project has a sterilising effect on land use (for example in some cases under transmission lines) there may be scope for this to be mitigated through, for example, using or incorporating the land for nature conservation or wildlife corridors or for parking and storage in employment areas.</p>	<p>Chapter 11: Land, Soils and Groundwater of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] sets out that Minerals has been scoped out of the EIA. Appendix 2: Minerals Safeguarding Assessment forms a part of the Planning Statement [EN010149/APP/7.2] which has been submitted in support of the DCO.</p> <p>On the basis the Proposed Development has a lifespan of 40 years and due to the Proposed Development being decommissioned at the end of its operational life, any minerals would not be permanently sterilised and would be available to exploit if required at a future date. The minerals within the Order limits will not be permanently sterilised, and post-decommissioning, the land could be worked for minerals. The Proposed Development is reservable by nature.</p>
	<p>5.11.30 Public Rights of way, National Trails, and other rights of access to land are important recreational facilities for example for walkers, cyclists and horse riders. The Secretary of State should expect applicants to take appropriate mitigation measures to address adverse effects on coastal access, National Trails, other rights of way and open access land and, where appropriate, to consider what opportunities there may be to improve or create new access. In considering revisions to an existing right of way,</p>	<p>Chapter 14: Traffic and Transport of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] provides an assessment of the Proposed Development's impact on public rights of way within the Order Limits, or that will be impacted by the Proposed Development.</p> <p>The Proposed Development includes opportunities for enhancement such as proposals to provide three new PRoW and four permissive paths, as well as improvements to existing PRoW.</p> <p>A number of existing PRoW traverse the Proposed Development and are presented in Table 14.18, Chapter 14:</p>

	<p>consideration should be given to the use, character, attractiveness, and convenience of the right of way.</p>	<p>Traffic and Transport of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] and have been illustrated in ES Volume 3, Appendix 14.1: Transport Assessment [EN010149/APP/6.3] and Outline Public Rights of Way and Permissive Path Management Plan [EN010149/APP/7.12].</p> <p>The Outline Public Rights of Way and Permissive Path Management Plan [EN010149/APP/7.12] has been prepared in support of the DCO application. The Outline Public Rights of Way and Permissive Path Management Plan sets out the mitigation, management, and monitoring measures for PRow affected by construction, which may require temporary diversion/closure or alternative routing where the former is not possible.</p>
	<p>5.11.31 The Secretary of State should consider whether the mitigation measures put forward by an applicant are acceptable and whether requirements or other</p>	<p>Section 14.7 of Chapter 14: Traffic and Transport of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] sets out the mitigation measures embedded in the Proposed Development, including that the Proposed Development seeks to protect and enhance the existing PRow network and ensure the provision of new and improved multi-user routes. These PRow are outlined in the Outline Public Rights of Way and Permissive Path Management Plan [EN010149/APP/7.12].</p>
<p><i>Secretary of State Decision Making</i></p>	<p>5.11.32 The Secretary of State should not grant consent for development on existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land unless an assessment has been undertaken either by the local authority or independently, which has shown the open space or the buildings and land to be surplus to requirements or the Secretary of State</p>	<p>The Proposed Development does not propose development on existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land.</p>

	<p>determines that the benefits of the project (including need), outweigh the potential loss of such facilities, taking into account any positive proposals made by the applicant to provide new, improved or compensatory land or facilities.</p>	
	<p>5.11.33 The loss of playing fields should only be allowed where applicants can demonstrate that they will be replaced with facilities of equivalent or better quantity or quality in a suitable location.</p>	<p>The Proposed Development does not involve the loss of playing fields.</p>
	<p>5.11.34 The Secretary of State should ensure that applicants do not site their scheme on the best and most versatile agricultural land without justification. Where schemes are to be sited on best and most versatile agricultural land the Secretary of State should take into account the economic and other benefits of that land. Where development of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary, areas of poorer quality land should be preferred to those of a higher quality.</p>	<p>Chapter 8 of the Planning Statement sets out how the Applicant considered agricultural land, and particularly BMV land, in its site selection process, noting that of the sites identified which met the Applicant's objectives, all presented similar or higher quantities of BMV in comparison to the Proposed Development. It is also important to recognise that while ALC was an important consideration in site selection, it was one of several factors which were balanced to determine a favoured site. Given that the other sites identified by the Applicant during site selection displayed similar ALC qualities, this was not a determining factor in the choice of site location.</p> <p>During design development the Applicant set out Project Principles aimed to avoid and reduce the use of higher quality land within the Order Limits for development. As set out in the Design Approach Document [EN010149/APP/7.3] Project Principles 7.1 and 7.2 relate to BMV land and state that:</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8.1: Fields comprising solely of Grade 1 or 2 land within the Site will remain in arable production. • Prioritise the use of BMV land for arable production where practicable. • Prioritise the use on non-BMV land for the habitat creation where practicable. <p>In terms of the economic impact of BMV, the BMV used for hard infrastructure within the Proposed Development represents 4% of the total wider landholding within Blankney Estate. The Proposed Development has been designed so as not to conflict with the wider business functions, and the income generated from land rental will play an important part in securing the ongoing viability of the estate.</p>
<p>Part 5.12 - Noise and Vibration Applicant Assessment</p>	<p>5.12.6 Where noise impacts are likely to arise from the proposed development, the applicant should include the following in the noise assessment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a description of the noise generating aspects of the development proposal leading to noise impacts, including the identification of any distinctive tonal characteristics, if the noise is impulsive, whether the noise contains particular high or low frequency content or any temporal characteristics of the noise 	<p>Chapter 12: Noise and Vibration of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] presents a noise assessment in accordance with the requirements of this policy, including a description of the noise generating aspects of the development.</p> <p>Section 12.4 of Chapter 12: Noise and Vibration of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] outlines the noise-sensitive receptors that have been identified through a desktop study of aerial imagery and mapping and are presented in Figure 12.1: Receptors Assessed of the ES Volume 2 [EN010149/APP/6.2] and are summarised in Chapter 12: Noise and Vibration of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1]. The effect of noise and vibration on these receptors have been</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identification of noise sensitive receptors and noise sensitive areas that may be affected • the characteristics of the existing noise environment • a prediction of how the noise environment will change with the proposed development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ in the shorter term, such as during the construction period ○ in the longer term, during the operating life of the infrastructure ○ at particular times of the day, evening and night (and weekends) as appropriate, and at different times of year • an assessment of the effect of predicted changes in the noise environment on any noise-sensitive receptors, including an assessment of any likely impact on health and quality of life / well-being where appropriate, particularly among those disadvantaged by other factors who are often disproportionately affected by noise-sensitive areas • if likely to cause disturbance, an assessment of the effect of underwater or subterranean noise 	<p>considered during the construction, decommissioning and operational phases of the Proposed Development.</p> <p>Section 12.5 of Chapter 12: Noise and Vibration of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] describes the existing characteristics of the noise environment for the Proposed Development and surrounding areas.</p> <p>Section 12.6 of Chapter 12: Noise and Vibration of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] describes the embedded design mitigation relevant to the Proposed Development with respect to noise and vibration, encompassing the construction, operational and decommissioning phases.</p> <p>Sections 12.7 and 12.9 of Chapter 12: Noise and Vibration of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] assess the noise and vibration likely effects and residual effects, respectively, on receptors arising from the construction, decommissioning, and operating life of the infrastructure including at particular times of the day and at night on the noise environment.</p>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> all reasonable steps taken to mitigate and minimise potential adverse effects on health and quality of life 	
<p>5.12.7 The nature and extent of the noise assessment should be proportionate to the likely noise impact.</p>	<p>The noise assessment is proportionate to the likely noise impact, which would be managed through the oCEMP [EN010149/APP/7.7] during construction and would be limited by the nature of the Proposed Development and very small amount of traffic generated during operation.</p>
<p>5.12.8 Applicants should consider the noise impact of ancillary activities associated with the development, such as increased road and rail traffic movements, or other forms of transportation.</p>	<p>Chapter 12: Noise and Vibration of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] considers the noise impact of ancillary activities associated with the development, such as increased road and rail traffic movements, or other forms of transportation. It concludes that with the implementation of mitigation measures significant adverse noise and vibration effects during the construction, operation and decommissioning of the Proposed Development will be avoided at sensitive receptors.</p> <p>Mitigation measures have been embedded into the Proposed Development's design and construction methodology to minimise adverse effects where practicable, as set out in Section 12.6 of Chapter 12: Noise and Vibration of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1]. A number of measures which will be secured within the oCEMP [EN010149/APP/7.7], oOEMP [EN010149/APP/7.10] and oDEMP [EN010149/APP/7.13] seek to mitigate the noise level impact from the construction and decommissioning phases.</p>

<p>5.12.9 Operational noise, with respect to human receptors, should be assessed using the principles of the relevant British Standards and other guidance. Further information on assessment of particular noise sources may be contained in the technology specific NPSs. In particular, for renewables (EN-3) and electricity networks (EN-5) there is assessment guidance for specific features of those technologies. For the prediction, assessment and management of construction noise, reference should be made to any relevant British Standards and other guidance which also give examples of mitigation strategies.</p>	<p>Chapter 12: Noise and Vibration of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] assesses operational noise at the identified sensitive noise receptors following BS 4142 guidance, BS 8233:2014 and World Health Organisation guidance. Construction and decommissioning noise and vibration impacts have been assessed per Annex E of British Standards 5228-1.</p>
<p>5.12.10 Some noise impacts will be controlled through environmental permits and parallel tracking is encouraged where noise impacts determined by an environmental permit interface with planning issues (i.e. physical design and location of development). The applicant should consult the EA and/or the SNCB, and other relevant bodies, such the MMO or NRW, as necessary, and in particular regarding assessment of noise on protected species or other wildlife. The results of any noise surveys and predictions may inform the ecological assessment. The seasonality of</p>	<p>The Schedule of Other Consents and Licences [EN010149/APP/3.3] has been prepared as part of the DCO application (DCO Application) and should be read in conjunction with the other documents submitted with the DCO Application. The purpose of this document is to provide information on the additional consents and licences potentially required for the Proposed Development, in addition to the DCO.</p> <p>The Consultation Report [EN010149/APP/5.1] sets out the Natural England did not comment on noise during consultation.</p>

	potentially affected species in nearby sites may also need to be considered.	
	5.12.11 In the marine environment, applicants should consider noise impacts on protected species, as well as other noise sensitive receptors, both at the individual project level and in-combination with other marine activities.	The Proposed Development does not affect marine environment.
	5.12.12 Applicants should submit a detailed impact assessment and mitigation plan as part of any development plan, including the use of noise mitigation and noise abatement technologies during construction and operation.	Chapter 12: Noise and Vibration of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] provides a detailed impact assessment and proposed mitigations for noise and vibration impacts.
<i>Mitigation</i>	5.12.13 The Secretary of State should consider whether mitigation measures are needed both for operational and construction noise over and above any which may form part of the project application. In doing so the Secretary of State may wish to impose mitigation measures. Any such mitigation measures should take account of the NPPF or any successor to it and the Planning Practice Guidance on Noise.	Section 12.6 of Chapter 12: Noise and Vibration of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] details the embedded mitigation measures that have been embedded into the Proposed Development's design and construction methodology to minimise adverse effects where practicable. The Applicant is specifically committing to noise related design principles including a minimum 250m offset from ITS, BESS, Project Substations and Collector Compounds to residential properties.
	5.12.14 Mitigation measures may include one or more of the following:	The likely noise impact would be managed through the oCEMP [EN010149/APP/7.7] during construction and would be limited by the nature of the Proposed Development and very small amount of traffic generated during operation.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • engineering: reducing the noise generated at source and/or containing the noise generated • lay-out: where possible, optimising the distance between the source and noise-sensitive receptors and/or incorporating good design to minimise noise transmission through the use of screening by natural or purpose-built barriers, or other buildings • administrative: using planning conditions/obligations to restrict activities allowed on the site at certain times and/or specifying permissible noise limits/noise levels, differentiating as appropriate between different times of day, such as evenings and late at night, and taking into account seasonality of wildlife in nearby designated sites • insulation: mitigating the impact on areas likely to be affected by noise including through noise insulation when the impact is on a building. 	<p>In addition, consideration has been given to traffic routing, timing and access points to the Proposed Development to minimise noise impacts at existing receptors and the management of construction traffic on the highway network through the oCTMP [EN010149/APP/7.8], which will inform a detailed CTMP to be secured through the DCO.</p> <p>These mitigation measures have taken account of the NPPF the Planning Practice Guidance on Noise.</p>
	<p>5.12.15 The project should demonstrate good design through selection of the quietest or most acceptable cost-effective plant available; containment of noise within buildings wherever possible, taking into account any other adverse impacts that such</p>	<p>The Proposed Development has demonstrated good design through the inclusion of noise and vibration mitigation measures. Section 12.6 of Chapter 12: Noise and Vibration of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] details the embedded mitigation measures for the operational phase. Embedded</p>

	<p>containment might cause (e.g. on landscape and visual impacts; optimisation of plant layout to minimise noise emissions; and, where possible, the use of landscaping, bunds or noise barriers to reduce noise transmission).</p>	<p>mitigation measures that will be applied includes (but is not limited to) consideration of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appendix 12.2: Construction Noise Plant Tables and Results of the ES Volume 3 [EN010149/APP/6.3] details the potential impacts of construction noise from the Proposed Development; and • Design layout of elements within the draft Order Limits to minimise noise at receptors. <p>Chapter 10: Landscape and Visual Amenity of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] sets out an assessment of how the Proposed Development’s design, which includes embedded mitigation measures, will have an effect on landscape and visual impacts, and sets out any necessary mitigation measures. A 4m high noise attenuation barrier would be erected around the BESS.</p>
	<p>5.12.16 A development must be undertaken in accordance with statutory requirements for noise. Due regard must be given to the relevant sections of the Noise Policy Statement for England, the NPPF, and the government’s associated planning guidance on noise. In Wales the relevant policy will be PPW and the TANs, as well as the Welsh Government’s Noise and Soundscape Action Plan</p>	<p>Chapter 12: Noise and Vibration of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] considers relevant sections of the Noise Policy Statement, the NPPF, and the government’s associated planning guidance on noise, within its assessment.</p>

<p><i>Secretary of State decision making</i></p>	<p>5.12.17 The Secretary of State should not grant development consent unless they are satisfied that the proposals will meet the following aims, through the effective management and control of noise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • avoid significant adverse impacts on health and quality of life from noise • mitigate and minimise other adverse impacts on health and quality of life from noise • where possible, contribute to improvements to health and quality of life through the effective management and control of noise. 	<p>Chapter 12: Noise and Vibration of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] assesses the likely impacts of the Proposed Development of noise and vibration, including temporary and permanent effects. Chapter 12: Noise and Vibration of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] outlines that there are no significant effects associated with construction noise or construction traffic. Therefore, there will be no significant effects to human receptors as a result of noise and vibration.</p>
	<p>5.12.18 When preparing the Development Consent Order, the Secretary of State should consider including measurable requirements or specifying the mitigation measures to be put in place to ensure that noise levels do not exceed any limits specified in the development consent. These requirements or mitigation measures may apply to the construction, operation, and decommissioning of the energy infrastructure development.</p>	<p>Section 12.6 of Chapter 12: Noise and Vibration of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] outlines the embedded mitigation measure included in the Proposed Development including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A 4m high barrier has been included around the BESS Compound, with a 6m high absorbent barrier positioned around the west, north and east faces of the Springwell Substation transformers; • Springwell Substation, BESS, Collector Compounds, Standalone Inverter, Transformer and Switchgear and ITS (part of the balance of solar system plant comprised in Work No. 1) will be offset at least 250m from residential properties; • Perimeter fencing surrounding the Solar PV development will be offset at least 15m from existing woodlands;

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perimeter fencing surrounding the Solar PV development will be offset at least 10m either side from all existing hedgerows; • Built development above ground will be offset at least 20m from Local Wildlife Sites except for highways improvement works; • Perimeter fencing surrounding the Solar PV development will be offset at least 30m from main badger setts; • Independent Outdoor Equipment (transformer, switchgear and central inverters) and ITS will be offset at least 50m from all existing and proposed statutory PRoW; and • Perimeter fencing surrounding the Solar PV development will be offset at least 15m from either side of existing and proposed statutory PRoW. <p>Chapter 12: Noise and Vibration of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] ensures that by adopting the additional control measures outlined above, it is considered that noise levels from all construction activities would not exceed 65 dB LAeq,T at any of the receptors considered. Through inclusion of the embedded mitigation and optimisation of proposed operational plant items, predicted noise levels throughout daytime and night-time periods from the operational Proposed Development would not exceed 35 dB LAr at any receptors.</p>
	5.13.2 Where the project is likely to have socio-economic impacts at local or regional levels, the applicant should undertake and	An assessment of these impacts is undertaken in Chapter 13: Population of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] .

<p>Part 5.13 - Socio-economic</p>	<p>include in their application an assessment of these impacts as part of the ES (see Section 4.3).</p>	
<p><i>Applicant Assessment</i></p>	<p>5.13.3 The applicant is strongly encouraged to engage with relevant local authorities during early stages of project development so that the applicant can gain a better understanding of local or regional issues and opportunities.</p>	<p>The Applicant has engaged with North Kesteven District Council (NKDC) and Lincolnshire County Council (LCC), as outlined in Section 13.3 of Chapter 13: Population of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1].</p> <p>Details on the feedback received from statutory consultation and the response to each matter raised and how this has been addressed in detail are in Appendix A-4, J-1, J-2 and K-3 of the Consultation Report [EN010149/APP/5.2].</p>
	<p>5.13.4 The applicant's assessment should consider all relevant socio-economic impacts, which may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the creation of jobs and training opportunities. Applicants may wish to provide information on the sustainability of the jobs created, including where they will help to develop the skills needed for the UK's transition to Net Zero • the contribution to the development of low-carbon industries at the local and regional level as well as nationally • the provision of additional local services and improvements to local infrastructure, including the provision of educational and visitor facilities 	<p>Chapter 13: Population of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] provides an assessment of all potential socio-economic impacts of the Proposed Development, in accordance with this policy.</p> <p>To help maximise the positive gain for the local economy from the beneficial effect arising from employment generation during the construction and operational (including maintenance) phase, an Outline Employment, Skills and Supply Chain Plan [EN010149/APP/7.20] supports the DCO Application.</p> <p>As set out in the Outline Employment, Skills and Supply Chain Plan [EN010149/APP/7.20], The Proposed Development will provide construction job opportunities over the anticipated four-year construction programme. The (gross) peak number of approximately 650 workers refers to the number of workers that may be on site at any one time. The average is 400 workers over the four-year construction</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • any indirect beneficial impacts for the region hosting the infrastructure, in particular in relation to use of local support services and supply chains • effects (positive and negative) on tourism and other users of the area impacted • the impact of a changing influx of workers during the different construction, operation and decommissioning phases of the energy infrastructure. This could change the local population dynamics and could alter the demand for services and facilities in the settlements nearest to the construction work (including community facilities and physical infrastructure such as energy, water, transport and waste). There could also be effects on social cohesion depending on how populations and service provision change as a result of the development • cumulative effects - if development consent were to be granted for a number of projects within a region and these were developed in a similar timeframe, there could be some short-term negative effects, for example a potential shortage of construction workers to meet the needs of other 	<p>period. The jobs created will be in the renewable energy sector and will contribute to the development of skills needed for the UK's transition.</p> <p>This details commitments to work with partners and the local and regional construction supply chain to enhance the proportion of activities that can be accessed by local people (both in employment, unemployed and economically inactive or outside of the current labour market) and firms with relevant experience and competencies. The main objectives of the Outline Employment, Skills and Supply Chain Plan [EN010149/APP/7.20] are detailed below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate the use of local labour from within the lead contractor's organisation; • Where economically and practically feasible, procure goods and services from local contractors, sub-contractors and suppliers to support the employment of the local community; • Demonstrate recruitment and training opportunities within the lead contractor's organisation and provide opportunities for upskilling local people; • Provide opportunities for local residents to access employment opportunities created during the construction phase; and • Support the development of skills within the local community. <p>The outline Employment, and Skills and Supply Chain Plan [EN010149/APP/7.20] would seek to promote local employment and supply chain activities such that leakage</p>
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	<p>industries and major projects within the region</p>	<p>may be reduced, promoting more local and targeted opportunities for employment.</p> <p>Chapter 13: Population of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] assesses the impacts of the Proposed Development on Tourism. The assessment concludes that the construction phase may have effects on the tourist economy as a result of impacts to visitor experience and behaviours, and linked impacts to tourism business receptor performance, resulting from visual and noise construction effects. Adverse impacts to tourism will mostly be temporary and experienced by users of PRow and the Stepping Out network within and closest to the Order Limits. The assessment concludes that there is a slight adverse likely impact of the Proposed Development on tourism, which is not significant in EIA terms.</p> <p>Section 5.9 of Chapter 16: Cumulative Effects of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] assesses the cumulative impact on population effects.</p>
	<p>5.13.5 Applicants should describe the existing socio-economic conditions in the areas surrounding the proposed development and should also refer to how the development's socio-economic impacts correlate with local planning policies.</p>	<p>Section 13.5 of Chapter 13: Population of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] describes the existing socio-economic baseline conditions of the Study Area.</p> <p>The land use within the Order Limits comprises mostly land that is used for agricultural purposes. The farming operations are expected to remain operational through all stages of the Proposed Development.</p> <p>There are also various PRow, permissive paths and routes of the Stepping Out network that traverse the Order Limits or run adjacent to the Order Limits. Many of these networks are</p>

		<p>used for tourist recreational activities and increase access to rural environments. The Stepping Out network appears to be of particular significance to the tourist economy and is heavily endorsed by the North Kesteven tourism office.</p> <p>The majority of tourist receptors referenced within the North Kesteven Heart of Lincs Visitor Guide are beyond the study area and therefore impacts to amenity from these receptors during operation (including maintenance) and construction is likely to be minimal. The RAF Digby site is located adjacent to the Order Limits, which is a popular tourist attraction associated with the aviation heritage of North Kesteven.</p> <p>Due to the rural location of the Proposed Development, there are a number of small, privately run accommodation providers within the 20km radius study area. Accommodation providers with a large number of beds are located in the nearest major settlement of Lincoln, approximately 14 miles from the Order Limits.</p> <p>There are 12 solar farms and energy parks in the pre-application or decision phase located within Lincolnshire. 11 of the 12 solar farms are proposed to be built on land classed as BMV land.</p> <p>The Proposed Development's compliance with local policies is considered in Table 6 of Appendix 3 of this Planning Statement [EN010149/APP/7.2].</p>
	<p>5.13.6 Socio-economic impacts may be linked to other impacts, for example visual impacts considered in Section 5.10 but may also have an impact on tourism and local</p>	<p>An Outline Employment, Skills and Supply Chain Plan [EN010149/APP/7.20] has been prepared to help maximise the positive gain for the local economy from the beneficial effect arising from employment generation during the</p>

	<p>businesses. Applicants are encouraged, where possible, to demonstrate that local suppliers have been considered in any supply chain.</p>	<p>construction and operational phase. A detailed Employment, Skills and Supply Chain Plan will be secured by way of a DCO requirement. The jobs created by the Proposed Development will be in the renewable energy sector, specifically relating to solar installation, but also electricity transmission and supply chain. Where possible, there will be a preference for local staffing, and it is likely that the appointed contractors will employ trainees and apprentices as part of the construction workforce.</p>
	<p>5.13.7 Applicants should consider developing accommodation strategies where appropriate, especially during construction and decommissioning phases, that would include the need to provide temporary accommodation for construction workers if required.</p>	<p>Chapter 13: Population of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] assesses the Proposed Development’s impact on occupancy rates as a result of increased visitor numbers to the area.</p> <p>There are 112 accommodation providers available within the 20km study area. Given the rural location of the Proposed Development, the accommodation providers closest to the Order Limits are generally small scale, bed and breakfast type facilities. Three of the accommodation providers located within the 20km study area are located in the larger urban centre of Lincoln and can be categorised as large, chain budget hotels.</p> <p>Table 13.12 of Chapter 12: Population of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] shows that including the percentage of construction staff likely to require temporary accommodation, accommodation rates within the region will not reach maximum capacity during any months of the year, demonstrating that temporary accommodation providers are able to cater for the tourist population as well as any temporary construction staff.</p>

		<p>An accommodation strategy is not proposed for the Proposed Development as there is considered to be sufficient local supply to facilitate all construction workers.</p>
<p><i>Mitigation</i></p>	<p>5.13.8 The Secretary of State should consider whether mitigation measures are necessary to mitigate any adverse socio-economic impacts of the development. For example, high quality design can improve the visual and environmental experience for visitors and the local community alike.</p>	<p>Chapter 13: Population of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] concludes that there would be no significant adverse effects in relation to socio-economics following the implementation of embedded mitigation measures as a part of the Proposed Development, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The existing PRoWs that cross the Site will be retained. Subject to the construction phasing and methodology, there may be a requirement to temporarily divert a PRoW during the construction phase, the detail of which will be sought to be agreed with relevant key stakeholders, with an appropriate temporary alternative provided; • Perimeter fencing surrounding the Solar PV development will be offset at least 15m from either side of existing and proposed permanent statutory PROW; and • Independent Outdoor Equipment (transformer, switchgear and central inverters) and ITS will be offset at least 50m from all existing and proposed statutory PRoW. <p>These embedded mitigation measures are detailed further and will be secured through the Outline Public Rights of Way and Permissive Path Management Plan [EN010149/APP/7.12] and Design Commitments [EN010149/APP/7.4]</p>

Secretary of State decision making	5.13.9 The Secretary of State should have regard to the potential socio-economic impacts of new energy infrastructure identified by the applicant and from any other sources that the Secretary of State considers to be both relevant and important to its decision.	<p>Chapter 13: Population of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] provides an assessment of all potential socio-economic impacts of the Proposed Development, in accordance with this policy.</p> <p>Chapter 13: Population of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] undertakes an assessment of the likely effects arising from the construction and operation (including maintenance) of the Proposed Development upon Population. The likely level of effect during decommissioning is expected to be similar to or less than that experienced during construction. Therefore the significance of effect during construction is expected to represent the level of effect during decommissioning.</p> <p>Chapter 13: Population of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] concludes that there would be no significant adverse effects in relation to socio-economics, following the implementation of embedded mitigation measures as a part of the Proposed Development.</p> <p>An Outline Employment, Skills and Supply Chain Plan [EN010149/APP/7.20] has been prepared to help maximise the positive gain for the local economy from the beneficial effect arising from employment generation during the construction and operational phase. A detailed Skills and Employment Plan will be secured by way of a DCO requirement.</p> <p>The Outline Employment, Skills and Supply Chain Plan [EN010149/APP/7.20] sets out that the economic benefits that the Proposed Development could generate are:</p>
	5.13.10 The Secretary of State may conclude that limited weight is to be given to assertions of socio-economic impacts that are not supported by evidence (particularly in view of the need for energy infrastructure as set out in this NPS).	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to employment, upskilling and re-skilling opportunities for people; and • Enhanced business growth and productivity and potential to increase capabilities and specialisms in green construction and manufacturing.
	<p>5.13.11 The Secretary of State should consider any relevant positive provisions the applicant has made or is proposing to make to mitigate impacts (for example through planning obligations) and any legacy benefits that may arise as well as any options for phasing development in relation to the socio-economic impacts.</p>	<p>The Proposed Development provides the following, economic, social and community benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The delivery of a substantial Critical National Priority (CNP) infrastructure that will deliver large amounts of cheap, secure and low-carbon electricity both during and beyond the critical 2020s timeframe. Maximising the capacity of generation in the resource-rich, well-connected and technically deliverable proposed location for the Proposed Development represents a significant and economically rational step forwards in the fight against the global climate emergency;
	<p>5.13.12 The Secretary of State may wish to include a requirement that specifies the approval by the local authority of an employment and skills plan detailing arrangements to promote local employment and skills development opportunities, including apprenticeships, education, engagement with local schools and colleges and training programmes to be enacted.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The provision of four new permissive paths; • The existing PRoWs that cross the Site will be retained. Perimeter fencing surrounding the Solar PV development will be offset at least 15m from either side of existing and proposed permanent statutory PROW. Independent Outdoor Equipment (transformer, switchgear and central inverters) and ITS will be offset at least 50m from all existing and proposed statutory PROW; • The (gross) peak number of approximately 650 workers may be on site at any one time, or an average of 400 over the four year construction period.

		<p>The jobs created will be in the renewable energy sector and will contribute to the development of skills needed for the UK's transition; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A £83,143 Gross Value Added per construction worker. <p>The Outline Employment, Skills and Supply Chain Plan [EN010149/APP/7.20] has been prepared to help maximise the positive gain for the local economy from the beneficial effect arising from employment generation during the construction and operational phase. A detailed Skills and Employment Plan will be secured by way of a DCO requirement. The jobs created by the Proposed Development will be in the renewable energy sector, specifically relating to solar installation, but also electricity transmission and supply chain. Where possible, there will be a preference for local staffing, and it is likely that the appointed contractors will employ trainees and apprentices as part of the construction workforce.</p>
<p>Part 5.14 - Traffic and Transport <i>Applicant Assessment</i></p>	<p>5.14.5 If a project is likely to have significant transport implications, the applicant's ES (see Section 4.3) should include a transport appraisal. The DfT's Transport Analysis Guidance (TAG) and Welsh Governments WeITAG provides guidance on modelling and assessing the impacts of transport schemes.</p>	<p>Appendix 14.1 of the ES Volume 3 [EN010149/APP/6.3] contains a Transport Assessment that has been prepared in accordance with appropriate guidance including the Department for Transport's guidance on Travel Plans, Transport Assessments and Statements in Decision Taking (2014). The applicant has consulted with the relevant Highways Authorities regarding the assessment. Comments from these stakeholders are included in Section 14.3 of Chapter 14: Traffic and Transport of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1].</p>

<p>5.14.6 National Highways and Highways Authorities are statutory consultees on NSIP applications including energy infrastructure where it is expected to affect the strategic road network and / or have an impact on the local road network. Applicants should consult with National Highways and Highways Authorities as appropriate on the assessment and mitigation to inform the application to be submitted.</p>	<p>A Transport Assessment has been submitted Appendix 14.1 of the ES Volume 3 [EN010149/APP/6.3] following consultation with the relevant Highways Authorities.</p>
<p>5.14.7 The applicant should prepare a travel plan including demand management and monitoring measures to mitigate transport impacts. The applicant should also provide details of proposed measures to improve access by active, public and shared transport to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reduce the need for parking associated with the proposal; • contribute to decarbonisation of the transport network; • improve user travel options by offering genuine modal choice. 	<p>An Appendix 1: Outline Travel Plan to the Outline CTMP [EN010149/APP/7.8] has been prepared to mitigate transport impacts and reduce the volume of construction staff and employee trips to the Proposed Development requiring the Principal Contractor to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare staff travel information in advance of construction commencing promoting alternative modes of transport and car sharing to be distributed electronically to staff; • Provide suitable cycle parking spaces and associated facilities during mobilisation of Primary Construction Compounds, as demand necessitates; and • Undertake monthly reviews of the car and cycle parking demands to ensure that sufficient capacity is available. Chapter 14: Traffic and Transport of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] considers any possible disruption to services and infrastructure.
<p>5.14.8 The assessment should also consider any possible disruption to services and infrastructure (such as road, rail and airports).</p>	

	<p>5.14.9 If additional transport infrastructure is needed or proposed, it should always include good quality walking, wheeling and cycle routes, and associated facilities (changing/storage etc.) needed to enhance active transport provision.</p>	
<p><i>Mitigation</i></p>	<p>5.14.11 Where mitigation is needed, possible demand management measures must be considered. This could include identifying opportunities to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reduce the need to travel by consolidating trips; • locate development in areas already accessible by active travel and public transport; • provide opportunities for shared mobility; • re-mode by shifting travel to a sustainable mode that is more beneficial to the network; • retime travel outside of the known peak times; • reroute to use parts of the network that are less busy. <p>5.14.12 If feasible and operationally reasonable, such mitigation should be required, before considering requirements for the provision of new inland transport infrastructure to deal with remaining transport</p>	<p>Chapter 14: Traffic and Transport of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] confirms that due to measures proposed for construction, the Proposed Development will not result in residual adverse effects upon highway safety or generate any highway capacity issues. Proposed mitigation measures include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upgrade of A15 / B1191 / Temple Road to provide improvement to existing conditions for all users inclusive of a non-motorised user crossing point; • A15/Gorse Hill Lane with improved junction infrastructure and surfacing for all users; • B1191 RAF Digby and Ashby-de-la-Launde widening for improved passing opportunities for all HGVs; and • Vehicle passing bays along Temple Road

<p>impacts. All stages of the project should support and encourage a modal shift of freight from road to more environmentally sustainable alternatives, such as rail, cargo bike, maritime and inland waterways, as well as making appropriate provision for and infrastructure needed to support the use of alternative fuels including charging for electric vehicles.</p>	
<p>5.14.13 Regard should always be given to the needs of freight at all stages in the construction and operation of the development including the need to provide appropriate facilities for HGV drivers as appropriate.</p>	<p>Chapter 14: Traffic and Transport of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] confirms that due to measures proposed for construction, the Proposed Development will not result in residual adverse effects upon highway safety or generate any highway capacity issues.</p>
<p>5.14.14 The Secretary of State may attach requirements to a consent where there is likely to be substantial HGV traffic that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • control numbers of HGV movements to and from the site in a specified period during its construction and possibly on the routing of such movements; • make sufficient provision for HGV parking, and associated high quality drive facilities either on the site or at dedicated facilities elsewhere, to support driver welfare, avoid ‘overspill’ parking on public roads, prolonged 	<p>All construction traffic will utilise the existing local highway network, with HGVs limited to specific designated routes as set out in the oCTMP [EN010149/APP/7.8]. Measures to enforce adherence to these routes is set out in the same document. The Contractor will prepare and implement the CTMP which will describe the traffic management, safety and control measures proposed during construction of the Proposed Development. The CTMP will include details of the parking arrangements.</p> <p>Traffic flow diagrams showing how the trips have been distributed on the road network can be found in as part of the appendices contained within Appendix 14.1: Transport Assessment of the ES Volume 3 [EN010149/APP/6.3].</p>

<p>queuing on approach roads and uncontrolled on-street HGV parking in normal operating conditions;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensure satisfactory arrangements for reasonably foreseeable abnormal disruption, in consultation with network providers and the responsible police force. 	
<p>5.14.15 The Secretary of State should have regard to the cost-effectiveness of demand management measures compared to new transport infrastructure, as well as the aim to secure more sustainable patterns of transport development when considering mitigation measures.</p>	<p>The Transport Assessment Appendix 14.1 of the ES Volume 3 [EN010149/APP/6.3] and the outline CTMP [EN010149/APP/7.8] outlines measures proposed to mitigate the traffic and transport impacts of the Proposed Development, including sustainable patterns of transport development. The oCTMP will be developed into a CTMP prior to commencement and will be secured by the DCO.</p>
<p>5.14.16 Applicants should consider the DfT policy guidance “Water Preferred Policy Guidelines for the movement of abnormal indivisible loads” when preparing their application.</p>	<p>The Strategic Road Network is considered in detail within the ES Volume 3, Appendix 14.1: Transport Assessment [EN010149/APP/6.3], where impacts are expected to be limited. As the specific routes Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) will take during construction are not known at this time, HGVs are assumed to access/egress the Strategic Road Network as close to the Proposed Development as possible.</p> <p>The majority of construction vehicles accessing the Construction Compounds will be standard/normal size LGVs and HGVs. However, it is expected that the Proposed Development would require AIL delivery during the construction phase for the delivery of heavy transformer equipment from the Grimsby Docks/Immingham Port towards the Site associated with the Springwell Substation.</p>

		<p>The DCO application is supported by an oCTMP [EN010149/APP/7.8] which sets out the Abnormal Indivisible Loads management plan. The construction works will involve the delivery of up to seven AILs which comprise the Springwell Substation transformer. This load will have a maximum width of 6.2m and a vehicle length of 64m. Other deliveries may be considered oversized loads, including three cranes and up to 18 cable drums, but would not fall into the category of requiring an escort vehicle or mitigation works to accommodate them. The oCTMP [EN010149/APP/7.8] sets out that an access route survey feasibility report has been undertaken, which identifies that the preferred route would utilise the heavy load routes. There are no suitable waterways for AILs to be delivered to the Site.</p>
	<p>5.14.17 If an applicant suggests that the costs of meeting any obligations or requirements would make the proposal economically unviable this should not in itself justify the relaxation by the Secretary of State of any obligations or requirements needed to secure the mitigation.</p>	<p>Given the conclusions of Chapter 14: Traffic and Transport of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1], the mitigation measures embedded into the design of the Proposed Development and measures to minimise impacts out in the oCTMP [EN010149/APP/7.8], it is considered that impacts related to traffic and transport are acceptable and development consent should not be withheld. These are secured by DCO Requirement so no separate planning obligation is required.</p>
<p><i>Secretary of State decision making</i></p>	<p>5.14.18 A new energy NSIP may give rise to substantial impacts on the surrounding transport infrastructure and the Secretary of State should therefore ensure that the applicant has sought to mitigate these impacts, including during the construction phase of the development and by enhancing</p>	<p>Chapter 14: Traffic and Transport of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] confirms that due to measures proposed for construction, the Proposed Development will not result in residual adverse effects upon highway safety or generate any highway capacity issues. As secured through</p>

	active, public and shared transport provision and accessibility.	<p>the Streets, Rights of Way and Access Plans [EN010149/APP/2.4], proposed mitigation measures include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upgrade of A15 / B1191 / Temple Road to provide improvement to existing conditions for all users inclusive of a non-motorised user crossing point; • A15/Gorse Hill Lane with improved junction infrastructure and surfacing for all users; • B1191 RAF Digby and Ashby-de-la-Launde widening for improved passing opportunities for all HGVs; and • Vehicle passing bays along Temple Road. <p>Chapter 14: Traffic and Transport of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] concludes that overall, the effect on road safety is considered to be not significant.</p>
	5.14.19 Where the proposed mitigation measures are insufficient to reduce the impact on the transport infrastructure to acceptable levels, the Secretary of State should consider requirements to mitigate adverse impacts on transport networks arising from the development, as set out below.	
	5.14.20 Development consent should not be withheld provided that the applicant is willing to enter into planning obligations for funding new infrastructure or requirements can be imposed to mitigate transport impacts. In this situation the Secretary of State should apply appropriately limited weight to residual effects on the surrounding transport infrastructure.	
	5.14.21 The Secretary of State should only consider refusing development on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe, or it does not show how consideration has been given to the provision of adequate active public or shared transport access and provision.	

