BEACON FEN ENERGY PARK

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The Planning Act 2008
The Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed Forms and Procedure) Regulations 2009 - Regulation 5(2)(q)

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Glossary

Abbreviation	Description
2008 Act	The Planning Act 2008
AC	Alternating Current
AIS	Air Insulated Switchgear
Applicant	Beacon Fen Energy Park Limited
BBC	Boston Borough Council
BESS	Battery Energy Storage System
CCTV	Closed circuit television
CNP	Critical National Priority
DAAD	Design and Access Approach Document
DC	Direct Current
DCO	Development Consent Order
EA	Environment Agency
EN-1	Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy
EN-3	National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure
EN-5	National Policy Statement for Electricity Networks Infrastructure
EP	Environmental Permitting
ES	Environmental Statement
EWP	Energy White Paper
ExA	Examining Authority
GIS	Gas Insulated Switchgear
GW	Gigawatts
Ha	Hectares
HV	High Voltage
IDB	Internal Drainage Board
Km	Kilometre
LCC	Lincolnshire County Council
Low Carbon	Low Carbon Ltd
MW	Megawatts
NGR	National Grid Reference
NKDC	North Kesteven District Council
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
NPS	National Policy Statement
NSIP	Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project

Abbreviation	Description
OBSMP	Outline Battery Safety Management Plan
OCEMP	Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan
OCTMP	Outline Construction Traffic Management Plan
ODEMP	Outline Decommissioning Management Plan
OLEMP	Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan
OSMP	Outline Soil Management Plan
Order	The Beacon Fen Energy Park Order
PAS	Potential Alternative Site
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
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
SoS	Secretary of State

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Executive Summary

1. This Planning Statement has been prepared on behalf of Beacon Fen Energy Park Limited (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 Energy Security and Net Zero, under Section 37 of 'The Planning Act 2008' (the '2008 Act') (the 'Application').

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 town 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.

3. 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.

4. The DCO, if made by the SoS, would be known as 'The Beacon Fen Energy Park Order' (the 'Order').

5. The land required for the Proposed Development, the Site, comprises land sited approximately 6.5 km northeast of the town of Sleaford and 2.5 km north of the village of Heckington forming a solar array area comprising solar PV panels and BESS facilities of approximately 529 hectares ('ha') (the 'Solar Array Area'). The Site includes an approximately 13-kilometre ('km') cable corridor between the Solar Array Area and the existing Bicker Fen National Grid 400kV Substation lying 2.3 km west of Bicker, which comprises approximately 183 ha of land. It also includes a corridor of land between the A17 and the Solar Array Area, which comprises approximately 45 ha of land and on which an access road will be constructed by the Applicant (the 'Bespoke Access Corridor').

6. The Site is centred on grid reference 514682, 347825 and is located within the administrative boundaries of North Kesteven District Council, Boston Borough Council, and Lincolnshire County Council.

7. Under the 2008 Act regime, the policy framework for examining and determining applications for development consent is provided by National Policy Statements ('NPSs'). Section 5 of the 2008 Act allows the relevant SoS to designate NPSs setting out national policy in relation to the types of Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects ('NSIPs') listed at Section 14 of the 2008 Act. A number of NPSs have been designated in relation to energy infrastructure (NPSs EN-1 to EN-6).

8. Section 104 of the 2008 Act requires the SoS to determine applications for NSIPs in accordance with the relevant NPSs (where these are in place) and appropriate marine policy documents having regard to any local impact report

produced by the relevant local planning authority; any matters prescribed in relation to development of the description to which the application relates; and any other matters which the SoS thinks are both "important and relevant" to their decision.

9. The primary purpose of this document is to assist the Examining Authority ('ExA') and the SoS in their assessment of the Proposed Development by demonstrating how the Applicant has taken account of relevant planning policy, notably the NPSs for energy infrastructure, and the extent to which the Proposed Development complies with the policies within those NPSs, as well as any other matters that are "important and relevant" to the SoS's determination of the Application, including UK Government energy and climate change policy, the National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF') and the statutory development plan.

10. This document sets out the key benefits and likely significant adverse environmental effects of the Proposed Development. Where relevant this document cross references or 'signposts' the relevant application documents that provide more detail.

11. The energy NPSs that are in place and have effect are considered at **Section 3** of this document. Part 3 of NPS EN-1 defines and sets out the 'need' for nationally significant energy infrastructure. Paragraph 3.2.6 asserts that "*The Secretary of State should assess all applications for development consent for the types of infrastructure covered by this NPS on the basis that the government has demonstrated that there is a need for those types of infrastructure which is urgent, as described for each of them in this Part*". Paragraph 3.2.7 of NPS EN-1 continues that "*In addition, the Secretary of State has determined that substantial weight should be given to this need when considering applications for development consent under the Planning Act 2008*". As such, NPS EN-1 is clear that the need that exists for new energy infrastructure is not open to debate or interpretation.

12. **Section 2** of this document discusses the Site, including the surrounding area and relevant planning designations. It also covers the relevant planning history relating to the Site, including the Heckington Fen Solar Farm DCO which connects into the same National Grid substation as the Proposed Development.

13. **Section 3** of this document sets out the legislative and policy framework for the consideration of and determination of DCO applications, notably the relevant NPS for energy infrastructure.

14. **Section 4** of this document discusses the national need case, considering recent UK Government energy and climate change policy, which set out important Government objectives for decarbonising the power and industrial sectors in order to achieve the legally binding target of net zero by 2050 and are important and relevant considerations.

15. **Section 5** of this document sets out NPPF and local policies of relevance. Paragraph 5 of the NPPF states that the document does not contain specific policies for NSIPs and that applications in relation to NSIPs are to be determined in accordance with the decision-making framework set out in the 2008 Act and relevant NPS, as well as any other matters that are considered both important and relevant. This includes the NPPF and local policy.

16. **Section 6** of this document considers the conformity of the Proposed Development against the assessment principles of the relevant energy NPSs. The Applicant's assessment has not identified any conflicts with NPS policy. Furthermore, **Section 6** has demonstrated that there is no conflict with NPPF policy or local policy.

17. **Section 7** of this document identifies the key benefits of the Proposed Development as well as any likely significant adverse effects/impacts and weighs these against each other.

18. **Section 8** of this document sets out the conclusions of the Planning Statement in terms of the overall acceptability of the Proposed Development.

19. The Proposed Development will have a number of very clear and tangible benefits, including:

- Generation of approximately 400 megawatts ('MW') of electricity – providing valuable clean energy that is deliverable swiftly, being capable of connecting to the grid as early as 2029.
- Provision of a Battery Energy Storage System ('BESS') capacity of up to 600MW, primarily to store energy from the solar panels but also to provide balancing services to the National Grid.
- Biodiversity Net Gain of 30% for Habitat Units, 10% for Hedgerow Units and 10% for Watercourse Units which shall be in place for 30 years as part of a wider package of appropriate landscaping and habitat proposals and new and improved hedgerows.
- Provision of a substantial new permissive path across the Solar Array Area during the operational period linking to existing Public Rights of Way to the east and west providing additional walking and recreation opportunities.
- The construction of the Proposed Development would provide moderate beneficial socioeconomic effects in the Boston Borough are in relation to workforce, businesses and residents

20. The Proposed Development would give rise to a number of unavoidable adverse effects of significance and adverse performance against planning policy:

- A number of significant adverse landscape impacts, the majority of which will be during the construction phase but also during operation and decommissioning. A number of mitigation measures are proposed and secured within the application.
- The Residential Amenity Threshold would be met at one receptor. However, mitigation measures will mean that after approximately 10 years the threshold would no longer be met.
- The construction and decommissioning phases would result in moderate adverse significant impact on a Grade I Listed Building, although it would be less than substantial harm. However, there is a critical national priority for the Proposed Development which justified this (and the above) residual impacts.
- A major adverse impact would result from the loss of agricultural land, but this would be temporary and reversible and soil management measures would allow for reinstatement of the Site to agricultural production following decommissioning. This impact has been minimised in accordance with policy.

21. In conclusion therefore, given the urgency of the need for new low carbon electricity generation capacity (as set out in NPS EN-1) and the importance of decarbonising the power and industrial sectors in the UK to meet the legally binding target of net zero by 2050, it is considered that the benefits of the Proposed Development significantly outweigh the limited harm that would result from the effects identified above and that development consent should be granted.

1. Introduction

1.1 Overview

1.1.1 This **Planning Statement** (**Document Ref: 5.5**) 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 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 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.

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 south-west 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 Asgarby Road and Heckington Road cross 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, 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').

1.4.3 A 600MW BESS adjacent to the On-Site Substation is included in the Proposed Development within the Solar Array Area. 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, and the inverters to the onsite transformers. Higher voltage cables 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 switch room, 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 a standard post and wire, deer fencing up to 3m tall around the Solar Array Area. Security fencing, up to 3.4m will be installed around the Onsite Substation compound 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 large vehicles

(including first responder access to the BESS and on-site substation). Tertiary operational access primarily for smaller vehicles is provided to the northwest 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 Proposed Development. The exact route of the permissive path will be determined via the discharge of requirement in the DCO, but it is anticipated to run in a south easterly direction along Car Dyke and then heading southwest on the north side of Hodge Dike. An undetermined number of footbridges (unlikely to be more than 8 in number) to cross existing watercourses will be required and will require the usual water course crossing agreements to be sought with the relevant Internal Drainage Board in parallel with the discharge of the requirement.

Cable Route

1.4.11 The Cable Route 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 Vegetation and hedgerows lost during the construction of the Cable Route will be re-instated where possible in relation to easement restrictions.

Bespoke Access Road

1.4.14 A dedicated access from the A17 to the Solar Array Area is required. The Bespoke Access Road will be constructed in advance of material construction commencing on the Solar Array Area and will facilitate construction in that area. During construction, temporary construction compounds will be required which may be anywhere along the route.

1.4.15 The Bespoke Access 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 Vegetation and hedgerows lost during the construction of the Bespoke Access Road will be re-instated.

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 (Document Ref: 3.1)**, and the areas in which each component (the 'Work Numbers') may be constructed are shown on the **Works Plans (Document Ref: 2.1)**.

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 Details of Associated Development

1.6.1 Section 115 of the 2008 Act provides that development consent may be granted for development which is *"associated development"* alongside *"development for which development consent is required"*. The 2008 Act does not provide any particular definition to what can comprise *"associated development"*. It is a matter of fact and degree for a given project having regard to the published government guidance ('Planning Act 2008: Guidance on associated development applications or major infrastructure projects' (April 2013)).

1.6.2 The guidance sets out four principles for defining associated development:

i. *"The definition of associated development requires a direct relationship between associated development and the principal development. Associated development should therefore either support the construction or operation of the principal development, or help address its impacts.*

ii. *Associated development should not be an aim in itself but should be subordinate to the principal development.*

iii. *Development should not be treated as associated development if it is only necessary as a source of additional revenue for the applicant, in order to cross-subsidise the cost of the principal development. This does not mean that the applicant cannot cross- subsidise, but if part of a proposal is only necessary as a means of cross-subsidising the principal development then that part should not be treated as associated development.*

iv. *Associated development should be proportionate to the nature and scale of the principal development. However, this core principle should not be read as excluding associated infrastructure development (such*

as a network connection) that is on a larger scale than is necessary to serve the principal development if that associated infrastructure provides capacity that is likely to be required for another proposed major infrastructure project. When deciding whether it is appropriate for infrastructure which is on a larger scale than is necessary to serve a project to be treated as associated development, each application will have to be assessed on its own merits. For example, the Secretary of State will have regard to all relevant matters including whether a future application is proposed to be made by the same or related developer as the current application, the degree of physical proximity of the proposed application to the current application, and the time period in which a future application is proposed to be submitted."

1.6.3 The guidance considerably predates solar generation NSIPs and provides no direct guidance on typical associated development for this type of NSIP.

1.6.4 Following an amendment to the 2008 Act made in December 2020 by the Infrastructure Planning (Electricity Storage Facilities) Order 2020, the BESS does not qualify as an NSIP in its own right. The BESS is clearly capable of being associated development under Section 115 of the 2008 Act.

1.6.5 The BESS would be contained within the Solar Array Area, connecting to the solar infrastructure and sharing one point of connection to the National Grid substation. The BESS would store generated electricity at times of lower demand and export it to the National Grid at times of higher demand, supporting the operation of the solar infrastructure.

1.6.6 The BESS is considered to be subordinate as it cannot undertake its primary function without the solar infrastructure, although the grid connection agreement does also allow for import, storage and redistribution of electricity from and to the National Grid so that it can be used for grid balancing as an ancillary beneficial function. Conversely, at times of higher demand the solar infrastructure could export energy directly to the National Grid without requiring the BESS. It is also considerably smaller in footprint than the solar array and the Works Plan (**Document Ref: 2.4**) provides a defined maximum physical extent for the BESS.

1.6.7 The capacity of the BESS is proportionate as it is sized to make efficient use of the connection with an output capacity of 600 MW. Furthermore, paragraph 2.10.16 of NPS EN-3 explicitly states that energy storage may be considered associated development alongside solar farms.

1.6.8 In light of the above, it is considered that the BESS accords with all of the principles relating to associated development set out in the -cited guidance.

1.6.9 The Bespoke Access Road is required for the construction and operational phases of the Proposed Development to both provide access for abnormal indivisible loads such as transformers (at both stages) and for HGVs. It will secondarily reduce HGV traffic on local rural roads. It is subordinate to the NSIP in its scale. The guidance is clear that 'formation of new or improved vehicular or pedestrian access (to stations, work sites etc), whether temporary or permanent' is capable of being associated development.

1.6.10 Furthermore, the proposed inverters, combiner boxes, transformers, cabling, on-site substation, fencing, planting, temporary construction compounds and

other infrastructure (including electrical connections) would support the operation of the Proposed Development, are clearly subordinate in scale, and are considered to be associated development for the purposes of Section 115 of the 2008 Act.

1.7 The Purpose and Structure of this Document

1.7.1 The primary purpose of this Planning Statement is to assist the Examining Authority ('ExA') and the SoS in their assessment of the Proposed Development by demonstrating how the Applicant has taken account of relevant planning policy, notably the National Policy Statements NPSs') for energy infrastructure, and the extent to which the Proposed Development complies with the policies within those NPSs, as well as any other matters that are "important and relevant" to the SoS's determination of the Application. Such matters include UK Government energy and climate change policy, the National Planning Policy Framework and local planning documents.

1.7.2 The Planning Statement sets out the key benefits and likely significant adverse environmental effects of the Proposed Development. Where relevant the Planning Statement cross references or 'signposts' the relevant application documents that provide more detail.

1.7.3 The structure of the remainder of this Planning Statement is set out in **Table 1.1** below.

Table 1.1: Planning Statement Structure

SECTION	TITLE	OVERVIEW
Section 2	The Site and Relevant Planning Designations	Provides an overview of the planning history and the local planning designations that apply to the Site.
Section 3	The Planning Act 2008 and National Policy Statements	Sets out the legislative and policy framework for the consideration of and determination of DCO applications, notably the NPSs for energy infrastructure.
Section 4	National Need Case and Benefits	Provides an overview of the national need case, considering recent UK Government energy and climate change policy, which set out important Government objectives for decarbonising the power and industrial sectors in order to achieve the legally binding target of net zero by 2050 and are important and relevant considerations.
Section 5	The National Planning Policy Framework and Local Plan	Sets out the National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF') and statutory development plan policies of relevance to the Proposed Development.
Section 6	The Assessment of the Proposed Development Against Policy	considers the conformity of the Proposed Development against the assessment principles of the relevant

SECTION	TITLE	OVERVIEW
		energy NPSs. It also looks at NPPF and local policy.
Section 7	The Benefits and Impacts of the Proposed Development	Identifies the key benefits of the Proposed Development as well as any likely significant adverse effects/impacts and weighs these against each other.
Section 8	Conclusions	Sets out the conclusions of the Planning Statement in terms of the overall acceptability of the Proposed Development

2. The Site and Relevant Planning Designations

2.1.1 This section provides an overview of the Site and summarises its current land use and planning history and describes the relevant planning designations (included related policies) that are of relevance to the Proposed Development.

2.1 Land use and planning history

2.1.1 Land use within the Solar Array Area, Cable Route Corridor and Bespoke Access Corridor is predominantly agricultural. Most planning history within the Order Limits is related to agricultural or minor residential proposals. The planning history within or overlapping with the Order Limits from each relevant Council, and in the case of DCO projects, the Planning Inspectorate, is included in **Tables 1A** to **1D** in **Appendix 1** of this document**.** There is no relevant planning history for Lincolnshire County Council.

2.1.2 Given the presence of the nearby Bicker Fen Substation, there are a number of energy-related developments in the area either with planning permission or awaiting determination that have been considered with regards to cumulative impacts, as set out in the ES.

2.2 Local Planning Designations

2.2.1 NKDC, BBC, and LCC represent the host local authorities for the Proposed Development for the purposes of Section 42 of the 2008 Act.

2.2.2 The following documents form the development plan for local applications in these areas:

- South East Lincolnshire Local Plan 2011-2036;
- Central Lincolnshire Local Plan (adopted April 2023; and
- Lincolnshire Minerals and Waste Plan (Core Strategy and Development Management Policies adopted 2016 and Site Locations adopted 2017).

2.2.3 In the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan, which covers the part of the Site located within Boston, the Site is within the Countryside and the Cable Route Corridor crosses through a Local Wildlife Site.

2.2.4 In the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan, which covers the portion of the Site located within North Kesteven, the Solar Array Area is partially located within a Designated Rural Area and partially located within a Location suitable in principle for large scale wind turbines. The Cable Route Corridor also largely passes through the same two designations. The Bespoke Access Route is largely located within a Designated Rural Area.

2.2.5 In the Lincolnshire Minerals and Waste Plan, part of the Solar Array Area is located in a Sand & Gravel Mineral Safeguarding Area.

3. The Planning Act 2008 and National Policy Statements

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 This section of the Planning Statement sets out the legislative and policy framework for the consideration of and determination of applications for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects ('NSIPs') such as the Proposed Development, notably the National Policy Statements ('NPS') for energy infrastructure.

3.1.2 Under the 2008 Act regime, the primary policy framework for examining and determining applications for development consent is provided by NPSs. Section 104 of the 2008 Act requires the SoS to determine applications for NSIPs in accordance with the relevant NPSs, I while also having regard to a number of specified matters.

3.2 Planning Act 2008

3.2.1 The Planning Act 2008 establishes the legal framework for applying for, examining, and determining applications for NSIPs. The Proposed Development constitutes a NSIP development, in accordance with the 2008 Act, as it comprises 'the construction or extension of a generating station' (Part 3, Section 14(1)(a)) with a 'generating capacity of more than 50MW' (Part 3, Section 15(2)(c)). As such, a Development Consent Order ('DCO') is required to authorise this part of the Proposed Development in accordance with Section 31 of the 2008 Act.

3.2.2 Section 115 of 2008 Act also states that a DCO can include consent for 'associated development', that is, development that is not part of, but is associated with the NSIP. This may be development that supports the construction or operation of the NSIP, which helps to address the impacts of the NSIP or is of a type normally brought forward with the particular type of NSIP (here the generating station). The proposed BESS, Bespoke Access Road, inverters, combiner boxes, transformers, cabling, on-site substation, fencing, temporary construction compounds and other infrastructure (including electrical connections) would support the operation of the Proposed Development and are considered to be associated development for the purposes of Section 115 of the 2008 Act, as set out in Section 1.6 of this document.

3.2.3 Under the 2008 Act, the policy framework for examining and determining applications for a DCO is provided by NPS. Section 5 of the 2008 Act allows the Secretary of State ('SoS') to designate NPS setting out national policy in relation to the types of NSIP listed at Section 14 of the 2008 Act.

3.2.4 Part 5 of the 2008 Act sets out that an application for an order granting development consent must be made to the SoS. The approach taken to pre-application and engagement was designed to ensure compliance with the legislative requirements set out in Sections 42, 47, 48, 49 and 50 of the Planning Act 2008 while also exceeding these minimum requirements to

ensure best practice. **Consultation Report (Document Ref: 5.1)** has been prepared that details compliance with Sections 42, 47, 49, and 50 of Planning Act 2008.

3.2.5 Part 6 of the 2008 Act is to be applied when determining applications for orders granting development consent. Sections 103 to 107 provide the framework for decision-making, which in turn frames the focus of the examination of the application for a Draft Development Consent Order. We

3.2.6 The NPS are the primary policy used by the SoS to examine and determine applications for NSIP. In addition, Section 104 (2) of the 2008 Act states the SoS must have regard to:

- any national policy statement which has effect in relation to development of the description to which the application relates;
- the appropriate marine policy documents (none apply to the Proposed Development);
- any local impact report submitted;
- any matters prescribed in relation to development of the description to which the application relates; and
- any other matters which the SoS thinks are both important and relevant to the SoS's decision.

3.2.7 Section 104 of the 2008 Act requires the SoS to determine applications for NSIPs in accordance with the relevant NPS unless this would:

- lead to the UK being in breach of its international obligations;
- be in breach of any statutory duty that applies to the SoS;
- be unlawful; or
- result in the adverse impacts of the development outweighing the benefits.

3.2.8 For the purpose of Section 104, the following NPSs have 'effect' in relation to the Proposed Development as discussed below in section 3.3:

- Overarching NPS for Energy (NPS EN-1) ('EN-1') (DESNZ, 2023); and
- NPS for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (NPS EN-3) ('EN-3') (DESNZ, 2023).

