



BEACON FEN ENERGY PARK

Planning Inspectorate Reference: EN010151

Adequacy of Consultation Milestone
Appendix 1

January 2025



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Revision History

Revision	Revision date	Authorised	Name	Position
Details				

List of Outstanding Issues and Information

Outstanding issue/info.	Section/Paragraph	Responsibility	Action

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Beacon Fen Energy Park - Adequacy of Consultation Milestone

Date Thu 05/12/2024 10:54
To

Good Morning

With reference to the Adequacy of Consultation Milestone Report (AoCM) for the above project. As you will be aware the South & East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership is made up of East Lindsey District Council, Boston Borough Council and South Holland District Council. Comments upon the AoCM Report have been requested from Boston Borough Council (BBC).

BBC previous comments upon the draft SOCC (8th Nov 2023) are addressed by Table 4.1 the Applicants response to feedback received during the consultation on the SOCC and therefore on that basis there are no further comments upon the consultation undertaken or approaches set out in the SOCC that are described within the AoCM Report. BBC have also made comments under separate cover for the targeted consultation approach.

Notwithstanding this, these comments do not preclude the ability for BBC to respond to the formal request from PINS under section 55 (4) (b) of the Act and accordingly, the formal view on Adequacy of Consultation will be provided at the Acceptance stage, after the submission of the DCO. Many Thanks

Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects Manager
South & East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership

www.sholland.gov.uk | www.boston.gov.uk
www.e-lindsey.gov.uk |

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Appendix 1.1 Local Planning Authority response to draft AoCM

05.12.24 - Email from North Kesteven District Council with feedback on draft AoCM

Your Ref : EN010151

Our Ref : 23/0471/

NSIP Contact :

Email :



By Email only to:

5 December 2024

Dear

RE: Application by Beacon Fen Energy Park Limited for an Order granting Development Consent for the Beacon Fen Energy Park on land located to the east of Sleaford, Lincolnshire

Adequacy of Consultation Milestone – response by North Kesteven District Council

I refer to your letter dated 22 November 2024 enclosing your Draft Consultation Response the Adequacy of Consultation Milestone report (November 2024).

The Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIP) Pre-Application Prospectus 2024 introduced the Adequacy of Consultation Milestone (AoCM) to allow early consideration of the adequacy of consultation undertaken by the applicant at pre-application stage by the Planning Inspectorate. The written submission to the Inspectorate may include the views of local authorities.

This letter provides the views of North Kesteven District Council to Beacon Fen Energy Park Limited, as the developer for the Beacon Fen Energy Park, to help inform their written submission on the AoCM as part of the DCO submission process.

The guidance within the Prospectus sets out that the written submission should cover:

- The consultation undertaken to date,
- The approaches set out in the Statement of Community Consultation, and should
- Summarise the consultation responses and the way in which they are shaping the application.

I can confirm that the Council was offered the opportunity to comment on the draft Statement of Community Consultation and our comments were taken on board prior to the statutory consultation being undertaken (Jan-March 2024). Further engagement was carried out around the two targeted statutory consultation exercises on proposed amendments to the DCO red line (March 2024 and to be undertaken in December 2024).

With regard to how consultation responses (from local residents, consultation bodies and the Council) have shaped the evolving scheme design, I note that Table 5.3 only mentions two examples of changes made to the project following statutory consultation. Paragraph 5.1.20 states that the applicant is continuing to consider the feedback received as it finalises its proposals ahead of DCO submission. The AOCM states that this information will not be

made available until the Consultation Report has been prepared (paragraphs 5.1.3, 5.1.18-19, 1.1.1 (after 6.1.15), 6.1.6 and various references in Table 4.3) and submitted as part of the DCO application. This means that the Council cannot meaningfully engage with the applicant during the remainder of the pre-application process. Furthermore, once the application has been submitted, the Council will not have the opportunity to shape the proposals. There is only one reference to how the consultation feedback from the PEIR will shape the proposals in Table 4.3, regards reference 5.1.5, which says that “This feedback was reviewed, analysed and passed to the project team ahead of the EIA and DCO submission being finalised.”

The PINS advice to Local Authorities (August 2024) states that:

“The applicant should engage local authorities in the early stages of preparing their application and programme document. The local authority should participate in the applicant’s engagement activities, such as taking part in topic based working groups or technical briefings...”

While the advice stresses that this is not a statutory form of consultation, it is recognised as a useful part of the pre-application process. The message around meaningful pre-application engagement is emphasised throughout PINS guidance on NSIPs to help applicants to identify and mitigate impacts of development, and other important matters, while the scheme is evolving prior to submission (paragraph 6.1.2 of the Statement of Community Consultation) and enable compliance with an applicant’s duty under s49 of the Planning Act 2008.

Consequently, it is disappointing that informal engagement with host authorities, including the Council, has been limited in the period following the s42 PEIR consultation. We have had a limited number of briefings on 3 April, 1 May, 26 June, 28 August and 8 November 2024. During these briefings we have not been party to detailed information about how the consultation responses have influenced the proposals nor the likely environmental impacts of the changes. For example, the Council made extensive comments on the PEIR but we have not received a full briefing on how these matters will be addressed in the final ES.

The Pre-application Prospectus, under sub-heading 5 ‘Demonstrating regard to advice’, paragraph: 009 Reference ID: 1-009-20240516; notes that the production of evidence, presented within the Consultation Report accompanying the submitted application, will demonstrate the applicant’s regard to the advice that the Inspectorate and affected statutory bodies have issued during the pre-application stage. Continuing, the paragraph notes that ‘this should highlight amendments to the application arising from advice received, and similarly provide justification where advice received has not led to an amendment to the application’.

Finally, the paragraph notes that the purpose of this is to ‘give better confidence to the stakeholder system that the applicant has taken account of the statutory advice received and made reasonable efforts to submit an application that is in an optimised condition for post-submission stages, including the examination’.

We accept that each respective DCO applicant’s approach to the post-PEIR meetings/briefings with host authorities differs and will be informed by a number of factors including the scale and nature of the project and variety of matters of a technical nature which may necessitate specific targeted meetings with host authorities and consultees alike.

However, unfortunately our experience on the Beacon Fen project, post-PEIR, has been one of only relatively sporadic meetings with the applicant, meeting cancellations and more limited updates and information sharing across a number of subject areas.

Relative to other NSIP solar projects within the District of a comparable or more advanced stage in the DCO process, the Beacon Fen scheme has fallen below what we have judged to be 'best practice' in terms of the frequency, openness and meaningfulness of dialogue and engagement. There are a number of standouts.

First, in paragraph 18.6 of our PEIR reply, we requested that the applicant confirm whether the A17 access route is temporary (construction) or permanent (operation/maintenance). We noted that based on modelled trip movements associated with the operational phase the Council's view, at that time, was that the retention of the access road beyond construction is not warranted and the applicant should instead consider localised works where necessary to the existing rural highway network for operational purposes.

We further noted, at paragraph 18.7 that there were potential adverse impacts associated with the proposed construction access on the setting and potentially significance of heritage assets around Asgarby and Howell and which were not accounted for in the ES. We stated that in our view, that harmed weighed against retention of the access road beyond the construction phase.

Notwithstanding the Council requesting clarity on the 'temporary vs permanent' nature of the proposed new access road throughout a number of meetings/briefings, this matter has only been relatively recently addressed in detail – and even then through confirmation that the new access road would be retained permanently (during operation) and that archaeological investigation works were already underway to determine the precise west of Asgarby.

We accept that the applicant has disclosed and shared a number of route options (including the Wardell Armstrong 'Access Options Plan') with us however our concern is that the Council has, during the course of a number of meetings, raised concern regarding the rationale for permanent access road retention and has requested more evidence behind the optioneering process to justify the choice. This has not been a two-way process.

To therefore be advised, without prior dialogue (for example through a dedicated meeting on highways matters) that the access has now been 'fixed' as a permanent element of infrastructure rather than a temporary expedient required for construction only - and furthermore that geophysical survey had already informed route refinement - was disappointing.

This matter remains of concern as the route option may have landscape and built heritage impacts. We would welcome further technical discussions with our landscape consultant and built heritage officer to understand the likely impacts of the route, the form of construction, its duration and proposed mitigation.

As we understand that you have had discussions with LCC's archaeology and highways officers regarding the A17 access road, we would welcome a briefing on the outcome of these discussions. Meanwhile, please note that our concerns are different from those of LCC.

Secondly, whilst we welcome the relatively recently confirmed changes to the proposals to include additional permissive paths through the site to link up with the existing public rights of way network, our general impression was one of 'push back' on what was essentially a straightforward proposition by us to provide a permissive link between two points, across a

site unfettered other than the area immediately around Gashes Barn. We provided a high-level sketch with a notional route; the intention being that you would develop a series of options.

We note and welcome that the recently announced forthcoming targeted consultation period will include seeking views on a new pedestrian footbridge over the Car Dyke that will facilitate a connection at the north-east of the site. However, this has only been confirmed after a period of debate as to their benefit – again our impression here is one of reluctance to accept a proposition initially put forward by us when in fact this ought to have been proactively explored by you much sooner.

Thirdly, in November 2024, we were made aware that the flood modelling has shown there will be flood issues to the north-east of the site. We would be grateful to understand further what implications would arise from this information and what changes are likely to be made to the design. We have made some further comments by email on the approach to the Flood Risk sequential test but are unaware if these have been followed through (email from Nick Feltham on 27 September 2024).

Finally, other topics raised in our PEIR response where a further update would be welcomed are landscape, ecology, trees, cultural heritage, noise, glint and glare, agricultural land and air quality.

In conclusion, we are satisfied that, at this stage and based on the information provided, an adequate level of consultation has been carried out in relation requirements of s42, s47 and s48 of the Planning Act 2008, subject to the caveat in the final paragraph below.

However, we are disappointed that further informal engagement has not been carried out since the PIER submission to explain how comments from the statutory and PEIR consultation have shaped the proposals since then and that this is being left to the Consultation Report.

We would therefore welcome continuing engagement between now and your DCO submission to help us better understand how comments in our PEIR response are being addressed in line with PINS guidance and to assist you in your duty under s49 of the Planning Act 2008.

This response is made without prejudice to the formal response that will be provided by the Council to the statutory Adequacy of Consultation requirements under s42, s47 and s48 of the Planning Act 2008, once a DCO application has been made and the full Consultation report has been submitted, and to the scope of the Council's representations through its LIR and Written Representations once the application is accepted for examination.

Yours faithfully,
NSIP Planning Consultant

Appendix 1.1 Local Planning Authority response to draft AoCM

05.12.24 - Email from Lincolnshire County Council with feedback on draft AoCM



Sent by email:

info@beaconfenenergypark.co.uk

Planning Apprentice
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5 December 2024

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Dear ,

Adequacy of Consultation Request – Application by Beacon Fen Energy Park Ltd for a Development Consent Order for Beacon Fen Energy Park in North Kesteven District and Boston Borough , Lincolnshire.

Thank you for your email on 22 November 2024 with your Adequacy of Consultation Milestone report which included your Compliance with the Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC).

The Adequacy of Consultation Milestone (AoCM) was introduced through the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIP) Pre-Application Prospectus in 2024, and aims to facilitate an earlier consideration of the adequacy of consultation undertaken by the applicant at pre-application stage by the Planning Inspectorate. The written submission to the Inspectorate may include the views of local authorities.

The Prospectus sets out that written submissions should cover:

- The consultation undertaken to date
- The approaches set out in the Statement of Community Consultation
- Summarises the Consultation responses and the way in which they are shaping the application.

In response to your request for a view from Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) on the adequacy of consultation and having had regard to Section 42 (Duty to consult), 47 (Duty to consult the local community) and 48 (Duty to publicise) of the Planning Act 2008 (as amended) (the Act). I can confirm that LCC is of the view that Beacon Fen Energy Park Ltd to date has carried out adequate pre-application consultation in accordance with the requirements as set out in Sections 42, 47 and 48 of the Act.

There has been engagement between the Beacon Fen project team and LCC throughout the pre-application process. The Applicant commenced early engagement with LCC from February 2023. Regular meetings with the project team and LCC's planning lead have taken place during the pre-application process, occurring approximately every one or two months. There have also been a number of technical meetings and engagement with other specialist council officers in relation to highway, public rights of way and archaeology (including site visits to observe the trenching works) matters. LCC's landscape consultants have also been consulted on the selection of viewpoints and photomontage locations.

The approach to consultation has been a key topic of discussion at project meetings at relevant times. Beacon Fen Energy Park Ltd formally consulted LCC on the draft SoCC in October 2023. LCC was given the opportunity to review and provide feedback on the draft SoCC, our response was sent on 20 October 2023. LCC's comments were taken into account before the SoCC was published.

Statutory and Targeted Consultation Comments

LCC were consulted as part of the statutory Section 47 consultation as required under Section 47 of the Act in January 2024. LCC were further consulted as part of a targeted consultation on changes to the scheme in March 2024. LCC provided a detailed response to the statutory consultation on 8 March 2024.

It is noted that a further round of targeted consultation on design refinements is planned between December 2024 and January 2025, LCC were advised of this at a project update meeting on 8 November 2024.

Section 49 (Duty to take account of responses to consultation and publicity) of the Act, requires applicants to have regard to any relevant consultation responses under sections 42, 47 and 48 of the Act. Applicants are required under section 37 of the Act to produce a consultation report alongside their application, which details how they have complied with the consultation requirements set out in the Act and how the proposed application has been shaped as a result. The pre-application stage should allow the likely effects of a project to be fully consulted upon, with the design of the project evolving up to the point of application submission.

National Infrastructure Planning Guidance on pre-application states that *"It is good practice that those who have contributed to the consultation are informed of the results. The consultation report may not be the most appropriate format in which to respond to the points raised by various consultee groups and bodies. Applicants should therefore consider producing a summary note in plain English for the local community setting out headline findings and how they have been addressed, together with a link to the full consultation report for those interested."*

A response to points raised by consultees with technical information is likely to need to focus on the specific impacts for which the body has expertise. The applicant should make a judgement as to whether the consultation report provides sufficient detail on the relevant effects, or whether a targeted response would be more appropriate."

(Paragraph 026 Reference ID 02-026-20240430)

LCC has not been provided with any specific detailed information on how the responses to the above consultations have shaped the application to date. However, we have been updated on amendments to the proposals at meetings with the project team, and have been invited to discuss our comments at these meetings and through targeted consultation. We note in section 5 of the Adequacy of Consultation Milestone Report dated November 2024 it is stated that the feedback is still being considered and full details will be presented in the Consultation Report. Table 5.3 lists examples of where feedback has informed changes in the scheme, however this is quite limited information at this stage and LCC will wish to see fuller details on how consultation feedback has been responded to in due course. LCC would welcome an opportunity to review and discuss with the applicant how the consultation feedback has shaped the application in advance of the DCO submission.

Yours faithfully,



BEACON FEN ENERGY PARK

Planning Inspectorate Reference: EN010151

Statement of Community Consultation
November 2023



Quality information

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1. Introduction

Purpose of This Document

- 1.1.1 This document is the Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) for the proposed Beacon Fen Energy Park (“the Proposed Development”), a solar park and battery energy storage system (BESS) located on land to the east of Sleaford, Lincolnshire.
- 1.1.2 The SoCC outlines how Beacon Fen Energy Park Ltd (“the Applicant”), a subsidiary of Low Carbon Ltd, of Stirling Square, 5-7 Carlton Gardens, London, SW1Y 5AD, intends to consult with local communities about the Development Consent Order (DCO) application for the Proposed Development, in accordance with sections 47 and 48 of the Planning Act 2008 (the Act).
- 1.1.3 It explains how the Applicant has identified consultees, the proposed consultation strategy, the timescales for consultation and how consultees can respond to and shape the Proposed Development.
- 1.1.4 Engagement with local communities and stakeholders has been carried out in a range of ways since March 2023.
- 1.1.5 It is anticipated that the statutory consultation in respect of the Proposed Development will take place in early 2024. The Applicant will have regard to representations received in response to the consultation when preparing the DCO application.
- 1.1.6 Should the Applicant require to carry out any further stages of limited, targeted consultation in respect of any proposed changes to the Proposed Development following the statutory consultation, the Applicant will use some, but not necessarily all, of the means of consultation outlined in this SoCC. The Applicant will liaise with the relevant local authorities in deciding the most appropriate activities for any further stages of consultation.

Beacon Fen Energy Park

- 1.1.7 The Proposed Development is a solar and BESS development located to the east of Sleaford, Lincolnshire. The development is expected to generate approximately 400 megawatts (MW) of energy with BESS capacity of approximately 600MW. The Proposed Development has the potential to power approximately 130,000 homes and could also avoid up to 72,000 tonnes of CO₂ emissions¹ each year.
- 1.1.8 The proposals for Beacon Fen Energy Park include building the infrastructure needed to export the electricity the energy park would generate into the National Grid. It is planned this would be at the existing Bicker Fen substation.
- 1.1.9 The Proposed Development is a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) because it will generate over 50MW of electricity. This means it requires a DCO under the Planning Act 2008. The DCO application will be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS), who will then examine the

¹ Low Carbon internal calculations using OFGEM Typical Domestic Consumption Values and BEIS Carbon Conversion Factors.

application before making a recommendation to the Secretary of State (SoS), who will then decide whether to grant the DCO. The Proposed Development is currently in the pre-application stage of the DCO process.

SoCC Context

- 1.1.10 The aim of the SoCC is to set out how the Applicant intends to consult with local communities on the proposals for Beacon Fen Energy Park. The document includes an overview of the Proposed Development, the proposed consultation approach and ways that communities can engage with and respond to the statutory consultation.
- 1.1.11 PINS' Advice Note 8² acknowledges that: "Responding to the developer's pre-application consultation is the best time to influence a project, whether you agree with it, disagree with it or believe it could be improved."
- 1.1.12 This SoCC provides information on the nature and extent of the consultation that the developer intends to undertake with the communities potentially affected by the project before the DCO application is submitted.

2. About the Applicant

- 2.1.1 Beacon Fen Energy Park is a development proposed by the Applicant, a subsidiary of Low Carbon Ltd ("Low Carbon") – a privately-owned UK investment and asset management company specialising in renewable energy.
- 2.1.2 Founded in 2011, Low Carbon is committed to making a positive and significant impact on climate change by investing in large-scale renewable energy projects across a range of energy technologies including solar PV, onshore wind, offshore wind, waste-to-energy, battery storage and other proven renewable energy technologies. Deploying capital at scale into renewables, it invests across the full life cycle from concept through to development, construction, and operation.
- 2.1.3 Low Carbon has ambitions to create 20GW of new renewable energy capacity by the end of the decade - enough to power the equivalent of 7.8 million homes.
- 2.1.4 Low Carbon is a long-standing certified B-Corporation, a reflection of the company's fundamental ethos to balance the needs of the environment and society with its business interests.
- 2.1.5 For more information on Low Carbon please visit: www.lowcarbon.com.

2 <https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/legislation-and-advice/advice-notes/advice-note-eight-overview-of-the-nationally-significant-infrastructure-planning-process-for-members-of-the-public-and-others/#Pre-application>

3. Solar Development in Planning Policy

- 3.1.1 The SoS' decision on the Proposed Development must be made in accordance with the relevant National Policy Statements (NPSs) which outline the need for new energy infrastructure and the issues to be considered in determining such applications, subject to minor exceptions. Other matters which the SoS may consider important and relevant when determining an application for development consent may include other national and local planning policies.
- 3.1.2 The UK government is currently reviewing and updating the July 2011 Energy NPSs. The draft revisions to NPS EN-3 include specific policies in support of solar PV, as the Government notes:

“Solar farms are one of the most established renewable electricity technologies in the UK and the cheapest form of electricity generation worldwide. Solar farms can be built quickly and, coupled with consistent reductions in the cost of materials and improvements in the efficiency of panels, largescale solar is now viable in some cases to deploy subsidy-free and at little to no extra cost to the consumer. The government has committed to sustained growth in solar capacity to ensure that we are on a pathway that allows us to meet net zero emissions. As such solar is a key part of the government’s strategy for low-cost decarbonisation of the energy sector’ (2.47.1).”

