

Planning Inspectorate Reference: EN010151

Statement of Common Ground (Draft) with Lincolnshire County Council

Document Reference: 8.1

April 2025





Quality information

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Abbreviation	Description
AC	Alternating Current
AIS	Air Insulated Switchgear
AMS	Archaeological Mitigation Strategy
Applicant	Beacon Fen Energy Park Ltd
BBC	Boston Borough Council
BESS	Battery energy storage system
CCTV	Closed circuit television
DC	Direct Current
DCO	Development Consent Order
EA	Environment Agency
GIS	Gas Insulated Switchgear
HV	High Voltage
IDB	Internal Drainage Board
LCC	Lincolnshire County Council
Low Carbon	Low Carbon Ltd
MW	Megawatts
NGR	National Grid Reference
NKDC	North Kesteven District Council
NPSs	National Policy Statements
NSIP	Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project
OCEMP	Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan
ODEMP	Outline Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan
Order	The Beacon Fen Energy Park Order
PCU	Power Conversion Unit
PINS	Planning Inspectorate
Proposed Development	The entire development to be constructed and operated within the Site, as set out in Schedule 1 of the draft DCO
PRoW	Public Right of Way
PV	Photovoltaic
Site	The entire draft Order Limits or red line boundary located
	approximately 6.5 km northeast of the village of Sleaford and 2.5 km north of Heckington
SoCC	Statement of Community Consultation
SoCG	Statement of Common Ground
SoS	Secretary of State
WA	Wardell Armstrong
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1. Introduction

1.1 Overview

- 1.1.1 This Statement of Common Ground ('SoCG') with Lincolnshire County Council ('LCC') (**Application Document Ref. 8.1**) has been prepared on behalf of Beacon Fen Energy Park Ltd (the 'Applicant') in support of an application for a Development Consent Order ('DCO'), that has been submitted to the Secretary of State (the 'SoS') for the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, under Section 37 of the Planning Act 2008 (the '2008 Act').
- 1.1.2 The Applicant is seeking development consent for a ground-mounted solar photovoltaic ('PV') electricity generation and battery energy storage system ('BESS'), together with associated grid connection infrastructure (the 'Proposed Development'), at an area sited approximately 6.5 km northeast of the village of Sleaford and 2.5 km north of Heckington (the 'Site'). The Proposed Development would have a generation capacity of approximately 400 megawatts ('MW') of electricity, with a 600MW BESS.
- 1.1.3 The Site corresponds to the entire draft Order Limits and represents the entire land area required for construction, operation and decommissioning of the Proposed Development. It is made up of the Solar Array Area (comprising the solar PV and BESS infrastructure) the Cable Route Corridor (comprising an electrical connection from the Solar Array Area to the Bicker Fen National Grid 400kV substation) and the Bespoke Access Corridor (for a bespoke access from the A17 to the Solar Array Area). This is termed the Bespoke Access Road.
- 1.1.4 The Proposed Development falls within the definition of a 'Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project' ('NSIP') under Section 14(1)(a) and Sections 15(1) and (2) of the 2008 Act, as it is an onshore generating station in England that would have a generating capacity greater than 50MW electrical output. As such, a DCO application is required to authorise the Proposed Development in accordance with Section 31 of the 2008 Act.
- 1.1.5 The DCO, if made by the SoS, would be known as 'The Beacon Fen Energy Park Order' (the 'Order').

1.2 The Applicant

1.2.1 The Applicant is a subsidiary of Low Carbon Ltd ('Low Carbon'). Low Carbon is a privately-owned global renewable energy company.

1.3 The Proposed Site

1.3.1 The Site represents the entire proposed Order Limits and is located east of Sleaford in Lincolnshire. It extends to approximately 758ha and comprises of three functional areas: the Solar Array Area, the Cable Route Corridor and the Bespoke Access Corridor.

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Solar Array Area

- 1.3.2 The Solar Array Area is approximately 529ha in size and located to the north of Heckington, centred at the National Grid Reference ('NGR') 514682 347825. The Solar Array Area is located wholly within the administrative areas of North Kesteven District Council ('NKDC') and Lincolnshire County Council ('LCC').
- 1.3.3 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 southwest of the Solar Array Area.
- 1.3.4 The Solar Array Area is bound to the south, west and north by local highways, and bound to the east by the Car Dyke. Public Right of Way ('PRoW') Ewer/12/1 extends across the north-eastern corner of the Site, close to the northern Site boundary. There are no other PRoW within the Solar Array Area.
- 1.3.5 Villages to the Solar Array Area include:
 - Howell immediately to the south-west, with Heckington c. 1.7km beyond;
 - Ewerby Thorpe immediately to the west, with Ewerby c. 1.1km beyond;
 - Anwick c. 2.7km to the north-west;
 - North Kyme c. 2.4km to the north; and
 - South Kyme c. 1.5km to the east.

Cable Route Corridor

- 1.3.6 The Cable Route Corridor is approximately 183 ha in size and extends c. 13km south-east from the Solar Array Area to Bicker Fen substation, at NGR TF 19684 38599. The Cable Route Corridor is located wholly within the administrative area of LCC. The majority of the Cable Route Corridor is located within the administrative area of NKDC, however the southern section is located within BBC's administrative area.
- 1.3.7 Land use within the Cable Route Corridor is predominantly agricultural. A number of local highways cross the Cable Route Corridor, and the A17 crosses east to west within the north-west section of the Corridor. The railway linking Heckington west to Sleaford and east to Swineshead intersects the mid-section of the Corridor. There are a number of PRoW within the Cable Route Corridor, including one alongside the South Forty Foot Drain which also crosses the Cable Route Corridor.

Bespoke Access Corridor

- 1.3.8 The Bespoke Access Corridor is approximately 45.4 ha in size comprising predominantly agricultural land and extends approximately 3km south-west from the Solar Array Area to the A17. The Bespoke Access Corridor is located wholly within the administrative areas of LCC and NKDC.
- 1.3.9 The Bespoke Access Corridor has been refined during the pre-application stage, informed by results from environmental surveys and consultation feedback.
- 1.3.10 Asgarby Road and Heckington Road crosses the Bespoke Access Corridor and there are four PRoW located within the route.



