



# BEACON FEN ENERGY PARK

Planning Inspectorate Reference: EN010151

Appendix 15.1 – Legislation, Policy and Guidance

Document Reference : 6.3 ES Volume 2, 6.3.96

April 2025



## Quality information

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This Appendix 15.1 has been prepared by Wardell Armstrong LLP (part of SLR) ('WA') on behalf of Beacon Fen Energy Park Ltd (the 'Applicant') in support of an application for a Development Consent Order (DCO) for Beacon Fen Energy Park (the 'Proposed Development').

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# 1. Appendix 15.1

- 1.1.1 This appendix expands on the summary of legislation, policy and guidance presented in **Chapter 15: Socio-economics (Document Ref : 6.2 ES Vol. 1, 6.2.15)**.

## 1.2 Legislation, policy and guidance

### Legislative Framework

- 1.2.1 The applicable legislative framework is summarised as follows:

- The Planning Act 2008; and
- The Infrastructure Planning (EIA) Regulations 2017.

### Planning Policy

- 1.2.2 The applicable planning policy is summarised as follows:

- Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1) (2023);
- National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3); and
- National Policy Statement for Electricity Networks Infrastructure (EN-5).
- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024);

- 1.2.3 The planning policy relating to socioeconomics that is relevant to the Proposed Development is described, below.

### National Planning Policy

#### National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024)

- 1.2.4 The National Planning Policy Framework (as amended December 2024)<sup>1</sup> is a material consideration in planning decisions and must be taken into account in preparing the development plan. It focuses on achieving sustainable development (section 2), which includes three objectives: economic, social and environmental. Paragraph 8 defines these objectives as follows:

*‘an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;*

*a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities’ health, social and cultural well-being;*

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<sup>1</sup>National Planning Policy Framework (publishing.service.gov.uk).



*‘an environmental objective – to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.’*

- 1.2.5 Other sections relevant for socio-economics, including holistic approaches to health, tourism and recreation, are:

*“They” (Local Planning Authorities) “should use the full range of planning tools available, including brownfield registers and permission in principle, and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area.”*

*“Planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which: promote social interaction, including opportunities for meetings between people who might not otherwise come into contact with each other; are safe and accessible, so that crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion; enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs; recognise that some undeveloped land can perform many functions, such as for wildlife, recreation, flood risk mitigation, cooling/shading, carbon storage or food production; identify and protect tranquil areas which have remained relatively undisturbed by noise and are prized for their recreational and amenity value for this reason.”*

*“To provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should: plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments; take into account and support the delivery of local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well-being for all sections of the community.”*

*“Access to a network of high-quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities; planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the need for open space, sport and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision.”*

*“Planning policies and decisions should enable sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside; and the retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.”*

### [National Policy Statements \(NPSs\)](#)

#### [Overarching National Policy Statement \(NPS\) for Energy \(EN-1\) \(2023\)](#)

- 1.2.6 The matters to be included in the assessment of any likely socio-economic impacts of the Proposed Development are set out in section 5.13 of EN-1 (2023) NPS. These include the following:

- *“the creation of jobs and training opportunities. Applicants may wish to provide information on the sustainability of the jobs created, including where they will help to develop the skills needed for the UK’s transition to Net Zero*
- *the contribution to the development of low-carbon industries at the local and regional level as well as nationally*
- *the provision of additional local services and improvements to local infrastructure, including the provision of educational and visitor facilities*
- *any indirect beneficial impacts for the region hosting the infrastructure, in particular in relation to use of local support services and supply chains*
- *effects on tourism*
- *the impact of a changing influx of workers during the different construction, operation and decommissioning phases of the energy infrastructure. This could change the local population dynamics and could alter the demand for services and facilities in the settlements nearest to the construction work (including community facilities and physical infrastructure such as energy, water, transport and waste). There could also be effects on social cohesion depending on how populations and service provision change as a result of the development*
- *cumulative effects - if development consent were to be granted to for a number of projects within a region and these were developed in a similar timeframe, there could be some short-term negative effects, for example a potential shortage of construction workers to meet the needs of other industries and major projects within the region”*

