

Submission ID: 37352

attached are comments arising at or from the hearings w/c 14 July 25

Points relating to the Hearings w/c 15/07/2025

Issue Specific Hearing – 15/07/2025 – ISH2

Noise and Vibration

5.2

The agenda asks about the experience of users of public rights of way during both the construction and operation phases. It is my view that the pleasure of walking the public rights of way will be ruined and the character and views will be spoiled in so many ways with construction noise being one of them.

Views of open farmland and the large skies and horizons will be replaced with views of fences, construction compounds, construction roadways, electrical infrastructure, solar panels, battery storage units and screening hedges. It is not possible that these components can be introduced, at the scale proposed, and the experience for users of public rights of way be improved by them so it must be the case that the experience will be worse than that enjoyed today. Additional intrusion of CCTV and lighting along with the dust and noise from construction and operational plant will undoubtedly further spoil the experience. Being marshalled by banks-men across construction roadways and being diverted or having the path closed off so as not to inconvenience plant and lorries, can only possibly be a negative experience. The fact the applicant proposes to add further paths and to improve some of the surfaces is no mitigation at all. Just don't spoil it in the first place!, Who wants more paths of the type just described?

The hum or buzz from inverters, transformers and cooling fans along with the noise from increased traffic, construction and decommissioning all has a detrimental effect on health and wellbeing of humans. This is particularly true in and around Scopwick which is a rural area where there is already a low ambient noise level. Many wildlife species including birds and bats have been shown to be affected by increased noise where their communication and navigation processes are hindered.

Open Floor Hearing – 15/07/2025 – OFH2

I would like to touch on some of the considerations that should be taken into account when recommending upon this application.

Need – Has this really been identified? We are told we will become a net exporter of power, this must mean we will have a surplus so clearly don't need all the applications being made. Other technologies like Nuclear can provide a much greater, much more constant, output without the need for BESS from a massively smaller footprint.

Environment – There are many documents describing the effects on the environment in great detail so I won't dwell here but suffice it to say that multiple years of construction, digging, piling, concrete, pulling up hedges, underground cables along with a massive increase in traffic through what are small villages and small rural roads can only have a very significant negative impact on the surrounding environment as will decommissioning.

Food security – BMV land should not be used for solar development. Much (almost half) of the Springwell proposal is on BMV land according to their own classification, significantly more is BMV according to some other research and this is also irrigated land.

BESS safety concerns – Again many concerns have been raised about the safety or lack of it associated with BESS installations. How can the inspectorate be convinced that the installation will be safe when previous ones have not, and when crucial decisions like what type of batteries will be used are not specified, and when key safety documents like the emergency response plan haven't even been started, let alone submitted.

Alignment with local needs – There are no benefits to locals of having the development. The power will not be used locally, there will not be a reduced rate. All of the negatives with no benefits.

Design and appearance – The proposed design will significantly alter the character of the local area. The cumulative effects of this and the many other developments (11 are now registered with National Grid for Navenby should that be approved) will make the whole area feel like an industrial landscape rather than the rural one enjoyed today. When I go for a walk in the future past the bribery community growing area onto the bribery improved surface of the footpath surrounded by mitigation hedges and more bribery footpaths I will still be in the middle of an industrial development, with fences, CCTV, construction compounds, collector stations, solar panels and BESS installations some of which being six metres tall. This is so sad, it will totally spoil the enjoyment I and many others get today and will have a major detrimental effect on mental health. This whole planning process already is.

Highway safety and traffic - Rural roads are narrow, passing is difficult in places. These roads are not suitable for large scale construction traffic. The traffic will come through the village of Scopwick, past children's school bus stops with no crossings and through a busy crossroads. The applicants report state there will be a 131% increase in HGV traffic through the village which they wrongly deem insignificant. There will be more accidents, it is clear to see.

Noise and Vibration – Construction noise and traffic noise will be much higher than the noise levels of today, this will cause harm to mental wellbeing. Vibration from vehicles and piling will cause damage to fragile local drainage systems causing knock on surface water drainage problems in a village that already has a documented significant surface water drainage issue.