1.4 The Proposed Development

1.4.1 The main components of the Proposed Development are summarised below.

Solar Array Area

- 1.4.2 The Solar Array Area consists of solar PV panels and modular ground-mounting structures. The height of the panels considered will be up to 3.9m above ground level in fields to the east and 3.5m above ground level in fields to the west, south and an isolated field in the north. The proposal is for a fixed (i.e., static) panel orientation, facing due south (i.e., 180° azimuth) which is commonly seen on existing UK solar farms, and angled 10° to 45° from horizontal. Supporting infrastructure includes inverters, combiner boxes, transformers and switchgear converting the Direct Current ('DC') to Alternating Current ('AC') and stepping up the voltage so it can be exported to the National Grid. An inverter, transformer and switchgear comprised together is termed a Power Conversion Unit (PCU). This could be located separately as an "Outdoor Solar Station" or enclosed within a single container, referred to as "Indoor Solar Station".
- 1.4.3 A 600MW BESS adjacent to the onsite ('Solar Array Area') substation is included in the Proposed Development. This will allow the electricity generated by the panels to be stored on site at times when grid demand is low, then exported at times of higher demand. The BESS containers and switch rooms are anticipated to be up to 8m x 3m in size, with a height of up to 4.5m.
- 1.4.4 Low voltage onsite electrical cabling is required to connect the PV modules and BESS to the inverters (typically via 1.0/1.5kV cables), and the inverters to the onsite transformers (typically via 0.4/1.0kV cables). Higher voltage cables (typically 33kV) are required between the transformers and the switchgear and from switchgear to the substation.
- 1.4.5 A new onsite substation is proposed and would have up to four High Voltage (HV) transformers with a maximum footprint of no more than 40,000m2 (e.g. 250m x 160m (or 200m x 200m)) and a height of up to 13m). The substation will include a 33kV switchroom, control and storage buildings that would house office space and welfare facilities, as well as operational monitoring and maintenance equipment and equipment for reactive compensation and/or harmonic filtering. The design control building and office/welfare will be defined as part of detailed design.
- 1.4.6 The perimeter fence would likely comprise standard up to 3m tall post and wire, deer fencing, with up to 3.4m security fencing, installed around the substation compounds and, possibly, other infrastructure / compounds. Acoustic fencing, up to 4m tall, may be required around the BESS, subject to the detailed design and layout.
- 1.4.7 Mounted internal-facing closed circuit television (CCTV) systems will likely be deployed around the perimeter of the operational areas of the Site; anticipated to be 5m high. The CCTV cameras would have fixed view sheds and will be aligned to face along the fence. Motion detection security lighting will be used around the electrical infrastructure and potentially at other pieces of critical infrastructure.



- 1.4.8 During construction, temporary construction compounds will be required, as well as temporary roadways, to enable access to all the land within the Site. Localised earthworks to form suitable development platform for the substation and BESS will also be required.
- 1.4.9 There will be one primary access on the western edge of the Solar Array Area and a secondary access to the north, both of which will allow larger vehicles to access the BESS and on-site substation. Tertiary operational access primarily for smaller vehicles is provided to the north west and south.
- 1.4.10 PRoW Ewer/12/1 is being extended in a south and westerly direction as a permissive path terminating in the vicinity of Ewerby Thorpe, and will be in place for the operational duration of the project, on a route to be determined via discharge of requirement, but approximately running in a south easterly direction along Car Dyke then heading south west on the north side of Hodge Dike. An undetermined number of footbridges (unlikely to be more than eight in number) to cross existing watercourses, will be required and will require Internal Drainage Board (IDB) agreements in parallel with discharge of requirement

Cable Route Corridor

- 1.4.11 The cable route connection running between the Solar Array Area and the Bicker Fen 400kV Substation will be constructed through trenched methods and, where required, trenchless methods.
- 1.4.12 During construction, temporary construction compounds will be required approximately every 1-3 km, as well as temporary roadways, to enable access to all land. It is anticipated that there will be 6 main compounds that are distributed at approximately equal distances along the cable route to facilitate proper construction management. Smaller temporary compounds may also be located anywhere within the final working area.
- 1.4.13 Replacement planting of vegetation and hedgerows lost during implementation will be included around the Cable Route Corridor perimeter to provide visual amenity, reduce landscape impacts, and provide net gains for biodiversity.

Bespoke Access Corridor

- 1.4.14 A dedicated access from the A17 to the Solar Array Area is required. It will be constructed in advance of and to facilitate the construction of the development within the Solar Array Area.
- 1.4.15 The road will likely be the last component of the Proposed Development to be removed as it will be used to facilitate decommissioning of the Solar Array Area. Whilst it is assumed for this assessment that the road will be removed, it is possible that engagement with the landowners at that time will establish a preference for it to be retained. Optionality has been deliberately retained in the Application to facilitate such a scenario.
- 1.4.16 There will be no permanent lighting installed and access will be controlled through gates at all stages.
- 1.4.17 Replacement planting of vegetation and hedgerows lost during implementation will be included around the Bespoke Access Road perimeter



to provide visual amenity, reduce landscape impacts, and provide net gains for biodiversity

In any or all of the above areas

- 1.4.18 Along with the above, in any or all of the three areas, the Proposed Development will include the following (subject to certain requirements):
- 1.4.19 Access tracks of between 3.5m to 9m width for construction access and routine maintenance when operational. Access tracks located adjacent to drainage ditches will incorporate the necessary ecological; Environment Agency (EA) and/or Internal Drainage Board (IDB) buffers where required;
 - Boundary treatments, means of enclosure, security measures, and paths;
 - Landscaping and reinstatement planting and Biodiversity Net Gain related habitats;
 - Flood resilience measures including swales and storm water attenuation, and works to existing irrigation systems;
 - Utility diversions;
 - Bunds, embankments, protective works to buildings, maintenance and improvement of streets; and
 - Construction related (and decommissioning related) work sites.