<p>Part 5.15 – Resource and Waste Management</p>	<p>5.15.6 Applicants must demonstrate that development proposals are in line with Defra’s policy position on the role of energy from waste in treating residual waste.</p>	<p>The Proposed Development has been designed and will be constructed and operated to minimise the creation of waste, maximise the use of recycled materials and assist the collection, separation, sorting, recycling and recovery of waste arising from the development during its use.</p>
<p><i>Applicant Assessment</i></p>	<p>5.15.7 The proposed plant must not compete with greater waste prevention, re-use, or recycling, or result in over-capacity of EfW or similar processes for the treatment of residual waste at a national or local level.</p>	<p>Chapter 3: Proposed Development Description of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] sets out the arrangements that are proposed for managing any waste produced by the Proposed Development, in accordance with the waste hierarchy, which are set out in the oCEMP [EN010149/APP/7.7], oDEMP [EN010149/APP/7.13] and oLEMP [EN010149/APP/7.9].</p>
	<p>5.15.8 The applicant should set out the arrangements that are proposed for managing any waste produced and prepare a report that sets out the sustainable management of waste and use of resources throughout any relevant demolition, excavation, and construction activities.</p>	<p>Measures include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any equipment that needs to be replaced during the operational period will be disposed of following the waste hierarchy, with materials being reused or recycled wherever possible; and • Electrical waste will be disposed of per the Waste from Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) Regulations, minimising the environmental impact of replacing any elements of the Proposed Development.
	<p>5.15.9 The arrangements described and a report setting out the sustainable management of waste and use of resources should include information on how re-use and recycling will be maximised in addition to the proposed waste recovery and disposal system for all waste generated by the development. They should also include an assessment of the impact of the waste arising from development on the capacity of waste management facilities to deal with other waste arising in the area for at least five years of operation.</p>	<p>During decommissioning, the Proposed Development will be subject to measures and procedures defined within a DEMP as secured through the DCO. An oDEMP [EN010149/APP/7.13] is submitted with the DCO application.</p>

<p>5.15.10 The applicant is encouraged to refer to the Waste Prevention Programme for England: Maximising Resources Minimising Waste and 'Towards Zero Waste: Our Waste Strategy for Wales' and should seek to minimise the volume of waste produced and the volume of waste sent for disposal unless it can be demonstrated that this is the best overall environmental outcome.</p>	
<p>5.15.11 If the applicant's assessment includes dredged material, the assessment should also include other uses of such material before disposal to sea, for example through re-use in the construction process.</p>	
<p>5.15.12 The UK is committed to moving towards a more 'circular economy'. Where possible, applicants are encouraged to source materials from recycled or reused sources and use low carbon materials, sustainable sources and local suppliers. Construction best practices should be used to ensure that material is reused or recycled onsite where possible.</p>	
<p>5.15.13 Applicants are also encouraged to use construction best practices in relation to storing materials in an adequate and protected place on site to prevent waste, for example, from damage or vandalism. The use of Building Information Management</p>	

	<p>tools (or similar) to record the materials used in construction can help to reduce waste in future decommissioning of facilities, by identifying materials that can be recycled or reused.</p>	
<p><i>Secretary of State decision making</i></p>	<p>5.15.14 The Secretary of State should consider the extent to which the applicant has proposed an effective system for managing hazardous and non-hazardous waste arising from the construction, operation and decommissioning of the proposed development.</p>	<p>The Proposed Development has been designed and will be constructed and operated to minimise the creation of waste, maximise the use of recycled materials and assist the collection, separation, sorting, recycling and recovery of waste arising from the development during its use.</p> <p>Chapter 3: Proposed Development Description of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] sets out the arrangements that are proposed for managing any waste produced by the Proposed Development, in accordance with the waste hierarchy, which are set out in the oCEMP [EN010149/APP/7.7], oDEMP [EN010149/APP/7.13] and oLEMP [EN010149/APP/7.9].</p> <p>Measures include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any equipment that needs to be replaced during the operational period will be disposed of following the waste hierarchy, with materials being reused or recycled wherever possible; and • Electrical waste will be disposed of per the Waste from Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) Regulations, minimising the environmental impact of replacing any elements of the Proposed Development. <p>Before the operation phase starts, the contractor will prepare a Site Waste Management Plan (SWMP) which will provide</p>
	<p>5.15.15 The Secretary of State should be satisfied that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • any such waste will be properly managed, both on-site and off-site. • the waste from the proposed facility can be dealt with appropriately by the waste infrastructure which is, or is likely to be, available. Such waste arisings should not have an adverse effect on the capacity of existing waste management facilities to deal with other waste arisings in the area. • adequate steps have been taken to minimise the volume of waste arisings, and of the volume of waste arisings sent for recovery or disposal, except 	

<p>where that is the best overall environmental outcome.</p>	<p>waste estimates and specify key responsibilities, reporting and auditing requirements and waste recovery targets. The SWMP will use, as a starting point, the measures detailed within the oSWMP which forms Appendix 1 of the oCEMP [EN010149/APP/7.7] updated to reflect the circumstances prevailing during the period in which operational and maintenance activities are to be carried out.</p>
<p>5.15.16 Where necessary, the Secretary of State should use requirements or obligations to ensure that appropriate measures for waste management are applied.</p>	
<p>5.15.17 The Secretary of State may wish to include a condition on revision of waste management plans at reasonable intervals when giving consent.</p>	
<p>5.15.18 Where the project will be subject to the Environmental Permitting regime, waste management arrangements during operations will be covered by the permit and the considerations set out in Section 4.12 will apply.</p>	
<p>5.15.19 The Secretary of State should have regard to any potential impacts on the achievement of resource efficiency and waste reduction targets set under the Environment Act 2021 or wider goals set out in the government's Environmental Improvement Plan 2023.</p>	

Part 5.16 - Water Quality and Resources <i>Applicant assessment</i>	<p>5.16.3 Where the project is likely to have effects on the water environment, the applicant should undertake an assessment of the existing status of, and impacts of the proposed project on, water quality, water resources and physical characteristics of the water environment, and how this might change due to the impact of climate change on rainfall patterns and consequently water availability across the water environment, as part of the ES or equivalent (see Section 4.3 and 4.10).</p>	<p>Chapter 15: Water of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] presents an assessment of the likely significant effects on the water environment including surface water features such as rivers, streams, ditches, lakes, groundwater assets, and demand for water resources, taking into account impacts from climate change.</p>
	<p>5.16.5 Where possible, applicants are encouraged to manage surface water during construction by treating surface water runoff from exposed topsoil prior to discharging and to limit the discharge of suspended solids e.g. from car parks or other areas of hard standing, during operation.</p>	<p>The implementation of embedded mitigation measures and best practice control measures to manage surface water during the construction of the Proposed Development will be secured via a detailed CEMP which is to be substantially in accordance with the Outline CEMP [EN010149/APP/7.7], and a Surface Water Drainage Strategy, which is to be substantially in accordance with the Outline Drainage Strategy, which forms an appendix to the Flood Risk Assessment [EN010149/APP/7.16].</p>
	<p>5.16.6 Applicants are encouraged to consider protective measures to control the risk of pollution to groundwater beyond those outlined in River Basin Management Plans and Groundwater Protection Zones – this could include, for example, the use of protective barriers.</p>	<p>Chapter 11: Land, Soils and Groundwater of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] set out that two landfills at Brauncewell and Longwood Quarry have been identified as potential significant off-site point sources of contamination (the former being approximately 8 m to the south east of the Order Limits, and the latter approximately 321 m to the north west of the Order Limits). These landfills were licensed to accept inert and non-biodegradable waste. The permit for the landfill</p>

	<p>5.16.7 The ES should in particular describe:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the existing quality of waters affected by the proposed project and the impacts of the proposed project on water quality, noting any relevant existing discharges, proposed new discharges and proposed changes to discharges • existing water resources affected by the proposed project and the impacts of the proposed project on water resources, noting any relevant existing abstraction rates, proposed new abstraction rates and proposed changes to • abstraction rates (including any impact on or use of mains supplies and reference to Abstraction Licensing Strategies) and also demonstrate how proposals minimise the use of water resources and water consumption in the first instance • existing physical characteristics of the water environment (including quantity and dynamics of flow) affected by the proposed project and any impact of physical modifications to these characteristics 	<p>site at Longwood Quarry has been surrendered to confirm that actions had been completed to avoid a pollution risk.</p> <p>Chapter 15: Water of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] considers the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development on flood risk and water receptors. The Chapter provides an overview of the existing environment of the Site, followed by an assessment of likely significant effects for the construction, operation, and decommissioning stages of the Proposed Development.</p> <p>Potential impacts on water quality, water resources, and WFD are considered in Chapter 15: Water of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] as well as the Flood Risk Assessment [EN010149/APP/7.16]. The depth of flooding and reasonable assumptions for the impacts of climate change on flood depths have been assessed as part of a Flood Risk Assessment using the data available on flooding.</p> <p>Chapter 16: Cumulative Effects of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] considers the cumulative effects of the Proposed Development on Water. The Chapter concludes that no inter-project cumulative effects on flood risk and water quality during the operational (including maintenance) phase are anticipated, provided that the proposed National Grid Navenby Substation provide surface water management strategies and the appropriate management and mitigation plans are followed to prevent degradation of water quality for both the proposed National Grid Navenby Substation and the Proposed Development.</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> any impacts of the proposed project on water bodies or protected areas (including shellfish protected areas) under the Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations 2017 and source protection zones (SPZs) around potable groundwater abstractions how climate change could impact any of the above in the future any cumulative effects 	
<i>Mitigation</i>	<p>5.16.8 The Secretary of State should consider whether mitigation measures are needed over and above any which may form part of the project application. A construction management plan may help codify mitigation at that stage.</p> <p>5.16.9 The risk of impacts on the water environment can be reduced through careful design to facilitate adherence to good pollution control practice. For example, designated areas for storage and unloading, with appropriate drainage facilities, should be clearly marked.</p> <p>5.16.10 The impact on local water resources can be minimised through planning and design for the efficient use of water, including water recycling. If a development needs new water infrastructure, significant supplies or</p>	<p>Mitigation measures during the construction phase of the Proposed Development will be according to best practice and implemented through the oCEMP [EN010149/APP/7.7].</p> <p>Chapter 15: Water of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] sets out the measures propped to mitigate adverse effects on the water environment including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perimeter fencing surrounding the Solar PV development will be offset at least 6m either side from all existing ditches where crossing is not required, secured through Design Commitments [EN010149/APP/7.4]; An Outline Drainage Strategy, secured through Flood Risk Assessment [EN010149/APP/7.16]; and Vegetation Management, secured through oLEMP [EN010149/APP/7.9].

	impacts other water supplies, the applicant should consult with the local water company and the EA or NRW.	
<i>Secretary of State decision making</i>	5.16.11 Activities that discharge to the water environment are subject to pollution control. The considerations set out in Section 4.12 on the interface between planning and pollution control therefore apply. These considerations will also apply in an analogous way to the abstraction licensing regime regulating activities that take water from the water environment, and to the control regimes relating to works to, and structures in, on, or under controlled waters.	<p>Following the application of mitigation measures set out in Section 15.6 of Chapter 15: Water of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] no significant adverse effects on water have been identified during construction, operation or decommissioning of the Proposed Development. The Proposed Development includes mitigation measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perimeter fencing surrounding the Solar PV development will be offset at least 6m either side from all existing ditches where crossing is not required, secured through Design Commitments [EN010149/APP/7.4]; • An Outline Drainage Strategy, secured through Flood Risk Assessment [EN010149/APP/7.16]; and • Vegetation Management, secured through oLEMP [EN010149/APP/7.9]. <p>Metheringham Beck is the only Water Framework Directive (WFD) classified watercourse waterbody within the study area. Following the implementation of mitigation measures, the anticipated impact on the WFD waterbody is negligible, which is not significant in EIA terms.</p>
	5.16.12 The Secretary of State will need to give impacts on the water environment more weight where a project would have an adverse effect on the achievement of the environmental objectives established under the Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations 2017.	
	5.16.13 The Secretary of State must also consider duties under other legislation including duties under the Environment Act 2021 in relation to environmental targets and have regard to the policies set out in the	

	<p>Government's Environmental Improvement Plan 2023.</p>	
	<p>5.16.14 The Secretary of State should be satisfied that a proposal has regard to current River Basin Management Plans and meets the requirements of the Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations 2017 (including regulation 19). The specific objectives for particular river basins are set out in River Basin Management Plans. The Secretary of State must refuse development consent where a project is likely to cause deterioration of a water body or its failure to achieve good status or good potential, unless the requirements set out in Regulation 19 are met. A project may be approved in the absence of a qualifying Overriding Public Interest test only if there is sufficient certainty that it will not cause deterioration or compromise the achievement of good status or good potential.</p>	<p>Chapter 15: Water of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] sets out that Metheringham Beck is the only WFD classified watercourse within the study area. The classified extents of Metheringham Beck are located outside of the Site boundary, approximately 100 m north from Field By01, shown in Figure 15.1: Watercourse and Water Receptor Mapping of the ES Volume 2 [EN010149/APP/6.2]. This watercourse is classified with a moderate ecological status under the WFD/River Basin Management Plan (Cycle 3 – 2022).</p> <p>Metheringham Beck, as a WFD classified watercourse with a moderate ecological status, is considered to be medium sensitivity. The magnitude of impact following additional mitigation is considered to be negligible. Therefore, the significance of effect is considered to be negligible and not significant.</p>
	<p>5.16.15 The Secretary of State should also consider the interactions of the proposed project with other plans such as Water Resources Management Plans and Shoreline Management Plans.</p>	<p>The Proposed Development does not interact with any Water Resources Management Plans or Shoreline Management Plans.</p>

	<p>5.16.16 The Secretary of State should consider proposals to mitigate adverse effects on the water environment and any enhancement measures put forward by the applicant and whether appropriate requirements should be attached to any development consent and/or planning obligations are necessary</p>	<p>Mitigation measures during the construction phase of the Proposed Development will be according to best practice and implemented through the oCEMP [EN010149/APP/7.7].</p> <p>Chapter 15: Water of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] sets out the measures propped to mitigate adverse effects on the water environment, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Perimeter fencing surrounding the Solar PV development will be offset at least 6m on either side from all existing ditches where crossing is not required, secured through Design Commitments [EN010149/APP/7.4];• An Outline Drainage Strategy, secured through Flood Risk Assessment [EN010149/APP/7.16]; and• Vegetation Management, secured through oLEMP [EN010149/APP/7.9].
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Springwell Solar Farm

Table 2 National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3) – Table of Compliance

National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3)		
Assessment and Technical Specific Information – Assessment of the specific impacts as set out in Part 2 of EN-3 (2023) is considered below.		
Policy	EN-3 Policy Text	Assessment
Part 2.4 Climate change adaptation	<p>2.4.11 Solar photovoltaic (PV) sites may also be proposed in low lying exposed sites. For these proposals, applicants should consider, in particular, how plant will be resilient to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increased risk of flooding; and • impact of higher temperatures 	<p>Chapter 15: Water of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] confirms that flood risk during construction and at decommissioning will be managed through the CEMP and DEMP, which will be secured by the DCO and required to be in accordance with the Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (oCEMP) [EN010149/APP/7.7], and the Outline Decommissioning Environmental Management (oDEMP) [EN010149/APP/7.13].</p> <p>As the Site is at predominantly low risk from flooding from all sources, the reasonable ‘worst case’ is limited to the placement of Solar PV modules and string inverters mounted on the panels within Flood Zone 2 and Flood Zone 3 towards the east of the Site.</p> <p>The residual flood risk will be negligible once mitigation is included. Embedded mitigation will include:</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Perimeter fencing surrounding the Solar PV development will be offset at least 6m either side from all existing ditches where crossing is not required, secured through Design Commitments [EN010149/APP/7.4];• An Outline Drainage Strategy, secured through Flood Risk Assessment [EN010149/APP/7.16]; and• Vegetation Management, secured through oLEMP [EN010149/APP/7.9] <p>The Proposed Development is based on a clean energy source. There are considered to be some limited opportunities for environmental enhancement specifically related to flood risk and water quality associated with the Proposed Development.</p> <p>The Outline Drainage Strategy which is an Appendix to the Flood Risk Assessment [EN010149/APP/7.16], sets out measures to ensure the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• proposed hard standing will capture surface water runoff from these areas and will be discharged back into the environment and limited to greenfield runoff rates;• provision of vegetation cover (for the duration of the operational (including maintenance) phase) below the Solar PV
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		<p>modules will help slow the rate of surface water runoff from the Site during high intensity rainfall events and promote the interception of surface water runoff; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• cessation of arable agricultural activities will also result in a reduction of the application of pesticides, herbicides and fertilisers within the Site. Chapter 15: Water of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] assesses flood risk and drainage in the context of EIA. This concludes that with the proposed mitigation measures to be secured as part of the CEMP and DEMP, the risk of flooding from all sources will not change. Given the design mitigation secured through the OEMP, there will be no significant adverse effects predicted upon receptors regarding flood risk during the Proposed Development's operation. <p>The proposed drainage design set out in the Outline Drainage Strategy, which forms an Appendix to the Flood Risk Assessment [EN010149/APP/7.16], demonstrates that sustainable drainage techniques have been designed into the Proposed Development and will be maintained by the Applicant, or another private operator to be confirmed and secured through the DCO.</p> <p>The Scoping Opinion confirmed that climate resilience can be scoped out of further</p>
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		<p>assessment, on the basis that Chapter 3: Proposed Development Description [EN010149/APP/6.1] sufficiently explains how the Proposed Development has been designed to be resilient to the impacts of climate change (which, in the opinion of the Applicant, it does).</p> <p>The Design Approach Document [EN010149/APP/7.3] sets out design principle 9.1 Design for resilience and adaptation to future climate change and Design Commitments [EN010149/APP/7.4] demonstrates this through design commitments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Proposed Development will create new opportunities for education on climate change via way of interpretation boards; and • Health and safety plans will be required to account for potential climate change impacts on workers, such as flooding and heatwaves.
<p>Part 2.5 – Consideration of good design for energy infrastructure</p>	<p>2.5.1 Section 4.7 of EN-1 sets out the criteria for good design that should be applied to all energy infrastructure.</p> <p>2.5.2 Proposals for renewable energy infrastructure should demonstrate good design, particularly in respect of landscape and visual amenity, opportunities for co-existence/co-location with other marine and terrestrial uses, and in the design of the</p>	<p>As detailed in section 2 of the Planning Statement [EN010149/APP/7.2], good design has been a fundamental consideration from the outset of the Proposed Development.</p> <p>The Design Approach Document [EN010149/APP/7.3] demonstrates how the design of the Proposed Development has been developed in accordance with a clear design framework, based on the criteria for good design</p>

	<p>project to mitigate impacts such as noise and effects on ecology and heritage.</p>	<p>set out in EN-1. This has included the adoption of project level design principles (Project Principles) to guide decision making and embed good design outcomes to the Proposed Development.</p> <p>Project Principles have evolved throughout the design process, being informed and refined by stakeholder engagement, consultation feedback, technical studies and environmental assessments. They have been used to steer and influence the design of the Proposed Development to avoid and reduce adverse impacts wherever possible, make the most of opportunities for enhancement and balance the need for flexibility and certainty within the DCO Application.</p> <p>Throughout the design process, the Applicant maintained an interdisciplinary approach to design and considered both the opportunities and constraints of the Proposed Development. This included analysis of the existing physical, environmental, social and cultural context of the Site by a broad range of technical disciplines (including landscape and visual, noise, ecology and heritage) as set out and assessed by Chapters 6 – 16 of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1]. This approach has enabled the Applicant to understand the complexities of the Site and identify where multiple opportunities and constraints have the potential to stack up with</p>
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		<p>one another to provide a good design response and allow for co-existence and co-location with other terrestrial uses. For example, creating green infrastructure corridors that mitigate the visual impact of the scheme and also provide biodiversity and recreational benefits to the local environment.</p> <p>Engagement with landowners and statutory consultees including North Kesteven District Council, Lincolnshire County Council, Natural England, Historic England, Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust and the Environment Agency has formed an important part of the design process and helped to identify opportunities for co-existence and co-location with other terrestrial uses. For example, working with landowners to reduce potential impacts on farming activities and secure the benefits provided by the Proposed Development.</p> <p>As a result of the design approach adopted by the Applicant, the Proposed Development would deliver a number of environmental, social and economic benefits in addition to the generation of secure, low cost, decarbonised, clean, renewable energy. These include significant areas of new habitats that respect and enhance features within the landscape, including over 100ha of grassland (including calcareous grassland), 15,563m of new hedgerows and 16ha of tree belt planting delivering a Biodiversity</p>
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		<p>Net Gain and improvements in ecological connectivity.</p> <p>The Proposed Development would also provide benefits to the local community via an enhanced green infrastructure network including a better-connected footpath and cycle network and access to open space and recreational spaces. These would include the provision of 3.49km of new PRow, 8.58km of permissive paths, improvements to the Spires and Steeples Trail and a new community growing area.</p> <p>If DCO consent is given, these design outcomes will be secured and implemented post-consent, in accordance with the Environmental Statement [EN010149/APP/6.1], via Control Documents contained within the Draft DCO [EN010149/APP/3.1]. Adherence to the Control Documents will secure good design outcomes, uphold the conclusions of the Environmental Statement, and provide for flexibility.</p>
<p>2.6 Flexibility in the project details</p>	<p>2.6.1 Where details are still to be finalised, applicants should explain in the application which elements of the proposal have yet to be finalised, and the reason why this is the case.</p> <p>2.6.2 Where flexibility is sought in the consent as a result, applicants should, to the best of their knowledge, assess the likely worst-case environmental, social and economic effects of the</p>	<p>The applicant wishes to retain flexibility regarding the design detail of certain components of the Proposed Development. The extent of flexibility required is described in Chapter 3: Proposed Development Description of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] and set out in the Design Approach Document [EN010149/APP/7.3] and Design Commitment [EN010149/APP/7.4].</p>

	<p>proposed development to ensure that the impacts of the project as it may be constructed have been properly assessed.</p>	<p>With the above need for flexibility in mind, the Applicant confirms that the ES has assessed the likely worst-case development scenario.</p>
	<p>2.6.3 Full guidance on how applicants and the Secretary of State should manage flexibility is set out in Section 4.3 of EN-1.</p>	<p>Establishing the maximum parameters enables a robust assessment of likely significant environmental effects to be undertaken within this ES for topics where the nature of the assessment requires a specific level of detail, such as maximum heights, massing, or noise levels. Thus, the assessment parameters form the basis of the assessment. The assessment parameters are detailed in the works descriptions which are linked to Schedule 1 within the Draft DCO [EN010149/APP/3.1] and are in full in ES Volume 3 Appendix 3.1: Project Parameters [EN010149/APP/6.3], the Works Plans [EN010149/APP/2.3] and a number of Control Documents as listed within the Guide to the Application [EN010149/APP/1.1] and supported by the following figures presented in ES Volume 2 [EN010149/APP/6.2]:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Figure 3.1: Zonal Masterplan • Figure 3.2: Height Parameters • Figure 3.3: Green Infrastructure Parameters • Figure 3.4: Construction and Operational Access
<p>Part 2.10 Solar Photovoltaic Generation</p>		

<p>Applicant Assessment – Irradiance and site topography</p>	<p>2.10.19 Irradiance will be a key consideration for the applicant in identifying a potential site as the amount of electricity generated on site is directly affected by irradiance levels. Irradiance of a site will in turn be affected by surrounding topography, with an uncovered or exposed site of good elevation and favourable south-facing aspect more likely to increase year-round irradiance levels. This in turn affects the carbon emission savings and the commercial viability of the site.</p>	<p>As detailed in Appendix 1: Site Selection Report to the Planning Statement [EN010149/APP/7.2], the location of the Proposed Development was chosen partly because the characteristics of the land in this part of Lincolnshire are optimal for the generation of renewable energy by solar PV. The land at this location has good levels of irradiation and large areas of flat land.</p> <p>Lincolnshire is generally flat, with a gently undulating topography, which is suitable and beneficial for solar. This increases the likelihood of being able to identify a suitable site capable of producing a large amount of electricity. Therefore, this influenced the location of the Order Limits within proximity to the overhead line capacity.</p> <p>In terms of the general topography of the area immediately surrounding the Order Limits it is relatively flat, with some areas of rolling hills.</p> <p>Due to the fast-evolving pace of solar PV technology, the Proposed Development allowed flexibility to be able to choose specific technology closer to the construction within the parameters defined in the Draft DCO [EN010149/APP/3.1] and the Design Approach Document [EN010149/APP/7.3] and Design Commitment [EN010149/APP/7.4]. They will enable the optimum production of renewable energy within</p>
	<p>2.10.20 In order to maximise irradiance, applicants may choose a site and design its layout with variable and diverse panel types and aspects, and panel arrays may also follow the movement of the sun in order further to maximise the solar resource.</p>	

		<p>the Proposed Development. As detailed in Chapter 3: Proposed Development Description of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1], the mounting structure of the Solar PV modules will be designed to face southwards on a fixed platform. The Solar PV modules would be angled at a tilt of 10 to 30 degrees from horizontal to optimise daylight absorption. The ES [EN010149/APP/6.1/6.2/6.3] takes account of the impacts of Solar PV modules facing southwards on a fixed platform.</p>
<p>Applicant Assessment – Network Connection</p>	<p>2.10.21 Applicants should consider important issues relating to network connection at Section 4.11 of EN-1 and in EN-5. In particular, and where appropriate, applicants should proceed in a manner consistent with the regulatory regime for offshore transmission networks established by Ofgem, details of which are set out in EN-5.</p> <p>2.10.22 Many solar farms are connected into the local distribution network. The capacity of the local grid network to accept the likely output from a proposed solar farm is critical to the technical and commercial feasibility of a development proposal.</p> <p>2.10.23 Larger developments may seek connection to the transmission network if there is available network capacity and/or supportive infrastructure.</p> <p>2.10.24 In either case the connection voltage, availability of network capacity, and the distance</p>	<p>The Applicant started engagement with the National Grid Electricity System Operator (NGESO) as the point contact for new connection requests to discuss the potential opportunities for a connection offer within the target region identified above. Grid connections with spare capacity are finite, and no connection offers were provided that could deliver the output proposed by NGESO to the Applicant for already available capacity at already existing substations in the target region/geography. This is somewhat inevitable given the context of the urgent national need for renewable energy (specifically solar), as developments have already been proposed to make use of existing substation capacity where it occurs. The Statement of Need [EN010149/APP/7.1] sets out that there is no capacity at any existing NGESO infrastructure</p>

<p>from the solar farm to the existing network can have a significant effect on the commercial feasibility of a development proposal.</p>	<p>within 50km of the Site to accommodate new connections of the Proposed Development's magnitude before 2033.</p>
<p>2.10.25 To maximise existing grid infrastructure, minimise disruption to existing local community infrastructure or biodiversity and reduce overall costs, applicants may choose a site based on nearby available grid export capacity.</p>	<p>As detailed in Appendix 1: Site Selection Report of the Planning Statement [EN010149/APP/7.2]. The Site was selected because it presents the physical characteristics which are highly supportive in terms of the ability to deliver a NSIP scale solar development. The Site:</p>
<p>2.10.26 Where this is the case, applicants should consider the cumulative impacts of situating a solar farm in proximity to other energy generating stations and infrastructure.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has a grid connection offer which will see energy transported to the national transmission network by 2030; • lies within an area of suitable irradiance and favourable topography; • includes a proportion of BMV land which is characteristic of the predominating mix adjacent the OHL; • has sufficient land to enable the grid connection offer to be maximised while maintaining sufficient offsets to sensitive residential receptors; • is located away from key environmental and cultural heritage related designations; • is on land which is available and may be voluntarily acquired with a single landowner enabling efficiencies in delivery; and

		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• is accessible from the road network and has suitable access to land not immediately adjacent the strategic road network. <p>The Proposed Development has secured a grid connection agreement to allow export and import of electricity to and from the National Grid. The Springwell Substation would facilitate the export and import of electricity from the Proposed Development to the National Grid.</p> <p>Chapter 4: Reasonable Alternatives Considered of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] and the Grid Connection Statement [EN010149/APP/7.6] provides further discussion on the process of securing the agreed network connection.</p> <p>The cumulative impact of the Proposed Development and developments within the surrounding area is included in Chapter 16: Cumulative Effects of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1]. The chapter sets out the short list of other existing development and/or approved development accounted for in the chapter's cumulative assessment. The short list includes energy generating stations and infrastructure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Navenby Heath 400MW Battery Storage Development;• Beacon Fen Energy Park;
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fosse Green Energy; • Heckington Fen Solar Park; and • Mareham Lane Solar development.
<p><i>Applicant Assessment – Proximity of site to dwellings</i></p>	<p>2.10.27 Utility-scale solar farms are large sites that may have a significant zone of visual influence. The two main impact issues that determine distances to sensitive receptors are therefore likely to be visual amenity and glint and glare. These are considered in Landscape, Visual and Residential Amenity (paragraphs 2.10.93-2.10.101) and Glint and Glare (paragraphs 2.10.102 – 2.10.106) impact sections below.</p>	<p>As set out in Appendix 1: Site Selection Report of the Planning Statement [EN010149/APP/7.2], the considerable landholding at Blankney Estate provides a mixture of highly rural land as well as land that encompasses local settlements such as Blankney, Scopwick, RAF and Ashby-de-la-Launde. Settlements are reasonably well dispersed with clear breaks between. There are also a relatively small number of individual dwellings/farmsteads in close proximity to the Order Limits. The Applicant considered that there was sufficient land available to be able to provide offsets to residential receptors through a combination of setbacks, natural screening as well as existing and proposed landscape improvements. During site selection a minimum offset of 100m was assumed from residential properties in the knowledge that once the Applicant understood more about the specific nature of the Site, bespoke mitigation could be provided.</p> <p>Chapter 10: Landscape and Visual of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] assesses the visual impact of the Proposed Development. Through consultation with the relevant stakeholders, 40 assessment viewpoints were selected. The</p>

		<p>assessment viewpoint locations were agreed with North Kesteven District Council and Lincolnshire County Council to represent the main landscape and visual receptors found in the study area.</p> <p>These assessment viewpoints are illustrated in Figure 10.4 of the ES Volume 2 [EN010149/APP/6.2]. The mitigation embedded into the design which is outlined in section 10.6 of Chapter 12: Landscape and Visual of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1], as secured through the oLEMP [EN010149/APP/7.9] and Design Commitments [EN010149/APP/7.4], includes, but is not limited to, hedgerow planting along field boundaries, woodland planting along field boundaries, hedgerow infill planting, structural planting, establishment of wildflower rich grassland, offsets from existing woodlands and proposed or existing PRoWs, which has aimed to reduce visual impacts.</p> <p>Significant adverse effects are expected for receptors within proximity to areas of the Site with solar PV infrastructure during construction and early years of operation. It is assessed that the residents of 31 dwellings would experience significant visual effects during construction. It is assessed that in year 1 of operation, 13 residential properties would experience significant visual effects. By year 10 of operation only Scopwick Windmill would still have</p>
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		<p>significant visual effects on account of its location within the landscape, the height of the building and the extent of Proposed Development. It is assessed that the residents of four properties would experience significant visual effects during decommissioning, namely Scopwick Low Field Farm, The Windmill and Scopwick Mill on Heath Road, Gorse Hill Farm. Residential properties referred to are shown on Figure 10.10: RVAA residential property location plan of the ES Vol.2 [EN010149/APP/6.2].</p> <p>At Year 10 of Operation, 16 of the viewpoints (2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 18, 22, 23, and 24) are anticipated to experience significant adverse effects. It is considered that the wider benefits of the Proposed Development, including the delivery of significant level of low carbon energy generation and biodiversity net gain and the provision of permissive footpaths and outweigh these impacts and that the Proposed Development is considered acceptable in terms of overall landscape, visual and residential amenity impacts and the nature of the visual impacts are not considered to outweigh the benefits of the Proposed Development.</p> <p>Appendix 5.4: Glint and Glare Study to the ES [EN010149/APP/6.3] assesses the potential impacts of glint and glare on surrounding road</p>
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		users, railway operations, dwellings, and aviation activity.
Applicant Assessment – Agriculture Land Classification and land type	2.10.28 Solar is a highly flexible technology and as such can be deployed on a wide variety of land types.	Appendix 1: Site Selection Report of the Planning Statement [EN010149/APP/7.2] explains the Applicant's approach to selection of an appropriate site to take forward as part of an application for a NSIP scale solar project. The report explains that initially there are three fundamental attributes required to develop NSIP scale solar: suitable irradiance and topography; a connection to the National Grid, and; available land. These three attributes identified locations which may be suitable for such solar development and focused the Applicant's search on sites within Lincolnshire, Rutland and Cambridgeshire along the West Burton to Bicker Fen and Cottam to Eaton Socon OHLs (where the Applicant was aware there was capacity in the National Grid infrastructure). Once the search area was determined, the Applicant applied specific environmental search criteria, including agricultural land grade to find appropriate land which would be able to deliver its objectives. The Applicant required a site with a minimum size of 1,000 acres but with a preference for a larger landholding under single ownership to maximise the potential energy generation and to assist with deliverability and
	2.10.29 While land type should not be a predominating factor in determining the suitability of the site location applicants should, where possible, utilise suitable previously developed land, brownfield land, contaminated land and industrial land. Where the proposed use of any agricultural land has been shown to be necessary, poorer quality land should be preferred to higher quality land avoiding the use of “Best and Most Versatile” agricultural land where possible. ‘Best and Most Versatile agricultural land is defined as land in grades 1, 2 and 3a of the Agricultural Land Classification	
	2.10.30 Whilst the development of ground mounted solar arrays is not prohibited on Best and Most Versatile agricultural land, or sites designated for their natural beauty, or recognised for ecological or archaeological importance, the impacts of such are expected to be considered and are discussed under paragraphs 2.10.73 – 92 and 2.10.107 – 2.10.126.	
	2.10.31 It is recognised that at this scale, it is likely that applicants’ developments will use some agricultural land. Applicants should explain their choice of site, noting the preference for development	

<p>to be on suitable brownfield, industrial and low and medium grade agricultural land.</p>	<p>management of potential impacts of a proposed solar development.</p>
<p>2.10.32 Where sited on agricultural land, consideration may be given as to whether the proposal allows for continued agricultural use and/or can be co-located with other functions (for example, onshore wind generation, storage, hydrogen electrolyzers) to maximise the efficiency of land use.</p>	<p>The size of the land required and other factors (as set out in Section 3 of Appendix 1 to this Planning Statement), such as the proximity to potential connection points resulted in the Applicant identifying five potential sites adjacent both to Bicker Fen and Cottam to Eaton Socon OHL. The Applicant's initial assessment work identified that each of the five sites presented similar land type and ALC grading characteristics i.e. a mixture of ALC Grade 2 and 3 and therefore there was no obvious preference for a particular site on the basis of the ALC search criteria. The Applicant was equally aware that land quality was one of several important factors in the site selection exercise and had to be considered in the round with other environmental and technical considerations.</p>
<p>2.10.33 The Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) is the only approved system for grading agricultural quality in England and Wales and, if necessary, field surveys should be used to establish the ALC grades in accordance with the current, or any successor to it, grading criteria and identify the soil types to inform soil management at the construction, operation, and decommissioning phases in line with the Defra Construction Code.</p>	<p>Chapter 11: Land, Soils and Groundwater of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] and the outline Soil Management Plan (oSMP) [EN010149/APP/7.11] set out how agricultural land was considered in the design of Proposed Development. Chapter 4: Reasonable Alternatives of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] sets out how fields that were identified as comprising solely of Grades 1 or 2 land were discounted from the area of Solar PV development to reduce the impact on BMV</p>
<p>2.10.34 Applicants are encouraged to develop and implement a Soil Resources and Management Plan which could help to use and manage soils sustainably and minimise adverse impacts on soil health and potential land contamination. This should be in line with the ambition set out in the Environmental Improvement Plan to bring at least 40% of England's agricultural soils into sustainable management by 2028 and increase this up to 60% by 2030.</p>	

		<p>agricultural land. Section 11.2 of Chapter 11: Land, Soils and Groundwater of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] assesses the impact of the Proposed Development on Land, Soils and Groundwater according to the Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) in line with Defra Construction Code.</p> <p>Appendix 1: Site Selection Report of the Planning Statement [EN010149/APP/7.2] sets out how the Applicant considered whether sufficient previously developed land would be available to develop a utility scale solar development, however, as the North Kesteven District Council brownfield register illustrates, there are currently only 5 available sites, none of which would have the capability of meeting the project objectives. 4 of these sites have either full planning permission or outline planning permission for housing development.</p> <p>The Design Approach Document [EN010149/APP/7.3] and Design Commitments [EN010149/APP/7.4] establish the agricultural land design principles that incorporate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fields comprising solely of Grade 1 or 2 land within the Site will remain available for arable production;• Prioritise the use of BMV land for arable production where practicable; and
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prioritise the use on non-BMV land for habitat creation where practicable. <p>The land beneath and around the Solar PV arrays will include a seed mix for ground cover. The mix has been selected to improve biodiversity value for pollinators which can support the productivity of surrounding agricultural land. The grown cover will allow continued agricultural use of land within the Solar PV area for grazing, which is included in the landscape management prescriptions set out in the oLEMP [EN010149/APP/7.9] and described below.</p> <p>An oSMP [EN010149/APP/7.11] has been prepared to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ensure the protection and conservation of soil resources on Site;• identify best practice measures to maintain the physical properties of the soil on Site; and• provide measures for the management of the soil resource for Site operators. <p>The oSMP [EN010149/APP/7.11] ensures that the Applicant manages the Soil sustainability and that damage to soil health is minimised by providing measures for soil handling, soil moisture content assessments and storage and trafficking of soils during the construction,</p>
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		operation (including maintenance) and decommissioning phase of the Proposed Development.
Applicant Assessment – Accessibility	2.10.35 Applicants will need to consider the suitability of the access routes to the proposed site for both the construction and operation of the solar farm with the former likely to raise more issues.	<p>The suitability of the routes to be used during both construction and once operational vehicular access arrangements for the Proposed Development are presented in sections 2.5 and 2.7 of the Transport Assessment (Appendix 14.1 of the ES Vol.3) [EN010149/APP/6.3] This confirms the use of several access points serving the Site.</p> <p>Chapter 4: Reasonable Alternatives of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] sets that a number of changes to the Proposed Development access design occurred as a result of consideration to the siting of the solar farm, and its impact on traffic and transport. The Design Approach Document [EN010149/APP/7.3] sets out design principles pertaining to accessibility including to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retain all PRoW in their existing alignment in the long term; • Protect the amenity of the Spires and Steeples Trail, avoiding any Solar PV development between the route and the B1188; • Consider sequential views and the experience of people using the Stepping Out Walks and other local footpaths; and
	2.10.36 Given that potential solar farm sites are largely in rural areas, access for the delivery of solar arrays and associated infrastructure during construction can be a significant consideration for solar farm siting.	
	2.10.37 Developers will usually need to construct on-site access routes for operation and maintenance activities, such as footpaths, earthworks, or landscaping.	
	2.10.38 In addition, sometimes access routes will need to be constructed to connect solar farms to the public road network.	
	2.10.39 Applications should include the full extent of the access routes necessary for operation and maintenance and an assessment of their effects.	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enhance the footpath and cycle network by providing new and improved routes to increase connectivity and link local settlements such as RAF Digby, Scopwick and Blankney. <p>As illustrated in Streets, Rights of Way and Access Plans [EN010149/APP/2.4], construction accesses are indicatively located at B1188, B1191, Gorse Hill Lane, and Temple Road. The location of the proposed construction and operational access points is presented in Figure 3.4: Construction and Operational Access Parameters Plan of the ES Vol.2 [EN010149/APP/6.2].</p> <p>The Proposed Development's design incorporates mitigation to reduce adverse effects and minimise impacts of traffic and transport. These are set out in section 15.12 of Chapter 14: Traffic and Transport of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] and section 2.8 of the associated TA (Appendix 14.1 of the ES Vol.3 [EN010149/APP/6.3]).</p> <p>The DCO application is also supported by an oCTMP [EN010149/APP/7.8] which sets out the Abnormal Indivisible Loads management plan. The construction works will involve the delivery of up to seven AILs which comprise the Springwell Substation transformers. This load will have a maximum width of 6.2m and a vehicle</p>
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		<p>length of 64m. Other deliveries may be considered oversized loads, including three cranes and up to 18 cable drums, but would not fall into the category of requiring an escort vehicle or mitigation works to accommodate them. The oCTMP [EN010149/APP/7.8] sets out that an access route survey feasibility report has been undertaken, which identifies that the preferred route would utilise the heavy load routes.</p> <p>The TA (Appendix 14.1 of the ES Vol.3 [EN010149/APP/6.3]) sets out the anticipated distribution of traffic associated with the Proposed Development upon the local highway network based upon the proposed access points described above and during construction.</p> <p>As set out in the TA (Appendix 14.1 of the ES Vol.3 [EN010149/APP/6.3]), several junctions have been modelled and assessed in detail within this transport assessment including A15/B1191/Temple Road priority staggered junction, A15/B1202 priority crossroads, A15/Navenby Lane priority T-junction, A15/Gorse Hill Lane priority T-junction, B1188/B1202 Metheringham Heath Lane priority T-junction, B1188/B1191 Heath Road priority T-junction, B1188/B1191 Main Street priority T-junction, and B1191/Navenby Lane/Main Street priority staggered junction.</p>
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		<p>Access designs are included in the Rights of Way and Streets and Access Plans [EN010149/APP/2.4] demonstrating the ability of the Proposed Development to create a safe and well-designed access with suitable geometry to allow safe manoeuvring in and out of the Site and with appropriate visibility splays informed by speed survey data for construction.</p>
<p>Applicant Assessment – Public Rights of Way</p>	<p>2.10.40 Proposed developments may affect the provision of public rights of way networks.</p>	<p>Chapter 14: Traffic and Transport of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] provides an assessment of the Proposed Development’s impact on public rights of way within the Order Limits, or that will be impacted by the Proposed Development.</p> <p>A number of existing PRoW traverse the Proposed Development and are presented in Chapter 14: Traffic and Transport of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] and have been illustrated in Appendix 14.1: Transport Assessment ES Vol.3 [EN010149/APP/6.3] and Outline Public Rights of Way and Permissive Path Management Plan [EN010149/APP/7.12].</p> <p>The Outline Public Rights of Way and Permissive Path Management Plan [EN010149/APP/7.12] has been prepared in support of the DCO application. The Outline Public Rights of Way and Permissive Path Management Plan sets out the mitigation, management, and monitoring measures for</p>
	<p>2.10.41 Public rights of way may need to be temporarily closed or diverted to enable construction, however, applicants should keep, as far as is practicable and safe, all public rights of way that cross the proposed development site open during construction and protect users where a public right of way borders or crosses the site.</p>	
	<p>2.10.42 Applicants are encouraged to design the layout and appearance of the site to ensure continued recreational use of public rights of way where possible during construction, and in particular during operation of the site.</p>	
	<p>2.10.43 Applicants are encouraged where possible to minimise the visual impacts of the development for those using existing public rights of way, considering the impacts this may have on any other visual amenities in the surrounding landscape.</p>	

	<p>2.10.44 Applicants should consider and maximise opportunities to facilitate enhancements to the public rights of way and the inclusion, through site layout and design of access, of new opportunities for the public to access and cross proposed solar development sites (whether via the adoption of new public rights of way or the creation of permissive paths), taking into account, where appropriate, the views of landowners.</p>	<p>PRoW affected by construction which may require temporary diversion/closure, or alternative routing where the former is not possible.</p> <p>The Proposed Development includes opportunities for enhancement such as proposals to provide three new PRoW and four permissive paths, as well as improvements to existing PRoW.</p> <p>Chapter 10: Landscape and Visual of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] sets out embedded measures to mitigate the visual impacts of the Proposed Development for those using existing public rights of way, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• New hedgerow planting along the western boundary of Fields By28 and Lf04, the southern boundary of Field Lf04 and the northern boundary of Field Lf11;• New hedgerow planting along the southern boundary of Field Lf08;• New hedgerow planting along the northern boundary of Fields Lf07 and Md01 and along the southern boundary of Fields By22 and By23;• New hedgerow planting along the eastern boundary of Field By03, the western boundary of By04 and the northern boundaries of Fields By10 and By11;
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New hedgerow planting along the southern boundary of Field By11, the northern boundary of Field By24 and the northern and eastern boundaries of Field By23; • New hedgerow planting along the western boundaries of Fields C8 and C9 and the northern boundary of Field C6; • New hedgerow planting along the southern boundaries of Fields Rw01 and RW02; • 20m width belt of structural native woodland planting along the northern boundary of Field Bcd139 and new hedgerows along the eastern boundary of Bcd139 and along the northern boundary of Bcd139 with Heath Road; and • The Proposed Development (excluding new landscaping) will be set back at least 15m either side from existing or proposed PRoW, except where crossings are necessary.
	<p>2.10.45 Applicants should set out detail on how public rights of way would be managed to ensure they are safe to use in an outline Public Rights of Way Management Plan.</p>	<p>An Outline Public Rights of Way and Permissive Path Management Plan [EN010149/APP/7.12] has been submitted alongside the application which sets out detail on how PRoW will be managed to ensure they are safe to use.</p>

<p>Applicant Assessment – Security and Lighting</p>	<p>2.10.46 Security of the site is a key consideration for developers. Applicants may wish to consider not only the availability of natural defences such as steep gradients, hedging and rivers but also perimeter security measures such as fencing, electronic security, CCTV and lighting, with the measures proposed on a site-specific basis.</p>	<p>Chapter 3: Proposed Development Description of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] outlines the security measures incorporated in the design of the Proposed Development design. Efforts have been made to reduce the impact of security fencing and lighting, as set out in detail in the oLEMP [EN010149/APP/7.9], oCEMP [EN010149/APP/7.7], oOEMP [EN010149/APP/7.10] and oDEMP [EN010149/APP/7.13]. Final versions of these documents will be produced and secured as part of the DCO.</p> <p>Design Commitments [EN010149/APP/7.4] outlines the design commitments relating to security measures, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D4: CCTV system will include passive infra-red detectors around the Solar PV development to minimise reduce the use of lighting. • D5: CCTV will be deployed at regular intervals to provide a sufficient field of view within the boundaries of each field, typically every 50-60 metres. • D19: There will be no permanent (continuous) lighting for security purposes except for at emergency exits. • D20: Lighting sensors will be implemented around the Springwell Substation and BESS compound.
	<p>2.10.47 Applicants should assess the visual impact of these security measures, as well as the impacts on local residents, including for example issues relating to intrusion from CCTV and light pollution in the vicinity of the site.</p>	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> E3: CCTV will be mounted on wooden poles and face internally into the Solar PV development.
Technical Considerations – Capacity of a site	2.10.55 The installed generating capacity of a solar farm will decline over time in correlation with the reduction in panel array efficiency. There is a range of sources of degradation that developers need to consider when deciding on a solar panel technology to be used. Applicants may account for this by overplanting solar panel arrays.	The Applicant's approach to EIA, including the use of the Rochdale envelope to assess effects, is set out in Chapter 3:Proposed Development Description and Chapter 5: Approach to the EIA of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1].
	2.10.56 AC installed export capacity should not be seen as an appropriate tool to constrain the impacts of a solar farm. Applicants should use other measurements, such as panel size, total area and percentage of ground cover to set the maximum extent of development when determining the planning impacts of an application.	
Technical Considerations – Site layout design, and appearance	2.10.59 Applicants should consider the criteria for good design set out in EN-1 Section 4.7 at an early stage when developing projects.	As detailed in the Design Approach Document [EN010149/APP/7.3] and section 5 of the Planning Statement, the location and design of the Proposed Development is the result of a comprehensive site selection process that was environmental, and planning led to avoid and minimise impacts as early as possible. Following this, the Proposed Development has undergone an iterative design process which has resulted in the delivery of a functional and efficient Proposed Development design which will deliver
	2.10.60 As set out above applicants will consider several factors when considering the design and layout of sites, including proximity to available grid capacity to accommodate the scale of generation, orientation, topography, previous land–use, and ability to mitigate environmental impacts and flood risk.	