3.2.9 It is considered that the NPS for Electricity Networks Infrastructure (NPS EN-5) ('EN-5') (DESNZ, 2023) does not have 'effect', but has importance and relevance to the determination of the Proposed Development under Section 104(2)(d) of the 2008 Act, in particular the development within the Cable Route Corridor.

3.2.10 Of further relevance is Section 106 of the 2008 Act which provides that the SoS may disregard representations if they relate to the merits of policy set out in a national policy statement. Similar provisions are made in relation to the Examining Authority as set out in Sections 87(3), 94(8) and 102(4) of the 2008 Act.

3.2.11 NKDC, BBC and LCC are able to submit Local Impact Reports (LIRs) as the host authorities. The neighbouring authorities may also choose to submit a LIR. The reports would give details of the likely impact of a project on the local authority's area. Section 104(2)(b) of the 2008 Act explains that the Examining Authority and the Secretary of State must have regard to any LIR submitted

when deciding the application, as explained in the updated advice on Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: Advice for Local Authorities.

3.2.12 The prescribed matters referred to in section 104(2)(c) of the 2008 Act are set out in the Infrastructure Planning (Decisions) Regulations 2010 (as amended) ('the Decisions Regulations'). The provisions within the Decisions Regulations that are of relevance to the Proposed Development are:

- Regulation 3(1) – When deciding a DCO application which affects a listed building or its setting, the SoS must have regard to the desirability of preserving the listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. The Applicant considers that sufficient information on cultural heritage is included within the DCO Application to inform the SoS's decision on the DCO Application (namely ES Chapter Cultural Heritage (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol. 1 6.2.8)).
- Regulation 3(2) – When deciding a DCO application relating to a conservation area, the SoS must have regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area. The Applicant considers that sufficient information on cultural heritage is included within the DCO Application to inform the SoS's decision on the DCO Application (namely ES Chapter Cultural Heritage (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol. 1 6.2.8)).
- Regulation 3(3) – When deciding a DCO application which affects or is likely to affect a scheduled monument or its setting, the SoS must have regard to the desirability of preserving the scheduled monument or its setting. The Applicant considers that sufficient information on cultural heritage is included within the DCO Application to inform the SoS's decision on the DCO Application (namely ES Chapter Cultural Heritage (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol. 1 6.2.8)).
- Regulation 7 – When deciding a DCO application the SoS must have regard to the United Nations Environmental Programme Convention on Biological Diversity of '992 ('1992 Convention'). The Applicant considers that sufficient information on biodiversity is included within the DCO Application to inform the SoS's decision on the DCO Application to comply with the 1992 Convention (namely ES Chapter Ecology (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol. 1 6.2.7)). Information on biodiversity net gain has been provided within the Biodiversity Net Gain Strategy (Document Ref: 7.3)

3.2.13 In the case of the Proposed Development, other matters that are important and relevant may include recent and relevant UK Government energy and climate change policy including national infrastructure plans and assessments. These documents set out important Government objectives for decarbonising the power and industrial sectors, in addition to the Government's target (enshrined in law) of achieving Net Zero in terms of GHG emissions by 2050. These are discussed further in **Section 4** of this Planning Statement.

3.2.14 Other matters that the SoS considers are both important and relevant may include the policies within the NPPF (MHCLG, 2024), Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) (MHCLG, 2024) and the local development plan. This is discussed further in Sections 5 and 6 of this Planning Statement. Each technical chapter of the ES refers to the policies from the NPS and other policy

documents that are relevant to the assessment of the environmental effects reported within that chapter.

3.3 National Policy Statement (NPS)

3.3.1 The Energy NPSs (EN-1 to EN-6) set out the Government's policy for the delivery of energy infrastructure and provide the legal framework for planning decisions for nationally significant infrastructure projects. As identified above the NPS which have effect for the Proposed Development are EN-1 and EN-3, while EN-5 is important and relevant.

3.3.2 The policy compliance assessment tables in **Section 6**, and **Appendices 3A and 3B** of this document provide a comprehensive assessment of compliance with EN-1 and EN-3, and should be read in conjunction with this section. Accordance with relevant EN-5 policies is considered in **Section 6** and **Appendix 3C**.

3.3.3 These documents, from a planning policy perspective, have been the focus in terms of scoping the EIA, as reported on in **ES Appendix 1.1: EIA Scoping Report (Document Ref. 6.3, ES Vol. 2, 6.3.1)**.

3.3.4 EN-1 provides the overarching policy position and solar PV generation falls within the EN-1 definition of Critical National Priority ('CNP') infrastructure. EN-3 outlines the SoS's decision making considerations for solar PV generation.

3.3.5 Each technical chapter of the ES (Chapters 6-18, ES Volume 1 **(Document Ref: 6.2)**) explains the policies in the NPS that have informed, and are informing, the design, assessment, and controls applicable to the Proposed Development.

Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (NPS EN-1)

3.3.6 EN-1 sets out the national policy for the delivery of energy NSIPs, including solar renewable electricity generation. Part 2 of EN-1 sets out the policy context for energy NSIPs, including meeting net zero by 2050, decarbonising the power sector and ensuring affordability and security of energy supplies.

3.3.7 Paragraph 2.2.2 states in regard to Net Zero 2050:

"The Government will continue to update its decarbonisation plan in coming years and the following should be read in conjunction with such updates as may be published from time to time."

3.3.8 The Clean Power 2030 Action Plan (DESNZ, December 2024) may potentially represent one such update. This is discussed further in section 4.9 of this document.

3.3.9 Following the release of the seventh carbon budget (covering the period from 2038-2042) in February 2025, another update to the Carbon Budget Delivery Plan is expected. This would follow on from the extant Carbon Budget Delivery Plan (DESNZ, March 2023) which covers the period from 2033-2037.

3.3.10 Paragraph 2.3.6 states:

"We need to transform the energy system, tackling emissions while continuing to ensure secure and reliable supply, and affordable bills for households and businesses. This includes increasing our supply of clean energy from renewables [inter alia]".

3.3.11 Paragraph 3.1.1 of EN-1 explains that the UK Government sees a need for significant amounts of new large scale energy infrastructure to meet its energy objectives and why the UK Government considers that the need for such infrastructure is urgent. Paragraph 3.1.2 goes on to state *"it will not be possible to develop the necessary amounts of such infrastructure without some significant residual adverse impacts"*, which will be minimised by policies later in the document as well as the technology specific NPSs.

3.3.12 Paragraph 3.2.3 explains the role of developers in proposing energy infrastructure projects that they consider appropriate in the market-based UK energy system:

"It is not the role of the planning system to deliver specific amounts or limit any form of infrastructure covered by this NPS. It is for industry to propose new energy infrastructure projects that they assess to be viable within the strategic framework set by government. This is the nature of a market-based energy system. With the exception of new coal or large-scale oil-fired electricity generation, the government does not consider it appropriate for planning policy to set limits on different technologies but planning policy can be used to support the government's ambitions in energy policy and other policy areas."

3.3.13 Paragraph 3.2.4 explains that it is desirable to deliver a large number of consented projects to aid the working of the energy market. It states:

"It is not the government's intention in presenting any of the figures or targets in this NPS to propose limits on any new infrastructure that can be consented in accordance with the energy NPSs. A large number of consented projects can help deliver an affordable electricity system, by driving competition and reducing costs within and amongst different technology and infrastructure types. Consenting new projects also enables projects utilising more advanced technology and greater efficiency to come forward."

3.3.14 At 3.2.5 it is further clarified that "*the government has other mechanisms to influence the delivery of its energy objectives and imposing limits on the consenting of different types of energy infrastructure would reduce competition, increase costs, and disincentivise newer, more efficient solutions coming forward*" and points out that not everything that obtains development consent will get built.

3.3.15 Paragraphs 3.2.6 – 3.2.8 of EN-1 clearly expresses how the need and urgency for energy NSIPs will be considered by the Secretary of State:

"The Secretary of State should assess all applications for development consent for the types of infrastructure covered by this NPS on the basis that the government has demonstrated that there is a need for those types of infrastructure which is urgent, as described for each of them in this Part.

In addition, the Secretary of State has determined that substantial weight should be given to this need when considering applications for development consent under the Planning Act 2008.

The Secretary of State is not required to consider separately the specific contribution of any individual project to satisfying the need established in this NPS."

3.3.16 Part 3.3 of EN-1 establishes the need for nationally significant energy infrastructure, and in particular the need for different types of electricity infrastructure, to address energy security objectives and carbon reduction requirements, replace closing generating capacity and deliver affordable decarbonisation.

3.3.17 Paragraphs 3.3.20 – 3.3.24 set out the role of wind and solar power, stating:

"Wind and solar are the lowest cost ways of generating electricity, helping reduce costs and providing a clean and secure source of electricity supply (as they are not reliant on fuel for generation). Our analysis shows that a secure, reliable, affordable, net zero consistent system in 2050 is likely to be composed predominantly of wind and solar".

3.3.18 Paragraphs 3.3.25 – 3.3.31 set out the need for electricity storage, stating that it *"has a key role to play in achieving net zero and providing flexibility to the energy system, so that high volumes of low carbon power, heat and transport can be integrated"* and *"can provide various services, locally and at the national level. These include maximising the usable output from intermittent low carbon generation (e.g. solar and wind), reducing the total amount of generation capacity needed on the system; providing a range of balancing services to the NETSO and Distribution Network Operators (DNOs) to help operate the system; and reducing constraints on the networks, helping to defer or avoid the need for costly network upgrades as demand increases."*

3.3.19 Paragraph 3.3.59 confirms all mentioned generating technologies are urgently required to meet the Government's energy objectives by providing security of supply, providing an affordable, reliable system and ensuring the system is net zero consistent.

3.3.20 Paragraphs 3.3.62 – 3.3.63 state:

"Government has concluded that there is a critical national priority (CNP) for the provision of nationally significant low carbon infrastructure. Section 4.2 states which energy generating technologies are low carbon and are therefore CNP infrastructure.

Subject to any legal requirements, the urgent need for CNP Infrastructure to achieving our energy objectives, together with the national security, economic, commercial, and net zero benefits, will in general outweigh any other residual impacts not capable of being addressed by application of the mitigation hierarchy. Government strongly supports the delivery of CNP Infrastructure and it should be progressed as quickly as possible."

3.3.21 Paragraph 4.1.3 states that *"Given the level and urgency of need for infrastructure of the types covered by the energy NPSs set out in Part 3 of this NPS, the Secretary of State will start with a presumption in favour of granting consent to applications for energy NSIPs. That presumption applies unless any more specific and relevant policies set out in the relevant NPSs clearly indicate that consent should be refused."*

3.3.22 Part 4.2 of EN-1 goes into more detail about the critical national priority for low carbon infrastructure. Paragraph 4.2.4 stresses that *"there is a critical national priority ('CNP') for the provision of nationally significant low carbon infrastructure."* Paragraph 4.2.5 confirms that 'low carbon infrastructure' includes electricity generation that does not involve fossil fuel combustion, including renewable energy sources like solar power.

3.3.23 Paragraph 4.2.14 states that where requirements for CNP set out in EN-1 are met, a presumption in favour of CNP applies.

3.3.24 Paragraph 4.2.15 states that *"Where residual non-HRA or non-MCZ impacts remain after the mitigation hierarchy has been applied, these residual impacts are unlikely to outweigh the urgent need for this type of infrastructure. Therefore, in all but the most exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely that consent will be refused on the basis of these residual impacts."*

3.3.25 Paragraph 4.2.16 states that *"the Secretary of State will take as the starting point for decision- making that such infrastructure is to be treated as if it has met any tests which are set out within the NPSs, or any other planning policy, which requires a clear outweighing of harm, exceptionality or very special circumstances."* Paragraph 4.2.17 sets out a non-exhaustive list of these tests.

3.3.26 Paragraph 4.2.12 states that *"Applicants should set out how residual impacts will be compensated for as far as possible."*

NPS for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (NPS EN-3)

3.3.27 EN-3 together with EN-1, provides the primary basis for decisions on renewable energy NSIPs. EN-3 provides a framework for assessment and technology-specific information for specified renewable energy technologies. It begins by stating at paragraph 1.1.1 that *"There is an urgent need for new electricity generating capacity to meet our energy objectives."*

3.3.28 The importance of the generation of electricity from renewable sources is stated in Paragraph 1.1.2 of EN-3:

"Electricity generation from renewable sources of energy is an essential element of the transition to net zero and meeting out statutory targets for the sixth carbon budget (CB6). Our analysis suggests that demand for electricity is likely to increase significantly over the coming years and could more than double by 2050".

3.3.29 Solar PV is specifically discussed in EN-3 under section 2.10, which includes relevant information on the technology to inform assessment and decision-making. Paragraphs 2.10.9 – 2.10.10 state *that "solar is a key part of the government's strategy for low-cost decarbonisation of the energy sector"* and *"Solar also has an important role in delivering the government's goals for greater energy independence"*.

3.3.30 Paragraphs 2.10.13 and 2.10.14 list out more benefits of solar deployment, stating:

"Solar farms are one of the most established renewable electricity technologies in the UK and the cheapest form of electricity generation.

Solar farms can be built quickly and, coupled with consistent reductions in the cost of materials and improvements in the efficiency of panels, large-scale solar is now viable in some cases to deploy subsidy-free."

3.3.31 Paragraph 2.10.16 states energy storage may be considered associated development within a solar farm.

NPS for Electricity Networks Infrastructure (NPS EN-5)

3.3.32 The NPS for Electricity Networks Infrastructure (EN-5) is the primary basis for decisions on transmission and distribution system NSIPs. Paragraph 1.6.2 explains that EN-5 covers above ground electricity lines of 132kV or above whose length is more than 2km. As a result, EN-5 does not have direct effect for the Proposed Development. It does, however, have relevance to the grid connection for the Proposed Development, which is to be below ground and of a non NSIP length, as envisaged in paragraph 1.6.4 of EN-5. EN-1 paragraph 4.11.4 on grid connection refers to EN-5 for further guidance on relevant considerations, including the impact of electromagnetic fields (EMFs).

4. National Need Case and Benefits

4.1.1 This section sets out the need for the Proposed Development and how it is supported by both national legislation and government policy and guidance. In making decisions on applications for NSIPs, section 104 of the 2008 Act states that the SoS must also have regard to any other matters that they consider to be both 'important and relevant' to their decision. This could include matters on need or benefits that update or supplement the need case in the relevant NPS.

4.1.2 This section summarises key elements of recent energy and climate change law, policy and guidance which provides updated and supplemental support to the urgent need for new energy infrastructure, including solar generating stations, set out in EN-1 and EN-3.

4.1.3 As discussed above in Section 3, the NPS establish the policy need for new renewable energy generation. Significant amounts of new large scale energy infrastructure are required to meet the Government's energy objectives of providing security of supply, providing an affordable, reliable system and ensuring the system is net zero consistent. All generating technologies within EN-1 are urgently required, and there is both urgency and a critical national priority for the provision of nationally significant low carbon infrastructure including solar photovoltaic generation.

4.1.4 This section discusses the key drivers underpinning the need for renewable energy within the UK as set out in the Government's policy and other guidance, and the resulting urgent need for new energy NSIPs.

4.1.5 This section begins by providing an overview of key legislation related to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. This is followed by current government policy and related guidance and documentation such as that from the National Energy System Operator. This is followed by earlier government policy that provides context to the current NPSs and other current government policy.

4.2 The Climate Change Act 2008

4.2.1 The Climate Change Act set up a framework for the UK to achieve its long-term goals of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and to ensure steps are taken towards adapting to the impact of climate change. The Act committed the UK to reducing its greenhouse gas emissions by at least 80% by 2050 when compared with 1990 levels, enshrining it in law.

4.2.2 In June 2019, legislation was passed in the form of the Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) Order 2019 to amend the Climate Change Act to set a new ambitious target requiring the UK to bring all greenhouse gas emissions to net zero (i.e. 100% reduction by 2050, compared with the previous target of at least 80% reduction from 1990 levels increasing the urgency and scale of the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions).

4.3 Clean Power 2030 Action Plan (Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, December 2024)

4.3.1 In December 2024, the government released their Clean Power 2030 Action Plan which sets out a pathway to achieving the target of producing at least 95% of Great Britain's power generation (and at least as much power as Great Britain consumes in total) from clean sources of power by 2030. This would reduce the carbon intensity of the UK's generation to well below 50gCO2e/kWh in 2030.

4.3.2 The Action Plan sets out what government will do to support and accelerate delivery of the new infrastructure required to achieve its target. The Government recognises that solar plays a key role in achieving the Clean Power target, and states that at the point of publication of the Action Plan there was 16.6 Gigawatts ('GW') of solar capacity installed in the UK. The Government have identified as achievable a Clean Power capacity range of 45-47 GW of installed solar by 2030 to support the delivery of their Clean Power target. The above clearly requires an unprecedented increase in installed capacity over the next six years.

4.3.3 Furthermore, the Clean Power Action Plan includes Clean Power capacity range of 23-27 GW of battery capacity (vs. 4.5 GW). The plan expects the majority of this increase to come from grid-scale batteries.

4.3.4 The Clean Power Action Plan also supports the UK Government's aim to decarbonise the wider economy including heat in buildings, transport, and industry by 2050. The report states *"By 2050, annual electricity demand is likely to at least double as a result of electrification."*

4.3.5 As such, decarbonising existing electricity demand, and the 2030 date, are not the end goals. The Action Plan states that although *"Clean power by 2030 prepares us for the rapid growth in power demand expected over the 2030s and 40s"* it is important that government *"looks at a clean power system beyond 2030, where demand is expected to increase"* The development of renewable energy projects at pace both before and after 2030, including solar, is vital to fulfil this increased demand in parallel with decarbonisation and the Government is expecting an increase in planning applications with the Clean Power 2030 target.

4.4 Seventh Carbon Budget Report (Climate Change Committee, February 2025)

4.4.1 The Seventh Carbon Budget Report covering the period 2038-2042 has been published by the Climate Change Committee. This is a report to government pursuant to Section 34 of the Climate Change Act 2008.

4.4.2 The recommended Balanced Pathway, an emissions reduction pathway from 2025 to Net Zero by 2050 within the UK's legislated carbon budgets, relies on electric vehicles and industrial electrification and importantly includes a solar capacity increase to 82GW by 2040.

4.5 Written Ministerial Statement (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 30 July 2024)

4.5.1 On 30 July 2024, soon after the election of the current government, a Written Ministerial Statement was made by the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government (ref. UIN HCWS48) referring to boosting the delivery of renewable energy, which it described as *"critical to meeting the Government's commitment to zero carbon electricity generation".*

4.6 Future Energy Scenarios: ESO Pathways to Net Zero (Electricity System Operator, July 2024)

4.6.1 In July 2024, the Electricity System Operator (now known as the National Energy System Operator) published their latest annual Future Energy Scenarios document. Their latest framework marks a move from reactive scenario setting to strategic network planning, seeking to identify credible, strategic routes to achieving net zero by 2050.

4.6.2 The document sets out three 'pathways' to net zero by 2050 and also explores one pathway which does not meet the 2050 net zero target, called 'Counterfactual'.

4.6.3 All pathways which achieve the net zero target include 71.8-107.9 GW of solar capacity by 2050. The Counterfactual pathway includes only 45.2GW of installed solar capacity by 2050.

4.6.4 All three net zero compatible pathways also require significant capacities of battery electrical storage to be deployed, with a 2050 range of 28.9–35.6 GW.

4.6.5 All three net zero compatible pathways achieve the Sixth Carbon Budget (by 2035) (see section 4.7 below), although there is limited headroom, reinforcing the challenge of achieving this and supporting the optionality Government has proposed to retain in how it will reach its Clean Power target as described in the Clean Power Action Plan.

4.6.6 Through the FES 2024, NESO show that a credible and deliverable electricity system which delivers net zero for the UK by 2050 must include capacities of solar generation and battery electrical storage which are larger than the Clean Power capacity ranges set by Government in its Clean Power 2030 Action Plan.

4.7 Other Government Policy and Strategy

4.7.1 The UK's general election in July 2024 saw a change of government. However, the UK's 2030 NDC remains unchanged at 68 per cent reduction in territorial emissions by 2030 on 1990 levels. The Sixth Carbon Budget (2033-2037) also remains unchanged, requiring the UK to reduce GHG emissions by 78 per cent by 2035 compared to 1990 levels.

4.7.2 In March 2020, the Energy System Catapult's Innovating to Net Zero report observed that: *"Net Zero narrows the set of viable pathways for the future energy system. Where an 80% target allowed considerable variation in relative effort across the economy, with some fossil fuels still permissible in most sectors, Net Zero leaves little slack."* It therefore follows that the government's proposed approach to achieve net zero shares many similarities with the approach taken by the previous government. Indeed, there is nothing inconsistent between the government's approach and the approach taken by

the previous government which would mean a move away from existing policies in support of renewable electricity supplies.

4.7.3 That said, one key difference, is that the urgency of the need to implement measures which deliver decarbonisation is now greater because of the reasons described in Section 4.4 of this Statement. The government's support for renewable generation going forwards is therefore no lower than the support set out in existing publications and strategies and if anything is emerging to be more supportive.