Bicker Fen Substation Works

- 1.4.20 The extension of Bicker Fen substation will include a new generation bay, a new generation bay control room and a perimeter access road. A new generation bay will also include electrical equipment required for connection to the transmission system.
- 1.4.21 National Grid have requested that there be optionality within the design of the extension to Bicker Fen substation. The two design options that have been assessed in the Environmental Statement and included in the Application are: Air Insulated Switchgear ('AIS') and Gas Insulated Switchgear ('GIS').

Draft Development Consent Order

- 1.4.22 The Proposed Development is described in detail in Schedule 1 of the Draft Development Consent Order (**Application Document Ref. 3.1**), and the areas in which each component (the 'Work Numbers') may be constructed are shown on the **Works Plans**.
- 1.4.23 The Proposed Development is split into 10 Work Numbers as follows:
 - Work No. 1 a ground mounted solar photovoltaic generating station with a gross electrical output capacity of over 50 megawatts;
 - Work No. 2 a battery energy storage system compound and associated works (including fire safety infrastructure);
 - Work No. 3 development of an onsite substation and associated works;
 - Work No. 4 works in connection with electrical cabling and associated compounds;
 - Work No. 5 works to the existing Bicker Fen National Grid substation to create a new generation bay and substation extension;
 - Work No. 6 various ancillary works relating to the Solar Array Area, including cabling, fencing, security features, access tracks, watercourse crossings and landscaping and biodiversity mitigation measures;



- Work No. 7 construction and decommissioning compounds in connection with Work Nos. 1, 2 and 3;
- Work No. 8 works to create the Bespoke Access Road;
- Work No. 9 areas of habitat management; and
- Work No. 10 works to facilitate access to Work Nos. 1 to 9.
- 1.4.24 In addition, Schedule 1 to the Draft DCO lists other associated works (referred to as "further associated development") which may be carried out in connection with the construction of Work Nos. 1 to 10.

1.5 The Development Consent Order Process

- 1.5.1 As a NSIP, the Applicant is required to seek a DCO to obtain planning and other powers to construct, operate and maintain the generating station, in accordance with Section 31 of the 2008 Act. Sections 42 to 48 of the 2008 Act govern the consultation that an applicant must carry out before submitting an application for a DCO and Section 37 of the 2008 Act governs the form, content and accompanying documents that are required as part of a DCO application.
- 1.5.2 An application for development consent for the Proposed Development will then be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate ('PINS') acting on behalf of the SoS. Subject to the Application being accepted (which will be decided within a period of 28 days following receipt of the Application), PINS will then examine it and make a recommendation to the SoS, who will then decide whether or not to make (grant) the DCO.

1.6 Purpose of this Document

- 1.6.1 This document is intended to summarise clearly the agreements reached between the parties on matters relevant to the examination of the Application and assist the Examining Authority. It has been prepared with regard to the guidance in 'Planning Act 2008: examination of applications for development consent' (Department for Communities and Local Government, March 2015).
- 1.6.2 The aim of this SoCG is therefore to provide a clear position of the progress and agreement met or not yet met between LCC and the Applicant on matters relating to the Beacon Fen Solar Farm.
- 1.6.3 It is intended that the SoCG will provide information for the examination process, facilitating a smooth and efficient examination and managing the amount of material that needs to be submitted.
- 1.6.4 Once finalised, the SoCG will be submitted to the Examining Authority concerning the Applicant's application under section 37 of the 2008 Act for an order granting development consent for the construction of the Beacon Fen DCO Project.

1.7 Role of key stakeholders

1.7.1 This SoCG refers to communications and correspondence between a number of key stakeholders. The role of each stakeholder is summarised Table 1.1 below.



Table 1.1 - Role of key stakeholders

STAKEHOLDER	ROLE
Lincolnshire County Council ('LCC')	Local Planning Authority (County)
North Kesteven District Council ('NKDC')	Local Planning Authority (District) for part of the Proposed Development, including Work Nos 1-3 and 6-8
Boston Borough Council ('BBC')	Local Planning Authority (District) for part of the Proposed Development, including Work No. 5
DWD Property and Planning ('DWD')	Planning consultants for the Applicant
Wardell Armstrong ('WA')	Environmental assessment consultants for the Applicant
Pier	Communication and stakeholder engagement consultants for the Applicant

1.8 Status of this Version

- 1.8.1 This SoCG is intended to be prepared in consultation with LCC, and as such, the Applicant is providing this draft version of the SoCG to LCC for comment on the matters outlined in Section 3.
- 1.8.2 It is intended that the Applicant and LCC can agree on a draft version of the document for submission with the DCO application.
- 1.8.3 One or more further versions (revised drafts) may be agreed between the parties during the examination period and submitted to the Examining Authority to assist the examination of the Application.
- 1.8.4 Section 2 of this document summarises the consultation undertaken with LCC to date and Section sets out the matters agreed between the parties during the pre-examination stage in respect of the Application.