	<p>2.10.61 For a solar farm to generate electricity efficiently the panel array spacing should seek to maximise the potential power output of the site. The type, spacing and aspect of panel arrays will depend on the physical characteristics of the site such as site elevation.</p>	<p>a large amount of renewable and low carbon electricity using solar PV modules, whilst also being sensitive to the local context and surrounding area within which it is located, avoiding and minimising impacts on the environment as far as practicable. The Applicant's site selection process (set out in Chapter 4: Reasonable Alternatives of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1]) demonstrates that land was identified for the Site within an area of good solar irradiance and relatively low and flat topography landscape to maximise energy generation.</p> <p>As set out in Chapter 4: Reasonable Alternatives of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1], the starting point for the Applicant was to understand where capacity existed in existing substations or the transmission network that would be sufficient to enable the connection of a utility scale solar development. Capacity at existing substations is finite but there remains capacity in the transmission network notably in the East Midlands distribution network region. In parallel to the search for grid capacity the Applicant also sought to align the search with general conditions that allow for the development of utility scale solar development, notably, suitable irradiance and topography.</p> <p>The Applicant started engagement with the National Grid Electricity System Operator</p>
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		<p>(NGESO) in November 2020 as the point contact for new connection requests to discuss the potential opportunities for a connection offer within the target region identified above. As set out in Section 7 of the Statement of Need [EN010149/APP/7.1], there is no capacity at any existing NGESO infrastructure within 50km of the Site to accommodate new connections of Springwell’s magnitude before 2033. This is somewhat inevitable given the context of the urgent national need for renewable energy (specifically solar), as developments have already been proposed to make use of existing substation capacity where it occurs.</p> <p>The design process and basis of design are set out in Chapter 4: Reasonable Alternatives of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] and the Design Approach Document [EN010149/APP/7.3] , which sets out the design approach and evolution of the Proposed Development which has been shaped by the Project Principles and has responded to the environmental assessment process, consultation feedback and engagement with stakeholders via an iterative design process. Consider the ability to avoid, minimise and mitigate environmental impacts, such as flood risk or BMV land.</p> <p>As detailed in Chapter 3: Proposed Development Description of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1], the mounting structure of</p>
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		<p>the Solar PV modules will be designed to face southwards on a fixed platform. The Solar PV modules would be angled at a tilt of 10 to 30 degrees from horizontal to optimise daylight absorption.</p>
	<p>2.10.62 In terms of design and layout, applicants may favour a south-facing arrangement of panels to maximise output although other orientations may be chosen. For example, an east-west layout, whilst likely to result in reduced output compared to south-facing panels on a panel-by-panel basis, may allow for a greater density of panels to compensate and therefore for generation to be spread more evenly throughout the day.</p>	<p>As detailed in Chapter 3: Proposed Development Description of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1], the mounting structure of the Solar PV modules will be designed to face southwards on a fixed platform. The Solar PV modules would be angled at a tilt of 10 to 30 degrees from horizontal to optimise daylight absorption. These details will be further developed through detailed design and engineering details to maximise the development area within Works No.1 to achieve the available capacity.</p>
	<p>2.10.63 It is likely that underground and overhead cabling will be required to connect the electrical assets of the site, such as from the substation to the panel arrays or storage facilities.</p>	<p>Chapter 3: Proposed Development Description of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] sets out the works contained in Work No. 6 – Cables. Cabling will be laid underground, apart from cabling between the Solar PV modules and string inverters, typically located above ground level and fixed to the Mounting Structure. The electrical design of the Proposed Development will be fixed at the detailed design stage. It is anticipated that the 33kV cables will run alongside the internal access tracks where</p>
	<p>2.10.64 In the case of underground cabling, applicants are expected to provide a method statement describing cable trench design, installation methodology, as well as details of the operation and maintenance regime.</p>	

		<p>practical and then be located within the adopted highway and/or agricultural land within the extent of Work No. 6 in order to connect back to the Springwell Substation and Main Collector Compound.</p> <p>Appendix 2: Cabling and Grid Connection Method Statement to the oCEMP [EN010149/APP/7.7] describes the grid connection and internal cable corridor, cable trench design, installation methodology, equipment, and details of construction and operation.</p>
<p>Technical Considerations – Project Lifetime</p>	<p>2.10.65 Applicants should consider the design life of solar panel efficiency over time when determining the period for which consent is required. An upper limit of 40 years is typical, although applicants may seek consent without a time-period or for differing time-periods of operation.</p> <p>2.10.66 Time limited consent, where granted, is described as temporary because there is a finite period for which it exists, after which the project would cease to have consent and therefore must seek to extend the period of consent or be decommissioned and removed.</p>	<p>Chapter 3: Proposed Development Description of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] sets out the operational life of the Proposed Development is 40 years from the date of final commissioning. This will allow the land (that has previously been intensively farmed) to recover ultimately safeguarding the agricultural usage of this land for future generations.</p> <p>At the end of the operational (including maintenance) phase, any above-ground infrastructure will be dismantled and removed per industry best practices. The decommissioned materials will follow the waste hierarchy such that they will be reused where possible before recycling and disposal are considered. All concrete, hardstanding areas, foundations for the infrastructure and any internal tracks will be</p>

		<p>removed to a depth of up to 1 m. All the below-ground cables will be left in situ.</p> <p>The Solar PV Site will be reinstated in accordance with this Outline Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan (oDEMP) [EN010149/APP/7.13]. A Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan (DEMP) will be subject to the approval of the local planning authorities at the time of decommissioning.</p> <p>Decommissioning activities will involve the removal of all of the Solar PV infrastructure, including the Ground Mounted Solar PV Generating Stations, Collector Compounds, Springwell Substation, BESS and ancillary infrastructure, including any on-site compounds.</p> <p>Decommissioning is expected to take approximately 24 months and may be undertaken in phases.</p>
	<p>2.10.67 Solar panel efficiency deteriorates over time and applicants may elect to replace panels during the lifetime of the site.</p>	<p>Chapter 3: Proposed Development Description of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] sets out that any equipment that needs to be replaced during the operational (including maintenance) phase will be disposed of following the waste hierarchy, with materials being reused or recycled wherever possible. Electrical waste will be disposed of per the Waste from Electrical and Electronic Equipment Regulations 2013,</p>

		<p>minimising the environmental impact of replacing any elements of the Proposed Development.</p> <p>Table 8.5 of Chapter 8: Climate of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] sets out the anticipated service life of the Proposed Development components. Assets with a service life of 40 years would not require any replacement.</p>
<p>Technical Considerations – Decommissioning</p>	<p>2.10.68 Solar panels can be decommissioned relatively easily and cheaply. The nature and extent of decommissioning of a site can vary. Generally, it is expected that the panel arrays and mounting structures will be decommissioned, and underground cabling dug out to ensure that prior use of the site can continue</p> <p>2.10.69 Applicants should set out what would be decommissioned and removed from the site at the end of the operational life of the generating station, considering instances where it may be less harmful for the ecology of the site to keep or retain certain types of infrastructure, for example underground cabling, and where there may be socio-economic benefits in retaining site infrastructure after the operational life, such as retaining pathways through the site or a site substation.</p>	<p>The operational life of the Proposed Development is 40 years from the date of final commissioning. This will allow the land (that has previously been intensively farmed) to recover, ultimately safeguarding the agricultural usage of this land for future generations.</p> <p>At the end of the operational (including maintenance) phase, any above-ground infrastructure will be dismantled and removed per industry best practices. The decommissioned materials will follow the waste hierarchy such that they will be reused where possible before recycling and disposal are considered. All concrete, hardstanding areas, foundations for the infrastructure and any internal tracks will be removed to a depth of up to 1 m. All the below-ground cables will be left in situ.</p> <p>The Solar PV Site will be reinstated in accordance with this oDEMP [EN010149/APP/7.13]. A Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan (DEMP) will be</p>

		<p>subject to the approval of the local planning authorities at the time of decommissioning.</p> <p>Decommissioning activities will involve the removal of all of the Solar PV infrastructure, including the Ground Mounted Solar PV Generating Stations, Collector Compounds, Springwell Substation, BESS and ancillary infrastructure, including any on-site compounds.</p> <p>Decommissioning would include removing any permissive paths and the land will be returned to the landowner. Landscape structural planting, including tree planting, hedgerows, scrub, etc., created to deliver biodiversity mitigation and enhancement associated with the Proposed Development would be left in situ when the Site is handed back to landowners, except for the planting within Tb2, which will be removed to facilitate the releveling and removal of the earth bund to allow the field to be returned to agricultural use. Otherwise, it is assumed that the landowner will return the land to agricultural use when it is handed back.</p> <p>The Proposed Development is proposing to create an enhanced and better-connected footpath and cycle network. This includes approximately 3.49km of additional PRow, which will remain even once the Proposed Development has been decommissioned.</p>
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		Decommissioning is expected to take approximately 24 months and may be undertaken in phases.
Technical Considerations – Flexibility in the project details	2.10.70 In many cases, not all aspects of the proposal may have been settled in precise detail at the point of application. Such aspects may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the type, number and dimensions of the panels; • layout and spacing; • the type of inverter or transformer; and • whether storage will be installed (with the option to install further panels as a substitute). 	The Applicant wishes to retain flexibility regarding the design detail of certain components of the Proposed Development. The extent of the flexibility required is described in Chapter 3: Proposed Development Description of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] and set out in the Design Approach Document [EN010149/APP/7.3] and Design Commitment [EN010149/APP/7.4] .
	2.10.71 Applicants should set out a range of options based on different panel numbers, types and layout, with and without storage.	Chapter 5: Approach to the EIA and Chapter 3: Proposed Development Description of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] explain that the parameters for the Proposed Development are defined by the Design Approach Document [EN010149/APP/7.3] Design Commitment [EN010149/APP/7.4] which have been informed by the assessments in the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1/6.2/6.3] and reciprocally used for assessment purposes. Where there is uncertainty, the Applicant has assessed the worst-case scenario for the purposes of the ES.
Impacts – Biodiversity, ecological, geological conservation and	2.10.76 The applicant’s ecological assessments should identify any ecological risk from developing on the proposed site.	Chapter 7: Biodiversity of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] provides an assessment of the Proposed Development’s impact on important ecological features and is supported by extensive survey work (see Appendices 7.1 to
	2.10.77 Issues that need assessment may include habitats, ground nesting birds, wintering and	

water management	migratory birds, bats, dormice, reptiles, great crested newts, water voles and badgers.	<p>7.14 of the ES Vol.3 [EN010149/APP/6.3]) to confirm the ecological habitats and species likely to be affected by the Proposed Development.</p> <p>Chapter 7: Biodiversity of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] identifies ecological risks from developing the Proposed Development. It has assessed impacts on protected species, habitats, and other species identified as being of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity. The assessment has been carried out by competent ecologists, who have advised during the design process to ensure that impacts are avoided, minimised and mitigated in line with the mitigation hierarchy, and biodiversity enhancements are maximised, as set out in Chapter 4: Alternatives Considered of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1].</p> <p>Section 7.7 and 7.9 of Chapter 7: Biodiversity of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] sets out the likely significant effects and residual effects, respectively, on the above receptors during construction, operation and decommissioning of the Proposed Development. It concludes that there are no potential significant adverse effects identified on any internationally, nationally, or locally designated sites during construction, operation or decommissioning of the Proposed Development.</p>
	2.10.78 The applicant should use an advising ecologist during the design process to ensure that adverse impacts are avoided, minimised or mitigated in line with the mitigation hierarchy, and biodiversity enhancements are maximised.	
	2.10.79 The assessment may be informed by a 'desk study' of existing ecological records, an evaluation of the likely impacts of the solar farm upon ecological features, and should specify mitigation to avoid or minimise these impacts, and any further surveys required.	

		<p>The Proposed Development will meet a minimum 10% BNG as secured in the oLEMP [EN010149/APP/7.9]. The BNG Assessment at Appendix 7.14 to the ES Vol. 3 [EN010149/APP/6.3] demonstrates that the Proposed Development is committed to achieve significant biodiversity net gain on site.</p> <p>Section 7.6 of Chapter 7: Biodiversity of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] sets embedded mitigation measures relevant to biodiversity, which is secured by the Design Commitments [EN010149/APP/7.4], oLEMP [EN010149/APP/7.9] and oCEMP [EN010149/APP/7.7].</p>
	<p>2.10.80 Applicants should consider earthworks associated with construction compounds, access roads and cable trenching.</p>	<p>Section 3.9 of Chapter 3: Proposed Development Description of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] describes the works required for construction of the Proposed Development, including installation of cables which will include earthworks.</p>
	<p>2.10.81 Where soil stripping occurs, topsoil and subsoil should be stripped, stored, and replaced separately to minimise soil damage and to provide optimal conditions for site restoration. Further details on minimising impacts on soil and soil handling are above at paragraphs 2.10.33 and 2.10.34.</p>	<p>An Outline Soil Management Plan [EN010149/APP/7.11] sets out the principles on how the soils will be managed and protected during the construction, operation and decommissioning of the Proposed Development. This includes separating topsoil during stripping, appropriate storage of topsoil and management of storage stockpiles, as well as methods for reinstatement of subsoil and topsoil to retain</p>

		<p>existing soil horizons. A detailed soil resource management plan will be prepared prior to construction as secured by DCO Requirement 18. The soil management plan must be substantially in accordance with the outline Soil Management Plan, as set out in Draft DCO [EN010149/APP/3.1].</p>
	<p>2.10.82 Applicants should consider how security and lighting installations may impact on the local ecology. Where pole mounted CCTV facilities are proposed the location of these facilities should be carefully considered to minimise impact. If lighting is necessary, it should be minimised and directed away from areas of likely habitat.</p>	<p>The Proposed Development's security and lighting have been designed to respond sensitively to ecology and the landscape features. Embedded mitigation measures pertaining to biodiversity and security are discussed in Chapter 7: Biodiversity of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] and include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There will be no permanent (continuous) lighting for security purposes except for at emergency exits; • CCTV system will include passive infra-red detectors around the Solar PV development to reduce the use of lighting; and • Lighting sensors will be implemented around the Springwell Substation and BESS compound. <p>Security, lighting and CCTV required for the Proposed Development are described in detail in section 3.13 of Chapter 3: Proposed Development Description of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1], oLEMP</p>

		<p>[EN010149/APP/7.9], oCEMP [EN010149/APP/7.7], oOEMP [EN010149/APP/7.10] and oDEMP [EN010149/APP/7.13].</p>
2.10.83 Applicants should consider how site boundaries are managed. If any hedges/scrub are to be removed, further surveys may be necessary to account for impacts. Buffer strips between perimeter fencing and hedges may be proposed, and the construction and design of any fencing should account for enabling mammal, reptile and other fauna access into the site if required to do so in the ecological report.		<p>The ES [EN010149/APP/6.1/6.2/6.3] takes account of all works boundaries and hedgerows. Buffers to woodland and hedgerow are included, and proposals for fencing incorporate features to enable the movement of mammals, reptiles and other fauna. These are set out in Chapter 7: Biodiversity of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1].</p>
2.10.84 Where a Flood Risk Assessment has been carried out this must be submitted alongside the applicant's ES. This will need to consider the impact of drainage. As solar PV panels will drain to the existing ground, the impact will not, in general, be significant.		<p>The DCO application is supported by a Flood Risk Assessment [EN010149/APP/7.16] which considers the impacts of the Proposed Development on drainage.</p>
2.10.85 Where access tracks need to be provided, permeable tracks should be used, and localised Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), such as swales and infiltration trenches, should be used to control any run-off where recommended.		<p>Chapter 15: Water of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] considers the potential likely effects of the Proposed Development on Water, including the assessment of establishment of construction compounds and access tracks.</p>
2.10.86 Given the temporary nature of solar PV farms, sites should be configured or selected to avoid the need to impact on existing drainage systems and watercourses.		<p>The recommendations set out in the Outline Drainage Strategy, which forms an appendix to the Flood Risk Assessment [EN010149/APP/7.16], include that all SuDS</p>

		<p>features are to be designed in accordance with the CIRIA C753 SuDS Manual, to ensure that surface water runoff discharged from the Site will be of an acceptable standard by following best design practices. Access tracks are considered to be permeable as they are gravel bound, however as precautionary mitigation the access tracks are proposed to have parallel swales which will intercept surface water runoff and will promote attenuation and infiltration.</p> <p>Section 15.5 of Chapter 15: Water of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] presents a summary of the existing baseline conditions for the receptors scoped into further assessment. The Proposed Development is assessed to have no more than a negligible impact on any water receptors, which is not significant in EIA terms.</p>
	<p>2.10.87 Culverting existing watercourses/drainage ditches should be avoided.</p>	<p>Section 15.6 of Chapter 15: Water of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] sets out steps taken to ensure existing water assets are conserved through a sustainable drainage strategy, including embedded mitigation such as a perimeter fencing surrounding the Solar PV development will be offset at least 6m either side from all existing ditches where crossing is not required. The proposed offset provides a buffer for any sediment entrained within surface water runoff where sediment can deposit. The proposed offset ensures no erosion of the</p>
	<p>2.10.88 Where culverting for access is unavoidable, applicants should demonstrate that no reasonable alternatives exist and where necessary it will only be in place temporarily for the construction period.</p>	

		banking of the watercourses which could result in degradation of water quality. The Design Approach Document [EN010149/APP/7.3] set out Project Principles which have influenced the design evolution to avoid and minimise effects on existing watercourses/drainage ditches.
	2.10.89 Solar farms have the potential to increase the biodiversity value of a site, especially if the land was previously intensively managed. In some instances, this can result in significant benefits and enhancements beyond Biodiversity Net Gain, which result in wider environmental gains which is encouraged	The Proposed Development will meet a minimum 10% BNG, as secured in the oLEMP [EN010149/APP/7.9] . The BNG Assessment at Appendix 7.14 to the ES Vol.3 [EN010149/APP/6.3] demonstrates that the Proposed Development is committed to achieve significant biodiversity net gain on site.
	2.10.90 For projects in England, applicants should consider enhancement, management, and monitoring of biodiversity in line with the ambition set out in the Environmental Improvement Plan and any relevant measures and targets, including statutory targets set under the Environment Act or elsewhere.	
Impacts – Landscape, Visual and residential amenity	2.10.93 Generic landscape and visual impacts are covered in Section 5.10 of EN-1.	Chapter 10: Landscape and Visual Amenity of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] includes an assessment of the potential landscape and visual impacts associated with the construction, operation and decommissioning of the Proposed Development on local amenity.
	2.10.94 The approach to assessing cumulative landscape and visual impact of large-scale solar farms is likely to be the same as assessing other onshore energy infrastructure. Solar farms are likely to be in low lying areas of good exposure and as	

<p>such may have a wider zone of visual influence than other types of onshore energy infrastructure.</p>	
<p>2.10.95 However, whilst it may be the case that the development covers a significant surface area, in the case of ground-mounted solar panels it should be noted that with effective screening and appropriate land topography, the area of a zone of visual influence could be appropriately minimised.</p>	<p>Photographs and visualisation have been included to support the descriptions of baseline views and visual effects in reference to the viewpoints, which have been agreed through consultation with the relevant local planning authority. Annotated photographs of the existing view at all assessment viewpoints as well as photomontages from a selection of viewpoints are provided in Volume 4 of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.4]. The method of visualisation selected has been informed by Landscape Institute Technical Note 06/19, with annotated photographs being the most appropriate visualisation type.</p>
<p>2.10.96 Landscape and visual impacts should be considered carefully pre-application. Potential impacts on the statutory purposes of nationally designated landscapes should form a part of the pre-application process.</p>	
<p>2.10.97 Applicants should carry out a landscape and visual assessment and report it in the ES. Visualisations may be required to demonstrate the effects of a proposed solar farm on the setting of heritage assets and any nearby residential areas or viewpoints</p>	
<p>2.10.98 Applicants should follow the criteria for good design set out in Section 4.7 of EN-1 when developing projects and will be expected to direct considerable effort towards minimising the landscape and visual impact of solar PV arrays especially within nationally designated landscapes.</p>	<p>While the appearance of solar panels is largely determined by their function, the site layout, landscaping and access have all been designed to reflect principles of good design.</p> <p>Good design has been a key consideration from the outset. The Proposed Development has undergone an iterative design process, informed by the LVIA, set out in section 2 of the Planning Statement [EN010149/APP/7.2] and the Design</p>
<p>2.10.99 Whilst there is an acknowledged need to ensure solar PV installations are adequately secured, required security measures such as</p>	

	<p>fencing should consider the need to minimise the impact on the landscape and visual impact (see paragraphs 2.10.46 – 2.10.48 above).</p>	<p>Approach Document [EN010149/APP/7.3], The Proposed Development layout has been developed in response to policy requirements, published landscape character assessment and fieldwork analysis. The design mitigation has been embedded into the Proposed Development to minimise effects on landscape character and visual amenity as outlined in the oLEMP [EN010149/APP/7.9] and Design Commitments [EN010149/APP/7.4]. As set out in the Design Approach Document [EN010149/APP/7.3], the landscape design principles incorporate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide appropriate offsets to local settlements and dwellings on a case-by-case basis, respecting their individual amenity;• Consider sequential views and the experience of people using Heath Road and other local roads;• Work with Blankney Estates and other landowners to secure the long-term management of both the agricultural landscape and benefits provided by the Proposed Development;• Identify opportunities for wider community benefits in consultation with local stakeholders by leading with the landscape;
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retain existing vegetation wherever reasonably possible to retain the fabric of the Site and aid assimilation of development into its context; • Design the Proposed Development to respond to the distinctive and unique local character of the Site, informed by relevant local studies such as North Kesteven Landscape Character Assessment; and • Maintain the rural separation between the villages of Ashby de la Launde, RAF Digby, Scopwick, Kirkby Green and Blankney.
	<p>2.10.100 The applicant should consider as part of the design, layout, construction, and future maintenance plans how to protect and retain, wherever possible, the growth of vegetation on site boundaries, as well as the growth of existing hedges, established vegetation, including mature trees within boundaries. Applicants should also consider opportunities for individual trees within the boundaries to grow on to maturity.</p>	<p>Chapter 10: Landscape and Visual of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] conducts an assessment of the visual impact of the Proposed Development, including assessing the impacts on, and loss of, all trees and woodlands. In terms of vegetation removal, a worst- case assumption has been made that all vegetation shown as in Figure 3.11: Vegetation Removal Parameters ES Vol.2 [EN010149/APP/6.2] would be removed. It is assumed that all other woodland, tree and hedgerow vegetation within the Order Limits would be retained.</p>
	<p>2.10.101 The impact of the proposed development on established trees and hedges should be informed by a tree survey and arboricultural/hedge assessment as appropriate.</p>	<p>Appendix 7.12: Arboricultural Impact Assessment of the ES Vol.3 [EN010149/APP/6.3] of all trees within the Order</p>

		Limits and, and within at least 100m from the Order Limits has been undertaken.
Impacts – Glint and Glare	2.10.104 When a quantitative glint and glare assessment is necessary, applicants are expected to consider the geometric possibility of glint and glare affecting nearby receptors, and provide an assessment of potential impact and impairment based on the angle and duration of incidence and the intensity of the reflection.	<p>Appendix 5.4: Glint and Glare Study to the ES [EN010149/APP/6.3] has undertaken an assessment of potential impacts of glint and glare on surrounding road users, railway operations, dwellings, and aviation activity.</p> <p>The methodology used within the glint and glare study considers permanent addresses of residences (dwellings) within the surrounding area. Commercial properties are not considered with regard to glint and glare as residential amenity is not a significant concern. This methodology has been widely accepted in planning submission for UK projects, including NSIPs, and internationally.</p> <p>As detailed in Chapter 3: Proposed Development Description of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1], the mounting structure of the Solar PV modules will be designed to face southwards on a fixed platform. The Solar PV modules would be angled at a tilt of 10 to 30 degrees from horizontal to optimise daylight absorption. The ES [EN010149/APP/6.1/6.2/6.3] takes account of the impacts of Solar PV modules facing southwards on a fixed platform.</p>
	2.10.105 The extent of reflectivity analysis required to assess potential impacts will depend on the specific project site and design. This may need to account for 'tracking' panels if they are proposed as these may cause differential diurnal and/or seasonal impacts.	
	2.10.106 When a glint and glare assessment is undertaken, the potential for solar PV panels, frames and supports to have a combined reflective quality may need to be assessed, although the glint and glare of the frames and supports is likely to be significantly less than the panels.	
	2.10.107 The impacts of solar PV developments on the historic environment will require expert	Chapter 9: Cultural Heritage of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] provides an assessment of

Impacts – Cultural Heritage	assessment in most cases and may have effect both above and below ground.	the Proposed Development on the historic environment, including above and below ground assets.
	2.10.108 Above ground impacts may include the effects on the setting of Listed Buildings and other designated heritage assets as well as on Historic Landscape Character.	It concludes that there will be no significant adverse impacts to any designated heritage assets, including Listed Buildings or Historic Landscape Character as a result of the Proposed Development.
	2.10.109 Below ground impacts, although generally limited, may include direct impacts on archaeological deposits through ground disturbance associated with trenching, cabling, foundations, fencing, temporary haul routes etc.	Chapter 9: Cultural Heritage of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] concludes there would be no significant adverse impacts to any designated or non-designated heritage assets as a result of the Proposed Development once embedded and additional mitigation measures are implemented.
	2.10.110 Equally, solar PV developments may have a positive effect, for example archaeological assets may be protected by a solar PV farm as the site is removed from regular ploughing and shoes or low-level piling is stipulated.	Both crash sites (Avro Lancaster Crash Site (Lincolnshire County Council HER MLI25416) and Hawker Hurricane Crash Site (Lincolnshire County Council HER ref. MLI125417) will be preserved from further disturbance by ploughing during the operational (including maintenance) phase of the Proposed Development. This will result in a minor beneficial magnitude of impact which will result in an effect of moderate beneficial significance which is considered to be significant in EIA terms. There would be a significant beneficial effect of the Proposed Development on Scheduled remains of former village of Brauncewell as a result of the creation
	2.10.111 Generic historic environment impacts are covered in Section 5.9 of EN-1.	

		of permissive path to improve access to monument.
	2.10.112 Applicant assessments should be informed by information from Historic Environment Records (HERs) or the local authority.	The assessment in Chapter 9: Cultural Heritage of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] has been informed by the HER.
	2.10.113 Where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, the applicant should submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation. These should be carried out using expertise where necessary and in consultation with the local planning authority, and should identify archaeological study areas and propose appropriate schemes of investigation, and design measures, to ensure the protection of relevant heritage assets.	<p>A detailed baseline is set out in section 9.5 of Chapter 9: Cultural Heritage of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1].</p> <p>A Geoarchaeological Deposit Modelling Report is provided as Appendix 9.2, of the ES Vol.3 [EN010149/APP/6.3].</p> <p>The location of heritage assets used in the cultural heritage assessment, within the site, within the study area and those included in the EIA are provided in Figure 9.1 to 9.8 of the ES Vol.2 [EN010149/APP/6.2].</p> <p>Section 9.8 of Chapter 9: Cultural Heritage of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] sets out additional mitigation measures includes that methods for identifying currently unknown archaeological remains to inform detailed design and securing mitigation measures are agreement with Lincolnshire County Council. Further archaeological trial trenching will be secured as a requirement to the DCO which is outlined in Schedule 2 of the Draft DCO [EN010149/APP/3.1] and set out in the outline</p>

	<p>Written Scheme of Investigation [EN010149/APP/7.15].</p>
<p>2.10.114 In some instances, field studies may include investigative work (and may include trial trenching beyond the boundary of the proposed site) to assess the impacts of any ground disturbance, such as proposed cabling, substation foundations or mounting supports for solar panels on archaeological assets.</p>	<p>Archaeological trial trench evaluation has been undertaken for the Proposed Development and potential impacts to buried archaeological features confirmed as being present within the Order limits is included within Chapter 9: Cultural Heritage of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1]. The trial trench report is submitted alongside the application as Appendix 9.5 of the ES Vol.3 [EN010149/APP/6.3]. Further archaeological trial trenching will be secured as a requirement to the DCO which is outlined in Schedule 2 of the Draft DCO [EN10149/APP/3.1] and set out in the outline Written Scheme of Investigation [EN010149/APP/7.15].</p>
<p>2.10.115 The extent of investigative work should be proportionate to the sensitivity of, and extent of, proposed ground disturbance in the associated study area.</p>	
<p>2.10.116 Applicants should take account of the results of historic environment assessments in their design proposal.</p>	<p>The Design Approach Document [EN010149/APP/7.3] and Design Commitment [EN010149/APP/7.4] sets out how the Proposed Development has considered the results of historic assessment in its design.</p> <p>Chapter 9: Cultural Heritage of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] describes the heritage assets within the Study Area for the Proposed Development and their significance, and the contribution of their significance to the setting.</p>
<p>2.10.117 Applicants should consider what steps can be taken to ensure heritage assets are conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, including the impact of proposals on views important to their setting.</p>	
<p>2.10.118 As the significance of a heritage asset derives not only from its physical presence but also from its setting, careful consideration should be</p>	

	<p>given to the impact of large-scale solar farms which depending on their scale, design, and prominence, may cause substantial harm to the significance of the asset.</p>	<p>Section 9.6 of Chapter 9: Cultural Heritage of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] sets out steps taken to ensure heritage assets are conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, including embedded mitigation such as avoiding areas with known or suspected below-ground archaeological deposits, changes to the setting of designated and non-designated heritage assets have been avoided, site access points from the A15 have been selected to avoid works in proximity to the listed milepost, non-intrusive construction methods will be used, and routeing of HGV traffic away from Blankney and Scopwick.</p> <p>Section 9.7 and 9.9 of Chapter 9: Cultural Heritage of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] provides an assessment of the likely effects and residual effects, respectively, of the Proposed Development on cultural heritage. All effects, including dust, noise, vibration and indirect impacts are considered. Due to the limited effects from noise, vibration and dust, the majority of impacts are as a result of direct impacts on non-designated heritage assets and impacts to the setting of designated heritage assets, as demonstrated in Figure 9.1: Cultural Heritage Study Area of the ES Vol.2 [EN010149/APP/6.2].</p>
<p>2.10.119 Applicants may need to include visualisations to demonstrate the effects of a proposed solar farm on the setting of heritage assets.</p>		
<p>Impacts – Construction</p>	<p>2.10.123 Applicants should assess the various potential routes to the site for delivery of materials</p>	<p>As set out in Chapter 3: Proposed Development Description of the ES</p>

<p>including traffic and transport noise and vibration</p>	<p>and components where the source of the materials is known at the time of the application, and select the route that is the most appropriate.</p>	<p>[EN010149/APP/6.1], highway improvements will be required to support construction HGVs travelling on the local highway network to/from the proposed site access on the B1191. These improvements are expected to comprise relatively minor verge clearance, hedge cutting or carriageway widening to achieve a minimum carriageway width of 7.3m at the compound entrance along Heath Road (B1191), Navenby lane, and Temple Road. Passing bays are proposed on Temple Road to support two-way construction traffic. These works will be retained permanently for future use and benefit to future road users.</p> <p>Further widening at the A15/B1191 junction is required. This will increase the width of the B1191 to accommodate two lanes on the approach to the A15 junction to support the increase in construction traffic. On the A15 southbound approach to the B1191 junction, widening of the existing road will be required to bring this approach up to standard to achieve appropriate visibility splays; this will entail the addition of a longer diverge deceleration lane, which will improve the southbound turning movement into the B1191. The widening of the A15 will also facilitate a longer turning lane for Temple Road for southbound HGV vehicles. All proposed carriageway widening is within the public highway boundary and will be retained</p>
	<p>2.10.124 Where the exact location of the source of construction materials, such as crushed stone or concrete is not be known at the time of the application, applicants should assess the worst-case impact of additional vehicles on the likely potential routes.</p>	
	<p>2.10.125 Applicants should ensure all sections of roads and bridges on the proposed delivery route can accommodate the weight and volume of the loads and width of vehicles. Although unlikely, where modifications to roads and/or bridges are required, these should be identified, and potential effects addressed in the ES.</p>	
	<p>2.10.126 Where a cumulative impact is likely because multiple energy infrastructure developments are proposing to use a common port and/or access route and pass through the same towns and villages, applicants should include a cumulative transport assessment as part of the ES. This should consider the impacts of abnormal traffic movements relating to the project in question in combination with those from any other relevant development. Consultation with the relevant local highways authorities is likely to be necessary.</p>	

		<p>permanently for future use and benefit to future road users.</p> <p>Gorse Hill Lane will provide the main point of access for the main primary construction compound west of the A15 and for the Springwell Substation. Highway improvements will require the widening and reconstruction of Gorse Hill Lane up to the compound entrance. The A15 will be widened to accommodate a right-turn lane for A15 southbound traffic turning into Gorse Hill Lane. Widening into the west verge of the A15 will be required to provide merge and diverge facilities.</p> <p>The Proposed Development design incorporates mitigation to reduce adverse effects and minimise impacts of traffic, and transport noise and vibration. These are set out in section 14.7 of Chapter 14: Traffic and Transport of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] and section 2.8 of the associated Transport Assessment at Appendix 14.1 of the ES Vol.3 [EN010149/APP/6.3]). These measures will be secured by the oCTMP [EN010149/APP/7.8], Streets, Rights of Way and Access Plans [EN010149/APP/2.4] and the Draft DCO [EN10149/APP/3.1]. The oCTMP [EN010149/APP/7.8] sets out the Abnormal Indivisible Loads management plan. The construction works will involve the delivery of up to seven ALLs which comprise the Springwell Substation transformer. This load will have a</p>
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		<p>maximum width of 6.2m and a vehicle length of 64m. Other deliveries may be considered oversized loads, including three cranes and up to 18 cable drums, but would not fall into the category of requiring an escort vehicle or mitigation works to accommodate them. The oCTMP [EN010149/APP/7.8] sets out that an access route survey feasibility report has been undertaken, which identifies that the preferred route would utilise the heavy load routes.</p> <p>Chapter 16: Cumulative Effects of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] provides an assessment of the cumulative transport assessment and concludes that provided there is adequate mitigation for the proposed National Grid Navenby Substation development there should be no inter-project cumulative effect. It is assumed that appropriate mitigation would be in place for the proposed National Grid Navenby Substation development, as is good practice and standard for schemes of this nature.</p>
<p>Mitigations – Agriculture Land classification and land type</p>	<p>2.10.127 The Defra Construction code of practice for the sustainable use of soils on construction sites provides guidance on ensuring that damage to soil during construction is mitigated and minimised. Mitigation measures focus on minimising damage to soil that remains in place, and minimising damage to soil being excavated and stockpiled. The measures aim to preserve soil health and soil structure to minimise soil carbon loss and maintain water</p>	<p>Chapter 11: Land, Soils and Groundwater of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] and the outline Soil Management Plan [EN010149/APP/7.11] set out how agricultural land was considered in the design of Proposed Development, the Proposed Development’s embedded mitigation measures, and principles on how the soils will be managed and protected during the construction, operation and decommissioning of the Proposed</p>

	<p>infiltration and soil biodiversity. Mitigation measures for agricultural soils include use of green cover, multispecies cover crops - especially during the winter minimising compaction and adding soil organic matter.</p>	<p>Development. Embedded mitigation measures secured through the Flood Risk Assessment [EN010149/APP/7.16], Appendix 3.1: Project Parameters of the ES Vol.3 [EN010149/APP/6.3], and Work Plans [EN010149/APP/2.3] include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The design of the Proposed Development minimises where possible the use of grade 1 and grade 2 agricultural land. The design and layout seeks to minimise disturbance to agricultural land of BMV quality. Where possible, existing access tracks within the Order Limits will be used, and new access tracks will avoid BMV land as far as is practical;• Solar PV mounting structure foundations will be driven or helical piles or concrete footings;• The foundations for the Solar PV modules will be at a maximum depth of 3m, depending on the ground conditions; and• Areas of impermeable surfaces have been assessed in the Flood Risk Assessment [EN010149/APP/7.16] and designed to ensure adequate groundwater infiltration is maintained during construction works. The design to ensure adequate infiltration and flood mitigation will be secured by the Flood Risk Assessment and supporting
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		outline Drainage Strategy [EN010149/APP/7.16]
Mitigations – Biodiversity and ecological conservation	2.10.128 In England, proposed enhancements should take account of the above factors and as set out in Sections 4.6 and 5.4 of EN-1 aim to achieve environmental and biodiversity net gain in line with the ambition set out in the Environmental Improvement Plan and any relevant measures and targets, including statutory targets set under the Environment Act or elsewhere.	The Proposed Development will meet a minimum of 10% BNG, as secured in the oLEMP [EN010149/APP/7.9] . The BNG Assessment at Appendix 7.14 to the ES Vol. 3 [EN010149/APP/6.3] demonstrates that the Proposed Development is committed to achieve significant biodiversity net gain on site.
	2.10.129 This might include maintaining or extending existing habitats and potentially creating new important habitats, for example by installing cultivated strips/plots for rare arable plants, rough grassland margins, bumble bee plant mixes, and wild bird seed mixes.	The Proposed Development includes measures to extend existing habitats and create new important habitats. These are set out in the oLEMP [EN010149/APP/7.9] .
	2.10.130 Applicants are advised to develop an ecological monitoring programme to monitor impacts upon the flora of the site and upon any particular ecological receptors (such as bats and wintering birds). Results of the monitoring will then inform any changes needed to the land management of the site, including, if appropriate, any livestock grazing regime.	Appropriate monitoring will be undertaken during construction, operation and decommissioning as set out in the oLEMP [EN010149/APP/7.9] , oCEMP [EN010149/APP7.7] , oOEMP [EN010149/APP/7.10] and oDEMP [EN010149/APP/7.13] .
Mitigations – Landscape, Visual and	2.10.131 Applicants should consider the potential to mitigate landscape and visual impacts through, for	The mitigation embedded into the design which is outlined in section 10.6 of Chapter 10: Landscape and Visual of the ES

<p>Residential Amenity</p>	<p>example, screening with native hedges, trees and woodlands.</p>	<p>[EN010149/APP/6.1], the oLEMP [EN010149/APP/7.9] and the Design Approach Document [EN010149/APP/7.3] and Design Commitment [EN010149/APP/7.4] includes, but is not limited to, hedgerow planting along field boundaries, woodland planting along field boundaries, hedgerow infill planting, structural planting, establishment of wildflower rich grassland, offsets from existing woodlands and proposed or existing PRowS, which has aimed to reduce visual impacts.</p>
	<p>2.10.132 Applicants should aim to minimise the use and height of security fencing. Where possible applicants should utilise existing features, such as hedges or landscaping, to assist in site security, or screen security fencing.</p>	<p>Chapter 10: Landscape and Visual of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] sets out embedded mitigations including that boundary fencing will not be constructed through retained existing hedgerows or across ditches. In response to consultations with NKDC and LCC, the height of fencing around the Solar PV generating stations will be 2.5m high and it is confirmed that this will be timber post and wire mesh 'deer-proof fencing'. Secure fencing is also required around the Springwell Substation, Main Collector Compound, BESS and Satellite Collector Compounds and this will be 2.75m high.</p>

	2.10.133 Applicants should minimise the use of security lighting. Any lighting should utilise a passive infra-red (PIR) technology and should be designed and installed in a manner which minimises impact.	<p>Chapter 3: Proposed Development Description of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] outlines the security measures, including lighting, incorporated in the design of the Proposed Development's design.</p> <p>The Proposed Development's security and lighting have been designed to respond sensitively to ecological and landscape features.</p>
Mitigations – Glint and Glare	2.10.134 Applicants should consider using, and in some cases the Secretary of State may require, solar panels to comprise of (or be covered with) anti-glare/anti-reflective coating with a specified angle of maximum reflection attenuation for the lifetime of the permission.	<p>Appendix 5.4: Glint and Glare Study to the ES [EN010149/APP/6.3] has undertaken an assessment of potential impacts of glint and glare on surrounding road users, railway operations, dwellings, and aviation activity.</p>
	2.10.135 Applicants may consider using screening between potentially affected receptors and the reflecting panels to mitigate the effects.	
	2.10.136 Applicants may consider adjusting the azimuth alignment of, or changing the elevation tilt angle of, a solar panel within the economically viable range, to alter the angle of incidence. In practice this is unlikely to remove the potential impact altogether but in marginal cases may contribute to a mitigation strategy.	
Mitigations – Cultural Heritage	2.10.137 The ability of the applicants to microsite specific elements of the proposed development during the construction phase should be an	<p>Chapter 9: Cultural Heritage of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] concludes there would be no significant adverse impacts to any designated</p>

	<p>important consideration by the Secretary of State when assessing the risk of damage to archaeology.</p> <p>2.10.138 Where requested by the applicant, the Secretary of State should consider granting consents which allow for the micrositing within a specified tolerance of elements of the permitted infrastructure, so that precise locations can be amended during the construction phase if unforeseen circumstances, such as the discovery of previously unknown archaeology, arise.</p>	<p>or non-designated heritage assets as a result of the Proposed Development once embedded and additional mitigation measures are implemented. There would be a significant beneficial effect of the Proposed Development on Scheduled remains of former village of Brauncewell as a result of the creation of permissive path to improve access to monument.</p> <p>The Proposed Development will be constructed in accordance with the parameters set out in the Design Approach Document [EN010149/APP/7.3] and Design Commitment [EN010149/APP/7.4], providing flexibility to amend the design should significant archaeological finds be discovered as a result of the programme of further archaeological trial trenching in accordance with the outline Written Scheme of Investigation.</p>
<p>Mitigation – Construction including traffic and transport noise and vibration</p>	<p>2.10.139 In some cases, the local highway authority may request that the Secretary of State impose controls on the number of vehicle movements to and from the solar farm site in a specified period during its construction and, possibly, on the routing of such movements particularly by heavy vehicles.</p> <p>2.10.140 Where the Secretary of State agrees that this is necessary, requirements could be imposed on development consent.</p> <p>2.10.141 Where cumulative effects on the local road network or residential amenity are predicted from</p>	<p>Measures required to control any construction traffic impacts, including AIL Routing, and delivery routes and scheduling have been identified and are secured through the oCTMP [EN010149/APP/7.8].</p> <p>Chapter 16: Cumulative Effects of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] concludes that the in terms</p>

	<p>multiple solar farm developments, it may be appropriate for applicants for various projects to work together to ensure that the number of abnormal loads and deliveries are minimised, and the timings of deliveries are managed and coordinated to ensure that disruption to residents and other highway users is reasonably minimised.</p>	<p>of transport and access cumulative impacts, the cumulative impacts of the Proposed Development will be temporary in nature and will occur on receptors with a low or very low sensitivity, as well as being managed by measures in the CTMP and Public Right of Way and Permissive Path Management Plan to be secured by the DCO, therefore there will be no significant cumulative effects on transport and access.</p>
<p>2.10.142 It may also be appropriate for the highway authority to set limits for, and coordinate these deliveries through, active management of the delivery schedules through the abnormal load approval process.</p>		
<p>2.10.143 Once consent for a scheme has been granted, applicants should liaise with the relevant local highway authority (or other coordinating body) regarding the start of construction and the broad timing of deliveries. Applicants may need to agree a planning obligation to secure appropriate measures, including restoration of roads and verges.</p>		
<p>2.10.144 Further, it may be appropriate for any non-permanent highway improvements carried out for the development (such as temporary road widening) to be made available for use by other subsequent solar farm developments.</p>	<p>Chapter 14: Traffic and Transport of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] set out that the principal contractor will liaise with local highways authorities and other parties in the event of other events (e.g., road closures, changes). Section 3.11 of Chapter 3: Proposed Development Description of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] sets out the works included in Works No 8: Highways Works, as secured through the Works Plan [EN010149/APP/2.3].</p>	
<p>Secretary of State decision making - Factors influencing site</p>	<p>2.10.145 The Secretary of State should take into account the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land. The Secretary of State should ensure that the applicant has put</p>	<p>Chapter 11: Land, Soils and Groundwater of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] and the outline Soil Management Plan [EN010149/APP/7.11] set out how agricultural land was considered in</p>

<p>selection and design – Agriculture land classification and land type</p>	<p>forward appropriate mitigation measures to minimise impacts on soils or soil resources.</p>	<p>the design of Proposed Development, the Proposed Development’s embedded mitigation measures, and principles on how the soils will be managed and protected during the construction, operation and decommissioning of the Proposed Development.</p> <p>The Order Limits comprise agricultural landholdings, with a mixture of arable output used for various purposes as set out above both on BMV and non-BMV land. The proposed extent of the Solar PV Development represents a proportion of the wider landholding. In fact, the amount of BMV which would be required to be used for hard infrastructure (231.7ha), represents just over 4% of the wider Blankney Estate’s landholding (5665ha). No key infrastructure, such as main agricultural buildings, is impacted and the Proposed Development has been designed to ensure that it does not conflict with the wider business functions. However, there will inevitably be changes in the day-to-day farm management and operation given the extent of the land required for the Proposed Development. The income the landholding would receive from the land rental will play an important role in securing the ongoing viability of the estate and a form of diversification which will help secure the estate’s long-term future.</p>
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Secretary of State decision making	2.10.146 The Secretary of State should ensure that the applicant has put forward outline plans for	The Solar PV Development will be reinstated in accordance with the Outline Decommissioning

<p>– Technical Considerations – Project lifetime and decommissioning</p>	<p>decommissioning the generating station when no longer in use and restoring the land to a suitable use (taking into account paragraphs 2.10.68 and 2.10.69).</p>	<p>Environmental Management Plan (oDEMP) [EN010149/APP/7.13] which has been provided with the Application. A Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan (DEMP) will be subject to the approval of the local planning authorities at the time of decommissioning.</p> <p>There is a DCO requirement included in Schedule 2 of the Draft DCO [EN010149/APP/3.1] securing the decommissioning of the Proposed Development 40 years after the date of final commissioning. The requirement requires the approval of the DEMP at that time and that the approved plan is thereafter implemented, thus securing the decommissioning.</p> <p>The effects of decommissioning are often similar to, or of a lesser magnitude than, construction effects are considered in Chapters 6 to 16 of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1]. An oDEMP [EN010149/APP/7.13] has been produced as part of the ES to demonstrate how the mitigation measures will be implemented. It will also set out the monitoring and auditing activities designed to ensure that such mitigation measures are carried out, and that they are effective. This will be secured by a Requirement within the DCO.</p> <p>The potential impacts due to the decommissioning phase of the Proposed Development are considered short-term in</p>
	<p>2.10.147 Where the consent for a solar farm is to be time-limited, the DCO should impose a requirement setting that time-limit from the date the solar farm starts to generate electricity.</p>	
	<p>2.10.148 Such a requirement should also secure the decommissioning of the generating station after the expiration of its permitted operation to ensure that inoperative plant is removed after its operational life.</p>	
	<p>2.10.149 An upper limit of 40 years is typical, although applicants may seek consent without a time period or for differing time-periods for operation.</p>	
	<p>2.10.150 The time limited nature of the solar farm, where a time limit is sought as a condition of consent, is likely to be an important consideration for the Secretary of State.</p>	
	<p>2.10.151 The Secretary of State should consider the period of time the applicant is seeking to operate the generating station, as well as the extent to which the site will return to its original state, when assessing impacts such as landscape and visual effects and potential effects on the settings of heritage assets and nationally designated landscapes.</p>	