4.7.4 The most relevant publications and strategies from the 2020s are summarised below. All of these were, furthermore, underpinned from 2011 to 2023 by a set of energy NPSs that provided support for decarbonisation through the consenting new energy infrastructure. For example, the former Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (BEIS, 2011) at paragraph 3.1.1 stated "*the UK needs all the types of energy infrastructure covered by this NPS in order to achieve energy security at the same time as dramatically reducing greenhouse gas emissions*".

4.7.5 The December 2020 Energy White Paper outlined a strategy to transform the UK's energy system and described that onshore and offshore wind and solar would be key building blocks of the future generation mix. In particular, the role of solar in displacing price-setting gas plants from the electricity system was noted, and therefore the Energy White Paper stated that the UK will need sustained growth in the capacity of renewable technologies in the next decade to remain on a pathway to net zero emissions under all demand scenarios.

4.7.6 The October 2021 Net Zero Strategy established a policy aim for the UK's electricity system to be clean by 2035. The Strategy stated that a sustained increase in the deployment of land-based renewables such as locally supported onshore wind and solar in the 2020s and beyond is required to meet the UK's Sixth Carbon Budget.

4.7.7 In March 2023, the DESNZ published 'Powering Up Britain' in which it set out how the UK will achieve energy security, promote green growth, and meet its net zero targets: *"We need investment at scale … to rapidly rollout existing technologies … at pace to meet our ambitions for decarbonising power and [lower] wholesale UK electricity prices."* Powering Up Britain observes that *"a significant proportion of technologies we will need for 2050 are currently at the demonstration or prototype phase"*. This implies that while the UK should continue to develop new low-carbon technologies, waiting for such technologies to deliver takes on risk because some may not deliver. Therefore, the rapid rollout of existing technologies, while continuing to invest in new technologies, is of critical importance in the fight against climate change.

4.8 British Energy Security Strategy (Department for Energy Security and Net Zero et al, April 2022)

4.8.1 The latest Energy Security Strategy was published largely in response to soaring energy (including gas) prices as a result of a sudden surge in demand following the COVID-19 pandemic, compounded by the Russian invasion of

Ukraine. The previous Energy Security Strategy was published by DECC in 2012 against a different geopolitical backdrop.

4.8.2 The focus of the Strategy is upon reducing energy dependence as a nation thereby reducing costs to consumers. The underlying vulnerability to international oil and gas prices is to be addressed by reducing the UK's dependence on imported oil and gas through both demand reduction (energy efficiency) and diversification of energy sources away from fossil fuel market based generation.

4.8.3 The Strategy explains that renewables are critical to transitioning away from fossil fuels. As well as support for wind generation there is support for the solar which is reducing significantly in cost to the consumer. The strategy seeks the effective use of land by encouraging large scale projects to locate on previously developed, or lower value land, where possible, and to ensure projects are designed to avoid, mitigate, and where necessary, compensate for the impacts of using greenfield sites. The Government will also support solar that is co-located with other functions (for example, electricity storage) to maximise the efficiency of land use.

4.8.4 The Strategy also sets out measures to ensure a more flexible, efficient system for electricity generators and users, including *"encouraging all forms of flexibility with sufficient large-scale, long-duration electricity storage to balance the overall system by developing appropriate policy to enable investment".*

4.9 Discussion

4.9.1 The Climate Change Act 2008 set out the first national target for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, committing to a reduction of at least 80%, when compared to 1990 levels, by 2050. The Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) Order 2019 later set a more ambitious reduction target of 100%. Since 2011 National Policy Statements have been in force that place decarbonisation aims at the heart of energy consenting.

4.9.2 Subsequent governments have formulated policy positions and strategies to deliver the UK's climate change obligations while also protecting the UK's energy security and delivering affordable energy to consumers. Each policy position and strategy has included significant new capacities of large-scale ground mounted solar as a critical part of the solution.

4.9.3 It is almost two decades since the enactment of the Climate Change Act 2008. As 2050 approaches, the need for new nationally significant sources of low carbon energy and supporting infrastructure have become more urgent.

4.9.4 The current government has recently published the Clean Power 2030 Action Plan which establishes a Clean Power target to deliver at least 95% of the country's electricity generation (and at least as much power as Great Britain consumes) from clean sources of power by 2030.

4.9.5 The Clean Power 2030 Action Plan includes capacity ranges of 45 – 47 GW of solar capacity and 23 -27 GW of battery capacity by 2030 to support delivering the Clean Power target. However, Government has retained optionality around these capacities until more clarity is available on which future generation mix is most likely to be deliverable.

4.9.6 The Clean Power 2030 Action Plan also re-affirms the need to decarbonise the wider economy by 2050, with annual electricity demand expected to at least double in this time due to the electrification of electrification of heat in buildings, transport, and industry (including data centres), meaning capacity will need to continue to increase beyond 2030, even if the 2030 target is met.

4.9.7 NESO's Future Energy Scenarios and previous government strategies have all assigned a significant role to new large-scale ground mounted solar capacity in staying on a pathway to achieve net zero by 2050. NESO's Future Energy Scenarios and the Government's Clean Power 2030 Action Plan also identify a critical role for a significant increase in battery energy storage capacity to support net zero, energy security and affordability.

4.9.8 The aim of the Government's energy policy is to accelerate decarbonisation of the current electricity system by 2030, and to deliver sufficient levels of low carbon generation and electricity storage to meet the anticipated doubling of electricity demand by 2050 necessary for the electrification of transportation and heating.

4.9.9 In addition to net zero considerations, electricity supplies must be affordable and secure. Current and previous government policies have identified the important role of solar generation and co-located electricity storage to reduce Great Britain's reliance on and exposure to volatile international fossil fuel markets and recognises that solar costs have come down significantly in recent years benefitting consumers.

4.9.10 While the Proposed Development is intended to connect into the grid as early as 2029 and contribute significantly to Clean Power 2030, in the event that it connects after 2030 it will still make a significant contribution to achieving net zero and meeting the UK's Seventh Carbon Budget, as electricity demand is set to double over the period that the Proposed Development would be operational.

4.9.11 This well-established need is consistent with and amplifies that set out in NPS EN-1 and EN-3. There is a need for significant amounts of new large cale energy infrastructure in particular low carbon infrastructure for which there is both urgency and a critical national priority.

4.9.12 EN-1 is clear on the need and benefits for electricity storage. Benefits include the provision of flexibility, making more use of the output of generating plant, reducing the total amount of generating plant required to meet peak demand, system services including balancing services and in turn reducing the need for new network infrastructure and bringing system savings.

4.9.13 In summary, urgent and unprecedented actions are required on a global scale to halt climate change. A rapid increase in the supply of low carbon electricity is needed for the UK to meet its legally binding climate change targets. Solar generation and battery storage are a critical part of the UK's strategy to achieve net zero by 2050, and the UK's Seventh Carbon Budget, and a key step towards these is the government's national mission for 'Clean Power by 2030'.

5. The National Planning Policy Framework and Local Development Plans

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 This section sets out the National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF') and local planning policies of potential relevance to the Proposed Development.

5.2 National Planning Policy Framework (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, December 2024)

5.2.1 The latest version of the NPPF was published in December 2024 (MHCLG, 2024). The policies contained within the NPPF are expanded upon and supported by the 'Planning Practice Guidance' (MHCLG, various dates).

5.2.2 The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are to be applied. Its policies are material considerations in planning decisions under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. Paragraph 5 of the NPPF states that the document does not contain specific policies for NSIPs and that applications in relation to NSIPs are to be determined in accordance with the decision-making framework set out in the 2008 Act and relevant NPSs, as well as any other matters that are considered relevant. However, the NPPF forms part of the overall framework of national planning policy and may be a material consideration in preparing plans and making decisions on planning applications.

5.2.3 Section 2 'Achieving sustainable development' confirms (paragraph 7) that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, summarised as *"meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs"*. Paragraph 8 goes on to identify three overarching objectives to the achievement of sustainable development, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways. These are:

- 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; and

- 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.

5.2.4 Central to the NPPF is 'a presumption in favour of sustainable development', which is set out in Paragraph 11. The NPPF is supportive of infrastructure delivery. One of the methods of fulfilling the objective of sustainable development listed at paragraph 8 is through the "*provision of infrastructure*".

5.2.5 Paragraph 161 in Section 14 'Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change' states that:

"The planning system should support the transition to net zero by 2050 and take full account of all climate impacts including overheating, water scarcity, storm and flood risks and coastal change. It should help to: shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimise vulnerability and improve resilience; encourage the reuse of existing resources, including the conversion of existing buildings; and support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure.".

5.2.6 Paragraph 168 states that when determining (Town and Country Planning Act 1990) applications for renewable and low carbon energy developments, there should be no requirement for applicants to demonstrate the overall need for renewable or low carbon energy and that local planning authorities should give significant weight to the benefits associated with renewable and low carbon energy generation and the project's contribution to a net zero future. This shows a degree of alignment with the energy National Policy Statements.

5.2.7 NPPF policies of particular relevance include:

- building a strong, competitive economy;
- making effective use of land;
- meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change;
- conserving and enhancing the natural environment; and
- conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

5.3 Local Planning Policy

Development Plans

5.3.1 The Proposed Development Site lies within the administrative areas of North Kesteven District Council, Boston Borough Council and Lincolnshire County Council. The development plans are set out in **Table 5.1** below:

Table 5.1: Development plan by local authority

LOCAL AUTHORITY	DEVELOPMENT PLAN
North Kesteven District Council	Central Lincolnshire Local Plan 2018-2040 (adopted 2023)
Boston Borough Council	South East Lincolnshire Local Plan 2011-2036 (adopted 2019)
Lincolnshire County Council	The Lincolnshire Minerals and Waste Plan (Core Strategy and Development Management

LOCAL AUTHORITY	DEVELOPMENT PLAN
	Policies adopted 2016 and Site Locations adopted 2017)

5.3.2 It is considered that these documents may be 'important and relevant' as defined in the 2008 Act and NPS EN-1. The development plan policies of relevance to the Proposed Development are set out in **Tables 5.2** to **5.4** below. A full assessment of the Proposed Development's accordance with the relevant local plan policies is set out in **Appendix 4**.

Adopted Non-Development Plan Policy

5.3.3 It is agreed that the following LCC non-Development Plan Policy documents are the most relevant to the Proposed Development:

- Lincolnshire Local Transport Plan 5 (adopted 2022);
- Lincolnshire County Council Green Masterplan (adopted 2020);
- Joint Lincolnshire Flood Risk and Water Management Strategy 2019-2050; and
- Lincolnshire County Council Highway and Flood Authority, Development Road and Sustainable Drainage Specification and Construction (adopted March 2021).

5.3.4 The local non-development plan policies of relevance to the Proposed Development are set out in **Tables 5.5** and **5.6** below. A summary of the Proposed Development's accordance with the relevant local non-development plan policies is set out in **Appendix 4**.

Emerging policy

5.3.5 On 19th February 2021, LCC resolved to update the 'Lincolnshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan'.

5.3.6 From 30 July to 24 September 2024, LCC consulted on their 'Minerals and Waste Local Plan: Preferred approach'. LCC is currently considering the community responses to this consultation in developing their draft Lincolnshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan Development Plan Documents.

5.3.7 Given the early stage of development this is considered to have limited material weight in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 process and also limited relevance or importance under the 2008 Act process.

North Kesteven Neighbourhood Plans

5.3.8 Evedon and Ewerby Neighbourhood Plan's proposed boundary will potentially cover the Site. According to the NKDC Neighbourhood Plan Progress Tracker dated 6 June 2024, this neighbourhood plan is currently at Stage 1 Initial Neighbourhood Plan Discussion. Given the early stage of development this is considered to have limited material weight in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 process and also limited relevance or importance under the 2008 Act process.

5.3.9 The Proposed Development's boundary is adjacent to the proposed boundary for the South Kyme Neighbourhood Plan, which according to the Tracker has also not progressed past Stage 1 Initial Neighbourhood Plan Discussion. Given the early stage of development this is considered to have limited

material weight in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 process and also limited relevance or importance under the 2008 Act process.

5.3.10 The NKDC Neighbourhood Plan Interactive Map indicates Neighbourhood Plans are also in development for the following although no boundary mapping is available:

- Swaton;
- Little Hale;
- Great Hale;
- Helpringham;
- Burton Pedwardine;
- Kirkby La Thorpe;
- Asgarby & Howell; and
- Heckington.

Table 5.2: Central Lincolnshire Local Plan 2018-2040 (adopted 2023) Policies

POLICY NO.	POLICY TITLE	OVERVIEW
S1	The Spatial Strategy and Settlement Hierarchy	The Central Lincolnshire Settlement Hierarchy applies to ensure an appropriate scale and mix of housing settlements. Decisions on investment in services and facilities, and on the location and scale of development, will be assisted by the hierarchy. All areas of the Site are considered 'Countryside' and are therefore subject to restrictions, with renewable energy generation being a permissible use.
S5, Part E	Development in the Countryside (Part E: Non-residential development)	Proposals for non-residential development in the countryside are supported through the policy, provided they are justifiable, access is suitable, there is no land use conflict and the size and scale of proposed development is appropriate.
S8	Reducing Energy Consumption – Non-Residential Buildings	Requires non-residential development proposals to include an Energy Statement confirming that they generate at least the same amount of renewable electricity as they demand over the course of a year.
S9	Decentralised Energy Networks and Combined Heat and Power	Where an existing decentralised energy network exists in the locality, proposals can consider connecting to the network provided the connection would not increase the fossil fuel consumption of the network.
S10	Supporting a Circular Economy	Proposals that demonstrate their compatibility with or furthering of a strong circular economy in the local area will be supported.
S11	Embodied Carbon	All development should take opportunities to reduce embodied carbon content through careful choice, use and sourcing of materials.
S12	Water Efficiency and Sustainable Water Management	New dwellings should achieve the Optional Technical Housing Standard of 110 litres per day per person for water efficiency as described by Building Regulation G2. The Proposed Development does not include new dwellings and as such this part of the policy is not relevant. All new development comprising new buildings must ensure hard surfaces are permeable, green roofing/walls are considered, and any garden areas include >100 L water butts.
S14	Renewable Energy	The Joint Strategic Planning Committee supports the transition to a net zero carbon future and maximising appropriately located renewable energy generation projects. Such proposals will be supported where the direct, indirect and cumulative impacts are acceptable having considered the scale, siting and design of the development, and the consequent impacts on landscape character, visual amenity, biodiversity, geodiversity, flood risk, townscape, heritage and highway/rail safety.

POLICY NO.	POLICY TITLE	OVERVIEW
		The impacts on aviation and defence navigation systems, and amenity impacts on sensitive neighbours must also be considered acceptable and any potential impacts must be appropriately mitigated. Where a proposal may result in significant adverse effects, such effects will be weighed against the wider environmental, economic, social and community benefits. Proposals for ground-based photovoltaics panels and associated infrastructure installed on existing property will be under a presumption in favour of permission unless significant harm would arise; it would be on Best and Most Versatile (BMV) agricultural land and doesn't meet the requirements of Policy S67; or the land is allocated for another purpose. Proposals should maximise the delivery biodiversity net gain taking account of soil, natural features, existing habitats, and planting proposals accompanying the scheme to create new habitats linking into the nature recovery strategy.
S15	Protecting Renewable Energy Infrastructure	Development should not significantly harm the technical performance of any existing or approved renewable energy generation facility, the potential for optimisation of strategic renewable energy installations or the availability of the energy resource.
S16	Wider Energy Infrastructure	Given the need to transition to net zero and the significant investment required for new and upgraded energy infrastructure, support will be given to proposals which form part of the transition to a net zero carbon sub-region. However, proposals should take all reasonable opportunities to mitigate any harm and select appropriate locations and design solutions.
S20	Resilient and Adaptable Design	In order to prevent and minimise the impacts of overheating in the built environment, applicants must demonstrate, commensurate with the scale and location of the proposal.
S21	Flood Risk and Water Resources	All development proposals will be considered against the NPPF, including application of the sequential and, if necessary, the exception test. Proposals should demonstrate that they are informed by the best available information; do not result in increased risk of flooding; will be safe, taking into account the impacts of climate change; will be resilient to flood risk from all forms of flooding; does not affect the integrity of existing flood defences; have necessary flood mitigation measures agreed with the relevant bodies; and have incorporated appropriate drainage. Development proposals that are likely to impact on surface or ground water should consider the requirements of the Water Framework Directive. The policy requires proposals to demonstrate a number of items including but not limited to sufficient water supply availability, adequate mains foul water treatment, implementation of water reuse and recycling and rainwater harvesting measures and the following of the surface water hierarchy.

POLICY NO.	POLICY TITLE	OVERVIEW
S22	Affordable Housing	Under Policy S22, a portion of the Site is mapped 'designated rural area' meaning affordable housing will be sought on all qualifying housing development sites of 5 or more dwellings within this area. This policy is not applicable as housing does not form part of the Proposed Development.
S28	Spatial Strategy for Employment	Land has been made available in appropriate locations in this plan to meet the strategic needs identified in Central Lincolnshire. Employment development will mainly be directed to Strategic Employment Sites, Important Established Employment Areas or Sustainable Urban Extensions. The Site is not located within one of these identified areas.
S34	Non-designated Spatial Strategy for Employment	Proposals for employment generating development will be limited to development proposals that support the growth of land-based rural businesses in accordance with relevant parts of Policy S5, and only if it: would be consistent in scale with its rural location; is without unacceptable environmental and/or visual impacts; would not adversely affect existing local community services and facilities; is designed to be compatible with the landscape; would not cause undue harm; and will not impact unacceptably on the local and/or strategic highway network.
S45	Strategic Infrastructure Requirements	New developments should be supported by, and have good access to, infrastructure. Development proposals must consider all the infrastructure implications of a scheme; not just those on the site or its immediate vicinity. Consideration also needs to be given to the likely timing of infrastructure provision, including if the development needs to be phased.
S47	Accessibility and Transport	Development proposals which contribute towards an efficient and safe transport network that offers a range of transport choices for the movement of people and goods will be supported. All developments should demonstrate, where appropriate, that the development is located where travel can be minimised and the use of sustainable transport modes maximised. All development proposals should have regard to the Central Lincolnshire Infrastructure Development Plan.
S48	Walking and Cycling Infrastructure	Development applications should demonstrate how the ability to travel by foot or cycle will be actively encouraged by the delivery of well designed, safe and convenient access for all to the site.
S49	Parking Provision	Development should incorporate a level of car parking that is suitable for the proposed development.
S53	Design and Amenity	All development must achieve high quality sustainable design that contributes positively to local character, landscape and townscape, and supports diversity, equality and access for all. All proposals will be assessed against design criteria and amenity criteria in the policy relating to context, identity, built form, movement, nature, public spaces, uses, homes and buildings, resources and lifespan.

POLICY NO.	POLICY TITLE	OVERVIEW
S54	Health and Wellbeing	The potential for achieving positive mental and physical health outcomes will be taken into account when considering all development proposals. Where any potential adverse health impacts are identified, the applicant will be expected to demonstrate how these will be addressed and mitigated.
S57	The Historic Environment	Development proposals should protect, conserve and seek opportunities to enhance the historic environment. Where a development proposal may affect the significance of a heritage asset the applicant must provide information to determine significance of the asset, impact of the proposed works and a clear justification for the works, especially if these would harm the significance of the asset. Development proposals that will result in harm to a designated heritage asset will only be granted permission where it is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh the harm or loss. Where the harm would be substantial, the policy provides further criteria the asset must meet for permission to be granted, as well as criteria for development affecting listed buildings, conservation areas and archaeological remains.
S59	Green and Blue Infrastructure	The northern portion of the site also falls over a Strategic Green Corridor identified in the Local Plan as a priority area for strategic green infrastructure enhancement, linkage and creation. The Site also falls within Green Infrastructure Zones 22 and 29 identified in the Local Plan as areas with opportunities for targeted green infrastructure improvements. These areas are safeguarded from inappropriate development and therefore this policy requires the Proposed Development to demonstrate that the benefits of the proposed use would outweigh any adverse impacts, and suitable mitigation measures are proposed for any unavoidable impacts on green infrastructure.
S60	Protecting Biodiversity and Geodiversity	All development should protect, manage, enhance and extend the ecological network of habitats, species and sites of international, national and local importance (statutory and non-statutory), including sites that meet the criteria for selection as a Local Site; minimise impacts on biodiversity and features of geodiversity value; deliver measurable and proportionate net gains in biodiversity in accordance with Policy S61; and protect and enhance the aquatic environment within or adjoining the site, including water quality and habitat. The hierarchy of sites outlined in the policy apply in the consideration of development proposals, and all proposals will be considered in the context of the relevant Local Authority's duty to promote the protection and recovery of priority species and habitats. Where adverse impacts are unavoidable, they must be adequately and proportionately mitigated, with compensation being required as a last resort where there is no alternative.