4. The Project

Beacon Fen Energy Park

- 4.1.1 The main components of Beacon Fen Energy Park will be solar photovoltaic (PV) panels and the battery energy storage system (BESS) infrastructure, and a cable route corridor that connects the project to the existing Bicker Fen National Grid substation. As the Applicant is still in the early stages of developing the proposals, the location of this equipment and how we will minimise any potential environmental impacts are still being determined.
- 4.1.2 The emerging proposals include:
- Solar PV panels and modular ground-mounting structures.
 - Supporting infrastructure – inverters, combiner boxes, transformers – converting the direct current to alternating current and stepping up the voltage so it can be exported to the National Grid.
 - A BESS, so electricity can be stored on-site and then released into the National Grid when it is needed most.
 - Onsite cables connecting the solar PV modules and energy storage system to inverters which, in turn, connect to the transformers.

- On-site substation within the solar PV panel area to export electricity from the solar energy park to the National Grid. The substation will include a control building comprising office and welfare space as well as storage.
- Fencing enclosing the operational areas of the site, with security measures including pole mounted internal facing closed circuit television (CCTV) around the site perimeter.
- Access tracks to the site during construction and for routine maintenance when operational.
- New planting around the site perimeter and within the solar PV area to enhance biodiversity and minimise the landscape impacts.

4.1.3 In addition:

- During construction, one or more temporary construction compounds will be required, as well as temporary roadways, to enable access to all the land within the energy park boundary.
- Opportunities for landscaping and habitat management will be explored in areas around the energy park to provide a net gain in biodiversity.

Components of a Typical Solar Park and Battery Energy Storage System

4.1.4 The schematic below shows the typical components of a solar park and battery energy storage system. The diagram is illustrative and not to scale.

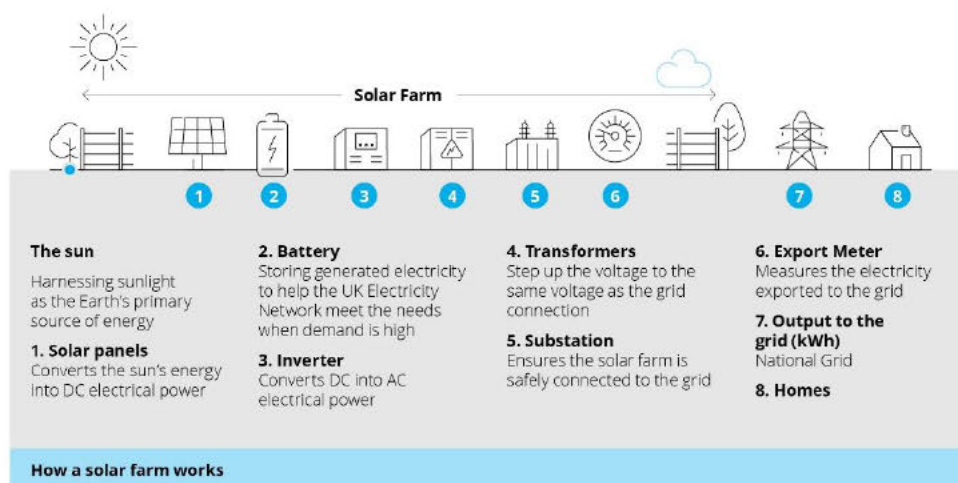


Figure 1 Schematic of a typical solar park and battery energy storage system

- 4.1.5 The DCO application for the Proposed Development will include all of these features. In addition, temporary works and associated infrastructure necessary for the construction and operation of the Proposed Development shall be included.
- 4.1.6 It is currently expected that the DCO application for the Proposed Development will be submitted in summer 2024.

Site Location

- 4.1.7 Beacon Fen Energy Park comprises solar photovoltaic (PV) panels and BESS facilities on agricultural land wholly contained within the boundary of one solar array area comprising approximately 517 hectares (1277 acres), as well as the cable route corridor including grid connection infrastructure to connect the Proposed Development to National Grid's Bicker Fen substation.
- 4.1.8 The site for this Proposed Development is on land approximately 6.5 km northeast of the town of Sleaford and 2.5 km north of the village of Heckington (see **Figure 2** for indicative site boundary and location). The site includes an indicative cable corridor linking the solar PV and BESS to the nearby Bicker Fen substation.

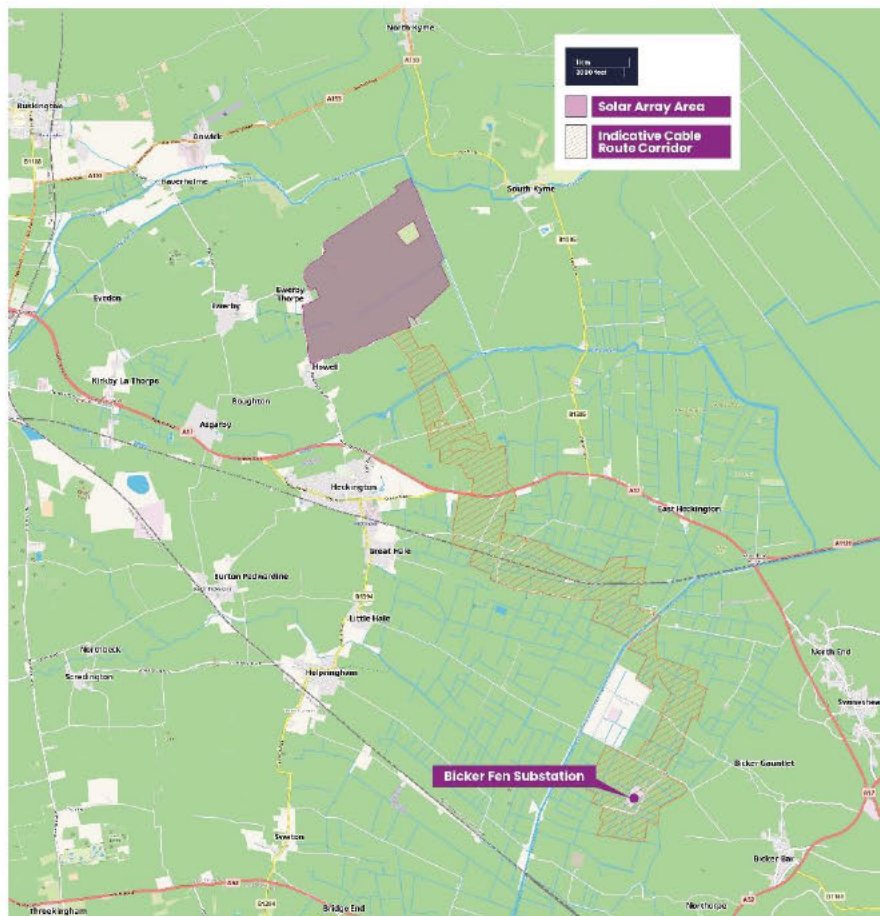


Figure 2 Anticipated site boundary for the Proposed Development

- 4.1.9 The site is in the parliamentary constituency of Sleaford and North Hykeham; the Lincolnshire County Council divisions of Heckington and Boston Rural; North Kesteven District Council's Heckington Rural, Kirkby la Thorpe and South Kyme wards; and Boston Borough Council's Five Villages ward.
- 4.1.10 The solar array area includes the Civil Parishes of Ewerby & Evedon and Asgarby & Howell, and is on the border of South Kyme Civil Parish. The cable route corridor includes the Civil Parishes of Heckington, Asgarby & Howell, Great Hale, Swineshead and Bicker, and the border of Donington Civil Parish.
- 4.1.11 The solar array area predominantly comprises agricultural land in arable use, divided by ditches with sparse tree cover that is limited to small woodland

blocks and scattered hedgerow trees. A small reservoir is located in the south-west of the solar array area.

- 4.1.12 The solar array area is bound to the south, west and north by local highways, and bound to the east by the Car Dyke. The north east corner of the area is crossed by a small section of the Ewer/12/1 Public Right of Way (PRoW).
- 4.1.13 Land use within the Cable Route Corridor is also predominantly agricultural. Where the Cable Route Corridor extends south from the solar array area it is located approximately 1.1km east of Heckington at the closest point.
- 4.1.14 All construction and decommissioning transport access will be confirmed as the design of the Proposed Development progresses, and in consultation with the relevant authorities. During the construction phase, one or more temporary construction compounds will be required, with temporary roadways to facilitate access to all land within the site.
- 4.1.15 A number of other solar developments are proposed at various scales in the vicinity of Bicker Fen substation, including Heckington Fen by Ecotricity. We have analysed other projects' submitted consultation documents to aid us in writing this SoCC and include best practice in respect of the proposed approach to consultation based on other developers' experiences in the local area.

5. Consenting Process

- 5.1.1 A description of the full DCO application process is shown in **Table 1** below. This SoCC outlines the consultation required for the pre-application stage only, to allow stakeholders to influence the Proposed Development before the DCO application is submitted.

THE DCO APPLICATION PROCESS	
1. Pre-application	Information will be in the local media and statutory consultation will be carried out with prescribed consultees and other stakeholders, including the local community.
2. Acceptance	The Planning Inspectorate, on behalf of the Secretary of State, has 28 days to decide whether the application meets the required standards to proceed to examination including whether the developer's consultation has been adequate.
3. Pre-examination	You can register as an interested party and, by doing so, will be kept informed of progress and opportunities to put your case forward. Inspectors will hold a Preliminary Meeting and set the timetable for examination.

4. Examination	You can send in your comments in writing. You can request to speak at a public hearing. The Inspectorate has six months to carry out the examination.
5. Recommendation & Decision	A recommendation to the Secretary of State will be issued by the Inspectorate within three months. The Secretary of State then has a further three months to issue a decision on the proposal.
6. Post-decision	There is the opportunity for legal challenge.

Table 1 DCO Application Process

5.1.2 Refer to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) website³ for more information on the DCO application and consenting process.

Supporting Environmental Information

5.1.3 The Proposed Development is considered an 'EIA development' under Schedule 2 of the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 and the Applicant has confirmed under Regulation 8(1) its intention to prepare an Environmental Statement (ES), reporting on the likely significant environmental effects of the Proposed Development, to accompany the DCO application.

5.1.4 As the Proposed Development is an EIA development, a Scoping Report⁴ was submitted by the Applicant to PINS on 19 April 2023. The Scoping Opinion⁵ was provided by PINS on 26 May 2023.

5.1.5 A PEIR (Preliminary Environmental Information Report) will be prepared and made available as part of the statutory consultation. The PEIR will include information on the potential environmental effects as a result of the Proposed Development. We will be asking for the views of individuals and organisations on the information set out in the PEIR as part of the consultation described in this SoCC. Feedback received during consultation on the PEIR will be reviewed and taken into account before the application and EIA are finalised for submission. The final EIA will be set out in an Environmental Statement (ES), which will be submitted with the application for development consent.

³ <https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/application-process/the-process/>

⁴ <https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/wp-content/ipc/uploads/projects/EN010151/EN010151-000008-EN010151%20-%20Scoping%20Report.pdf>

⁵ <https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/wp-content/ipc/uploads/projects/EN010151/EN010151-000005-EN010151%20-%20Scoping%20Opinion%202017%20EIA%20Reqs.pdf>

- 5.1.6 The PEIR will be made available to the public to view free of charge at locations to be confirmed, as well as through publication on the Beacon Fen Energy Park website and the PINS website.

6. The Consultation Process

Consultation Objectives

- 6.1.1 The Applicant is committed to consulting widely, honestly and comprehensively – to allow representations to be incorporated into the Proposed Development and influence its development, where practicable and appropriate.

- 6.1.2 PINS' guidance on the pre-application process⁶ advocates that:

"...early involvement of local communities, local authorities and statutory consultees can bring about significant benefits for all parties, by:

- Helping the applicant identify and resolve issues at the earliest stage, which can reduce the overall risk to the project further down the line; as it becomes more difficult to make changes once an application has been submitted;*
- Enabling members of the public to influence proposed projects and feedback on potential options, and encouraging the community to help shape the proposal to maximise local benefits and minimise any downsides;*
- Helping local people understand the potential nature and local impact of the proposed project, with the potential to dispel misapprehensions at an early stage;*
- Enabling applicants to obtain important information about the economic, social and environmental impacts of a scheme from consultees, which can help rule out unsuitable options;*
- Enabling potential mitigating measures to be considered and, if appropriate, built into the project before an application is submitted; and*
- Identifying ways in which the project could, without significant costs to promoters, support wider strategic or local objectives."*

- 6.1.3 This SoCC has been prepared having regard to, and in accordance with, PINS' guidance.

Consultation Strategy

- 6.1.4 The consultation strategy for Beacon Fen Energy Park has been split into two phases as described below.

Early (Non-Statutory) Consultation

- 6.1.5 An inception meeting was held with PINS in March 2023, with introductory meetings then held with Planning Officers for Lincolnshire County Council

⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-the-pre-application-process-for-major-infrastructure-projects>

(LCC), North Kesteven District Council (NKDC), South Holland District Council (SHDC) and Boston Borough Council (BBC) between March and April 2023 to gain insight into the local area and advice on communicating with stakeholders.

- 6.1.6 NKDC indicated a consultation zone of 5km from the project boundary be used and all those within the zone be invited to take part in the consultation. As our site was spread over two areas at non-statutory consultation, we clarified to NKDC that we proposed a zone approximately 2.5km from the entire site boundary, including (conservatively and in contrast to some similar developments) the cable route and substation. No further correspondence was received and 2.5km was adopted for this round of consultation.
- 6.1.7 The project team published a consultation booklet in spring 2023 giving high level details of the Proposed Development and providing contact details for consultee engagement.
- 6.1.8 Additionally, a website (<https://www.beaconfenenergypark.co.uk/>) has been created showing details of the Proposed Development and frequently asked questions; this went live before the start of the non-statutory consultation (March 2023). The website will be updated as the consultation process progresses.
- 6.1.9 We completed a phase of early engagement between 15 May and 18 June 2023 to introduce the Proposed Development to statutory bodies, key stakeholders and local residents and businesses, allowing them an opportunity to engage with and comment on our early proposals.
- 6.1.10 Three in-person non-statutory Consultation Events and two online webinars were held as part of our early engagement phase.
- 6.1.11 To publicise the early (non-statutory) consultation phase, an advert was placed in local newspapers in May 2023, a leaflet drop was arranged to all properties within approximately 2.5km of the site's red line boundary, posters were sent out to local shops and parish councils, and two media releases were issued to the local press. A digital mailshot was also sent on the day the consultation commenced to 40 people on our subscribed mailing list.
- 6.1.12 During and after the consultation period, a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) page was added to the project website⁷, which was then updated to address the FAQs received.
- 6.1.13 The events provided further information on the initial scheme proposals, including details of the site location, proposed cable route corridor and potential environmental impact. They also gave those interested in the Proposed Development an opportunity to provide feedback via a hard copy or online survey.
- 6.1.14 Prior to the Consultation Events, letters were sent to key stakeholders including local MPs, county councillors, district councillors and parish councils, with the offer of a meeting.
- 6.1.15 The methods of consultation used during the early (non-statutory) consultation phase have been reviewed and adapted where necessary to influence the

⁷ <https://www.beaconfenenergypark.co.uk/faqs/>

methods of communication we will use to inform people of our statutory consultation.

Statutory Consultation

- 6.1.16 A statutory consultation will be carried out, in accordance with sections 42-44, 47 and 48 of the Planning Act 2008 (the “Planning Act”).
- 6.1.17 Details of what we will consult on are included in section 7, who we will consult with in section 8 and what communication methods we will use in section 9.
- 6.1.18 Pursuant to the Planning Act and its associated regulations, it is required to provide a minimum period of 28 days for receipt of responses to the consultation; however, the Applicant intends to provide for the statutory consultation to be held for a period of 42 days, in order to provide additional time for consultees to submit responses.
- 6.1.19 Consultation materials will include information on how the proposals have changed since previous consultation, including how we have responded to feedback. We will capture feedback, comments and questions and will document how these influence the development of the Proposed Development and the Environmental Statement.
- 6.1.20 We plan to advertise these events in a similar way as our early (non-statutory) consultation events, considering any lessons learnt previously from early (non-statutory) consultation feedback. Previously, consultation respondents gave feedback that they had found out about our events via a postcard through the door or in a local newspaper, therefore we will use these methods again. Any additional suggestions made as part of the consultation of this SoCC will also be considered.

7. What Will We Consult On?

- 7.1.1 The purpose of our pre-application consultation is to gather views while the scheme proposals are being developed, to allow people the opportunity to influence relevant aspects of the Proposed Development.
- 7.1.2 The National Policy Statements recognise that many elements of energy infrastructure are functional. For example, NPS EN-1 at paragraphs 4.6.6-4.6.7 states: *“Whilst the applicant may not have any or very limited choice in the physical appearance of some energy infrastructure, there may be opportunities for the applicant to demonstrate good design in terms of siting relative to existing landscape character, land form and vegetation. Furthermore, the design and sensitive use of materials in any associated development such as electricity substations will assist in ensuring that such development contributes to the quality of the area. Applicants should also, so far as is possible, seek to embed opportunities for nature inclusive design within the design process. Applicants must be able to demonstrate in their application documents how the design process was conducted and how the proposed design evolved. Where a number of different designs were*

considered, applicants should set out the reasons why the favoured choice has been selected" (NPS EN-1, 2023)⁸.

- 7.1.3 We have consulted local authorities on this SoCC before publication by giving them five weeks to review and give feedback on a draft version. We will notify stakeholders that the SoCC has been published via a notice placed in local and county-wide newspapers in line with Section 47 of the Planning Act. Hard copies of the SoCC will be placed in the publicly accessible information points outlined in **Table 4** below for a minimum of four weeks. A digital copy of the SoCC will be published on the project website.
- 7.1.4 The statutory consultation phase will provide as much detail as possible about the Proposed Development. This will include:
- Details of the scheme proposals and parameters;
 - Preliminary Environmental Information (PEI) that has been gathered and how this has informed and affected the design;
 - The route of the electrical connection from the solar array area to Bicker sub-station;
 - The timescales and next steps for the Proposed Development;
 - Proposals for maximising the positive effects and community benefits of the Beacon Fen Energy Park; and
 - Proposed methods for minimising and mitigating any adverse effects on the local community or environment that could be caused by the Proposed Development.
- 7.1.5 During the statutory consultation, we will provide information on the Proposed Development, including PEI and any refinements made to its design since earlier consultation and engagement.
- 7.1.6 Individuals, communities and consultees will be invited to comment on all or any part of our proposals for the Proposed Development.
- 7.1.7 Hard copies of consultation documents will be made available at our in-person events, online on the project website⁹, and also in hard copy at the key locations outlined below in **Table 4**.

8. Identifying Our Consultees

Local Communities

- 8.1.1 In defining who we directly contact from the local community, we have identified a consultation zone minimum 5km from the solar array area and 2.5km from the cable route, substation and proposed haul road boundaries, extended in certain locations to follow residential or geographic boundaries, encompassing approximately 9,296 properties. This zone has also been informed by consultation with NKDC (who requested 5km/2km respectively) and our early view as to the distance at which effects from the Proposed Development may be experienced. This includes those in nearby villages and

8

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1147380/NPS_EN-1.pdf

9 <https://www.beaconfenenergypark.co.uk/documents/>

parishes, those that may be affected by construction traffic, and those that may experience a visual impact or disruption during construction. The consultation zone is shown below in **Figure 3**. All properties within this zone will be sent a hard copy leaflet drop inviting them to participate in our statutory consultation.