		<p>duration in any given location for a maximum of two years. There would be intermittent periods of relatively intense human activity and decommissioning movements across the Site, and therefore, there would be a short period of relatively large impact similar to those of the construction phase.</p> <p>At the end of the operational lifetime, the decommissioning phase would include removing any permissive paths and the land will be returned to the landowner. Landscape structural planting, including tree planting, hedgerows, scrub, etc., created to deliver biodiversity mitigation and enhancement associated with the Proposed Development would be left in situ when the Site is handed back to landowners, except for the planting within Tb2, which will be removed to facilitate the releveling and removal of the earth bund to allow the field to be returned to agricultural use. It is assumed that the remaining land would be returned to agricultural use when handed back to the landowner.</p> <p>Effects on landscape and visual amenity and heritage assets during decommissioning would be temporary and short term. Following decommissioning the landscape will be largely restored to its pre-development state. There would be a slight beneficial impact on the landscape fabric and consequently the character of the landscape and the wider environment.</p>
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		<p>This would arise as a result of the retention on decommissioning of most of the mitigation hedgerows and woodland planted as part of the development.</p>
<p>Secretary of State decision making - Impacts – Biodiversity, ecological, geological conservation and water management</p>	<p>2.10.154 Water management is a critical component of site design for ground mount solar plants. Where previous management of the site has involved intensive agricultural practice, solar sites can deliver significant ecosystem services value in the form of drainage, flood attenuation, natural wetland habitat, and water quality management.</p>	<p>The Outline Drainage Strategy which forms an appendix of the Flood Risk Assessment [EN010149/APP/7.16] sets out how water and drainage will be managed as part of the Proposed Development. The cessation of arable agricultural activities will result in a reduction of the application of pesticides, herbicides and fertilisers within the Site. In turn, the vegetation cover will stabilise soils and reduce the mobilisation of these materials.</p> <p>Chapter 15: Water of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] confirms that flood risk during construction and at decommissioning will be managed through the CEMP and DEMP, which will be secured by the DCO and required to be in accordance with the oCEMP [EN010149/APP/7.7], and the oDEMP [EN010149/APP/7.13].</p> <p>As the Site is at predominantly low risk from flooding from all sources, the reasonable ‘worst case’ is limited to the placement of Solar PV modules and string inverters mounted on the panels within Flood Zone 2 and Flood Zone 3 towards the east of the Site.</p>

		<p>The residual flood risk will be negligible once mitigation is included. Embedded mitigation will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Perimeter fencing surrounding the Solar PV development will be offset at least 6m either side from all existing ditches where crossing is not required, secured through Design Commitments [EN010149/APP/7.4];• An Outline Drainage Strategy, secured through Flood Risk Assessment [EN010149/APP/7.16]; and• Vegetation Management, secured through oLEMP [EN010149/APP/7.9]. <p>Chapter 15: Water of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] concludes that due to the nature of the Proposed Development, there is a low likelihood that during the operational (including maintenance) phase the water quality would be degraded at Metheringham Beck. Once vegetation is established below Solar PV modules this will support the stabilisation of soils which will be less prone to the erosional forces of rainfall runoff.</p> <p>Water quality during construction and decommissioning phases will be protected by appropriate control measures and any adverse effects will be greatly reduced or eliminated. Mitigation measures are documented within and</p>
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		<p>will be secured by the oCEMP [EN010149/APP/7.7] and oDEMP [EN010149/APP/7.13], which are submitted in support of the DCO Application.</p> <p>Wetland habitats are not affected by the Proposed Development; therefore, are not considered in the assessment.</p>
	<p>2.10.155 The Secretary of State must consider the worst-case effects in its consideration of the application and consent.</p>	<p>The impact assessment within Chapters 6 to 16 of this ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] has been based on the worst-case parameters for each technical topic and justification is presented within the relevant technical chapter.</p>
<p>Secretary of State decision making - Impacts – Landscape, visual and residential amenity</p>	<p>2.10.157 The Secretary of State will consider the landscape and visual impact of any proposed solar PV farm, taking account of any sensitive visual receptors, and the effect of the development on landscape character, together with the possible cumulative effect with any existing or proposed development. Nationally designated landscapes (National Parks, The Broads and Areas of Outstanding Beauty) are afforded extra protection due their statutory purpose. Development in these areas needs to satisfy policy as set out in EN-1 Section 5.10.</p>	<p>Chapter 10: Landscape and Visual of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] concludes that no part of the Site or its immediately surrounding context falls within a statutorily designated landscape. The nearest National Park or National Landscape (formerly known as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) to the Site is the Lincolnshire Wolds National Landscape, located more than 20km to the north-east and this would not be affected by the Proposed Development.</p> <p>Chapter 10: Landscape and Visual of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] concludes that during construction, operation (year 1) and decommissioning, significant effects are anticipated on LCA 7: The Limestone Heath and LCA 11: Central Clays and Gravels. During operation (year 10), significant effects are</p>

		<p>anticipated on LCA 11: Central Clays and Gravels.</p> <p>Table 16.11 of Chapter 16: Cumulative Effects of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] assesses the landscape and visual inter-project cumulative effects. The assessment concludes that no significant inter-project cumulative effects have been identified.</p> <p>It is considered that the wider benefits of the Proposed Development, including the delivery of a significant level of low carbon energy generation and biodiversity net gain and the provision of permissive footpaths and outweigh these impacts and that the Proposed Development is considered acceptable in terms of overall landscape, visual and residential amenity impacts and the nature of the visual impacts are not considered to outweigh the benefits of the Proposed Development.</p>
<p>Secretary of State decision making - Impacts – Glint and Glare</p>	<p>2.10.158 Solar PV panels are designed to absorb, not reflect, irradiation. However, the Secretary of State should assess the potential impact of glint and glare on nearby homes, motorists, public rights of way, and aviation infrastructure (including aircraft departure and arrival flight paths).</p> <p>2.10.159 Whilst there is some evidence that glint and glare from solar farms can be experienced by pilots and air traffic controllers in certain conditions, there is no evidence that glint and glare from solar</p>	<p>Appendix 5.4: Glint and Glare Study to the ES [EN010149/APP/6.3] has undertaken an assessment of potential impacts of glint and glare on surrounding road users, railway operations, dwellings, and aviation activity.</p>

	<p>farms results in significant impairment on aircraft safety. Therefore, unless a significant impairment can be demonstrated, the Secretary of State is unlikely to give any more than limited weight to claims of aviation interference because of glint and glare from solar farms.</p>	
<p>Secretary of State decision making - Impacts – Cultural Heritage</p>	<p>2.10.160 Solar farms are generally consented on the basis that they will be time-limited in operation. The Secretary of State should therefore consider the length of time for which consent is sought when considering the impacts of any indirect effect on the historic environment, such as effects on the setting of designated heritage assets.</p>	<p>The design life of the Proposed Development is expected to be 40 years. Chapter 9: Cultural Heritage of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] concludes there would be no significant adverse impacts to any designated or non-designated heritage assets as a result of the Proposed Development once embedded and additional mitigation measures are implemented. There would be a significant beneficial effect of the Proposed Development on Scheduled remains of former village of Brauncewell as a result of the creation of permissive path to improve access to monument.</p>
<p>Secretary of State decision making - Impacts – Construction including traffic and transport noise and vibration</p>	<p>2.10.161 Once solar farms are in operation, traffic movements to and from the site are generally very light, in some instances as little as a few visits each month by a light commercial vehicle or car. Should there be a need to replace machine components, this may generate heavier commercial vehicle movements, but these are likely to be infrequent.</p> <p>2.10.162 The Secretary of State is unlikely to give any more than limited weight to traffic and transport</p>	<p>Chapter 14: Traffic and Transport of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] concludes that once the Proposed Development is operational, the effect on the local road system is expected to be minimal therefore there will be no significant adverse impacts.</p>

	noise and vibration impacts from the operational phase of a project.	
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Springwell Solar Farm

Table 3 National Policy Statement for Electricity Networks Infrastructure (EN5) – Table of Compliance

National Policy Statement for Electricity Networks Infrastructure (EN-5)		
Assessment and Technical Specific Information – Assessment of the specific impacts as set out in Part 2 of EN-5 (2023) is considered below.		
Policy	EN-5 Policy Text	Assessment
Part 2.3 Climate change adaptation and resilience	<p>2.3.2 As climate change is likely to increase risks to the resilience of some of this infrastructure, from flooding for example, or in situations where it is located near the coast or an estuary or is underground, applicants should in particular set out to what extent the proposed development is expected to be vulnerable, and, as appropriate, how it has been designed to be resilient to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • flooding, particularly for substations that are vital to the network; and especially in light of changes to groundwater levels resulting from climate change; • the effects of wind and storms on overhead lines; • higher average temperatures leading to increased transmission losses; 	<p>The minimum height of the lowest part of the Solar PV modules will be 0.8m AGL (existing levels). The maximum height of the Solar PV modules will be 3.0m AGL (existing levels), except in areas of flood risk where the maximum height will be up to 3.5m AGL (existing levels) to ensure enough freeboard and climate resilience. To ensure climate resilience, all Balance of Solar System (BoSS) options would be located within fields suitable for the Solar PV Modules and outside Flood Zones 2 and 3.</p> <p>Solar PV mounting structures are designed to withstand the wind and snow loading and other environmental impacts expected for the operational life of the project. Solar PV modules are constructed and tested to withstand wind loading and temperature in some of the harshest environments.</p> <p>As outlined in Chapter 8: Climate of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] the Proposed Development takes account of the effects of climate change have been</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • earth movement or subsidence caused by flooding or drought (for underground cables); and • coastal erosion – for the landfall of offshore transmission cables and their associated substations in the inshore and coastal locations respectively. 	<p>considered the design of the Proposed Development and its construction and decommissioning.</p> <p>As set out in Design Approach Document [EN010149/APP/7.3], the Applicant adopted 10 Strategic Principles to guide the design of the Proposed Development at the early stages of the project, including to build resilience in a changing climate. This is demonstrated through Design Principle 9.1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design for resilience and adaptation to future climate change. Ensure responsible construction, ongoing maintenance and decommissioning. <p>One of the major risks posed to new developments regarding climate change is flood risk. The Applicant has opted to site potentially vulnerable infrastructure (i.e., Substation and BESS Units) in the northwestern region of the Site, where flood risk is considered to be ‘very low’. This infrastructure will be situated on raised platforms above ground level, to further minimise the residual flood risk. Further information on the extent of design measures implemented to minimise flood risk can be found in the Flood Risk Assessment [EN010149/APP/7.16].</p> <p>As set out in Chapter 11: Land, Soil and Groundwater of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] areas of land underneath the Solar PV modules and within the field margins are expected to be used for ecological mitigation and enhancements, which would include planting and establishment of grassland, which would help to reduce soil degradation and erosion during the operational</p>
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		<p>(including maintenance) phase, which could lead to potential benefits.</p> <p>The oCEMP [EN010149/APP/7.7] sets out measures to avoid, minimise or mitigate effects on the environment during construction works. This includes procedures to mitigate against erosion.</p> <p>There is potential that soil health could be enhanced over the assumed 40-year period of operation of the Proposed Development due to the implementation of the outline Soil Management Plan [EN010149/APP/7.11] and due to the permanent cover of grassland which would reduce the impact of soil erosion.</p>
	<p>2.3.3 Section 4.10 of EN-1 advises that the resilience of the project to the effects of climate change must be assessed in the Environmental Statement (ES) accompanying an application. For example, future increased risk of flooding would be covered in any flood risk assessment (see Sections 5.8 in EN-1). Consideration should also be given to coastal change (see sections 5.6 in EN1)</p>	<p>The Scoping Opinion confirmed that climate resilience can be scoped out of further assessment, on the basis that ES Chapter 3: Proposed Development Description [EN010149/APP/6.1] sufficiently explains how the Proposed Development has been designed to be resilient to the impacts of climate change (which, in the opinion of the Applicant, it does).</p>
<p>Part 2.4 – Consideration of good design for energy infrastructure</p>	<p>2.4.1 The Planning Act 2008 requires the Secretary of State to have regard, in designating an NPS, and in determining applications for development consent to the desirability of good design.</p>	<p>The Design Approach Document [EN010149/APP/7.3] demonstrates how the Proposed Development would fulfil the requirement for good design. It explains how good design has been embedded into the Proposed Development from the early stages of the project via a</p>

<p>2.4.2 Applicants should consider the criteria for good design set out in EN1 Section 4.7 at an early stage when developing projects.</p>	<p>clear design framework, how this has provided a shared understanding of desired outcomes for the project and informed decision making. It explains the way in which the design has evolved since inception, the rationale for the proposals contained within the DCO Application, and the mechanism by which good design would be secured post-consent.</p> <p>Chapter 4: Reasonable Alternatives of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] outlines how landscape and visual amenity have been considered in the preliminary site section and design of the Proposed Development.</p> <p>Chapter 10: Landscape and Visual of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] details the embedded design mitigation developed for the Proposed Development, including the development of an Outline Landscape and Ecology Mitigation Plan (oLEMP) [EN010149/APP/7.9].</p>
<p>2.4.3 However, the Secretary of State should bear in mind that electricity networks infrastructure must in the first instance be safe and secure, and that the functional design constraints of safety and security may limit an applicant's ability to influence the aesthetic appearance of that infrastructure.</p>	<p>Security is an important consideration during construction, operation and decommissioning of the Proposed Development. Each area of the Site has been assessed against its function and requirements for security measures, focused on being safe and secure by design. This has led to mitigation measures being put in place such as fencing, security gates, CCTV and PIR lighting.</p>
<p>2.4.4 While the above principles should govern the design of an electricity networks infrastructure application to the fullest possible extent – including in its avoidance</p>	<p>Details of proposed security provisions are provided in the Outline Operational Environmental Management Plan [EN010149/APP/7.10], ES Vol.2 Figure 3.12: Typical Security Details [EN010149/APP/6.2] and</p>

	<p>and/or mitigation of potential adverse impacts (particularly those detailed in Sections 2.9 below) – the functional performance of the infrastructure in respect of security of supply and public and occupational safety must not thereby be threatened.</p>	<p>Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan [EN010149/APP/7.7].</p> <p>The Design Approach Document [EN010149/APP/7.3] and Design Commitment [EN010149/APP/7.4] submitted as part of the Application contains design principles which focus on good design.</p> <p>An Outline Battery Safety Management Plan [EN010149/APP/7.14] sets out the approach to be taken to manage the safety of the BESS in accordance with regulatory requirements, guidance, and good industry practice. The Outline Battery Safety Management Plan will address aspects such as safe design, construction, operation, and disposal and the strategy for firefighting and emergency planning.</p> <p>Figure 3.3: Green Infrastructure Parameters, of the ES Vol.2 [EN010149/APP/6.2] illustrates the P_{RoW} improvements and new P_{RoW} and permissive path proposals. The Outline Public Rights of Way and Permissive Path Management Plan [EN010149/APP/7.12] sets out details on how P_{RoW} will be managed to ensure users safety.</p>
<p>Part 2.8 Strategic Network Planning</p>	<p>2.8.4 The Secretary of State should also take into account that Transmission Owners (TOs) and Distribution Network Operators (DNOs) are required under Section 9 of the Electricity Act 1989 to bring forward efficient and economical proposals in terms of network design.</p>	<p>The Applicant has secured a connection to the National Grid that allows the export and import of 800MW of electricity to the NETS via a connection to the Navenby Substation. The grid connection cables will consist of one or two 400kV cable circuits, each consisting of three cables, which will run from Springwell Substation to</p>

	<p>2.8.5 TOs and DNOs are also required to facilitate competition in the generation and supply of electricity, and electricity distributors have a statutory duty to provide a connection where requested.</p>	<p>Navenby Substation. Further details are included in the Grid Connection Statement [EN010149/APP/7.6].</p>
<p>Part 2.9 – Applicant Assessment</p>	<p>2.9.46 All overhead power lines produce EMFs. These tend to be highest directly under a line and decrease to the sides at increasing distance. Although putting cables underground eliminates the electric field, they still produce magnetic fields, which are highest directly above the cable. EMFs can have both direct and indirect effects on human health, aquatic and terrestrial organisms.</p> <p>2.9.47 The direct effects occur in terms of impacts on the central nervous system resulting in its normal functioning being affected. Indirect effects occur through electric charges building up on the surface of the body producing a microshock on contact with a grounded object, or vice versa, which, depending on the field strength and other exposure factors, can range from barely perceptible to being an annoyance or even painful.</p>	<p>The Applicant does not anticipate any significant adverse EMF effects on any receptors. A high-level electromagnetic assessment has been undertaken and can be found within ES Vol.3 Appendix 5.5: High-level Electromagnetic Assessment [EN010149/APP/6.3]. The study sets out the proposed siting zone for the cabling and includes an assessment of EMF for underground cabling and transformer and substations. The assessment recommends a minimum clearance distance of 25m relative to public exposure limits for magnetic and electric fields and concludes that there would be no effects to sensitive receptors. This is secured in the Project Parameters at Appendix 3.1 to the ES Vol.3 [EN010149/APP/6.3].</p> <p>As set in Chapter 3: Proposed Development Description of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1], cabling will be laid underground, apart from cabling between the Solar PV modules and string inverters, typically located above ground level and fixed to the Mounting Structure. The dimensions of trenching will vary, subject to the number of underground cables and the number of ducts they contain. The width of cable trenches will vary depending on the detailed design.</p>

Springwell Solar Farm

Table 4 National Planning Policy – Table of Compliance

National Planning Policy Framework			
Policy	Policy Text	Draft NPPF Text (July 2024)	Assessment
<p>Section 2: Achieving sustainable development.</p> <p>Paragraph 8</p>	<p>Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure; b) a social objective – to support strong, vibrant 		<p>The Planning Statement [EN010149/APP/7.2] and the Statement of Need [EN010149/APP/7.1] sets out how the Proposed Development would contribute substantially to the need to supply low carbon energy, in order for the government to meet its objectives and commitments. By generating low carbon electricity at a low marginal cost, large-scale solar power reduces the energy generated by more expensive and more carbon intensive forms of generation. The Proposed Development will therefore help to decarbonise the electricity system and lowers the market price of electricity.</p> <p>The Applicant has developed the design of the Proposed Development to avoid, reduce or mitigate the requirement to use BMV land where possible. As set out in the Site Selection Report at Appendix 1 to the Planning Statement, the Applicant, from an early stage, sought to avoid land of higher agricultural quality.</p>

	<p>and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and</p> <p>c) an environmental objective – to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.</p>		<p>However, given the nature of the sites which were able to meet the Applicant's objectives, agricultural land formed part of each potential site identified. The general quality of the land across the sites considered was similar i.e. predominantly Grade 3 with some areas of Grade 2. Given the similarities, the land type did not represent a differentiating factor in the site selection process. This has been assessed through Chapter 11: Land, Soil and Groundwater of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] and has included amendments to the Order Limits and potential areas for Solar Development.</p> <p>Agricultural land quality was a key consideration in the Applicant's site selection process as set out in the Design Approach Document [EN010149/APP/7.3] and Design Commitments [EN010149/APP/7.4]. The agricultural land design principles incorporate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All fields comprising solely of Grades 1 or 2 land within the site will remain in arable production; • Prioritise the use of BMV land for arable production where practicable; and
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			<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prioritise the use of non-BMV land for habitat creation where practicable. <p>Chapter 13: Population of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] assesses the impacts on the economic objectives of the NPPF. The assessment found that the Proposed Development will have a slight/moderate beneficial impact and therefore significant in EIA terms on employment during the construction phase.</p> <p>From a social perspective, Chapters 6, 12 and 13 of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] assess the disturbance (air quality and noise) to social infrastructure and population and social infrastructure impacts arising from the residual effects of the Proposed Development are both adverse and beneficial, but are no greater than negligible and so not significant in EIA terms. Chapter 10: Landscape and Visual of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] identifies major/moderate and moderate adverse impacts, which are significant in EIA terms, of the Proposed Development. The Proposed Development also includes a new community growing area to the north of Scopwick. The</p>
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			<p>community growing area would be located adjacent to existing community facilities along Vicarage Lane (including Scopwick Cemetery, park and play area) and is adjacent to the Spires and Steeples Trail and Stepping Out Scopwick Loop. The community growing area would be secured via the oLEMP [EN010149/APP/7.9].</p> <p>The Proposed Development includes opportunities for enhancement such as proposals to provide three new PRow and four permissive paths, as well as improvements to existing PRow.</p> <p>The Outline Public Right of Way and Permissive Path Management Plan [EN010149/APP/7.12] has been prepared in support of the DCO application. The Outline Public Rights of Way and Permissive Path Management Plan sets out the mitigation, management, and monitoring measures for PRow affected by construction which may require temporary diversion/closure, or alternative routing where the former is not possible.</p> <p>From an environmental perspective, Chapter 7: Biodiversity of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] outlines how the Applicant has sought to protect and</p>
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			<p>enhance the natural environment as far as practical. The Applicant's assessment and application of the mitigation hierarchy for the Proposed Development has mitigated residual adverse effects to a level which is no greater than adverse at the local level but not significant in EIA terms.</p> <p>Section 8.6 of Chapter 8: Climate of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] sets out the mitigation measures embedded into the Proposed Development to mitigate the impacts on and adapt to climate change.</p> <p>Chapter 9: Cultural Heritage of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] provides an assessment of the Proposed Development on the historic environment, including above and below ground assets.</p> <p>It concludes that there will be no significant impacts to the historic environment as a result of the Proposed Development. There would be a significant beneficial effect of the Proposed Development on Scheduled remains of former village of Brauncewell as a result of the creation of permissive path to improve access to monument.</p>
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<p>Section 6: Building a strong, competitive economy.</p> <p>Paragraph 85</p>	<p>Planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development. The approach taken should allow each area to build on its strengths, counter any weaknesses and address the challenges of the future. This is particularly important where Britain can be a global leader in driving innovation, and in areas with high levels of productivity, which should be able to capitalise on their performance and potential.</p>	<p>Paragraph 83</p> <p>Planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development. The approach taken should allow each area to build on its strengths, counter any weaknesses and address the challenges of the future. This is particularly important where Britain can be a global leader in driving innovation, and in areas with high levels of productivity, which should be able to capitalise on their performance and potential.</p>	<p>Chapter 13: Population of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] assesses the impacts on the economics of the Proposed Development. The assessment found that the Proposed Development will have a slight beneficial impact, which is not significant in EIA terms on employment during the construction phase.</p> <p>The Site is mainly agricultural and there are no other businesses or land allocated for employment use (within a development plan) within the Order Limits; therefore, Chapter 13: Population of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] sets out that the development land and businesses receptor has been scoped out of the assessment. This is confirmed within Appendix 5.2: Scoping Opinion of the ES Vol.3 [EN010149/APP/6.3].</p> <p>As set out in the Outline Employment, Skills and Supply Chain Plan [EN010149/APP/7.20], the Proposed Development will provide construction job opportunities over the anticipated four-year construction programme. The (gross) peak number of approximately 650 workers may be on site at any one time, or an average of 400 over the four-year construction period. The jobs</p>
<p>Supporting a prosperous rural economy</p> <p>Paragraph 88</p>	<p>Planning policies and decisions should enable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well- 	<p>Paragraph 86</p> <p>Planning policies and decisions should enable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through 	<p>As set out in the Outline Employment, Skills and Supply Chain Plan [EN010149/APP/7.20], the Proposed Development will provide construction job opportunities over the anticipated four-year construction programme. The (gross) peak number of approximately 650 workers may be on site at any one time, or an average of 400 over the four-year construction period. The jobs</p>

	<p>designed, beautiful new buildings;</p> <p>b) the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;</p> <p>c) sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside; and</p> <p>d) the retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship</p>	<p>conversion of existing buildings and well-designed, beautiful new buildings;</p> <p>b) the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;</p> <p>c) sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside; and</p> <p>d) the retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship</p>	<p>created will be in the renewable energy sector and will contribute to the development of skills needed for the UK's transition.</p>
<p>Section 8: Promoting healthy and safe communities.</p> <p>Paragraph 96</p>	<p>Planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which:</p> <p>a) promote social interaction, including opportunities for meetings between people who might not otherwise</p>		<p>Chapter 13: Population of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] includes an assessment which concludes that no residual effect is greater than minor adverse or beneficial for any impact, therefore not significant in EIA terms.</p> <p>As outlined throughout the ES, the Proposed Development will deliver</p>

	<p>come into contact with each other – for example through mixed-use developments, strong neighbourhood centres, street layouts that allow for easy pedestrian and cycle connections within and between neighbourhoods, and active street frontages;</p> <p>b) are safe and accessible, so that crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion – for example through the use of attractive, well-designed, clear and legible pedestrian and cycle routes, and high quality public space, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas; and</p> <p>c) enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs – for example through the</p>		<p>significant social and economic benefits as outlined within Chapter 13: Population of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1]. This includes contributing to a skilled, diverse workforce and strengthening the existing manufacturing base which will be secured via the Outline Employment, Skills and Supply Chain Plan [EN010149/APP/7.20]. The production of a detailed Skills and Employment Strategy is secured via Requirement 16 of the Draft DCO [EN010149/APP/3.1].</p> <p>A number of existing PRoW traverse the Proposed Development and are presented in Table 14.19, Chapter 14: Traffic and Transport of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] and have been illustrated in Appendix 14.1: Transport Assessment of the ES Vol.3 [EN010149/APP/6.3] and Outline Public Rights of Way and Permissive Path Management Plan [EN010149/APP/7.12].</p> <p>The Proposed Development includes opportunities for enhancement such as proposals to provide three new PRoW and four permissive paths, as well as improvements to existing PRoW. No</p>
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	<p>provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling.</p>		<p>PRoW will be permanently closed as a result of the Proposed Development.</p> <p>The Proposed Development would incorporate a number of green infrastructure proposals, as set out in the Outline LEMP [EN010149/APP/7.9] which would enhance the strategic green infrastructure network in the surrounding area. The green infrastructure proposed is illustrated in Figure 3.3: Green Infrastructure Parameters Plan of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.2].</p>
<p>Paragraph 101</p>	<p>Planning policies and decisions should promote public safety and take into account wider security and defence requirements by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) anticipating and addressing possible malicious threats and natural hazards, especially in locations where large numbers of people are expected to congregate. Policies for relevant areas (such as town centre and regeneration frameworks), and the 		<p>X</p>

	<p>layout and design of developments, should be informed by the most up-to-date information available from the police and other agencies about the nature of potential threats and their implications. This includes appropriate and proportionate steps that can be taken to reduce vulnerability, increase resilience and ensure public safety and security; and</p> <p>b) recognising and supporting development required for operational defence and security purposes, and ensuring that operational sites are not affected adversely by the impact of other development proposed in the area.</p>		
<p>Paragraph 102</p>	<p>Access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities, and can deliver wider benefits for nature and</p>		<p>The Proposed Development includes the provision of enhancements and improvements to the local footpath and cycle network including the provision of new PRoWs, thereby offering potential for new recreational opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linking RAF Digby to Scopwick.

	<p>support efforts to address climate change. Planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the need for open space, sport and recreation facilities (including quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses) and opportunities for new provision. Information gained from the assessments should be used to determine what open space, sport and recreational provision is needed, which plans should then seek to accommodate.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing a connection between the existing PRoW west of the A15 to New England Lane. • Providing a connection across the A15 by linking Temple Road to Bloxham Woods Car Park. <p>The creation of four new permissive paths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new permissive path along the western edge of the Proposed Development linking New England Lane to Temple Road, north of Brauncewell (approx. length 4,130m). • A new permissive path connecting the B1191 (Heath Road) with the existing PRoW between RAF Digby and Rowston (Rows/5/1) (approx. length 1,610m). • A new permissive path linking Bloxholm Wood to Brauncewell Village (approx. length 1,120m). • New permissive paths to provide a series of circular walking loops from Bloxholm Woods (approx. length 1,720m).
<p>Paragraph 104</p>	<p>Planning policies and decisions should protect and enhance public rights of way and access, including taking opportunities to provide better facilities for users, for example by adding links to</p>		<p>Chapter 14: Traffic and Transport of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] provides an assessment of the Proposed Development’s impact on Public Rights of Way within the Order Limits, or that</p>

	<p>existing rights of way networks including National Trails.</p>		<p>will be impacted by the Proposed Development.</p> <p>A number of existing PRow traverse the Proposed Development and are presented in Table 14.19, Chapter 14: Traffic and Transport of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] and have been illustrated in Appendix 14.1: Transport Assessment of the ES Vol.3 [EN010149/APP/6.3] and Outline Public Rights of Way and Permissive Path Management Plan [EN010149/APP/7.12].</p> <p>The Outline Public Rights of Way and Permissive Path Management Plan [EN010149/APP/7.12] has been prepared in support of the DCO application. The Outline Public Rights of Way and Permissive Path Management Plan sets out the mitigation, management, and monitoring measures for PRow affected by construction which may require temporary diversion/closure, or alternative routing where the former is not possible.</p> <p>The Proposed Development includes opportunities for enhancement such as proposals to provide three new PRow and four permissive paths, as well as</p>
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			<p>improvements to existing PRow. No PRow will be permanently closed as a result of the Proposed Development.</p> <p>The Consultation Report [EN010149/APP/5.1] sets out that in response to the feedback received following Phase Two Consultation, the following changes were introduced:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Removal of 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”).• Removal of fields located in Springwell East, including to the west of the Spires and Steeples PRow, Blankney Circuit PRow and Trundle Lane to reduce landscape and visual impacts on PRow in this area.• Refining the size and location of construction compounds and site access points, including the main construction compound proposed for Springwell East to reduce impacts on nearby properties, users of the B1188 and PRow.
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			In response to the feedback received following targeted consultation, changes included the additions to the proposed Order limits to connect the existing PRow (Blan/737/1) with the B1188 to enhance walking routes to Blankney.
<p>Section 9: Promoting sustainable transport.</p> <p>Paragraph 108</p>	<p>Transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals, so that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. the potential impacts of development on transport networks can be addressed; b. opportunities from existing or proposed transport infrastructure, and changing transport technology and usage, are realised – for example in relation to the scale, location or density of development that can be accommodated; c. opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use are identified and pursued; d. the environmental impacts of traffic and transport infrastructure can be identified, 	<p>Paragraph 106</p> <p>Transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals, so that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. the potential impacts of development on transport networks can be addressed; b. opportunities from existing or proposed transport infrastructure, and changing transport technology and usage, are realised – for example in relation to the scale, location or density of development that can be accommodated; c. opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use are identified and pursued; 	<p>Chapter 14: Traffic and Transport of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] provides an assessment on traffic and transportation. The Assessment concludes that no construction, operation or decommissioning impact will result in a residual effect which is greater than minor adverse, not significant in EIA terms.</p> <p>To achieve this, the Applicant has submitted an Outline Construction Traffic Management Plan (oCTMP) [EN010149/APP/7.8] which is provided in support of the DCO application. The oCTMP includes outline travel plan measures, which would be developed further in consultation with the relevant highway authorities prior to the commencement of the Proposed Development. These measures include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitating the safe and efficient movement of people and materials during the construction

	<p>assessed and taken into account – including appropriate opportunities for avoiding and mitigating any adverse effects, and for net environmental gains; and</p> <p>e. patterns of movement, streets, parking and other transport considerations are integral to the design of schemes, and contribute to making high quality places.</p>	<p>d. the environmental impacts of traffic and transport infrastructure can be identified, assessed and taken into account – including appropriate opportunities for avoiding and mitigating any adverse effects, and for net environmental gains; and</p> <p>e. patterns of movement, streets, parking and other transport considerations are integral to the design of schemes, and contribute to making high quality places.</p>	<p>phase as far as reasonably practicable;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimising freight and construction traffic, including HGVs and staff vehicles, during network peaks to reduce the impact on the highway network during the busy periods; • Minimising the impact and disruption to the local communities- <p>The production of a final Construction Traffic Management Plan is secured by Requirement 14 of the draft DCO.</p> <p>The Applicant has submitted Appendix 14.1: Transport Assessment ES Vol.3 [EN010149/APP/6.3], as an appendix to Chapter 14: Traffic and Transport of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1], which has been produced in accordance with current transport guidance. The TA demonstrates that the Proposed Development will not have a severe impact on the operation and safety of the surrounding highway network. The TA proposes mitigations including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Junction improvements at the A15/B1192 and A15/Gorse Hill Lane junctions are proposed as
<p>Paragraph 114</p>	<p>In assessing sites that may be allocated for development in plans, or specific applications for development, it should be ensured that:</p> <p>a) appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable transport modes can be – or have been – taken up, given the type of development and its location;</p>	<p>Paragraph 112</p> <p>In assessing sites that may be allocated for development in plans, or specific applications for development, it should be ensured that:</p> <p>a) A vision led approach to promoting sustainable transport modes is taken, taking account of the type of development and its location;</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> b) safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users; c) the design of streets, parking areas, other transport elements and the content of associated standards reflects current national guidance, including the National Design Guide and the National Model Design Code; and d) any significant impacts from the development on the transport network (in terms of capacity and congestion), or on highway safety, can be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> b) safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users; c) the design of streets, parking areas, other transport elements and the content of associated standards reflects current national guidance, including the National Design Guide and the National Model Design Code; and d) any significant impacts from the development on the transport network (in terms of capacity and congestion), or on highway safety, can be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree through a vision led approach. 	<p>embedded mitigation to support the Proposed Development, with benefits for all users likely; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mitigation for predicated capacity issues prior to the introduction of Proposed Development traffic. However, junction performance is expected to improve following junction improvements (currently being explored by Lincolnshire County Council and LRSP) or alternatively through a commuter bus service for workers.
<p>Paragraph 115</p>	<p>Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.</p>	<p>Paragraph 113</p> <p>Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe, in all tested scenarios.</p>	

<p>Paragraph 117</p>	<p>All developments that will generate significant amounts of movement should be required to provide a travel plan, and the application should be supported by a transport statement or transport assessment so that the likely impacts of the proposal can be assessed.</p>	<p>Paragraph 115 All developments that will generate significant amounts of movement should be required to provide a travel plan, and the application should be supported by a transport statement or transport assessment so that the likely impacts of the proposal can be assessed.</p>	
<p>Section 11: Making effective use of land</p> <p>Paragraph 124(a)</p>	<p>Planning policies and decisions should ‘encourage multiple benefits from both urban and rural land, including through [...] taking opportunities to achieve net environmental gains – such as developments that would enable new habitat creation [...].’</p>	<p>Paragraph 122(a) Planning policies and decisions should ‘encourage multiple benefits from both urban and rural land, including through [...] taking opportunities to achieve net environmental gains – such as developments that would enable new habitat creation [...].’</p>	<p>The Proposed Development will meet a minimum 10% BNG, as secured within the proposals in the Outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (oLEMP) [EN010149/APP/7.9]. ES Vol.3 Appendix 7.14 BNG Assessment [EN010149/APP/6.3] demonstrates that the Proposed Development is committed to achieve a significant biodiversity net gain on site.</p> <p>Section 7.6 of Chapter 7: Biodiversity of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] set out the proposed mitigation measures embedded in the Proposed Development, including the creation of approximately 100 hectares (ha) of grassland consisting of calcareous grassland to provide open nesting habitat for ground nesting birds to compensate for habitat lost due to</p>

			<p>placement of Solar PV modules and improve habitat and carrying capacity for ground nesting birds.</p> <p>Habitat creation and improvement measures for ground nesting and wintering birds are documented within and secured by the oLEMP [EN010149/APP/7.9].</p>
<p>Section 12: Achieving well-designed and beautiful places.</p> <p>Paragraph 131</p>	<p>The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. Being clear about design expectations, and how these will be tested, is essential for achieving this. So too is effective engagement between applicants, communities, local planning authorities and other interests throughout the process.</p>	<p>Section 12: Achieving well-designed places.</p> <p>Paragraph 128</p> <p>The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. Being clear about design expectations, and how these will be tested, is essential for achieving this. So too is effective engagement between applicants, communities, local planning authorities and other interests throughout the process.</p>	<p>As detailed in the Design Approach Document [EN010149/APP/7.3] and Design Commitments [EN010149/APP/7.4] and section 5 of the Planning Statement [EN010149/APP/7.2], the location and design of the Proposed Development is the result of a comprehensive site selection process that was environmental, and planning led to avoid and minimise impacts as early as possible. Following this, the Proposed Development has undergone an iterative design process which has resulted in the delivery of a functional and efficient Proposed Development design which will deliver a large amount of renewable and low carbon electricity using solar PV arrays, whilst also being sensitive to the local context and surrounding area within which it is located, avoiding and minimising impacts on the environment as far as</p>

<p>Paragraph 137</p>	<p>Design quality should be considered throughout the evolution and assessment of individual proposals. Early discussion between applicants, the local planning authority and local community about the design and style of emerging schemes is important for clarifying expectations and reconciling local and commercial interests. Applicants should work closely with those affected by their proposals to evolve designs that take account of the views of the community. Applications that can demonstrate early, proactive and effective engagement with the community should be looked on more favourably than those that cannot.</p>	<p>Paragraph 134 Design quality should be considered throughout the evolution and assessment of individual proposals. Early discussion between applicants, the local planning authority and local community about the design and style of emerging schemes is important for clarifying expectations and reconciling local and commercial interests. Applicants should work closely with those affected by their proposals to evolve designs that take account of the views of the community. Applications that can demonstrate early, proactive and effective engagement with the community should be looked on more favourably than those that cannot.</p>	<p>practicable. The Applicant's site selection process (set out in Chapter 4: Reasonable Alternatives of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1]) demonstrates that land was identified for the Site within an area of good solar irradiance and relatively low and flat topography landscape to maximise energy generation.</p> <p>As set out in Chapter 4: Reasonable Alternatives of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1], the starting point for the Applicant was to understand where capacity existed in existing substations or the transmission network that would be sufficient to enable the connection of a utility scale solar development. Capacity at existing substations is finite but there remains capacity in the transmission network notably in the East Midlands distribution network region. In parallel to the search for grid capacity the Applicant also sought to align the search with general conditions that allow for the development of utility scale solar development, notably, suitable irradiance and topography.</p>
<p>Paragraph 139</p>	<p>Development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design</p>	<p>Paragraph 136 Development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning</p>	<p>The Applicant started engagement with the National Grid Electricity System Operator (NGESO) as the point contact</p>

	<p>guides and codes. Conversely, significant weight should be given to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) development which reflects local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes; and/or b) outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability, or help raise the standard of design more generally in an area, so long as they fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings 	<p>documents such as design guides and codes. Conversely, significant weight should be given to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) development which reflects local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes; and/or b) outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability, or help raise the standard of design more generally in an area, so long as they fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings 	<p>for new connection requests to discuss the potential opportunities for a connection offer within the target region identified above. Grid connections with spare capacity are finite, and no connection offers were provided that could deliver the output proposed by NGENSO to the Applicant for already available capacity at already existing substations in the target region/geography. This is somewhat inevitable given the context of the urgent national need for renewable energy (specifically solar), as developments have already been proposed to make use of existing substation capacity where it occurs.</p> <p>The Statement of Need [EN010149/APP/7.1] sets out that there is no capacity at any existing NGENSO infrastructure within 50km of the Site to accommodate new connections of the Proposed Development's magnitude before 2033.</p> <p>The design process and basis of design are set out in Chapter 4: Reasonable Alternatives of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1].</p>
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			<p>Refining the design and layout of the Proposed Development has been 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].</p> <p>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 of the Consultation Report [EN010149/APP/5.1]</p> <p>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</p>
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			<p>feedback on the outcome of these assessments and how they would help 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 interest to them.</p> <p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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.
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<p>Section 14: Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change.</p> <p>Paragraph 157</p>	<p>The planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, taking full account of flood risk and coastal change. It should help to: shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimise vulnerability and improve resilience; encourage the reuse of existing resources, including the conversion of existing buildings; and support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure.</p> <p>Paragraph 154 states that new development should be planned for in ways that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. avoid increased vulnerability to the range of impacts arising from climate change. When new development is brought forward in areas which are vulnerable, care should be taken to ensure that risks can be managed through suitable adaptation 	<p>Paragraph 158</p> <p>The planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, taking full account of flood risk and coastal change. It should help to: shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimise vulnerability and improve resilience; encourage the reuse of existing resources, including the conversion of existing buildings; and support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure.</p>	<p>The Proposed Development would make a substantial contribution, both to the achievement of UK decarbonisation targets and to global commitments to mitigating climate change. By generating low carbon, renewable and low-cost electricity in the UK, the Proposed Development would also help to reduce the UK's reliance on imported energy and to improve energy security.</p> <p>Chapter 8: Climate of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] includes a greenhouse gas (GHG) assessment. The assessment considers GHG emissions and in-combination climate change. The assessment concludes that no construction, operation or decommissioning impact will result in an adverse residual effect which is significant in EIA terms. There is an assessed significant beneficial effect on GHG emissions, as it is anticipated that 9.6 million tCO₂e will be saved over lifespan of the Proposed Development.</p>
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	<p>measures, including through the planning of green infrastructure; and</p> <p>b. can help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, such as through its location, orientation and design. Any local requirements for the sustainability of buildings should reflect the Government's policy for national technical standards.</p>		
<p>Paragraph 159</p>	<p>New development should be planned for in ways that:</p> <p>a) avoid increased vulnerability to the range of impacts arising from climate change. When new development is brought forward in areas which are vulnerable, care should be taken to ensure that risks can be managed through suitable adaptation measures, including through the planning of green infrastructure; and</p> <p>b) can help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, such as</p>	<p>Paragraph 160</p> <p>New development should be planned for in ways that:</p> <p>a) avoid increased vulnerability to the range of impacts arising from climate change. When new development is brought forward in areas which are vulnerable, care should be taken to ensure that risks can be managed through suitable adaptation measures, including through the planning of green infrastructure; and</p> <p>b) can help to reduce greenhouse gas</p>	

	<p>through its location, orientation and design. Any local requirements for the sustainability of buildings should reflect the Government's policy for national technical standards.</p>	<p>emissions, such as through its location, orientation and design. Any local requirements for the sustainability of buildings should reflect the Government's policy for national technical standards.</p>	
<p>Paragraph 163</p>	<p>When determining planning applications for renewable and low carbon development, local planning authorities should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) not require applicants to demonstrate the overall need for renewable or low carbon energy, and recognise that even small-scale projects provide a valuable contribution to significant cutting greenhouse gas emissions; b) approve the application if its impacts are (or can be made) acceptable. Once suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy have been identified in plans, local planning authorities should expect subsequent applications 	<p>Paragraph 164</p> <p>Local planning authorities should support planning applications for all forms of renewable and low carbon development. When determining planning applications for these developments, local planning authorities should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) not require applicants to demonstrate the overall need for renewable or low carbon energy, and give significant weight to the proposal's contribution to renewable energy generation and a net zero future; b) recognise that even small-scale and community-led projects provide a valuable 	<p>The Planning Statement [EN010149/APP/7.2] and the Statement of Need [EN010149/APP/7.1] sets out how the Proposed Development would contribute substantially to the need to supply low carbon energy, in order for the government to meet its objectives and commitments as mentioned above. By generating low carbon electricity at a low marginal cost, large-scale solar power reduces the energy generated by more expensive and more carbon intensive forms of generation. The Proposed Development will therefore help to decarbonise the electricity system and lowers the market price of electricity.</p>

	<p>for commercial scale projects outside these areas to demonstrate that the proposed location meets the criteria used in identifying suitable areas; and</p> <p>c) in the case of applications for the repowering and life-extension of existing renewable sites, give significant weight to the benefits of utilising an established site, and approve the proposal if its impacts are or can be made acceptable.</p>	<p>contribution to cutting greenhouse gas emissions;</p> <p>c) in the case of applications for the repowering and life-extension of existing renewable sites, give significant weight to the benefits of utilising an established site.</p>	
Paragraph 164	<p>In determining planning applications, local planning authorities should give significant weight to the need to support energy efficiency and low carbon heating improvements to existing buildings, both domestic and non-domestic (including through installation of heat pumps and solar panels where these do not already benefit from permitted development rights). Where the proposals would affect conservation areas, listed</p>	Paragraph 163 <p>Local planning authorities should also give significant weight to the need to support energy efficiency and low carbon heating improvements to existing buildings, both domestic and non-domestic (including through installation of heat pumps and solar panels where these do not already benefit from permitted development rights). Where the proposals would affect conservation areas, listed</p>	Chapter 9: Cultural Heritage of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] provides an assessment of the Proposed Development on the historic environment, including above and below ground assets. It concludes that there will be no significant impacts to any designated heritage assets, including Listed Buildings or other designated heritage assets as a result of the Proposed Development. There would be a significant beneficial effect of the Proposed Development on Scheduled remains of former village of

	buildings or other relevant designated heritage assets, local planning authorities should also apply the policies set out in chapter 16 of this Framework.	buildings or other relevant designated heritage assets, local planning authorities should also apply the policies set out in chapter 16 of this Framework.	Brauncewell as a result of the creation of permissive path to improve access to monument. The policies set out in Chapter 16 are addressed below in this document.
Paragraph 165	Inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk (whether existing or future). Where development is necessary in such areas, the development should be made safe for its lifetime without increasing flood risk elsewhere.		Chapter 15: Water of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] confirms that flood risk during construction and at decommissioning will be managed through the CEMP and DEMP, which will be secured by the DCO and required to be in accordance with the Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (oCEMP) [EN010149/APP/7.7] , and the Outline Decommissioning Environmental Management (oDEMP) [EN010149/APP/7.13] .
Paragraph 173	When determining any planning applications, local planning authorities should ensure that flood risk is not increased elsewhere. Where appropriate, applications should be supported by a site-specific flood-risk assessment. Development should only be allowed in areas at risk of flooding where, in the light of this assessment (and the sequential and exception tests, as applicable) it can be demonstrated that:		As the Site is at predominantly low risk from flooding from all sources, the reasonable 'worst case' is limited to the placement of Solar PV modules and string inverters mounted on the panels within Flood Zone 2 and Flood Zone 3 towards the east of the Site. The residual flood risk will be negligible once mitigation is included. This will include:

	<p>a) within the site, the most vulnerable development is located in areas of lowest flood risk, unless there are overriding reasons to prefer a different location;</p> <p>b) the development is appropriately flood resistant and resilient such that, in the event of a flood, it could be quickly brought back into use without significant refurbishment;</p> <p>c) it incorporates sustainable drainage systems, unless there is clear evidence that this would be inappropriate;</p> <p>d) any residual risk can be safely managed; and</p> <p>e) safe access and escape routes are included where appropriate, as part of an agreed emergency plan.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A minimum offset of 6 m from ditches/ watercourses; • An Outline Drainage Strategy; and • Vegetation Management. <p>Opportunities for environmental enhancement in relation to water are detailed in the Design Approach Document [EN010149/APP/7.3] and Planning Statement [EN010149/APP/7.2], particularly with the relatively few panels that will be located in Flood Zone 3. The only operational element of the Proposed Development in Flood Zone 3a and 3b is Solar PV modules and once attached to the mounting structure, the minimum height of the lowest part of the Solar PV modules will be 0.8m above the existing ground level (AGL).</p> <p>A requirement of the DCO will ensure that the detailed design is substantially in accordance with the Design Approach Document [EN010149/APP/7.3] and Design Commitments [EN010149/APP/7.4].</p> <p>Chapter 15: Water of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] assesses flood</p>
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			<p>risk and drainage in the context of EIA. This concludes that with the proposed mitigation measures to be implemented as part of the CEMP and DEMP, the risk of flooding from all sources will not change. Given the design mitigation secured through the OEMP, there will be no significant adverse effects predicted upon receptors regarding flood risk during the Proposed Development's operation.</p> <p>The proposed surface water drainage design set out in the Outline Drainage Strategy, which serves as an appendix to the Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) [EN010149/APP/7.16] demonstrates that sustainable drainage techniques have been designed into the Proposed Development and will be maintained by the Applicant, or another private operator to be confirmed and secured through the DCO.</p> <p>The FRA [EN010149/APP/7.16] provides an assessment of flood risk to and from the Proposed Development from all sources of flooding. The FRA demonstrates how residual flood risk will be managed during construction, operation and decommissioning of the Proposed Development and how the</p>
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			requirements of the Sequential Test and Exceptions Test are satisfied.
Paragraph 175	<p>Major developments should incorporate sustainable drainage systems unless there is clear evidence that this would be inappropriate. The systems used should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) take account of advice from the lead local flood authority; b) have appropriate proposed minimum operational standards; c) have maintenance arrangements in place to ensure an acceptable standard of operation for the lifetime of the development; and d) where possible, provide multifunctional benefits. 		<p>The proposed surface water drainage design set out in the Outline Drainage Strategy which serves as an appendix to the Flood Risk Assessment [EN010149/APP/7.16] demonstrates that sustainable drainage techniques have been designed into the Proposed Development and will be maintained by the Applicant, or another private operator to be confirmed and secured through the DCO.</p>
<p>Section 15: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment.</p> <p>Paragraph 180</p>	<p>Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their 	<p>Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> h) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate 	<p>Chapter 7: Biodiversity of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] identifies ecological risks from developing the Proposed Development. It has assessed impacts on protected species, habitats, and other species identified as being of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity. The assessment has been carried out by competent ecologists,</p>

	<p>statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland; c) maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate; d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures; e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, 	<p>with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland; j) maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate; k) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures; l) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at 	<p>who have advised during the design process to ensure that impacts are avoided, minimised and mitigated in line with the mitigation hierarchy, and biodiversity enhancements are maximised.</p> <p>Sections 7.7 and 7.9 of Chapter 7: Biodiversity of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] sets out the expected likely effects and residual effects, respectively, on the above receptors during construction, operation and decommissioning of the Proposed Development. It concludes that there are no potential significant adverse effects identified on any internationally, nationally, or locally designated sites during construction, operation or decommissioning of the Proposed Development.</p> <p>The Proposed Development will meet a minimum 10% BNG as secured by the Outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (oLEMP) [EN010149/APP/7.9]. ES Vol.3 Appendix 7.14: BNG Assessment [EN010149/APP/6.3] demonstrates that the Proposed Development is committed to achieve significant biodiversity net gain on site.</p>
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	<p>unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and</p> <p>f) remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.</p>	<p>unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and</p> <p>m) remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.</p>	<p>Chapter 11: Land, Soils and Groundwater of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] and the outline Soil Management Plan [EN010149/APP/7.11] set out how agricultural land was considered in the design of Proposed Development, the Proposed Development's embedded mitigation measures, and principles on how the soils will be managed and protected during the construction, operation and decommissioning of the Proposed Development.</p>
<p>Paragraph 181</p>	<p>Plans should: distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites; allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework; take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing</p>		<p>Chapter 10: Landscape and Visual of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] concludes that no part of the Site or its immediately surrounding context falls within a statutorily designated landscape. The nearest National Park or National Landscape (formerly known as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) to the Site is the Lincolnshire Wolds National Landscape, located</p>

	<p>networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries.</p>		<p>more than 20km to the north-east and this would not be affected by the Proposed Development.</p> <p>Chapter 10: Landscape and Visual of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] concludes that during construction, operation (year 1) and decommissioning, significant effects are anticipated on LCA 7: The Limestone Heath and LCA 11: Central Clays and Gravels. During operation (year 10), significant effects are anticipated on LCA 7: The Limestone Heath.</p> <p>It is considered that the wider benefits of the Proposed Development, including the delivery of significant level of low carbon energy generation and biodiversity net gain and the provision of permissive footpaths and PRoWs outweigh these impacts, and that the Proposed Development is considered acceptable in terms of overall landscape, visual and residential amenity impacts and the nature of the visual impacts are not considered to outweigh the benefits of the Proposed Development.</p>
<p>Paragraph 182</p>	<p>Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in</p>		<p>Chapter 10: Landscape and Visual of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] concludes that no part of the Site or its</p>

	<p>National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads. The scale and extent of development within all these designated areas should be limited, while development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas.</p>		<p>immediately surrounding context falls within a statutorily designated landscape. The nearest National Park or National Landscape (formerly known as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) to the Site is the Lincolnshire Wolds National Landscape, located more than 20km to the north-east and this would not be affected by the Proposed Development.</p>
<p>Paragraph 186</p>	<p>When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then 		<p>Chapter 7: Biodiversity of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] identifies ecological risks from developing the Proposed Development. It has assessed impacts on protected species, habitats, and other species identified as being of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity. The assessment has been carried out by competent ecologists, who have advised during the design process to ensure that impacts are avoided, minimised and mitigated in</p>

	<p>planning permission should be refused;</p> <p>b) development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest;</p> <p>c) development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable</p>		<p>line with the mitigation hierarchy, and biodiversity enhancements are maximised.</p> <p>Sections 7.7 and 7.9 of Chapter 7: Biodiversity of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] sets out the expected likely effects and residual effects, respectively, on the above receptors during construction, operation and decommissioning of the Proposed Development. There are five statutory designated sites within 10km of the Order Limits boundary, including: Metheringham Heath Quarry SSSI, High Dyke SSSI, Tattershall Old Gravel Pits SSSI, Tattershall Carrs SSSI and Nitrate Vulnerable Zone. Chapter 7: Biodiversity of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] concludes that there are no potential significant adverse effects identified on any internationally, nationally, or locally designated sites during construction, operation or decommissioning of the Proposed Development.</p> <p>Chapter 7: Biodiversity of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] confirms that there are no ancient woodlands contained within the Order Limits. Six veteran trees have been identified near Scopwick only one of which is within</p>
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	<p>compensation strategy exists; and</p> <p>d) development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate.</p>		<p>the Order Limits. The tree in question is over 250m from any development and will not be directly affected and measures are outlined in the oCEMP [EN010149/APP/7.7], oLEMP [EN010149/APP/7.9] and oDEMP [EN010149/APP/7.13] to ensure protection of the tree (and other trees) during the lifetime of the Project.</p> <p>The Proposed Development will meet a minimum 10% BNG as secured by the Outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (oLEMP) [EN010149/APP/7.9]. ES Vol.3 Appendix 7.14: BNG Assessment [EN010149/APP/6.3] demonstrates that the Proposed Development is committed to achieve significant biodiversity net gain on site.</p>
<p>Paragraph 189</p>	<p>Planning policies and decisions should ensure that:</p> <p>a) a site is suitable for its proposed use taking account of ground conditions and any risks arising from land instability and contamination. This includes risks arising from natural hazards or former activities such as mining, and any</p>		<p>The ES is supported by the findings of a Preliminary Risk Assessment (ES Vol.3 Appendix 11.1D: Preliminary Risk Assessment [EN010149/APP/6.3]). Where land contamination has been identified, this chapter has assessed the significant effects where they are likely to occur. Chapter 11: Land, Soils and Groundwater of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] sets out that that land contamination has been scoped into the EIA assessment. The baseline</p>

	<p>proposals for mitigation including land remediation (as well as potential impacts on the natural environment arising from that remediation);</p> <p>b) after remediation, as a minimum, land should not be capable of being determined as contaminated land under Part IIA of the Environmental Protection Act 1990; and</p> <p>c) adequate site investigation information, prepared by a competent person, is available to inform these assessments.</p>		<p>conditions have been established by a Preliminary Risk Assessment, provided in Appendix 11.2: Preliminary Risk Appraisal, of the ES Vol.3 [EN010149/APP/6.3].</p> <p>An assessment of the potential impacts associated with the construction and operation of the Proposed Development has been undertaken. Potential mitigation measures are also discussed within Chapter 11: Land, Soils and Groundwater of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] and secured through the Outline Soil Management Plan [EN010149/APP/7.11]. The Assessment concludes that all residual effects of the Proposed Development's construction, operation and decommissioning will result in effects which are no greater than minor adverse, not significant in EIA terms other than the loss of BMV land during the operation phase and decommissioning phases, which is slight to moderate adverse and therefore, significant in EIA terms.</p> <p>Agricultural land quality was a key consideration in the Applicant's site selection process as set out in the Design Approach Document</p>
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			<p>[EN010149/APP/7.3] and Design Commitments [EN010149/APP/7.4].</p> <p>As set out in the Site Selection Report at Appendix 1 to the Planning Statement, the Applicant, from an early stage, sought to avoid land of higher agricultural quality. However, given the nature of the sites which were able to meet the Applicant's objectives, agricultural land formed part of each potential site identified. The general quality of the land across the sites considered was similar i.e. predominantly Grade 3 with some areas of Grade 2. Given the similarities, the land type did not represent a differentiating factor in the site selection process. It is also worth noting that there is a higher percentage of BMV land in Lincolnshire (71.2%) compared to the national average (42%) and therefore a higher likelihood that higher quality grades of agricultural land will be encountered in locations that are more suited to NSIP scale solar development.</p> <p>The agricultural land design principles incorporate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• All fields comprising solely of Grade 1 or 2 land within the site will remain in arable production;
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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritise the use of BMV land for arable production where practicable; and • Prioritise the use on non-BMV land for habitat creation where practicable.
<p>Paragraph 191</p>	<p>Planning policies and decisions should also ensure that new development is appropriate for its location taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment, as well as the potential sensitivity of the site or the wider area to impacts that could arise from the development. In doing so they should:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) mitigate and reduce to a minimum potential adverse impacts resulting from noise from new development – and avoid noise giving rise to significant adverse impacts on health and the quality of life; b) identify and protect tranquil areas which have remained relatively undisturbed by noise and 		<p>Chapter 12: Noise and Vibration of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] considered the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development on noise and vibration. The assessment includes mitigation measures embedded into the Proposed Development including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A 4m high barrier has been included around the BESS Compound, with a 6m high absorbent barrier positioned around the west, north and east faces of the Springwell Substation transformers. • Springwell Substation, BESS, Collector Compounds, Standalone Inverter, Transformer and Switchgear and ITS (part of the balance of solar system plant comprised in Work No. 1) will be offset at least 250m from residential properties. • Perimeter fencing surrounding the Solar PV development will

	<p>are prized for their recreational and amenity value for this reason; and</p> <p>c) limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation</p>		<p>be offset at least 15m from existing woodland.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perimeter fencing surrounding the Solar PV development will be offset at least 10m either side from all existing hedgerows. • Built development above ground will be offset at least 20m from Local Wildlife Sites except for highways improvement works. • Perimeter fencing surrounding the Solar PV development will be offset at least 30m from main badger setts. • Independent Outdoor Equipment (transformer, switchgear and central inverters) and ITS will be offset at least 50m from all existing and proposed statutory PRow. • Perimeter fencing surrounding the Solar PV development will be offset at least 15m from either side of existing and proposed statutory PRow. <p>The Assessment concludes that no construction, operation or decommissioning impact will result in a residual effect of noise or vibration which is greater than minor adverse, not significant in EIA terms.</p>
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			<p>Chapter 3: Proposed Development Description of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] outlines the security measures incorporated in the design of the Proposed Development design. Efforts have been made to reduce the impact of security fencing and lighting, as set out in detail in the Outline LEMP [EN010149/APP/7.9], Outline CEMP [EN010149/APP/7.7], Outline OEMP [EN010149/APP/7.10] and Outline DEMP [EN010149/APP/7.13]. Final versions of these documents will be produced and secured as part of the DCO.</p>
<p>Paragraph 192</p>	<p>Planning policies and decisions should sustain and contribute towards compliance with relevant limit values or national objectives for pollutants, taking into account the presence of Air Quality Management Areas and Clean Air Zones, and the cumulative impacts from individual sites in local areas. Opportunities to improve air quality or mitigate impacts should be identified, such as through traffic and travel management, and green infrastructure provision and enhancement. So far as possible these opportunities</p>		<p>The Air Quality Assessment provided as ES Vol.3 Appendix 6.2 [EN010149/APP/6.3] to Chapter 6: Air Quality of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] considers the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development on local air quality. The Chapter provides an overview of the existing environment for the Proposed Development.</p> <p>North Kesteven District Council has not declared any Air Quality Management Areas. Therefore, the Proposed Development is not located within an Air Quality Management Area. The assessment concludes that no construction, operation or decommissioning impact leads to a</p>

	<p>should be considered at the plan-making stage, to ensure a strategic approach and limit the need for issues to be reconsidered when determining individual applications. Planning decisions should ensure that any new development in Air Quality Management Areas and Clean Air Zones is consistent with the local air quality action plan.</p>		<p>residual or cumulative effect which is greater than not significant in EIA terms, where mitigation measures are implemented.</p> <p>Chapter 6: Air Quality of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] assesses the impact of road traffic exhaust emissions on human receptors and Local Wildlife Sites and concludes that the impact on both receptors is not significant in EIA terms.</p>
<p>Section 16: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment.</p> <p>Paragraph 200</p>	<p>In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the</p>		<p>Chapter 9: Cultural Heritage of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] provides an assessment of the Proposed Development on the historic environment, including above and below ground assets. It concludes that there will be no significant adverse impacts to any designated heritage assets, including Listed Buildings or Historic Landscape Character as a result of the Proposed Development.</p> <p>Table 9.7 of Chapter 9: Cultural Heritage of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] sets out the criteria for classifying magnitude of impact upon heritage significance. The assessment of the Proposed Development on the historic</p>

	<p>potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.</p>		<p>environment, determined the magnitude of impact using the criteria set out in Table 9.7 and professional judgement with reference to the planning policy tests for “substantial harm” and “less than substantial harm”.</p> <p>The Applicant considers the Proposed Development will lead to ‘less than substantial harm’ to the significance of designated heritage assets as set out in Appendix 5 – Heritage Harm Statement of this Statement. The Applicant considers the public benefits of the proposal, namely the substantial contribution the Proposed Development will make in:</p>
<p>Paragraph 206</p>	<p>Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks or gardens, should be exceptional; b) assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered battlefields, grade I and II* listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - meeting the demand for greater energy to be produced from renewable sources, - supporting to meeting the UK’s decarbonisation targets, - supporting the UK’s commitments to mitigating global climate change, <p>Through the implementation of mitigation measures, all residual</p>

<p>Paragraph 209</p>	<p>The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.</p>		<p>effects are assessed as less than substantial harm to the significance of all designated heritage assets impacted by the Proposed Development.</p> <p>In recognising that the Proposed Development will result in harm of a 'less than substantial' nature, the key policy test is that such harm is weighted against the public benefits. Given the clear and urgent need to deploy renewable energy at speed and scale, the Proposed Development demonstrably gives rise to substantial public benefits, which outweigh the less than substantial harm identified.</p> <p>Chapter 9: Cultural Heritage of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] concludes there would be no significant adverse impacts to any designated or non-designated heritage assets as a result of the Proposed Development once embedded and additional mitigation measures are implemented.</p> <p>Chapter 9: Cultural Heritage of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] concludes there would be a moderate beneficial impact of the Proposed Development on scheduled remains of former village of Brauncewell, which is significant in</p>
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			<p>EIA terms, as there is the Proposed Development includes the creation of permissive path to improve access to monument.</p> <p>Section 9.6 of Chapter 9: Cultural Heritage of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] sets out steps taken to ensure heritage assets are conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, including embedded mitigation such as avoiding areas with known or suspected below-ground archaeological deposits, changes to the setting of designated and non-designated heritage assets have been avoided, site access points from the A15 have been selected to avoid works in proximity to the listed milepost, non-intrusive construction methods will be used, and routing of HGV traffic away from Blankney and Scopwick.</p> <p>Section 9.7 and 9.9 of Chapter 9: Cultural Heritage of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] provides an assessment of the likely effects and residual effects, respectively, of the Scheme on cultural heritage. All effects, including dust, noise, vibration and indirect impacts are considered. Due to the limited effects from noise, vibration and dust, the majority of</p>
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			impacts are as a result of direct impacts on non-designated heritage assets and impacts to the setting of designated heritage assets.
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National Planning Practice Guidance Accordance

National Planning Practice Guidance		
Policy	Policy Text	Assessment
<p>Paragraph: 013 Reference ID: 5-013-20150327</p> <p>What are the particular planning considerations that relate to large-scale ground-mounted solar photovoltaic farms?</p>	<p>The deployment of large-scale solar farms can have a negative impact on the rural environment, particularly in undulating landscapes. However, the visual impact of a well-planned and well-screened solar farm can be properly addressed within the landscape if planned sensitively.</p> <p>Particular factors a local planning authority will need to consider include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> encouraging the effective use of land by focusing large-scale solar farms on previously developed and non-agricultural land, provided that it is not of high environmental value; 	<p>The Site Selection Report which forms Appendix 1 to the Planning Statement [EN010149/APP/7.2] explains the process for identifying the location of the Order Limits. Section 4 of the Site Selection Report sets out the assessment that was completed for the Site Selection. Chapter 4: Reasonable Alternatives of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] and the Design Approach Document [EN010149/APP/7.3] set out how fields that were identified as comprising solely of Grades 1 or 2 land were discounted from the area of Solar PV development to reduce the impact on BMV agricultural land.</p> <p>The land beneath and around the Solar PV arrays will include a seed mix for ground cover. The mix has been selected to improve biodiversity value for pollinators which can support the productivity of surrounding agricultural land. The grown cover will also allow continued agricultural use of land within the Solar PV area for grazing, which is included in the landscape management prescriptions set out in the outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (oLEMP) [EN010149/APP/7.9]</p> <p>The Statement of Need [EN010149/APP/7.1] is also submitted in support of the DCO Application and sets out a detailed and compelling case as</p>

		<p>to why the Proposed Development is urgently required and at the proposed scale. This assessment of alternatives is set in the context of the clear and urgent need for the Proposed Development.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • where a proposal involves greenfield land, whether (i) the proposed use of any agricultural land has been shown to be necessary and poorer quality land has been used in preference to higher quality land; and (ii) the proposal allows for continued agricultural use where applicable and/or encourages biodiversity improvements around arrays. See also a speech by the Minister for Energy and Climate Change, the Rt Hon Gregory Barker MP, to the solar PV industry on 25 April 2013 and a written ministerial statement on solar energy: protecting the local and global environment made on 25 March 2015. 	<p>Chapter 11: Land, Soils and Groundwater of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] and the outline Soil Management Plan [EN010149/APP/7.11] set out how agricultural land was considered in the design of Proposed Development. Design Approach Document [EN010149/APP/7.3] sets out how fields that were identified as comprising solely of Grade 1 or 2 land were discounted from the area of Solar PV development to reduce the impact on BMV agricultural land.</p> <p>Fields that comprised a majority of BMV agricultural land were reviewed to identify whether those parts of the field that contained BMV could be discounted, whilst retaining the non-BMV parts of the field. In some cases, part of the field was discounted in combination with other environmental factors as identified in this table.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • that solar farms are normally temporary structures and planning conditions can be used to ensure that the installations are removed when 	<p>The Proposed Development will be decommissioned after approximately 40 years of operation (including maintenance). Decommissioning is expected to take approximately 24 months and may be undertaken in phases.</p>

	<p>no longer in use and the land is restored to its previous use;</p>	<p>The Solar PV Site will be reinstated in accordance with this Outline Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan (oDEMP) [EN010149/APP/7.13]. A Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan (DEMP) will be subject to the approval of the local planning authorities at the time of decommissioning. Decommissioning activities will involve the removal of all of the Solar PV infrastructure, including the Ground Mounted Solar PV Generating Stations, Collector Compounds, Springwell Substation, BESS and ancillary infrastructure, including any on-site compounds.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the proposal's visual impact, the effect on the landscape of glint and glare (see guidance on landscape assessment) and on neighbouring uses and aircraft safety; 	<p>ES Vol. 3 Appendix 5.4 Solar photovoltaic glint and glare study [EN010149/APP/6.3] has undertaken an assessment of potential impacts of glint and glare on surrounding road users, railway operations, dwellings, PRow, bridleways and aviation activity. The solar photovoltaic glint and glare study concludes that no significant impact is predicted upon road safety, residential amenity, and railway operations and infrastructure and mitigation is not recommended.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the extent to which there may be additional impacts if solar arrays follow the daily movement of the sun; 	<p>As detailed in Chapter 3: Proposed Development Description of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1], the mounting structure of the Solar PV modules will be designed to face southwards on a fixed platform. The Solar PV modules would be angled at a tilt of 10 to 30</p>

		<p>degrees from horizontal to optimise daylight absorption. The ES [EN010149/APP/6.1/6.2/6.3] takes account of the impacts of Solar PV modules facing southwards on a fixed platform.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the need for, and impact of, security measures such as lights and fencing; 	<p>Section 3.13 of Chapter 3: Proposed Development Description of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] outlines the security measures incorporated in the design of the Proposed Development design. Efforts have been made to reduce the impact of security fencing and lighting, as set out in detail in the Outline LEMP [EN010149/APP/7.9], Outline CEMP [EN010149/APP/7.7], Outline OEMP [EN010149/APP/7.10] and Outline DEMP [EN010149/APP/7.13]. Final versions of these documents will be produced and secured as part of the DCO.</p> <p>The Proposed Development's security and lighting have been designed to respond sensitively to ecology and landscape features.</p> <p>Chapter 10: Landscape and Visual of the ES [EN010149/APP6.1] sets out embedded mitigations including that boundary fencing will not be constructed through retained existing hedgerows or across ditches. In response to consultations with NKDC and LCC, the height of fencing around the Solar PV generating stations will be 2.5m high and it is confirmed that this will be timber post and wire mesh 'deer-proof fencing'. Secure fencing is also required around</p>

		<p>the Springwell Substation, Main Collector Compound, BESS and Satellite Collector Compounds and this will be 2.75m in height with a pulse monitoring security system up to 3.4m height inside the mesh fence. A 4m high noise attenuation barrier would be erected around the BESS. Within the Springwell Substation compound (amongst taller structures) there would be 6m high absorbent barriers around the transformers.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> great care should be taken to ensure heritage assets are conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, including the impact of proposals on views important to their setting. As the significance of a heritage asset derives not only from its physical presence but also from its setting, careful consideration should be given to the impact of large-scale solar farms on such assets. Depending on their scale, design and prominence, a large-scale solar farm within the setting of a heritage asset may cause substantial harm to the significance of the asset; 	<p>Chapter 9: Cultural Heritage of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] provides an assessment of the Proposed Development on the historic environment, including above and below ground assets. It concludes that there will be no significant adverse impacts to any designated heritage assets, including Listed Buildings or Historic Landscape Character as a result of the Proposed Development.</p> <p>Chapter 9: Cultural Heritage of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] concludes there would be no significant adverse impacts to any designated or non-designated heritage assets as a result of the Proposed Development once embedded and additional mitigation measures are implemented.</p> <p>Chapter 9: Cultural Heritage of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] concludes there would be a moderate beneficial impact of the Proposed Development on scheduled remains of former</p>

		<p>village of Brauncewell, which is significant in EIA terms, as there is the Proposed Development includes the creation of permissive path to improve access to monument.</p> <p>Section 9.6 of Chapter 9: Cultural Heritage of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] sets out steps taken to ensure heritage assets are conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, including embedded mitigation such as avoiding areas with known or suspected below-ground archaeological deposits, changes to the setting of designated and non-designated heritage assets have been avoided, site access points from the A15 have been selected to avoid works in proximity to the listed milepost, non-intrusive construction methods will be used, and routeing of HGV traffic away from Blankney and Scopwick.</p> <p>Section 9.7 and 9.9 of Chapter 9: Cultural Heritage of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] provides an assessment of the likely effects and residual effects, respectively, of the Scheme on cultural heritage. All effects, including dust, noise, vibration and indirect impacts are considered. Due to the limited effects from noise, vibration and dust, the majority of impacts are as a result of direct impacts on non-designated heritage assets and impacts to the setting of designated heritage assets.</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the potential to mitigate landscape and visual impacts through, for example, screening with native hedges; 	<p>Chapter 10: Landscape and Visual of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] assesses the visual impact of the Proposed Development.</p> <p>The mitigation embedded into the design which is outlined in section 10.6 of Chapter 10: Landscape and Visual of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1], the Outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (oLEMP) [EN010149/APP/7.9] and the Design Approach Document [EN010149/APP/7.3] and Design Commitments [EN010149/APP/7.4] includes, but is not limited to, hedgerow planting along field boundaries, woodland planting along field boundaries, hedgerow infill planting, structural planting, establishment of wildflower rich grassland, offsets from existing woodlands and proposed or existing PRowS, which has aimed to reduce visual impacts.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the energy generating potential, which can vary for a number of reasons including latitude and aspect. 	<p>The Planning Statement [EN010149/APP/7.2] and the Statement of Need [EN010149/APP/7.1] sets out how the Proposed Development would contribute substantially to the need to supply low carbon energy, in order for the government to meet its objectives and commitments as mentioned above. By generating low carbon electricity at a low marginal cost, large-scale solar power reduces the energy generated by more expensive and more carbon intensive forms of generation. The Proposed Development will therefore help to decarbonise the electricity system and lowers the market price of electricity.</p>

	<p>The approach to assessing the cumulative landscape and visual impact of large-scale solar farms is likely to be the same as assessing the impact of wind turbines. However, in the case of ground-mounted solar panels, it should be noted that with effective screening and appropriate land topography the area of a zone of visual influence could be zero.</p>	<p>Chapter 10: Landscape and Visual of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] includes a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) of the construction, operation and decommissioning phases of the Proposed Development. The study area for the LVIA has been informed through a combination of Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) analysis and site work. A series of ZTVs for different elements of the Proposed Development are provided as Figures 10.5-10.9 of ES Volume 2 [EN010149/APP/6.2].</p> <p>Chapter 10: Landscape and Visual of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] includes an assessment of cumulative landscape and visual effects where the approach to the assessment is explained.</p> <p>In addition, Chapter 16: Cumulative Effects of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] considers cumulative impacts of the Proposed Development across all topics assessed in Chapters 6-16 of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] conclude that no cumulative significant adverse effects will arise.</p>
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Springwell Solar Farm

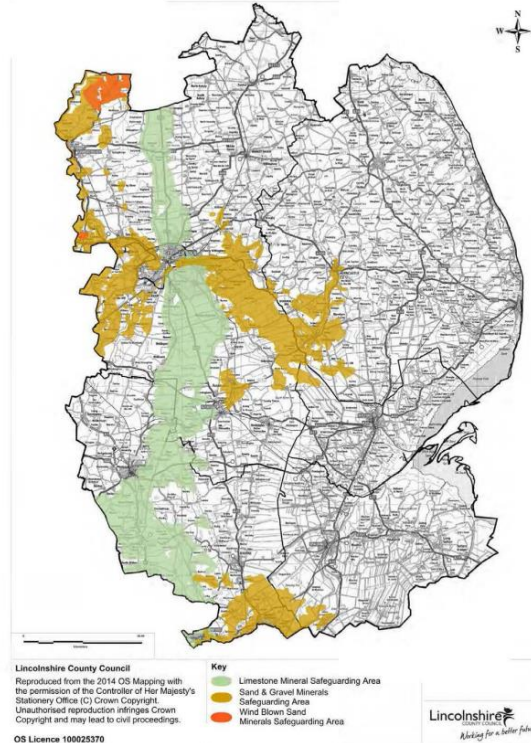
Table 5 Lincolnshire County Council – Table of Compliance

The Lincolnshire Minerals and Waste Plan (Core Strategy and Development Management Policies adopted 2016 and Site Locations adopted 2017)		
Policy	Policy Text	Assessment
<p>Policy M11: Safeguarding of Mineral Resources</p>	<p>Sand and gravel, blown sand and limestone resources that are considered to be of current or future economic importance within the Minerals Safeguarding Areas shown on Figure 1, together with potential sources of dimension stone for use in building and restoration projects connected to Lincoln Cathedral/Lincoln Castle within the areas shown on Figure 2, and chalk resources included on Figure 3, will be protected from permanent sterilisation by other development.</p> <p>Applications for non-minerals development in a minerals safeguarding area must be accompanied by a Minerals Assessment. Planning permission will be granted for development within a Minerals Safeguarding Area provided that it would not sterilise mineral resources within the Mineral Safeguarding Areas or prevent future minerals extraction on neighbouring</p>	<p>Chapter 11: Land, Soil and Groundwater of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] sets out that Minerals has been scoped out of the EIA. Appendix 2: Minerals Safeguarding Assessment forms a part of the Planning Statement [EN010149/APP/7.2] which has been submitted in support of the DCO.</p> <p>The Proposed Development has a lifespan of 40 years and will be decommissioned at the end of its operational life. This would involve the removal of all of the Solar PV infrastructure, including the Ground Mounted Solar PV Generating Stations, Collector Compounds, Springwell Substation, BESS and ancillary infrastructure, including any on-site compounds.</p> <p>All concrete, hardstanding areas, foundations for the infrastructure and any internal tracks will be removed to a depth of up to 1m. All the below-ground cables will be left in situ.</p> <p>Decommissioning will include removing any permissive paths and the land will be returned to the landowner. Landscape structural planting, including tree planting, hedgerows, scrub, etc.,</p>

	<p>land. Where this is not the case, planning permission will be granted when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the applicant can demonstrate to the Mineral Planning Authority that prior extraction of the mineral would be impracticable, and that the development could not reasonably be sited elsewhere; or • the incompatible development is of a temporary nature and can be completed and the site restored to a condition that does not inhibit extraction within the timescale that the mineral is likely to be needed; or • there is an overriding need for the development to meet local economic needs, and the development could not reasonably be sited elsewhere; or • the development is of a minor nature which would have a negligible impact with respect to sterilising the mineral resource; or • the development is, or forms part of, an allocation in the Development Plan. <p><u>Exemptions</u> This policy does not apply to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applications for householder development 	<p>created to deliver biodiversity mitigation and enhancement associated with the Proposed Development would be left in situ when the Site is handed back to landowners.</p> <p>Therefore, the landowner has the right to use their land as they would now and any minerals would not be permanently sterilised and would be available to exploit if required at a future date. The minerals within the Order limits will not be permanently sterilised, and post-decommissioning, the land could be worked for minerals. The Proposed Development is reservable by nature, and therefore there is not considered to be any conflict with the M11 mineral safeguarding policy.</p> <p>The Statement of Need [EN01049/APP/7.1] accompanying the DCO Application sets out a detailed case for why the Proposed Development is urgently required, concluding that it will be a critical part of the UK's portfolio of renewable energy generation, and required to decarbonise its energy supply quickly and provide secure and affordable energy supplies.</p> <p>The DCO Application demonstrates an overwhelming need for this Proposed Development and that the development could not reasonably be sited elsewhere, in line with the requirements of Policy M11 of the Lincolnshire Minerals and Waste Core Strategy and Development Management Policies.</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Applications for alterations to existing buildings and for change of use of existing development, unless intensifying activity on site• Applications for Advertisement Consent• Applications for Listed Building Consent• Applications for reserved matters including subsequent applications after outline consent has been granted• Prior Notifications (telecommunications; forestry; agriculture; demolition)• Certificates of Lawfulness of Existing or Proposed Use or Development (CLEUDs and CLOPUDs)• Applications for Tree Works	
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Figure 1: Lincolnshire Minerals Safeguarding Areas Map



**Policy M12:
Safeguarding of
Existing Mineral Sites
and Associated
Minerals Infrastructure**

Mineral sites (excluding dormant sites) and associated infrastructure that supports the supply of minerals in the County will be safeguarded against development that would unnecessarily sterilise the sites and infrastructure or prejudice or jeopardise their use by creating incompatible land uses nearby.

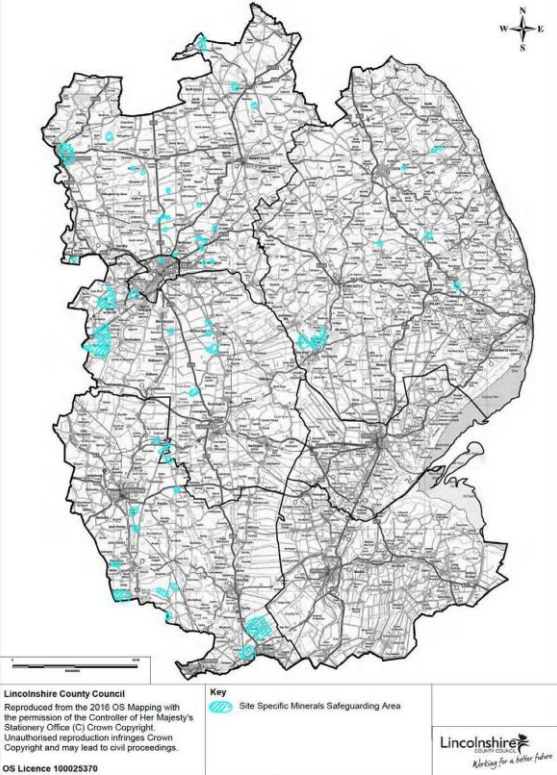
Exemptions

This policy does not apply to the following:

Chapter 11: Land, Soil and Groundwater of the **ES [EN010149/APP/6.1]** sets out that Minerals has been scoped out of the EIA. **Appendix 2: Minerals Safeguarding Assessment** forms a part of the **Planning Statement [EN010149/APP/7.2]** which has been submitted in support of the DCO.

The Proposed Development has a lifespan of 40 years and will be decommissioned at the end of its operational life. This would involve the removal of all of the Solar PV infrastructure, including the Ground Mounted Solar PV Generating Stations,

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applications for householder development • Applications for alterations to existing buildings and for change of use of existing development, unless Intensifying activity on site • Applications for Advertisement Consent • Applications for Listed Building Consent • Applications for reserved matters including subsequent applications after outline consent has been granted • Prior Notifications (telecommunications; forestry; agriculture; demolition) • Certificates of Lawfulness of Existing or Proposed Use or Development (CLEUDs and CLOPUDs) • Applications for Tree Works 	<p>Collector Compounds, Springwell Substation, BESS and ancillary infrastructure, including any on-site compounds.</p> <p>All concrete, hardstanding areas, foundations for the infrastructure and any internal tracks will be removed to a depth of up to 1m. All the below-ground cables will be left in situ.</p> <p>Decommissioning will include removing any permissive paths and the land will be returned to the landowner. Landscape structural planting, including tree planting, hedgerows, scrub, etc., created to deliver biodiversity mitigation and enhancement associated with the Proposed Development would be left in situ when the Site is handed back to landowners.</p> <p>Therefore, the landowner has the right to use their land as they would now and any minerals would not be permanently sterilised and would be available to exploit if required at a future date. The minerals within the Order limits will not be permanently sterilised, and post-decommissioning, the land could be worked for minerals. The Proposed Development is reservable by nature, and therefore, there is not considered to be any conflict with M12 mineral safeguarding policy.</p> <p>The Proposed Development is reservable by nature and, therefore, is in accordance with all relevant criteria with policies M12 of the Lincolnshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan Core</p>
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		<p>Strategy and Development Management Policies DPD.</p>
<p>Local Transport Plan 5</p>		
Policy	Policy Text	Assessment
<p>Policy EC3</p>	<p>Create town centres, villages and rural areas that are accessible but not vehicle dominated.</p>	<p>Sections 14.8 and 14.10 of Chapter 14: Traffic and Transport of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] sets out the impacts to non-motorised users. The Proposed Development design incorporates mitigation to reduce adverse effects and minimise impacts on non-motorised users. The assessment finds that the effect of the Proposed Development on the non-motorised users is expected to be</p>

		minimal therefore the impact will not be significant in EIA terms.
Policy EC5	<p>We will support a range of transport improvements that underpin and priority sectors to develop and grow.</p> <p>...</p> <p>For energy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase and improve the infrastructure for alternative energy sources. • Improve access to the renewable energy growth points along the Humber and along the east coast. • Drive a shift from fossil fuels for both passenger and freight movements 	<p>As set out in Chapter 3: Proposed Development Description of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1], highway improvements will be required to support construction HGVs travelling on the local highway network to/from the proposed site access on the B1191. These improvements are expected to comprise relatively minor verge clearance, hedge cutting or carriageway widening to achieve a minimum carriageway width of 7.3m at the compound entrance along Heath Road (B1191), Navenby lane, and Temple Road (i.e. the agreed construction vehicle route). Passing bays are proposed on Temple Road to support two-way construction traffic. These works will be retained permanently for future use and benefit to future road users.</p> <p>Further widening at the A15/B1191 junction is required. This will increase the width of the B1191 to accommodate two lanes on the approach to the A15 junction to support the increase in construction traffic. On the A15 southbound approach to the B1191 junction, widening of the existing road will be required to bring this approach up to standard.</p>
Policy GREEN4	<p>We will use the local and strategic development management processes to ensure that development is planned, delivered and managed to reduce the need to travel</p>	<p>Section 14.10 of Chapter 14: Traffic and Transport of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] sets out the impacts to non-motorised users. The Proposed Development design incorporates mitigation to</p>

	<p>and support the delivery of sustainable transport modes. We will support the provision of improved walking, cycling and public transport services and facilities as part of new developments and actively encourage innovative solutions such as car clubs, mobility hubs, active travel plans and other sustainable solutions as opposed to single occupancy car use.</p>	<p>reduce adverse effects and minimise impacts on non-motorised users. The assessment finds that the effect of the Proposed Development on the non-motorised users is expected to be minimal therefore the impact will not be significant in EIA terms.</p> <p>The Proposed Development design incorporates mitigation to reduce adverse effects and minimise impacts. These are set out in section 15.12 of Chapter 14: Traffic and Transport of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] and section 2.8 of the associated Transport Assessment (Appendix 14.1 of the ES Vol.3 [EN010149/APP/6.3]). These measures will be secured by the oCTMP [EN010149/APP/7.8], the oCEMP [EN010149/APP/7.7], and oDEMP [EN010149/APP/7.13]. These are submitted alongside the DCO with requirements securing the submission and approval of a CTMP, CEMP and DEMP at the relevant phase of the Proposed Development to be substantially in accordance with the Framework Plans and for the Proposed Development to then be implemented in accordance with the approved plans.</p>
<p>Policy ENV1</p>	<p>We will put in place procedures during construction, surfacing and maintenance works that will minimise and mitigate their environmental impacts.</p>	<p>The Proposed Development design incorporates mitigation to reduce adverse effects and minimise impacts of construction on traffic and transport. These are set out in section 15.12 of Chapter 14: Traffic and Transport of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] and section 2.8 of the</p>

		<p>associated Transport Assessment (Appendix 14.1 of the ES Vol.3 [EN010149/APP/6.3]). These measures will be secured by the oCTMP [EN010149/APP/7.8], the oCEMP [EN010149/APP/7.7], and oDEMP [EN010149/APP/7.13]. These are submitted alongside the DCO with requirements securing the submission and approval of a CTMP, CEMP and DEMP at the relevant phase of the Proposed Development to be substantially in accordance with the Framework Plans and for the Proposed Development to then be implemented in accordance with the approved plans.</p>
<p>Policy ENV5</p>	<p>We will support, promote and provide sustainable access to our sensitive built and natural environments.</p>	<p>Chapter 14: Traffic and Transport of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] provides an assessment of the Proposed Development’s impact on public rights of way within the Order Limits, or that will be impacted by the Proposed Development.</p> <p>A number of existing PRow traverse the Proposed Development and are presented in Table 14.18, Chapter 14: Traffic and Transport of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] and have been illustrated in ES Vol.3 Appendix 14.1: Transport Assessment [EN010149/APP/6.3] and Outline Public Rights of Way and Permissive Path Management Plan [EN010149/APP/7.12].</p> <p>The Outline Public Rights of Way and Permissive Path Management Plan [EN010149/APP/7.12] has been prepared in support of the DCO application. The Outline</p>

		<p>Public Rights of Way and Permissive Path Management Plan sets out the mitigation, management, and monitoring measures for PRow affected by construction which may require temporary diversion/closure, or alternative routing where the former is not possible.</p> <p>The Proposed Development includes opportunities for enhancement such as proposals to provide three new PRow and four permissive paths, as well as improvements to existing PRow, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Proposed new PRow linking RAF Digby to Scopwick;• Proposed new permissive path from Heath Road to link to the existing PRow between RAF Digby and Rowston and to enable a circular walking route;• Proposed new PRow to provide a connection between the existing PRow west of the A15 (near Navenby Lane) to New England Lane;• Proposed new permissive path along the western edge of the Proposed Development linking New England Lane to Temple Road, north of Brauncewell;• Proposed new PRow from Temple Road (north of Brauncewell) to the Bloxham Woods Car Park to provide a connection across the A15;• Proposed new permissive path linking Bloxholm Wood to Brauncewell Village;
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Proposed new permissive paths creating a circular walk at Bloxholm Wood;• Improvements to the Bloxham Wood access on Heath Road; and• Proposed enhancement to the existing PRow between Scopwick and Blankney.
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Springwell Solar Farm

Table 6 Central Lincolnshire Local Plan Policy – Table of Compliance

Central Lincolnshire Local Plan – Adopted April 2023		
Policy	Policy Text	Assessment
Policy S1: The Spatial Strategy and Settlement Hierarchy	<p>The spatial strategy will focus on delivering sustainable growth for Central Lincolnshire that meets the needs for homes and jobs, regenerates places and communities, and supports necessary improvements to facilities, services and infrastructure.</p> <p>Development should create strong, sustainable, cohesive and inclusive communities, making the most effective use of previously developed land and enabling a larger number of people to access jobs, services and facilities locally.</p> <p>Development should provide the scale and mix of housing types and a range of new job opportunities that will meet the identified needs of Central Lincolnshire in order to secure balanced communities.</p> <p>Decisions on investment in services and facilities, and on the location and scale of development, will be</p>	<p>As set out in the Planning Statement [EN010149/APP/7.2], and Statement of Need [EN010149/APP/7.1] the Proposed Development is a substantial infrastructure asset, capable of delivering large amounts of secure, affordable low carbon electricity to local and national networks.</p> <p>The draft Order Limits do not conflict with any allocations within the Local Plan and would not restrict the achievement of the objectives of Policy S1.</p> <p>Chapter 13: Population of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] provides an assessment of all potential socio-economic impacts of the Proposed Development, in accordance with this policy. The (gross) peak number of approximately 650 workers may be on site at any one time, or an average of 400 over the four year construction period. The jobs created will be in the renewable energy sector and will contribute to the development of skills needed for the UK's transition.</p> <p>An Outline Employment, Skills and Supply Chain Plan [EN010149/APP/7.20] has been prepared to help maximise the positive gain for the local economy from the beneficial effect arising from employment generation during the construction and operational phase. A detailed Employment, Skills and Supply Chain Plan will be secured by way of a DCO requirement. The jobs created by the Proposed Development will be in the renewable energy sector, specifically relating to solar installation, but also electricity transmission and supply</p>