POLICY NO.	POLICY TITLE	OVERVIEW
S61	Biodiversity Opportunity and Delivering Measurable Net Gains	Following application of the mitigation hierarchy, proposals should ensure opportunities are taken to retain, protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity features. Proposals should enhance habitat connectivity and species adaptability as per Central Lincolnshire Biodiversity Opportunity and Green Infrastructure Mapping evidence and the Biodiversity Opportunity Area. Proposals for major and large-scale development should seek to deliver wider environmental net gains where feasible, the requirements of which are set out in detail in the policy.
S66	Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows	Proposals should maintain, improve and expand existing tree and woodland cover, and applications should actively consider and implement opportunities to do so. Proposals must not result in the loss or deterioration of ancient woodland, aged/veteran trees, a tree protected by a Tree Preservation Order or within a Conservation Area. Trees that make a significant contribution to the landscape or biodiversity value of the area should be retained, provided this can be done without compromising good design. Where higher value trees or woodland will be lost, then appropriate mitigation, via compensatory tree planting, is required. Proposals must retain existing hedgerows where appropriate and integrate them fully into the design having regard to their management requirements.
S67	Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land	Proposals should protect BMV agricultural land so as to protect opportunities for food production and the continuance of the agricultural economy. Proposals resulting in the loss of this land will only be supported if the need is clearly established (there is insufficient lower grade land available), the benefits outweigh the need for the land to be protect, the impacts of the proposal have been minimised and the land would be restored to its former use when the project is decommissioned.

Table 5.3: South East Lincolnshire Local Plan 2011-2036 (Adopted 2019) Policies

POLICY NO.	POLICY TITLE	OVERVIEW
1	Spatial Strategy	The Site is designated as Countryside in the Local Plan, meaning development will be permitted that is necessary to such a location and/or where it can be demonstrated that it meets the sustainable development needs of the area in terms of economic, community or environmental benefits.
2	Development Management	Proposals must meet sustainable development considerations, particularly in relation to factors including amenity impacts, existing land uses, quality of design and orientation, use of sustainable materials, access and vehicle generation levels, the capacity of existing community services and infrastructure, sustainable drainage and flood risk and biodiversity and heritage impacts.

POLICY NO.	POLICY TITLE	OVERVIEW
3	Design of New Development	All development should create distinctive places through high quality and inclusive design and layout and, where appropriate, make innovative use of local traditional styles and materials. Design which is inappropriate to the local area, or which fails to maximise opportunities for improving the character and quality of an area, will not be acceptable.
4	Approach to Flood Risk	Development proposed within an area at risk of flooding (Flood Zones 2 and 3 of the Environment Agency's flood map) will be permitted only when: 1. There are no other sites available at a lower risk of flooding (the sequential test); 2. Highly vulnerable development in FZ 2, or more vulnerable development in FZ3, provides wider sustainability benefits that outweigh flood risk; 3. The application is supported with a site-specific flood risk assessment covering risk from all sources of flooding and which meets all the criteria set out in policy 4. Development in all flood zones, and development over 1 ha in FZ 1, must demonstrate that surface water from the development can be managed and will not increase the risk of flooding to third parties.
28	The Natural Environment	A high quality, comprehensive ecological network of interconnected designated sites, sites of nature conservation importance and wildlife-friendly greenspace will be achieved by protecting, enhancing and managing natural assets including internationally, nationally or locally designated sites and protected or priority habitats and species, and by addressing gaps in the ecological network.
29	The Historic Environment	Development proposals must conserve and enhance the character and appearance of designated and non-designated heritage assets. Policy 29 provides specific criteria for proposals impacting listed buildings, conservation areas, archaeology and scheduled monuments, registered parks and gardens and enabling development. Where a proposal would affect the significance of a heritage asset, including any contribution made to its setting, it should be informed by proportionate historic environment assessments and evaluations.
30	Pollution	Development proposals will not be permitted where, taking account of any proposed mitigation measures, they would lead to unacceptable adverse impacts upon health and safety of the public; the amenities of the area; or the natural, historic and built environment; by way of air quality, noise; light; land quality and condition; or surface and groundwater quality. Planning applications must include an assessment of the impact of the proposed development on air quality and amenity from existing uses. Proposals will be refused if impacts cannot be suitably mitigated or avoided.

POLICY NO.	POLICY TITLE	OVERVIEW
31	Climate Change and Renewable and Low Carbon Energy	All development proposals will be required to demonstrate that the consequences of current climate change have been addressed, minimised and mitigated through high-quality design, flood risk mitigation measures, the protection of water resources, reduction of the need to travel and incorporating measures which promote green infrastructure. The development of renewable energy facilities will be permitted provided there would be no significant harm to visual amenity, landscape character or quality; residential amenity (in respect of noise, fumes, odour, vibration, shadow flicker, sunlight reflection, broadcast interference, traffic); highway safety; agricultural land take; aviation and radar safety; heritage assets including their setting; and the natural environment. Provision should be made for post-construction monitoring and the removal of the facility and reinstatement of the site if the development ceases to be operational.
32	Community, Health and Wellbeing	Development must contribute to the creation of socially cohesive and inclusive communities, reducing health inequalities and improving the community's health and well-being in accordance with the criteria set out in Policy 32. Where the development will increase the need for community facilities, it will not be permitted unless it (where necessary) supports the provision of new facilities, and/or the enhancement of existing facilities in accordance with Policy 5.

Table 5.4: Lincolnshire Minerals and Waste Plan (Core Strategy and Development Management Policies adopted 2016 and Site Locations adopted 2017) Policies

POLICY NO.	POLICY TITLE	OVERVIEW
M11	Safeguarding of Mineral Resources	Applications for non-minerals development in a Minerals Safeguarding Area must be accompanied by a Minerals Assessment. Proposals within a MSA must not sterilise mineral resources within the area or prevent future minerals extraction on neighbouring land.
M12	Safeguarding of Existing Mineral Sites and Associated Minerals Infrastructure	Mineral sites (excluding dormant sites) and associated infrastructure that supports the supply of minerals will be safeguarded against development that would unnecessarily sterilise the sites and infrastructure or prejudice or jeopardise their use by creating incompatible land uses nearby.

Table 5.5: Local Transport Plan 5 – Lincolnshire County Council

POLICY NO.	POLICY	OVERVIEW
EC3	Create town centres, villages and rural areas that are accessible but not vehicle dominated.	LCC will invest in local and smaller scale projects that meet local needs and promote local connections enabling efficient access to local services. Key projects that will be supported include those that identify and support a public transport network that provides high-quality alternative to the private car,
EC5	We will support a range of transport improvements that underpin and priority sectors to develop and grow.	LCC will identify transport improvements that provide support to the six priority sectors, of which energy is one. For energy, LCC will increase and improve the infrastructure for alternative energy sources; improve access to the renewable energy growth points along the Humber and the east coast; and drive a shift from fossil fuels for both passenger and freight movements.
GREEN4	We will use the local and strategic development management processes to ensure that development is planned, delivered and managed to reduce the need to travel and support the delivery of sustainable transport modes.	LCC will influence the planning system as a statutory consultee to adopt and implement sustainable transport policies and will ensure that adequate and appropriate provision is made to both reduce the need to travel and support measures that encourage active travel and public transport when travel is required. LCC will support the provision of improved walking, cycling and public transport services and facilities as part of new developments and actively encourage innovative solutions such as car clubs, mobility hubs, active travel plans and other sustainable solutions as opposed to single occupancy car use. Key projects that will be supported include implementation and monitoring of travel plans.
ENV1	We will put in place procedures during construction, surfacing and maintenance works that will minimise and mitigate their environmental impacts.	The transport network provides excellent opportunities to help ais the emerging Greater Lincolnshire Nature Recovery Strategy and the accompanying Local Nature Recover Strategies through the protection and improvement of adjacent habitats. A balance needs to be stuck with maintenance regimes for safeguarding crucial sight lines to maintain road safety.
ENV5	We will support, promote and provide sustainable access to our sensitive built and natural environments.	LCC will work to promote more sustainable transport options to sensitive environmental areas. Key approaches include provision of high-quality, safe and direct networks and facilities for walking cycling and public transport; interchanges to improve connectivity between transport modes; and visitor travel plans; and information to visitors on ways to visit Lincolnshire's environment without using a car.

Table 5.6: Local non-development plans of relevance

PLAN	OVERVIEW
Lincolnshire County Council Green Masterplan (adopted 2020)	The Green Masterplan is a multi-year programme running until 2050 to ensure that carbon reduction targets are met. The plan was developed as a response to climate change and sets out the guiding principles of how we will meet this challenge being: don't waste anything, consider wider opportunities and take responsibility and pride. The first phase of the plan involves development of the following projects: • Implementation of the Carbon Management Plan to reduce carbon emissions by 20 per cent; • Installation low energy LED lamps in streetlights around the county; • Delivering low carbon heat to Council buildings; • Assessing Council buildings for suitability to install solar panels; • Creating a sustainability decision-making tool; • Looking for opportunities to use demonstration electric vehicles; • Implementation of a smarter working programme to maximise improvements in digital connectivity; and • Updating of the Council risk assessment alongside the national programme and looking at climate change adaptation and resilience
Joint Lincolnshire Flood Risk and Water Management Strategy 2019-2050	Aims to enhance the safety and resilience of communities across Lincolnshire, focusing on three primary objectives: • reducing the number of people at risk of flooding • increasing the resilience of local communities • reducing the impact of flooding The purpose of the strategy is to manage the impact of flood risk to people, businesses and the environment across Lincolnshire. The basic contents of the Strategy are outlined in legislation as follows: • The risk management authorities operating in the LLFA's area • The flood risk and coastal erosion functions that may be exercised by those authorities relating to the area • Objectives for managing flood risk in the area • Measures proposed to meet those objectives • How and when the measures are to be implemented • Costs and benefits of the measures and how they are to be paid for • Assessment of local flood risk (meaning from surface runoff, groundwater and ordinary watercourses) • How and when the strategy is to be reviewed • How the strategy contributes to the achievement of wider environmental objectives The strategy must be consistent with the National Flood Risk and Coastal Erosion Management Strategy.

PLAN	OVERVIEW
	The previous strategy identified 9 strategic outcomes, which have either seen significant progress, have been achieved or remain the fundamental approach to achieving positive outcomes in how the Flood Risk and Water Management Partnership operate. Outcomes specifically achieved and which are now firmly embedded in how the partnership function include: • Outcome 1: There will be a common works programme of measures to manage flood risk and drainage by 2013. • Outcome 2: Existing resources will be used in the most efficient way possible. We will attract as much external funding as possible and will secure new resources locally and nationally. • Outcome 6: Local communities and businesses will be more aware of flood risk, and with the help of public authorities, will take steps to protect themselves through individual and community action. • Outcome 7: Planning and development control across the county will take account of all forms of flood risk and sustainable drainage; development which could increase flood risk will be minimised, as will inappropriate development in areas of significant flood risk. • Outcome 9: Flood risk and drainage management will be more accountable to the public through the local democratic process, and through more freely available information about flood risk and measures taken to control it.
Lincolnshire County Council Highway and Flood Authority, Development Road and Sustainable Drainage Specification and Construction (adopted March 2021)	Advice is provided on good highway design and construction, flood risk management and sustainable drainage (SuDS) principles at all stages of the planning process. Prospective developers are advised, therefore, to consult the Highway and Flood Authority when considering new highway proposals, undertaking a Flood Risk Assessment or Flood Risk Statement, preparing a Drainage Strategy and planning application drawings for submission to the Planning Authority. Attention is drawn to the Lincolnshire Development Roads and Sustainable Drainage Design Approach, where information can be found on planning and adoption milestones and requirements. This lists the essential technical documents and information required at various stages of the planning and adoption processes to enable the necessary processes to be progressed.

6. Assessment of the Proposed Development Against Policy

6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 This section provides an assessment of the Proposed Development against policy, given that Section 104 of the 2008 Act requires the SoS to determine applications for NSIPs in accordance with the NPSs that have 'effect' for the infrastructure in the application.

6.1.2 The assessment of the Proposed Development against the NPSs that have effect has been structured so as to follow the relevant 'assessment principles' and 'generic impact' headings set out in EN-1 and also to take account of the assessment and technology specific information contained within EN-3 in relation to renewable energy infrastructure. Each heading references the relevant part or section of the NPS. The assessment considers the degree of compliance with EN-1 and EN-3 policies.

6.1.3 As described in section 3.2, NPS EN-5 may also be important and relevant though does not have 'effect' for the infrastructure proposed. The assessment therefore considers the degree of general accordance with EN-5 policies.

6.1.4 **Section 6.2** provides a summary of the relevant sections of Part 4 of EN-1, which sets out the general principles that should be applied in the assessment of development consent applications relating to energy infrastructure. This section also includes a summary of the Proposed Development's compliance with this part of EN-1.

6.1.5 **Section 6.3** provides a comprehensive assessment of the Proposed Development's compliance with Part 5 of EN-1, which sets out the policy on the assessment of generic impacts which are common across a range of energy infrastructure covered by the energy NPSs.

6.1.6 **Section 6.4** provides a comprehensive assessment of the Proposed Development's compliance with Part 2 of EN-3, which is concerned with impacts and other matters which are specific to solar energy generation or where, although the impact or issue is generic and covered in EN-1, there are further specific considerations arising from the technologies covered in EN-3.

6.1.7 **Section 6.4** also provides an assessment of the Proposed Development's accordance with Part 2 of EN-5, which should be considered together with the requirements of EN-1 but including additional policy considerations specific to electricity networks infrastructure.

6.1.8 **Section 6.5** provides an assessment of the Proposed Development's accordance with the relevant policies contained within the NPPF, that could constitute important and relevant considerations in decision making.

6.1.9 **Section 6.6** provides an assessment of the accordance of the Proposed Development with relevant policies contained within local development plans, that could constitute important and relevant considerations in decision making.

6.2 EN-1: Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy - Assessment Principles

6.2.1 Part 4 of EN-1 sets out 'Assessment Principles' which are the general policies for the submission and assessment of applications relating to infrastructure that the SoS should take into account in decision-making on NSIPs, in addition to a number of key assessment principles that both applicants and the SoS should have regard to in preparing and determining applications for development consent. The assessment principles in EN-1 are of relevance to most types of nationally significant energy infrastructure.

6.2.2 While the focus of this section is on the assessment principles in EN-1, a number of these are also referred to within EN-3 and EN-5 and are therefore also dealt with below and the relevant part of the NPS is referenced.

General Policies and Considerations (EN-1, 4.1)

6.2.3 Paragraph 4.1.3 of EN-1 states that, given the level and urgency of the need for infrastructure projects of the types covered by the NPSs, the SoS will start with a presumption in favour of granting consent for applications for energy NSIPs, and that presumption applies unless any more specific and relevant policies set out in the relevant NPSs clearly indicate that consent should be refused.

6.2.4 When weighing the adverse impacts against the benefits of energy NSIPs, paragraph 4.1.5 of EN-1 states that the SoS should take into account both the potential benefits, including the contribution to meeting the need for energy infrastructure, job creation, ecological enhancements, and any long-term or wider benefits as well as any potential adverse impacts, including on the environment, and any long-term and cumulative adverse impacts, as well as any measures to avoid, reduce, mitigate, or compensate for any adverse impacts. Paragraph 4.3.8 advises that any reference to the terms 'effects', 'impacts' or 'benefits' in EN-1 should be understood to mean significant likely effects, benefits or impacts.

6.2.5 With regards to this, this Planning Statement at **Section 7** provides an assessment of the key benefits and adverse impacts of the Proposed Development. It shows that the Proposed Development would have a number of substantial benefits and that these clearly outweigh its adverse impacts.

6.2.6 Paragraph 4.1.6 of the EN-1 brings to the attention of the SoS that environmental, social, and economic benefits and adverse impacts both nationally, regionally and locally should be taken into account.

6.2.7 Paragraph 4.1.7 of the EN-1 sets out that the technology specific NPSs require applicants to mitigate particular impacts as far as possible but should residual adverse effects remain, the SoS should weigh those against the benefits of the Proposed Development. Critically, it goes on to state that for CNP projects (which includes solar and BESS projects) "*it is likely that the need case will outweigh the residual effects in all but the most exceptional cases*". Further detail on compliance with the policies for CNP infrastructure is provided later below.

6.2.8 Paragraph 4.1.11 confirms that the suite of Energy NPSs have taken into account the NPPF and PPG, and that Local Development Plan documents are a matter that is "important and relevant" to decision making on energy NSIPs. However, in the event of a conflict between these or any other documents and NPSs, the NPS prevails.

6.2.9 It is also relevant to note that the Government's energy and climate change policy is important and relevant to the decision-making on the Proposed Development. Government energy and climate change policy, and how the Proposed Development would contribute toward key policy objectives is considered in **Section 4** of this Planning Statement.

6.2.10 In respect of the above, **Sections 6.5** and **6.6** respectively provide an assessment of the accordance of the Proposed Development with the NPPF and local development plan policies.

6.2.11 Notably, the Applicant and the three relevant local authorities have agreed the list of relevant policies set out in the respective **Statements of Common Ground** documents for each authority **(Document Refs: 8.1, 8.2 and 8.3)**. Each SoCG also records agreement with the factual position as to the primacy of the NPSs in decision making and that they prevail in the event of conflict.

6.2.12 The assessment shows that the Proposed Development shows general accordance with local policy.

6.2.13 The Applicant's assessment of the Proposed Development, notably through the **Environmental Statement (Document Refs: 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3)** has identified some effects that require mitigation. However, the necessary mitigation has either been embedded within the design of the Proposed Development or is secured through the requirements in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)** and therefore, taking into account the above tests, there is no other mitigation that would warrant a development consent obligation in order to make the Proposed Development acceptable in planning terms.

6.2.14 Paragraph 4.1.19 of EN-1 emphasises the importance of early engagement with stakeholders of the Proposed Development. This process of engagement with both public regulators and statutory bodies, alongside those likely to have an interest in the application, is set out within the submitted **Consultation Report (Document Ref: 5.1)**. In addition, **Chapter 5: Consultation** of the **Environmental Statement (Document Ref: 6.2)** outlines the Applicant's key engagement undertaken to date.

6.2.15 Paragraph 4.1.21 of the EN-1 requires applicants to have considered both the financial and technical viability of the Proposed Development. For the Proposed Development, the Applicant has given due consideration to commercial and financial matters which have informed the decision to proceed with the Proposed Development. The **Funding Statement (Document Ref: 4.2)** gives consideration to the proposed costs of the development and sets out how the Proposed Development may be funded as well as including details of the financial position of the Applicant.

6.2.16 The **Appendix 2.1: Grid Connection Construction Method Statement (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.4)** and **Appendix 2.2: Bespoke Access Road Construction Method Statement (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2,**

6.3.5) provide indicative outlines of how the Cable Route Corridor and Bespoke Access Road, respectively, will be constructed and describes the proposed technology and equipment to be used to install the cable and construct the road.

The Critical National Priority for low carbon infrastructure (EN-1, 4.2)

6.2.17 Paragraph 4.2.2 explains that ensuring a smooth transition to abundant, low carbon energy generation will ensure the UK is energy independent, resilient and secure. It identifies the criticality of the deployment of *"new low carbon sources of energy at speed and scale"* in terms of our energy security and net zero ambitions.

6.2.18 Paragraph 4.2.4 is fundamental in highlighting the government's position on the criticality of the delivery of low carbon energy generation. It states that the government has *"concluded there is a critical national priority (CNP) for the provision of nationally significant low carbon infrastructure".*

6.2.19 Paragraph 4.2.5 relates to definitions of low carbon infrastructure for the purposes of the CNP policy. It states that *"for electricity generation, all onshore and offshore generation that does not involve fossil fuel combustion"* is included. This confirms that NSIP scale solar PV development is a CNP. It also advises that infrastructure relating to the electricity grid is covered, including *"network reinforcement and upgrade works, and associated infrastructure such as substations"*.

6.2.20 Paragraph 4.2.6 expands further on how low carbon energy infrastructure should be considered, and references earlier paragraphs in the NPS, namely 3.2.6 to 3.2.8 which confirm that applications for NSIPs covered by EN-1 should be assessed "*on the basis that the government has demonstrated that there is a need for those types of infrastructure which is urgent*". Paragraph 3.2.7 goes on to state that the SoS has "*determined that substantial weight should be given to this need when considering applications for development consent*". Paragraph 3.2.8 further advises that there is no requirement on the SoS to consider separately the specific contribution of any individual project in satisfying the need established in EN-1.

6.2.21 Paragraph 4.2.7 advises that the CNP policy applies *"following the normal consideration of the need case, the impacts of the project, and the application of the mitigation hierarchy"*. It points out that it is therefore relevant during SoS decision making and with particular reference to any residual impacts that have been identified and should be given consideration by the ExA when making its recommendation to the SoS.

6.2.22 Paragraphs 4.2.10 - 4.2.12 cover the applicant's assessment and require the applicant to show how their proposals meet the requirements of the NPS, applying the mitigation hierarchy and any other relevant legal requirements. Applicants are required to *"apply the mitigation hierarchy and demonstrate that it has been applied"* and demonstrate that all "*residual impacts are those that cannot be avoided, reduced or mitigated*". It further advises applicants to demonstrate, as far as possible, how residual effects may be compensated for to the extent that the relevant topic specific policy requires compensation.

6.2.23 Paragraph 4.2.15 refers to SoS decision making. It states that "*where residual… impacts remain after the mitigation hierarchy has been applied, these residual impacts are unlikely to outweigh the urgent need for this type of infrastructure. Therefore, in all but the most exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely that consent will be refused on the basis of these residual impacts*".

6.2.24 This section of the Planning Statement alongside relevant chapters from the **Environmental Statement**, **Chapters 6** to **17 (Document Ref: 6.2)** and the **Design and Access Approach Document (Document Ref: 5.6)** set out how potential impacts are addressed including the measures taken to avoid, minimise and mitigate such impacts.