2. Summary of Consultation

2.1.1 The below **Table 2.1** contains a record of pertinent correspondence between the Applicant and LCC.

Table 2.1 – Summary of Correspondence

DATE	FORM OF CORRESPONDENCE	NOTES
27/02/2023	Meeting with LCC and WA	Introductory meeting.
20/03/2023	Meeting with LCC, DWD and WA	Meeting to discuss project timeframes, steps and key issues from Council.
24/05/2023	Meeting with LCC and WA	Meeting to discuss phased approach to the geophysical survey.
25/05/2023	Meeting with LCC	Briefing LCC Councillors on the project.
01/06/2023	Meeting with LCC and WA	Meeting to discuss the geophysical survey results and archaeological approach.
13/06/2023	Meeting with LCC Highways team and WA transport planning team	Meeting to discuss access routes and survey locations.
10/08/2023	Meeting with LCC and DWD	Meeting to update LCC on the project changes, including the removal of 'Beacon Fen South'.
04/10/2023	Draft Statement of Community Consultation ('SoCC') shared with LPAs	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
20/10/2023	Feedback on SoCC received from LCC.	than the 28-day period required by Section 47(3) of the PA 2008.
21/11/2023	Meeting with LCC and LCC Highways team	Applicant briefing on the bespoke access road.
10/01/2024	Joint meeting with LCC, NKDC and BBC with DWD, WA and Pier.	Meeting to brief LCC, BBC and NKDC. Discussed the Bespoke Access Road, mitigation masterplan and future engagement.
11/01/2024	Meeting with LCC and DWD	Update on the Bespoke Access Road, archaeology and community benefits.
17/01/2024	Letter from DWD (on behalf of Applicant) to LCC	Section 42 statutory consultation with project information, including the PEIR and non-technical summary.
12/12/2023	Email from LCC	Responses from LCC the list of cumulative developments to be considered in the Environmental Statement (ES).
07/02/2024	Joint meeting with LCC, NKDC and BBC with DWD, WA and Pier	Meeting to provide update to Councils during the statutory consultation period regarding progress and discuss biodiversity mapping.
08/03/2024	Statutory Consultation response from LCC	In response to Section 42 consultation which commenced 1 January 2025.



03/04/2024	Joint meeting with LCC, NKDC and BBC with DWD and Pier	Meeting to provide update to Councils and discuss Councils' PEIR responses.
01/05/2024	Joint meeting with LCC, NKDC and BBC	Meeting to discuss Public Rights of Way and statutory consultation feedback on community benefits.
13/05/2024	Joint meeting with LCC, NKDC and BBC	Meeting to discuss community benefits.
03/06/2024	Meeting with WA and LCC	Meeting regarding the proposed bespoke access road.
26/06/2024	Joint meeting with LCC, NKDC and BBC	Meeting to discuss the project programme, permissive paths and community benefit.
28/08/2024	Joint meeting with LCC, NKDC and BBC	Meeting to discuss the second round of targeted consultation, permissive path, cable route and bespoke road red line boundary.
20/10/2024	Letter from LCC to DWD	LCC provided response on their review of the draft SoCC.
24/10/2024	Meeting with Lincolnshire LNRS	Applicant briefing the team developing the Lincolnshire Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS).
08/11/2024	Joint meeting with LCC, NKDC and BBC	Meeting to provide Councils with a general update and information on archaeology, and discuss the adequacy of consultation milestone, principles of disagreement/ statements of common ground (SoCGs) and local employment plan. Following the meeting LCC with provided an email with permitting scheme information.
06/12/2024	Email from LCC	LCC comments on the Adequacy of Consultation Milestone confirming that the Applicant has, to date, carried out adequate pre-application consultation in accordance with the requirements as set out in ss. 42, 47 and 48 of the 2008 Act.
12/12/2024	Email from LCC	Feedback from LCC regarding proposed Targeted Consultation for project updates.
13/12/2024	Letter from DWD (on behalf of Applicant) to LCC	Targeted Consultation letter regarding project updates and changes.
06/01/2025	Email from LCC	Responses from LCC on review of updated list of cumulative developments to be considered in the ES.
18/12/2024	Email from LCC	Providing comments on proposed agenda for 15 January 2025 meeting.
15/01/2025	Joint meeting with LCC, NKDC and BBC with DWD	Meeting to provide Councils with a general update and discuss Councils s42 responses. Also discussed SoCGs and community benefit fund.
17/01/2025	Targeted Consultation Response from LCC	In response to Targeted Consultation which commenced 13 December 2024.



3. Matters Agreed during Pre-Application Stage

3.1.1 The below **Table 3.1** contains a list of 'matters agreed' correct at the date of the submission of the Application along with a concise commentary of what the item refers to and how it came to be agreed between the two parties.

Table 3.1 – List of Matters Agreed during Pre-Application Stage

MATTER	COMMENTARY
Adequacy of consultation	LCC was consulted informally and formally by the Applicant throughout the pre-application process regarding the approach to consultation and content and scope of the Statement of Community Consultation ('SoCC'). LCC provided comments on the draft SoCC, which were taken into account before the SoCC was published. Specialist Council officers have also been consulted in relation to highway, public rights of way and archaeology matters.
	The Applicant has consulted with LCC throughout the preapplication process and undertaken statutory (and targeted statutory) consultation in accordance with the requirements as set out in Sections 42, 47 and 48 of the 2008 Act. LCC has formed the view (letter dated 5 December 2024): 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.
Need for a solar and battery project in general and of this scale	National Policy Statements ('NPSs') and other UK national policy recognise that solar plays a key role in achieving the Government's carbon reduction targets. NPS EN-1 sets outs the urgent need for new electricity generation capacity and the importance of decarbonising the power and industrial sectors in the UK to meet climate targets, and the NPS's require the Secretary of State to give significant weight to this needs case for renewable energy projects when considering an application.
	As per the Clean Power 2030 Action Plan, the Government expects at least a further 21.2GW in deployment of new renewable projects within just 6 years to reach their target of 45-47 GW, by 2030. To support this growth, an extra 23-27 GW of battery storage is needed by 2030 to provide flexible capacity. Noting that the Proposed Development has an anticipated connection date of 2029, it would make a significant contribution to achieving Government targets for both solar and battery storage.
	LCC agree that these are relevant statements from national policy in respect of solar development.



Principles
regarding the
proposed
construction access
arrangements
(Solar Array Area)

The Proposed Development will also include a new Bespoke Access Road from the A17 to the Solar Array Area, as well as a secondary access to the south. The Bespoke Access Road is required to provide direct access to the Solar Array Area from the highway network, as local roads were identified as not suitable for haulage of larger infrastructure. LCC agree with the principle that a Bespoke Access Road is preferable rather than the use of the local road network. In terms of the route selected LCC would need to review the submission documents to determine whether it would be the most suitable.