#### NPS for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3)

- 1.2.7 NPS EN-3 mentions relevant socio-economic impacts in paragraph 3.10.38 on choosing site location:

*“To maximise existing grid infrastructure, minimise disruption to existing local community infrastructure or biodiversity and reduce overall costs applicants may choose a site based on nearby available grid export capacity.”*

#### NPS for Electricity Networks Infrastructure (EN-5)

- 1.2.8 NPS EN-5 states the need consider the potentially disruptive effects of undergrounding in paragraph 2.9.17:

*“approach urban areas through industrial zones, where they exist; and when pleasant residential and recreational land intervenes between the approach line and the substation, carefully assess the comparative costs of undergrounding.”*

#### Local Plans

- 1.2.9 The following local policy has been considered:

- Central Lincolnshire Local Plan (adopted April 2023); and
- South East Lincolnshire Local Plan 2011-2036 (adopted March 2019).

#### Central Lincolnshire Local Plan (April 2023):

1.2.10 Central Lincolnshire Local Plan (April 2023)<sup>2</sup>, with particular reference to Policy S14: Renewable Energy, states that:

*“Proposals for renewable energy schemes, including ancillary development, will be supported where the direct, indirect, individual and cumulative impacts on the following considerations are, or will be made, acceptable.”*

1.2.11 One of the tests is to assess whether: *“impacts are acceptable on the amenity of sensitive neighbouring uses (including local residents) by virtue of matters such as noise, dust, odour, shadow flicker, air quality and traffic.”*

1.2.12 Moreover, *“significant adverse effects [...] will be weighed against the wider environmental, economic, social and community benefits provided by the proposal. In this regard, and as part of the planning balance, significant additional weight in favour of the proposal will arise for any proposal which is community-led for the benefit of that community.”*

1.2.13 Of importance is also Policy S43: Sustainable Rural Tourism, Policy S48: Walking and Cycling Infrastructure, Policy S50: Community Facilities, Policy S54: Health and Wellbeing and Policy S59: Green and Blue Infrastructure Network.

#### South East Lincolnshire Local Plan 2011-2036 (adopted March 2019).

1.2.14 The South East Lincolnshire Local Plan<sup>3</sup> mentions preserving social qualities and developing sustainable tourism in the section 2.4: Vision: *“South East Lincolnshire’s important heritage and natural assets, landscapes and townscapes will have been protected, conserved, and enhanced where appropriate, to ensure that their inherent social, economic and environmental qualities are retained and that opportunities for sustainable tourism can be realised.”*

#### Neighbourhood Plans

1.2.15 North Kesteven District Council follows the Localism Act from 2011 and is encouraging local communities to take part in planning policy. There are three Neighbourhood Plans (NP) for the area around the Proposed Development<sup>4</sup>. These are:

- Leasingham and Roxholm NP, status: Examination;
- Ewerby and Evedon NP, status: Initial Discussion; and
- Sleaford NP, status: Preparing Draft Plan.

#### Guidance

1.2.16 In the absence of established UK specific guidance on socio-economic impact assessment, the socio-economic chapter uses the following guidance for social impact assessments and additionality assessments:

- IAIA, Social Impact Assessment: Guidance for Assessing and Managing the Social Impacts of Project (2015); and

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.n-kesteven.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2023-04/Local%20Plan%20for%20adoption%20Approved%20by%20Committee.pdf>

<sup>3</sup>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.n-kesteven.gov.uk/your-community/localism-your-community/neighbourhood-plans>

- Homes & Community Agency (HCA) Additionality Guide Fourth Edition (2014).