6.2.25 **ES Chapter 19: Summary of Environmental Effects (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.2, 6.2.19)** provides a summary of the significant residual effects of the Proposed Development on the receptors considered within the **Environmental Statement (Document Refs: 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3). ES Chapter 3: Alternatives and Design Evolution (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.3)** and the **Design and Access Approach Document (Document Ref: 5.6)** demonstrate how, in accordance with the mitigation hierarchy, the Proposed Development has been designed to avoid impacts. Mitigation has been embedded into the design has been adopted (where possible) to reduce adverse environmental effects, as presented in **ES Chapter 2: Proposed Development (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.2)** and **Chapter 3: Alternatives and Design Evolution (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.3)**.

6.2.26 Further to the embedded mitigation, each technical chapter of the **Environmental Statement**, **Chapters 6** to **17 (Document Ref: 6.2)** has considered the need for additional mitigation measures where necessary. Table 19.1 in **ES Chapter 19: Summary of Environmental Effects (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.2, 6.2.19)** summarises the additional mitigation proposed and confirms how this is secured within the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1).**

6.2.27 The instances where CNP is required to be relied upon due to residual significant effects is in relation to the topics of landscape and visual and cultural heritage, which are considered further below and in the planning balance at Section 7.4.

6.2.28 Paragraph 4.2.19 of EN-1 states that, "*where, following Appropriate Assessment, CNP Infrastructure has residual adverse impacts on the integrity of sites forming part of the UK national site network, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, the Secretary of State will consider making a derogation under the Habitats Regulations*."

6.2.29 Under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, consideration should be given as to whether a project may have a significant effect on a protected site or any site to which the same degree of protection is applied as a matter of policy, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects. Applicants are required to supply such information as the 'competent authority' may reasonably require for the purposes of the assessment or to enable it to determine whether an Appropriate Assessment is required.

6.2.30 Paragraph 4.1.19 of EN-1 confirms that applicants should seek early engagement with the appropriate Statutory Nature Conservation Bodies

(SNCB). There are five statutory designated sites within the study area (2 km from the site for National Nature Reserves (NNR) and Local Nature Reserves (LNR), 10 km for SSSIs and 20 km for international sites) including: The Wash RAMSAR, The Wash SPA, The Wash and North Norfolk Coast SAC, Horbling Fen SSSI and Wilsford & Rauceby Warrens SSSI. There are no NNR or LNR present within 2 km of the Site. Potential impacts to these sites were considered throughout the **ES Chapter 7: Ecology (Document Ref 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.7)**, which concluded that impacts would be nil to low.

6.2.31 A **Shadow Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) (Document Ref: 5.2)** has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (Habitats Regulations) to consider whether or not the Proposed Development would cause 'likely significant effects' on the qualifying features of relevant sites (and their overlapping designations where appropriate), specifically The Wash (Ramsar & Special Protection Area (SPA) and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI); and The Wash & North Norfolk Coast Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

6.2.32 The document deals with the first stage of Habitat Regulations Assessment (the Likely Significant Effect Test) and the second stage (Appropriate Assessment). If Natural England gives an indication at a later stage that adverse effects on the integrity of the relevant site(s) cannot be avoided or mitigated, appropriate information will be provided to confirm that the Proposed Development meets the three derogation tests.

Environmental Effects / Considerations (NPS EN-1, 4.3)

6.2.33 Paragraphs 4.3.1 and 4.3.2 of the EN-1 discuss the requirement that project proposals are required to be accompanied by an Environmental Statement (ES) describing the aspects of the environment likely to be significantly affected by the project, if the project is subject to the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017. Paragraph 4.3.3 specifies the range of effects, their duration, and measures for avoiding or mitigating significant effects that must be considered at all project stages.

6.2.34 An ES has been submitted with this DCO Application for the Proposed Development. The scope of the submitted ES is in accordance with **ES Appendix 1.2: Scoping Opinion (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol. 2, 6.3.2)**. In accordance with EN-1, the ES has been structured to enable a clear understanding of the Proposed Development's construction, operational, and decommissioning phases. In addition, it has been prepared in accordance with the policy contained in paragraphs 4.3.1 to 4.3.4 of EN-1.

6.2.35 Paragraph 4.3.11 of EN-1 acknowledges that it may not be possible for all elements of an application to be settled in precise detail at the time of submission and that the Applicant should explain where details are yet be finalised. Paragraph 4.3.12 of EN-1 goes on to state that where details are still to be finalised, the ES should assess likely worst-case environmental, social and economic effects of the proposed development. This is also known as the application of the 'Rochdale Envelope' approach. Section 4.3 of **ES Chapter 4: Scope and Methodology (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.4)** sets out that a parameters-based approach was taken to the EIA, in accordance with the Rochdale Envelope principles set out in NSIP Advice Note 9: Rochdale Envelope (2018). This approach involves assessing the maximum (and/or,

where relevant, minimum) parameters for the design elements which require flexibility to be retained. This ensures the 'worst-case' parameter is considered within the technical assessment, to allow for a robust, and worst-case, assessment of the potential impacts of the Proposed Development. Table 2.1 in **ES Chapter 2: Proposed Development (Document Ref: 6.2)** sets out the parameters utilised in the ES.

Alternatives and Site Selection (NPS EN-1, 4.3 and EN-3, 2.3)

6.2.36 The **Site Selection Report** at **Appendix 2** to this Planning Statement demonstrates a consideration of the relevant policy and its applicability to the site selection process that the Applicant has undertaken while **ES Chapter 3: Alternatives and Design Evolution (Document Ref: 6.2)** sets out the Applicant's approach to design alternatives.

6.2.37 Paragraph 4.3.9 of the EN-1 states that: "*…the relevance or otherwise to the decision-making process of the existence (or alleged existence) of alternatives to a proposed development is in the first instance matter of law."*

6.2.38 It goes on to state that "*This NPS does not contain any general requirement to consider alternatives or to establish whether the proposed project represents the best option from a policy perspective. Although there are specific requirements in relation to compulsory acquisition and habitats sites, the NPS does not change requirements in relation to compulsory acquisition and habitats sites*".

6.2.39 Paragraph 4.3.15 advises that applicants are "*obliged to include in their ES, information about the reasonable alternatives they have studied. This should include an indication of the main reasons for the applicant's choice, taking into account the environmental, social and economic effects and including, where relevant, technical and commercial feasibility*".

6.2.40 EN-1 paragraphs 4.3.16 and 4.3.17 further note that: "*In some circumstances, the NPSs may impose a policy requirement to consider alternatives.*" and that where "*there is a policy or legal requirement to consider alternatives, the applicant should describe the alternatives considered in compliance with these requirements*."

6.2.41 Paragraph 4.3.22 helps set the framework for decision making around alternatives and provides the key principles which should be considered when attributing weight to alternatives:

- The consideration of alternatives compliance with policy requirements should be carried out in a proportionate manner; and
- Only alternatives that can meet the objectives of the proposed development need to be considered.

6.2.42 Paragraph 4.3.23 advises the SoS should be guided by whether there is a *"reasonable prospect of the alternative delivering the same infrastructure capacity… in the same timescale as the proposed development".*

6.2.43 Paragraph 4.3.24 importantly recognises that the SoS should not "*refuse an application for development on one site simply because fewer adverse impacts would result from developing similar infrastructure*". The paragraph continues to say that the SoS should have regard to the possibility that "*all*

suitable sites for energy infrastructure of the proposed type may be needed by future proposals". There are also specific circumstances where there is a policy requirement to consider alternatives. The circumstances relating to when they are required and the Applicant's response to these circumstances is set out, below:

1) Where a scheme would involve the compulsory acquisition of land or interests in land (EN-1 4.3.9). The DCO Application is seeking compulsory acquisition powers. The **Statement of Reasons (Document Ref: 4.1), ES Chapter 3: Alternatives and Design Evolution (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.3)** and the Site Selection Report (**Appendix 2** to this Planning Statement) set out the consideration of alternatives.

2) Where a scheme would be located near a sensitive receptor site for air quality (EN-1 paragraph 5.2.7). As confirmed in **ES Chapter 16: Air Quality (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.16)**, the Proposed Development is not within an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). There are no AQMAs declared within the North Kesteven District Council administrative area and two declared in the Boston Borough Council administrative area, within the Boston township and not in proximity to the Site.

3) Where a scheme would lead to significant harm to biodiversity and geological conservation interests (EN-1 section 5.4). The Proposed Development would not likely give rise to significant harm on such receptors, as reported **ES Chapter 7: Ecology (Document Ref: 6.2)**. The Applicant has sought to avoid ecological designations through the selection of the site, as demonstrated by the Site Selection Report at **Appendix 2** of this report, **Appendix 3.1: Grid Connection Corridor Appraisal (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.9)** and **ES Appendix 3.2: Bespoke Access Road Appraisal (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.10)**.

4) Where a scheme would result in an adverse effect on the integrity of a European site that cannot be avoided (EN-1 section 5.4.27). The **Shadow Habitats Regulation Assessment (Document Ref: 5.2)** submitted as part of the DCO Application concludes that the Proposed Development has been assessed as having a likely significant effect upon National Network sites (RAMSAR/SPA/SAC) due to loss of functionally linked habitats and the risk of pollution and run-off into the waterways during construction works of the project. Further mitigation is included in the Appropriate Assessment within the **Shadow Habitats Regulation Assessment (Document Ref: 5.2)** which would avoid or minimise the risk of these adverse effects and it is therefore considered that the development can proceed without the requirement for further assessment or consideration of alternatives.

5) Where a scheme would be located within, or partially within, Flood Zone 2 or Flood Zone 3 (EN-1 section 5.8) the Sequential Test should be undertaken. If following application of the Sequential Test, it is not possible for the project to be located in areas of lower flood risk the Exception Test can be applied, which provides a method of allowing necessary development to go ahead in situations where suitable sites at lower risk of flooding are not available. The Sequential Test is covered within the Site

Selection Report included at Appendix 2 of this Planning Statement, while the Exception Test is discussed at paragraph 6.2.49.

6) Where a development would be located within a National Park, the Broads or an Areas of Natural Beauty (now National Landscapes) (EN-1 section 5.10). The Proposed Development is not located within any of these designations, therefore no further consideration of alternatives in this regard is required.

7) Paragraph 5.11.12 states that *"Applicants should seek to minimise impacts on the best and most versatile agricultural land (defined as land in grades 1, 2 and 3a of the Agricultural Land Classification) and preferably use land in areas of poorer quality (grades 3b, 4 and 5)."* The Applicant has sought to do this in the selection and design of the Site, as evidenced through **Appendix 2: Site Selection Report** of this Planning Statement and the **Design and Access Approach Document (Document Ref: 5.6)**, and through the measures within **Appendix 14.4: Outline Soil Management Plan ('OSMP') (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.95)** and secured by a requirement in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**.

8) Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and Council (the Water Framework Directive or WFD) came into force on 22nd December 2000 and established a framework for community action in the field of water policy. The role of a WFD Assessment is to evaluate the potential for deterioration in the overall status of a water body from a Proposed Development, based on the 2022 River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) and to determine whether the Proposed Development may hinder any existing Programmes of Measures in returning a failing water body to Good status. **Appendix 11.6 Water Framework Directive Assessment (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.85)** concludes that the Proposed Development is unlikely to include any activities that are likely to cause deterioration in the WFD status for the water body or prevent the Water Body from achieving its WFD objectives, provided that best practice and established guidance are adhered to.

6.2.44 The policy is clear that work should be undertaken on a proportionate basis and any alternative would need to be a reasonable alternative and so it would be expected to deliver the same capacity in the same timeframes. Indeed, there is acknowledgement that other sites may exist which potentially have lesser impacts than that proposed but that they may equally be required for further energy infrastructure in the future (EN-1 paragraph 4.3.24). This goes to the core of the approach to planning in England and Wales, which is that applications should be judged on their own merits.

6.2.45 In terms of legislative requirements on alternatives, Regulation 14(2)(d) of the EIA Regulations 2017 states that an ES should "*include a description of the reasonable alternatives studied by the applicant, which are relevant to the proposed development and its specific characteristics, and an indication of the main reasons for the option chosen, taking into account the effects of the development on the environment.*"

6.2.46 The Applicant has considered reasonable alternatives that could realistically achieve the objectives for the Proposed Development. This is set out in **ES Chapter 3: Alternatives and Design Evolution (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.3)**. A **Site Selection Report** has also been prepared and is included

in **Appendix 2** to this Planning Statement. These reports conclude there were no alternative technologies or sites studied by the Applicant that could deliver the project objectives.

6.2.47 As outlined in the **Site Selection Report** (**Appendix 2** to this Planning Statement), the Applicant's analysis regarded the minimum area for large scale solar to be economically viable identified a threshold of at least 300 ha of continuous land for an individual site. Only 'continuous' sites were considered in selection in order to maximise the potential energy generation and assist with deliverability and management of potential impacts of a proposed solar development.

6.2.48 The Proposed Development will utilise fixed south-facing panel orientation chosen to maximise year-round solar energy generation. Due to the fast pace of solar PV technology evolution, the Proposed Development incorporates flexibility to be able to choose specific technology closer to the construction period within the parameters defined in the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**. This will enable the optimum production of renewable energy within the Proposed Development.

6.2.49 With regards to the application of the Exception Test[1] the Proposed Development performs as follows:

a. The Proposed Development would provide significant wider sustainability benefits throughout the production of clean, renewable energy for which there is a substantial need and a CNP as set out in **Section 3** and **Section 4** of this Planning Statement. The Proposed Development will also provide biodiversity net gain as set out in the **Biodiversity Net Gain Strategy (Document Ref: 7.3)**.

b. It has been demonstrated within the **ES Chapter 11: Water Resources and Floor Risk (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.11**) and **Appendix 11.1: Flood Risk Assessment (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol. 2, 6.3.82)** that the Proposed Development will remain operational and be safe for its users at all times. Surface water runoff generated within the development will be managed sustainably within the Site, and necessary fluvial floodplain compensation will be provided to ensure that the risk of flooding elsewhere is not increased as a result of the Proposed Development.

Health (NPS EN-1, 4.4)

6.2.50 Paragraph 4.4.1 of EN-1 highlights that energy infrastructure has the potential to impact the health and well-being of the population. EN-1 goes on to state that where development has the potential to affect human beings, the ES should assess those effects for each element of the project, identifying any adverse health impacts and measures to avoid, reduce, or compensate for the impacts as appropriate.

6.2.51 Paragraph 4.4.7 of EN-1 advises that the aspects of energy infrastructure which are "*most likely to have a significantly detrimental impact on health are subject to separate regulation (for example air pollution) which will constitute suitable mitigation of them, so that it is unlikely that health concerns will either by themselves constitute a reason to refuse consent or require specific mitigation*". Paragraph 4.4.8 continues, however, to advise that not all potential

[1] https://www.gov.uk/guidance/flood-risk-and-coastal-change#table2

sources of health impacts will be mitigated in such a way and the "*SoS may want to take account of health concerns when setting requirements relating to a range of impacts such as noise*".

6.2.52 Following the consideration of potential impacts in relation to human health, **Appendix 1.2: Scoping Opinion (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2. 6.3.2)**, issued on 26th May 2023, confirmed that Human Health could be scoped out of the ES provided adequate signposting between aspect chapters is included.

6.2.53 As outlined in **Section 17.7: Health** of **ES Chapter 17: Other Environmental Topics (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.17)**, the Proposed Developments potential impacts upon health are assessed in the ES across the following chapters:

- **Chapter 9: Access and Traffic (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.9);**
- **Chapter 10: Noise and Vibration (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.10);**
- **Chapter 11: Water Resources and Flood Risk (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.11);**
- **Chapter 13: Climate Change (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.13);**
- **Chapter 15: Socio Economics (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.15); and**
- **Chapter 16: Air Quality (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.16).**

6.2.54 Regarding health impacts in relation to access and traffic**,** the temporary increase of traffic, during the construction and decommissioning phases, could potentially disrupt the lives of nearby residential and social receptors, causing stress or changes to daily activities, such as longer commutes. However, as outlined in **ES Chapter 9: Access and Traffic (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.9)**, the limited and temporary nature of the traffic increase is not identified to result in any significant residual effects. The Bespoke Access Road will provide dedicated access for abnormal indivisible loads during construction operation and decommissioning and will also reduce HGV traffic in local settlements thereby benefitting health, safety, and wellbeing.

6.2.55 Regarding noise impacts with respect to health, **ES Chapter 10: Noise and Vibration (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.10)** concludes that potential noise and vibration impacts have been assessed to be non-significant, and as such no secondary mitigation is required during the construction. To manage and minimise potential impacts, mitigation measures in the form of best practicable means (BPM) are suggested and implemented through the **Appendix 2.4: Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan ('OCEMP') (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.7)** and construction works will follow the guidelines in BS 5228-1: 2009+A1:2014 (or any equivalent guidance in force during the construction period).

6.2.56 **Chapter 11: Water Resources (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.11)** assesses the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development on Water Resources and Flood Risk. The assessment concluded that with appropriate mitigation in place, the scale of potential effects on the water environment are no greater than minor adverse and, as such, not significant and therefore not significant for human health.

6.2.57 **ES Chapter 12: Climate Change (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.12)** assesses the resilience of the Proposed Development to climate change based on the susceptibility and vulnerability of a range on different receptors.

It concludes that the potential climate related effects for human health during construction are assessed to be not significant. Further, the development offsets the emissions associated with non-renewable methods of electricity generation and therefore mitigates the impact of climate change to human health.

6.2.58 In regard to socio-economic impacts with respect to health, **ES Chapter 15: Socio-Economic (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.15)** recognises that stress and sleep disturbance related to noise and vibration can impact on human health. For residential receptors located close to the Proposed Development, the noise effects are anticipated to be moderate and long-term, impacting a small number of social receptors. These effects are reversible, with a negligible to low impact on well-being. Further, it is indicated that while increased noise and traffic during construction and decommissioning could cause stress and minor disruptions to daily life, including extended commutes, the magnitude of these impacts is low. As a result, the effects on human health and well-being for residents are deemed not significant.

6.2.59 The connection between human health and wellbeing and recreation in the outdoors is well established. **Chapter 15: Socio-Economic (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.15)** has assessed the impacts of restricted access to recreation such as PRoW and cycle routes as not significant. It is notable that the Proposed Development includes a permissive path which will connect existing PRoWs and provide recreational benefits.

6.2.60 **ES Chapter 16: Air Quality (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.16)** reports that human health risk (in relation to in relation to dust and particulate matter emissions) is considered low. However, as some activities present a risk above negligible, site-specific mitigation measures will be implemented through **Appendix 2.4: OCEMP (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.7)**, the final version of which (the CEMP) will be secured through a Requirement in Schedule 2 of the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**. During construction, the risk of dust soiling is low to medium and human health risks are low. Therefore, site-specific mitigation measures implemented via a **Dust Mitigation Plan** will be implemented as part of the detailed CEMP(s) (see **Appendix 2.4: OCEMP (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.7)**) and reduce all dust and particulate impacts to a level which is not significant. Traffic emissions during both construction and operational phases are well below relevant thresholds and no significant impacts are anticipated.

6.2.61 The above demonstrates that health impacts have been considered across the Proposed Development and, with the application of suitable mitigation measures, are not significant. It is therefore considered that, regarding paragraph 4.4.7 of EN-1, there is no reason that health concerns associated with the Proposed Development present a reason for refusal. In relation to paragraph 4.4.8 of EN-1, that there is no evidence to suggest that additional requirements relating to health need to be added to the DCO if the application for development consent be granted. It is therefore considered that the Proposed Development complies with the aims and intentions of the EN-1 policy requirements in regard to health.

Marine Considerations (NPS EN-1, 4.5)

6.2.62 There are no marine policy documents relevant to the Proposed Development and therefore the SoS is not required to consider this matter.

Environmental and Biodiversity Net Gain (NPS EN-1, 4.6)

6.2.63 Paragraph 4.6.1 of EN-1 states that applicants should go beyond mitigating and compensating harms and also consider opportunities for enhancements.

6.2.64 Paragraph 4.6.2 seeks that projects in England are encouraged to consider and seek to incorporate improvements in natural capital, ecosystem services and the benefits they deliver when planning how to deliver biodiversity net gain ('BNG').

6.2.65 BNG is not statutorily required for NSIPs at present bit is expected to apply to applications received from November 2025. No BNG Statement has been published setting out how BNG is to be incorporated into DCO applications and there is no standard practice around how to incorporate BNG into NSIP projects during the present interim period. The Applicant has therefore adopted appropriate principles of the statutory BNG regime from the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 projects where practicable.

6.2.66 Paragraph 4.6.3 requires that the SoS should "*give appropriate weight to environmental and biodiversity net gain, although any weight given to gains provided to meet a legal requirement (for example under the Environment Act 2021) should be limited*".

6.2.67 Section 7.8 of **ES Chapter 7: Ecology (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.7)** outlines that in addition to the additional mitigation measures proposed, habitat enhancements will be made in support of biodiversity net gain. One of the Proposed Development's key design objectives, as set out in the **Design and Access Approach Document (Document Ref: 5.6)** is to take advantage of opportunities to achieve a high biodiversity net gain.

6.2.68 The Proposed Development will achieve an exceedance of the general policy level (10%) of BNG, with a commitment to provide 30% gain in habitat units and a 10% gain in hedgerow units and a 10% gain in watercourse units delivered on-site for 30 years. The **Biodiversity Net Gain Strategy (Document Ref. 7.3)** evidences that the Proposed Development has potential to achieve higher levels (36.43% net gain in habitat units, 10.79% net gain in hedgerow units and 15.95% net gain in watercourse units) however, these do not form the formal commitment. The statutory metric dating from July 2024 has been used and this version will continue to be used by the Applicant.