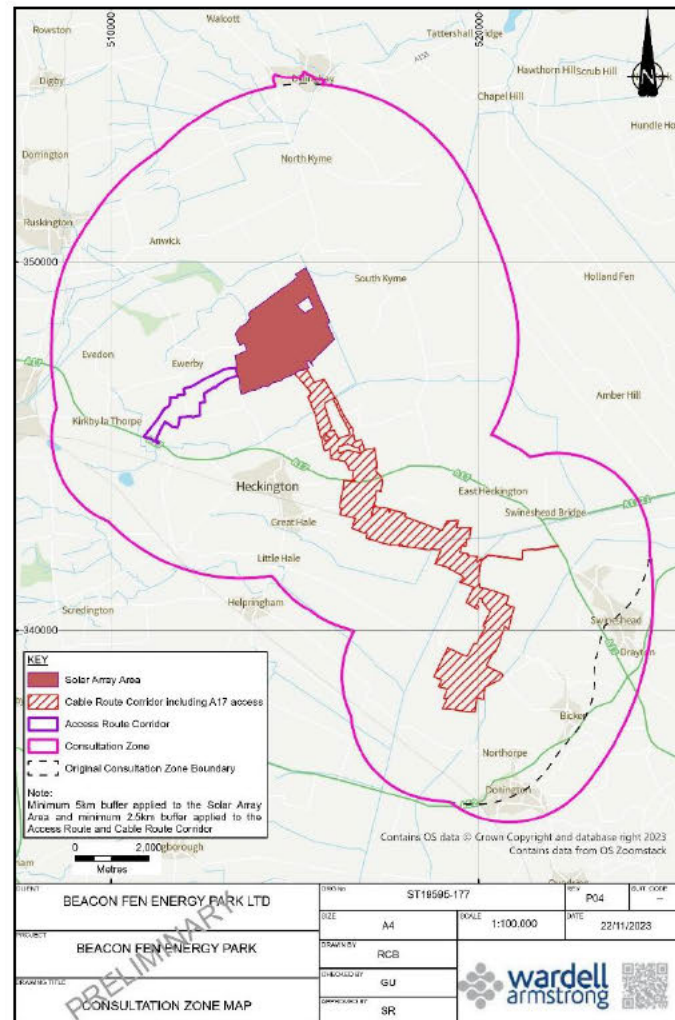


Figure 3 Map showing outline of proposed consultation zone in pink

- 8.1.2 We are aware that other stakeholders outside of our consultation zone will also be interested in taking part in and responding to our consultation. Therefore, we intend to use other methods, such as newspaper adverts, social media adverts, and sending digital mailshots to registered interested parties, to promote the consultation more widely, and encourage those from the wider area with comments and views to engage.

Statutory Consultees

- 8.1.3 At the same time as consulting with the local community, the Applicant will be carrying out consultation on the same information (including the PEIR) with those bodies prescribed under Section 42 of the Planning Act 2008 (the Act):

- Persons as prescribed under Schedule 1 of the Infrastructure Planning (Application: Prescribed Forms and Procedures) Regulations 2009 (as amended);
- Each local authority as defined under Section 43 of the Act;

- Each person who is within one or more of the categories as set out under Section 44 of the Act.

Non-Statutory Consultees

8.1.4 There are other non-statutory consultees with whom the Applicant intends to consult with as best practice. These include:

- Local community groups, i.e., residents' associations
- Seldom heard groups
- Local interest and amenity groups
- Local schools and colleges
- Local MPs
- Local councillors; and
- Local Parish Councils

8.1.5 Please note that these lists are not exhaustive.

8.1.6 Briefings will be offered to North Kesteven District, Boston Borough and Lincolnshire County Councillors and Town and Parish Councils at key stages of the DCO application process.

Seldom Heard Groups

8.1.7 The Proposed Development is largely situated within North Kesteven District Council's (NKDC) jurisdiction. 94% of NKDC is classed as green space, which includes agricultural land and open space. Principal sectors of the economy are food and agriculture, engineering, tourism and construction.

8.1.8 There are low unemployment rates and relatively good skills levels in the District. Nationally, North Kesteven is in the top 15% of the least deprived local authority areas in England (IMD 2019)¹⁰.

8.1.9 More than 64% of the population live in rural settlements, including villages or market towns; therefore, North Kesteven has been classified as being 'mainly rural'.

8.1.10 North Kesteven district has a relatively underdeveloped transport and communications infrastructure. As a result, local communities have historically been self-reliant, with parish and town councils providing services such as playing fields or play areas.

8.1.11 Based on the above, for the purpose of pre-application consultation we have defined 'Seldom Heard' groups as including, but not limited to, those living in remote rural areas, those from ethnic minorities or where English is not their first language, those with a disability or communication impairment, those that are part of the LGBTQ+ community, and those who are unable to travel to a consultation event or engage with the Proposed Development via online channels.

8.1.12 To secure the attention of the 'Seldom Heard' audiences at early (non-statutory) engagement, we sent a hard copy leaflet drop to all properties within an approximately 2.5km boundary of the Proposed Development, and will be using a broader consultation zone for hard copy information during statutory consultation. We also set up analogue feedback mechanisms, including a

¹⁰ <https://www.n-kesteven.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2023-03/North%20Kesteven%20District%20Profile%20-%202023.pdf>

Freepost address and telephone voicemail service which is available 24/7. Informed by this experience, we intend to use similar communication methods during our statutory consultation phase.

- 8.1.13 Within the consultation zone, most consultees live in villages, hamlets or more remotely and local public transport is infrequent. For this reason, locations for in-person consultation events will be chosen based on their proximity to populations and public transport routes. Additionally, online webinars will be held to ensure as many people as possible can engage with the statutory consultation.
- 8.1.14 Additionally, we will always provide summary information in clear, non-technical language, ensure all venues we use for events are fully accessible, and consider requests for large-print, braille, audio or other language versions of consultation documents.
- 8.1.15 A list of Seldom Heard groups we intend to consult with can be found at Appendix 3.

9. How We Will Consult and Publicise

- 9.1.1 We want to create opportunities for as many people as possible to get involved with our consultation by using the following tools:
- In person consultation events – information boards and materials exhibited at our in-person events will provide context to, and summarise, the proposals. The Beacon Fen Project Team will be on hand to answer questions, talk to participants and aid their understanding of the Proposed Development.
 - Online webinars – alongside in-person events, we also plan to hold at least one online webinar.
 - Digital versions of our consultation materials will be published via an online document library on the project website¹¹.
 - Local information points – the consultation documents, including this SoCC, will be displayed at appropriate public buildings in the vicinity of the site. Should it not be possible, for whatever reason, to deposit the documents at the specified locations, then alternative representative buildings will be identified to allow access by the public. See **Table 3** for a list of the proposed locations.

Communication Methods

- 9.1.2 The Applicant recognises that one method of consultation will not meet the requirements of every stakeholder group. For this reason, we propose to use a variety of communication methods as shown below in **Table 2**.

¹¹ <https://www.beaconfenenergypark.co.uk/documents/>

METHOD	DETAILS
Website	A dedicated project website (www.beaconfenenergypark.co.uk) that is updated at pertinent intervals, including FAQs, and hosts digital versions of all consultation documents. We will also provide a digital version of our consultation feedback form via the website.
Digital mailshot	Sending mailshots to those who are registered on our mailing list when there is a pertinent update on the Proposed Development, or to invite them to take part in the statutory consultation.
Leaflet drop	Hard copy correspondence sent to all properties within the consultation zone (approximately 9,296) ahead of the statutory consultation phase.
Newsletters	Newsletters issued to local consultees/subscribed members around once a quarter, sharing updates on the Proposed Development.
Stakeholder briefings	Inviting key stakeholders, such as councillors, seldom heard or community groups, to online or in-person briefing meetings ahead of and during consultation phases.
Stakeholder emails	Issuing update emails to key stakeholders, including political representatives, to share key project information and invite them to take part in the statutory consultation.
Newspaper adverts	As required by Section 48 of the Planning Act, we will publish a Section 48 Notice advertising our intention to submit a DCO application in local newspapers for two consecutive weeks, and a national newspaper and the London Gazette for one week. We will also place adverts publicising the statutory consultation in titles within the Boston Standard series (including online at Lincolnshire World), the Boston Target series (including online at Lincolnshire Live), and the Lincolnshire Echo (or

METHOD	DETAILS
	successor/alternative titles if these become unavailable).
Consultation documents	Hard-copy versions of consultation documents including the PEIR, consultation booklets and SoCC will be available at in-person events and deposited at a range of local information points. Digital copies will be made available on the project website. Hard copies of documents can be made available to individual stakeholders, although this may be subject to a charge to cover print costs. The newspaper notices will state the cost, if applicable, for providing any printed documents.
Press releases	Media releases containing information on the Proposed Development and consultation timeline will be sent to a wide range of local media (see Appendix 4 for a list of proposed titles).
Information posters	Posters advertising the consultation will be sent to locations around the local area to be displayed on noticeboards. See Appendix 2 for details of proposed poster locations.
Social media	Adverts will be placed on social media to promote the statutory consultation.

Table 2 – Communication methods

Consultation Events

- 9.1.3 We are proposing to hold two online webinars and four in-person events during the statutory consultation phase. The four venues have been selected based on their location, size and accessibility. Events will be held across weekends, daytimes and evenings within local school term times.

9.1.4 The proposed in-person event locations are as follows:

LOCATION	VENUE AND ADDRESS
Heckington	Heckington Village Hall, 9-11 High Street, NG34 9RA
Bicker	Bicker Village Hall, Cemetery Road, Bicker, Boston PE20 3BT
Ewerby	Ewerby Reading Rooms, 75 Main St, Ewerby, Sleaford NG34 9PJ
South Kyme	South Kyme Coronation Hall, High St, South Kyme, Lincoln LN4 4AD

Table 3 – Proposed venues for statutory consultation events

9.1.5 We anticipate that our statutory consultation will be held for six weeks in early 2024. The consultation will be advertised using the same channels as at our early (non-statutory) phase – see Table 2 above.

9.1.6 In addition to the consultation events and webinars, we will offer key political stakeholders within the consultation zone (MPs, County Councillors, District Councillors, Parish Councils) the opportunity to attend a briefing meeting either in person or online.

Methods to Provide Consultation Feedback

9.1.7 Seeking feedback is key to the principles of consultation. This will be sought using a variety of mechanisms, including:

- Feedback forms provided at Consultation Events to provide detailed comments in response to specific questions;
- An online version of the feedback form to be made available during the consultation on the project website (www.beaconfenenergypark.co.uk);
- A dedicated email (info@beaconfenenergypark.co.uk) and Freepost address (FREEPOST Beacon Fen Energy Park) to allow feedback or questions to be made directly to the project team info@beaconfenenergypark.co.uk.

9.1.8 A phone number (0330 0571943) has been set up to contact the project team with questions by leaving a voicemail, accessible 24 hours a day. Calls will then be returned by a member of the project team. Where consultees approach the Applicant by email, phone or post, the communication will be acknowledged within five working days following receipt of the enquiry.

- 9.1.9 We will accept feedback via hard copy and digital feedback forms provided during the consultation phase, as well as written feedback received in the form of letter or email during this period. Our consultation materials will make clear the importance of providing written feedback, in order for it to be formally considered in our consultation process.
- 9.1.10 We will respond to queries received verbally or via phone, but this will not necessarily be recorded as a formal consultation response to the consultation.
- 9.1.11 To follow the Proposed Development via the PINS website, Beacon Fen Energy Park is at the following address:

<https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/east-midlands/beacon-fen-energy-park>

Local information points

- 9.1.12 In order to make information accessible locally and for those without internet access, we have identified a range of public information points where key consultation documents will be sent for display.
- 9.1.13 Hard copies of consultation documents can be provided to stakeholders upon request. A charge may be incurred to cover the printing and/or postage costs for some larger documents.
- 9.1.14 We plan to place hard copies of some of our consultation documents, including the non-technical summary of the PEIR and this SoCC, to be viewed free of charge at the locations listed below in **Table 4** during the pre-application period. If for any reason we cannot deposit at a particular location, we will identify an alternative location as a replacement.
- 9.1.15 The libraries listed below also provide computers with internet access where stakeholders can view digital copies of all consultation documents.

LOCATION AND ADDRESS	OPENING TIMES
Heckington Community Library, St Andrew's Street, Heckington, Sleaford, Lincolnshire, NG34 9RE	Monday 10:00 - 12:00 Tuesday 10:00 - 12:00 Wednesday 10:00 - 12:00 Thursday 10:00 - 12:00 Friday 10:00 - 12:00 Saturday 10:00 - 12:00
Sleaford Library, 13-16 Market Place, Sleaford, Lincolnshire, NG34 7SR	Monday 09:00 - 17:00 Tuesday 09:00 - 17:00 Wednesday 09:00 - 17:00 Thursday 09:00 - 18:00 Friday 09:00 - 17:00 Saturday 09:00 - 13:00
South Kyme Golf Club, 1 Skinner's Lane, South Kyme, Lincolnshire, LN4 4AT	Monday 07:00 - 16:30 Tuesday 07:00 - 16:30 Wednesday 07:00 - 16:30 Thursday 07:00 - 16:30 Friday 07:00 - 16:30 Saturday 07:00 - 16:30 Sunday 07:00 - 16:30

LOCATION AND ADDRESS	OPENING TIMES
Swineshead Pre-School Centre, North End, Swineshead, Boston, Lincolnshire, PE20 3LZ	Monday 08:00 - 15:00 Tuesday 08:00 - 17:00 Wednesday 08:00 - 17:00 Thursday 08:00 - 17:00 Friday 08:00 - 17:00
Lincolnshire County Council Offices, Newland, Lincoln, LN1 1YL	Monday 08:00 - 17:00 Tuesday 08:00 - 17:00 Wednesday 08:00 - 17:00 Thursday 08:00 - 17:00 Friday 08:00 - 17:00
Boston Library, Bank Street Entrance, County Hall, Boston, PE21 6DY	Monday 09:00 - 17:00 Tuesday 09:00 - 17:00 Wednesday 09:00 - 17:00 Thursday 09:00 - 18:00 Friday 09:00 - 17:00 Saturday 09:00 - 16:00

Table 4 – Proposed local information points (subject to permission from venues)

- 9.1.16 The opening times of these organisations are controlled by the venue operators and may be subject to change.
- 9.1.17 Hard and/or electronic copies of the SoCC will also be sent to all parish councils in the consultation zone.

How We Will Respond to Consultee Comments

- 9.1.18 When statutory consultation has closed, we will review and finalise our proposed application having regard to the feedback received throughout. We will then produce a Consultation Report which will set out how the feedback from the pre-application consultation has shaped and influenced our proposed application.
- 9.1.19 In the Consultation Report we will also make it clear where we have not altered our proposals to reflect comments received and explain our reasoning. The Consultation Report will be submitted to the SoS as part of the DCO application.
- 9.1.20 Please note that all feedback will be included in the Consultation Report; however, no personal details will be published, in line with the Proposed Development's Privacy Policy¹².
- 9.1.21 Names and personal contact details (including email addresses, telephone number and home address) may be collected for the purpose of contacting and corresponding with consultees. Appropriate technical and organisational security measures are in place to protect any personal information we receive against unauthorised or unlawful use, and against accidental loss, damage or

¹² <https://www.beaconfenenergypark.co.uk/privacy-policy/>

destruction in line with GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) requirements. More information about these measures is available on request.

10. Other Consultations

10.1.1 We are aware of a number of other Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects in the local area. These include:

- Heckington Fen Solar Park – currently in Examination stage
- Temple Oaks Renewable Energy Park – currently in Pre-Application stage
- Springwell Solar Farm – currently in Pre-Application stage
- Fosse Green Energy Solar and Energy Storage Park – currently in Pre-Examination stage

10.1.2 We have coordinated with other DCO solar projects in the area by monitoring their pre-application timelines, in order to minimise overlap of respective consultation dates and lighten the administrative burden on local statutory and non-statutory stakeholders.

11. Glossary of Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Term
BBC	Boston Borough Council
BESS	Battery energy storage system
CO ₂	Carbon Dioxide
CCTV	Closed circuit television
DCO	Development Consent Order
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
ES	Environmental Statement
FAQ	Frequently asked question
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulations
KWh	Kilowatt hour
LCC	Lincolnshire County Council
MP	Member of Parliament

MW	Megawatt
NKDC	North Kesteven District Council
NPS	National Policy Statement
NSIP	Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project
PINS	Planning Inspectorate
PEI	Preliminary Environmental Information
PEIR	Preliminary Environmental Information Report
PRoW	Public Right of Way
PV	Photovoltaic
SHDC	South Holland District Council
SoCC	Statement of Community Consultation
SoS	Secretary of State

Appendix 1

Planned timeline for Beacon Fen Energy Park (pre-application consultation to construction)



Appendix 2

Proposed poster display locations

Village	Name of location
North Kyme	The Plough
	North Kyme Villaae Hall
Billinghay	Lincolnshire Co-op Billinghay Post Office
	Ship Inn
South Kyme	South Kyme Golf Club
	South Kyme Parish Council
	Hume Arms
Ewerby	Ewerby Reading Rooms
	Ewerby and Evedon Parish Council
Heckington	Sylv's Coffee Shop & Cate
	Royal Oak Heckington
	POP in cafe
	The Windmill Shoo
	Heckington Village Hall
	Heckington Parish Council
Helpringham	The Brass Windmill
Great Hale	Hale Magna Village Hall
	Great Hale Parish Council
Swineshead	Swineshead Village Store
	Swineshead St Mary's Church
	Lincolnshire Co-op Swineshead Food Store
	Swineshead Parish Council
	Baythoroe Tea Room & Garden Centre
Bicker	Bicker Parish Council
Donington	Co-op Food Donington
	The Black Bull
Sleaford	Sleaford Town Council
	Sleaford Library
	Sleaford Rugby Club
	Sleaford Town Junior Football Club
	Sleaford Leisure centre
Anwick	Anwick Community Centre

Appendix 3

Proposed Seldom Heard consultees to consult

Support and advice: Disability, equality, diversity and inclusion related groups, charities and organisations	
Organisation	Specialisation
Abbeyfield UK Lincoln	Wellbeing, older people
ADHD 360	Mental health and learning disability
Adults Supporting Adults (ASA)	Wellbeing, mental health
Age Friendly Future	Wellbeing, older people
Age UK Lincoln and South Lincolnshire	Wellbeing, older people
Alzheimer's and Dementia Support	Wellbeing, older people
Alzheimer's Society	Wellbeing, older people
Alzheimer's Society - Side by Side North East Lincolnshire	Wellbeing, older people
Autistic Society Lincolnshire	Autism, learning difficulties
Blue Badge Scheme - Lincolnshire County Council	Disability, transport
Carre's Grammar School	Young people, learning
Children's Disability Register - Lincolnshire County Council	Disability, young people
Churches All Together in Lincolnshire	Religious Group
Citizens Advice Mid Lincolnshire	Equality
Community Digital Hubs	Equality
Community Lincs	Wellbeing
Dementia Cafe Lincoln	Dementia support
Dementia Cafe Sleaford	Dementia support
Dementia Support South Lincolnshire	Dementia support
Diabetes Service Lincolnshire	Diabetes, health, wellbeing
Diabetes UK - Midlands and East of England	Wellbeing, health, mental health
Disability Services - Lincolnshire County Council	Support, disability, blue badge, transport, care, equipment, finance, therapy and other
EDAN Lincs Domestic Abuse Service Lincoln	Health, mental health, wellbeing
Equality Diversity and Inclusion Team - Lincolnshire Police	Equality
Ethnic Minority and Traveller Education Team	Equality, education
Evergreen Care Sleaford	Wellbeing, support, health, older people
Evergreen Care Trust Stamford	Wellbeing, support, health, older people
GAIN - Guillain-Barré & Associated Inflammatory Neuropathies	Disability, support
Good Neighbour Scheme	Wellbeing
Grantham Short Breaks & Respite - Ambient Support	Mental health, learning disability and older people