*IAIA, Social Impact Assessment: Guidance for Assessing and Managing the Social Impacts of Project (2015)*

- 1.2.17 The IAIA guidance<sup>5</sup> suggests how Social Impact Assessment (SIA) can manage social issues within a project, throughout the project's lifecycle. SIA's have developed over time, previously, primarily focused on the negative impact(s) the project may cause, with more current practice providing a wider focus of how a project can be enhanced to improve benefits, and mitigate community concern. The use of an SIA goes beyond legislative regulation; it can be used as a tool to meet expectation of stakeholders, including project partners, financial backers, industry organisation, as well as local communities.
- 1.2.18 *IAIA's good practice guidance considers 26 key topics within SIA, under the following steps:* understand the issues; predict, analyse and assess the likely impact pathways; develop and implement strategies; and design and implement monitoring programs.
- 1.2.19 Compiling a community profile, of stakeholders, can assist in identifying the issues of concern for stakeholders in relation to the project. Following this, changes can be made to project design, to mitigate social impacts. An important aspect of understanding project issues, is also liaising with the EIA team, to allow autonomy and more detail and context to process any stakeholder issues or grievances. Best practice also highlights the importance of taking into account human rights, and livelihood restoration when addressing community relations to a project.
- 1.2.20 Following the understanding of stakeholder issues, comes the prediction, analysis and assessment of the likely impact pathways. Genuine community engagement, 'consistent with the spirit of free, prior and informed consent', can help identify ways in which projects benefits can be enhanced. Stakeholder engagement is a two-way process, which can allow projects to help communities better understand the potential social impacts. Analysis of impact pathways should be monitored and updated when necessary.
- 1.2.21 Developing and implementing strategies and monitoring programmes to enhance project benefits should consider appropriate compensation mechanisms, grievance mechanisms and social management plans, to solidify negotiated agreements between the project and stakeholder(s). Best practice suggests this should also include closure planning.
- 1.2.22 'SIA should be seen as an appropriate, useful management process that reduces risk and brings benefits to companies and to communities – in other words, that operationalises the concept of shared value.'

*Additionality Guide Fourth Edition, HCA (2014)*

- 1.2.23 The Homes & Community Agency (HCA) Additionality Guide Fourth Edition (2014)<sup>6</sup> explains how to assess the additional impact or additionality of local economic growth and housing interventions. The guidance suggest that 'in

<sup>5</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7ec4b9e5274a2e87db1c92/additionality\\_guide\\_2014\\_full.pdf](#)

<sup>6</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7ec4b9e5274a2e87db1c92/additionality\\_guide\\_2014\\_full.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7ec4b9e5274a2e87db1c92/additionality_guide_2014_full.pdf)



assessing additionality, the important thing is not to calculate a spuriously precise figure, but rather to be clear about the likely scale and nature of an intervention's additional impacts'.

- 1.2.24 The process of assessing additionality is based upon value-for-money judgment, but can also be used as a tool to help design a project, to allow as many beneficiaries to receive the benefits of a project, as possible. Best practice suggest this can be applied throughout the lifecycle of the project.
- 1.2.25 There are several aspects in which additionality can refer to, these include scale, timing, quality, and/or a specific group or area. Net additional impact of an intervention can be understood by comparing the intervention and reference case option (no intervention), which will then provide the total net additional local effects.
- 1.2.26 The reference case, where no intervention occurs, should be built using baseline conditions, based on information from past, local and comparator areas, as well as assessment of forecast markets and demographic trends, local policies and strategies and previous evaluation and research.
- 1.2.27 Throughout this process, it is important to consider intervention options, gross direct effects, leakage effects (benefits received by those out of the target area/ group) substitution effects, economic multiplier effects (further economic activity) and displacement ('the number or proportion of intervention outputs accounted for by reduced outputs elsewhere in the target area should also be deducted').
- 1.2.28 The calculation of the total net additional local impact of an intervention can be summarised using the following equation:
- $$'AI = [GI \times (1-L) \times (1-Dp) \times (1-S) \times M] - [GI^* \times (1-L^*) \times (1-Dp^*) \times (1-S^*) \times M]$$
- 1.2.29 'Where:
- AI = Net additional impact;
  - GI = Gross impact;
  - L = Leakage;
  - Dp= Displacement;
  - S = Substitution;
  - M = Multiplier; and
  - \* denotes reference case and hence deadweight'
- 1.2.30 Overall, the assessment of additionality is an important element in maximising the impact and value for money of an intervention and ensuring that it delivers real results.