6.2.69 **ES Chapter 7: Ecology (Document Ref: 6.2)** is supported by the **Appendix 6.7: Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (OLEMP') (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol. 2, 6.3.19)**, which ensures the development delivers long term biodiversity compensation and enhancement. Preparation, approval and implementation of the detailed version of this plan (the LEMP) is secured through a requirement in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**. It is through delivery of the commitments in the detailed LEMP that the committed BNG for the Proposed Development will be delivered.

6.2.70 Paragraph 4.6.6 of EN-1 advises that applications for development consent should be accompanied by a statement demonstrating how opportunities for

delivering wider environmental net gains have been considered and, where appropriate, incorporated into the project's design (including any relevant operational aspects). Opportunities to deliver wider environmental gains are outlined by topic in the relevant sections of the **ES (Document Ref: 6.2)**, as well as in the **OLEMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol. 2, 6.3.19)** and **Design and Access Approach Document (Document Ref: 5.6)**.

Criteria for good design for Energy Infrastructure (NPS EN-1, 4.7 and NPS EN-3, 2.5)

6.2.71 The Applicant's design approach is detailed in the **Design and Access Approach Document ('DAAD') (Document Ref: 5.6)**.

6.2.72 EN-1 Paragraph 4.7.2 states, *"Applying good design to energy projects should produce sustainable infrastructure sensitive to place, including impact on heritage, efficient in the use of natural resources, including land-use, and energy used in their construction and operation, matched by an appearance that demonstrates good aesthetic as far as possible."*

6.2.73 Paragraph 4.7.4 of EN-1 states that design principles should be established during the early stages of the project lifecycle. Footnote 122 of EN-1 states that "*Design principles should take into account any national guidance on infrastructure design, this could include for example the Design Principles for National Infrastructure published by the National Infrastructure Commission*". These principles are considered in Section 2.4 of the **DAAD (Document Ref: 5.6).**

6.2.74 EN-1 paragraph 4.7.6 states that applicants may have very limited choice in the physical appearance of some energy infrastructure. However, given the importance the 2008 Act places on good design and sustainability, paragraph 4.7.10 emphasises that the SoS needs to ensure that energy infrastructure development is as attractive, durable, and adaptable as possible. Paragraph 4.7.6 of EN-1 also states that applicants should seek to embed opportunities for nature-inclusive design within the design process.

6.2.75 The **DAAD (Document Ref: 5.6)** demonstrates how the Proposed Development has been developed in accordance with a clear design framework, based on the criteria for good design set out in EN-1. This has included the adoption of project level **Outline Design Principles** (**Appendix 1** of the **DAAD (Document Ref: 5.6)**) to guide future detailed design and embed good design outcomes for the Proposed Development.

6.2.76 The **Outline Design Principles** will feed into the delivery of the Proposed Development and ensure an integrated design approach is taken are included at **Appendix 1** of the **DAAD (Document Ref: 5.6)** and how these are secured is discussed in Section 7 of the **DAAD (Document Ref: 5.6)**. Requirement 5 in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)** secures that the detailed design of the Proposed Development must accord with the **Outline Design Principles** (**Appendix 1** of the **DAAD (Document Ref: 5.6)**) and the **Works Plan (Document Ref: 2.4)**.

6.2.77 Paragraph 4.7.7 of EN-1 requires applicants to demonstrate in their application how the design process was conducted and how the proposed design evolved. Chapter 4 of the **DAAD (Document Ref: 5.6)** sets out the

approach that the Applicant has taken to the design of the Proposed Development, to demonstrate the adoption of a good design process.

6.2.78 The **DAAD (Document Ref: 5.6)** details how the **Outline Design Principles** (**Appendix 1** of the **DAAD (Document Ref: 5.6)**) have evolved throughout the design process, being informed and refined by stakeholder engagement, consultation feedback, technical studies and environmental assessments. **ES Chapter 3: Alternatives & Design Evolution (Document Ref. 6.2)** sets out how the proposed design evolved over time, informed by ongoing environmental assessments, engineering and design considerations and engagement with consultees.

6.2.79 Paragraphs 2.5.1 and 2.5.2 of EN-3 refer to section 4.7 of EN-1 and emphasise that proposals for renewable energy infrastructure should demonstrate good design with respect to landscape and visual amenity, and in the design of the project to mitigate impacts such as noise and effects on ecology.

6.2.80 Regarding solar development itself, paragraph 2.10.60 of EN-3 notes that applicants should consider several factors when designing and laying out the proposed sites. These include proximity to available grid capacity to accommodate the scale of generation, orientation, topography, previous land use, and the ability to mitigate environmental impacts and flood risk.

6.2.81 Detail on how the design of the Proposed Development has considered these factors is provided the **Site Selection Report (Appendix 2** of this Planning Statement**)**, **ES Chapter 3: Alternatives & Design Evolution (Document Ref. 6.2)** and the relevant topic chapters of the **ES (Document Ref: 6.2)**.

Consideration of Combined Heat and Power (CHP) (NPS EN-1, 4.8)

6.2.82 Combined heat and power generation relates to thermal generating stations which do not form part of the Proposed Development and therefore the SoS is not required to consider this matter.

Carbon Capture and Storage (NPS EN-1, 4.9)

6.2.83 Carbon capture and storage relates to thermal generating stations which do not form part of the Proposed Development and therefore the SoS is not required to consider this matter.

Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience (NPS EN-1, 4.10; EN-3, 2.4 and EN-5, 2.3)

6.2.84 Paragraph 4.10.8 of EN-1 states that applicants must consider the direct and indirect impacts of climate change when planning the location, design, build, operation and, where appropriate, decommissioning of new energy infrastructure. Paragraph 4.10.5 of EN-1 states that applications should take reasonable steps to maximise the use of nature-based solutions which can also result in biodiversity benefits as well as increasing absorption of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere in adapting to climate change.

6.2.85 EN-1 continues at paragraph 4.10.13 to advise that the SoS "*should be satisfied that applicants for new energy infrastructure have taken into account*

the potential impacts of climate change". At 4.10.15 it states that the SoS should "*be satisfied that there are not features of the design of new energy infrastructure critical to its operation which may be affected by more radical changes to the climate beyond that projected by the latest set of UK climate projections*".

6.2.86 Paragraph 2.4.11 of EN-3 discusses the introduction of solar photovoltaics and how they are typically proposed within low-lying exposed sites. For these types of proposals, applicants should consider how the equipment is resilient to increased risk of flooding and the impact of higher temperatures. See **Table 3B** in **Appendix 3** of this Planning Statement for consideration of compliance with this part of EN-3.

6.2.87 Paragraph 2.3.2 of EN-5 requires the consideration of the effects of flooding (particularly on substations that are vital for the electricity transmission and distribution network), winds and storms (on overhead lines), higher average temperatures (leading to increased transmission losses) and earth movement or subsidence caused by flooding or drought (on underground cables). See **Table 3C** in **Appendix 3** of this Planning Statement for consideration of accordance with this part of EN-5.

6.2.88 The National Infrastructure Commission's Design Principles for National Infrastructure (2020)[2] set out four principles for good design, one of which is in relation to climate change and ensuring flexibility and adaptation to ensure resilience. As such, one of the Proposed Development's key objectives as set out in the **DAAD (Document Ref: 5.6)** is to ensure that solar panel heights are optimised to ensure they are safe during flood events and that key infrastructure such as batteries and substations are located outside of areas at risk of flooding to ensure resilience against climate change.

6.2.89 **ES Chapter 12: Climate Change (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.12)** includes a Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions Assessment. The assessment considers GHG emissions and in-combination climate change impacts. The assessment concludes that overall the Proposed Development is considered to have a beneficial effect that is significant. It is anticipated that 8,330,640 tCO2e will be saved over the lifespan of the Proposed Development.

6.2.90 **ES Chapter 12: Climate Change (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.12)** also includes an assessment of climate change resilience. The assessment considers the impacts of climate change and how the Proposed Development can be resilient to these effects and concludes that the likelihood of the climatic impact on the Proposed Development occurring is low.

6.2.91 With the proposed embedded mitigation measures in place, particularly those associated with enhancing the resilience of the development to increased temperature and precipitation that is expected to occur with climate change, the Proposed Development is deemed to be resilient to climate change impacts including those within the RCP8.5 scenario that are proposed to occur over the 45-year nominal project lifetime (40 year operation plus an allowance for construction and decommissioning).

6.2.92 As concluded in **ES Chapter 12: Climate Change (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.12)**, with the proposed embedded mitigation measures

[2] https://nic.org.uk/studies-reports/design-principles-for-national-infrastructure/

incorporated, it is also considered the Proposed Development will be resilient to increased flood risk with climate change.

6.2.93 In undertaking **Appendix 11.1: Flood Risk Assessment (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol. 2, 6.3.81)**, a 40-year operational lifetime for the Proposed Development has been used. Appropriate climate change allowances based on the latest Environment Agency guidance for a development with a 40-year lifespan have been accounted for in the assessments.

6.2.94 It is therefore considered that the Proposed Development will mitigate the effects of climate change by providing a source of renewable energy connected to the national grid, while its design would ensure that it is resilient to the future potential effects of climate change. The Proposed Development therefore complies with the NPSs.

Network Connection (NPS EN-1, 4.11 and NPS EN-3, 2.10)

6.2.95 Paragraph 4.11.1 of EN-1 notes that the grid connection point of a generating station to the electricity network is an important consideration for applicants. While it is not necessary for an applicant to have received or accepted a formal grid connection offer at the time of submitting an application for a DCO, paragraph 4.11.6 notes that this is at the applicant's risk, the SoS will want to be satisfied that there is no obvious reason why a grid connection would not be possible.

6.2.96 Paragraph 2.10.21 of EN-3 notes that applicants should consider issues relating to network connection in Section 4.11 of EN-1 and in EN-5. In particular, and where appropriate, applicants should proceed in a manner consistent with the regulatory regime for offshore transmission networks.

6.2.97 Paragraph 4.11.4 of EN-1 states that "*transmission infrastructure, and related network reinforcement and upgrade work, associated with low carbon infrastructure is considered CNP infrastructure*".

6.2.98 It is considered that the **Electricity Grid Connection Statement (Document Ref: 7.1)** submitted with the Application demonstrates that it is feasible to connect the Proposed Development to the electricity network and that the necessary agreements to facilitate this would be forthcoming. The connection will be provided via 400kV underground cables from the Bicker Fen Substation to the on-site substation via the Cable Route.

6.2.99 The **Electricity Grid Connection Statement (Document Ref: 7.1)** provides confirmation to the SoS that the Applicant has, or will have, the ability to procure the necessary land and rights to facilitate this connection, and that the Applicant will be responsible for designing and building the Cable Route (within the Cable Route Corridor) and works to connect to the existing substation.

Pollution Control and Other Environmental Regulatory regimes (NPS EN-1, 4.12)

6.2.100 Paragraph 4.12.1 of EN-1 states that "*discharges or emissions from a proposed project which lead to other direct or indirect impacts on terrestrial, freshwater, marine, onshore, and offshore environments, or which include*

noise and vibration may be subject to separate regulation under the pollution control framework or other consenting and licencing regimes".

6.2.101 Paragraph 4.12.6 notes that many projects covered by EN-1 will be subject to the Environmental Permitting ('EP') regime. Paragraph 4.12.7 advises applicants to make early contact with relevant regulators, such as the Environment Agency, to discuss their requirements for EPs and other consents. This will ensure that applications take account of all relevant environmental considerations and that the relevant regulators are able to provide timely advice and assurance to the SoS.

6.2.102 The Application is accompanied by an **Other Consents and Licences Statement (Document Ref: 5.4)**. This document outlines the other environmental consents, permits and licences required to facilitate the Proposed Development. The Applicant acknowledges the preference set out in paragraph 4.12.8 of EN-1 for applicants to submit applications for other necessary consents at the same time as seeking development consent from the SoS, however, the level of detail required to obtain such permits and licenses is not available at this stage. The **Other Consents and Licences Statement (Document Ref: 5.4)** sets out the status of the permits and licences, and discussions with relevant regulators. The vast majority of engagement and subsequent applications is expected to be undertaken by the relevant contractor at detailed design stage when the relevant information becomes available, should DCO consent be granted.

6.2.103 The **Other Consents and Licences Statement (Document Ref: 5.4)** provides evidence that the Applicant is progressing the 'non-DCO' consents and licences required for the Proposed Development in a timely manner and indicates that there is not considered to be any impediment to these consents and licences being forthcoming. The Applicant will continue to progress the necessary consents and licences throughout the pre-examination period and, if required, during the examination and will update the document accordingly.

6.2.104 Paragraph 4.12.9 of EN-1 advises that the SoS should focus on whether the development itself is an acceptable use of the land and on the impact of that use rather than the control of processes, emissions, and discharges themselves. This continues into paragraph 4.12.10, which notes that the SoS should work on the assumption that the relevant pollution control regime and other environmental regulatory regimes will be properly applied and enforced by the relevant regulator. The SoS should act to complement but not seek to duplicate them.

6.2.105 The Proposed Development's construction phase environmental impacts will be managed through the implementation of a CEMP, which is secured by a requirement in the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**. **ES Appendix 2.4: OCEMP (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.7)** submitted with the Application sets out a series of measures, based on best-practice guidance, to control the environmental effects of construction of the Proposed Development.

6.2.106 Ongoing impacts arising from the operational phase of the Proposed Development are assessed to be to be few and minor, as outlined by topic in the relevant sections of the **ES (Document Ref: 6.2)**. However, any arising impacts will be controlled through a variety of management plans secured in the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**, such as **Appendix 6.7: OLEMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol. 2, 6.3.19).**

6.2.107 A Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan prepared in accordance with the **ES Appendix 2.5: Outline Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan ('ODEMP') (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol. 2, 6.3.8)** will control environmental effects as identified in the ES during the decommissioning of the Proposed Development.

6.2.108 In terms of paragraph 4.12.16 of EN-1, based on the above, the Applicant considers there should be no reason for the SoS to believe that any operational pollution permits, licenses and/or other consents will not be granted.

Safety (NPS EN-1, 4.13)

6.2.109 Paragraph 4.13.1 of EN-1 explains that the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is the independent regulator responsible for enforcing a range of occupational health and safety legislation, some of which is relevant to the construction, operation and decommissioning of energy infrastructure. Paragraph 4.13.3 confirms that some energy infrastructure will be subject to the Control of Major Accident Hazards (COMAH) Regulations 2015. As per Section 3 of these Regulations, Solar and BESS development is not applicable to the regime and therefore no further response is required. As the Proposed Development is not subject of the COMAH Regulations, paragraphs 4.13.7 and 4.13.8 of EN-1 are not engaged.

6.2.110 As outlined in **ES Chapter 17: Other Environmental Topics (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.17)**, consultation with HSE indicated that the Proposed Development is within the consultation zone of a Major Accident Hazard Pipeline (MAHP), identified as National Grid Gas plc's '7 Feeder Hatton/ Gosberton'. The MAHP intersects with the Site in one location, along the Triton Knoll access track.

6.2.111 In applying the HSE's Land Use Planning methodology, it can be concluded that the Proposed Development is within the 'outermost boundary' of the consultation zone, with a Level 1 sensitivity. Applying this information to the Decision Matrix in paragraph 35 of the methodology, the HSE methodology output is 'Do not Advise Against' the Proposed Development.

6.2.112 **ES Chapter 17: Other Environmental Topics (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.17)** confirms that major hazards or accidents are not anticipated from the Proposed Development being located within the consultation zone of the MAHP. During construction, operation and decommissioning, statutory legislation will be followed to ensure people and property are protected from any potential major hazards or accidents. Throughout the process, all necessary consultations with the HSE and relevant authorities will be undertaken to ensure full regulatory compliance and risk mitigation.

6.2.113 With regard to other safety matters, the Application is accompanied by an **Outline Battery Safety Management Plan ('OBSMP') (Document Ref: 7.0 Other Reports, 7.2)**, which sets out the general access and layout arrangements and the multi-layer protections and safety provisions for the BESS. These include technological, management, layout, design, and emergency response matters. Engagement has been held with Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue Service on the principles of this document and the general layout and access arrangements, and they will also be consulted in the preparation of the detailed version of this plan that must be produced,

approved and implemented pursuant to the relevant requirement in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1).**

Hazardous Substances (NPS EN-1, 4.14)

6.2.114 Paragraph 4.14.1, EN-1 states that all establishments wishing to hold stocks of certain hazardous substances above a certain threshold require Hazardous Substances Consent (HSC).

6.2.115 There is no requirement for storage or use of hazardous substances at or above Controlled Quantities for the Proposed Development, and HSC is not required. Pollution prevention and control measures with management prescriptions are set out in the **OCEMP (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.7)**, which is secured by requirement in the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**.

Common Law Nuisance and Statutory Nuisance (NPS EN-1, 4.15)

6.2.116 Paragraph 4.15.5 requires that at application stage, "*possible sources of nuisance under section 79(1) of the EPA 1990 and how they may be mitigated or limited should be identified by the applicant so that appropriate requirements can be included in any subsequent order granting consent*". Paragraph 4.15.6 states that at the application stage of an energy NSIP, it is important that the SoS consider possible sources of nuisance under Section 79(1) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 (EPA) and how they may be mitigated or limited so that appropriate requirements can be included in any subsequent DCO.

6.2.117 The Applicant has prepared and submitted a **Statutory Nuisance Statement (Document Ref. 5.3)** as is required under APFP Regulation 5(2)(f) and paragraph 4.15.5 of EN-1. This document identifies the matters set out in Section 79(1) of the EPA in respect of statutory nuisance and considers if the Proposed Development could result in a nuisance. It also identifies the measures, where relevant, to prevent and mitigate such nuisance occurring and provides an assessment of the potential for nuisance taking into account of the assessments undertaken for the EIA. The matters in Section 79(1) of the EPA that have been considered within the Statement are general site condition, air quality, artificial light, and noise and vibration, during all phases of the Proposed Development. A number of matters are not relevant to the Proposed Development and are more relevance to other forms of infrastructure (e.g. insects in respect of waste facilities).

6.2.118 Construction control mechanisms proposed include core working hours, traffic management and industry good practice measures. These are set out under the **OCEMP (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.7)** and **Appendix 9.3: Outline Construction Traffic Management Plan ('OCTMP') (Document Reference 6.3, ES Vol 2, 6.3.78)**, the final versions of which are secured by requirements in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1).** With these measures in place, it is considered that the construction and decommissioning phases of the Proposed Development will not give rise to impacts that would constitute a statutory nuisance under Section 79(1)(a) or (e).

6.2.119 The Applicant at Article 10 of the **Draft DCO (Document Ref. 3.1)** deals with defence to proceedings in respect of statutory nuisance and provides that no person is able to bring statutory nuisance proceedings under the

Environmental Protection Act 1990 in respect of noise, if the noise is created in the course of carrying out construction, maintenance or decommissioning of the authorised development and cannot be reasonably avoided; or for which notice has been given under sections 60 and 61 of the Control of Pollution Act 1974.

Security Considerations (NPS EN-1, 4.16)

6.2.120 Paragraph 4.16.1 of EN-1 explains that national security considerations apply across all national infrastructure sectors. Paragraph 4.16.2 of EN-1 notes that the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) works closely with Government security agencies, including the Centre for the Protection of National Infrastructure (CPNI) and the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC), to provide advice to the most critical infrastructure assets on terrorism and other national security threats and risk mitigation.

6.2.121 Paragraph 4.16.4 of EN-1 states that Government policy is to ensure that proportionate protective security measures are designed into new infrastructure projects at an early stage. Paragraph 4.16.6 states that where "*national security implications have been identified, the applicant should consult with relevant security experts from NPSA, ONR (for civil nuclear) and/or DESNZ to ensure that security measures have been adequately considered in the design process and that adequate consideration has been given to the management of security risks*".

6.2.122 The Applicant has not identified any relevant considerations relating to national security in relation to the Proposed Development. General security requirements and mitigations have been embedded into the design of the proposals from the outset and are considered proportionate. Fencing and CCTV will be employed across the Order Limits to secure and monitor solar infrastructure and the assessment of the visual impact is included in **ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual (Document Ref. 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.6)**. Details of the fencing and lighting proposed are provided in **ES Chapter 2: Proposed Development (Document Ref. 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.2)**.

6.2.123 Paragraph 4.16.8 states that if "*NPSA, ONR (for civil nuclear) and/or DESNZ are satisfied that security issues have been adequately addressed in the project when the application is submitted to the Secretary of State, it will provide confirmation of this to the Secretary of State. The Secretary of State should not need to give any further consideration to the details of the security measures in its examination*." The Applicant considers that no further consideration is therefore required on security matters, and that the Proposed Development accords with the key assessment principles of the energy NPSs.

6.3 EN-1: Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy - Generic Impacts

6.3.1 A detailed assessment of the Proposed Development's accordance with the 'generic impacts' set out in Part 5 of EN-1 is presented in **Table 3A** in **Appendix 3** of this Planning Statement.

6.3.2 Part 5 of EN-1 sets out the policy on the assessment of generic impacts which are common across a range of energy infrastructure covered by the energy NPSs or arise in similar ways from the development of energy infrastructure

6.4 EN-3 and EN-5: National Policy Statements for Renewable Energy Infrastructure and Electricity Networks Infrastructure

6.4.1 The technology specific considerations of relevance to the Proposed Development that are contained within EN-3 and EN-5 are considered in **Table 3B** and **Table 3C**, respectively, within **Appendix 3** of this Planning Statement.