Support and advice: Disability, equality, diversity and inclusion related groups, charities and organisations	
Great Hale Charities	Finance, support, wellbeing
Ground Level Network Lincoln	Religious Group
Guide Dogs	Blindness
Heckington Community Hub	Library services
Heckington Almshouse Charity	Older people, housing support
Heckington Relief in Need	Disability, support, wellbeing
Helpringham Community Cafe	Wellbeing, community group support
Helpringham Primary School	Young people, learning
Homestart Lincolnshire	Volunteering, support, mental health, wellbeing, parenting
JUST Lincolnshire	Equality, diversity & tackling discrimination
Kesteven and Sleaford High School	Young people, learning
KISIMUL School	Education, special needs, autism, learning difficulties, disability
Laffletics Disability Sports Club Sleaford	Disability, sports club, young people
LEAP Housing	Housing support, emergency accommodation
Volunteering, support, mental health, wellbeing, parenting	Equality, health, mental health
Lincoln and District Stroke Club	Health, wellbeing, mental health
Lincoln and Lindsey Blind Society	Blindness
Lincoln Central Mosque and Cultural Centre	Religious group
Lincoln Methodist Church	Religious group
Lincoln MS Therapy Centre	Health, wellbeing, mental health, disability
Lincoln Parkinson's Social Meet Up	Disability, health, wellbeing, mental health
Lincolnshire Action Trust	Equality, criminal justice system
Lincolnshire Black Police Association	Equality, wellbeing
Lincolnshire Community & Voluntary Service (CVS)	Health, wellbeing
Lincolnshire Community Foundation	Community groups support
Lincolnshire Council for Voluntary Youth Services	Volunteering, young people, wellbeing
Lincolnshire Learning Disability Partnership Board - Total Voice Lincolnshire	Learning disability, autism, wellbeing, mental health
Lincolnshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust	Mental health
Lincolnshire Police Federation	Equality
Lincolnshire Sensory Services	Disability services
Lincolnshire South Federation - Inspiring Women	Wellbeing
Lincolnshire Stroke Recovery Service	Health, mental health, wellbeing
Lincolnshire Transport Helpline - Dial a ride	Equality, transport
Lincolnshire Transport Helpline - Lincs Bus	Equality, transport
Lincolnshire Travellers Initiative	Equality
Lincolnshire YMCA	Day Care, youth work, emergency accommodation, housing and training

Support and advice: Disability, equality, diversity and inclusion related groups, charities and organisations	
Lincolnshire Young Carers	Health & Wellbeing
Linkage - Learning Disability	Equality, learning disability
Lions Club Sleaford & District	Volunteering, disability, mental health, wellbeing
Longhurst Group - Sleaford HRS	Housing support, wellbeing
MND - Motor Neurone Disease Cuppa and a Chat Support Group	Health, wellbeing, mental health, disability
MND - Motor Neurone Disease NELSWelaR Support Group (North East Leicestershire, South West Lincolnshire and Rutland)	Health, wellbeing, mental health, disability
MND - Motor Neurone Disease South Lincolnshire Support Group	Health, wellbeing, mental health, disability
Moving Forward Lincolnshire	Family support
MS Support Boston & South Holland Society	Health, wellbeing, mental health, disability
NACRO Services in Lincolnshire	Housing support
National Deaf Children's Society	Hearing loss
New Life Church Sleaford	Religious group, volunteering
New Life Community Larder	Religious group, volunteering, food bank
NKDC Housing Options	Housing support
NK Social Strollers	Health, wellbeing
Nomad Centre Lincs YMCA	Housing support, wellbeing
Nomad Trust Lincoln	Housing support
North East Lincolnshire Women's Aid	Health, mental health, wellbeing
North Hykeham Children Centre	Children centre
North Lincolnshire Youth Council	Young people, support
Our Lady of Good Counsel Catholic Church	Religious group
Parkinson's Service NHS Team	Parkinson's disease, disability, mental health, wellbeing
Pinfold Way Sheltered Housing Sleaford	Emergency housing, housing support
Project Compass	Wellbeing, support, health
Rainbow Stars Sleaford	Disability, support
Religious Society of Friends Quakers - Lincoln Quakers Meeting	Religious group
Rethink Mental Illness Woodhall Spa Group	Mental Health
Rotary Club of Sleaford	Volunteering, wellbeing, community support
Royal British Legion Sleaford	Wellbeing, veterans
Royal National Institute for the Blind	Blindness
Royal Naval Association Cleethorpes & Grimsby	Wellbeing, veterans
Royal Naval Association Lincoln	Wellbeing, veterans
Salvation Army - Sleaford	Religious group, volunteering
Samaritans Lincoln	Volunteering, mental health

Support and advice: Disability, equality, diversity and inclusion related groups, charities and organisations	
SEND - Special Educational Needs & Disabilities in North Kesteven and South Kesteven	Disability, learning difficulties, wellbeing, health
Seventh-Day Adventist Church	Religious group
SHINE Lincolnshire Support Group	Disability, equality, spina bifida
Shine Mental Health Support network in Lincolnshire	Mental health support
Short Breaks for Disabled Children	Disability, wellbeing, mental health
Siblinks	Wellbeing, support
Sleaford Children Centre	Children services, wellbeing
Sleaford Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)	Equality
Sleaford Community Grocer	Food, support
Sleaford Dementia Support	Older people, dementia support
Sleaford Foyer - Housing Group	Equality, emergency accommodation
Sleaford Methodist Church	Religious group
Sleaford Mosque and Community Centre	Religious group
Sleaford u3a	Older people, wellbeing
Sleaford Vs Arthritis	Older people, wellbeing, arthritis support
Sleaford Youth Centre	Young people, support
SOLDAS - South Lincolnshire Domestic Abuse Service - Boston Women's Aid	Health, mental health, wellbeing
South Lincolnshire Blind Society	Disability, blindness
Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Local Offer - North East Lincolnshire	Special Needs, disability, learning difficulties
Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Local Offer - North Lincolnshire	Special Needs, disability, learning difficulties
St Andrew's School, Heckington	Young people, learning
St George's Academy	Young people, learning
Stepping Up Walks	Health, wellbeing
Stroke Association - North East Lincolnshire	Health, mental health, wellbeing
T.E.D. Ageing Better in East Lindsey	Wellbeing, older people
The Centre for Reconciliation	Young people, wellbeing
VICTA - Support for Children and Young Adults who are blind or partially sighted	Blindness, visual impairment
VoiceAbility Lincolnshire	Mental health
Voluntary Centre Services North Kesteven	Volunteering
We Are With you (Previously Addaction) National	Addiction support
Wellbeing Lincs	Wellbeing, health, mental health
Youth Offending Service	Young people, support

Appendix 4

List of media titles press releases are proposed to be issued to.

Heckington Living
Lincolnshire Echo
Lincolnshire Free Press
Lincolnshire in Focus
Lincolnshire Life
Lincolnshire Live
Lincolnshire Pride
Lincolnshire Reporter
Lincolnshire Today
Lincolnshire World
The Lincolnite
Sleaford Standard
Spalding Today
Your Local Lines
Business Lincolnshire
Business Link Magazine
Business Live
CityX
BBC Radio Lincolnshire
BBC Radio Yorkshire/Lincolnshire
ITV News Central
ITV Yorkshire
Heckington Living Community Radio
Lines FM
BBC One East Midlands
BBC One Look North (Yorkshire)
Capital Midlands
ReNews
4C Offshore
Alt Energy Mag
Carbon Brief
Energy Voice
Solar Power Portal
Recharge
PV magazine



Appendix 1.3 Local Planning Authority response to draft SoCC

20.10.2023 - Email from Lincolnshire County Council with feedback on draft SoCC



By Email Only Colin
Turnbull - DWD

20 October 2023

Dear Mr Turnbull

**Planning Act 2008, Section 47 (2) - Consultation on draft Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC)
Beacon Fen Energy Park**

Thank you for your email dated 4 October 2023 Inviting the Council's comments on the draft Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC). Our views and comments, at this stage, are set out below:

- Chapter 8: Identifying Our Consultees, at paragraphs 8.1.4, 8.1.7 and 8.1.11 refers to 'Hard to Reach Groups'. This phrase can potentially cause offence, as groups may be seldom heard rather than hard to reach. Please therefore consider using the phrase "seldom heard groups" instead. Consideration should be made to publishing the "seldom heard groups" as this demonstrates that these stakeholders are fully included in the SoCC process. This also shows that appropriate effort has been made to find out who these groups are and how they will be contacted.
- It is recommended that the definition of groups is not limited to just those groups stated at paragraph 8.1.11. Many factors can contribute to people being seldom heard, including disability, ethnicity, sexuality, communication impairments, mental health problems, homelessness and geographical isolation.
- Chapter 9: How We Will Consult, Paragraph 9.1.2 table 2- communication methods, it would be helpful if a cost for printed documents could be provided, if a charge is to be applied.
- Paragraph 9.1.3 • reference should be made to the dates and times of these events. It is recommended that some events are held outside of standard working hours to ensure there is availability to those who cannot attend during working hours.
- Paragraph 9.1.8 • Consider offering a call back service/ out of working hours times to call for those working/ with other commitments during these times.
- Paragraph 9.1.15 Local information points- it is good to see a large number of options but please consider finding some that are more local.
- It would be useful if you could send a copy of the information leaflet and newsletters to each of the host authorities and political representatives so they are aware what has been sent out to their constituents- If this is not already intended.

I trust the comments set out above are useful and should you require clarification on any of the issues highlighted above please feel free to contact me.

Yours faithfully

County Offices, Newland
Lincoln LN1 1YL
www.lincolnshire.gov.uk

Appendix 1.3 Local Planning Authority response to draft SoCC

08.11.2023 - Email from North Kesteven District Council with feedback on draft SoCC

Dear Colln, Leo

Beacon Fen Solar Farm - Consultation on the draft Statement of Community Consultation (Section 47(2) of the Planning Act 2008)

Thank you for consulting North Kesteven District Council on the draft SOCC for the Beacon Fen project. I've now had the chance to review the consultation draft version and can now provide the Council's formal response. The Ewer/1103/1 is on the boundary of the development site and we

would prefer that it is referenced

- Paragraph 5.1.5 - this should state that views submitted in PEIR will where relevant be acted upon. At present, beyond the comments being 'considered' there is no commitment to scheme amendments stemming from those comments. It reads as being 'closed' at that point which should not be the case.
- Paragraph 6.1.12 • can you please include a table showing the number of attendees to the events, website hits, no. of online & postal feedback etc and summarise the main comments and themes raised
- Paragraph 6.1.10 and 6.1.14 - there is no reference as to the NKDC May 2023 suggestion of 5km buffer zone for consultation. This reference, along with Figure 3 and paragraph 8.1.1 make no reference to this suggestion and therefore a reader might assume tacit NKDC acceptance which is not the case. Please can you expand either 6.1.10 or section 8 to clarify the Initial request made by NKDC for a larger consultation zone and why this has been ruled out and a narrower zone promoted?
- Paragraph 6.1.7 - we request that the statutory consultation is extended to 6 weeks consistent with other projects
- Paragraph 6.1.19-what are these lessons/learning points? Useful to summarise what they are therefore how you are addressing in the stat consultation phase
- Paragraph 7.1.4 - this should be expanded to reference the deletion of BF South and also to confirm how the design has been informed by feedback received during Scoping/the EIA Scoping opinion. With reference to 7.1.4 point 5, you might need to clarify this - do you mean DCO-specific measures or Community Benefit Agreement or both?
- Paragraph 8.1.1- as above this doesn't reflect the advice given by NKDC at early pre-application stage and gives the impression that NKDC have agreed this zone which we haven't. Can you please acknowledge the alternative zone suggested by us and if needed provide some rebuttal to that i.e. from experience of other NSIP solar scheme consultation zones. I accept that there are differences of opinion here but at present there is no reference to the alternative view given by NKDC nor an attempt to respond to it in justifying the reduced zone.

Appendix 1.3 Local Planning Authority response to draft SoCC

08.11.2023 - Email from North Kesteven District Council with feedback on draft SoCC

- Figure 3 - as above our recommendation across the NSIP solar schemes is 5km. This has been adopted by Heckington Fen. Whilst there is text which describes how the zone has been derived nevertheless this gives somewhat arbitrary boundaries and a fixed zone from the edge of the site seems more defensible. For instance, it is unclear why the zone around A52/Swatton in the south, and which relates to the cable corridor, is over twice as extensive as the area around the energy park site?
- Paragraph 8.1.4 – please add Parish Councils
- Paragraph 8.1.7 – presume ‘green space’ means ‘agricultural’?
- Paragraph 8.1.12 – as above regarding consultation zone extent
- Chapter 9 heading - possibly expand to ‘How We Will Consult and Publicise’
- Paragraph 9.1.2/table 2 – no reference to the use of Social Media
- Table 2 ‘Newspaper Adverts’ - please expand to confirm that advertisements will be placed in both print and digital publications (where applicable) to ensure wider coverage within and beyond the core and wider consultation zones. Consistent with Heckington Fen we recommend the publications could include Lincolnshire Live, Lincolnshire World, The Lincolnite and Spalding Today
- Table 2 ‘Press Releases’ - would be worth listing those to be approached and based on Heckington Fen we suggest Heckington Living, BBC Radio Lincolnshire, Lincs 102.2FM, BBC Look North, ITV News Calendar, Lincolnshire Free Press, Lincolnshire Live which includes: Boston Target, Sleaford Target & Spalding Target, Lincolnshire World, the collective website which includes the Sleaford Standard, Boston Standard & Spalding Standard, The Lincolnite (online only), Spalding Today and Local Lincs Magazine
- Paragraph 9.1.3 and table 3 - no reference to likely timings of meetings, whether likely weekday/weekend etc.
- Paragraph 9.1.5 - see above re: social media, press release outlets etc
- Paragraph 9.1.6 – Teams, in person or both?
- Paragraph 9.1.7 - suggest also accepting comments from Social Media, Facebook etc?
- Table 4 – Sleaford Library will be sufficient, therefore suggest to remove STH and NKDC offices? The Library will offer longer periods of access than NKDC offices. Sleaford Town Council Offices can be retained if previously agreed with STC however it doesn’t require all 3 Sleaford venues as deposit points. Are there other more local village or parish halls closer to the site than Heckington where documents can be deposited even if they are only accessible for shorter periods?
- Paragraph 10.1.1 – please update this list to include Fosse Green solar NSIP.

We will provide a list of recommended hard to reach group contacts in due course.

Finally, we note the intention to hold in person events between Friday 26th January and Wednesday 14th February. 10th to 18th February is Lincolnshire school half term so we would always recommend either avoidance or extension of the consultation period. We wouldn’t support proposals for public exhibitions during those periods as this might reduce the number of attendees. I’d therefore recommend that 13th and 14th are rescheduled to avoid both the half term clash and the other events that you have noted in correspondence. To not do so would, we feel, reduce the likelihood of people attending those events and therefore the robustness of the consultation process.

Regards

Appendix 1.3 Local Planning Authority response to draft SoCC

08.11.2023 - Email from Boston Borough Council with feedback on draft SoCC

From:

Sent: Wednesday, November 8, 2023 1:24 PM

To: Colin Turnbull ; Leo Cunningham-Baily

Subject: RE: Beacon Fen Solar draft SOCC - Section 47(2) of the Planning Act 2008

Good Afternoon Both,

Please find below BBC comments on the SoCC:

- 4.1.1/2 – should include a reference to cable route/connection at Bicker. It mentions an on-site substation to export to National Grid?
- 9.9.1 – would agree with NKDC to include Social Media
- Table 2 – Newspaper adverts – would list specifically the publications to be used, both in print and digitally, eg Heckington Living, BBC Radio Lincolnshire, Lincs 102.2FM, BBC Look North, ITV News Calendar, Lincolnshire Free Press, Lincolnshire Live which includes: Boston Target, Sleaford Target, Lincolnshire World, the collective website which includes the Sleaford Standard, Boston Standard & Spalding Standard, The Lincolnite (online only), Spalding Today and Local Lincs Magazine.
- Table 2 – Information posters – would be useful to know how many/what locations these are proposed to be. Would need to include locations specific to the cable route, eg Bicker.
- Table 3 – info on dates/times would be useful
- Table 4 – worth including a location closer to Bicker, either Bicker Parish or Libraries at Donington or Swineshead
- 10.1.1 – Outer Dowsing off shore wind farm is progressing with a cable route through Boston/South Holland – just mentioning for awareness more than anything as probably won't impact this cumulatively etc.

I would suggest engagement does specifically include Bicker village, in relation to impacts during cable works and traffic/haulage routes etc. Other issues that have been raised on other projects have included the loss of trees/screening to Biker Substation as a result of works to connect and how this can be mitigated for. The cable will cross the South Forty Foot Drain which is also a Local Wildlife Site, and issues such as habitat connectivity, hedgerows and biodiversity, archaeology and watercourses are important in relation to the cable route and substation works. I'd suggest early engagement with Lincs Wildlife Trust and the Internal Drainage Boards on these issues.

Kind Regards

Contact numbers:

www.boston.gov.uk

| Boston Borough Council

Appendix 1.4 SoCC notices under Section 47

29.11.23 - A printed notice publicising the SoCC in the Boston and Sleaford Target

BS L2_1ST_XXX_014-019_0

Section 47 Planning Act 2008

Notice Publicising
a Statement of
Community Consultation



Beacon Fen Energy Park Ltd (the Applicant), a subsidiary of Low Carbon Ltd, is intending to apply for a Development Consent Order to develop Beacon Fen Energy Park, a solar park and battery energy storage system (BESS) to be located on land to the east of Ewerby, Sleaford, Lincolnshire. The project is expected to generate approximately 400 megawatts (MW) of energy with a BESS capacity of approximately 600MW.

In accordance with Section 47 of the Planning Act 2008, the Applicant has prepared and published the Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) for the project. The SoCC outlines how the Applicant will consult with local communities on the proposals for the project.

The SoCC will be available to view on the Beacon Fen Energy Park website from 29 November 2023 on the following page:
www.beaconfenenergypark.co.uk/documents

A paper copy of the SoCC will be available to view at the following locations between 29 November 2023 - 3 March 2024 (opening times may be subject to change):

LOCATION AND ADDRESS	OPENING TIMES			
Heckington Community Library, St Andrew's Street, Heckington, Sleaford, Lincolnshire, NG34 9RE	Monday	10:00 – 12:00	Thursday	10:00 – 12:00
	Tuesday	10:00 – 12:00	Friday	10:00 – 12:00
	Wednesday	10:00 – 12:00	Saturday	10:00 – 12:00
Sleaford Library 13–16 Market Place, Sleaford, NG34 7SR	Monday	09:00 – 17:00	Thursday	09:00 – 18:00
	Tuesday	09:00 – 17:00	Friday	09:00 – 17:00
	Wednesday	09:00 – 17:00	Saturday	09:00 – 13:00
South Kyme Golf Club 1 Skinner's Ln, South Kyme, Lincolnshire, LN4 4AT	Monday	07:00 – 16:30	Friday	07:00 – 16:30
	Tuesday	07:00 – 16:30	Saturday	07:00 – 16:30
	Wednesday	07:00 – 16:30	Sunday	07:00 – 16:30
	Thursday	07:00 – 16:30		
Swineshead Pre-School Centre, North End, Swineshead, Boston, Lincolnshire, PE20 3LZ	Monday	08:00 – 15:00	Thursday	08:00 – 17:00
	Tuesday	08:00 – 17:00	Friday	08:00 – 17:00
	Wednesday	08:00 – 17:00		
Lincolnshire County Council Offices Newland, Lincoln, LN1 1YL	Monday	08:00 – 17:00	Thursday	08:00 – 17:00
	Tuesday	08:00 – 17:00	Friday	08:00 – 17:00
	Wednesday	08:00 – 17:00		
Boston Library Bank Street Entrance, County Hall, Boston, Lincolnshire, PE21 6DY	Monday	09:00 – 17:00	Thursday	09:00 – 18:00
	Tuesday	09:00 – 17:00	Friday	09:00 – 17:00
	Wednesday	09:00 – 17:00	Saturday	09:00 – 16:00

To contact us and request an alternative format, please write to FREEPOST Beacon Fen Energy Park, or telephone 0330 057 1943 or email info@beaconfenenergypark.co.uk

Appendix 1.4 SoCC notices under Section 47

30.11.23 - A printed notice publicising the SoCC in the Lincolnshire Echo

20 LINCOLNSHIRELIVE.CO.UK THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 2023

Section 47 Planning Act 2008

Notice Publicising a Statement of Community Consultation

BEACON FEN
ENERGY PARK

Beacon Fen Energy Park Ltd (the Applicant), a subsidiary of Low Carbon Ltd, is intending to apply for a Development Consent Order to develop Beacon Fen Energy Park, a solar park and battery energy storage system (BESS) to be located on land to the east of Ewerby, Skeaford, Lincolnshire. The project is expected to generate approximately 400 megawatts (MW) of energy with a BESS capacity of approximately 600MW.