Democracy – The whole democratic process does not appear to be taken into account. It is clear that the vast majority of the local public are against solar installations and BESS on quality farm land. Many of the public are so against it they have formed action groups to campaign to get these applications stopped. Hundreds have made representations to this planning process. Many of the public have approached their local Parish Councils with their concerns. Parish councils have done their own due diligence and subsequently objected to the development on behalf of their Parishioners. The district council have raised many objections and are against the development. Local district councillors are against the scheme, so much so that they have come forward and spoken at these hearings. The County council have raised many objections and are against the development. The leader of the county council is against the development. County councillors are against the proposed development and again we have seen them here raising those concerns. The mayor of Lincolnshire is against the proposal and again has taken the time to attend these meetings to explain why. Our local MP's are against the proposal. And despite being very busy people even they have found the time to attend these hearings and give their reasons why the developments should not go ahead. Unless I have missed anyone that is the entire democracy in this county against the proposed development. Please will the planning inspectorate give this overwhelming democratic view along with the other points raised the weight they deserve in it's deliberations.

Issue Specific Hearing – 16/07/2025 – ISH3

BESS

4.2

I asked at the last hearing that more detail be provided about the approach to fire safety of the BESS implementations given the proven problematic experiences in both the UK and around the world. From the revised documentation submitted it would appear that very little has been done in this area. No new meetings between Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue and the applicant have been recorded. Point 20.9 of LCC local impact report shows that the applicant is not looking to collaborate further with LFR at this stage but that LFR are keen for further involvement. If they are keen then why wouldn't the inspectorate make use of that. The changes submitted to the Outline Battery Storage Management Plan are minimal with the most common change being the substitution of the word Fire with the words Thermal runaway throughout the document. The principle the applicant seems to still be relying upon is that of sorting it out later with promises that sometime after planning has been granted they would prepare an Emergency response plan which they would "consult on" rather than "agree with" Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue. This is too late in the process, it does not engage the minds of the Fire service until it is too late to have any meaningful say or objection, it also doesn't allow any public scrutiny of the document. Living close to the development I am scared of a BESS fire and the significant problems it will cause, toxic gases released into the air, toxic waste introduced to the water systems finding its way to the local chalk streams, to the Lincolnshire aquifer and public drinking water, causing an environmental disaster.

This is the wrong place for one BESS, let alone the many, around 8 or 9, other BESS systems subsequently proposed for this locality. Indeed are BESS actually needed at all? Their function is to store the power when its generation is high and release it when its low.. If we didn't go for solar or wind power generation but instead used more on demand based power generation like that from nuclear plants we wouldn't need the battery storage systems or the solar plants at all.

This pattern of planning has been followed with previous applications for existing developments all glibly saying they would follow the guidance at the time. It is clear by the number and scale of recorded fires that the safety measures have been insufficient. Why would the planning inspectorate rely on the same assurances, including sorting it out later, on this massive scale development.

What is different this time and what should give the public and the planning inspectorate confidence that this time it will be safe? I put it to you that there is nothing substantially different and therefore it must by default be unsafe and therefore should not be approved.

I would like to hear from the Leader of the Lincolnshire Fire service on their assessment of the risks, their readiness, their equipment, their training and funding and their level of comfort in taking on these tens maybe even hundreds of BESS facilities in the county.

Issue Specific Hearing – 17/07/2025 – ISH4

Traffic & Transport

4

Many points have already been made by me and other interested parties against the sheer volumes of construction traffic on small rural roads and the inappropriateness of this so I will not go through those again but ask they really are given due consideration in deliberations. As a new point I think there should be a requirement for the traffic management plan to be amended to avoid HGV traffic through the village of Scopwick during the period young people are catching buses and taxis too and from educational facilities. In addition pedestrian crossings should be provided at appropriate locations to reduce risks from any continuing movement of NON HGV traffic.

If staff or contractors do not adhere to the plan how will this be identified and what action is possible to be taken if they do. It is my understanding that there are no ramifications and in practice many similar traffic management plans are simply disregarded. It was said it would be a criminal offence but who would be prosecuted, fined and or imprisoned?

