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Submitted via PINS NSIP Portal

17 June 2025

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: Springwell Solar Farm NSIP – response to Deadline 1 submissions

This letter forms the Council's response to some of the submissions made at Deadline 1 of the Springwell Solar Farm examination.

ExQ1: Q1.1.1

NKDC notes the response from National Grid and remains concerned that there is a lack of integration between the two planning processes and proposals in respect of Springwell solar farm and the National Grid Navenby Substation (NGNS).

The submission of the NGNS has been delayed until around October 2025 by which time the Springwell NSIP Examination will have closed. The Council has not yet provided an EIA Scoping Response to the National Grid though a request has now been submitted.

There does not appear to be a meaningful fall-back position presented by either National Grid nor the Applicant to ensure that the Springwell Solar Farm could be delivered by the anticipated timescale of 2030 should the planning process for the NGNS or consenting process for the overhead powerlines be delayed (through appeal or judicial processes) or not receive consent. Each party appears to be reliant on the statutory duty upon the National Grid to provide a grid connection to its customers, however, no specific timescales appear to be associated with this commitment.

In light of National Grid's response to Q1.1.1 b) to the effect that it is for the applicant to decide whether the proposed solar farm would be undeliverable, it would be helpful if the applicant could outline whether the solar farm would indeed be undeliverable should National Grid not receive consent for the NGNS or the new overhead powerlines and within what anticipated timescale. It is noted that at ISH1, the applicant confirmed that there is no fallback if the NGNS is not delivered [REP1-073].

As a result, the Council remains concerned that the delivery of the NGNS will not align with the Springwell solar farm thereby the 'additional' benefits of renewable energy provision by 2030 (Clean Power 2030 Action Plan target) may not be achieved and should not be allocated significant weight in the planning balance over and above the Critical National Priority status of the proposals.

Updated Grid Connection Statement [REP1-58] and Written Summary of Applicant's Oral Submissions at ISH1 [REP1-073]

The Council notes the applicant's updated Grid Connection Statement, which at para 7.1.4 states that the applicant is not aware of any reason why the NGNS permission should not be obtained. The Council also notes the more detailed information on this matter contained in the applicant's Written Summary of Oral Submissions at ISH1, including Appendix 1 Response to Action Points.

At Action Point 2 [Rep1-073] the applicant sets out the national and local planning policy context to the consideration of the NGNS concluding that 'there are no obvious reasons that consent for the Navenby substation and associated overhead lines to connect it to the national grid would be withheld.'

The Council considers that at a high-level assessment of the planning policy context, there is support for the NGNS as there is for solar farms in general. However, while CLLP policy S16 supports the principle of renewable and energy related infrastructure in the countryside, there are as yet unquantified environmental impacts to consider in light of CLLP policy S53 to consider in terms of the overall planning balance.

Without prejudice to the determination of the NGNS, the applicant's statement does not address any potential reasons why the NGNS application might be refused given the objections that the Council has raised to the solar farm and the environmental topics that it has considered in its Screening Opinion for the NGNS in concluding that the NGNS proposals are EIA development.

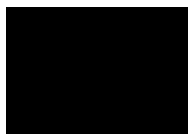
Updated outline Landscape and Environmental Management Plan [REP1-040]

The Council notes the updated outline Landscape and Environmental Management Plan (oLEMP). The Council will continue to seek additional details and commitments to grazing, contracts eg and alignment with BRE National Solar Centre Biodiversity Guidance for Solar Developments (2014).

Updated draft DCO [REP1-006]

The Council has made a number of comments on the draft DCO in its Written Representation [REP1-105]. It welcomes the amendments to the draft DCO submitted at Deadline 1 in respect of the changes proposed to Schedule 16. The Council wishes to emphasise that the additional proposed Requirement and amendments to draft Requirements (including the reference to choice of battery set out in para 7.15 of our WR) as well as to Article 40 are considered by the applicant.

Yours faithfully



**NSIP Planning Consultant
Planning Services**