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Sleaford Library 13–16 Market Place, Sleaford, NG34 7SR	Monday	09:00 – 17:00	Thursday	09:00 – 18:00
	Tuesday	09:00 – 17:00	Friday	09:00 – 17:00
	Wednesday	09:00 – 17:00	Saturday	09:00 – 13:00
South Kyme Golf Club 1 Skinner's Ln, South Kyme, Lincolnshire, LN4 4AT	Monday	07:00 – 16:30	Friday	07:00 – 16:30
	Tuesday	07:00 – 16:30	Saturday	07:00 – 16:30
	Wednesday	07:00 – 16:30	Sunday	07:00 – 16:30
	Thursday	07:00 – 16:30		
Swineshead Pre-School Centre, North End, Swineshead, Boston, Lincolnshire, PE20 3LZ	Monday	08:00 – 15:00	Thursday	08:00 – 17:00
	Tuesday	08:00 – 17:00	Friday	08:00 – 17:00
	Wednesday	08:00 – 17:00		
Lincolnshire County Council Offices Newland, Uncln, LN11 1YL	Monday	08:00 – 17:00	Thursday	08:00 – 17:00
	Tuesday	08:00 – 17:00	Friday	08:00 – 17:00
	Wednesday	08:00 – 17:00		
Boston Library Bank Street Entrance, County Hall, Boston, Lincolnshire, PE21 6DY	Monday	09:00 – 17:00	Thursday	09:00 – 18:00
	Tuesday	09:00 – 17:00	Friday	09:00 – 17:00
	Wednesday	09:00 – 17:00	Saturday	09:00 – 16:00

To contact us and request an alternative format, please write to
FREEPOST Beacon Fen Energy Park, or telephone 0330 057 1943
or email info@beaconfenenergypark.co.uk

www.beaconfenenergypark.co.uk

Appendix 1.4 SoCC notices under Section 47

06.12.23 - A printed notice publicising the SoCC in the Boston Standard

PLANNING NOTICES

Section 47 Planning Act 2008

Notice Publicising a Statement of Community Consultation

**BEACON FEN
ENERGY PARK**

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	Tuesday	08:00 - 17:00	Friday	08:00 - 17:00
	Wednesday	08:00 - 17:00		
Lincolnshire County Council Offices Newland, Lincoln, LN1 1YL	Monday	08:00 - 17:00	Thursday	08:00 - 17:00
	Tuesday	08:00 - 17:00	Friday	08:00 - 17:00
	Wednesday	08:00 - 17:00		
Boston Library , Bank Street Entrance, County Hall, Boston, Lincolnshire, PE21 6DY	Monday	09:00 - 17:00	Thursday	09:00 - 18:00
	Tuesday	09:00 - 17:00	Friday	09:00 - 17:00
	Wednesday	09:00 - 17:00	Saturday	09:00 - 16:00

To contact us and request an alternative format, please write to FREEPOST Beacon Fen Energy Park, or, telephone 0330 057 1943 or email info@beaconfenenergypark.co.uk

www.beaconfenenergypark.co.uk

TRUSTEES NOTICES

Audrey Ferguson (Deceased)

Pursuant to the Trustee Act 1925 any persons having a claim against or an interest in the Estate of the above named, late of The Beeches, 28 South Street, Louth, LN11 9JT, who died on 09/09/2023, are required to send written particulars thereof to the undersigned on or before 07/02/2024, after which date the Estate will be distributed having regard only to the claims and interests of which they have had notice.

PAUL RUDD SOLICITORS T/A GRIMSBY SOLICITORS, Riverhead Chambers, 9 New Street, Grimsby, GB, DN31 1HQ

Gerald Taylor (Deceased)

Pursuant to the Trustee Act 1925 any persons having a claim against or an interest in the Estate of the above named, late of 28 Churchfields Road, Folkingham, Sleaford, NG34 0TR, who died on 27/01/2023, are required to send written particulars thereof to the undersigned on or before 07/02/2024, after which date the Estate will be distributed having regard only to the claims and interests of which they have had notice.

William Taylor, The London Gazette (37282), PO Box 3 58, N orish NR 7W D

Kenneth Arthur Danby (Deceased)

Pursuant to the Trustee Act 1925 any persons having a claim against or an interest in the Estate of the above named, late of 20 Louth Road, Homcastle, LN9 5ED, who died on 21/10/2022, are required to send written particulars thereof to the undersigned on or before 07/02/2024, after which date the Estate will be distributed having regard only to the claims and interests of which they have had notice.

Ringrose Law, 32 Southgate Sleaford NG34 7RY

ESAU HERNANDEZ Deceased

Pursuant to the Trustee Act 1925 anyone having a claim against or an interest in the Estate of the deceased, late of 78 Sandbeck Avenue, Skegness, Lincolnshire, PE25 3JS, who died on 04/11/2023, must send written particulars to the address below by 07/02/2024, after which date the Estate will be distributed having regard only to claims and interests notified.

Matthew Hart c/o Co-operative Legal Services Limited, 650 Aztec West, Almondsbury, Bristol, BS32 4SD. Ref: 6593119P/Hernandez

JOBS

HOMES



GENERAL NOTICES

For sale
Louth

Appendix 1.4 SoCC notices under Section 47



Section 47 Planning Act 2008

Notice Publicising a Statement of Community Consultation

The SoCC will be available to
view on the Beacon Fen Energy
Park website from 29 November
2023 on the following page:

www.beaconfenenergypark.co.uk/documents

Telephone 0330 057 1943

CONTACT US



Section 47 Planning Act 2008

Notice Publicising a Statement of Community Consultation

The SoCC will be available to view on the Beacon
Fen Energy Park website from 29 November 2023
on the following page:

www.beaconfenenergypark.co.uk/documents

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BEACON FEN ENERGY PARK

Planning Inspectorate Reference: EN010151

Adequacy of Consultation Milestone
January 2025



Quality information

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Revision History

Revision	Revision date	Details	Authorized	Name	Position

List of Outstanding Issues and Information

Outstanding issue/info.	Section/Paragraph	Responsibility	Action

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Appendices

Appendix 1

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of this document

- 1.1.1 This Adequacy of Consultation Milestone (AoCM) document has been prepared by Beacon Fen Energy Park Limited (the Applicant) in preparation for the application for a Development Consent Order (DCO) for Beacon Fen Energy Park ('the Project').
- 1.1.2 In 2024, the UK Government introduced new guidance relevant to the application for a DCO:
- Planning Act 2008: Pre-application stage for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects¹ (the 'Guidance')
 - Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: 2024 Pre-application Prospectus² (the 'Prospectus')
- 1.1.3 The Guidance and the Prospectus together set out the requirements for pre-application consultation for a DCO project, including an AoCM document.
- 1.1.4 Updated guidance³ from the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) from August 2024 outlined the contents of the AoCM document:

"Engagement in a pre-submission Adequacy of Consultation Milestone (AoCM) intended to allow early consideration of the adequacy of consultation undertaken by the applicant and minimise risk at the acceptance stage. The AoCM should be programmed to occur early enough to enable applicants to consider how to undertake any additional engagement that may be needed, but sufficiently towards the end of the pre-application stage to assess the adequacy of the consultation that has been done. To inform the AoCM, the applicant will make a written submission to the Inspectorate which establishes the consultation undertaken to date, confirms the approaches set out in the Statement of Community Consultation, and summarises the consultation responses and the way in which they are shaping the application. Importantly, it should include the views and any relevant supporting material from local authorities if available."

- 1.1.5 The Applicant has drafted this AoCM document to provide the relevant Local Authorities and PINS an opportunity to understand how we have complied with the agreed Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC), and the pre-application consultation requirements set out in the Planning Act 2008 (the Act), the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 ('the Infrastructure EIA Regulations 2017'), The Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed Forms and Procedure) Regulations 2009 (as amended) ('the APFP Regulations'), and relevant government guidance.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/planning-act-2008-pre-application-stage-for-nationally-significant-infrastructure-projects>

² <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nationally-significant-infrastructure-projects-2024-pre-application-prospectus>

³ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nationally-significant-infrastructure-projects-2024-pre-application-prospectus#milestone>

1.1.6 The Applicant discussed the draft AoCM with the host local authorities for the Project: Lincolnshire County Council (LCC), North Kesteven District Council (NKDC) and Boston Borough Council (BBC).

1.1.7 The Application discussed the purpose of the AoCM, as set out in the Guidance and the Prospectus, and shared the draft document with the host authorities on 22 November 2024 to allow an opportunity for their views and/or supporting material to be included as part of the submitted document.

1.1.8 A response was received from all three host authorities. Feedback was received from South & East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership on behalf of BBC, on 5 December 2024. A copy of this response can be found at Appendix 1.1. Comments included:

"BBC previous comments upon the draft SoCC (8th Nov 2023) are addressed by Table 4.1 the Applicants response to feedback received during the consultation on the SoCC and therefore on that basis there are no further comments upon the consultation undertaken or approaches set out in the SoCC that are described within the AoCM Report."

1.1.9 A response was received from NKDC on 5 December 2024. A full copy of this response can be found at Appendix 1.1. Comments included:

"I can confirm that the Council was offered the opportunity to comment on the draft Statement of Community Consultation and our comments were taken on board prior to the statutory consultation being undertaken (Jan-March 2024). Further engagement was carried out around the two targeted statutory consultation exercises on proposed amendments to the DCO red line (March 2024 and to be undertaken in December 2024)."

"With regard to how consultation responses (from local residents, consultation bodies and the Council) have shaped the evolving scheme design, I note that Table 5.3 only mentions two examples of changes made to the project following statutory consultation. Paragraph 5.1.20 states that the applicant is continuing to consider the feedback received as it finalises its proposals ahead of DCO submission. The AOCM states that this information will not be made available until the Consultation Report has been prepared (paragraphs 5.1.3, 5.1.18-19, 1.1.1 (after 6.1.15), 6.1.6 and various references in Table 4.3) and submitted as part of the DCO application. This means that the Council cannot meaningfully engage with the applicant during the remainder of the pre-application process. Furthermore, once the application has been submitted, the Council will not have the opportunity to shape the proposals."

1.1.10 A response was received from LCC on 6 December 2024. A copy of this response can be found at Appendix 1.1. The response stated:

"I can confirm that LCC is of the view that Beacon Fen Energy Park Ltd to date has carried out adequate pre-application consultation in accordance with the requirements as set out in Sections 42, 47 and 48 of the Act."

"We note in section 5 of the Adequacy of Consultation Milestone Report dated November 2024 it is stated that the feedback is still being considered and full details will be presented in the Consultation Report. Table 5.3 lists examples

of where feedback has informed changes in the scheme, however this is quite limited information at this stage and LCC will wish to see fuller details on how consultation feedback has been responded to in due course. LCC would welcome an opportunity to review and discuss with the applicant how the consultation feedback has shaped the application in advance of the DCO submission.”

- 1.1.11 Following the close of Statutory Consultation on 3 March 2024, the Applicant met with LCC, NKDC and BBC on 3 April, 1 May, 26 June, 28 August and 8 November 2024. A further three-way briefing ahead of submission of the DCO application will take place on 15 January 2025, during which the recent scheme evolution and assessment methodologies will be described with reference to the Councils' Section 42 consultation responses.

1.2 The proposed project

- 1.2.1 The Project is a solar and BESS (Battery Energy Storage System) development located to the east of Sleaford, Lincolnshire. The development is expected to generate approximately 400 megawatts (MW) of energy with BESS capacity of approximately 600MW.
- 1.2.2 The proposals for Beacon Fen Energy Park include building the infrastructure needed to export the electricity the energy park would generate into the National Grid. It is planned this would be at the existing Bicker Fen substation.
- 1.2.3 The Proposed Development is a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) because it will generate over 50MW of electricity. This means it requires a DCO under the Planning Act 2008. The DCO application will be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS), who will then examine the application before making a recommendation to the Secretary of State (SoS), who will then decide whether to grant the DCO. The Project is currently in the pre-application stage of the DCO process.
- 1.2.4 The principal components, as set out in the Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR), are:
- Solar PV (photovoltaic) panels and modular ground mounting structures.
 - The proposal is for a fixed (i.e., static) panel orientation, facing due south. Supporting infrastructure – inverters, combiner boxes, transformers – converting the direct current to alternating current and stepping up the voltage so it can be exported to the National Grid.
 - An up to 600MW BESS so electricity generated or imported can be stored on-site and then released into the National Grid when it is needed most. It is proposed the BESS will be located in the middle of the solar array, reducing potential noise and views of the equipment.
 - Onsite low voltage cabling connecting the solar PV modules and BESS to inverters, and inverters to the onsite transformers.
 - Onsite cabling between PV modules and inverters anticipated to be above ground level, placed along row of racks fixed to mounting structure, placed

underground, between racks and inverter. All other onsite cabling to be underground where possible.

- Higher voltage cables required between transformers and switchgear and from switchgear to the substations.
- A single onsite substation within the solar PV panel area (solar array), to export electricity from the solar energy park to the National Grid.
- Fencing with security measures including pole mounted internal facing closed circuit television (CCTV) anticipated to be approximately 5m high around the solar array area.
- Acoustic fence (if required). Floodlights will not be used.
- Earthworks to form a suitable development platform for the substation and BESS.
- Water supply and drainage infrastructure including up to four firewater storage tanks with a total capacity of 240 cubic metres.
- Landscaping and biodiversity enhancement areas around the solar array area perimeter and within the solar array area to provide visual amenity, reduce landscape impacts, and provide net gains for biodiversity.
- Areas of reinforced ground or hardstanding adjoining the BESS for occasional laydown activities or for emergency usage.

1.2.5 In addition:

- During construction, temporary construction compounds will be required, as well as temporary roadways, to enable access to all the land within the energy park boundary.
- Access tracks 3.5m to 7m wide for construction access and routine maintenance when operational.
- Flood resilience measures.

2. Overview of Engagement to Date

2.1 Overview of Consultation

2.1.1 The Applicant has sought to engage and consult with the local community and other key stakeholders from an early stage of the Project, giving them multiple opportunities to inform the Project's design:

- Early (non-statutory) consultation May - June 2023
- Statutory consultation January - March 2024
- Targeted consultation March 2024, including under Section 42 and with newly identified land interests
- A second targeted consultation December 2024 – January 2025, including under Section 42

Further information on each of these stages is provided in the subsequent sections of this document.

2.1.2 The Applicant has given careful consideration to the specific requirements set out in the following legislation in developing the approach to consultation for the proposed development:

- The Planning Act 2008 (the Act 2008).
- The Infrastructure Planning: (Application: Prescribed Form and Procedure) Regulations 2009 (the Infrastructure Planning Regulations 2009).
- The Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (the Infrastructure EIA Regulations 2017).

2.1.3 In addition, attention has been paid to:

- Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) Planning Act 2008: Guidance on the pre-application process (2015) (since updated);
- Planning Inspectorate (PINS) Advice Note 3: Environmental Impact Assessment Consultation and Notification (since updated);
- PINS Advice Note 6: Preparation and Submission of Application Documents (since updated);
- PINS Note: Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: Advice on the Consultation Report;
- National Policy Statement (NPS) EN-1: Overarching NPS for Energy; and
- NPS EN-3: NPS for Renewable Energy Infrastructure.

2.1.4 The Applicant also supplemented these efforts via ongoing engagement with a wide range of consultees, including the relevant local Members of Parliament (MPs), County Council, District Councils, Borough, Town and Parish Councils within or close to the Project boundary, and local residents and businesses. Briefing meetings were held with a range of local Councillors during non-statutory and statutory consultation.

2.1.5 The Applicant undertook pre-application consultation in accordance with Sections 42, 47 and 48 of the 2008 Act, with the following consultees:

- Prescribed bodies in accordance with Section 42;
- Local authorities in accordance with Section 42 and as described in Section 43;
- Those with an interest in the land (in accordance with Section 42 and as described in Section 44);
- Community and stakeholders living in the vicinity of the Project in accordance with Section 47; and
- Wider communities and organisations by publicising the consultation in accordance with Section 48.

3. Early (Non-Statutory) Consultation

3.1 Project Launch

3.1.1 The Applicant organised several introductory project meetings as part of the Project launch and inception with prescribed consultees, statutory undertakers and local planning authorities.

3.1.2 Meetings were held with the consultees listed in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 – List of meetings held during Project inception

Date	Stakeholder	Topic of Discussion
27 February 2023	Lincolnshire County Council	Introducing the Project's environmental consultants, Wardell Armstrong, and the Project.
20 March 2023	Lincolnshire County Council	Introduction to project for Planning Officers.
24 March 2023	Lincolnshire County Council	Meeting to discuss a phased approach to the geophysical survey.
29 March 2023	North Kesteven District Council	Introduction to project for Planning Officers.
29 March 2023	Boston Borough Council	Introduction to project for Planning Officers.

3.1.3 The Applicant launched the Project to the public on 30 March 2023.

3.1.4 A press release was issued to regional and industry media on 30 March 2023 to announce the launch of the Project.

Non-statutory consultation

3.1.5 An initial round of non-statutory public consultation was held between 15 May and 18 June 2023. Whilst not required by the EIA Regulations or the Act 2008, key environmental stakeholders were consulted in this process. Comments from the non-statutory consultation influenced the ongoing evolution of the Project design.

3.1.6 The Applicant promoted the consultation to statutory and non-statutory consultees, and residents and businesses within the Project's consultation zone.

3.1.7 The Applicant organised several introductory project meetings as part of the early (non-statutory) engagement with prescribed consultees, statutory undertakers and local planning authorities. Meetings were held with the consultees listed in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2 – List of meetings held at non-statutory consultation

Date	Stakeholder	Topic of Discussion
17 April 2023	South Holland District Council	Introduction to project for Planning Officers.

9 May 2023	Burton Pedwardine Village Community	Introduction to Project.
10 May 2023	North Kyme Parish Council	Introduction to Project.
10 May 2023	Ewerby & Evedon Parish Council	Introduction to Project.
16 May 2023	Sleaford Town Council	Introduction to Project.
17 May 2023	Swaton Parish Council	Introduction to Project.
25 May 2023	Lincolnshire County Council	Briefing to Council members to introduce the project.
25 May 2023	Kirkby la Thorpe Parish Council	Introduction to Project.
1 June 2023	Lincolnshire County Council	Meeting to discuss the geophysical survey results and the archaeological approach.
5 June 2023	Great Hale Parish Council	Introduction to Project.
7 June 2023	Network Rail	Introduction to Project.
13 June 2023	Lincolnshire County Council	Consultation with highways, including potential access routes to northern and southern array and proposed survey locations.
13 June 2023	Little Hale Parish Council	Introduction to Project.

3.1.8 Stakeholders, residents and businesses were informed about the early (non-statutory) consultation via various methods. These were:

- A dedicated maildrop to 7,270 properties located within 2.5km of the Project's proposed Order limits, sent two weeks ahead of the start of consultation.
- A press release announcing the consultation launch was distributed to regional media, broadcast outlets and industry trade media two weeks in advance of the start of consultation.
- Quarter page newspaper print adverts were placed in the Sleaford and Boston Target on Wednesday 10 May, Lincolnshire Echo on Thursday 11 May and Boston and Sleaford Standard on Wednesday 17 May 2023.
- A digital mailshot was emailed to the subscribed Beacon Fen Energy Park mailing list on 15 May 2023 announcing the start of the consultation.