6.4.2 As discussed above in **Section 3**, paragraph 1.6.2 explains that EN-5 covers above ground electricity lines of 132kV or above whose length is more than 2km. As a result, EN-5 does not have direct effect to the Proposed Development. It does, however, have relevance to the grid connection for the Proposed Development, which is of a non NSIP scale, as envisaged in paragraph 1.6.4 of EN-5. This comprises the On-site Substation within the Solar Array Area, and the entire Cable Route Corridor including the extension works to the Bicker Fen 400kV Substation.

6.4.3 EN-1 paragraph 4.11.4 on grid connection refers to EN-5 for further guidance on relevant considerations, including the impact of electromagnetic fields (EMFs). Further, the assessment undertaken in **Table 3A** and **Table 3B** considers in detail impacts such as biodiversity conservation, landscape and visual impacts, and noise and vibration impacts.

6.4.4 As such, the assessment in **Table 3C** focusses on the relevant considerations such as EMFs.

6.5 The National Planning Policy Framework

6.5.1 The current NPPF was last substantively updated in December 2024. Paragraph 5 of the NPPF explains that NPSs form part of the overall framework of national planning policy and may be a material consideration in preparing plans and making decisions on planning applications. The EIA and other studies and designs undertaken for the Proposed Development will therefore have regard to the relevant policies of the NPPF as part of the overall framework of national policy.

6.5.2 Paragraph 7 of the NPPF is clear that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, summarised as *"meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs"*. Paragraph 8 goes on to identify three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental, which it states are interdependent and must be pursued in mutually supportive ways. It explains that these dimensions give rise to the need for the planning system to perform economic, social and environmental objectives.

6.5.3 Central to the NPPF is 'a presumption in favour of sustainable development'. This is highlighted at Paragraph 11. For decision-making, this means approving applications that accord with the relevant development plans without delay.

6.5.4 The NPPF is supportive of infrastructure delivery. One of the methods of fulfilling the objective of sustainable development listed at paragraph 8a is

through the 'provision of infrastructure', with the important role that infrastructure should play highlighted in Chapter 3 (Plan-Making). Paragraph 193c states that development resulting in loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats should be refused unless there are wholly exceptional reasons, which footnote 70 suggests may include NSIP where the public benefit would clearly outweigh the loss or deterioration of habitat.

6.5.5 NPPF policies of relevance include building a strong, competitive economy, promoting sustainable transport, achieving well-designed places, meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change, conserving and enhancing the natural environment and conserving and enhancing the historic environment. The Proposed Development accords with these core land-use planning principles as follows:

- it would contribute toward sustainable economic development by providing new low carbon electricity generating capacity, for which there is a confirmed need, thereby contributing to the security and diversity of energy supplies for businesses and homes;
- it is appropriate in terms of its context and setting and incorporates the principles of 'good design', as demonstrated in the **Design and Access Approach Document (Document Ref: 5.6)**, while the ES demonstrates that it would not result in unacceptable impacts on the amenity of people living in the surrounding area;
- it would support the transition to a low carbon future;
- it has been designed to be resilient to flooding and would not increase the risk of flooding at the Site or elsewhere;
- the ES demonstrates that the Proposed Development would conserve the natural environment, and it includes measures to enhance landscaping and biodiversity at the Site, while it would not result in significant effects in terms of pollution; and
- while the assessment of traffic and transport in the ES for the Proposed Development (**Chapter 9: Access and Traffic, Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.9**) is based on a worst-case scenario, it demonstrates the transport effects would be acceptable. The transport implications during operation will be very minor.

6.5.6 An assessment of the Proposed Development's accordance with the relevant policies contained within the NPPF, that could constitute important and relevant considerations in decision making, is provided in **Table 4A** in **Appendix 4** of this Planning Statement.

6.5.7 For the reasons set out in Table 4A, the Proposed Development is considered to accord with the relevant policies within the NPPF.

6.6 Local Planning Policy

6.6.1 **Table 4A**, **Table 4B** and **Table 4C** in **Appendix 4** of this Planning Statement considers the general accordance of the Proposed Development with the relevant development plan policies, bring Central Lincolnshire Local Development Plan, South East Lincolnshire Local Development Plan and the Lincolnshire Minerals and Waste Plan.

6.6.2 The Proposed Development is generally considered to accords with the abovementioned Local Development Plan Policies insofar as:

- It contributes substantially to the need to supply low carbon energy, in order for the government to meet its net zero commitments;
- It has been designed to be resilient to flooding and to not significantly increase flooding elsewhere;
- It has been designed to demonstrate that the transport effects would be acceptable with implemented mitigation;
- It has been designed to have consideration for amenity of the surrounding area;
- It has been designed to facilitate health and wellbeing by enhancing existing PRoWs to connect them to the wider PRoW network;
- It has been designed to be considerate of the surrounding Historic Environment and has implemented trial trenching measures to ensure sites of archaeological significance are maintained;
- It has been designed to protect Biodiversity and Geodiversity by ensuring measures that result significant BNG; and
- It has been designed taking account of BMV land, with the Site minimising use of BMV land as much as possible, whilst ensuring that post decommissioning, land can be restored to its current agricultural use.

6.6.3 While there are some residual significant adverse impacts, it is considered that the Applicant has provided substantial and appropriate mitigation and that residual impacts are outweighed by material considerations in the form of the benefits and need for the Proposed Development.

6.6.4 Given that EN-1, EN-3, and EN-5 provide the primary basis upon which any decision on the Application should be made, combined with the fact the matters covered by these local planning policies have for the most part already been considered in detail above in relation to the NPSs, in general a summarised response has been provided to each policy.

6.6.5 **Table 5.6** of this Planning Statement outlines the purpose specific non-development plans, including: the Lincolnshire County Council Green Masterplan (adopted 2020), the Joint Lincolnshire Flood Risk and Water Management Strategy 2019-2050 and the Lincolnshire County Council Highway and Flood Authority, Development Road and Sustainable Drainage Specification and Construction (adopted March 2021). It is considered that the Proposed Development conforms with the aims and objectives of these documents.

6.7 Summary

6.7.1 This section of the Planning Statement has considered the Proposed Development's conformity against the assessment principles, generic impacts and assessment and technology specific consideration of the energy NPSs that have 'effect' (EN-1, EN-3) and importance and relevance (EN-5). The NPSs that have 'effect' are the primary basis for the determination of development consent applications for energy infrastructure.

6.7.2 The Applicants' assessments have identified a number of environmental impacts, some of which are significant adverse, however, due to the mitigations included as part of the application and the significant benefits and need for new low carbon energy sources (classified as a critical national priority), it is considered that the Proposed Development complies with the

relevant NPSs. Furthermore, it has been demonstrated that there is no conflict with NPPF policy or local planning policy. It is important to recognise that although the NPPF and local development plan policy may be 'important and relevant', the NPSs are the primary consideration for the determination of NSIPs and take precedence where there is any conflict with such policies.

7. Assessment of the Benefits and Adverse Impacts of the Proposed Development

7.1 Introduction

7.1.1 This section of the Planning Statement identifies the key benefits of the Proposed Development as well as its likely significant adverse effects having regard to the policy assessment within **Section 6** and the EIA that has been undertaken.

7.1.2 This section is set out with regard to the criteria in Section 104 of the 2008 Act which in summary provide that development consent decisions shall be made with regard to the NPS that has 'effect' except to the extent that the benefits are outweighed by the impacts or there are wider legal obligations breached.

7.2 Compliance with the relevant NPS

7.2.1 As set out in Section 6 and the Appendices of this Statement, the Proposed Development is considered to comply as a whole with EN-1 and EN-3 and is in accordance with EN-5. While there are a number of residual significant adverse impacts, the Proposed Development results in significant benefits and best efforts have been made to provide mitigation and therefore, for the reasons set out below, the Proposed Development is considered to comply with the relevant NPSs.

7.3 Wider Legal Obligations

7.3.1 As set out in the **Shadow Habitats Regulations Assessment (Document Ref: 5.2)**, the Proposed Development has been assessed as having a Likely Significant Effect upon National Network sites (Ramsar/SPA/SAC) due to the loss of functionality linked habitats, however, within the Appropriate Assessment, mitigation measures outlined in **the OCEMP (Document ref 6.3 ES Vol 2, 6.3.7)** to avoid these adverse effects have been taken into account. It is therefore considered that the Proposed Development will result in no adverse effects on the Wash SPA and Rasmar or the Wash and North Norfolk Coast SAC or the qualifying features of these designated sites.

7.3.2 The WFD Compliance Assessment (**Appendix 11.6 Water Framework Directive Assessment (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.85)**) has considered the potential for the Proposed Development to affect the Black Sluice IDB area draining to the South Forty Foot Drain Water Body, WFD status and programme of measures. The WFD Compliance Assessment has found that the Proposed Development is unlikely to include any activities that are likely to cause deterioration in the WFD status for the water body or prevent the Water Body from achieving its WFD objectives, provided that best practice and established guidance are adhered to.

7.3.3 Furthermore, the planned provision of SuDS and its associated benefits for water quality, and the additional embedded mitigation discussed above and in

the OCEMP, the effect on the EA's 'Black Sluice IDB draining to the South Forty Foot Drain Water Body' Water Body is expected to be neutral with an element of providing betterment. Further details on the WFD Compliance Assessment can be found in **Appendix 11.6 Water Framework Directive Assessment (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.85)**.

7.4 Benefits of the Proposed Development

7.4.1 The Proposed Development would have a number of very clear and substantial benefits, which can be summarised as follows:

- Generation of 400 MW of renewable electricity – providing valuable clean energy that is deliverable swiftly, being capable of connecting to the grid before 2030, making a substantial contribution to Clean Power 2030 and in any event a substantial contribution to the Seventh Carbon Budget ambitions for solar PV generation deployment. As described in EN-1 and set out in section 3 of this document, there is a wide range of government and wider policy and strategy underpinning the need case for the Proposed Development, in addition to the primary and established need case set out in NPS EN-1 including the CNP for the provision of nationally significant low carbon infrastructure. This represents a substantial benefit in relation to greenhouse gas emissions (as confirmed in **ES Chapter 12: Climate Change (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol. 2, 6.2.12)**) due to the displacement of conventional forms of generation, as well as benefits to energy security and consumer costs.
- Provision of a BESS with capacity of up to 600MW, sized to match the grid connection available, primarily to store energy from and complement the use of the solar panels but also to be able to provide such balancing and other services as National Grid may require over the 40-year operational lifetime of the infrastructure. The benefits of storage are acknowledged in paragraphs 3.3.25 - 3.3.27 of EN-1.
- Delivering Biodiversity Net Gain of 30% for Habitat Units, 10% for Hedgerow Units and 10% for Watercourse Units which shall be in place for 30 years as part of a wider package of appropriate landscaping and habitat proposals and new and improved hedgerows as set out in the **Biodiversity Net Gain Strategy (Document Ref: 7.3)** which will be suitably managed as set out in **ES Appendix 6.7: OLEMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol. 2, 6.3.19)** and secured by a Requirement in Schedule 2 of the **draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**. This would deliver beneficial significant improvements to habitats through Biodiversity Net Gain during operation, as set out in **ES Chapter 7: Ecology (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol. 2, 6.2.7)**.
- Provision of a substantial new permissive path across the Solar Array Area during the operational period linking to existing Public Rights of Way to the east and west providing additional walking and recreational opportunities. Furthermore, the **Outline Design Principles** at **Appendix 1** of the **Design and Access Approach Document (Document Ref: 5.6)** secures a number of interpretation boards to be provided along the permissive path, describing particular elements of the Proposed Development or particular natural features, and to provide safety information in the vicinity of existing engineered embankments to drainage

ditches/dykes. No Public Rights of Way currently exist on the ground in the Solar Array Area.

- The Construction of the Proposed Development would provide moderate beneficial socioeconomic effects in the Boston Borough are in relation to workforce, businesses and residents, as set out in **ES Chapter 15: Socio-Economics (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol. 2, 6.2.19)** and enhanced by measures within **ES Appendix 15.3: Outline Skills, Supply Chain and Employment Plan (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol. 3, 6.3.98),** a full version of which is secured by a requirement in Schedule 2 of the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**.

7.5 Adverse Effects of the Proposed Development

7.5.1 The Proposed Development would give rise to a small number of unavoidable adverse effects, whether as identified in **ES Chapter 19: Summary of Significant Environmental Effects (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.2, 6.2.19)**, or against planning policy:

- As set out in **ES Chapter 6: Landscape & Visual (Document Ref: 6.2, Vol. 2, 6.2.6)** and its accompanying appendices, a number of significant adverse landscape impacts would occur at various stages. In construction stage this would be in relation to the Landscape Character of the Site, (Major), Fenland Sub Area and Holland Reclaimed Area (both Moderate). At year 0, and during the decommissioning stage, moderate adverse impacts would remain within the Landscape Character of the Site and moderate adverse impacts in the Fenland Sub Area. At year 15 only a Moderate Adverse Impact would remain within the Landscape Character of the Site. Mitigation is secured through the implementation of measures within the **OCEMP**, **OLEMP** and **ODEMP**, of which preparation, approval and implementation of detailed versions is secured by requirements in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**. With regards to visual impacts, during construction there would be significant adverse impacts on 29 visual receptors (18 Major, 11 Moderate). At year 0 this would reduce to 9 (3 major, 6 Moderate), and at year 15 it would reduce to 3 (all Moderate). The decommissioning will result in significant adverse impacts at 7 visual receptors (1 Major, 6 Moderate). Mitigation would be secured through the implementation of measures within the **OCEMP**, **OLEMP** and **ODEMP** as noted above. Paragraph 5.10.5 of EN-1 acknowledges that *"Virtually all nationally significant energy infrastructure projects will have adverse effects on the landscape, but there may also be beneficial landscape character impacts arising from mitigation".* Furthermore, paragraph 2.10.98 of EN-3 states that "*Applicants should follow the criteria for good design set out in Section 4.7 of EN-1 when developing projects and will be expected to direct considerable effort towards minimising the landscape and visual impact of solar PV arrays especially within nationally designated landscapes*" which the Applicant has demonstrated in the **DAAD (Document Ref: 5.6),** for example, undertaking flood modelling to optimise the panel height and reduce them from up to 4.5m at PEIR stage to 3.9m in flood areas, and 3.5m elsewhere.
- As set out within **Appendix 6.5: Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.17)** Gashes Barn would reach the Residential Amenity Threshold at various stages. This is not an

EIA impact (it is appended to the ES due to its linkage with the LVIA) but relates to wider planning principles. In this location arises because of the manner in which the property would be encompassed by the Solar Array Area and there would be views of energy infrastructure from several locations around the property. This is judged to be perceived as 'overwhelming' but not 'overbearing' in the medium term. This scenario would persist until the proposed mitigation planting became established and sufficiently mature to provide effective screening of energy infrastructure from the property and associated access road. It is anticipated that this level of visual assimilation would be reached after approximately 10 years after which following implementation of the landscape scheme after which the Residential Amenity Threshold would no longer be reached. NPS policy refers to residential amenity in a landscape and visual context (paragraphs 2.10.93 – 2.10.101) but does not establish any test or principle that impacts must be avoided: it describes the assessment, design and screening with regard to avoiding and minimising landscape and visual effects in line with the mitigation hierarchy. Landscape and visual impacts have been avoided where possible as set out in the **ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.6)** and **DAAD (Document Ref: 5.6)**. Where impacts cannot be avoided, the proposed mitigation measures include a comprehensive landscape restoration and enhancement scheme illustrated in **Figure 6.31: Landscape Strategy Plan (Document Ref: 6.4, ES Vol.3, 6.4.42)**. The **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)** secures this through requiring the submission, approval and implementation of a detailed LEMP based on the **Appendix 6.7: OLEMP (Document Ref 6.3, ES Vol 2, 6.3.19).** It is considered that NPS policy is complied with. Nevertheless, in the event that NPS policy was not considered to be complied with it is considered that CNP would override the specified residual effect since the mitigation hierarchy has been set out. This is discussed further in section 7.6.

- The construction and decommissioning phases would result in moderate adverse significant impact on Church of St Andrew, Asgarby, a Grade I Listed Building (NHLE 1061832). The impact would be to the setting of the asset but would be short term and temporary, as set out **in ES Chapter 8: Cultural Heritage (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol. 2, 6.2.8)**. Importantly, it is considered that the Proposed Development will not result in substantial harm to the asset. Paragraph 4.2.17 of EN-1 states that CNP infrastructure will meet the test to be considered exceptional to justify substantial harm to a heritage asset. As the Proposed Development would result in less than substantial harm, it is considered that NPS policy is complied with.
- The ES finds a major adverse impact through the long-term, virtually entirely temporary (besides from the land where the Bicker Fen Substation is to be extended) loss of agricultural land. This will be mitigated through measures within the **Outline SMP (6.3, Vol. 2, 6.3.95),** of which preparation of detailed Soil Management Plans is secured via a requirement in the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**, implementing best practice guidance on soil handling. The temporary and reversible nature of the majority of the Proposed Development, along with the measures within the OSMP, will allow for reinstatement of the Site to agricultural production following decommissioning. In light of the above, it is considered that the

Applicant has minimised impacts on BMV agricultural land and soil health and quality, in line with paragraphs 5.11.12 and 5.11.13 of EN-1.

7.6 The S104 Balance

7.6.1 This section has identified that NPS policy is complied with and that there are no contrary wider legal matters that would indicate against the making of the Development Consent Order in the terms sought.

7.6.2 This section also identifies a number of very clear and substantial benefits that the Proposed Development would deliver and enable, including renewable energy generation capacity for which there is an established need case set out in NPS EN-1, wider government policy and strategy, and the CNP as set out in EN-1. Other benefits include the provision of BESS which can complement the flexibility of solar generation and provide grid balancing services, Biodiversity Net Gain, a new permissive path and socio-economic benefits. NPS EN-1 provides support for storage (paragraphs 3.3.25 – 3.3.27) and states that biodiversity net gain should be given weight (paragraph 4.6.3) and positive socio-economic benefits (paragraph 5.13.11).

7.6.3 The submitted Site Selection Report (see Appendix 2) sets out the logic behind this site's selection, making use of an existing point of connection and avoiding constraints wherever possible, and demonstrates that there is no more suitable to make use of the identified grid capacity.

7.6.4 Some significant adverse effects have been identified which are unavoidable due to the scale of the area required to provide the significant benefits associated with the Proposed Development. These relate to the specified landscape and visual including residential visual amenity, above ground heritage, and soils. The Applicant has sought to avoid, reduce and mitigate these impacts as far as possible, as demonstrated throughout the application documentation including this document and the **Environmental Statement (Document Refs: 6.1-6.4)**, and mitigation measures are appropriate secured within the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**. For the reasons set out in this Chapter, the Proposed Development is considered to comply with the relevant NPSs.

7.6.5 The residual soils impacts are considered policy compliant by reference to the test in NPS policy at paragraphs 5.11.12 and 5.11.13 of EN-1.

7.6.6 In relation to the specified residual landscape and visual including residential visual amenity impacts and heritage setting impacts, NPS policy is considered complied with, specifically the tests in paragraphs 5.9.28 and 5.10.36 of EN-1 and paragraphs 2.10.157 and 2.10.160 of EN-3. Furthermore, Paragraph 4.2.15 of EN-1 states that "*Where residual non-HRA or non-MCZ impacts remain after the mitigation hierarchy has been applied, these residual impacts are unlikely to outweigh the urgent need for this type of infrastructure. Therefore, in all but the most exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely that consent will be refused on the basis of these residual impacts. The exception to this presumption of consent are residual impacts onshore and offshore which present an unacceptable risk to, or unacceptable interference with, human health and public safety, defence, irreplaceable habitats or unacceptable risk to the achievement of net zero.*"

7.6.7 As the Proposed Development is CNP infrastructure, it is considered that the presumption described in paragraph 4.2.15 applies in relation to these specified residual impacts identified in relation to the specific landscape and visual effects including residential visual amenity, and heritage setting effects, as the Applicant has demonstrated application of the mitigation hierarchy.

7.6.8 Importantly, none of the residual impacts are considered to present these unacceptable risks or interferences. It is therefore considered that the benefits of the Proposed Development considerably outweigh its limited adverse impacts.

8. Conclusions

8.1.1 Decisions on DCO applications where a NPS is designated are made against the criteria in **Section 104** of the 2008 Act. This **Section 8** sets out conclusions corresponding to the criteria in **Section 104** subsection (2)(a)-(d) and subsections (3)-(9).

8.1.2 The Proposed Development has demonstrated in Section 6 to be in conformity with the relevant NPSs. In particular:

- the need case set out in NPS EN-1, as set out in **Section 3**, for all types of energy infrastructure, including low carbon electricity generating infrastructure for which there is a CNP, has been demonstrated to be of particular urgency and relevance by reference to a range of recent Government energy and climate change related laws, policy and guidance, as set out in **Section 4**. The Proposed Development will contribute in a timely manner to this urgent need; and
- the Proposed Development complies with all relevant 'generic impacts' and 'assessment and technology specific consideration' in the NPS EN-1 and EN-3, as detailed in **Section 6**, and **Tables 3A** and **3B** in Appendix 3 of this Planning Statement, and is in accordance with all relevant policy in EN-5 as detailed in **Section 6** and **Table 3C of Appendix 3.** This includes in respect of air quality and emissions, greenhouse gas emission, biodiversity and geological conservation, sources of potential nuisance, floor risk, historic environment, landscape and visual, land use, noise and vibration, socio-economic, traffic and transport, waste management and water quality and resources, by reference to the findings in the **Environmental Statement Volumes 1 to 3 (Document Refs: 6.1 to 6.4)**.