	<p>assisted by the Central Lincolnshire Settlement Hierarchy.</p> <p>The hierarchy is as follows:</p> <p>1 – 7 ...</p> <p>8. Countryside Unless allowed by:</p> <p>a) policy in any of the levels 1-7 above; or</p> <p>b) any other policy in the Local Plan (such as Policies S4, S5, S34, or S43) or a relevant policy in a neighbourhood plan, development will be regarded as being in the countryside and as such restricted to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • that which is demonstrably essential to the effective operation of agriculture, horticulture, forestry, outdoor recreation, transport or utility services; • delivery of infrastructure; • renewable energy generation; and • to minerals or waste development in 	<p>chain. Where possible, there will be a preference for local staffing, and it is likely that the appointed contractors will employ trainees and apprentices as part of the construction workforce.</p> <p>The location of the Proposed Development in the countryside is justified due to the Proposed Development's delivery of the substantial renewable energy generation that the Proposed Development will provide, and the need to be in sufficient proximity of the connection point to the National Electricity Transmission System (NETS), and the contribution the Proposed Development would make to meeting the established urgent need for renewable energy generation infrastructure.</p>
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	<p>accordance with separate Minerals and Waste Local Development Documents.</p> <p>* The definition of “developed footprint” as used throughout this policy is provided in the Glossary.</p>	
<p>Policy S5: Development in the Countryside</p>	<p>...</p> <p>Part E: Non-residential development in the countryside</p> <p>Proposals for non-residential development will be supported provided that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The rural location of the enterprise is justifiable to maintain or enhance the rural economy or the location is justified by means of proximity to existing established businesses or natural features; b) The location of the enterprise is suitable in terms of accessibility; c) The location of the enterprise would not result in conflict with neighbouring uses; and 	<p>The location of the Proposed Development in the countryside is justified due to the Proposed Development’s delivery of the substantial renewable energy generation that the Proposed Development will provide, and the need to be in sufficient proximity of the connection point to the National Electricity Transmission System (NETS), and the contribution the Proposed Development would make to meeting the established urgent need for renewable energy generation infrastructure.</p> <p>The application allows the diversification of existing agricultural businesses. Chapter 11: Land, Soil and Groundwater of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] confirms that there will be land temporarily taken out of agricultural use as a result of the Proposed Development; however, it is not anticipated that any tenants or businesses would cease due to the Proposed Development and the landowners would remain in operation, therefore, no impacts to agricultural land holdings are anticipated.</p> <p>There is also the potential to use the open spaces between the infrastructure for pastoral farming (sheep grazing), and</p>

	<p>d) The development is of a size and scale commensurate with the proposed use and with the rural character of the location.</p> <p>Part F: Agricultural diversification Proposals involving farm based diversification to non-agricultural activities or operations will be permitted, provided that the proposal will support farm enterprises and providing that the development is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) In an appropriate location for the proposed use;b) Of a scale appropriate to its location; andc) Of a scale appropriate to the business need. <p>Part G: Agricultural, forestry, horticultural or other rural land-based development Proposals which will help farms modernise and/or adapt to funding changes or climate change will be supported in principle and any such proposals will be considered against relevant design, landscape and natural environment policies in this plan.</p>	<p>therefore some agricultural use of the Site can still remain during the lifespan of the Proposed Development.</p>
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	<p>Where permission is required, development proposals for buildings required for agriculture or other rural land based development purposes will be supported where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) It is demonstrated that there is a functional need for the building which cannot be met by an existing, or recently disposed of, building; b) the building is of a scale that is proportionate to the proposed functional need; c) the building is designed specifically to meet the functional need identified; d) the site is well related to existing buildings in terms of both physical and functional location, design and does not introduce isolated structures away from existing buildings; and e) significant earthworks are not required, and there will be no harm to natural drainage and will not result in pollution of soils, water or air. 	
<p>Policy S9: Decentralised Energy Networks and</p>	<p>Where an existing decentralised energy network exists in the locality, and such a network is likely operational in the long term (i.e.</p>	<p>As explained in the Statement of Need [EN010149/APP/7.1], large scale electricity generation facilities are needed. The Proposed Development would connect directly to the NETS, to enable the transfer of the renewably generated electricity it</p>

<p>Combined Heat and Power</p>	<p>minimum 30 years), then development proposals in the vicinity can consider connection to such an existing energy network provided that in doing so it does not require the network as a whole to increase its fossil fuel consumption (i.e. it should be demonstrated that the network either has spare and wasted capacity, or demonstrate that the energy in the decentralised network is sourced from renewable sources).</p> <p>Any proposal for a new or extended combined heat and power network will only be supported if the power source of such a network is renewable or very low carbon based.</p>	<p>generates over a wide geographical area, as per this policy. The Proposed Development should be considered on the basis that its need is established and this established and urgent need should be given substantial weight in the decision.</p>
<p>Policy S10: Supporting a Circular Economy</p>	<p>The Joint Committee is aware of the high energy and material use consumed on a daily basis, and, consequently, is fully supportive of the principles of a circular economy.</p> <p>Accordingly, and to complement any policies set out in the Minerals and Waste Development Plan, proposals will be supported, in principle, which demonstrate their compatibility with, or the furthering of, a strong circular economy in the local area (which</p>	<p>The Proposed Development includes embedded design measures to reduce its impact on waste and materials.</p> <p>Chapter 3: Proposed Development Description of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] sets out that any equipment that needs to be replaced during the operational (including maintenance) phase will be disposed of following the waste hierarchy, with materials being reused or recycled wherever possible. Electrical waste will be disposed of per the Waste from Electrical and Electronic Equipment Regulations 2013, minimising the environmental impact of replacing any elements of the Proposed Development.</p>

	<p>could include cross-border activity elsewhere in Lincolnshire).</p>	<p>At the end of the operational (including maintenance) phase, any above-ground infrastructure will be dismantled and removed per industry best practices. The decommissioned materials will follow the waste hierarchy such that they will be reused where possible before recycling and disposal are considered.</p> <p>The decommissioning of the Proposed Development will be subject to measures and procedures defined within a DEMP as secured through the DCO. An Outline DEMP [EN010149/APP/7.13] is submitted with the DCO application.</p>
<p>Policy S11: Embodied Carbon</p>	<p>Presumption against demolition: To avoid the wastage of embodied carbon in existing buildings and avoid the creation of new embodied carbon in replacement buildings, there is a presumption in favour of repairing, refurbishing, re-using and re-purposing existing buildings over their demolition. Proposals that result in the demolition of a building (in whole or a significant part) should be accompanied by a full justification for the demolition. For non-listed buildings demolition will only be acceptable where it is demonstrated to the satisfaction of the local planning authority that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the building proposed for demolition is in a state of such disrepair that it is not practical or viable to be 	<p>Chapter 8: Climate of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] sets out the measures the Proposed Development will take to reduce embodied carbon through the choice, use and sourcing of materials, and construction and decommissioning methods.</p> <p>No buildings will be demolished or replaced as part of the Proposed Development.</p> <p>Sections 8.6 and 8.8 of Chapter 8: Climate of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] explains that the Outline CEMP [EN010149/APP/7.7] and the Outline LEMP [EN010149/APP/7.9], which accompany the application, will inform detailed management plans to be secured by the DCO, will ensure that the following measures will be implemented to reduce the Proposed Development's carbon:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any vegetation cleared for the Proposed Development will be compensated by a planting scheme that equals or exceeds the current levels of vegetation; • Lean design to minimise use of concrete, steel, aggregates, etc.; • Implementing measures to decrease fuel use by maximising energy efficiencies, for example to ensure

	<p>repaired, refurbished, re-used, or re-purposed; or 2. repairing, refurbishing, re-using, or re-purposing the building would likely result in similar or higher newly generated embodied carbon than if the building is demolished and a new building is constructed; or 3. repairing, refurbishing, re-using, or re-purposing the building would create a building with such poor thermal efficiency that on a whole life cycle basis (i.e. embodied carbon and in-use carbon emissions) would mean a lower net carbon solution would arise from demolition and re-build; or 4. demolition of the building and construction of a new building would, on an exceptional basis, deliver other significant public benefits that outweigh the carbon savings which would arise from the building being repaired, refurbished, re-used, or re-purposed.</p>	<p>all vehicles switch off engines when stationary and ensure vehicles are well maintained and conform to current emissions standards;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promoting the use of sustainable fuels in construction vehicles, and where possible making use of electric vehicles to reduce fuel consumption;• Using locally sourced and/or produced materials, where practicable. The use of recycled aggregates, where appropriate, for foundations, subbases, hard-standings and pavement materials; and• Actions to meet the waste hierarchy in accordance with the principles of the Government's Resources and waste strategy for England 2018. Promoting the recycling of materials by segregating waste to be re-used and recycled where practical.
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Applications within the countryside relating to the re-use or conversion of existing buildings will only be acceptable where they also meet the requirements of Policy S5, S34, or S43 as applicable.

Major development proposals:

All major development proposals should explicitly set out what opportunities to lower a building's embodied carbon content have been considered, and which opportunities, if any, are to be taken forward.

In the period to 31 December 2024, there will be no requirement (unless mandated by Government) to use any specific lower embodied carbon materials in development proposals, provided the applicant has at least demonstrated consideration of options and opportunities available.

From 1 January 2025, there will be a requirement for a development proposal to demonstrate how the design and building materials to be used have been informed by a consideration of embodied carbon, and that reasonable opportunities to minimise embodied carbon have

	<p>been taken. Further guidance is anticipated to be issued by the local planning authorities on this matter prior to 1 January 2025.</p>	
<p>Policy S14: Renewable Energy</p>	<p>The Central Lincolnshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee is committed to supporting the transition to a net zero carbon future and will seek to maximise appropriately located renewable energy generated in Central Lincolnshire (such energy likely being wind and solar based).</p> <p>Proposals for renewable energy schemes, including ancillary development, will be supported where the direct, indirect, individual and cumulative impacts on the following considerations are, or will be made, acceptable. To determine whether it is acceptable, the following tests will have to be met:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The impacts are acceptable having considered the scale, siting and design, and the consequent impacts on landscape character; visual amenity; biodiversity; geodiversity; flood risk; townscape; heritage assets, their 	<p>The Planning Statement [EN010149/APP/7.2] and the Statement of Need [EN010149/APP/7.1] sets out how the Proposed Development would contribute substantially to the need to supply low carbon energy, in order for the government to meet its objectives and commitments as mentioned above. By generating low carbon electricity at a low marginal cost, large-scale solar power reduces the energy generated by more expensive and more carbon intensive forms of generation. The Proposed Development will therefore help to decarbonise the electricity system and lowers the market price of electricity.</p> <p>The Planning Statement [EN010149/APP/7.2] sets out that the Proposed Development will deliver 800 MW DC of low-carbon, low-cost and UK-located solar electricity generation capacity connecting to the National Electricity Transmission System from 2028. In addition to meeting the urgent national need for secure and affordable low-carbon energy infrastructure and its associated environmental and societal benefits, the Proposed Development delivers wider benefits to the environment and the local community.</p> <p>Chapters 6 to 16 of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] and Section 9 of the Planning Statement assesses any direct, indirect, individual and cumulative impacts of the Proposed Development on air quality, biodiversity, climate, cultural heritage, landscape and visual, land, soil and ground water, noise and vibration, population, traffic and transport, water and the cumulative effects.</p>

	<p>settings and the historic landscape; and highway safety and rail safety; and</p> <p>ii. The impacts are acceptable on aviation and defence navigation system/communications; and</p> <p>iii. The impacts are acceptable on the amenity of sensitive neighbouring uses (including local residents) by virtue of matters such as noise, dust, odour, shadow flicker, air quality and traffic;</p> <p>Testing compliance with part (i) above will be via applicable policies elsewhere in a development plan document for the area (i.e. this Local Plan; a Neighbourhood Plan, if one exists; any applicable policies in a Minerals or Waste Local Plan); and any further guidance set out in a Supplementary Planning Document.</p> <p>In order to test compliance with part (ii) above will require, for relevant proposals, the submission by the applicant of robust evidence of the</p>	<p>Chapters 6 to 16 of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] considers relevant sections of NPS EN-1, NPS EN-3, NPS EN-5, the NPPF, National Planning Practice Guidance, The Lincolnshire Minerals and Waste Plan, The Lincolnshire Local Transport Plan 5, Central Lincolnshire Local Plan (2023) and The Scopwick and Kirkby Green Neighbourhood Plan 2021 – 2036.</p> <p>oLEMP [EN010149/APP/7.9], oCEMP [EN010149/APP/7.7], oOEMP [EN010149/APP/7.10] and oDEMP [EN010149/APP/7.13] have been produced as part of the ES to demonstrate how the mitigation measures will be implemented.</p> <p>The Applicant has developed the design of the Proposed Development to prioritise the use of BMV land for arable production where practicable. This has been assessed through the Chapter 11: Land, Soil and Groundwater of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] and has included amendments to the Order Limits and potential areas for Solar Development. Agricultural land quality was a key consideration in the Applicant’s site selection process as set out in the Design Approach Document [EN010149/APP/7.3] and Design Commitments [EN010149/APP/7.4]. The agricultural land design principles incorporate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All fields comprising solely of Grade 1 or 2 land within the site will remain in arable production; • Prioritise the use of BMV land for arable production where practicable; and • Prioritise the use on non-BMV land for habitat creation where practicable.
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	<p>potential impact on any aviation and defence navigation system/communication, and within such evidence must be documented areas of agreement or disagreement reached with appropriate bodies and organisations responsible for such infrastructure.</p> <p>In order to test compliance with part (iii) above will require, for relevant proposals, the submission by the applicant of a robust assessment of the potential impact on such users, and the mitigation measures proposed to minimise any identified harm.</p> <p>For all matters in (i)-(iii), the applicable local planning authority may commission its own independent assessment of the proposals, to ensure it is satisfied what the degree of harm may be and whether reasonable mitigation opportunities are being taken.</p> <p>Where significant adverse effects are concluded by the local planning authority following consideration of the above assessment(s), such effects will be weighed against the wider environmental, economic,</p>	<p>The Proposed Development will meet a minimum of 10% BNG as secured in the Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (oLEMP) [EN010149/APP/7.9]. ES Vol.3 Appendix 7.14 Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment [EN010149/APP/6.3] demonstrates that the Proposed Development is committed to achieve significant biodiversity net gain on site.</p> <p>ES Vol.3 Appendix 5.4: Solar photovoltaic glint and glare study [EN010149/APP/6.3] to Chapter 10: Landscape and Visual of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] has undertaken an assessment of potential impacts of glint and glare on surrounding road users, railway operations, dwellings, and aviation activity. The solar photovoltaic glint and glare study concludes that no significant impact is predicted upon road safety, residential amenity, and railway operations and infrastructure and mitigation is not recommended.</p> <p>Although the Proposed Development is to be operational for a long term, it will be temporary with Requirement 19 in the Draft DCO [EN010149/APP/3.1] securing a time limited consent for 40 years.</p> <p>At the end of the operational (including maintenance) phase, any above-ground infrastructure will be dismantled and removed per industry best practices. The decommissioned materials will follow the waste hierarchy such that they will be reused where possible before recycling and disposal are considered.</p>
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social and community benefits provided by the proposal. In this regard, and as part of the planning balance, significant additional weight in favour of the proposal will arise for any proposal which is community-led for the benefit of that community.

In areas that have been designated for their national importance, as identified in the National Planning Policy Framework, renewable energy infrastructure will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that it would be appropriate in scale, located in areas that do not contribute positively to the objectives of the designation, is sympathetically designed and includes any necessary mitigation measures.

Additional matters for solar based energy proposals

Proposals for solar thermal or photovoltaics panels and associated infrastructure to be installed on existing property will be under a presumption in favour of permission unless there is clear and demonstrable significant harm arising.

Proposals for ground based photovoltaics and associated infrastructure, including commercial large scale proposals, will be under a presumption in favour unless:

- there is clear and demonstrable significant harm arising; or
- the proposal is (following a site specific soil assessment) to take place on Best and Most Versatile (BMV) agricultural land and does not meet the requirements of Policy S67; or
- the land is allocated for another purpose in this Local Plan or other statutory based document (such as a nature recovery strategy or a Local Transport Plan), and the proposal is not compatible with such other allocation.

Proposals for ground based photovoltaics should be accompanied by evidence demonstrating how opportunities for delivering biodiversity net gain will be maximised in the scheme taking account of soil, natural features, existing habitats, and planting

proposals accompanying the scheme to create new habitats linking into the nature recovery strategy.

Additional matters for wind based energy proposals

Proposals for a **small to medium single wind turbine**, which is defined as a turbine up to a maximum of 40m from ground to tip of blade, are, in principle, supported throughout Central Lincolnshire (i.e. the whole of Central Lincolnshire is identified as a broad area potentially suitable for such a single turbine), subject to meeting the above criteria (i)-(iii) and the requirements of national planning policy. Under this paragraph, no dwelling or other operation (e.g. a farm or a business) may have more than one turbine at any one time in the curtilage of that dwelling or other operation.

Proposals for **medium (over 40m from ground to tip of blade) to large scale wind turbines (including groups of turbines)** will, in principle, be supported only where they are located within an area identified as a 'Broad Area Suitable for Larger Scale Wind

Energy Turbines' as identified on the Policies Map and (indicatively) on Map 2. Such proposals will be tested against criteria (i)-(iii) and the requirements of national planning policy.

Medium to large scale wind turbines must not be within 2km of a settlement boundary of a settlement identified in the Settlement Hierarchy. However, where a proposal is within 2km of any residential property, the following matters will need careful consideration as to the potential harm arising:

- Noise
- Flicker
- Overbearing nature of the turbines (established by visual effects from within commonly used habitable rooms)
- Any other amenity which is presently enjoyed by the occupier.

In this regard, no medium to large scale wind turbine within 700m of a residential property is anticipated to be supported, and proposals between 700-2,000m will need clear

	<p>evidence of no significant harm arising.</p> <p>For the avoidance of doubt, any medium to large scale wind turbine proposals outside of the identified Broad Area Suitable for Larger Scale Wind Energy Turbines should be refused.</p> <p>Decommissioning renewable energy infrastructure Permitted proposals will be subject to a condition that will require the submission of an End of Life Removal Scheme within one year of the facility becoming non-operational, and the implementation of such a scheme within one year of the scheme being approved. Such a scheme should demonstrate how any biodiversity net gain that has arisen on the site will be protected or enhanced further, and how the materials to be removed would, to a practical degree, be re-used or recycled.</p>	
<p>Policy S15: Protecting Renewable Energy Infrastructure</p>	<p>Development should not significantly harm:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) the technical performance of any existing or approved renewable energy generation facility; 	<p>The Planning Statement [EN010149/APP/7.2] sets out that the Proposed Development will deliver 800 MW DC of low-carbon, low-cost and UK-located solar electricity generation capacity connecting to the National Electricity Transmission System from 2028. In addition to meeting the urgent national need for secure and affordable low-carbon energy</p>

	<p>b) the potential for optimisation of strategic renewable energy installations;</p> <p>c) the availability of the resource, where the operation is dependent on uninterrupted flow of energy to the installation.</p>	<p>infrastructure and its associated environmental and societal benefits, the Proposed Development delivers wider benefits to the environment and the local community.</p> <p>Chapter 16: Cumulative Effects of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] sets out the cumulative impacts of the development and details how the Applicant has taken these into account throughout the development of the Proposed Development.</p> <p>This National Grid Navenby Substation has the potential to support multiple future renewable energy development in the region, additional to the Proposed Development.</p> <p>The Proposed Development contributes to the optimisation of strategic renewable energy installations within Lincolnshire and enhances the availability of low carbon energy to the National Grid. It is therefore in accordance with this policy</p>
<p>Policy S16: Wider Energy Infrastructure</p>	<p>The Joint Committee is committed to supporting the transition to net zero carbon future and, in doing so, recognises and supports, in principle, the need for significant investment in new and upgraded energy infrastructure.</p> <p>Where planning permission is needed from a Central Lincolnshire authority, support will be given to proposals which are necessary for, or form part of, the transition to a net zero carbon sub-region, which could include: energy storage facilities</p>	<p>The Proposed Development comprises of the construction, operation and maintenance, and decommissioning of a solar photovoltaic (PV) array electricity generating facility with a total capacity in excess of 50 megawatts (MW) direct current (DC) and export connection to the National Grid, as comprised in the Works Plans [EN010149/APP/2.3].</p> <p>The Proposed Development is classed as a 'Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project' (NSIP) and it therefore requires a DCO. All of the development outlined above will form part of the DCO application, which is submitted to the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero. As such, there will be no applications submitted to the Central Lincolnshire authority as part of this Proposed Development.</p>

	<p>(such as battery storage or thermal storage); and upgraded or new electricity facilities (such as transmission facilities, sub-stations or other electricity infrastructure.</p> <p>However, any such proposals should take all reasonable opportunities to mitigate any harm arising from such proposals, and take care to select not only appropriate locations for such facilities, but also design solutions (see Policy S53) which minimises harm arising.</p>	
<p>Policy S21: Flood Risk and Water Resources</p>	<p>Flood Risk All development proposals will be considered against the NPPF, including application of the sequential and, if necessary, the exception test.</p> <p>Through appropriate consultation and option appraisal, development proposals should demonstrate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) that they are informed by and take account of the best available information from all sources of flood risk and by site specific flood risk assessments where appropriate; 	<p>The Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) [EN010149/APP/7.16] provides an assessment of flood risk to and from the Proposed Development from all sources of flooding. The FRA demonstrates how residual flood risk will be managed during construction, operation and decommissioning of the Proposed Development and how the requirements of the Sequential Test and Exceptions Test are satisfied.</p> <p>An Outline Drainage Strategy which forms an appendix to the Flood Risk Assessment of the ES [EN010149/APP/7.16] has been prepared setting out how surface water will be managed across the Proposed Development to avoid an increase in flood risk elsewhere. The Outline Drainage Strategy concludes that runoff will be attenuated via local ditch / watercourse network (subject to infiltration testing and ditch network connectivity survey) within the Order Limits as per the existing conditions. A detailed Drainage Strategy will</p>

	<p>b) that the development does not place itself or existing land or buildings at increased risk of flooding;</p> <p>c) that the development will be safe during its lifetime taking into account the impacts of climate change and will be resilient to flood risk from all forms of flooding such that in the event of a flood the development could be quickly brought back into use without significant refurbishment;</p> <p>d) that the development does not affect the integrity of existing flood defences and any necessary flood mitigation measures have been agreed with the relevant bodies, where adoption, ongoing maintenance and management have been considered and any necessary agreements are in place;</p> <p>e) how proposals have taken a positive approach to reducing overall flood risk</p>	<p>be secured by a requirement of the Draft DCO [EN010149/APP/3.1].</p> <p>As the Site is at predominantly low risk from flooding from all sources, the reasonable 'worst case' is limited to the placement of Solar PV modules and string inverters mounted on the panels within Flood Zone 2 and Flood Zone 3 towards the east of the Site.</p> <p>The residual flood risk will be negligible once mitigation is included. This will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A minimum offset of 6 m from ditches/ watercourses; • An Outline Drainage Strategy; and • Vegetation Management.
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and have considered the potential to contribute towards solutions for the wider area; and

- f) that they have incorporated Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)/ Integrated Water Management into the proposals unless they can be shown to be inappropriate.

Protecting the Water Environment

Development proposals that are likely to impact on surface or ground water should consider the requirements of the Water Framework Directive.

Development proposals should demonstrate:

- g) that water is available to support the development proposed;
- h) that adequate mains foul water treatment and disposal already exists or can be provided in time to serve the development. Non mains foul sewage disposal solutions should only be considered where

	<p>it can be shown to the satisfaction of the local planning authority that connection to a public sewer is not feasible;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">i) that they meet the Building Regulation water efficiency standard of 110 litres per occupier per day or the highest water efficiency standard that applies at the time of the planning application (see also Policy S12);j) that water reuse and recycling and rainwater harvesting measures have been incorporated wherever possible in order to reduce demand on mains water supply as part of an integrated approach to water management (see also Policy S11);k) that they have followed the surface water hierarchy for all proposals:<ul style="list-style-type: none">i. surface water runoff is collected for use;	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">ii. discharge into the ground via infiltration;iii. discharge to a watercourse or other surface water body;iv. discharge to a surface water sewer, highway drain or other drainage system, discharging to a watercourse or other surface water body;iv. discharge to a combined sewer; <p>l) that no surface water connections are made to the foul system;</p> <p>b. m) that surface water connections to the combined or surface water system are only made in exceptional circumstances where it can be demonstrated that there are no feasible alternatives (this applies to new</p>	
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	<p>developments and redevelopments) and where there is no detriment to existing users;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">m) that no combined sewer overflows are created in areas served by combined sewers, and that foul and surface water flows are separated;n) that development contributes positively to the water environment and its ecology where possible and does not adversely affect surface and ground water quality in line with the requirements of the Water Framework Directive;o) that development with the potential to pose a risk to groundwater resources is not located in sensitive locations to meet the requirements of the Water Framework Directive;p) how Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)/ Integrated Water Management to deliver	
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	<p>improvements to water quality, the water environment and to improve amenity and biodiversity net gain wherever possible have been incorporated into the proposal unless they can be shown to be impractical;</p> <p>q) that relevant site investigations, risk assessments and necessary mitigation measures for source protection zones around boreholes, wells, springs and water courses have been agreed with the relevant bodies (e.g. the Environment Agency and relevant water companies);</p> <p>r) that suitable access is safeguarded for the maintenance of watercourses, water resources, flood defences and drainage infrastructure; and</p> <p>s) that adequate provision is made to safeguard the future maintenance of</p>	
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	<p>water bodies to which surface water and foul water treated on the site of the development is discharged, preferably by an appropriate authority (e.g. Environment Agency, Internal Drainage Board, Water Company, the Canal and River Trust or local Council).</p> <p>In order to allow access for the maintenance of watercourses, development proposals that include or abut a watercourse should ensure no building, structure or immovable landscaping feature is included that will impede access within 8m of a watercourse, or within 16m of a tidal watercourse. Conditions may be included where relevant to ensure this access is maintained in perpetuity and may seek to ensure responsibility for maintenance of the watercourse including land ownership details up to and of the watercourse is clear and included in maintenance arrangements for future occupants</p>	
<p>Policy S28: Spatial</p>	<p>In principle, employment related development proposals should be consistent with meeting the</p>	<p>Chapter 13: Population of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] provides an assessment of all potential socio-economic impacts of the Proposed Development, in accordance with this</p>

<p>Strategy for Employment</p>	<p>following overall spatial strategy for employment.</p> <p>The strategy is to strengthen the Central Lincolnshire economy offering a wide range of employment opportunities focused mainly in and around the Lincoln urban area and the towns of Gainsborough and Sleaford, with proportionate employment provision further down the Settlement Hierarchy (see Policy S1).</p> <p>Aligned to the Greater Lincolnshire Local Industrial Strategy, and as a key component of the Midlands Engine, there will be significant growth in a number of sectors, most notably agri-food, manufacturing, business services and the visitor economy, including accommodation and food services.</p> <p>Land has been made available in appropriate locations in this plan to meet the strategic needs identified in Central Lincolnshire. Strategic Employment Sites (SES), and existing Important Established Employment Areas (IEEA) will be protected for their importance to the economy. Employment development</p>	<p>policy. The (gross) peak number of approximately 650 workers may be on site at any one time, or an average of 400 over the four-year construction period. The jobs created will be in the renewable energy sector and will contribute to the development of skills needed for the UK's transition.</p> <p>An Outline Employment, Skills and Supply Chain Plan [EN010149/APP/7.20] has been prepared to help maximise the positive gain for the local economy from the beneficial effect arising from employment generation during the construction and operational phase. A detailed Employment, Skills and Supply Chain Plan will be secured by way of a DCO requirement. The jobs created by the Proposed Development will be in the renewable energy sector, specifically relating to solar installation, but also electricity transmission and supply chain. Where possible, there will be a preference for local staffing, and it is likely that the appointed contractors will employ trainees and apprentices as part of the construction workforce.</p>
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	<p>will mainly be directed to these SES and IEEA and at Sustainable Urban Extensions (SUEs) as part of mixed use communities being created.</p> <p>Elsewhere, policies will seek to protect Local Employment Areas (LEA) to help ensure there are jobs and services available to meet the local needs of the community and to allow enterprises to flourish at suitable sites across Central Lincolnshire.</p> <p>Outside of existing employment areas and allocated sites, economic development will typically be limited to small-scale proposals which satisfy the requirements of Policy S33 or Policy S34.</p>	
<p>Policy S34: Non-designated Employment Proposals in the Countryside</p>	<p>In locations outside of the settlements named in the Settlement Hierarchy in Policy S1, proposals for employment generating development will be limited to the expansion of an existing employment use and development proposals that support the growth of the agri-food sector or other land-based rural businesses and buildings in accordance with relevant parts of Policy S5, and only</p>	

where the following criteria are satisfied:

- a) It would be consistent in scale with its rural location, without unacceptable environmental and/or visual impacts; and
- b) It would not adversely affect existing local community services and facilities; and
- c) It is designed to be compatible with the landscape in which it would be situated; and
- d) It would not cause undue harm to the open nature of the countryside or any site protected for its natural or heritage qualities, including designated and non-designated sites; and
- e) It will not impact unacceptably on the local and/or strategic highway network; and
- f) In the case of a conversion, the building is not in such a state of dereliction or disrepair that significant

	reconstruction would be required.	
<p>Policy S45: Strategic Infrastructure Requirements</p>	<p>New Development should be supported by, and have good access to infrastructure.</p> <p>Infrastructure Planning permission will only be granted if it can be demonstrated that there is, or will be, sufficient infrastructure capacity to support and meet all the necessary requirements arising from the proposed development. Development proposals must consider all of the infrastructure implications of a scheme; not just those on the site or its immediate vicinity. Conditions or planning obligations, as part of a package or combination of infrastructure delivery measures, are likely to be required for many proposals to ensure that new development meets this principle.</p> <p>Consideration must be given to the likely timing of infrastructure provision. As such, development may need to be phased. Conditions or a planning obligation may be used to secure this phasing arrangement.</p>	<p>The Proposed Development has secured a grid connection agreement to allow export and import of electricity to and from the National Grid by 2030. The Springwell Substation would facilitate the export and import of electricity from the Proposed Development to the National Grid. Further details are included in the Grid Connection Statement [EN010149/APP/7.6].</p>

Healthcare Facilities

Proposals for new health care facilities should relate well to public transport services, walking and cycling routes and be easily accessible to all sectors of the community. Proposals which utilise opportunities for the multi-use and co-location of health facilities with other services and facilities, and thus co-ordinate local care and provide convenience for the community, will be particularly supported. Planning obligations are likely to require contributions to primary healthcare provision where there is a demonstrated shortfall in capacity.

Education Provision

Proposals for new or extended school facilities will be expected to relate well to the population that they are to serve, ensuring that they are easily accessible for all. Conditions or planning obligations are likely to require education provision where there is a demonstrated shortfall in capacity.

Development Contributions

	<p>Developers will be expected to contribute towards the delivery of relevant infrastructure, either through direct provision or contribution towards the provision of local and strategic infrastructure to meet the needs arising from the development either alone or cumulatively with other developments.</p>	
<p>Policy S47: Accessibility and Transport</p>	<p>Development proposals which contribute towards an efficient and safe transport network that offers a range of transport choices for the movement of people and goods will be supported.</p> <p>All developments should demonstrate, where appropriate, that they have had regard to the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Located where travel can be minimised and the use of sustainable transport modes maximised; b) Minimise additional travel demand through the use of measures such as travel planning, safe and convenient public transport, car clubs, walking and cycling links and integration with existing infrastructure; 	<p>The location of the Proposed Development and site selection process considered a range of factors including accessibility, and public rights of way. The site was chosen due to its good access to the local highway. Appendix 14.1 Transport Assessment of the ES Vol.3 [EN010149/APP/6.3] sets out the access strategy for the construction and operation of the Proposed Development.</p> <p>As illustrated in Figure 3.1: Zonal Masterplan of the ES Vol.2 [EN010149/APP/6.2] of the ES, construction accesses are indicatively located at A15, B1202, B1188, B1191, Gorse Hill Lane, Navenby Lane, and Temple Road.</p> <p>The Proposed Development will implement a Travel Plan as Appendix 1 to the oCTMP [EN010149/APP/7.8] to reduce the volume of construction staff and employee trips to the Proposed Development, while encouraging the use of lower carbon modes of transport by identifying and communicating local bus connection and pedestrian/cycle access routes to/from the Proposed Development to all construction staff. Cycle parking may be provided within the construction compounds. Due to the nature of the Proposed Development, there are no set cycle parking standards within local policy to conform to, thus it is proposed that cycle parking will be</p>

	<p>c) Making allowance for low and ultra-low emission vehicle refuelling infrastructure.</p> <p>Delivering Transport Related Infrastructure All development proposals should have regard to the IDP, and, where necessary contribute to the delivery of the following transport objectives, either directly where appropriate (such as the provision of infrastructure or through the contribution of land to enable a scheme to occur) or indirectly (such as through developer contributions as set out in Policy S45).</p> <p>For Strategic Transport Infrastructure:</p> <p>d) Improve and manage the strategic highway infrastructure for a range of users and increased capacity where appropriate and viable;</p> <p>e) Improve and manage the wider road infrastructure to benefit local communities including through the use of traffic management and calming initiatives where appropriate on rural roads,</p>	<p>provided on a demand-led basis. Details of cycle parking provision will be determined at the detailed design stage.</p> <p>The Proposed Development will implement a Travel Plan as Appendix 1 to the oCTMP [EN010149/APP/7.8]. As set out in the Travel Plan, construction workers will be directed to park at main compounds. Onward transport to satellite compounds and working areas will be facilitated through the use of minibuses. The dedicated construction car parks are to be located at or adjacent to each of the main construction compounds, with limited parking also found at the satellite construction compounds for visitors and minibuses.</p> <p>The Proposed Development includes opportunities for enhancement such as proposals to provide three new PRow and four permissive paths, as well as improvements to existing PRow. As part of Public Rights of Way (PRow) improvements, a new pedestrian refuge island (crossing point) will be constructed in the centre of the A15/B1191/Temple Road junction in the existing hatched area to assist with pedestrians crossing. This island will allow pedestrians to cross each half separately while providing a safe waiting area.</p> <p>Chapter 14: Traffic and Transport of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] confirms that due to measures proposed for construction, the Proposed Development will not result in residual adverse effects upon highway safety or generate any highway capacity issues. Proposed mitigation measures include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upgrade of A15 / B1191 / Temple Road to provide improvement to existing conditions for all users inclusive of a non-motorised user crossing point;
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	<p>and key transport links in the towns and villages;</p> <p>f) Deliver opportunities for improved road and rail interaction, and avoiding impacts upon level crossings;</p> <p>g) Improve, extend and manage the strategic cycling network for a range of users;</p> <p>h) Support the enhancement of existing or proposed transport interchanges;</p> <p>i) Improve and manage the strategic highway infrastructure, wider road infrastructure and public rights of way network to deliver biodiversity net gain, including improved connectivity and extent of green infrastructure guided by local nature recovery strategy; and</p> <p>j) Explore opportunities to utilise waterways for transport, particularly freight.</p> <p>For Public and Community Transport Infrastructure and Services:</p> <p>k) Assist in the implementation of infrastructure which will help</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A15/Gorse Hill Lane with improved junction infrastructure and surfacing for all users; • B1191 RAF Digby and Ashby-de-la-Launde widening for improved passing opportunities for all HGVs; and • Vehicle passing bays along Temple Road to ensure safe passage of vehicles and AILs during construction. <p>The design of the Proposed Development has been guided by design objectives in response to the local context to develop a good design that balances the need to maximise renewable energy generation from the Proposed Development, whilst minimising potential adverse impacts and providing mitigation and enhancement measures where practicable, as set out in the Design Approach Document [EN010149/APP/7.3] and Design Commitments [EN010149/APP/7.4].</p>
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	<p>all communities in Central Lincolnshire, including people living in villages and small settlements, to have opportunities to travel without a car for essential journeys;</p> <p>l) Improve the integration, efficiency, accessibility, safety, convenience and comfort of public transport stations, including both rail and buses;</p> <p>m) Deliver flexible transport services that combine public and community transport, ensuring that locally based approaches are delivered to meet the needs of communities;</p> <p>n) Assist in bringing forward one or more mobility hubs in the Lincoln area.</p> <p>To demonstrate that developers have considered and taken into account the requirements of this policy, an appropriate Transport Statement/ Assessment and/ or Travel Plan should be submitted with proposals, with the precise form dependent on the scale and nature of development and agreed through early discussion with the local</p>	
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	<p>planning or highway authority and external bodies where relevant.</p> <p>Any development that has severe transport implications will not be granted planning permission unless deliverable mitigation measures have been identified, and arrangements secured for their implementation, which will make the development acceptable in transport terms.</p>	
<p>Policy S48: Walking and Cycling Infrastructure</p>	<p>Development proposals should facilitate active travel by incorporating measures suitable for the scheme from the design stage. Plans and evidence accompanying applications will demonstrate how the ability to travel by foot or cycle will be actively encouraged by the delivery of well designed, safe and convenient access for all both into and through the site. Priority should be given to the needs of pedestrians, cyclists, people with impaired mobility and users of public transport by providing a network of high quality pedestrian and cycle routes and green corridors, linking to existing routes and public rights of way where opportunities exist, that give easy access and permeability to adjacent areas.</p>	<p>The location of the Proposed Development and site selection process considered a range of factors including accessibility, and public rights of way. The site was chosen due to its good access to the local highway. Appendix 14.1 Transport Assessment of the ES Vol.3 [EN010149/APP/6.3] sets out the access strategy for the construction and operation of the Proposed Development.</p> <p>As illustrated in Figure 3.1: Zonal Masterplan of the ES Vol.2 [EN010149/APP/6.2] of the ES, construction accesses are indicatively located at A15, B1202, B1188, B1191, Navenby Lane, Gorse Hill Lane, and Temple Road.</p> <p>The Proposed Development will implement a Travel Plan as Appendix 1 to the oCTMP [EN010149/APP/7.8] to reduce the volume of construction staff and employee trips to the Proposed Development, while encouraging the use of lower carbon modes of transport by identifying and communicating local bus connection and pedestrian/cycle access routes to/from the Proposed Development to all construction staff. Cycle parking may be provided within the construction compounds. Due to the nature of the Proposed Development,</p>

	<p>Proposals will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) protect, maintain and improve existing infrastructure, including closing gaps or deficiencies in the network and connecting communities and facilities;b) provide high quality attractive routes that are safe, direct, legible and pleasant and are integrated into the wider network;c) ensure the provision of appropriate information, including signposting and way-finding to encourage the safe use of the network;d) encourage the use of supporting facilities, especially along principle cycle routes;e) make provision for secure cycle parking facilities in new developments and in areas with high visitor numbers across Central Lincolnshire; andf) consider the needs of all users through inclusive design.	<p>there are no set cycle parking standards within local policy to conform to, thus it is proposed that cycle parking will be provided on a demand led basis. Details of cycle parking provision will be determined at the detailed design stage.</p> <p>The Proposed Development includes opportunities for enhancement such as proposals to provide three new PRow and four permissive paths, as well as improvements to existing PRow. As part of Public Rights of Way (PRow) improvements, a new pedestrian refuge island (crossing point) will be constructed in the centre of the A15/B1191/Temple Road junction in the existing hatched area to assist with pedestrians crossing. This island will allow pedestrians to cross each half separately while providing a safe waiting area.</p> <p>The design of the Proposed Development has been guided by design objectives in response to the local context to develop a good design that balances the need to maximise renewable energy generation from the Proposed Development, whilst minimising potential adverse impacts and providing mitigation and enhancement measures where practicable, as set out in the Design Approach Document [EN010149/APP/7.3] and Design Commitments [EN010149/APP/7.4].</p>
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<p>Policy S49: Parking Provision</p>	<p>...</p> <p>Part B: All Other Locations</p> <p>...</p> <p>Parking Provision Non-Residential Development All other types of development should incorporate a level of car parking that is suitable for the proposed development taking into account its location, its size and its proposed use, including the expected number of employees, customers or visitors.</p> <p>Infrastructure relating to electric vehicle charging points should be provided in accordance with Policy NS18.</p> <p>Other considerations In areas where there is a made Neighbourhood Plan containing residential parking standards, these will take precedent over the standards contained in Appendix 2.</p>	<p>The Proposed Development will implement a Travel Plan as Appendix 1 to the oCTMP [EN010149/APP/7.8]. As set out in the Outline Travel Plan, construction workers will be directed to park at main compounds. Onward transport to satellite compounds and working areas will be facilitated through the use of minibuses. The dedicated construction car parks are to be located at or adjacent to each of the main construction compounds, with limited parking also found at the satellite construction compounds for visitors and minibuses</p> <p>As set out in the Outline Operation Environmental Management Plan (oOEMP) [EN010149/APP/7.10], during operation, parking for vehicles will be available for use by workers within the Springwell Substation compound. Further details on parking provisions will be confirmed by the Contractor and provided in the OEMP.</p> <p>As set out in the Outline Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan (oDEMP) [EN010149/APP/7.13], Car parking for site staff during the decommissioning phase will be provided within the temporary Decommissioning Compounds. These would be removed upon completion of the decommissioning phase. Details of the temporary Decommissioning Compounds, including the location and size of parking provisions, loading and unloading areas for plant and materials, storage areas, wheel washing facilities will be confirmed with the Contractor and set out in the DTMP(s).</p>
<p>Policy S53: Design and Amenity</p>	<p>All development, including extensions and alterations to existing buildings, must achieve high quality sustainable design that contributes positively to local character, landscape and</p>	<p>The Planning Statement [EN010149/APP/7.2] sets out that the Proposed Development will deliver 800 MW DC of low-carbon, low-cost and UK-located solar electricity generation capacity connecting to the National Electricity Transmission System from 2028. In addition to meeting the urgent national need for secure and affordable low-carbon energy</p>

	<p>townscape, and supports diversity, equality and access for all.</p> <p>Good design will be at the centre of every development proposal and this will be required to be demonstrated through evidence supporting planning applications to a degree proportionate to the proposal. Design Codes may be produced for parts of Central Lincolnshire or in support of specific developments. The approach taken in these Design Codes should be informed by the National Model Design Code and where these codes have been adopted, developments will be expected to adhere to the Code.</p> <p>Proposals for new buildings should incorporate the Design Principles for Efficient Buildings in Policy S6 at the centre of design.</p> <p>All development proposals will be assessed against, and will be expected to meet the following relevant design and amenity criteria. All development proposals will:</p> <p>1. Context</p>	<p>infrastructure and its associated environmental and societal benefits, the Proposed Development delivers wider benefits to the environment and the local community. The Proposed Development is a substantial infrastructure asset, capable of delivering large amounts of secure, affordable low carbon electricity to local and national networks.</p> <p>As set out in section 5 of the Planning Statement [EN010149/APP/7.2], the location and design of the Proposed Development is the result of a comprehensive site selection process that was environmental, and planning led to avoid and minimise impacts as early as possible. Following this, the Proposed Development has undergone an iterative design process which has resulted in the delivery of a functional and efficient design which will deliver a large amount of renewable and low carbon electricity using solar PV arrays, whilst also being sensitive to the local context and surrounding area within which it is located, avoiding and minimising impacts on the environment as far as practicable.</p> <p>Design objectives were developed at an early stage and have guided the design response to the local context to develop a good design that balances the need to maximise renewable energy generation from the Proposed Development, whilst minimising potential adverse impacts and providing mitigation and enhancement measures where practicable, as set out in the Design Approach Document [EN010149/APP/7.3] and Design Commitments[EN010149/APP/7.4].</p> <p>The Proposed Development delivers good design, being in accordance with the design policies set out in the NPSs in the context of efficiently delivering large scale renewable energy infrastructure where it is recognised in national policy that the</p>
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	<p>a) Be based on a sound understanding of the context, integrating into the surroundings and responding to local history, culture and heritage;</p> <p>b) Relate well to the site, its local and wider context and existing characteristics including the retention of existing natural and historic features wherever possible and including appropriate landscape and boundary treatments to ensure that the development can be satisfactorily assimilated into the surrounding area;</p> <p>c) Protect any important local views into, out of or through the site;</p> <p>2. Identity</p> <p>a) Contribute positively to the sense of place, reflecting and enhancing existing character and distinctiveness;</p> <p>b) Reflect or improve on the original architectural style of the local surroundings, or embrace opportunities for innovative design and new technologies which</p>	<p>extent to which a scheme can contribute to the enhancement of the quality of the area is limited.</p> <p>The Proposed Development design does however include embedded additional measures that will deliver biodiversity enhancements; improved connectivity and enhancement of PRow through the provision of three new permissive paths and proposes a landscape strategy which is sensitive to its surroundings, by reducing the Proposed Development's impact on the landscape and providing opportunities for screening to protect residential amenities.</p> <p>The location and design of the Proposed Development accords with the site selection and technical considerations set out in NPS EN-3 for large scale solar development. The Proposed Development will also deliver a high-quality solar development design that has responded to the local and surrounding context in accordance with relevant local planning policies.</p>
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sympathetically complement or contrast with the local architectural style;
c) Use appropriate, high quality materials which reinforce or enhance local distinctiveness; d) Not result in the visual or physical coalescence with any neighbouring settlement nor ribbon development;

3. Built Form

- a) Make effective and efficient use of land that contribute to the achievement of compact, walkable neighbourhoods;
- b) Be appropriate for its context and its future use in terms of its building types, street layout, development block type and size, siting, height, scale, massing, form, rhythm, plot widths, gaps between buildings, and the ratio of developed to undeveloped space both within a plot and within a scheme;
- c) Achieve a density not only appropriate for its context but

also taking into account its accessibility;
d) Have a layout and form that delivers efficient and adaptable homes in accordance with Policy S6 and Policy S20.