- The dedicated project website (www.beaconfenenergypark.co.uk) was updated with information about the early (non-statutory) consultation two weeks ahead of the launch.
 - A poster was sent to a number of local parish councils and locations such as shops and libraries displaying information about the upcoming consultation.
 - In addition, key political stakeholders, including MPs, County and District Councillors and Parish and Town Councils for the area within the Project boundary and the 2.5km consultation zone, were sent the press release two weeks before consultation launch in a dedicated email to receive the news first-hand.
 - Halfway through the consultation, a reminder press release was issued to local media on 30 May 2023 to urge consultees to engage with the project. A reminder mailshot was also sent via email to subscribed stakeholders on 6 June 2023.
- 3.1.9 Three in-person events were organised and held for the early (non-statutory) consultation. To maximise attendees and to ensure ease of access, these were organised at three different locations relevant to the Project geographically (Heckington, Helpringham and Donington), and at different days of the week and times of day.
- 3.1.10 At the Heckington event, landowners were invited to book a meeting in advance with land agents Ardent to discuss individual cases and concerns. Five meetings were booked in advance and others asked for one throughout the day.
- 3.1.11 Two online webinars were also organised and held to ensure people who were not able to attend our in-person events had another option to engage. Each webinar consisted of a presentation on the Project and a Q&A session for those attending. We accepted questions both before and during the webinars through channels including the Project email address and the 'chat' function during the event. Again, to maximise attendance, these were held on different days of the week.
- 3.1.12 All consultation information available at the in-person events was also directly available at any time on our dedicated website www.beaconfenenergypark.co.uk/documents.
- 3.1.13 Near neighbours to the Beacon Fen solar array areas were sent a letter in the post on 2 May 2023 inviting them to a personal meeting with The Applicant to discuss the Project and potential impacts on their properties, alongside a copy of the Project map. In total, 14 meetings were held with near neighbours to the site during the early (non-statutory) consultation.
- 3.1.14 A total of 208 people attended the Early (Non-Statutory) Consultation Public Information Days and webinars. In total we received 88 completed feedback forms.
- 3.1.15 A full breakdown of the issues raised by the community and local political representatives as part of the early (non-statutory) consultation will be grouped together under common themes and summarised in the Consultation Report as part of the DCO submission.

3.1.16 Table 3.3 explains any changes that were made to the Project proposals as a result of feedback received during the consultation.

Table 3.3 – Details of changes made to Project proposals based on feedback from our early (non-statutory) consultation

Feedback received	Details of change made to Project proposals
Concerns over how Beacon Fen South would interact with Anglian Water's proposed reservoir were raised.	Beacon Fen South, which was planned for land near to Helpringham and Burton Pedwardine near the town of Sleaford, was removed from Beacon Fen Energy Park. A wide variety of feedback was received at the consultation, including concerns over how the energy park could work with another proposed nationally significant infrastructure project – a reservoir proposed by Anglian Water on the same land identified for Beacon Fen South. Beacon Fen Energy Park could commence construction from approximately 2026/2027 onwards, but due to the scale and nature of the reservoir project, its DCO application will not be brought forward until after this timeframe, which could have caused delays to Beacon Fen Energy Park as a whole. These changes mean that the proposals are now further from Burton Pedwardine, Little Hale and Helpringham.
Objection to the use of overhead cabling and installation of pylons on the cable route.	Following the consultation, overhead cabling was ruled out in favour of underground cabling.
More advertising needed to publicise the consultation period.	Paid adverts on social media were included to promote the statutory consultation.
The local roads are unsuitable for construction traffic in terms of volume, as well as potential damage and safety concerns from HGVs.	Following this feedback and further traffic surveys, a bespoke access road for the solar array site was proposed. This proposed access would come directly off the A17 via an existing layby and would divert traffic away from the small local roads.

4. Statement of Community Consultation

4.1 Development of the SoCC

- 4.1.1 In accordance with Section 47(1) of the Act 2008, a Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) was prepared in consultation with North Kesteven District Council, Boston Borough Council and Lincolnshire County Council, hereafter referred to as 'the Host Authorities'. The SoCC outlined how the Applicant would consult with the local community, including, in accordance with Regulation 12 of the EIA Regulations (Ref 3-1), how it intended to publicise and consult on the Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR).
- 4.1.2 In summer 2023, the applicant prepared a draft SoCC based on feedback from the early (non-statutory) consultation. The draft SoCC outlined who would be consulted at the Project's statutory consultation, how the consultation would take place and what information would be consulted on, as well as how stakeholder feedback could be submitted and used to shape the proposals.
- 4.1.3 This section describes how the Applicant prepared the SoCC, the consultation with the Local Planning Authorities (LPAs), the feedback received and subsequent changes made (if applicable), and the ways in which the Applicant publicised and made the published SoCC available to the local community.

4.2 Formal Consultation on the Draft

- 4.2.1 The draft SoCC (see Appendix 1.2) was submitted via email to the relevant Local Planning Authorities of the Host Authorities (LCC, NKDC, BBC) on 4 October 2023.
- 4.2.2 It was requested that feedback on the SoCC was returned by 5pm on 8 November 2023. This provided a 36-day long consultation period, eight days longer than the 28-day period required by Section 47(3) of the Act 2008.
- 4.2.3 LCC's response was received on 20 October 2023. NKDC's response was received on 8 November 2023. BBC's response was received on 8 November 2023. A copy of all responses can be found at Appendix 1.3.
- 4.2.4 Table 4.1 below details all comments received from the three LPAs and the Applicant's response to them which was included in the published SoCC.

Table 4.1 – Feedback received during formal consultation on the SoCC and the Applicant's response

Local Authority	Comment Made	Response to Comment
North Kesteven District Council	Paragraph 4.1.12 – footpath Ewer/1103/1 is on the boundary of the development site and we would prefer that it is referenced	Added at 4.1.12: 'The north east corner of the area is crossed by a small section of the Ewer/12/1 Public Right of Way (PRoW)'.
North Kesteven District Council	Paragraph 5.1.5 - this should state that views submitted in PEIR will where relevant be acted upon. At present, beyond the comments being 'considered' there is no commitment to scheme amendments stemming from those comments. It reads as being 'closed' at that point which should not be the case.	Added at 5.1.5: 'Feedback received during consultation on the PEIR will be reviewed and taken into account before the application and EIA are finalised for submission.'
North Kesteven District Council	Paragraph 6.1.12 - can you please include a table showing the number of attendees to the events, website hits, no. of online & postal feedback etc and summarise the main comments and themes raised	This information was published within our Summer 2023 newsletter, which was circulated in hard copy across the consultation zone: https://www.beaconfenenergypark.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Beacon-Fen-Newsletter.pdf
North Kesteven District Council	Paragraph 6.1.10 and 6.1.14 - there is no reference as to the NKDC May 2023 suggestion of 5km buffer zone for consultation. This reference, along with Figure 3 and paragraph 8.1.1 make no reference to this suggestion and	Added at 6.1.6 (non-statutory consultation zone): 'NKDC indicated a consultation zone of 5km from the project boundary be used and all those within the zone be invited to take part in the consultation. As our site was spread over two areas at non-statutory consultation, we clarified to NKDC that we proposed a zone approximately 2.5km from the entire site boundary,

Local Authority	Comment Made	Response to Comment
	therefore a reader might assume tacit NKDC acceptance which is not the case. Please can you expand either 6.1.10 or section 8 to clarify the initial request made by NKDC for a larger consultation zone and why this has been ruled out and a narrower zone promoted?	<p>including (conservatively and in contrast to some similar developments) the cable route and substation. No further correspondence was received and 2.5km was adopted for this round of consultation.'</p> <p>Added at 8.1.1 (statutory consultation zone): 'In defining who we directly contact from the local community, we have identified a consultation zone minimum 5km from the solar array area and 2.5km from the cable route, substation and proposed haul road boundaries, extended in certain locations to follow residential or geographic boundaries, encompassing approximately 9,296 properties. This zone has also been informed by consultation with NKDC (who requested 5km/2km respectively) and our early view as to the distance at which effects from the Proposed Development may be experienced. This includes those in nearby villages and parishes, those that may be affected by construction traffic, and those that may experience a visual impact or disruption during construction.'</p>
North Kesteven District Council	Paragraph 6.1.7 – we request that the statutory consultation is extended to 6 weeks consistent with other projects	Added to 6.1.18: 'Pursuant to the Planning Act and its associated regulations, it is required to provide a minimum period of 28 days for receipt of responses to the consultation; however, the Applicant intends to provide for the statutory consultation to be held for a period of 42 days, in order to provide additional time for consultees to submit responses.'
North Kesteven District Council	Paragraph 6.1.19 – what are these lessons/learning points? Useful to summarise what they are therefore how	Added at 6.1.20: 'We plan to advertise these events in a similar way as our early (non-statutory) consultation events, considering any lessons learnt previously from early (non-

Local Authority	Comment Made	Response to Comment
	you are addressing in the stat consultation phase.	statutory) consultation feedback. Previously, consultation respondents gave feedback that they had found out about our events via a postcard through the door or in a local newspaper, therefore we will use these methods again. Any additional suggestions made as part of the consultation of this SoCC will also be considered.'
North Kesteven District Council	Paragraph 7.1.4 - this should be expanded to reference the deletion of BF South and also to confirm how the design has been informed by feedback received during Scoping/the EIA Scoping opinion. With reference to 7.1.4 point 5, you might need to clarify this - do you mean DCO-specific measures or Community Benefit Agreement or both?	As the SoCC was drafted after the removal of Beacon Fen South, it was felt it might confuse consultees to include reference to this in the document. Details of refinements made since early (non-statutory) consultation were published on the project website's news page for consultees to review the project's evolution.
North Kesteven District Council	Paragraph 8.1.1 - as above this doesn't reflect the advice given by NKDC at early pre-application stage and gives the impression that NKDC have agreed this zone which we haven't. Can you please acknowledge the alternative zone suggested by us and if needed provide some rebuttal to that i.e. from experience of other NSIP solar scheme consultation zones. I accept that there are differences of opinion here but at present there is no reference to the	Added at 8.1.1: 'In defining who we directly contact from the local community, we have identified a consultation zone minimum 5km from the solar array area and 2.5km from the cable route, substation and proposed haul road boundaries, extended in certain locations to follow residential or geographic boundaries, encompassing approximately 9,296 properties. This zone has also been informed by consultation with NKDC (who requested 5km/2km respectively) and our early view as to the distance at which effects from the Proposed Development may be experienced. This includes those in nearby villages and parishes, those that may be affected by construction traffic, and those that may experience a visual impact or disruption

Local Authority	Comment Made	Response to Comment
	alternative view given by NKDC nor an attempt to respond to it in justifying the reduced zone.	during construction. The consultation zone is shown below in Figure 3 . All properties within this zone will be sent a hard copy leaflet drop inviting them to participate in our statutory consultation.'
North Kesteven District Council	Figure 3 - as above our recommendation across the NSIP solar schemes is 5km. This has been adopted by Heckington Fen. Whilst there is text which describes how the zone has been derived nevertheless this gives somewhat arbitrary boundaries and a fixed zone from the edge of the site seems more defensible. For instance, it is unclear why the zone around A52/Swatton in the south, and which relates to the cable corridor, is over twice as extensive as the area around the energy park site?	The consultation zone was amended to a minimum 5km from the solar array area and 2.5km from the cable route, substation and proposed haul road boundaries, extended in certain locations to follow residential or geographic boundaries, now encompassing approximately 9,296 properties. Once any non-occupied addresses (e.g., telegraph poles) were cleaned from the address data, the zone encompassed 8,008 properties.
North Kesteven District Council	Paragraph 8.1.4 – please add Parish Councils	Added.
North Kesteven District Council	Paragraph 8.1.7 – presume 'green space' means 'agricultural'?	8.1.7 amended to: '94% of NKDC is classed as green space, which includes agricultural land and open space.'
North Kesteven District Council	Paragraph 8.1.12 – as above regarding consultation zone extent	Added at 8.1.2: 'To secure the attention of the 'Seldom Heard' audiences at early (non-statutory) engagement, we sent a hard copy leaflet drop to all properties within an approximate 2.5km

Local Authority	Comment Made	Response to Comment
		boundary of the Proposed Development, and will be using a broader consultation zone for hard copy information during statutory consultation.'
North Kesteven District Council	Chapter 9 heading - possibly expand to 'How We Will Consult and Publicise'	Amended.
North Kesteven District Council	Paragraph 9.1.2/table 2 – no reference to the use of Social Media	Added to Table 2: 'Adverts will be placed on social media to promote the statutory consultation.'
North Kesteven District Council	Table 2 'Newspaper Adverts' - please expand to confirm that advertisements will be placed in both print and digital publications (where applicable) to ensure wider coverage within and beyond the core and wider consultation zones. Consistent with Heckington Fen we recommend the publications could include Lincolnshire Live, Lincolnshire World, The Lincolnite and Spalding Today	Added: 'As required by Section 48 of the Planning Act, we will publish a Section 48 Notice advertising our intention to submit a DCO application in local newspapers for two consecutive weeks, and a national newspaper and the London Gazette for one week. We will also place adverts publicising the statutory consultation in titles within the Boston Standard series (including online at Lincolnshire World), the Boston Target series (including online at Lincolnshire Live), and the Lincolnshire Echo (or successor/alternative titles if these become unavailable).
North Kesteven District Council	Table 2 'Press Releases' - would be worth listing those to be approached and based on Heckington Fen we suggest Heckington Living, BBC Radio Lincolnshire, Lincs 102.2FM, BBC Look North, ITV News Calendar, Lincolnshire Free Press, Lincolnshire Live which	Appendix 4, which listed the media titles press releases are proposed to be issued to, was added to the SoCC.

Local Authority	Comment Made	Response to Comment
	includes: Boston Target, Sleaford Target & Spalding Target, Lincolnshire World, the collective website which includes the Sleaford Standard, Boston Standard & Spalding Standard, The Lincolnite (online only), Spalding Today and Local Lincs Magazine	
North Kesteven District Council	Paragraph 9.1.3 and table 3 - no reference to likely timings of meetings, whether likely weekday/weekend etc.	Added to 9.1.3: 'Events will be held across weekends, daytimes and evenings within local school term times.'
North Kesteven District Council	Paragraph 9.1.5 - see above re: social media, press release outlets etc	See amendments to Table 2 above.
North Kesteven District Council	Paragraph 9.1.6 – Teams, in person or both?	Added to 9.1.6: 'We will offer key political stakeholders within the consultation zone (MPs, County Councillors, District Councillors, Parish Councils) the opportunity to attend a briefing meeting either in person or online.'
North Kesteven District Council	Paragraph 9.1.7 - suggest also accepting comments from Social Media, Facebook etc?	We created a targeted Facebook advert at statutory consultation to promote the consultation within the local area. As we would not be able to determine whether any comments received on the Facebook advert were written as a response to our consultation, we made the decision not to include comments as formal feedback.
North Kesteven District Council	Table 4 – Sleaford Library will be sufficient, therefore suggest to remove	The information point locations were subsequently changed to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heckington Community Library

Local Authority	Comment Made	Response to Comment
	<p>STH and NKDC offices? The Library will offer longer periods of access than NKDC offices. Sleaford Town Council Offices can be retained if previously agreed with STC however it doesn't require all 3 Sleaford venues as deposit points. Are there other more local village or parish halls closer to the site than Heckington where documents can be deposited even if they are only accessible for shorter periods?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sleaford Library • South Kyme Golf Club • Swineshead Pre-School Centre • Lincolnshire County Council Offices • Boston Library
North Kesteven District Council	Paragraph 10.1.1 – please update this list to include Fosse Green solar NSIP.	Added to 10.1.1.
North Kesteven District Council	<p>Finally, we note the intention to hold in person events between Friday 26th January and Wednesday 14th February. 10th to 18th February is Lincolnshire school half term so we would always recommend either avoidance or extension of the consultation period. We wouldn't support proposals for public exhibitions during those periods as this might reduce the number of attendees. I'd therefore recommend that 13th and 14th are rescheduled to avoid both the half term clash and the other events that you have noted in correspondence. To</p>	Events were scheduled within term time dates (26th, 27th, 29th January and 21st, 22nd, 29th February).

Local Authority	Comment Made	Response to Comment
	not do so would, we feel, reduce the likelihood of people attending those events and therefore the robustness of the consultation process.	
Lincolnshire County Council	Chapter 8:- Identifying Our Consultees, at paragraphs 8.1.4, 8.1.7 and 8.1.11 refers to 'Hard to Reach Groups'. This phrase can potentially cause offence, as groups may be seldom heard rather than hard to reach. Please therefore consider using the phrase "seldom heard groups" instead. Consideration should be made to publishing the "seldom heard groups" as this demonstrates that these stakeholders are fully included in the SoCC process. This also shows that appropriate effort has been made to find out who these groups are and how they will be contacted.	8.1.4, 8.1.11 and 8.1.12 amended to 'Seldom Heard' groups with definition added. A list of Seldom Heard groups was added at Appendix 3.
Lincolnshire County Council	It is recommended that the definition of groups is not limited to just those groups stated at paragraph 8.1.11. Many factors can contribute to people being seldom heard, including disability, ethnicity, sexuality, communication impairments, mental health problems,	8.1.11 amended to: 'Based on the above, for the purpose of pre-application consultation we have defined 'Seldom Heard' groups as including, but not limited to, those living in remote rural areas, those from ethnic minorities or where English is not their first language, those with a disability or communication impairment, those that are part of the LGBTQ+ community, and

Local Authority	Comment Made	Response to Comment
	homelessness and geographical isolation.	those who are unable to travel to a consultation event or engage with the Proposed Development via online channels.'
Lincolnshire County Council	Chapter 9: How We Will Consult, Paragraph 9.1.2 table 2 – communication methods, it would be helpful if a cost for printed documents could be provided, if a charge is to be applied.	Added to 9.1.2: 'Hard copies of documents can be made available to individual stakeholders, although this may be subject to a charge to cover print costs. The newspaper notices will state the cost, if applicable, for providing any printed documents.'
Lincolnshire County Council	Paragraph 9.1.3 - reference should be made to the dates and times of these events. It is recommended that some events are held outside of standard workings hours to ensure there is availability to those who cannot attend during working hours.	Added to 9.1.3: 'Events will be held across weekends, daytimes and evenings within local school term times.'
Lincolnshire County Council	Paragraph 9.1.8 - Consider offering a call back service / out of working hours times to call for those working / with other commitments during these times.	Amended at 9.1.8: 'A phone number (0330 0571943) has been set up to contact the project team with questions by leaving a voicemail, accessible 24 hours a day. Calls will then be returned by a member of the project team.'
Lincolnshire County Council	Paragraph 9.1.15 Local information points – it is good to see a large number of options but please consider finding some that are more local.	The information point locations were subsequently changed to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heckington Community Library • Sleaford Library • South Kyme Golf Club • Swineshead Pre-School Centre

Local Authority	Comment Made	Response to Comment
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lincolnshire County Council Offices Boston Library
Lincolnshire County Council	It would be useful if you could send a copy of the information leaflet and newsletters to the each of the host authorities and political representatives so they are aware what has been sent out to their constituents – if this is not already intended.	Emails were sent out to ward and parish councillors ahead of the start of statutory consultation with the newsletter attached.
Boston Borough Council	4.1.1/2 – should include a reference to cable route/connection at Bicker. It mentions an on-site substation to export to National Grid?	<p>Added to 4.1.1: 'The main components of Beacon Fen Energy Park will be solar photovoltaic (PV) panels and the battery energy storage system (BESS) infrastructure, and a cable route corridor that connects the project to the existing Bicker Fen National Grid substation.'</p> <p>Amended at 4.1.2: 'On-site substation within the solar PV panel area to export electricity from the solar energy park to the National Grid. The substation will include a control building comprising office and welfare space as well as storage.'</p>
Boston Borough Council	9.9.1 – would agree with NKDC to include Social Media	Added to Table 2: 'Adverts will be placed on social media to promote the statutory consultation.'
Boston Borough Council	Table 2 – Newspaper adverts – would list specifically the publications to be used, both in print and digitally, eg Heckington Living, BBC Radio Lincolnshire, Lincs 102.2FM, BBC Look	Added to Table 2: 'We will also place adverts publicising the statutory consultation in titles within the Boston Standard series (including online at Lincolnshire World), the Boston Target

Local Authority	Comment Made	Response to Comment
	North, ITV News Calendar, Lincolnshire Free Press, Lincolnshire Live which includes: Boston Target, Sleaford Target, Lincolnshire World, the collective website which includes the Sleaford Standard, Boston Standard & Spalding Standard, The Lincolnite (online only), Spalding Today and Local Lincs Magazine.	series (including online at Lincolnshire Live), and the Lincolnshire Echo (or successor/alternative titles if these become unavailable).'
Boston Borough Council	Table 2 – Information posters – would be useful to know how many/what locations these are proposed to be. Would need to include locations specific to the cable route, eg Bicker.	List of poster locations added at Appendix 2.
Boston Borough Council	Table 3 – info on dates/times would be useful	We did not have the details of specific times/dates at the time of publication, but added to 9.1.3: 'Events will be held across weekends, daytimes and evenings within local school term times.'
Boston Borough Council	Table 4 – worth including a location closer to Bicker, either Bicker Parish or Libraries at Donington or Swineshead	Swineshead Pre-School Centre was added as an information point location.
Boston Borough Council	10.1.1 – Outer Dowsing off shore wind farm is progressing with a cable route through Boston/South Holland – just mentioning for awareness more than	No action required.