Planning history

The Applicant has provided a list of past planning decisions for the land within the proposed Order Limits (see **Appendix 2**) based on the online public register along with information held by the Applicant relating to historical consents at the Proposed Development Site. LCC agree that the national planning history is accurate and that there is no relevant LCC planning history.

Elements of the approach to archaeological evaluation preapplication

The Applicant, WA and LCC discussed the proposed approach to archaeological evaluation at several meetings throughout the pre-application stage.

The Applicant also consulted with LCC regarding proposed project boundary changes and in an email on 17 January 2025, LCC confirmed that they had no objections to the changes under the assumption that these additional areas will be appropriately assessed for archaeological potential, as per the National Planning Policy Framework, EIA Regulations and NPS EN-1.

LCC and the Applicant have agreed on the following matters relating to archaeology:

- LCC and the Applicant have agreed on a suitable study area for the historic environment baseline assessment.
- The methodological approach for the assessment, including desk-based assessment, geophysical survey and aerial assessment, has been agreed with the Applicant. All Written Schemes of Investigation for surveys have been submitted to and approved by LCC.
- Full aerial assessment, comprising aerial photographic analysis and LiDAR analysis, has been completed for the full redline boundary.

As requested by LCC and accepted by the Applicant, where the assessment indicates archaeological potential exists or an impact may occur, additional proportionate evaluation may be required at a suitable point before construction, to better understand the significance and potential impact.

The Applicant has started consultations with the LCC archaeological officer to work towards broad agreement on the conclusions and recommendations for mitigation to be included within **ES Appendix 8.11: Archaeological**



	Mitigation Strategy ('AMS') (Document Ref: 6.3, vol. 3, 6.3.74).
List of requirement discharge documents – agreement to principle	The Applicant has provided a list of documents to be submitted at requirement discharge stage (see Appendix 3) that are proposed to control or mitigate the likely effects of the Proposed Development or provide enhancement or deliver policy benefits. The draft DCO submitted with the application (Application Document Ref: 3.1) sets out the proposed timings and contents of these documents.
	LCC agree that the list of documents to be submitted at requirement discharge stage are of the type LCC would expect to see for a proposal of this type, however, other documents may be require and LCC will be able to comment further once it has had the opportunity to review the submission documents.
National planning policy	It is agreed between LCC and the Applicant that the following NPSs are relevant to the Application and provide the primary basis for decisions by the SoS in relation to the Application:
	 The Overarching NPS for Energy (EN-1); The NPS for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3); and The NPS for Electricity Networks Infrastructure (EN-5).
	It is agreed that the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024) may also be relevant to the consideration of the Application.
	The Applicant has set out accordance with the relevant local planning policies in the Planning Statement (Document Ref: 5.5).
Local development plan policy	It is agreed that section 104 of the PA 2008 states that the SoS must have regard to other matters that are 'important and relevant', and it is agreed that that includes the development plan(s) in force in the area. It is also agreed that EN-1 is clear that in the event of any conflict between a NPS and a local development plan document, the NPS prevails for the purpose of SoS decision-making given the national significance of the infrastructure concerned. It is agreed that the following LCC planning policy documents are most relevant to the Proposed Development:
	 South East Lincolnshire Local Plan 2011-2036 Central Lincolnshire Local Plan (adopted April 2023) Lincolnshire Minerals and Waste Plan (Core Strategy and Development Management Policies adopted 2016 and Site Locations adopted 2017) Lincolnshire County Council Green Masterplan (adopted 2020) including the Carbon Management Plan Joint Lincolnshire Flood Risk and Water Management Strategy 2019-2050 Lincolnshire Local Transport Plan 5 (adopted 2022)



• Lincolnshire County Council Highway and Flood Authority, Development Road and Sustainable Drainage Specification and Construction (adopted March 2021).

It is further agreed that the following policies from each of the above documents are most relevant to the Proposed Development.

Central Lincolnshire Local Plan

- S1 The Spatial Strategy and Settlement Hierarchy
- S5, Part E Development in the Countryside (Part E: Non-residential development)
- S8 Reducing Energy Consumption Non-Residential Buildings
- S9 Decentralised Energy Networks and Combined Heat and Power
- S10 Supporting a Circular Economy
- S11 Embodied Carbon
- · S12 Water Efficiency and Sustainable Water Management
- S14 Renewable Energy
- S15 Protecting Renewable Energy Infrastructure
- · S16 Wider Energy Infrastructure
- S20 Resilient and Adaptable Design
- S21 Flood Risk and Water Resources
- S34 Non-designated Employment Proposals in the Countryside
- S45 Strategic Infrastructure Requirements
- S47 Accessibility and Transport
- S48 Walking and Cycling Infrastructure
- S49 Parking Provision
- S53 Design and Amenity
- S57 Historic Environment
- S59 Green and Blue Infrastructure Network
- S60 Protecting Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- S61 Biodiversity Opportunity and Delivering Measurable Net Gains
- S66 Tress, Woodland and Hedgerows
- S67 Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land

South East Lincolnshire Local Plan:

- 1 Spatial Strategy (Part D)
- 2 Development Management
- 3 Design of New Development
- · 4 Approach to Flood Risk
- 28 The Natural Environment
- 29 The Historic Environment
- 30 Pollution
- 31 Climate Change and Renewable and Low Carbon Energy
- 32 Community, Health and Wellbeing

Local Transport Plan 5

Policy EC3



- Policy EC 5
- Policy GREEN4
- Policy ENV1
- Policy ENV5

Lincolnshire Minerals and Waste Plan

- Policy M11
- Policy M12

LCC agree that the development plan documents listed are relevant to the proposed development. However, in terms of the relevance of specific policies, LCC would wish to review the submission documents to determine their individual relevance.