4. Movement

- a) Form part of a well-designed and connected travel network with consideration for all modes of transport offering genuine choices for non-car travel and prioritising active travel and where relevant demonstrate this through evidence clearly showing connectivity for all modes and a hierarchy of routes (also see Policy S47 and Policy S48);
- b) Maximise pedestrian and cycle permeability and avoid barriers to movement through careful consideration of street layouts and access routes both within the site and in the wider context contributing to the delivery of walkable and cyclable neighbourhoods in accordance with Policy S48;

- c) Ensure areas are accessible, safe and legible for all including people with physical accessibility difficulties;
- d) Deliver well-considered parking, including suitable electric vehicle charging points, with appropriate landscaping provided in accordance with the parking standards set out in Policy NS18 and Policy S49;
- e) Deliver suitable access solutions for servicing and utilities;

5. Nature

- a) Incorporate and retain as far as possible existing natural features including hedgerows, trees, and waterbodies particularly where these features offer a valuable habitat to support biodiversity, aligned with policies in the Natural Environment chapter of the Local Plan;
- b) Incorporate appropriate landscape and boundary treatments to ensure that the development can be

satisfactorily assimilated into the surrounding area, maximising opportunities to deliver diverse ecosystems and biodiverse habitats, strengthening wildlife corridors and green infrastructure networks, and helping to achieve wider goals for biodiversity net gain, climate change mitigation and adaptation and water management;

6. Public Spaces

- a) Ensure public spaces are accessible to all, are safe and secure and will be easy to maintain with clear definition of public and private spaces;
- b) Form part of a hierarchy of spaces where relevant to offer a range of spaces available for the community and to support a variety of activities and encourage social interaction;
- c) Be carefully planned and integrated into the wider community to ensure spaces feel safe and are safe through natural surveillance, being flanked by active uses

and by promoting activity within the space;
d) Maximise opportunities for delivering additional trees and biodiversity gains through the creation of new habitats and the strengthening or extending wildlife corridors and the green infrastructure network in accordance with policies in the Natural Environment chapter;

7. Uses

- a) Create or contribute to a variety of complementary uses that meet the needs of the community;
- b) Be compatible with neighbouring land uses and not result in likely conflict with existing uses unless it can be satisfactorily demonstrated that both the ongoing use of the neighbouring site will not be compromised, and that the amenity of occupiers of the new development will be satisfactory with the ongoing normal use of the neighbouring site;

c) Not result in adverse noise and vibration taking into account surrounding uses nor result in adverse impacts upon air quality from odour, fumes, smoke, dust and other sources;

8. Homes and Buildings

a) Provide homes with good quality internal environments with adequate space for users and good access to private, shared or public spaces;

b) Be adaptable and resilient to climate change and be compatible with achieving a net zero carbon Central Lincolnshire as required by Policies S6, S7 and S8;

c) Be capable of adapting to changing needs of future occupants and be cost effective to run by achieving the standards set out in Policy S20;

d) Not result in harm to people's amenity either within the proposed development or neighbouring it through overlooking, overshadowing,

loss of light or increase in artificial light or glare;
e) Provide adequate storage, waste, servicing and utilities for the use proposed;

9. Resources

- a) Minimise the need for resources both in construction and operation of buildings and be easily adaptable to avoid unnecessary waste in accordance with Policies S10 and S11;
- b) Use high quality materials which are not only suitable for the context but that are durable and resilient to impacts of climate change in accordance with the requirements of Policy S20;

10. Lifespan

- a) Use high quality materials which are durable and ensure buildings and spaces are adaptive; and
- b) Encourage the creation of a sense of ownership for users and the wider community with a clear strategy for ongoing

	<p>management and stewardship.</p> <p>Development proposals will be expected to satisfy requirements of any adopted local design guide or design code where relevant to the proposal.</p>	
<p>Policy S57: The Historic Environment</p>	<p>Development proposals should protect, conserve and seek opportunities to enhance the historic environment of Central Lincolnshire.</p> <p>In instances where a development proposal would affect the significance of a heritage asset (whether designated or non-designated), including any contribution made by its setting, the applicant will be required to undertake and provide the following, in a manner proportionate to the asset's significance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) describe and assess the significance of the asset, including its setting, to determine its architectural, historical or archaeological interest; and b) identify the impact of the proposed works on the significance and special 	<p>Chapter 9: Cultural Heritage of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] provides an assessment of the likely effects of the Proposed Development on heritage assets. This includes a description of the significance of the heritage assets and the contribution of their setting to their significance.</p> <p>A geophysical survey of the Site has been undertaken for the Proposed Development. The results of the geophysical survey are reported in detail in Appendix 9.4 Geophysical Survey of the ES Vol.3 [EN010149/APP/6.3]. Archaeological trial trenching was undertaken across the Site, the results of which are presented in Appendix: 9.5 Archaeological Trial Trenching Report of the ES Vol.3 [EN010149/APP/6.3].</p> <p>Chapter 9: Cultural Heritage of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] assesses the likely impacts of the Proposed Development on cultural heritage, including direct and indirect, and temporary or permanent effects. It concludes there will be no residual significant adverse effects on any designated heritage assets or their setting as a result of the Proposed Development. Embedded mitigation measures have reduced any significant adverse effects on heritage assets. There would be a significant beneficial effect of the Proposed Development on Scheduled remains of former village of Brauncewell as a</p>

	<p>character of the asset, including its setting; and</p> <p>c) provide a clear justification for the works, especially if these would harm the significance of the asset, including its setting, so that the harm can be weighed against public benefits.</p> <p>Development proposals will be supported where they:</p> <p>d) protect the significance of heritage assets (including where relevant their setting) by protecting and enhancing architectural and historic character, historical associations, landscape and townscape features and through consideration of scale, design, architectural detailing, materials, siting, layout, mass, use, and views and vistas both from and towards the asset;</p> <p>e) promote opportunities to better reveal significance of heritage assets, where possible;</p> <p>f) take into account the desirability of sustaining and enhancing non-designated</p>	<p>result of the creation of permissive path to improve access to monument.</p> <p>Listed Buildings</p> <p>Chapter 9: Cultural Heritage of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] concludes that one Grade II listed building, Mile Post (20m south of Ashby Farm Lodge) is located within the Site. There are several listed buildings within 5km of the Site, as illustrated in Figure 2.1: Environmental Considerations, of the ES Vol.2 [EN010149/APP/6.2]. Mitigation measures documented within and secured by the oCTMP [EN010149/APP/7.8], the oCEMP [EN010149/APP/7.7] and the oDEMP [EN010149/APP/7.13] will avoid or mitigate construction phase impacts on listed buildings.</p> <p>Conservation Areas</p> <p>Chapter 9: Cultural Heritage of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] concludes that Blankney Conservation Area is located partly within the Site. The Scopwick and Blankney Conservation Areas are directly adjacent to the Site. Three conservation Areas, Bloxham, Metheringham, and Martin, are located within 3km of the Site. Mitigation measures documented within and secured by the oCTMP [EN010149/APP/7.8] and the oCEMP [EN010149/APP/7.7] will ensure that construction phase impacts on the conservation areas will be avoided. Visibility of the Proposed Development within the wider rural surroundings of the conservation areas would result in a minor reduction in their significance this impact would be further reduced by proposed planting which is detailed in Figure 3.3: Green Infrastructure Parameter Plan of the ES Vol.2 [EN010149/APP/6.2] and will be secured within the oLEMP [EN010149/APP/7.9]. These potential effects are not considered to be significant.</p>
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	<p>heritage assets and their setting.</p> <p>Proposals to alter or to change the use of a heritage asset, will be supported provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> g) the proposed use is compatible with the significance of the heritage asset, including its fabric, character, appearance, setting and, for listed buildings, interior; and h) such a change of use will demonstrably assist in the maintenance or enhancement of the heritage asset; and i) features essential to the special interest of the individual heritage asset are not harmed to facilitate the change of use. <p>Development proposals that will result in substantial harm to, or the total loss of, a designated heritage asset will only be granted permission where it is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh the harm or loss, and the following criteria can be satisfied:</p>	<p>Non-designated Assets / Archaeology Archaeological evaluations were undertaken for the Proposed Development and are detailed in Appendix 9.1 and 9.8 of the ES Vol.2 [EN010149/APP/6.2] in addition to Appendix 9.4 Geophysical Survey of the ES Vol.3 [EN010149/APP/6.3].</p> <p>Chapter 9: Cultural Heritage of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] provides an assessment of the Proposed Development on the historic environment, including above and below ground assets.</p> <p>It concludes that there will be no significant impacts to any designated heritage assets, including Listed Buildings or Historic Landscape Character as a result of the Proposed Development.</p> <p>Chapter 9: Cultural Heritage of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] concludes there would be no significant impacts to any designated or non-designated heritage assets as a result of the Proposed Development once embedded and additional mitigation measures are implemented.</p> <p>The substantial public benefits and need for the Proposed Development, as set out in Section 3 of the Planning Statement [EN010149/APP/7.2], including the delivery of CNP infrastructure to contribute towards meeting national energy security objectives and carbon reduction commitments, clearly and demonstrably outweigh the less than significant harm to cultural heritage assets.</p>
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j) the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and
k) no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and
l) conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and
m) the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.

Where a development proposal would result in less than substantial harm to a designated heritage asset, permission will only be granted where the public benefits, including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use, outweigh the harm.

Where a non-designated heritage asset is affected by development proposals, there will be a presumption in favour of its retention, though regard will be had

to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset. Any special features which contribute to an asset's significance should be retained and reinstated, where possible.

Listed Buildings

Permission to change the use of a Listed Building or to alter or extend such a building will be granted where the local planning authority is satisfied that the proposal is in the interest of the building's conservation and does not involve activities or alterations prejudicial to the special architectural or historic interest of the Listed Building or its setting.

Development proposals that affect the setting of a Listed Building will, in principle, be supported where they make a positive contribution to, or better reveal the significance of the Listed Building.

Conservation Areas

Significant weight will be given to the protection and enhancement of Conservation Areas.

Development within, affecting the setting of, or affecting views into or out of, a Conservation Area should conserve, or where appropriate enhance, features that contribute positively to the area's special character, appearance and setting, including as identified in any adopted Conservation Area appraisal. Proposals should:

- n) retain buildings/groups of buildings, existing street patterns, historic building lines and ground surfaces and architectural details that contribute to the character and appearance of the area;
- o) where relevant and practical, remove features which have a negative impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area;
- p) retain and reinforce local distinctiveness with reference to height, massing, scale, form, materials and plot widths of the existing built environment;
- q) assess, and mitigate against, any negative impact the proposal might have on

the townscape, roofscape, skyline and landscape; and r) aim to protect trees, or where losses are proposed, demonstrate how such losses are appropriately mitigated against.

Archaeology

Development affecting archaeological remains, whether known or potential, designated or undesignated, should take every practical and reasonable step to protect and, where possible, enhance their significance.

Planning applications for such development should be accompanied by an appropriate and proportionate assessment to understand the potential for and significance of remains, and the impact of development upon them.

If initial assessment does not provide sufficient information, developers will be required to undertake field evaluation in advance of determination of the application. This may include a range of techniques for both intrusive and non-intrusive

	<p>evaluation, as appropriate to the site.</p> <p>Wherever possible and appropriate, mitigation strategies should ensure the preservation of archaeological remains in-situ. Where this is either not possible or not desirable, provision must be made for preservation by record according to an agreed written scheme of investigation submitted by the developer and approved by the planning authority.</p> <p>Any work undertaken as part of the planning process must be appropriately archived in a way agreed with the local planning authority.</p>	
<p>Policy S58: Protecting Lincoln, Gainsborough and Sleaford's Setting and Character</p>	<p>All development proposals should contribute to the realisation of the following key principles:</p> <p>Lincoln:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Protect the dominance and approach views of Lincoln Cathedral, Lincoln Castle and uphill Lincoln on the skyline; b) Protect Lincoln's distinct built heritage and townscape character as set out in the 	<p>Lincoln The Site is located approximately 13km to the south of Lincoln.</p> <p>The Proposed Development would not have any impacts on Lincoln's built heritage and townscape character, or conservation areas and historic parks, due to its distance from the town.</p> <p>The Proposed Development would incorporate a number of green infrastructure proposals, as set out in the Outline LEMP [EN010149/APP/7.9] which would enhance the strategic green infrastructure network around Lincoln. The green</p>

	<p>Lincoln Townscape Character Assessment;</p> <p>c) Respect Lincoln's unique character and setting and relationship with surrounding villages by maintaining and enhancing a strategic green infrastructure network around and into the City, including Green Wedges (see Policy S63) to protect the City's green character and to maintain the setting and integrity of surrounding villages;</p> <p>d) Proposals within, adjoining or affecting the setting of the 11 Conservation Areas and 3 historic parks and gardens within the built up area of Lincoln, should preserve and enhance their special character, setting, appearance and respect their special historic and architectural context;</p> <p>e) Support the development of art, cultural and leisure assets and facilities, such as the Collection, the Theatre Royal, the Engine Shed, Arboretum and Whisby Nature Park, and improve</p>	<p>infrastructure proposed is illustrated in Figure 3.3: Green Infrastructure Parameters Plan of the ES Vol.2 [EN010149/APP/6.2].</p> <p>Gainsborough The Proposed Development is not located within proximity to Gainsborough and as such will have no impact on it.</p> <p>Sleaford The Site is located approximately 6km to the north of Sleaford.</p> <p>The Proposed Development would not have any impacts on Sleaford's built heritage and townscape character, or conservation areas and historic parks, due to its distance from the town.</p> <p>The Proposed Development would incorporate a number of green infrastructure proposals, as set out in the Outline LEMP [EN010149/APP/7.9] which would enhance the strategic green infrastructure network around Sleaford. The green infrastructure proposed is illustrated in Figure 3.3: Green Infrastructure Parameters Plan of the ES Vol.2 [EN010149/APP/6.2].</p>
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access to such assets and facilities; and
f) Do not detract from the open character of Lincoln's Brayford Pool and waterways, protecting and enhancing them as a major focal points in and through the City

Gainsborough

g) Take into account the Gainsborough Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal and Gainsborough Town Centre Heritage Masterplan;
h) Protect and enhance the landscape character and setting of Gainsborough and the surrounding villages by ensuring key gateways are landscaped to enhance the setting of the town, minimise impact upon the open character of the countryside and to maintain the setting and integrity of surrounding villages.

Sleaford

i) Take into account the Sleaford Masterplan, Sleaford Town Centre

	<p>Conservation Area Appraisal, Sleaford Town Centre Regeneration SPD and any subsequent guidance;</p> <p>j) Protect, conserve and, where appropriate, enhance the Castle Site, Market Place, the Bass Maltings, Money's Mill and Yard, Handley Monument and Northgate, through sensitive development and environmental improvement;</p> <p>k) Protect important local views of Sleaford, including the Bass Maltings complex and its setting, from both within and outside the town;</p> <p>l) Support the development of art, cultural and leisure assets and facilities within or close to the town centre, and improve access to such assets and facilities, such as The Hub (the National Centre for Craft and Design);</p> <p>m) Protect and enhance the River Slea Navigation Corridor as a major focal point for the town, optimising its use and value for recreation, tourism and biodiversity, and taking into</p>	
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	<p>account the opportunities identified in the Sleaford Urban Opportunities Study;</p> <p>n) Support the development of the Sleaford East West Leisure Link as the key component of the Sleaford Urban Green Grid in accordance with the Sleaford Masterplan and Central Lincolnshire Green Infrastructure Study and take opportunities to deliver improvements to the wider Green Infrastructure network</p>	
<p>Policy S59: Green and Blue Infrastructure Network</p>	<p>The Central Lincolnshire Authorities will safeguard green and blue infrastructure in Central Lincolnshire from inappropriate development and work actively with partners to maintain and improve the quantity, quality, accessibility and management of the green infrastructure network.</p> <p>Proposals that cause loss or harm to the green and blue infrastructure network will not be supported unless the need for and benefits of the development demonstrably outweigh any adverse impacts. Where adverse impacts on green infrastructure are unavoidable,</p>	<p>The Proposed Development has been designed to avoid, maintain and mitigates all significant adverse effects on internationally, nationally and locally designated sites and other important ecological features such as protected species and habitats, ancient and veteran trees, and green infrastructure during the construction, operation and decommissioning phases. This has been achieved through a considered and iterative design, that has considered and integrated green and blue infrastructure into the design from the outset, informed by a design team with qualified professional ecologists, which includes embedded avoidance and mitigation measures that are to be secured by the DCO.</p> <p>The Green Infrastructure shown on Figure 3.3: Green Infrastructure Parameters, of the ES Vol.2 [EN010149/APP/6.2] will deliver a net gain in biodiversity. Information can be found within Appendix 7.14: Biodiversity</p>

	<p>development will only be supported if suitable mitigation measures for the network are provided.</p> <p>Development proposals should ensure that existing and new green and blue infrastructure is considered and integrated into the scheme design from the outset. Where new green infrastructure is proposed, the design and layout should take opportunities to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) incorporate a range of types and sizes of green and blue spaces, green routes and environmental features that are appropriate to the development and the wider green and blue infrastructure network to maximise the delivery of multi-functionality;b) deliver biodiversity net gain and support ecosystem services;c) respond to landscape/townscape and historic character;d) support climate change adaptation and resilience including through use of appropriate habitats and species; and	<p>Net Gain Assessment of the ES Vol.3 [EN010149/APP/6.3].</p> <p>The management of the Green Infrastructure and Mitigation and Enhancement Areas will be undertaken in accordance with the oLEMP [EN010149/APP/7.9].</p> <p>The green infrastructure proposed is illustrated in Figure 3.3: Green Infrastructure Parameters Plan of the ES Vol.2 [EN010149/APP/6.2].</p>
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	<p>e) encourage healthy and active lifestyles</p> <p>Development proposals must protect the linear features of the green and blue infrastructure network that provide connectivity between green infrastructure assets, including public rights of way, bridleways, cycleways and waterways, and take opportunities to improve and expand such features.</p> <p>Development will be expected to make a contribution proportionate to their scale towards the establishment, enhancement and on-going management of green and/or blue infrastructure by contributing to the development of the strategic green infrastructure network within Central Lincolnshire, in accordance with the Developer Contributions SPD.</p>	
<p>Policy S60: Protecting Biodiversity and Geodiversity</p>	<p>All development should:</p> <p>a) protect, manage, enhance and extend the ecological network of habitats, species and sites of international, national and local importance (statutory and non-statutory), including sites that meet the</p>	<p>Chapter 7: Biodiversity of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] explains that the Proposed Development has been designed to avoid all sites statutorily designated for their biodiversity importance and to avoid or minimise impacts on sites that are non-statutorily designated for their biodiversity importance. Measures embedded within the Proposed Development design will ensure that designated sites are not significantly</p>

	<p>criteria for selection as a Local Site;</p> <p>b) minimise impacts on biodiversity and features of geodiversity value;</p> <p>c) deliver measurable and proportionate net gains in biodiversity in accordance with Policy S61; and</p> <p>d) protect and enhance the aquatic environment within or adjoining the site, including water quality and habitat.</p> <p>Part One: Designated Sites The following hierarchy of sites will apply in the consideration of development proposals:</p> <p>1. International Sites The highest level of protection will be afforded to internationally protected sites. Development proposals that will have an adverse impact on the integrity of such areas, will not be supported other than in exceptional circumstances, in accordance with the NPPF.</p> <p>Development proposals that are likely to result in a significant adverse effect, either alone or in combination with other proposals,</p>	<p>adversely impacted during construction, operation or decommissioning.</p> <p>In addition to the above, Chapter 7: Biodiversity of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] sets out that the Proposed Development has been designed to avoid key nature conservation and ecological features present within or adjacent to the draft Order limits. Accordingly, minimum buffers have been applied where practicable.</p> <p>The Proposed Development would provide extensive new tree and hedgerow planting and improvement of existing hedgerows by bolstering with a diversity of appropriate native species and 'gapping-up' where required. These will provide both a valuable habitat, forming important wildlife corridors and re-enforcing existing ones.</p> <p>Natural England has been consulted during the pre-application process, and they do not consider that internationally nor nationally designated sites would be impacted.</p> <p>The Wash Special Protection Area (SPA)/Ramsar is approximately 35km east of the Site. No qualifying species of the Wash SPA were recorded using the Site during the survey, with a single flyover Pink-footed goose (<i>Anser brachyrhynchus</i>) flock being the only qualifying species observed. As a result, in conjunction with the large distance between the Site and the SPA (c. 35km), it was not considered likely that the area within the Order Limits and surrounding area is functionally linked to the Wash SPA. Details are provided in the Habitat Regulation Assessment No Significant Effects Screening Report [EN010149/APP/7.17] which is submitted in support of the DCO Application.</p>
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	<p>on any internationally designated site, must satisfy the requirements of the Habitats Regulations (or any superseding similar UK legislation). Development requiring Appropriate Assessment will only be allowed where it can be determined, taking into account mitigation, that the proposal would not result in significant adverse effects on the site's integrity.</p> <p>2. National Sites (NNRs and SSSIs) Development proposals should avoid impact on these nationally protected sites. Development proposals within or outside a national site, likely to have an adverse effect, either individually or in combination with other developments, will not normally be supported unless the benefits of the development, at this site, clearly outweigh both the adverse impacts on the features of the site and any adverse impacts on the wider network of nationally protected sites.</p> <p>3. Irreplaceable Habitats Planning permission will be refused for development resulting in the loss, deterioration or fragmentation</p>	<p>There are five statutory designated sites within 10km of the Order Limits boundary, including: Metheringham Heath Quarry SSSI, High Dyke SSSI, Tattershall Old Gravel Pits SSSI, Tattershall Carrs SSSI.</p> <p>Chapter 7: Biodiversity of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] justifies the decision to scope out the SSSIs given the distance of the Proposed Development to statutory sites, the nature of the Proposed Development and lack of any direct hydrological connection or other obvious impact pathway, no significant effects are expected to arise from the Proposed Development.</p> <p>The areas where four Local Wildlife Sites (LWSs) will potentially be affected by the Proposed Development have been surveyed, as detailed in ES Vol.3 Appendix 7.9: Local Wildlife Site Verges [EN010149/APP/6.3]. These LWSs are all calcareous grassland road verges. These were up to c. 200 m lengths of grassland road verges: A15, Green Man Road to Cuckoo Lane LWS; A15, Slate House Farm to Dunsby Pit Plantation LWS; Temple Road Verges, Welbourn to Brauncewell; and Navenby Heath Road Verges LWS. Sections of Gorse Hill Lane LWS and Gorse Lane LWS (c. 100 m lengths adjacent to the Order Limits) were also surveyed as it was not known, at the time, whether these would also be affected by works. It is now known that the latter two LWS will not be affected by the Proposed Development.</p> <p>The oCEMP [EN010149/APP/7.7] sets out the control measures that will be implemented during construction to protect LWSs and other important habitats from direct impacts,</p>
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	<p>of irreplaceable habitats, including ancient woodland and aged or veteran trees, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy will be delivered.</p> <p>4. Local Sites (LNR, LWS and LGS) Development likely to have an adverse effect on locally designated sites, their features or their function as part of the ecological network, will only be supported where the benefits of the development clearly outweigh the loss, and the coherence of the local ecological network is maintained. Where significant harm cannot be avoided, the mitigation hierarchy should be followed.</p> <p>Part Two: Species and Habitats of Principal Importance All development proposals will be considered in the context of the relevant Local Authority's duty to promote the protection and recovery of priority species and habitats.</p> <p>Development should seek to preserve, restore and re-create priority habitats, ecological networks</p>	<p>using fencing and signage where appropriate to establish and maintain appropriate buffer zones.</p> <p>Embedded mitigation measures are outlined in Section 7.6 of Chapter 7: Biodiversity of the ES [EN01014/APP/6.1] and are further set out within the Outline CEMP [EN010149/APP/7.7], Outline OEMP [EN010149/APP/7.10] and Outline DEMP [EN010149/APP/7.13]. These include habitat avoidance, mitigation, creation and replacement measures; mitigation relating to protected and notable species; and standard mitigation measures that comply with industry good practice and environmental legislation.</p> <p>Production of a final CEMP, OEMP and DEMP will be secured via a requirement within the DCO. The Outline CEMP [EN010149/APP/7.7] includes best practice measures to ensure that activities will be confined to the minimum areas required for the works during construction, in accordance with this part of the policy.</p> <p>Section 7.10 of Chapter 7: Biodiversity of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] outlines mitigation measures pertaining to habitat avoidance, creation and replacement measures that comply with this policy.</p>
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and the protection and recovery of priority species set out in the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, Lincolnshire Biodiversity Action Plan, Lincolnshire Geodiversity Strategy and Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

Where adverse impacts are likely, development will only be supported where the need for and benefits of the development clearly outweigh these impacts. In such cases, appropriate mitigation or compensatory measures will be required.

Part Three: Mitigation of Potential Adverse Impacts

Development should avoid adverse impact on existing biodiversity and geodiversity features as a first principle, in line with the mitigation hierarchy. Where adverse impacts are unavoidable they must be adequately and proportionately mitigated. If full mitigation cannot be provided, compensation will be required as a last resort where there is no alternative.

	<p>Development will only be supported where the proposed measures for mitigation and/or compensation along with details of net gain are acceptable to the Local Planning Authority in terms of design and location, and are secured for the lifetime of the development with appropriate funding mechanisms that are capable of being secured by condition and/or legal agreement.</p> <p>If significant harm to biodiversity resulting from development cannot be avoided, adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission will be refused.</p>	
<p>Policy S61: Biodiversity Opportunity and Delivering Measurable Net Gains</p>	<p>Following application of the mitigation hierarchy, all development proposals should ensure opportunities are taken to retain, protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity features proportionate to their scale, through site layout, design of new buildings and proposals for existing buildings with consideration to the construction phase and ongoing site management.</p>	<p>As set out in Chapter 7: Biodiversity of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1], the Proposed Development has followed the mitigation hierarchy to firstly avoid, protect and then ensure opportunities are taken to enhance biodiversity features proportionate to the scale, layout, design of the Proposed Development.</p> <p>Additional mitigation for habitats and species, to avoid, prevent, reduce or offset environmental effects during the construction, operation (including maintenance) and decommissioning phases of the Proposed Development. are detailed in the oCEMP [EN010149/APP/7.7], oLEMP [EN010149/APP/7.9], oOEMP [EN010149/APP/7.10] and oDEMP [EN010149/APP/7.13], respectively.</p>

	<p>Development proposals should create new habitats, and links between habitats, in line with Central Lincolnshire Biodiversity Opportunity and Green Infrastructure Mapping evidence, the biodiversity opportunity area principles set out in Appendix 4 to this Plan and the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (once completed), to maintain and enhance a network of wildlife sites and corridors, to minimise habitat fragmentation and provide opportunities for species to respond and adapt to climate change.</p> <p>Proposals for major and large scale development should seek to deliver wider environmental net gains where feasible.</p> <p>Biodiversity Net Gain The following part of the policy applies unless, and until, subsequently superseded, in whole or part, by national regulations or Government policy associated with the delivery of mandatory biodiversity net gain arising from the Environment Act 2021. Where conflict between the policy below and the provisions of Government</p>	<p>The Proposed Development will meet a minimum 10% BNG and minimum 30-year habitat management plan and secured in the Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (oLEMP) [EN010149/APP/7.9]. ES Vol.3 Appendix 7.14: Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment [EN010149/APP/6.3] demonstrates that the Proposed Development is committed to achieve significant biodiversity net gain on site.</p> <p>Embedded mitigation measures are outlined in Section 7.6 of Chapter 7: Biodiversity of the ES [EN01014/APP/6.1] and are set out within the Outline CEMP [EN010149/APP/7.7], Outline OEMP [EN010149/APP/7.10] and Outline DEMP [EN010149/APP/7.13]. These include habitat avoidance, mitigation, creation and replacement measures; mitigation relating to protected and notable species; and standard mitigation measures that comply with industry good practice and environmental legislation.</p> <p>Production of a final CEMP, OEMP and DEMP will be secured via a requirement within the DCO [EN010149/APP/3.1]. The Outline CEMP [EN010149/APP/7.7] includes best practice measures to ensure that activities will be confined to the minimum areas required for the works during construction, in accordance with this part of the policy.</p> <p>Section 7.6 of Chapter 7: Biodiversity of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] outlines mitigation measures pertaining to habitat avoidance, creation and replacement measures that comply with this part of the policy.</p>
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regulations or national policy arises, then the latter should prevail.

All qualifying development proposals must deliver at least a 10% measurable biodiversity net gain attributable to the development. The net gain for biodiversity should be calculated using Natural England's Biodiversity Metric.

Biodiversity net gain should be provided on-site wherever possible. Off-site measures will only be considered where it can be demonstrated that, after following the mitigation hierarchy, all reasonable opportunities to achieve measurable net gains on-site have been exhausted or where greater gains can be delivered off-site where the improvements can be demonstrated to be deliverable and are consistent with the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

All development proposals, unless specifically exempted by Government, must provide clear and robust evidence for biodiversity net gains and losses in the form of a biodiversity gain plan, which should ideally be submitted with the

planning application (or, if not, the submission and approval of a biodiversity gain plan before development commences will form a condition of any planning application approval), setting out:

- a) information about the steps to be taken to minimise the adverse effect of the development on the biodiversity of the onsite habitat and any other habitat;
- b) the pre-development biodiversity value of the onsite habitat;
- c) the post-development biodiversity value of the onsite habitat following implementation of the proposed ecological enhancements/interventions;
- d) the ongoing management strategy for any proposals;
- e) any registered off-site gain allocated to the development and the biodiversity value of that gain in relation to the development; and
- f) exceptionally any biodiversity credits purchased for the development through a recognised and deliverable offsetting scheme.

	<p>Demonstrating the value of the habitat (pre and post-development) with appropriate and robust evidence will be the responsibility of the applicant. Proposals which do not demonstrate that the post-development biodiversity value will exceed the pre-development value of the onsite habitat by a 10% net gain will be refused.</p> <p>Ongoing management of any new or improved onsite and offsite habitats, together with monitoring and reporting, will need to be planned and funded for 30 years after completion of a development</p>	
<p>Policy S66: Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows</p>	<p>Development proposals should be prepared based on the overriding principle that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the existing tree and woodland cover is maintained, improved and expanded; and • opportunities for expanding woodland are actively considered, and implemented where practical and appropriate to do so. <p>Existing Trees and Woodland</p>	<p>Chapter 7: Biodiversity of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] concludes there would be no loss of ancient woodland or veteran trees as a result of the Proposed Development.</p> <p>The Arboricultural Impact Assessment which forms ES Vol.3 Appendix 7.12 [EN010149/APP/6.3] to Chapter 7: Biodiversity of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] explains that of the individual trees recorded many had habitat features that are valuable wildlife resources. Five had sufficient qualities and features to be considered veteran trees; T118, T119, T175, T180 (now outside the Order Limits) and T124 (within the revised Order Limits).</p> <p>As detailed within the Design Commitments [EN010149/APP/7.4], mitigation measures are proposed to</p>

	<p>Planning permission will only be granted if the proposal provides evidence that it has been subject to adequate consideration of the impact of the development on any existing trees and woodland found on-site (and off-site, if there are any trees near the site, with 'near' defined as the distance comprising 12 times the stem diameter of the off-site tree). If any trees exist on or near the development site, 'adequate consideration' is likely to mean the completion of a British Standard 5837 Tree Survey and, if applicable, an Arboricultural Method Statement</p> <p>Where the proposal will result in the loss or deterioration of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) ancient woodland; and/or b) the loss of aged or veteran trees found outside ancient woodland, <p>permission will be refused, unless and on an exceptional basis the need for, and benefits of, the development in that location clearly outweigh the loss.</p> <p>Where the proposal will result in the loss or deterioration of a tree protected by a Tree Preservation</p>	<p>ensure that tree roots will be protected through buffering and a minimum 15m offset from woodland.</p> <p>Hedgerows and hedgerow trees would be protected by a minimum 10m buffer as secured in the Design Commitments [EN010149/APP/7.4]; however, several sections of hedgerow would need to be removed to facilitate cable installation and access. The assessment in Chapter 7: Biodiversity of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] concludes that this hedgerow loss would be a temporary adverse effect, that is not significant.</p> <p>Measures to protect retained trees and hedgerows will be put in place and secured through a detailed CEMP, DEMP and LEMP as requirements of the DCO. These measures will need to be substantially in accordance with the measures set out in the Outline CEMP [EN010149/APP/7.7], Outline DEMP [EN010149/APP/7.13] and Outline LEMP [EN010149/APP/7.9] to ensure that impacts are minimised and that the Proposed Development is implemented in accordance with the detailed management plans.</p> <p>In addition to the above, Chapter 7: Biodiversity of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] sets out that the Proposed Development has been designed to avoid key nature conservation and ecological features present within or adjacent to the draft Order limits where possible. Accordingly, minimum buffers have been applied where practicable.</p> <p>The Proposed Development would provide extensive new tree and hedgerow planting and improvement of existing hedgerows by bolstering with a diversity of appropriate native species and 'gapping-up' where required. These will provide</p>
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	<p>Order or a tree within a Conservation Area, then permission will be refused unless:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">c) there is no net loss of amenity value which arises as a result of the development; ord) the need for, and benefits of, the development in that location clearly outweigh the loss. <p>Where the proposal will result in the loss of any other tree or woodland not covered by the above, then the Council will expect the proposal to retain those trees that make a significant contribution to the landscape or biodiversity value of the area, provided this can be done without compromising the achievement of good design for the site.</p> <p>Mitigating for loss of Trees and Woodland Where it is appropriate for higher value tree(s) (category A or B trees (BS5837)) and/or woodland to be lost as part of a development proposal, then appropriate mitigation, via compensatory tree planting, will be required. Such tree</p>	<p>both a valuable habitat, forming important wildlife corridors and re-enforcing existing ones.</p>
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planting should be on-site wherever possible and should:

e) take all opportunities to meet the six Tree Planting Principles (see supporting text); and

f) unless demonstrably impractical or inappropriate, provide the following specific quantity of compensatory trees:

Trunk diameter(mm) at 1.5m above ground of tree lost to development	Number of replacement trees required, per tree lost*
75-200	1
210-400	4
410-600	6
610-800	3
810-1000	10
1000+	11

* replacement based on selected standards 10/12 cm girth at 1m

New Trees and Woodland

Where appropriate and practical, opportunities for new tree planting should be explored as part of all development proposals (in addition to, if applicable, any necessary

compensatory tree provision).
Where new trees are proposed, they should be done so on the basis of the five Tree Planting Principles. Proposals which fail to provide practical opportunities for new tree planting will be refused.

Planting schemes should include provision to replace any plant failures within five years after the date of planting. Planting of trees must be considered in the context of wider plans for nature recovery which seeks to increase biodiversity and green infrastructure generally, not simply planting of trees, and protecting / enhancing soils, particularly peat soils. Tree planting should only be carried out in appropriate locations that will not impact on existing ecology or opportunities to create alternative habitats that could deliver better enhancements for people and wildlife, including carbon storage. Where woodland habitat creation is appropriate, consideration should be given to the economic and ecological benefits that can be achieved through natural regeneration. Any tree planting should use native and local

provenance tree species suitable for the location.

Management and Maintenance

In instances where new trees and/or woodlands are proposed, it may be necessary for the council to require appropriate developer contributions to be provided, to ensure provision is made for appropriate management and maintenance of the new trees and/or woodland.

Hedgerows

Proposals for new development will be expected to retain existing hedgerows where appropriate and integrate them fully into the design having regard to their management requirements.

Proposals for new development will not be supported that would result in the loss of hedges of high landscape, heritage, amenity or biodiversity value unless the need for, and benefits of, the development clearly outweigh the loss and this loss can be clearly demonstrated to be unavoidable.

Development requiring the loss of a hedgerow protected under The

	<p>Hedgerow Regulations will only be supported where it would allow for a substantially improved overall approach to the design and landscaping of the development that would outweigh the loss of the hedgerow. Where any hedges are lost, suitable replacement planting or restoration of existing hedges, will be required within the site or the locality, including appropriate provision for maintenance and management.</p>	
<p>Policy S67: Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land</p>	<p>Proposals should protect the best and most versatile agricultural land so as to protect opportunities for food production and the continuance of the agricultural economy.</p> <p>With the exception of allocated sites, significant development resulting in the loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land will only be supported if:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) The need for the proposed development has been clearly established and there is insufficient lower grade land available at that settlement (unless development of such lower grade land would be 	<p>The Applicant has developed the design of the Proposed Development to prioritise the use of BMV land for arable production where practicable. This has been assessed through the Chapter 11: Land, Soil and Groundwater of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] and has included amendments to the Order Limits and potential areas for Solar Development.</p> <p>Agricultural land quality was a key consideration in the Applicant's site selection process as set out in the Design Approach Document [EN010149/APP/7.3] and Design Commitments [EN010149/APP/7.4]. The agricultural land design principles incorporate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All fields comprising solely of Grades 1 or 2 land within the site will remain in arable production; • Prioritise the use of BMV land for arable production where practicable; and • Prioritise the use on non-BMV land for habitat creation where practicable.

	<p>inconsistent with other sustainability considerations); and</p> <p>b) The benefits and/or sustainability considerations outweigh the need to protect such land, when taking into account the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land; and</p> <p>c) The impacts of the proposal upon ongoing agricultural operations have been minimised through the use of appropriate design solutions; and</p> <p>d) Where feasible, once any development which is supported has ceased its useful life the land will be restored to its former use (this condition will be secured by planning condition where appropriate).</p> <p>Where proposals are for sites of 1 hectare or larger, which would result in the loss of best and most versatile agricultural land, an agricultural land classification report should be submitted, setting out the</p>	<p>Section 8 of the Planning Statement [EN010149/APP/7.2] sets out the Applicant's full policy response including reasoned justification for the use of BMV land within the Order Limits.</p>
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	justification for such a loss and how criterion b has been met.	
<p>Policy S84: Ministry of Defence Establishments</p>	<p>Part Two: Development affecting MOD establishments Development will not be supported where it would adversely affect military operations or capability unless those impacts can be appropriately mitigated in agreement with the MOD.</p>	<p>The Applicant has ongoing engagement with the MOD following Phase Two Consultation. And following further discussions, additional technical information has been provided to the MOD for further technical assessment by their SMEs.</p> <p>The Applicant accepts the site partially falls within the MOD technical safeguarding zone. The Applicant has amended the scheme in response to MOD specific request, for amendments within the technical safeguarding zone. As set out in the Design Approach Document [EN010149/APP/7.3], solar PV development was discounted from 5no. parcels of land to the north of Navenby Lane, to respond to MOD Defence Infrastructure Organisation consultation feedback in accordance with the design principle to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide appropriate offsets to local settlements and dwellings on a case-by-case basis, respecting their individual amenity. <p>The Applicant is not aware of any adverse effect from the Proposed Development but will continue to work with the MOD in this respect.</p> <p>Further engagement continues in relation to RAF Air Command, for nearby airbase operations, and above ground design of lighting, fencing and CCTV in proximity to the RAF Digby boundary.</p>

Springwell Solar Farm

Table 7 - Scopwick and Kirkby Green– Table of Compliance

Scopwick and Kirkby Green Neighbourhood Plan 2021 - 2036		
Policy	Policy Text	Assessment
Community Objective 2	To ensure that development minimises the impact on the landscape character of the Parish and protects and enhances the Significant Green Gaps within and around the villages.	<p>Chapter 10: Landscape and Visual of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] assesses the visual impact of the Proposed Development. The chapter confirms that residents within and visitors to the villages of Scopwick and Kirkby Green were scoped into the EIA. The assessment established that belts of vegetation which surround these settlements, combined with multiple additional layers of intervening hedgerow, would screen any view of the Proposed Development from within these settlements. It has therefore been assessed that there would be no view of any element of the Proposed Development, during construction, operation and maintenance or during decommissioning from any location within these villages.</p> <p>A significant impact has been identified on the PRoWs between Blankney, Scopwick and Kirkby Green extending up to Blankney Walks Lane and the railway on the eastern site boundary during construction, operation and decommissioning. Existing mature hedgerows and blocks of woodland would provide some localised screening and filtering of construction from certain parts of the routes. Notably, Trundle Lane acts as a robust visual barrier to views from PRoWs to the south of this route.</p>

		<p>The land that is required for mitigation is shown on the Green Infrastructure Parameters outlined in Appendix 1 – Green Infrastructure Parameters of the oLEMP, which are secured via the oLEMP [EN010149/APP/7.9]. The detailed Landscape and Ecology Management Plan(s) will provide details for these mitigation measures, including ongoing maintenance and monitoring. The DCO would require ongoing compliance with the LEMP(s).</p>
Community Objective 3	<p>To ensure that development delivers biodiversity net gain. The protection and enhancement of habitat corridors, hedges, trees, and the protection of Local Green Spaces will be a focus.</p>	<p>The Proposed Development will meet a minimum 10% BNG, as secured in the oLEMP [EN010149/APP/7.9]. The ES Vol.3 Appendix 7.14 BNG Assessment [EN010149/APP/6.3] demonstrates that the Proposed Development is committed to achieve significant biodiversity net gain on site.</p>
Community Objective 4	<p>To ensure that the heritage of the Parish is protected and, where possible, enhanced.</p>	<p>Chapter 9: Cultural Heritage of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] concludes there would be no significant adverse impacts to any designated or non-designated heritage assets as a result of the Proposed Development once embedded and additional mitigation measures are implemented. There is an assessed beneficial impact to Scheduled remains of former village of Brauncewell, which is significant in EIA terms.</p> <p>Section 9.6 of Chapter 8: Cultural Heritage of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] sets out steps taken to ensure heritage assets are conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, including embedded mitigation such as avoiding areas with known or suspected below-ground archaeological deposits, changes to the setting of designated and non-designated heritage assets have been avoided, site access points from the A15 have been selected to avoid works in proximity to the listed</p>

		milepost, non-intrusive construction methods will be used, and routing of HGV traffic away from Blankney and Scopwick.
Community Objective 9	<p>To ensure that future development minimises its impact on the environment by</p> <p>a) using energy efficient materials;</p> <p>b) has a layout that benefits from passive solar gain; and</p> <p>c) encourages the use of small scale renewable energy.</p>	The Planning Statement [EN010149/APP/7.2] sets out that the Proposed Development is expected to deliver approximately 800MW, in line with the grid connection agreement, of low-carbon, low-cost and UK-located solar electricity generation capacity connecting to the National Electricity Transmission System from 2028. In addition to meeting the urgent national need for secure and affordable low-carbon energy infrastructure and its associated environmental and societal benefits, the Proposed Development delivers wider benefits to the environment and the local community.
Community Objective 10	Development should not increase flood risk in the area. Innovative solutions to reduce the risk of future flooding events are supported and sustainable drainage systems should provide biodiversity benefits.	Chapter 15: Water of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] assesses flood risk and drainage in the context of EIA. This concludes that with the proposed mitigation measures to be implemented as part of the CEMP and DEMP, the risk of flooding from all sources will not change. Given the design mitigation secured through the OEMP, there will be no significant adverse effects predicted upon receptors regarding flood risk during the Proposed Development's operation.
Community Objective 11	To reduce car usage and promote health by encouraging accessibility on foot and bike within the villages, out to the countryside and to the wider area (specially to access the railway station at Metheringham) both for leisure and to access services.	Sections 14.8 and 14.10 of Chapter 14: Traffic and Transport of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] sets out the impacts to non-motorised users. The Proposed Development design incorporates mitigation to reduce adverse effects and minimise impacts on non-motorised users. The assessment finds that the effect of the Proposed Development on the non-motorised users is