Local Authority	Comment Made	Response to Comment
	anything as probably won't impact this cumulatively etc.	

4.3 Publication of the SoCC

- 4.3.1 In accordance with the Act, once the SoCC is finalised, the Applicant must:
- under section 47(6)(za), make the statement available for inspection by the public in a way that is reasonably convenient for people living in the vicinity of the proposed development;
 - under section 47(6)(a), publish in a newspaper circulating in the vicinity of the proposed development, a notice stating where and when the statement can be inspected; and
 - under section 47(6)(b), publish the statement in such manner as may be prescribed. Regulation 12 of the Infrastructure EIA Regulations 2017 requires that the consultation statement prepared under Section 47 of the Act sets out whether the application is an EIA development and, if so, how the applicant intends to publicise and consult on the preliminary environmental information.
- 4.3.2 The SoCC was published on or around 29 November 2023 via different media. A copy of the published SoCC can be viewed at Appendix 1.1.
- 4.3.3 A printed notice publicising the SoCC was placed in the local publications on the dates of publication shown in Table 4.2. The SoCC notice contained information on what the SoCC is, where it can be viewed both online and in hard copy. Copies of the printed notices can be found at Appendix 1.4.

Table 4.2 – Dates and titles of SoCC notice placement

Date	Title
29 November 2023	Boston/Sleaford Target
30 November 2023	Lincolnshire Echo
6 December 2023	Boston/Sleaford Standard

- 4.3.4 A digital copy of the notice was also published on the Lincolnshire Live website. Copies of the online notices can be found at Appendix 1.4.
- 4.3.5 Paper copies of the SoCC were placed in the local public information points shown below from 29 November 2023 – 31 March 2024:
- Heckington Community Library
 - Sleaford Library
 - South Kyme Golf Club
 - Swineshead Pre-School Centre
 - Lincolnshire County Council Offices
 - Boston Library
- 4.3.6 A digital mailshot was sent to the subscribed mailing list announcing the publication of the SoCC on 29 November 2023.
- 4.3.7 An email was sent to key political stakeholders (MPs; Ward and District Councillors; Parish Councils) and our database of Seldom Heard groups on 29 November 2023 to announce the publication of the SoCC, with a copy of the SoCC notice attached.

4.4 SoCC Compliance

- 4.4.1 The SoCC Compliance Checklist at Table 4.3 below demonstrates how the Applicant undertook Section 47 statutory consultation with the local community and key stakeholders in accordance with the SoCC.
- 4.4.2 The Consultation Report and appendices will include all evidence of compliance with the SoCC during statutory consultation.

Table 4.3 – SoCC Compliance Checklist

Reference	SoCC Text	How the requirement has been complied with
1.1.5	It is anticipated that the statutory consultation in respect of the Proposed Development will take place in early 2024. The Applicant will have regard to representations received in response to the consultation when preparing the DCO application.	The statutory consultation was held between 22 January – 3 March 2024, giving several months for regard to be had to the responses received ahead of submitting the DCO application.
1.1.6	Should the Applicant require to carry out any further stages of limited, targeted consultation in respect of any proposed changes to the Proposed Development following the statutory consultation, the Applicant will use some, but not necessarily all, of the means of consultation outlined in this SoCC. The Applicant will liaise with the relevant local authorities in deciding the most appropriate activities for any further stages of consultation.	The Applicant undertook a small, targeted consultation in March 2024. The relevant Local Authorities (NKDC and LCC) were consulted on the proposed approach ahead of the consultation being carried out. The methods used included letters and plans sent out to addresses within the targeted consultation zone, a feedback form and information on the project website.
5.1.5	A PEIR (Preliminary Environmental Information Report) will be prepared and made available as part of the statutory consultation. The PEIR will include information on the potential environmental effects as a result of the Proposed Development. We will be asking for the views of individuals and organisations on the information set out in the PEIR as part of the consultation described in this SoCC. Feedback received during consultation on the PEIR will be reviewed and taken into account before the application and EIA are finalised for submission. The final EIA will be set out in an Environmental Statement (ES), which will be submitted with the application for development consent.	The PEIR was published and made available on the project website and in hard copy from 22 January 2024 as part of the statutory consultation. The PEIR assessed the potential impacts of the project and proposed mitigation methods to minimise any impacts. Question 14 on the statutory consultation feedback form asked for feedback on the content of the PEIR. This feedback was reviewed, analysed and passed to the project team ahead of the EIA and DCO submission being finalised. A record of all statutory consultation feedback received under Section 47 will be included as part of the Consultation Report.
5.1.6	The PEIR will be made available to the public to view free of charge at locations to be confirmed, as well as through publication on the Beacon Fen Energy Park website and the PINS website.	The PEIR was displayed free of charge to view at the following locations throughout the statutory consultation period: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heckington Community Library • Sleaford Library

Reference	SoCC Text	How the requirement has been complied with
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South Kyme Golf Club • Swineshead Pre-School Centre • Lincolnshire County Council Offices • Boston Library <p>It was also made available on the project website.</p>
6.1.1	The Applicant is committed to consulting widely, honestly and comprehensively – to allow representations to be incorporated into the Proposed Development and influence its development, where practicable and appropriate.	The statutory consultation was advertised through a number of channels, and different ways in which people could leave feedback and influence the project, including a hard copy and digital feedback form, or email address. A list of ‘Seldom Heard’ groups was gathered and contacted ahead of the start of statutory consultation to invite them to engage with the project.
6.1.16	A statutory consultation will be carried out, in accordance with sections 42-44, 47 and 48 of the Planning Act 2008 (the “Planning Act”).	Statutory consultation was carried out from January-March 2024, in accordance with Section 42-44, 47 and 48 of the Act 2008.
6.1.18	Pursuant to the Planning Act and its associated regulations, it is required to provide a minimum period of 28 days for receipt of responses to the consultation; however, the Applicant intends to provide for the statutory consultation to be held for a period of 42 days, in order to provide additional time for consultees to submit responses.	The statutory consultation took place between 22 January-3 March 2024, a total of 42 days. This was extended by 14 days for consultees included in the targeted consultation.
6.1.19	Consultation materials will include information on how the proposals have changed since previous consultation, including how we have responded to feedback. We will capture feedback, comments and questions and will document how these influence the development of the Proposed Development and the Environmental Statement.	The consultation materials contained information on the refinement of the cable route and evolution of the project red line boundary since the early (non-statutory) engagement phase, based on feedback received (e.g. removal of Beacon Fen South; proposal for a new bespoke access road; proposed PRow improvements). All written feedback, comments and questions were captured via hard copy/digital feedback forms or via email. The Consultation Report will give full details of how

Reference	SoCC Text	How the requirement has been complied with
		feedback received has influenced the proposals for the Proposed Development.
6.1.20	We plan to advertise these events in a similar way as our Early (Non-Statutory) consultation events, considering any lessons learnt previously from Early (Non-Statutory) Consultation feedback. Previously, consultation respondents gave feedback that they had found out about our events via a postcard through the door or in a local newspaper, therefore we will use these methods again. Any additional suggestions made as part of the consultation of this SoCC will also be considered.	<p>We advertised the statutory consultation events via:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newsletter through the door • Adverts in local papers • Media release published in local papers • Facebook targeted advert • Posters sent to local noticeboards • Publishing details on the project website • Sending a digital mailshot to subscribed stakeholders • Offering briefings to local Parish and Town Councils <p>Social media adverts were added as an advertising method after consultation on this SoCC with the local authorities. We decided to offer briefings to Parish and Town Councils again at statutory consultation as this had proved effective at disseminating information via the Councils to the local community at early (non-statutory) consultation. As more than half of respondents to our early (non-statutory) consultation events found out about the consultation via the maildrop sent directly to their property, we used this method again as to announce the statutory consultation phase, and in fact widened the consultation zone.</p>
7.1.1	The purpose of our pre-application consultation is to gather views while the scheme proposals are being developed, to allow people the opportunity to influence relevant aspects of the Proposed Development.	Feedback forms were made available in hard copy at our consultation events, and could be returned during the event or via the project's Freepost address. A digital version of the feedback form was also available on the project website. We also accepted written feedback submitted via email or Freepost.

Reference	SoCC Text	How the requirement has been complied with
7.1.3	We have consulted local authorities on this SoCC before publication by giving them five weeks to review and give feedback on a draft version. We will notify stakeholders that the SoCC has been published via a notice placed in local and county-wide newspapers in line with Section 47 of the Planning Act. Hard copies of the SoCC will be placed in the publicly accessible information points outlined in Table 4 below for a minimum of four weeks. A digital copy of the SoCC will be published on the project website.	<p>A printed notice publicising the SoCC was placed in local and county-wide publications in line with Section 47 of the Planning Act.</p> <p>Paper copies of the SoCC were placed in the local public information points outlined in Table 4 of the SoCC from 29 November 2023 – 31 March 2024.</p> <p>A digital copy of the SoCC was published on the project website on 29 November 2023 here: https://www.beaconfenenergypark.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/November-2023-Beacon-Fen-Energy-Park-SoCC_FINAL.pdf</p>
7.1.4	<p>The statutory consultation phase will provide as much detail as possible about the Proposed Development. This will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Details of the scheme proposals and parameters; • Preliminary Environmental Information (PEI) that has been gathered and how this has informed and affected the design; • The route of the electrical connection from the solar array area to Bicker substation; • The timescales and next steps for the Proposed Development; • Proposals for maximising the positive effects and community benefits of the Beacon Fen Energy Park; and • Proposed methods for minimising and mitigating any adverse effects on the local community or environment that could be caused by the Proposed Development. 	<p>The statutory consultation contained a range of information presented in both hard copy and digital form, including exhibition banners, maps and a consultation booklet. Copies of the PEIR were printed out and available at in-person events, at the public information points and a digital version was published on the website.</p> <p>A copy of the exhibition banners, which included information on the scheme proposals and parameters, community benefits and revisions to the Project following previous consultation, can be found under the Statutory Consultation Documents section of the Project website.</p>
7.1.5	During the statutory consultation, we will provide information on the Proposed Development, including PEI and any refinements made to its design since earlier consultation and engagement.	A copy of the consultation booklet and a copy of the Project red line boundary map, showing the route of the electrical

Reference	SoCC Text	How the requirement has been complied with
		connection from the solar array area to the Bicker substation, can also be found on the Project website.
7.1.6	Individuals, communities and consultees will be invited to comment on all or any part of our proposals for the Proposed Development.	A maildrop was sent to every property within the consultation zone, with details of how to engage with the statutory consultation and provide feedback.
7.1.7	Hard copies of consultation documents will be made available at our in-person events, online on the project website, and also in hard copy at the key locations outlined below in Table 4.	<p>Hard copies of the PEIR and the Project map were available for review at the in-person events and online at the Project website.</p> <p>Hard copies of the PEIR were placed in the local public information points shown in Table 4 from 29 November 2023 – 31 March 2024.</p>
8.1.1	In defining who we directly contact from the local community, we have identified a consultation zone minimum 5km from the solar array area and 2.5km from the cable route, substation and proposed haul road boundaries, extended in certain locations to follow residential or geographic boundaries, encompassing approximately 9,296 properties. This zone has also been informed by consultation with NKDC (who requested 5km/2km respectively) and our early view as to the distance at which effects from the Proposed Development may be experienced. This includes those in nearby villages and parishes, those that may be affected by construction traffic, and those that may experience a visual impact or disruption during construction. The consultation zone is shown below in Figure 3. All properties within this zone will be sent a hard copy leaflet drop inviting them to participate in our statutory consultation.	The consultation zone described in the SoCC was used to determine the properties that received a hard copy leaflet in the post inviting them to engage with the statutory consultation. Once any non-occupied addresses (e.g., telegraph poles) were cleaned from the address data, which comprised 9,296 individual addresses, the zone encompassed 8,008 properties.
8.1.2	We are aware that other stakeholders outside of our consultation zone will also be interested in taking part in and responding to our consultation. Therefore, we intend to use	<p>The statutory consultation was advertised via:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Newspaper adverts placed in the Boston/Sleaford Standard, Lincolnshire Echo and Boston/Sleaford Target

Reference	SoCC Text	How the requirement has been complied with
	<p>other methods, such as newspaper adverts, social media adverts, and sending digital mailshots to registered interested parties, to promote the consultation more widely, and encourage those from the wider area with comments and views to engage.</p>	<p>at the start of consultation and halfway through as a reminder for people to engage.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A targeted Facebook advert, which ran for the entire consultation period. • A digital mailshot sent to our subscribed mailing list via email on the launch of the consultation and halfway through to remind people to give their feedback. • A press release issued at the start and halfway through the consultation period to promote the consultation and remind people to take part ahead of the closing date.
8.1.3	<p>At the same time as consulting with the local community, the Applicant will be carrying out consultation on the same information (including the PEIR) with those bodies prescribed under Section 42 of the Planning Act 2008 (the Act):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persons as prescribed under Schedule 1 of the Infrastructure Planning (Application: Prescribed Forms and Procedures) Regulations 2009 (as amended); • Each local authority as defined under Section 43 of the Act; 15 • Each person who is within one or more of the categories as set out under Section 44 of the Act. 	<p>Statutory Section 42 consultees were consulted during statutory consultation and targeted consultation (where relevant). Section 42 consultees were initially sent all consultation documents including a digital link to the PEIR on 17 January 2024, ahead of the consultation period commencing on 22 January 2024.</p>
8.1.4	<p>There are other non-statutory consultees with whom the Applicant intends to consult with as best practice. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local community groups, i.e., residents' associations • Seldom heard groups • Local interest and amenity groups • Local schools and colleges • Local MPs 	<p>These groups were invited to take part in statutory consultation either via the hard copy maildrop or stakeholder letter. Local schools were additionally engaged with prior to statutory consultation with the offer of the Applicant providing a lesson on solar energy and a visit to one of its operational solar park sites.</p>

Reference	SoCC Text	How the requirement has been complied with
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local councillors; and • Local Parish Councils 	
8.1.6	Briefings will be offered to North Kesteven District, Boston Borough and Lincolnshire County Councillors and Town and Parish Councils at key stages of the DCO application process.	<p>Regular meetings were set up with North Kesteven District, Boston Borough and Lincolnshire County officers to discuss the evolving Project proposals.</p> <p>Key ward or district councillors were invited to the Ewerby consultation event an hour before it opened to the public to discuss the scheme with the project team.</p> <p>Local Town/Parish Councils were also offered an in-person briefing during statutory consultation to update them on the Project proposals.</p>
8.1.12	To secure the attention of the 'Seldom Heard' audiences at early (non-statutory) engagement, we sent a hard copy leaflet drop to all properties within an approximately 2.5km boundary of the Proposed Development, and will be using a broader consultation zone for hard copy information during statutory consultation. We also set up analogue feedback mechanisms, including a Freepost address and telephone voicemail service which is available 24/7. Informed by this experience, we intend to use similar communication methods during our statutory consultation phase.	<p>The same communication methods and feedback mechanisms were used at statutory consultation. The consultation zone was actually widened to a minimum 5km from the solar array area and 2.5km from the cable route, substation and proposed haul road boundaries, extended in certain locations to follow residential or geographic boundaries.</p> <p>Following a request at non-statutory consultation for large-print materials, we designed and printed large-print consultation booklets which were provided at our statutory consultation events.</p>
8.1.13	Within the consultation zone, most consultees live in villages, hamlets or more remotely and local public transport is infrequent. For this reason, locations for in-person consultation events will be chosen based on their proximity to populations and public transport routes. Additionally, online webinars will be held to ensure as many people as possible can engage with the statutory consultation.	<p>During statutory consultation, we held four events at four different locations around the site boundary, including at Heckington Village Hall which is served by a local bus service directly outside the building.</p> <p>Two online webinars were also held in the evenings for those that could not attend an in-person event.</p>

Reference	SoCC Text	How the requirement has been complied with
8.1.14	Additionally, we will always provide summary information in clear, non-technical language, ensure all venues we use for events are fully accessible, and consider requests for large-print, braille, audio or other language versions of consultation documents.	All the consultation materials created for the statutory phase (website copy, exhibition banners, consultation booklet, feedback form) were all written by communications professionals to be clear and as non-technical as possible. We undertook visits to all event venues ahead of booking to ensure they were fully accessible. We designed and printed large-print consultation booklets which were provided at our statutory consultation events and published online at the Project website.
9.1.1	<p>We want to create opportunities for as many people as possible to get involved with our consultation by using the following tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In person consultation events – information boards and materials exhibited at our in-person events will provide context to, and summarise, the proposals. The Beacon Fen Project Team will be on hand to answer questions, talk to participants and aid their understanding of the Proposed Development. • Online webinars – alongside in-person events, we also plan to hold at least one online webinar. • Digital versions of our consultation materials will be published via an online document library on the project website. • Local information points – the consultation documents, including this SoCC, will be displayed at appropriate public buildings in the vicinity of the site. Should it not be possible, for whatever reason, to deposit the documents at the specified locations, then alternative representative buildings will be identified to allow access by the public. See Table 3 for a list of the proposed locations. 	<p>All of these tools were used to engage stakeholders in the statutory consultation.</p> <p>A range of representatives from the project team attended the in-person events and webinars, including those from the environment, land, planning, consultation team and multiple client representatives.</p>
9.1.2	The Applicant recognises that one method of consultation will not meet the requirements of every stakeholder group. For this	All of these communication methods were used before and during the statutory consultation phase. Full details will be included in the Consultation Report.