PRoW and recreation (Solar Array Area)

In addition to the permissive path proposed in the north-east of the site at the PEIR stage, the project will include another, longer permissive path through the east and centre of the solar array area, connecting these paths to the existing PRoW network (see **Appendix 4**). In principle, LCC are supportive of the Applicant committing to a substantial length of permissive path, with routing to be subject to the relevant requirements. The proposed routing includes 7 ditch crossings but the layout is indicative (and by definition the permissive path is indicative). The footbridges and permissive pathways will be for the duration of the operation of the Proposed Development only. LCC would wish to consider this further once the submission documents are available.

There are a number of PRoW within the Cable Route Corridor, including one alongside the South Forty Foot Drain which also crosses the Cable Route Corridor. There are four PRoW located within the Bespoke Access Corridor. These are discussed in detail in the **Environmental Statement Chapter 15: Socio-Economics (Document Ref: 6.2.15)**.



Matters not agreed during Pre-Application Stage

4.1.1 The below Table 4.1 contains a list of 'matters not agreed' correct at the date of the submission of the Application along with a concise commentary of what the item refers to and how it came to be agreed between the two parties.

Table 4.1 – List of Matters not agreed during Pre-Application Stage

MATTER	COMMENTARY	LIKELIHOOD OF RESOLUTION
Archaeological baseline environment	The Applicant, WA and LCC discussed the proposed approach to archaeological evaluation at several meetings throughout the preapplication stage.	High
	The following matters are still under discussion between the Applicant and LCC:	
	 Provision of the final documents detailing the baseline assessment results to LCC has not occurred. Interim reports have been issued on the understanding that these are live work in progress and final versions will be issued with the DCO submission. The Applicant can confirm that all reports will be submitted with the DCO in final form, with the exception of the AMS which will be submitted in draft form and undergo consultation with LCC until the content is agreed. This approach has been discussed and confirmed by LCC. LCC have some minor concerns regarding the progress of pre-DCO submission trenching of the cable route area. The Access Route Corridor trenching was completed in early autumn 2024 and LCC are awaiting the final report. The Applicant can confirm that further details on further archaeological works within the Cable Route Corridor will be detailed within the AMS and submitted as part of the DCO application. LCC has concerns over the assumption that any archaeological remains likely to be impacted during the operational phase will be of low significance and that any corresponding impact would therefore by Not Significant. LCC 	



- consider this assumption to be a broad and sweeping statements such as this should be removed and replaced with site-specific and evidence-based assessments.
- The Applicant can confirm that this will be considered further within ES Chapter 8: Heritage (Document Ref: 6.2, vol. 2, 6.2.8) submitted as part of the DCO application.
- removal from consideration of potential archaeological impact from decommissioning effects. Given that no details on the decommissioning phase and removal of apparatus and infrastructure have yet been decided, LCC Consider that impacts on archaeological remains should be included within ES Appendix 2.5

 Outline Decommissioning

 Environmental Management Plan

 ('ODEMP') (Document Ref: 6.3, Vol.3, 6.3.8).
- The Applicant can confirm that this has been considered in ES Chapter 8: Heritage (Document Ref: 6.2, Vol. 2, 6.2.8) and the ODEMP.

Archaeological Field Evaluation

The following matters are still under discussion between the Applicant and LCC:

- A comprehensive geophysical survey of the Order Limits has been completed. Some small areas were inaccessible and not considered suitable for geophysical survey; however, the Applicant considered this work to be complete.
- LCC note that archaeological trial trench evaluation has been undertaken for the Solar Array Area and Bespoke Access Corridor though not the Cable Route Corridor. LCC will seek to agree an appropriate level of evaluation of the cable route in advance of any post-DCO construction works, as necessary which is outlined within the AMS. The Applicant intends to agree appropriate evaluation for the Cable Route Corridor with LCC through the development of the AMS.
- LCC are of the view that any outstanding trenching should ideally be completed during the DCO submission phase.

High



	 However, in light of the trenching undertaken thus far a targeted approach to further trenching is agreeable. Where this is not feasible, targeted trenching should be secured as part of the DCO consent where this cannot be agreed between LCC and the Applicant ahead of the consent, should the SoS be mindful to grant consent. The Applicant has discussed the approach regarding further archaeological works and the intention to submit an AMS with the DCO application with LCC. An AMS will be submitted in draft form and undergo consultation with LCC until the content is agreed. This approach has been discussed and confirmed with LCC. 	
Archaeological Mitigation	The Applicant is proposing to include a 'Scheme of archaeological investigation' within their DCO submission which will cover the mitigation strategy to be utilised. This will be outlined within a document termed AMS. Whilst LCC welcome this, any mitigation and management strategy should include not only pre-construction mitigation but also the management of operational phase impacts and any effects that may be triggered once the decommissioning methodology has been determined. This would set out the framework for the long term comprehensive and scheme-specific management plan for the historic environment. The Applicant can confirm that this will be considered further in the AMS.	Medium
The content of requirements	The specific drafting of the requirements in Schedule 2 of the Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1) is not yet agreed. The Applicant will engage constructively and regularly and seek to reach agreement on the matters within Schedule 2 prior to and during examination.	High
The content and scope of highways and streetworks articles	A meeting has been held between the Applicant and the highways department of LCC in advance of the submission of the DCO application in parallel with this SoCG drafting. Progress on agreement will be reported on in a future SoCG.	High

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Procedure for discharge of DCO requirements The Applicant has provided a draft of the procedure for the discharge of DCO requirements to LCC at **Appendix 1**. LCC would wish to consider procedures of the discharge of requirements in the context of the full DCO and submission documents when available before agreeing that that the discharge procedure are acceptable.

High





INSERT SIGNATURE

Signed: NAME

On behalf of: [Stakeholder Organisation]

Date:

INSERT SIGNATURE

Signed: NAME [Project Team Company Name]

On behalf of: Beacon Fen Energy Park Ltd

Date:



Appendices

Appendix 1 - Procedure for Discharge of DCO Requirements

WITHOUT PREJUDICE TO APPLICANT'S FINAL SUBMISSION VERSION

PROCEDURE FOR DISCHARGE OF REQUIREMENTS

Interpretation

- 19. In this Part of this Schedule—
 - "discharge" means any consent, agreement or approval required by-
 - (a) a requirement;
 - (b) a document referred to by a requirement; or
 - (c) a document that has been approved pursuant to a requirement;

"requirement consultee" means any body or authority named in a requirement as a body to be consulted by the relevant planning authority in discharging that requirement; and

"start date" means the date of the notification given by the Secretary of State under paragraph 22(2)(c).