		<p>expected to be minimal therefore the impact will not be significant in EIA terms.</p> <p>Chapter 14: Traffic and Transport of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] provides an assessment of the Proposed Development's impact on public rights of way within the Order Limits, or that will be impacted by the Proposed Development.</p> <p>A number of existing PRoW traverse the Proposed Development and are presented in Table 14.18, Chapter 14: Traffic and Transport of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] and have been illustrated in ES Volume 3, Appendix 14.1: Transport Assessment [EN010149/APP/6.3] and Outline Public Rights of Way and Permissive Path Management Plan [EN010149/APP/7.12].</p> <p>The Applicant has developed the design of the Proposed Development to reduce potential impacts on the PRoW network and the cultural heritage of the local landscape in accordance with the Project Principles set out in the Design Approach Document [EN010149/APP/7.3].</p> <p>This includes the provision of offsets and new planting to mitigate the views and the experience of people using the Spires and Steeples Trail, Stepping Out Walks and other local footpaths in Springwell East.</p> <p>The Outline Public Rights of Way and Permissive Path Management Plan [EN010149/APP/7.12] has been prepared in support of the DCO application. The</p>
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		<p>Outline Public Right of Way and Permissive Path Management Plan sets out the mitigation, management, and monitoring measures for PRow affected by construction which may require temporary diversion/closure, or alternative routing where the former is not possible.</p> <p>The Proposed Development includes opportunities for enhancement such as proposals to provide three new PRow and four permissive paths, as well as improvements to existing PRow, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Proposed new PRow linking RAF Digby to Scopwick;• Proposed new permissive path from Heath Road to link to the existing PRow between RAF Digby and Rowston and to enable a circular walking route;• Proposed new PRow to provide a connection between the existing PRow west of the A15 (near Navenby Lane) to New England Lane;• Proposed new permissive path along the western edge of the Proposed Development linking New England Lane to Temple Road, north of Brauncewell;• Proposed new PRow from Temple Road (north of Brauncewell) to the Bloxham Woods Car Park to provide a connection across the A15;• Proposed new permissive path linking Bloxholm Wood to Brauncewell Village;• Proposed new permissive paths creating a circular walk at Bloxholm Wood;• Improvements to the Bloxham Wood access on Heath Road; and
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposed enhancement to the existing PRow between Scopwick and Blankney.
Community Objective 13	To encourage developers to consult with the community early in the planning application process (at pre-application stage) via mechanisms outlined in this Neighbourhood Plan.	The pre-application consultation undertaken by the Applicant and how feedback from various consultees has informed the Proposed Development is documented within the Consultation Report [EN010149/APP/5.1] .
Neighbourhood Plan Policy 1: Sustainable Development, Limited Infill and the Development Boundary	<p>1. Where relevant to the scale, nature and location of the proposal, development within the Development Boundaries defined on Map 2a and Map 2b will be supported where they can demonstrate that they satisfy the principles of sustainable development by;</p> <p>a) meeting identified housing needs in SKGNP for smaller dwellings as set out in the most up to date housing need assessment (SHMA, AECOM HNA or equivalent); and</p> <p>b) being of a scale, density, layout and design that is compatible with the character, appearance and amenity of that part of the Parish as defined by the Scopwick and Kirkby Green Design Code 2020; and</p> <p>c) safeguarding any natural or built features on the site which have heritage or conservation value, wherever possible; and</p>	<p>As detailed in section 2 of the Planning Statement [EN010149/APP/7.2], the Proposed Development delivers good design.</p> <p>The Design Approach Document [EN010149/APP/7.3] and Design Commitment [EN010149/APP/7.4] establishes the Site Context. An extensive review of the wider site context of the Site, including topics such as landscape, flood risks, ecology, and the historic environments, was undertaken to provide an evidence base for the site selection. This was reviewed over a number of stages as the Site sought to avoid settlements, sensitive habitats, historically significant sites and has taken into account other technical and environmental constraints.</p> <p>The Outline Drainage Strategy, which forms an appendix of the Flood Risk Assessment [EN010149/APP/7.16], sets out how water and drainage will be managed as part of the Proposed Development. The cessation of arable agricultural activities will result in a reduction of the application of pesticides, herbicides and fertilisers within the Site. In turn, the vegetation cover will stabilise soils and reduce the mobilisation of these materials.</p>

	<p>d) promoting walking, cycling and the use of public transport; and</p> <p>e) including sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) that improve biodiversity, as well as mitigating flood risk.</p> <p>2. Outside the Development Boundaries, proposals that require planning permission will be considered against wider policies in the Development Plan, including as appropriate, the policies of this Neighbourhood Plan.</p> <p>3. Within the Development Boundaries, residential development on infill sites will typically be limited to those that can accommodate no more than one or two dwellings.</p> <p>4. All new development should be of a design which is adaptable and resilient to current and future flood risk and should, where appropriate, have regard to the sequential test approach to development as required by the NPPF.</p>	<p>The Sequential Test has been discussed within the Site Selection Report, which forms part of the Planning Statement [EN010149/APP/7.2], which is included as part of the DCO application.</p>
<p>Neighbourhood Plan Policy 2: Protecting the Landscape Character</p>	<p>1. In areas identified as Significant Green Gaps (see Map 3a and 3b and Table 4) planning permission will not be granted for development that adversely affects the sense of openness or their undeveloped character.</p>	<p>An assessment of landscape effects is presented in Chapter 10: Landscape and Visual of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1]. Whilst the effects are reported with reference to Landscape Character Assessments (LCAs), the size of the LCA is not a factor in determining the significance of the effect. The extent of significant effects</p>

	<p>2. Exceptions to the approach set out in Policy 2 (1) above will only be considered favourably where the benefits of development significantly and demonstrably outweigh the adverse impacts.</p> <p>3. Development within the view cones that will affect the Key Views identified on Map 4a and 4b including the sense of openness and/or the sense of place should include an objective assessment of the effects the proposals will have on the landscape character. Development proposals should not obstruct or detract from the Key View or any key feature or heritage asset within the view.</p> <p>4. Development proposals should show how they have regard to the relevant design principles set out in the Scopwick and Kirkby Green Design Code 2020.</p> <p>5. Proposals should avoid rigid building lines and uniform building design and should include appropriate boundary treatment such as dry-stone walling, enhance the landscape character and will be supported.</p> <p>6. As appropriate to their scale, nature and location, mitigation planting and</p>	<p>on landscape character are defined with reference to physical features in the landscape and not the LCA as a whole.</p> <p>Chapter 10: Landscape and Visual of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] assesses the visual impact of the Proposed Development. The chapter confirms that the receptor of the residents and visitors within the villages of Scopwick and Kirkby Green have been scoped into the EIA assessment. The assessment established that belts of vegetation which surround these settlements, combined with multiple additional layers of intervening hedgerow, would screen any view of the Proposed Development from within these settlements. It has therefore been assessed that there would be no view of any element of the Proposed Development, during construction, operation and maintenance or during decommissioning from any location within these villages.</p> <p>A significant impact has been identified on the PRowS between Blankney, Scopwick and Kirkby Green extending up to Blankney Walks Lane and the railway on the eastern site boundary during construction, operation and decommissioning. Existing mature hedgerows and blocks of woodland would provide some localised screening and filtering of construction from certain parts of the routes. Notably, Trundle Lane acts as a robust visual barrier to views from PRowS to the south of this route.</p> <p>Chapter 7: Biodiversity of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] sets out embedded mitigations including improvement of existing hedgerows by bolstering with a diversity of appropriate native species and 'gapping-up' where</p>
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	<p>boundary treatment should include native species.</p> <p>7. Development should present a soft boundary to the open countryside (potentially including native hedges, low limestone walls and native trees) to minimise the impact of development on the landscape character</p>	<p>required and mitigation through strategic areas for new tree and hedgerow planting.</p> <p>The land that is required for mitigation are shown on the Green Infrastructure Parameters outlined in Appendix 1 – Green Infrastructure Parameters of the oLEMP, which are secured via the oLEMP [EN010149/APP/7.9]. The detailed Landscape and Ecology Management Plan(s) will set out the details for these mitigation measures, including ongoing maintenance and monitoring. The DCO would require ongoing compliance with the LEMP(s).</p>
<p>Neighbourhood Plan Policy 3: Protecting and Enhancing Biodiversity</p>	<p>1. As appropriate to their scale, nature and location development proposals should provide at least 10% net biodiversity gain in line with the applicable legislative requirements. Enhancement measures may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) strengthening hedgerows (gapping up) and field boundaries to provide more robust habitat ‘corridors’, b) planting wild flower meadows and strips, c) encouraging native tree and shrub planting on suitable sites, especially species that provide good berry or nectar sources. 	<p>The Proposed Development will meet a minimum 10% BNG as secured in the oLEMP [EN010149/APP/7.9]. The ES Vol.3 Appendix 7.14 BNG Assessment [EN010149/APP/6.3] demonstrates that the Proposed Development is committed to achieve significant biodiversity net gain on site.</p>

d) for major development, encouraging the creation of sustainable urban drainage schemes (SuDS) that provide multi benefits (rain gardens, pond and wetland creation and recreational amenity) in new schemes and 'retrofitting' where appropriate,

e) the installation of habitat features (i.e. nest boxes) to benefit all bats and bird species of conservation concern, such as swifts, swallow, house martin and house sparrow, and

f) protecting dry ditches - as these features are essential to the sustainable management of surface water.

2. Trees and hedgerows are significant to the character of the villages and should be protected and retained. Where it is appropriate for higher value tree(s) (category A or B trees – BS5837) 31 to be lost as part of a development proposal, then appropriate mitigation, via compensatory tree planting, will be required. Such tree planting should be on-site wherever possible, be of an appropriate species for the site and take

	<p>all opportunities to meet the six Tree Planting Principles.</p> <p>3. Proposals that result in a net increase in tree coverage enhance carbon sequestration and will be supported (unless such additional tree cover is likely to have a negative net carbon impact (such as planting on peat soils).</p>	
<p>Neighbourhood Plan Policy 5 Conservation and Enhancement of Non-Vehicular Routes</p>	<p>1. Improving or extending the non-vehicular routes across the Parish will be supported where the proposals;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) do not detract from the landscape character as defined in the most recent Landscape Character Assessment Study and the Scopwick and Kirkby Green Design Code; and b) will not harm locally protected habitats. <p>2. Where applicable, development proposals will be expected to demonstrate how they protect and where possible enhance existing public rights of way and permissive routes. Opportunities to improve non-vehicular linkages between existing routes from the edge of Scopwick village to the centre and/or out into the countryside are supported.</p>	<p>Sections 14.8 and 14.10 of Chapter 14: Traffic and Transport of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] sets out the impacts to non-motorised users. The Proposed Development design incorporates mitigation to reduce adverse effects and minimise impacts on non-motorised users. The assessment finds that the effect of the Proposed Development on the non-motorised users is expected to be minimal therefore the impact will not be significant in EIA terms.</p> <p>Chapter 14: Traffic and Transport of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] provides an assessment of the Proposed Development's impact on public rights of way within the Order Limits, or that will be impacted by the Proposed Development.</p> <p>A number of existing PRoW traverse the Proposed Development and are presented in Table 14.18, Chapter 14: Traffic and Transport of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] and have been illustrated in ES Volume 3, Appendix 14.1: Transport Assessment [EN010149/APP/6.3] and Outline Public Rights of Way</p>

and Permissive Path Management Plan [EN010149/APP/7.12].

The **Outline Public Rights of Way and Permissive Path Management Plan [EN010149/APP/7.12]** has been prepared in support of the DCO application. The **Outline Public Right of Way and Permissive Path Management Plan** sets out the mitigation, management, and monitoring measures for PRow affected by construction which may require temporary diversion/closure, or alternative routing where the former is not possible.

The Proposed Development includes opportunities for enhancement such as proposals to provide three new PRow and four permissive paths, as well as improvements to existing PRow, as follows:

- Proposed new PRow linking RAF Digby to Scopwick;
- Proposed new permissive path from Heath Road to link to the existing PRow between RAF Digby and Rowston and to enable a circular walking route;
- Proposed new PRow to provide a connection between the existing PRow west of the A15 (near Navenby Lane) to New England Lane;
- Proposed new permissive path along the western edge of the Proposed Development linking New England Lane to Temple Road, north of Brauncewell;
- Proposed new PRow from Temple Road (north of Brauncewell) to the Bloxham Woods Car Park to provide a connection across the A15;

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed new permissive path linking Bloxholm Wood to Brauncewell Village; • Proposed new permissive paths creating a circular walk at Bloxholm Wood; • Improvements to the Bloxham Wood access on Heath Road; and • Proposed enhancement to the existing PRow between Scopwick and Blankney.
<p>Neighbourhood Plan Policy 10 Protecting Heritage Assets</p>	<p>1. The effect of a proposal on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset, including their setting, will be taken into consideration when determining planning applications.</p> <p>2. Gardens and open spaces form part of the special interest of the Conservation Areas. Development will only be permitted on gardens and open spaces between buildings within the Conservation Areas where it can be demonstrated that the proposals shall not harm the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.</p>	<p>Chapter 9: Cultural Heritage of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] concludes there would be no significant adverse impacts to any designated or non-designated heritage assets as a result of the Proposed Development once embedded and additional mitigation measures are implemented. There is an assessed beneficial impact to Scheduled remains of former village of Brauncewell, which is significant in EIA terms.</p> <p>Section 9.6 of Chapter 8: Cultural Heritage of the ES [EN010149/APP/6.1] sets out steps taken to ensure heritage assets are conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, including embedded mitigation such as avoiding areas with known or suspected below-ground archaeological deposits, changes to the setting of designated and non-designated heritage assets have been avoided, site access points from the A15 have been selected to avoid works in proximity to the listed milepost, non-intrusive construction methods will be used, and routing of HGV traffic away from Blankney and Scopwick.</p>

Appendix 4 - Planning History



Reference	Address	Description	Decision
N/00/1463/79	Various Parishes	Installation of oil pipeline from Stow Park to Coningsby with spur to waddington	No Objections
N/70/1029/84	Walcott & billinghay	Installation of overhead line	Approved
98/0078/PNTEL	Adjacent Gorse Lane Navenby Lincoln	The installation of 3 no. cross polar antennas each 2.4 metres inlength and upto 2 no. 0.3m microwave dishes on the existing pylon with necessary support brackets and connecting feeder cabling	Prior Approval Not Required
99/0689/FUL	Vicarage Lane Scopwick Lincoln	Change of use of agricultural land to playfield	Approved
08/0257/PNAGR	Glebe Farm Ashby De La Launde Sleaford Lincolnshire	Construction of 2 agricultural irrigation reservoirs	Prior Approval Not Required
13/0090/PNAGR	Ashby Lodge Navenby Lane Lincoln Lincolnshire LN4 3JW	Proposed reservoir for water storage for use in irrigation scheme.	Prior Approval Not Required
14/0797/EIASCR	Land North Of Scopwick Lincoln	Erection of 47-49mw solar array with switchgear compound and connecting towers to 132kv circuit.	Screening Opinion
14/0937/FUL	Land North East Of Scopwick And West Of Railway Line (Blankney Estate) Lincolnshire	Development of a solar photovoltaic power generating installation with associated 132kv substation, transformer/inverter stations, internal access tracks, security fencing and landscaping	Approved
16/0410/VARCON	Land North East Of Scopwick LN4 3PH	Application to vary conditions 3 (Scheme of landscaping and biodiversity enhancements), 4 (Scheme of protection for Great Crested Newts), 5 (Scheme of works to ensure that archaeological remains are preserved), 8 (Provision of wheel-washing facilities), 11 (Code of Practice) and 12 (Scheme of protection for trees and hedgerows) attached to planning application 14/0937/FUL -	Approved

		Development of a solar photovoltaic power generating installation with associated 132kv substation, transformer/inverter stations, internal access tracks, security fencing and landscaping - to allow phased commencement of development.	
20/1056/PNAGR	Land At Ashby Lodge Navenby Lane Ashby De La Launde Lincoln Lincolnshire LN4 3JW	Proposed formation of an agricultural irrigation reservoir.	Prior Approval Not Required
21/0895/PNND	Beckside Barn Off Heath Road Scopwick Lincoln Lincolnshire	Proposed conversion of agricultural building to a dwelling	Prior Approval Required - Approved
21/1024/LDEXI	Land North East Of Scopwick Scopwick LN4 3PH	Certificate of Lawful development for an existing use in respect of the construction of approved access junction to B1188 and first section of road pursuant to 16/0410/VARCON - Application to vary conditions 3 (Scheme of landscaping and biodiversity enhancements), 4 (Scheme of protection for Great Crested Newts), 5 (Scheme of works to ensure that archaeological remains are preserved), 8 (Provision of wheel-washing facilities), 11 (Code of Practice) and 12 (Scheme of protection for trees and hedgerows) attached to planning application 14/0937/FUL - Development of a solar photovoltaic power generating installation with associated 132kv substation, transformer/inverter stations, internal access tracks, security fencing and landscaping - to allow phased commencement of development.	Approved
21/1630/DISCON	Beckside Barn Off Heath Road Scopwick Lincoln Lincolnshire	Application to discharge condition 2 (Contamination Risk Assessment) of planning application 21/0895/PNND- Proposed conversion of agricultural building to a dwelling	Approved

24/0377/EIASCR	Raf Digby Cuckoo Lane Scopwick Lincoln Lincolnshire LN4 3LH	Proposed office and training building - Request for Screening Opinion under Regulation 6 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017	Screening Opinion
24/0595/PNND	Grainstore Brickyard Farm Martin Road Blankney LN4 3BE	Change of use to dwelling	Prior Approval Required - Approved
24/0959/FUL	Land Off Cuckoo Lane Scopwick Lincoln Lincolnshire	Erection of a new office and training building, together with associated ancillary buildings, access (including the provision of a haul road), parking, landscaping, and all other associated works (e.g. the erection of boundary fences, external lighting, drainage, installation of a ground-mounted solar panel array and solar electrical substation as well as associated engineering, and ground modelling work).	Registered

Appendix 5 – Heritage Harm Statement



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1. Introduction

1.1. Introduction

1.1.1. The Springwell Solar Farm (the 'Proposed Development') is a new solar energy farm proposal that would deliver electricity to the national electricity transmission network.

1.1.2. The Proposed Development is defined as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) and will require a Development Consent Order (DCO) from the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, due to its generating capacity exceeding 50 MW. Legislation and national planning policy considered relevant to the determination of the DCO application identifies the need to present an assessment of harm to designated heritage assets affected by the Proposed Development and consider this in the decision as to whether to grant a DCO. The purpose of this Heritage Harm Statement is to set out the assessment of harm that the Proposed Development may have upon designated heritage assets. This is then used in the planning balance relating to the heritage national planning policy tests in the **Planning Statement [EN010149/APP/7.2]** accompanying the DCO application. This Heritage Harm Statement therefore includes the following:

- The legislative and planning policy framework context for the assessment;
- A summary of the results of the environmental impact assessment (EIA) undertaken which is presented in the **Environmental Statement (ES) [EN010149/APP/6.1]** to establish those assets affected by the Proposed Development with resultant harm to their significance; and for those assets where there is the potential for that harm to be substantial, a statement of significance is provided to explain the potential scale of the harm.
- A conclusion as to whether substantial harm is caused.
- Table 1 presents the level of harm for each designated heritage asset affected by the Proposed Development.

1.1.4. The EIA relating to Cultural Heritage is presented in **ES Chapter 9: Cultural Heritage [EN010149/APP/6.1]**. This Heritage Harm Statement draws upon the information presented in the **ES [EN010149/APP/6.1]**. Where a significant impact/ effect has been identified in the EIA and there is less clarity on the potential extent of the harm this Heritage Harm Statement explores this further.

2. Legislative and Planning Policy Framework

2.1. The Infrastructure Planning (Decisions) Regulations 2010 (as amended)

2.1.1. The Infrastructure Planning (Decisions) Regulations 2010 (as amended) apply to the determination of DCO applications under the Planning Act 2008. Regulation 3 requires the Secretary of State to have regard to the following when deciding an application:

- a. *For an application which affects a listed building or its setting, the Secretary of State ‘must have regard to the desirability of preserving the listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses’.*
- b. *For an application relating to a conservation area, the Secretary of State ‘must have regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area’.*
- c. *For an application for development consent which affects or is likely to affect a scheduled monument or its setting, the Secretary of State ‘must have regard to the desirability of preserving the scheduled monument or its setting’.*

2.2. Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 (amended by the National Heritage Act 1983 and 2002)

2.2.1. The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 (amended by the National Heritage Act 1983 and 2002) affords protection to any asset identified on the schedule of nationally important archaeological sites, known as Scheduled Monuments. Pursuant to section 33 of the Planning Act 2008, the notice and consent requirements under this Act do not apply to DCO development proposals.

2.3. Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1)

2.3.1. The overarching NPS for Energy (NPS EN-1) (Ref. 1) sets out the overall national energy policy for delivering major energy infrastructure.

2.3.2. Part 3.2 of the statement sets out how the Secretary of State should approach decision making, namely that substantial weight should be given to the need for these types of infrastructure. Part 5 of the statement sets out guidance on generic impacts for the Applicant’s assessment and decision-making on the application. These impacts concern, amongst other matters, the historic environment. Paragraph 5.9.5 details what non-designated heritage assets “have been demonstrated to be of equivalent significance to designated heritage assets of the highest significance”. The document sets out a phase progression to the heritage assessment, emphasising the need to understand the significance of a heritage asset and the contribution of their setting to that significance (paragraph 5.9.10) before assessing the extent to which that significance is impacted.

- 2.3.3. When assessing impact, NPS EN-1 identifies the potential for the significance of an asset to be harmed or lost through development.

Paragraph 5.9.28 states that ‘loss affecting any designated heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification’. This harm is described in terms of substantial harm or loss of significance. A distinction is given between substantial harm to or loss of a grade II listed building, park or garden which should be exceptional and substantial harm to or loss of designated assets of the highest significance, including Scheduled Monuments; registered battlefields; grade I and II* listed buildings; grade I and II* registered parks and gardens; and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional (paragraphs 9.9.29 and 5.9.30).

2.3.4. Paragraph 5.9.32 provides guidance on how harm should be weighed within the planning balance and states ‘[less than substantial harm] should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. These paragraphs recognise that a scale needs to be employed so that the greater the harm to the significance of the heritage asset the greater the justification will be needed for any loss. The document is clear that consent should be refused for any Proposed Development which will lead to substantial harm to or total loss of significance of a designated heritage ‘unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm to or loss of significance is necessary in order to deliver substantial public benefits that outweigh that loss or harm’ (paragraph 5.9.31).

2.3.5. NPS EN-1 makes allowance for those assets with archaeological interest not currently designated, but which are demonstrably of equivalent significance to scheduled monuments (paragraph 5.8.4). Within this it includes those assets ‘which have yet to be formally assessed for designation’. When such an asset is identified as being affected by a development, paragraph 5.8.5 makes it clear that the same policy considerations should be applied as those that apply to designated assets. This is applicable to the Proposed Development and should any non-designated assets of schedulable quality have been identified; these would have been included in Table 1. However, no such assets have been identified. The two WWII air plane crash sites identified within the Order Limits have been assessed as of high importance but are not considered to be of schedulable quality due to the fragmentary nature of any potential surviving remains.

2.3.6. The NPS for Renewable Energy (NPS EN-3) (Ref. 2) sets out specific policies for solar energy developments. Paragraph 2.10.117 notes that “applicants should consider what steps can be taken to ensure heritage assets are conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, including the impact of proposals on views important to their setting”. The Proposed Development has embedded mitigation measures to reduce the impacts on views important to the setting of heritage assets.

2.4. National Planning Policy Framework

2.4.1. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Ref. 3) was originally published in 2012 and most recently updated in December 2024. The NPPF provides more detail regarding the assessment of harm to heritage assets and is supported by the Planning Practice Guidance (Ref.

4). This document has been produced following S55 advice received from the planning inspector post-submission and therefore references the latest version of NPPF which was published post-submission.

2.4.2. The NPPF sets out the importance of being able to assess the significance of heritage assets that may be affected by a development. Paragraph 207 of the NPPF states that in determining applications, decision makers should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. Similarly, there is a requirement on decision makers, having assessed the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal; to take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset (paragraph 208). Significance is defined in Annex 2 as being the, "value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic". Significance is not only derived from an asset's physical presence, but also from its setting. The setting of a heritage asset is defined in Annex 2 as, "the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve".

2.4.3. Paragraphs 213 to 216 of the NPPF introduce the concept that heritage assets can be harmed or lost through alteration, destruction or development within their setting. This harm ranges from less than substantial through to substantial. In instances where development would cause substantial harm to or total loss of significance of a designated asset consent should be refused unless it can be demonstrated that it is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss (paragraph 214). In instances where development would cause less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated asset the harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal to provide a balanced judgement (paragraph 215).

2.4.4. With regard to non-designated assets, there is a requirement to take a balanced judgement in determining planning applications given the scale of any harm or loss against the significance of the asset (paragraph 216). Where the asset is demonstrably of equivalent significance to scheduled monuments, it should be considered subject to the policies for designated heritage assets (footnote 75).

2.5. Planning Practice Guidance

2.5.1. Further clarity on the interpretation of harm is provided within the Planning Practice Guidance (Ref. 4). Although relating to the policy outlined within the NPPF, it is transferable to the policy contained within the National Policy Statement for Energy.

- 2.5.2. The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) expands on terms such as ‘significance’ and its importance in decision making. Paragraph 018 states “What matters in assessing whether a proposal might cause harm is the impact on the significance of the heritage asset. As the NPPF makes clear, significance derives not only from a heritage asset’s physical presence, but also from its setting. Proposed development affecting a heritage asset may have no impact on its significance or may enhance its significance and therefore cause no harm to the heritage asset. Where potential harm to designated heritage assets is identified, it needs to be categorised as either less than substantial harm or substantial harm (which includes total loss) in order to identify which policies in the NPPF (paragraphs 200-202) apply. Within each category of harm (which category applies should be explicitly identified), the extent of the harm may vary and should be clearly articulated”.
- 2.5.3. Paragraph 018 emphasises that substantial harm is a high test and it is important to consider whether an adverse impact “seriously affects a key element” of an asset’s significance. It is the degree of harm to the asset’s significance rather than the scale of the development that is to be assessed.
- 2.5.4. The PPG states that in relation to setting, a thorough assessment of the impact on setting needs to take into account, and be proportionate to, the significance of the heritage asset under consideration and the degree to which proposed changes enhance or detract from that significance and the ability to appreciate it (paragraph 013).
- 2.5.5. The NPPF indicates that the degree of harm should be considered alongside any public benefits that can be delivered by development. The PPG states that these benefits should flow from the Proposed Development and should be of a nature and scale to be of benefit to the public and not just a private benefit and would include securing the optimum viable use of an asset in support of its long-term conservation (paragraph 020).

2.6. Historic England Guidance

- 2.6.1. Managing Significance in Decision Taking in the Historic Environment: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice Note 2 (GPA2, 2015, Ref. 5) contains Historic England’s guidance on implementing historic environment policy contained within the NPPF and PPG. GPA2 emphasises the importance of having a knowledge and understanding of the significance of heritage assets likely to be affected by the development and that the ‘first step for all applicants is to understand the significance of any affected heritage asset and, if relevant the contribution of its setting to its significance (paragraph 4). With regard to harm, the document clarifies that change to heritage assets is inevitable, but that the change is only harmful when significance is damaged and that ‘the nature and importance of the significance that is affected will dictate the proportionate response to assessing that change’ (paragraph 29). The document reiterates that substantial harm is a high test (paragraph 27).

3. Methodology

3.1. Introduction

- 3.1.1. All designated assets which have been identified as experiencing an adverse effect in the Environmental Statement have been considered within this document and are identified in Table 1 of this report. Adverse effects can be experienced as a direct physical impact on historic fabric, or an effect as a result of changes to an asset's setting. Effects can also be experienced during the construction of the Proposed Development as short-term, or long-term impacts, or as a result of the operation of the Proposed Development.
- 3.1.2. For the majority of assets, the effect presented in the Environmental Statement has been assessed as being not significant. No impacts of major or moderate magnitude have been identified to any designated heritage assets and as such, it is concluded that the harm caused to these assets falls within the less than substantial category. The reader is directed to **Chapter 9: Cultural Heritage** of the **ES [EN010149/APP/6.1]** and **Appendix 9.1: Desk-Based Assessment and Stage 1 Setting Assessment [EN010149/APP/6.3]** for a full consideration of the impacts to these assets and Annex A of this Statement for the categorisation of harm.
- 3.1.3. While there is no direct correlation between the significance of effect in EIA terms and the degree of harm referenced in national planning policy, it is acknowledged that those assets which are identified as experiencing a significant adverse effect are more likely to experience substantial harm. This note, therefore, provides further assessment of those heritage assets where significant effects have been identified in order to understand where on the harm spectrum this impact falls. The emphasis is placed on the level of impact for the purposes of this Heritage Harm Statement. This is consistent with the NPS and the NPPF. 'Effect' is a purely EIA term which balances the impact of a development on the heritage significance of an asset. Harm is associated with the impact on the asset and is not influenced by an asset's heritage value. It is recognised that for designated heritage assets any harm requires justification and therefore Table 2 of this report details those designated assets for which non-significant effects were identified in the EIA but where some level of adverse impact, and therefore harm has been identified. This harm is also assessed to fall within the less than substantial category. No physical harm will occur to any of these designated assets, only harm resulting from changes in their setting which will be reversed following decommissioning.
- 3.1.4. In addition, this note only discusses harm in relation to designated assets. Although non-designated assets could be identified as being of sufficient significance to meet the criteria for designation, i.e. are of 'schedulable quality', no such assets have been identified within the Proposed Development (see **ES Volume 3, Appendix 9.1: Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment and Stage 1 Setting Assessment [EN010149/APP/6.3]**). Harm can be caused to non-designated heritage assets; however, there is no policy requirement to distinguish between

substantial and less than substantial harm (unless demonstrably of equivalent

significance to a scheduled monument). Therefore, impacts to non-designated assets are not explored within this statement. These impacts are outlined in **Chapter 9: Cultural Heritage** of the **ES [EN010149/APP/6.1]**.

- 3.1.5. This note considers the significance of the assets to enable an understanding of how the impact is experienced. In particular, it establishes the degree to which the setting of an asset makes a contribution to significance, in recognition of the fact that no designated asset will be physically impacted by the Proposed Development. There follows a discussion of the impact of the Proposed Development on the identified significance, or on the ability to perceive that significance, and the resultant level of harm. This takes into consideration embedded mitigation within the Proposed Development.
- 3.1.6. The conclusion outlines the level of harm and the significance of the designated heritage assets affected by the Proposed Development, in accordance with national planning policy and guidance.

3.2. Statement of Significance

- 3.2.1. As reported within Chapter 9 of the **Environmental Statement [EN010149/APP/6.1]**, one designated asset has been identified as experiencing significant adverse effects on its heritage value:

Braucewell Medieval Village (Scheduled Monument; NHLE 1018397)

- 3.2.2. Braucewell Medieval Village (Scheduled Monument; NHLE 1018397) is located partly within the Order Limits on the south side of Springwell West. The monument derives significance from its archaeological interest as the earthwork remains of a medieval village. The physical and historic association with the surviving church within the monument (separately designated as a Grade II Listed Building, NHLE 1254135) and with the non-designated farm buildings outside the scheduled monument contribute to this archaeological and historic interest. The immediate rural surroundings, including fields containing earthwork ridge and furrow to the north of the monument also contribute to the significance of the asset by providing appropriate context to the former rural settlement.

3.3. Harm Assessment

- 3.3.1. Braucewell Medieval Village (Scheduled Monument; NHLE 1018397) will experience both adverse and beneficial effects as a result of the Proposed Development. The adverse impact arises from changes within the setting of the monument through siting of solar arrays in the wider agricultural surroundings that contribute to its significance. This impact has been minimised through embedded mitigation comprising converting the field closest to the monument to grassland habitat to preserve the remains of ridge and furrow associated with the medieval village and the proposed vegetation planting to screen the panels from views from the monument

(identified by the **Works Plans [EN010149/APP/2.3]**). The earthworks of the medieval village will continue to be experienced in an immediate agricultural setting, and the relationship with the surviving church and farm buildings will be retained.

- 3.3.2. Despite the carefully designed mitigation, there remains an impact on the medieval village due to the introduction of modern infrastructure within a formerly agricultural landscape. The landscape will continue to be read as open fields; however, the modern infrastructure is in conflict with the historic setting of the asset. In addition, while the development will be screened from the monument, the fields remain part of the setting of the asset as a whole. The character of the setting as individual fields will be maintained through the retention of existing boundaries, with development remaining low level. The development is also reversible, and, upon decommissioning the landscape can revert back to its current form.
- 3.3.3. As noted above, beneficial impacts will also occur to Brauncewell medieval village as a result of the Proposed Development. The beneficial effects arise from the creation of a permissive path to allow more people to appreciate the asset. Installation of interpretation boards on or close to this permissive path would provide further benefits.
- 3.3.4. Paragraph 018 of the PPG recognises that substantial harm to a designated heritage asset, which includes total loss, is a high test which may not arise in many circumstances. While there will be some loss of significance to Brauncewell medieval village during the lifetime of the Proposed Development, the loss will be negligible ("very minor changes to setting that hardly affect [the asset]" - as defined in Table 9.6 of the ES) and the harm will be at the lower end of less than substantial.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1.1. Both the NPS EN-1 and NPPF require an assessment of harm to heritage significance. The NPPF further categorises that harm into 'substantial' and 'less than substantial'. The PPG which supports the NPPF heritage policies expects potential harm to designated heritage assets to be categorised as either less than substantial harm or substantial harm (which includes total loss) and that within each category of harm identified, the extent of the harm should be clearly articulated.
- 4.1.2. **Chapter 9: Cultural Heritage** of the **ES [EN01010149/APP/6.1]** has identified a number of effects to designated and non-designated assets as a result of the proposals. The majority of these are not significant and in the case of the designated heritage assets affected (outlined in Table 1) the effects can be reasonably equated with less than substantial harm, at the lower end of the spectrum.
- 4.1.3. The ES identifies significant effects to a single scheduled monument. Significant effects have a greater potential to represent substantial harm and have, therefore been assessed in this Statement in detail, non-significant effects to designated heritage assets may represent substantial or less than substantial harm. In this case the magnitude of impact is negligible, reflecting a low level of harm to significance and the significance of effect is a product of the high importance of this heritage asset.
- 4.1.4. The Scheduled Brauncewell Medieval Village (NHLE 1018397) represents a good example of earthwork remains of a medieval village, associated with a surviving medieval church and later farm complex. The setting of the earthwork remains will experience a change through alterations within the surrounding agricultural landscape. Specifically, land approximately 400 m northwest of the monument and approximately 600 m to the north of the monument will be utilised for solar arrays and some visibility of the arrays is predicted from the monument though this will be filtered by proposed planting. The Order Limits extend into the Scheduled Monument to accommodate a proposed permissive path. These changes will slightly alter the appreciation of the wider rural surroundings and their contribution to the significance of the monument, however their historic relationship will remain. The changes do not constitute substantial harm to the significance of the asset as a whole and therefore less than substantial harm to the significance of the asset as result of the Proposed Development is concluded.

5. References

- 5.1.1. Ref. 1 BEIS (2024) National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1)
- 5.1.2. Ref. 2 BEIS (2024) National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy (EN-3)
- 5.1.3. Ref. 3 Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) (2024) National Planning Policy Framework.
- 5.1.4. Ref. 4 Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2019) Planning Practice Guidance.
- 5.1.5. Ref. 5 Historic England (2015) Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 2. Managing Significance in Decision Taking in the Historic Environment.

6. Tables

6.1. Effects as reported in Environmental Statement and Harm Category Assessment Summary

Designation	Description	Description of impact	Additional Mitigation/Enhancement measure	Residual effect after mitigation	Harm category assessment
Designated Asset – Scheduled Monument	Brauncewell Medieval Village	The Proposed Development will introduce infrastructure elements in the setting of this asset that are likely to affect the ability to understand and appreciate the asset as a former rural settlement. A permissive path adjacent to the monument will increase the ability to appreciate the earthwork remains.	Any mitigation has been integrated into the design through removing panels from the field closest to the monument, and through enhancement planting within, and on the periphery of the Order limits.	<i>Negligible Not Significant</i>	Less than substantial – lower end

6.2. Effects reported in Annex 12 of Appendix 9.1 and Harm Category Assessment Summary

Designation	Description	Description of impact	Additional Mitigation/Enhancement measure	Residual effect after mitigation	Harm category assessment
Designated Asset – Conservation Area	Scopwick Conservation Area	The Proposed Development will introduce infrastructure elements in the setting of this asset that are likely to affect the ability to understand and	Any mitigation has been integrated into the design through removing panels from the fields closest to the conservation area and	<i>Minor Not Significant</i>	Less than substantial – lower end

appreciate the asset as a rural settlement.

the fields adjacent to the B1188 between Blankney and Scopwick and through enhancement planting within, and on the periphery of the Order limits.

Designated Asset – Conservation Area	Blankney Conservation Area	The Proposed Development will introduce infrastructure elements in the setting of this asset that are likely to affect the ability to understand and appreciate the asset as a rural settlement. The effects will be minor as only part of the Conservation Area (around the church) is predicted to have visibility of the Proposed Development.	Any mitigation has been integrated into the design through removing panels from the field closest to the conservation area and the fields adjacent to the B1188 between Blankney and Scopwick and through enhancement planting within, and on the periphery of the Order limits.	Minor Not Significant	Less than substantial – lower end
Designated Asset – Conservation Area	Bloxholm Conservation Area	The Proposed Development will introduce infrastructure elements in the setting of this asset that are likely to affect the ability to understand and appreciate the asset as a rural settlement. The effects will be minor as only a small part of	Any mitigation has been integrated into the design through enhancement planting within, and on the periphery of the Order limits.	Minor Not Significant	Less than substantial – lower end

the Conservation Area is predicted to have visibility of the Proposed Development at a range of 1.3 km.

<p>Designated Asset – Grade II Listed Building</p>	<p>Home Farmhouse</p>	<p>The Proposed Development will introduce infrastructure elements in the setting of this asset that are likely to affect the ability to understand and appreciate the asset as a farmhouse. The effects will be minor due to the 1 km distance to the nearest solar arrays.</p>	<p>Any mitigation has been integrated into the design through enhancement planting within, and on the periphery of the Order limits.</p>	<p>Minor Not Significant</p>	<p>Less than substantial – lower end</p>
<p>Designated Asset – Grade II* Listed Building</p>	<p>Church of St Oswald</p>	<p>Construction vehicle movement past the church will result in short term changes to the setting.</p>	<p>None necessary</p>	<p>Minor Not Significant</p>	<p>Less than substantial – lower end</p>
<p>Designated Asset – Grade II Listed Building</p>	<p>Kennel House</p>	<p>The Proposed Development will introduce infrastructure elements in the setting of this asset that are likely to affect the ability to understand and appreciate the asset as a farmhouse.</p>	<p>Any mitigation has been integrated into the design through enhancement planting within, and on the periphery of the Order limits.</p>	<p>Minor Not Significant</p>	<p>Less than substantial – lower end</p>

Designated Asset – Grade II Listed Building	Wright’s Farmhouse	The Proposed Development will introduce infrastructure elements in the setting of this asset that are likely to affect the ability to understand and appreciate the asset as a farmhouse.	Any mitigation has been integrated into the design through enhancement planting within, and on the periphery of the Order limits.	Minor Not Significant	Less than substantial – lower end
Designated Asset – Grade II Listed Building	Kirkby Green Mill	The Proposed Development will introduce infrastructure elements in the setting of this asset that are likely to affect the ability to understand and appreciate the asset as a former watermill.	Any mitigation has been integrated into the design through enhancement planting within, and on the periphery of the Order limits.	Minor Not Significant	Less than substantial – lower end
Designated Asset – Grade II Listed Building	Farmyard To The North Of Number 10 (The Manor House)	The Proposed Development will introduce infrastructure elements in the setting of this asset that are likely to affect the ability to understand and appreciate the asset as part of a farmstead.	Any mitigation has been integrated into the design through enhancement planting within, and on the periphery of the Order limits.	Minor Not Significant	Less than substantial – lower end
Designated Asset – Grade II Listed Building	37 And 39, Main Street	The Proposed Development will introduce infrastructure elements in the setting of this asset that are likely to affect the ability to understand and appreciate the asset as a pair of rural dwellings.	Any mitigation has been integrated into the design through enhancement planting within, and on the periphery of the Order limits.	Minor Not Significant	Less than substantial – lower end

Designated Asset – Grade II Listed Building	97-103 Main Street	The Proposed Development will introduce infrastructure elements in the setting of this asset that are likely to affect the ability to understand and appreciate the asset as a group of rural dwellings.	Any mitigation has been integrated into the design through enhancement planting within, and on the periphery of the Order limits.	Minor Not Significant	Less than substantial – lower end
Designated Asset – Grade II Listed Building	High House	The Proposed Development will introduce infrastructure elements in the setting of this asset that are likely to affect the ability to understand and appreciate the asset as a rural dwelling.	Any mitigation has been integrated into the design through enhancement planting within, and on the periphery of the Order limits.	Minor Not Significant	Less than substantial – lower end
Designated Asset – Grade II Listed Building	Stable Block At Blankney Hall	The Proposed Development will introduce infrastructure elements in the setting of this asset that are likely to affect the ability to understand and appreciate the asset as part of a rural estate complex. The association with other estate buildings including Blankney Hall will not be altered.	Any mitigation has been integrated into the design through enhancement planting within, and on the periphery of the Order limits.	Minor Not Significant	Less than substantial – lower end
Designated Asset – Grade II	Cottage To West Of Kirkby Green Mill	The Proposed Development will introduce infrastructure elements in the setting of this asset that are likely to affect	Any mitigation has been integrated into the design through enhancement planting within, and on the	Minor Not Significant	Less than substantial – lower end

Listed Building		the ability to understand and appreciate the asset as a rural dwelling. The association with Kirkby Green Mill will not be altered.	periphery of the Order limits.		
Designated Asset – Grade II Listed Building	Thompson's Bottom Farmhouse	The Proposed Development will introduce infrastructure elements in the setting of this asset that are likely to affect the ability to understand and appreciate the asset as a farmhouse. Relationship with associated farm buildings will not be altered.	Any mitigation has been integrated into the design through enhancement planting within, and on the periphery of the Order limits.	Minor Not Significant	Less than substantial – lower end
Designated Asset – Grade II Listed Building	Stables And Coach House At Thompson's Bottom Farmhouse	The Proposed Development will introduce infrastructure elements in the setting of this asset that are likely to affect the ability to understand and appreciate the asset as part of a farmstead.	Any mitigation has been integrated into the design through enhancement planting within, and on the periphery of the Order limits.	Minor Not Significant	Less than substantial – lower end
Designated Asset – Grade II Listed Building	Brauncewell Lodge	The Proposed Development will introduce infrastructure elements in the setting of this asset that are likely to affect the ability to understand and appreciate the asset as part of a farmstead.	Any mitigation has been integrated into the design through enhancement planting within, and on the periphery of the Order limits.	Minor Not Significant	Less than substantial – lower end

Designated Asset – Grade II Listed Building	Rowston Manor	The Proposed Development will introduce infrastructure elements in the setting of this asset that are likely to affect the ability to understand and appreciate the asset as a rural dwelling.	Any mitigation has been integrated into the design through enhancement planting within, and on the periphery of the Order limits.	Minor Not Significant	Less than substantial – lower end
Designated Asset – Grade II Listed Building	Farmyard To North Of The Firs	The Proposed Development will introduce infrastructure elements in the setting of this asset that are likely to affect the ability to understand and appreciate the asset as part of a farmstead.	Any mitigation has been integrated into the design through enhancement planting within, and on the periphery of the Order limits.	Minor Not Significant	Less than substantial – lower end
Designated Asset – Grade II Listed Building	Kirkby Green Millhouse	The Proposed Development will introduce infrastructure elements in the setting of this asset that are likely to affect the ability to understand and appreciate the asset as a rural dwelling. The association with Kirkby Green Mill will not be altered.	Any mitigation has been integrated into the design through enhancement planting within, and on the periphery of the Order limits.	Minor Not Significant	Less than substantial – lower end
Designated Asset – Grade II Listed Building	Scopwick Mill	The Proposed Development will introduce infrastructure elements in the setting of this asset that are likely to affect the ability to understand and	Any mitigation has been integrated into the design through removing panels from the fields closest to the mill and minimizing	Minor Not Significant	Less than substantial – lower end

appreciate the asset as a former mill.

visibility of panels in views of the mill and through enhancement planting within, and on the periphery of the Order limits.

<p>Designated Asset – Grade II Listed Building</p>	<p>The Manor House</p>	<p>The Proposed Development will introduce infrastructure elements in the setting of this asset that are likely to affect the ability to understand and appreciate the asset as a farmhouse. Relationship with associated farm buildings will not be altered.</p>	<p>Any mitigation has been integrated into the design through enhancement planting within, and on the periphery of the Order limits.</p>	<p>Minor Not Significant</p>	<p>Less than substantial – lower end</p>
<p>Designated Asset – Grade II Listed Building</p>	<p>Evans Farmhouse</p>	<p>The Proposed Development will introduce infrastructure elements in the setting of this asset that are likely to affect the ability to understand and appreciate the asset as a farmhouse. Relationship with associated farm buildings will not be altered.</p>	<p>Any mitigation has been integrated into the design through enhancement planting within, and on the periphery of the Order limits.</p>	<p>Minor Not Significant</p>	<p>Less than substantial – lower end</p>



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