Reference	SoCC Text	How the requirement has been complied with
	<p>reason, we propose to use a variety of communication methods as shown below in Table 2.</p> <p>Table 2: Communication Methods</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website - A dedicated project website (www.beaconfenenergypark.co.uk) that is updated at pertinent intervals, including FAQs, and hosts digital versions of all consultation documents. We will also provide a digital version of our consultation feedback form via the website. • Digital Mailshot - Sending mailshots to those who are registered on our mailing list when there is a pertinent update on the Proposed Development, or to invite them to take part in the statutory consultation. • Leaflet Drop - Hard copy correspondence sent to all properties within the consultation zone (approximately 9,296) ahead of the statutory consultation phase. • Newsletters - Newsletters issued to local consultees/subscribed members around once a quarter, sharing updates on the Proposed Development. • Stakeholder Briefings - Inviting key stakeholders, such as councillors, seldom heard or community groups, to online or in-person briefing meetings ahead of and during consultation phases. • Stakeholder Emails - Issuing update emails to key stakeholders, including political representatives, to share key project information and invite them to take part in the statutory consultation. • Newspaper Adverts - As required by Section 48 of the Planning Act, we will publish a Section 48 Notice advertising our intention to submit a DCO application in 	

Reference	SoCC Text	How the requirement has been complied with
	<p>local newspapers for two consecutive weeks, and a national newspaper and the London Gazette for one week. We will also place adverts publicising the statutory consultation in titles within the Boston Standard series (including online at Lincolnshire World), the Boston Target series (including online at Lincolnshire Live), and the Lincolnshire Echo (or successor/alternative titles if these become unavailable).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation Documents - Hard-copy versions of consultation documents including the PEIR, consultation booklets and SoCC will be available at in-person events and deposited at a range of local information points. Digital copies will be made available on the project website. Hard copies of documents can be made available to individual stakeholders, although this may be subject to a charge to cover print costs. The newspaper notices will state the cost, if applicable, for providing any printed documents. • Press Releases - Media releases containing information on the Proposed Development and consultation timeline will be sent to a wide range of local media (see Appendix 4 for a list of proposed titles). • Information Posters - Posters advertising the consultation will be sent to locations around the local area to be displayed on noticeboards. See Appendix 2 for details of proposed poster locations. • Social Media - Adverts will be placed on social media to promote the statutory consultation. 	

Reference	SoCC Text	How the requirement has been complied with
9.1.3	We are proposing to hold two online webinars and four in-person events during the statutory consultation phase. The four venues have been selected based on their location, size and accessibility. Events will be held across weekends, daytimes and evenings within local school term times.	Four in-person events and two online webinars were held during statutory consultation, on different days of the week and at different times of day, all within school term times.
9.1.4	<p>The proposed in-person event locations are as follows:</p> <p>Table 3: Proposed venues for statutory consultation events</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heckington - Heckington Village Hall, 9-11 High Street, NG34 9RA • Bicker - Bicker Village Hall, Cemetery Road, Bicker, Boston PE20 3BT • Ewerby - Ewerby Reading Rooms, 75 Main St, Ewerby, Sleaford NG34 9PJ • South Kyme - South Kyme Coronation Hall, High St, South Kyme, Lincoln LN4 4AD 	The four proposed venues were used for our events during statutory consultation.
9.1.5	We anticipate that our statutory consultation will be held for six weeks in early 2024. The consultation will be advertised using the same channels as at our early (non-statutory) phase – see Table 2 above.	The statutory consultation commenced on 00.01am Monday 22 January 2024 and closed at 11.59pm on Sunday 3 March 2024, constituting 42 days, or six weeks.
9.1.6	In addition to the consultation events and webinars, we will offer key political stakeholders within the consultation zone (MPs, County Councillors, District Councillors, Parish Councils) the opportunity to attend a briefing meeting either in person or online.	<p>MPs and key County and District Councillors for the wards which the Project is located within were invited to our Ewerby event an hour early to speak to view our updated proposals and speak to the Project team.</p> <p>Parish and Town Councils within the Project red line boundary were offered a briefing meeting during statutory consultation.</p>
9.1.7	<p>Seeking feedback is key to the principles of consultation. This will be sought using a variety of mechanisms, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback forms provided at Consultation Events to provide detailed comments in response to specific questions; 	Feedback forms were provided at consultation events in hard copy and online at the Project website. The email address and Freepost address were available throughout the consultation to collect written feedback. We extended the deadline for receiving

Reference	SoCC Text	How the requirement has been complied with
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An online version of the feedback form to be made available during the consultation on the project website (www.beaconfenenergypark.co.uk); • A dedicated email (info@beaconfenenergypark.co.uk) and Freepost address (FREEPOST Beacon Fen Energy Park) to allow feedback or questions to be made directly to the project team info@beaconfenenergypark.co.uk. 	responses through the post by one week after the consultation closed, in case of any postal delays.
9.1.8	A phone number (0330 0571943) has been set up to contact the project team with questions by leaving a voicemail, accessible 24 hours a day. Calls will then be returned by a member of the project team. Where consultees approach the Applicant by email, phone or post, the communication will be acknowledged within five working days following receipt of the enquiry	<p>The voicemail was checked daily, and all calls received were returned by a member of the Project team on the same or next working day.</p> <p>No letters were received in the post during statutory consultation.</p> <p>All emails were acknowledged within five working days and responded to more fully if required.</p>
9.1.9	We will accept feedback via hard copy and digital feedback forms provided during the consultation phase, as well as written feedback received in the form of letter or email during this period. Our consultation materials will make clear the importance of providing written feedback, in order for it to be formally considered in our consultation process.	<p>Feedback forms were provided at consultation events in hard copy and online at the Project website. The email address and Freepost address were available throughout the consultation to collect written feedback.</p> <p>The need for written feedback was emphasised in the maildrop sent in hard copy to all properties within the consultation zone and on the consultation materials.</p>
9.1.10	We will respond to queries received verbally or via phone, but this will not necessarily be recorded as a formal consultation response to the consultation.	<p>The voicemail was checked daily, and all calls received were returned by a member of the Project team on the same or next working day. No consultees attempted to give a response via phone during the statutory consultation.</p> <p>Conversations that took place at events and meetings during statutory consultation were noted by team members, and written responses sent to consultees via email to answer queries.</p>

Reference	SoCC Text	How the requirement has been complied with
9.1.12	In order to make information accessible locally and for those without internet access, we have identified a range of public information points where key consultation documents will be sent for display.	<p>Six information points were identified, and confirmed after consultation with the Local Authorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heckington Community Library • Sleaford Library • South Kyme Golf Club • Swineshead Pre-School Centre • Lincolnshire County Council Offices • Boston Library <p>Hard copies of key consultation documents, including the PEIR, were sent to these locations for display during statutory consultation.</p>
9.1.13	Hard copies of consultation documents can be provided to stakeholders upon request. A charge may be incurred to cover the printing and/or postage costs for some larger documents.	Hard copies were offered to stakeholders upon request and sent in the post. One consultee requested a hard copy of the PEIR, but declined to go ahead when informed of the advertised cost involved with the print and delivery.
9.1.14	We plan to place hard copies of some of our consultation documents, including the non-technical summary of the PEIR and this SoCC, to be viewed free of charge at the locations listed below in Table 4 during the pre-application period. If for any reason we cannot deposit at a particular location, we will identify an alternative location as a replacement.	We were able to place all documentation in the proposed locations during pre-application/statutory consultation.
9.1.15	<p>The libraries listed below also provide computers with internet access where stakeholders can view digital copies of all consultation documents.</p> <p>Table 4: Proposed Local Information Points (Subject to Permission from Venues)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heckington Community Library, St Andrew's Street, Heckington, Sleaford, Lincolnshire, NG34 9RE 	Copies of consultation documents were held in the libraries listed in the SoCC's Table 4 throughout the statutory consultation, which also had computers available to view digital copies of the documents which had been added to the Project website.

Reference	SoCC Text	How the requirement has been complied with
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sleaford Library, 13-16 Market Place, Sleaford, Lincolnshire, NG34 7SR South Kyme Golf Club, 1 Skinner's Lane, South Kyme, Lincolnshire, LN4 4AT Swineshead Pre-School Centre, North End, Swineshead, Boston, Lincolnshire, PE20 3LZ Lincolnshire County Council Offices, Newland, Lincoln, LN1 1YL Boston Library, Bank Street Entrance, County Hall, Boston, PE21 6DY 	
9.1.17	Hard and/or electronic copies of the SoCC will also be sent to all parish councils in the consultation zone.	An electronic copy of the SoCC was sent to all parish councils within the consultation zone on 29 November 2023.
9.1.18	When statutory consultation has closed, we will review and finalise our proposed application having regard to the feedback received throughout. We will then produce a Consultation Report which will set out how the feedback from the pre-application consultation has shaped and influenced our proposed application.	After the close of statutory consultation on 3 March 2024 and all targeted consultation on 31 March 2024, all written feedback received from community consultees was reviewed and shared with the project team. This was used to draft the Consultation Report.
9.1.19	In the Consultation Report we will also make it clear where we have not altered our proposals to reflect comments received and explain our reasoning. The Consultation Report will be submitted to the SoS as part of the DCO application.	The Consultation Report will show whether feedback has altered our proposals or not, with the Applicant's response explaining this fully. This Report will be submitted to the SoS as part of the DCO application.
9.1.21	Names and personal contact details (including email addresses, telephone number and home address) may be collected for the purpose of contacting and corresponding with consultees. Appropriate technical and organisational security measures are in place to protect any personal information we receive against unauthorised or unlawful use, and against accidental loss, damage or destruction in line with GDPR (General Data	We have complied with GDPR by using the content management system 'Tractivity' to log feedback forms and emails. We have also developed a Project privacy policy explaining how we manage personal information.

Reference	SoCC Text	How the requirement has been complied with
	Protection Regulation) requirements. More information about these measures is available on request.	
10.1.2	We have coordinated with other DCO solar projects in the area by monitoring their pre-application timelines, in order to minimise overlap of respective consultation dates and lighten the administrative burden on local statutory and non-statutory stakeholders.	We reviewed other proposed projects within the area to check their timelines for statutory consultation to minimise overlap. We also gave longer than the statutory 28 days for statutory and non-statutory stakeholders to respond to our consultation by providing 42 days, to lighten the administrative burden.

5. Statutory Consultation

Section 47 Consultation

- 5.1.1 The Applicant carried out the Section 47 consultation in accordance with the SoCC and as required under Section 47(7) of the Act 2008.
- 5.1.2 The statutory consultation ran from 22 January to 3 March 2024. During the consultation, information was shared on the Project location, the principal components of the energy park, mitigation concept masterplans, the PEIR and Non-Technical Summary, the amended and refined cable route and grid connection, and details of a newly proposed bespoke access road to the solar array area from the A17.
- 5.1.3 After the consultation closed, the Applicant assessed all feedback from stakeholders, residents and businesses to gain a thorough understanding of all considerations raised. A full breakdown of the issues raised by the community and local political representatives as part of the Section 47 consultation will be outlined in the Consultation Report as part of the DCO submission.
- 5.1.4 Consultation activity was broadly focused in the immediate vicinity of the Project, which included 8,008 residential and business addresses within the core consultation zone. The following activities took place:
- Direct mail of the Project newsletter to all addresses lying within the consultation zone
 - Programme of public consultation events (four in-person events at Heckington, Bicker, Soth Kyme and Ewerby, and two online webinars)
 - Erection of Section 48 site notices providing Project information and details of the consultation events
 - Stakeholder communication updates via digital mailshot
 - Posters distributed for display at local venues
 - Offering near neighbour briefing meetings
 - Offering key political stakeholder, MP, Parish and Town Council briefing meetings
 - Making all consultation materials available to view and download from the Project website
 - Making hard copies of the consultation materials available at six document inspection locations
 - Printed material could be requested via the Project's Freepost address, email and hotline
 - Advertising the consultation across regional media

- Targeted social media adverts promoting the statutory consultation and consultation events

5.1.5 Recognising that people who live and work beyond the core consultation zone may also have an interest in the Project, the Applicant engaged with individuals and organisations outside the core area, including by keeping the Host Authorities (LCC, BBC and NKDC) informed of the proposals as part of the Applicant's project updates.

5.1.6 In addition to the properties and local businesses consulted within the core consultation zone, the Applicant identified a range of relevant local interest groups and community organisations in vicinity of the Project, as well as organisations representing the interests of seldom heard and underrepresented groups. These groups were also emailed with details of the upcoming statutory consultation.

5.1.7 Briefings to update Parish and Town Councils were offered at statutory consultation. They can be found in Table 5.1 below. It is important to note not every organisation took up the offer of a briefing.

Table 5.1 – List of Parish and Town council briefings held

Date	Stakeholder	Topic of Discussion
17 January 2024	Sleaford Town Council	Project briefing
18 January 2024	South Kyme Parish Council	Project briefing
5 February 2024	Great Hale Parish Council	Project briefing
7 February 2024	Asgarby and Howell village	Project briefing
8 February 2024	Ewerby and Evedon Parish Council	Project briefing

5.1.8 The Applicant ran Section 47 consultation in parallel to Section 42 consultation to invite responses from the community to the consultation documents.

5.1.9 A total response period of 45-days was provided for Section 47 consultation, going beyond the 28-day statutory requirement.

Section 42 Consultation

5.1.10 Section 42 of the Act states that the applicant must consult the following (the 'Section 42 Consultees') about a proposed application for a DCO:

- Section 41 (a) – such persons as may be prescribed;
- Section 42 (aa) – the Marine Management Organisation, in any case where the project would affect, or would be likely to affect, any of the

areas specified in subsection 2 of Section 42 (e.g., tidal, or offshore areas)

- Section 42(b) – each local authority that is within Section 43;
- Section 42(c) – the Greater London Authority if the land is in Greater London. This is not relevant to the Proposed Development and is therefore not considered further in this section;
- Section 42 (d) – each person who is within one or more of the categories set out in Section 44.

5.1.11 The Applicant consulted the 'Prescribed Persons' (as prescribed under the APFP Regulations at the time of the statutory consultation) (106 in total), the relevant local authorities under Section 43 (18 in total) and persons/land ownership interests falling within Categories 1, 2 and 3 of Section 44 (116 in total). These consultees are collectively referred to as the 'Section 42 Consultees'.

Section 46 Consultation

5.1.12 Section 46 of the Act 2008 places a duty on the applicant for a DCO to notify the SoS of the Section 42 consultation that it is to carry out. The Applicant must comply with this requirement either before or at the same time as commencing the Section 42 consultation. In doing so, the Applicant must send to the SoS the same information that is to provide to the Section 42 consultees.

5.1.13 In accordance with Section 46, PINS was notified of the start of the Section 42 Consultation by the Applicant by letter (sent by e-mail only) alongside the relevant attachments on 16 January 2024. PINS acknowledged receipt of the Section 46 notification by email only on 18 January 2024.

5.1.14 The Applicant also re-notified the SoS in accordance with Section 46 at the same time the targeted consultation was launched on 29 February 2024 (by email only). PINS acknowledged receipt of this further Section 46 notification by email on 1 March 2024.

Section 48 Consultation

5.1.15 Section 48 of the Act 2008 imposes a duty on the Applicant to publish a notice of the proposed application in accordance with Regulation 4 of the Infrastructure Planning Regulations 2009.

5.1.16 Under Section 48 of the Act 2008, the Applicant has a duty to publicise in the following ways:

- (1) The applicant must publicise the proposed application in the prescribed manner.
- (2) Regulations made for the purposes of subsection (1) must, in particular, make provision for publicity under subsection (1) to include a deadline for receipt by the applicant of responses to the publicity.

5.1.17 Table 5.2 includes details of the newspapers used to publicise the proposed application in the prescribed manner. The notice published under Section 48 of the Act 2008 gave the deadline of 3 March 2024 for responses (more than 28 days from the date when the last notice was published).

Table 5.2 – Dates and titles of Section 48 notice placement

Date	Title
10 January 2024	Boston/Sleaford Target
10 January 2024	London Gazette
10 January 2024	The Guardian
17 January 2024	Boston/Sleaford Target

Section 49: Feedback received at Statutory Consultation

5.1.18 The Applicant recognises its duty to consider all feedback received ahead of finalising the Project proposals for the DCO application.

5.1.19 Full details of the feedback received and how it has impacted the Project proposals will be included as part of the Consultation Report.

5.1.20 A full breakdown of the issues raised by the Section 42 stakeholders, the community and local political representatives as part of the statutory consultation will be grouped together under common themes and summarised in the Consultation Report as part of the DCO submission.

5.1.21 Whilst the Applicant is continuing to consider the feedback received as it finalises its proposals ahead of the DCO submission next year, examples of changes that have already been proposed in response to the feedback received are listed in Table 5.3 below.

Table 5.3 – Details of changes made to Project proposals based on feedback from statutory consultation

Feedback received	Details of change made to Project proposals
Local residents could benefit from the project through footpath upgrades/public pathways to enable walkers to safely walk within the solar array.	Introduction of a longer permissive pathway through the solar array site.
Concern over the proximity of the Project's solar PV and associated infrastructure to nearby properties in terms of visual impact. Concern over the distance of setbacks and that	Residential buffers have been amended both in shape and size following further engagement with near neighbours.

proposed screening would cause the loss of current open countryside views.	
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6. Targeted Consultation

- 6.1.1 A round of targeted consultation was carried out in March 2024.
- 6.1.2 The targeted statutory consultation invited comments on a number of minor increases that had been made to the Order Limits since statutory consultation, largely to ensure facilitation of construction traffic during the Project's build. These changes did not alter any of the conclusions set out in the PEIR published during the statutory consultation. This was stated in the letters and documents issued at consultation.
- 6.1.3 The two host local authorities for the Areas of Change, NKDC and LCC, were written to by the Applicant via email on 22 February in regards to the timing and methods of the targeted consultation, citing the SoCC and including a plan of the Areas of Change. The Host Authorities provided their written agreement to the Applicant's proposed approach via emails on 26 February. Accordingly, the SoCC has been complied with.
- 6.1.4 During the targeted consultation, the Applicant promoted the consultation to all relevant statutory and non-statutory consultees, landowners, residents and businesses who it was thought could be affected by the proposed changes. This included the following three consultee categories under Section 42:
- Section 42(1)(a) consultees that could be affected by the minor increases to the Order Limits (statutory consultation extended from 3 March to 10 March 2024)
 - Existing land interests that could be affected by the minor increases to the Order Limits (statutory consultation extended from 3 March to 17 March 2024)
 - Two new land interests which had been identified and were therefore consulted for the first time under Section 42 (being the Crown Estate and Ecotricity (Heckington Fen Solar Park Limited)) (consulted during the period from letters being issued on 29 February 2024 – 31 March 2024).
- 6.1.5 Information was made available to consultees alongside emails and letters, and targeted consultation technical documents were also uploaded to the Project website to provide information about the Areas of Change. This comprised a plan showing the Areas of Change, and a revised Site Location Plan with a red line showing the amendments to the proposed Order Limits.
- 6.1.6 Full details of the responses received to the targeted consultation will be provided in the Consultation Report.
- 6.1.7 As part of design refinements following the statutory consultation, the Applicant has identified some small changes to the red line boundary in the north-eastern corner of the solar array site to facilitate the construction of a pedestrian footbridge and around the selected cable corridor needed to facilitate access points for construction. A targeted consultation is therefore taking place from 16 December 2024 to 19 January 2025 to consult on these changes. All impacted land interests have been notified with details of the changes. The relevant Parish Councils and highways authority, Lincolnshire County Council, North Kesteven District Council and Boston Borough Council

have also been consulted. The targeted consultation has been undertaken in accordance with the principles and methods set out in the SoCC. Consultees have been given 35 days to provide their comments by email to the Applicant. All feedback will be considered and captured in the Consultation Report.

Glossary of Abbreviations

ABBREVIATION	TERM
BBC	Boston Borough Council
BESS	Battery energy storage system
CO ₂	Carbon Dioxide
CCTV	Closed circuit television
DCO	Development Consent Order
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
ES	Environmental Statement
FAQ	Frequently asked question
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulations
KWh	Kilowatt hour
LCC	Lincolnshire County Council
MP	Member of Parliament
MW	Megawatt
NKDC	North Kesteven District Council
NPS	National Policy Statement
NSIP	Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project
PINS	Planning Inspectorate
PEI	Preliminary Environmental Information
PEIR	Preliminary Environmental Information Report
PRoW	Public Right of Way
PV	Photovoltaic
SoCC	Statement of Community Consultation

SHDC	South Holland District Council
SoS	Secretary of State

Appendix 1