Applications made under requirement

- **20.**—(1) Where an application has been made to the relevant planning authority for any discharge, the relevant planning authority must give notice to the undertaker of its decision on the application within a period of ten weeks beginning with the later of—
 - (a) the day immediately following that on which the application is received by the authority;
 - (b) the day immediately following that on which further information has been supplied by the undertaker under paragraph 21; or
 - (c) such longer period that is agreed in writing by the undertaker and the relevant planning authority.
 - (2) Subject to paragraph 22, in the event that the relevant planning authority does not determine an application within the period set out in sub-paragraph (1), the relevant planning authority is to be taken to have granted all parts of the application (without any condition or qualification) at the end of that period.
 - (3) Any application made to the relevant planning authority pursuant to sub-paragraph (1) must—
 - (a) include a statement to confirm whether it is likely that the subject matter of the application will give rise to any materially new or materially different environmental effects compared to those in the environmental statement and if it will then it must be accompanied by information setting out what those effects are; and
 - (b) include confirmation that the application has been notified and provided to the requirement consultees in accordance with sub-paragraph (5), if the provision governing or requiring the application specifies that consultation with a requirement consultee is required (such confirmation to include contact details for the requirement consultees).
 - (4) Where an application has been made to the relevant planning authority for any discharge and the relevant planning authority does not determine the application within the period set out in sub-paragraph (1) and the application is accompanied by a report pursuant to sub-paragraph (3)(a) which states that the subject matter of such application is likely to give rise to any materially new or materially different environmental effects compared to those in the environmental statement then the application is to be taken to have been refused by the relevant planning authority at the end of that period.
 - (5) Where an application has been made to the relevant planning authority for any discharge, the undertaker will also submit a copy of that application to any requirement consultee.

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Further information and consultation

- **21.**—(1) In relation to any application to which this Schedule applies, the relevant planning authority may request such reasonable further information from the undertaker as is necessary to enable it to consider the application.
 - (2) In the event that the relevant planning authority considers such further information to be necessary and the provision governing or requiring the application does not specify that consultation with a requirement consultee is required, the relevant planning authority must, within 20 working days of receipt of the application, notify the undertaker in writing specifying the further information required.
 - (3) If the provision governing or requiring the application specifies that consultation with a requirement consultee is required, the relevant planning authority must issue the consultation to the requirement consultee within 10 working days of receipt of the application, and must notify the undertaker in writing specifying any further information the relevant planning authority considers necessary or that is requested by the requirement consultee within 10 working days of receipt of such a request and in any event within 20 working days of receipt of the application (or such other period as is agreed in writing between the undertaker and the relevant planning authority).
 - (4) In the event that the relevant planning authority does not give notification as specified in sub-paragraph (2) or (3) it is deemed to have sufficient information to consider the application and is not thereafter entitled to request further information without the prior agreement of the undertaker.
 - (5) Where further information is requested under this paragraph in relation to part only of an application, that part is to be treated as separate from the remainder of the application for the purposes of calculating time periods in paragraph 20 and paragraph 21.

Appeals

- 22.—(1) The undertaker may appeal in the event that—
 - (a) the relevant planning authority refuses an application for any discharge or grants it subject to conditions;
 - (b) the relevant planning authority is deemed to have refused an application pursuant to paragraph 20(4);
 - (c) on receipt of a request for further information pursuant to paragraph 21 the undertaker considers that either the whole or part of the specified information requested by the relevant planning authority is not necessary for consideration of the application; or
 - (d) on receipt of any further information requested, the relevant planning authority notifies the undertaker that the information provided is inadequate and requests additional information which the undertaker considers is not necessary for consideration of the application.
 - (2) The steps to be followed in the appeal process are as follows—
 - (a) any appeal by the undertaker must be made within 42 days of the date of the notice of the decision or the determination, or (where no determination has been made) the expiry of the time period set out in paragraph 20(1), giving rise to the appeal referred to in sub-paragraph (1);
 - (b) the undertaker must submit the appeal documentation to the Secretary of State and must on the same day provide copies of the appeal documentation to the relevant planning authority and any requirement consultee;
 - (c) the Secretary of State must appoint a person to determine the appeal as soon as reasonably practicable and must forthwith notify the appeal parties of the identity of the appointed person and the address to which all correspondence for the appointed person's attention should be sent;
 - (d) the relevant planning authority and any requirement consultee must submit written representations to the appointed person in respect of the appeal within 10 working days of the start date and must ensure that copies of their written representations are sent to each other and to the undertaker on the day on which they are submitted to the appointed person;
 - (e) the undertaker may make any counter-submissions to the appointed person within 10 working days of receipt of written representations pursuant to sub-paragraph (d);
 - (f) the appointed person must make their decision and notify it to the appeal parties, with reasons, as soon as reasonably practicable; and



- (g) the appointment of the person pursuant to sub-paragraph (c) may be undertaken by a person appointed by the Secretary of State for this purpose instead of by the Secretary of State.
- (3) In the event that the appointed person considers that further information is necessary to enable the appointed person to consider the appeal they must as soon as reasonably practicable, notify the appeal parties in writing specifying the further information required.
- (4) Any further information required pursuant to sub-paragraph (3) must be provided by the relevant party to the appointed person and the other appeal parties on the date specified by the appointed person (the "specified date"), and the appointed person must notify the appeal parties of the revised timetable for the appeal on or before that day. The revised timetable for the appeal must require submission of written representations to the appointed person within 10 working days of the specified date, but otherwise the process and time limits set out in sub-paragraphs (d) to (f) of sub-paragraph (2) apply.
 - (5) The appointed person may—
- (a) allow or dismiss the appeal; or
- (b) reverse or vary any part of the decision of the relevant planning authority (whether the appeal relates to that part of it or not),

and may deal with the application as if it had been made to them in the first instance.