Issue Specific Hearing – 17/07/2025 – ISH4

Comments raised and Questions asked

1. Landscape and cumulative effects - With regard to landscape and cumulative effects there was discussion about the Viking Way and views to the west from it. The Viking Way follows the edge of the cliff with extensive views to the west, indeed this is why the footpath follows this route in the first place. The point I raised which was not addressed in the response was that views of proposed solar facilities would be from an elevated position making the effect on the landscape more significant as a sea of black panels would clearly be visible. Also that any mitigation planting would not screen views from an elevated position only from the same level as the panels. The point was made by a representative of the applicant that no views of Springwell would be seen from the Viking Way. Assurances should be given that this is also the case for the Navenby Sub Station and BESS along with the other BESS applications in the area to the east looking towards Navenby as I suspect their elevated position and height of infrastructure will mean they are visible.
2. Spires and Steeples and mitigation - The applicants representative talked of mitigations they had put in place for the spires and steeples way. These were all about the distance of solar panels from the footpath. There was no mention however of the construction compounds, cable routes and HGV access across the path where marshalling of pedestrians would take place. Also there was no mention of the six metre high collector compounds which would be visible. The applicant made the point that year 10 it may not be possible to see the collector compounds. This just highlights the issue of the massive loss of open views from the path, if we will not be able to see a six metre high collector compound this just confirms the complete loss of open views.
3. Concrete and Cabling - I asked a question of the applicant about the removal of concrete and cabling at the decommissioning phase as there had been much talk of the concrete remaining. The applicant confirmed all concrete would be removed but that cables would be left underground (separate points have been made about the long term degradation of the cables leaching chemicals into the soil). I was pleased that the point had been accepted that all concrete should be removed.
4. Benefits? - There were discussions on the perceived benefits being provided by the applicant in terms of footpath improvement and extension. The applicants representative suggested that people could simply choose a different footpath or indeed may be interested to see solar installations as a destination in itself. This simply is not true for locals. If we wish to go for a walk from our homes then there will be no choice but to use the existing footpaths and so will be definitely experience the detrimental affect on views. Having a better surface to walk on or a different path to use with the same or worse visual effect is not considered a benefit to me. The applicants suggestion that solar installations are a visitor attraction is simply disrespectful. There is not a single solar installation in the UK listed on trip advisor, nor is there likely to be any added.
5. Human Considerations? - There was a long discussion on the affect of solar facilities on birds and bats. Much work had been done and was continuing to be done to give this every consideration. Whilst I do value nature I pointed out that we had spent much more time discussing the effect on birds and bats than was taken to discuss the affect on humans which seems to have been conveniently ignored by the applicant and should be investigated in much more detail.
6. Decommissioning - On the subject of decommissioning of the site there was along detailed explanation given to decommissioning which was difficult to follow. I raised the point and asked the question: Solar companies are often sold on so how is the obligation to decommission passed on

and what would happen if that obligation was just walked away from or that company failed. Please explain in simple language. Provision should be made. Would this be a proper accounting provision and how would that show in the accounts. The response provided by the applicant indicated that due provision would be made and taken on by any company purchasing the Springwell company or the DCO. There was no answer to where this provision would be made i.e. in which set of company books and where specifically it would show in those books. We are well aware that solar companies are sold on and become less profitable towards the end of their life. Specific bond style arrangements should be put in place to ensure that a solar company reaching the end of its life doesn't simply walk away from its decommissioning obligation and simply crash the company. Provision for a bond to protect the public and the countryside should be added to the provisions of the DCO.

7. Waste – When questioned on waste and the disposal of it at the end of life of panels and batteries etc. the applicant said that they were relying upon market forces creating waste and recycling facilities that would be able to use in the future. This really isn't good enough given the enormous amount of product that will need to be disposed of over the life of the project as well as at the end. It is simply irresponsible to recommend a facility be built that has no method to dispose of the toxic waste that will be generated.

8. Drainage – There is significant concern that the fragile clay piping drainage will be damaged by the effects of piling. The applicant said they have an obligation to make good any issues caused but without careful planning and supervision they simply will not know what damage has been caused and so will not repair it. How will they know? The only way to be sure is to identify every pipe and survey it internally before piling commences and then repeat the exercise post piling and repair those requiring it. The significance of this due to the surface water flooding that occurs routinely in the village of Scopwick and the fact that this would be increased by any damage to the drainage system in place. Piling is not the only cause of likely damage to the drainage but other areas like cable runs going through drainage systems are more easily identifiable. The DCO should be more specific in this area adding the obligation to identify and repair this unseen inevitable damage.