- (6) The appointed person may proceed to a decision on an appeal taking into account only such written representations as have been sent within the relevant time limits.
- (7) The appointed person may proceed to a decision even though no written representations have been made within the relevant time limits, if it appears to them that there is sufficient material to enable a decision to be made on the merits of the case.
- (8) The decision of the appointed person on an appeal is to be final and binding on the parties, unless proceedings are brought by a claim for judicial review.
- (9) If an approval is given by the appointed person pursuant to this Schedule, it is to be deemed to be an approval for the purpose of Part 1 of this Schedule as if it had been given by the relevant planning authority. The relevant planning authority may confirm any determination given by the appointed person in identical form in writing but a failure to give such confirmation (or a failure to give it in identical form) is not to be taken to affect or invalidate the effect of the appointed person's determination.
- (10) Save where a direction is given pursuant to sub-paragraph (11) requiring the costs of the appointed person to be paid by the relevant planning authority, the reasonable costs of the appointed person must be met by the undertaker.
- (11) On application by the relevant planning authority or the undertaker, the appointed person may give directions as to the costs of the appeal parties and as to the parties by whom the costs of the appeal are to be paid. In considering whether to make any such direction and the terms on which it is to be made, the appointed person must have regard to advice on planning appeals and award costs published in Planning Practice Guidance: Appeals (March 2014) or any circular or guidance which may from time to time replace it.

Fees

- 23.—(1) Where an application is made to the relevant planning authority for any consent, agreement or approval required by a requirement, a fee is to apply and must be paid to the relevant planning authority for each application.
 - (2) The fee payable for each application under sub-paragraph (1) is as follows—
 - (a) a fee of £298 for an application pursuant to a requirement expressed as able to be discharged in respect of a "part" of the authorised development, where that application relates to a part of the full extent of the authorised development that is comprised within that relevant planning authority's area;
 - (b) a fee of £894 for an application pursuant to a requirement expressed as able to be discharged in respect of a "part" of the authorised development, where that application relates to the full extent of the authorised development that is comprised within that relevant planning authority's area; and
 - (c) a fee of £894 for an application pursuant to any other requirement.
 - (3) Any fee paid under this Part of this Schedule must be refunded to the undertaker within four weeks of—

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- (a) the application being rejected as invalidly made; or
- (b) the relevant planning authority failing to determine the application within the relevant period in paragraph 20(1),

unless within that period the undertaker agrees, in writing, that the fee is to be retained by the relevant planning authority and credited in respect of a future application.

(4) The fees specified in sub-paragraph (2) shall be adjusted on each anniversary of the date this Order comes into force by a percentage equal to the index value of the Consumer Price Index (CPI) most recently published prior to that anniversary, provided that in no event shall any annual adjustment exceed 5%.



Appendix 2 – Planning History

There is no relevant Lincolnshire County Council Planning History within the red line boundary for Beacon Fen Energy Park.

Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects

REFERENCE NUMBER	ADDRESS	DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT	APPLICANT NAME	STATUS
EN010123	The site is located on land to the north of East Heckington and 3.5km south east of South Kyme.	The Proposed Development will comprise the construction, operation and decommissioning of a solar photovoltaic (PV) electricity generating facility exceeding 50 megawatt (MW) output capacity, together with associated energy storage. The installed capacity of the solar generation is expected to be in the order of 500MW.	Ecotricity (Heck Fen Solar) Limited	Granted 24/01/2025
EN020019 (Connect to same substation)	33km off the Lincolnshire coast to the Triton Knoll Substation in Lincolnshire	Triton Knoll Electrical System works are needed to transmit the electricity generated by the consented Triton Knoll Offshore Wind Farm to the National Grid. The Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change directed on 14 November 2013 (in accordance with section 35) that these works require development consent under the Planning Act 2008. The electrical system will include: onshore and offshore buried export cables and associated works; an intermediate electrical compound to provide voltage stability and compensate for electrical losses; and a substation located in the vicinity of the grid connection point.	Triton Knoll Offshore Wind Farm Limited	Granted 06/09/2016

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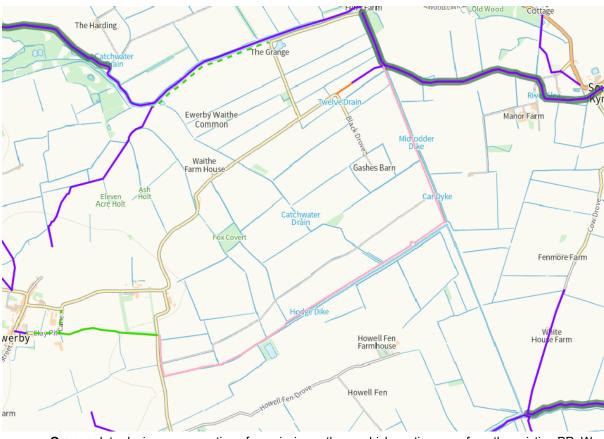
Appendix 3 – List of Requirement Discharge Documents

The list of documents proposed to be submitted at requirement discharge stage.

DOCUMENT
Battery safety management plan
Landscape and ecological management plan
Biodiversity net gain strategy
Scheme of archaeological investigation
Construction environmental management plan
Construction traffic management plan
Operational Noise Assessment
Soil management plan
Skills, supply chain and employment plan (or equivalent)
Decommissioning environmental management plan



Appendix 4 – Permissive pathway indicative route



- Orange: Introducing a new section of permissive pathway which continues on from the existing PRoW (0.5km). This route requires one pedestrian footbridge with a span of up to 14.5m
- **Pink:** New proposed permissive path that links up existing PROW Ewer/9/1 and Ewer/1103/1. This route will require four pedestrian footbridges with spans ranging from 4-15m.