8.1.3 Other matters important and relevant to decision making on the Application include the overarching aims of the National Planning Policy Framework and development plan policies. **Table 4A**, **Table 4B** and **Table 4C** of **Appendix 4** of this Planning Statement confirm that the Proposed Development appropriately addresses these matters.

8.1.4 At the heart of the policy and framework set out in the Energy NPSs is the legally binding requirement for the UK to achieve Net Zero by 2050. The Government's Clean Power 2030 Action Plan (Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, 2024) sets out a pathway to achieving this, requiring an unprecedented increase in installed capacity over the next six years to achieve a Clean Power capacity range of 45-47 GW of installed solar by 2030. The development of renewable energy projects at pace both before and after 2030, including solar, is vital to fulfil this increased demand in parallel with decarbonisation and the Government is expecting an increase in planning applications with the Clean Power 2030 target.

8.1.5 No other laws, statutory duties or enactments indicate against making the DCO. The **Shadow HRA (Document Ref: 5.2)** and **ES Appendix 11.6: Water Framework Directive Assessment (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol. 2, 6.3.86)** do not present concerns. The **Statement of Reasons (Document Ref: 4.1)** and **Site Selection Report** (**Appendix 2** of this Planning Statement) and **Statement of Reasons (Document Ref: 4.1)** demonstrate that all reasonable alternatives to compulsory acquisition have been explored, and the proposed interference with the rights of those with an interest in the Order Land is

necessary, proportionate and legitimate. No serious detriment to statutory undertakers would arise and appropriate protective provisions are included in the **Draft DCO (Document Ref. 3.1)**.

8.1.6 The Proposed Development has a number of clear and substantial benefits, which NPS EN-1 and EN-3 accord weight, and which considerably outweigh its limited adverse impacts, as set out in **Section 7.**

8.1.7 The **Draft DCO (Document Ref. 3.1)** includes appropriate requirements (Schedule 2) that will control the detailed design of the Proposed Development and its construction and operation in order to ensure that it accords with the robust assessment reported in the **Environmental Statement Volumes 1** to **3 (Document Refs: 6.1** to **6.4)** and would not result in unacceptable effects.

8.1.8 It is therefore submitted that the Proposed Development conforms with the criteria in Section 104 of the 2008 Act and is acceptable in all relevant respects.

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Appendix 1A: North Kesteven District Council Planning History

Table 1A: North Kesteven District Council Planning History

REFERENCE NUMBER	ADDRESS	DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT	APPLICANT NAME	STATUS
24/1265/FUL	Land Lying to The South of Little Hale Drove Little Hale Fen Sleaford NG34 9BG	Erection of 99MW Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) and associated infrastructure	Root-Power (South) Limited	Approved 14/03/2025
23/1021/FUL (PINS Appeal Reference: APP/R2520/W/25/3363027)	Land South of Little Hale Drove Little Hale Fen Sleaford Lincs	Development of a photovoltaic solar array (49.995MW export capacity) with associated grid corridor works, access improvements and ancillary development	AGR Solar 3 Limited	Refused - 07/11/2024 (Appeal Allowed - 24/09/2025)
24/0311/EIASCR	Land Lying to The South of Little Hale Drove Little Hale Fen Sleaford NG34 9BG	Proposed development of a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS)	Sharon Thomas	Non EIA 16/08/2024
23/0174/PNND	Top Barn Yard Off Swaton Road Thorpe Latimer Sleaford Lincolnshire NG34 0RF	Proposed conversion of agricultural buildings into two dwellings	Robert Watts Limited	Approved 26/04/2023
22/1235/LDEXI	Boughton Barns C402 A17 To C379 Howell Asgarby Sleaford Lincolnshire NG34 9QB	Application for a lawful development certificate for an existing use - change of use from dwellinghouse (C3) to a learning and non-residential institution (F1)(A) for the provision of education in the form of a cookery school	Mr and Mrs Christopher Edgar Deborah Catherine Hopkins	Withdrawn – 12/10/2022
22/0716/FUL	Land Off Star Fen Heckington Sleaford Lincolnshire	Proposed single storey eco-dwelling	Mr & Mrs Andrew Mitchell	Refused – 26/07/2022

REFERENCE NUMBER	ADDRESS	DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT	APPLICANT NAME	STATUS
22/0425/FUL	Brandy Barn Eau End Farm North Drove Helpringham Sleaford Lincolnshire NG34 0BS	Installation of a horse exerciser on the area behind the existing stable block.	Mrs Jane Francis	Approved – 17/06/2022
20/1665/FUL	Boughton Barns C402 A17 To C379 Howell Asgarby Sleaford Lincolnshire NG34 9QB	Demolition of existing modern agricultural building to allow conversion of and extension to remaining barns to form dwelling and cookery school. (Amended Description)	Mr C Hopkins	Refused – 31/03/2022
20/1666/LBC	Boughton Barns C402 A17 To C379 Howell Asgarby Sleaford Lincolnshire NG34 9QB	Demolition of existing modern agricultural building to allow conversion of and extension to remaining barns to form dwelling and cookery school. (Amended Description)	Mr C Hopkins	Refused – 31/03/2022
21/0221/FUL	The Meadows North Drove Helpringham Sleaford Lincolnshire NG34 0BS	Demolition of existing attached outbuildings and erection of attached annex and double garage	Mr and Mrs Wood	Approved – 28/10/2021
21/1337/EIASCR	Land At Little Hale Fen, To the East of Helpringham, To the South East of Little Hale, And to The North West of Bicker and Donington, Including Grid Connection Cabling Extending to The National	Proposed solar farm (up to 49.995MW generating capacity) and associated infrastructure including grid connection cabling to Bicker Fen Substation	AGR Solar 2 Limited	Screening opinion issued 6 October 2021 – it does not constitute EIA

REFERENCE NUMBER	ADDRESS	DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT	APPLICANT NAME	STATUS
	Grid Substation to The East, Lincolnshire			development and therefore an ES is not required.
21/1166/DISCON	Installation Of High Voltage Direct Current (DC) Cables for The Viking Link Interconnector Project Between Proposed Landfall at Boygrift in East Lindsey to A Proposed Converter Station at North Ing Drove in South Holland	Application to discharge condition 14 (Archaeological Mitigation) attached to application 17/1200/FUL - Works to facilitate the Viking Link electrical interconnector with an approximate capacity of 1400 megawatts (MW) extending from Revsing, Jutland, (Denmark) to Bicker Fen, Lincolnshire (UK) comprising: – Installation of two (2) subsea high voltage direct current (DC) cables between Mean Low Water Springs (MLWS) and landfall at Boygrift in East Lindsey; – Installation of two (2) onshore DC cables between the landfall at Boygrift and the converter station at North Ing Drove in South Holland; – Construction of associated Temporary Construction Compounds (TCC) and Temporary Works Areas (TWA) and temporary vehicle access arrangements required for DC and AC cable installation; – Erection of converter station buildings together with the formation of internal roads, permanent access road from the A52, erection of security fencing, formation of landscaping	Brendan Maloney	Approved - 10/09/2021

REFERENCE NUMBER	ADDRESS	DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT	APPLICANT NAME	STATUS
		with associated temporary construction compounds; – Installation of up to six (6) onshore high voltage alternating current (AC) cables between the converter station at North Ing Drove and the existing Bicker Fen 400 kilovolt (400kV) Substation owned and operated by National Grid Electricity Transmission Plc (NGET); – Installation of link pillars along the AC cable route for inspection and maintenance purposes, these will be contained within fenced areas; – Installation of two substation bays at Bicker Fen Substation to allow Viking Link to be connected to the National Grid electricity transmission system; – Installation of all associated drainage mitigation works; and – Installation of fibre-optic cable(s) with the high voltage AC and DC cables (A bay consists of switching equipment including circuit breakers, disconnector and measuring equipment. NGET will be providing Viking Link the space available to connect to Bicker Fen).		
21/0282/DISCON	Installation Of High Voltage Direct Current (DC) Cables For The Viking Link	Application to discharge condition 5 (Landscape Restoration) attached to planning permission 17/1200/FUL - Works to facilitate the Viking Link	Brendan Maloney	Approved - 30/07/2021

REFERENCE NUMBER	ADDRESS	DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT	APPLICANT NAME	STATUS
	Interconnector Project Between Proposed Landfall At Boygrift In East Lindsey To A Proposed Converter Station At North Ing Drove In South Holland;	electrical interconnector with an approximate capacity of 1400 megawatts (MW) extending from Revsing, Jutland, (Denmark) to Bicker Fen, Lincolnshire (UK) comprising: – Installation of two (2) subsea high voltage direct current (DC) cables between Mean Low Water Springs (MLWS) and landfall at Boygrift in East Lindsey; – Installation of two (2) onshore DC cables between the landfall at Boygrift and the converter station at North Ing Drove in South Holland; – Construction of associated Temporary Construction Compounds (TCC) and Temporary Works Areas (TWA) and temporary vehicle access arrangements required for DC and AC cable installation; Erection of converter station buildings together with the formation of internal roads, permanent access road from the A52, erection of security fencing, formation of landscaping with associated temporary construction compounds; – Installation of up to six (6) onshore high voltage alternating current (AC) cables between the converter station at North Ing Drove and the existing Bicker Fen 400 kilovolt (400kV) Substation owned and operated by National Grid Electricity Transmission Plc (NGET);		

REFERENCE NUMBER	ADDRESS	DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT	APPLICANT NAME	STATUS
		– Installation of link pillars along the AC cable route for inspection and maintenance purposes, these will be contained within fenced areas; – Installation of two substation bays at Bicker Fen Substation to allow Viking Link to be connected to the National Grid electricity transmission system; – Installation of all associated drainage mitigation works; and - Installation of fibre-optic cable(s) with the high voltage AC and DC cables (A bay consists of switching equipment including circuit breakers, disconnector and measuring equipment. NGET will be providing Viking Link the space available to connect to Bicker Fen).		
21/0677/HOUS	Bramble Cottage Great Hale Drove Great Hale Sleaford Lincolnshire NG34 9GJ	Proposed single storey front extension	Mr and Mrs Cope	Approved – 14/06/2021
21/0393/FUL	White House Great Hale Drove Great Hale Sleaford Lincolnshire NG34 9LT	Proposed erection of new brick meter house and siting of shipping container to house pump-house equipment, (together with installation of underground mains electricity supply from existing farmyard to agricultural lagoon) to provide pumping equipment for the extraction of water from lagoon.	Mr Matthew Mountain	Approved - 18/05/2021

REFERENCE NUMBER	ADDRESS	DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT	APPLICANT NAME	STATUS
21/0960/HOUS	The Meadows North Drove Helpringham Sleaford Lincolnshire NG34 0BS	Change of use of part of paddock to a menage and lighting columns and stable block	Mrs Anne Wood	Approved – 13/04/2021
20/0743/DISCON	Installation Of High Voltage Direct Current (DC) Cables For The Viking Link Interconnector Project Between Proposed Landfall At Boygrift In East Lindsey To A Proposed Converter Station At North Ing Drove In South Holland	Application to discharge conditions 2 (Ecological Management Plan), 3 (Pre-commencement surveys), 4 (Programme of mink control), 6 (Construction Traffic Management Plan and Access Route), 8 (Preconstruction condition survey), 13 (Construction Environmental Management Plan), 16 (Drainage) and 21 (Contaminated material treatment scheme) attached to application 17/1200/FUL - Works to facilitate the Viking Link electrical interconnector.	Mr Chris Sharp	Approved - 07/09/2020
20/0298/FUL	White House Great Hale Drove Great Hale Sleaford Lincolnshire NG34 9LT	Siting of 2 no. shipping containers for the storage of chemicals and formation of concrete base	Mr Matthew Mountain	Approved – 25/05/2020
20/0485/DISCON	Installation Of High Voltage Direct Current (DC) Cables For The Viking Link Interconnector Project Between Proposed Landfall At Boygrift In East Lindsey To A Proposed Converter Station At North Ing Drove In South Holland	Application to discharge condition 7 (Contact for queries or complaints) attached to application 17/1200/FUL - Works to facilitate the Viking Link electrical interconnector with an approximate capacity of 1400 megawatts (MW) extending from Revsing, Jutland, (Denmark) to Bicker Fen, Lincolnshire (UK) comprising: – Installation of two (2) subsea high voltage direct current (DC) cables between Mean Low Water	Mr Chris Sharp	Approved - 05/05/2020

REFERENCE NUMBER	ADDRESS	DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT	APPLICANT NAME	STATUS
		Springs (MLWS) and landfall at Boygrift in East Lindsey; – Installation of two (2) onshore DC cables between the landfall at Boygrift and the converter station at North Ing Drove in South Holland; – Construction of associated Temporary Construction Compounds (TCC) and Temporary Works Areas (TWA) and temporary vehicle access arrangements required for DC and AC cable installation; – Erection of converter station buildings together with the formation of internal roads, permanent access road from the A52, erection of security fencing, formation of landscaping with associated temporary construction compounds; – Installation of up to six (6) onshore high voltage alternating current (AC) cables between the converter station at North Ing Drove and the existing Bicker Fen 400 kilovolt (400kV) Substation owned and operated by National Grid Electricity Transmission Plc (NGET); – Installation of link pillars along the AC cable route for inspection and maintenance purposes, these will be contained within fenced areas; – Installation of two substation bays at Bicker Fen Substation to allow Viking Link to be connected to the National Grid electricity transmission system;		

REFERENCE NUMBER	ADDRESS	DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT	APPLICANT NAME	STATUS
		– Installation of all associated drainage mitigation works; and – Installation of fibre-optic cable(s) with the high voltage AC and DC cables (A bay consists of switching equipment including circuit breakers, disconnector and measuring equipment. NGET will be providing Viking Link the space available to connect to Bicker Fen).		
19/1510/FUL	White House Great Hale Drove Great Hale Sleaford Lincolnshire NG34 9LT	Erection of two grain silos.	Mr Matthew Mountain	Approved – 24/12/2019
18/1730/HOUS	Home Farm House Little Hale Drove Little Hale Sleaford Lincolnshire NG34 9BG	Extension and alterations to create home office.	Mr & Mrs Needham	Approved – 02/04/2019
17/1200/FUL	Installation Of High Voltage Direct Current (DC) Cables For The Viking Link Interconnector Project Between Proposed Landfall At Boygrift In East Lindsey To A Proposed Converter Station At North Ing Drove In South Holland;	Works to facilitate the Viking Link electrical interconnector with an approximate capacity of 1400 megawatts (MW) extending from Revsing, Jutland, (Denmark) to Bicker Fen, Lincolnshire (UK) comprising, Installation of two (2) subsea high voltage direct current (DC) cables between Mean Low Water Springs (MLWS) and landfall at Boygrift in East Lindsey. Installation of two (2) onshore DC cables between the landfall at Boygrift and the converter station at North Ing Drove in South Holland. Construction of associated Temporary Construction Compounds (TCC) and Temporary Works Areas (TWA) and temporary vehicle access	Ms Liz Wells 35 Homer Road Solihull B91 3QJ West Midlands	Approved - 18/08/2018

REFERENCE NUMBER	ADDRESS	DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT	APPLICANT NAME	STATUS
		arrangements required for DC and AC cable installation. Erection of converter station buildings together with the formation of internal roads, permanent access road from the A52, erection of security fencing, formation of landscaping with associated temporary construction compounds. Installation of up to six (6) onshore high voltage alternating current (AC) cables between the converter station at North Ing Drove and the existing Bicker Fen 400 kilovolt (400kV) Substation owned and operated by National Grid Electricity Transmission Plc (NGET). Installation of link pillars along the AC cable route for inspection and maintenance purposes, these will be contained within fenced areas. Installation of two substation bays at Bicker Fen Substation to allow Viking Link to be connected to the National Grid electricity transmission system. Installation of all associated drainage mitigation works and Installation of fibre-optic cable(s) with the high voltage AC and DC cables (A bay consists of switching equipment including circuit breakers, disconnector and measuring equipment. NGET will be providing Viking Link the space available to connect to Bicker Fen)		
18/0890/OHL	Burton Road Heckington Sleaford Lincolnshire NG34 9QS	Proposed 11kv overhead line.	Peter Scott	No objections – 08/08/2018

REFERENCE NUMBER	ADDRESS	DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT	APPLICANT NAME	STATUS
17/1762/EIASCR	Ewerby Waithe Common Ewerby Sleaford	Solar Farm	James Jamieson	EIA Development - 15/12/2017
Ref 17/1122/FUL Appeal Ref: APP/R2520/W/18/3198226	Land Adjacent to Bramble Cottage, Scredington Road, Burton Pedwardine, Sleaford NG34 0BY	Erection of dwelling and detached double garage with associated site works (Re-submission 17/0280/FUL)	Mrs Lynda Targosz	Refused - 28/09/2017 Appeal dismissed - 08/08/2018
14/1003/FUL	Land Associated With Ewerby Thorpe Farm Ewerby Thorpe Sleaford NG34 9PR	Development of a solar photovoltaic power generating installation with associated inverter cabinets, transformers, switchgear, internal access tracks, security fencing and cameras	Mr Tom Vernon	Approved - 03/10/2014
14/1034/EIASCR	Land At Ewerby Thorpe	Erection of solar array with generating capacity of up to 28 MW and associated infrastructure	Andrew Troup	Non EIA - 18/08/2014
13/1257/EIASCR	Land Off Cow Drove West of White House Farm Cow Drove South Kyme Lincoln LN4 4AL	Request for a screening opinion in respect of the proposed erection of solar photovoltaic development on land off Cow Drove, west of White House Farm, Cow Drove, South Kyme, Lincoln LN4 4AL	Sally Walker	EIA Development - 15/11/2013
13/0604/EIASCR	Land West of Cow Drove South Drove South Kyme	Erection of a 30MWp solar farm	Sam Jones	EIA Development - 11/06/2013

REFERENCE NUMBER	ADDRESS	DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT	APPLICANT NAME	STATUS
13/0001/HOUS	Mastins Farmhouse Great Hale Drove Great Hale Sleaford Lincolnshire NG34 9LS	Erection of detached double garage and store	Mr And Mrs Mountain	Approved - 27/02/2013
09/0963/FUL	Layby A17 Near Boons Cottage Sleaford Road Asgarby Sleaford NG34 9QF	Siting of a mobile catering unit	S Rudd	Refused - 03/02/2010
08/0457/FUL	Mastins House Great Hale Fen Great Hale	Erection of double garage	Mr Mountain	Refused - 03/07/2008
07/1302/FUL	Mastins Farmhouse Great Hale Fen	Reroofing of dwelling including the installation of dormer windows, erection of double garage and porch	Mr and Mrs Mountain	Approved - 20/12/2007
07/0731/FUL	Gashes Barn Ewerby Fen	Erection of 9.6m high wind turbine	Mr & Mrs R Dolby	Approved - 07/08/2007

Appendix 1B: Boston Borough Council Planning History

Table 1B: Boston Borough Council Planning History

REFERENCE NUMBER	ADDRESS	DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT	APPLICANT NAME	STATUS
B/25/0224	Land East of Bicker Fen substation, Bicker Fen, Boston	Proposed installation and operation of a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) and other ancillary and associated infrastructure. Approximately1.2 GW electrical capacity.	Bicker Drove Limited	Validated 28/05/2025
B/25/0054	Gauntlet Solar Farm, Land at nr Bicker Fen, Bicker, Boston PE20 3PQ	Screening opinion under Regulation 6 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (as amended) with regard to the proposed development for a Solar Farm and Battery Energy Storage System (BESS)	Third Revolution Projects	EIA not required 10/03/2025
B/23/0300	Land South of Little Hale Drove, Vicarage Drove, Bicker Fen, Boston, PE20 3BF	Proposed Development of a Photovoltaic Solar Array, Grid Connection, Access Improvements and Ancillary Development on Land at Little Hale Fen, North Kesteven, Lincolnshire	Axis	Approved 19/02/2025
B/24/0374	Land North of Bicker Drove, Boston PE20 3BQ	Temporary planning permission for a period of 40 years for the erection of an Energy Storage System (ESS), with associated infrastructure, site levelling works, site access, landscaping and ancillary works	Net Zero Twenty Two Limited	Approved 05/02/2025
B/24/0363	Land to the south east of Vicarage Drove, Bicker Bar, Boston	Proposed development of a battery energy storage system and associated infrastructure	Vicarage Drove BESS Limited	Approved 05/02/2025
B/24/0415	Land off Vicarage Drove, Bicker Fen, Bicker, Boston	Proposed installation and operation of a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) and ancillary infrastructure and landscaping and biodiversity enhancements	FRV Powertek	Approved 05/02/2025

REFERENCE NUMBER	ADDRESS	DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT	APPLICANT NAME	STATUS
B/22/0356/NMA	Land to the west of Cowbridge Road, Bicker, Boston	Application under s96a for minor amendments to the approved layout following approval B/22/0356 (Proposed Development of a Photovoltaic Solar Array, Grid Connection, Access Improvements Works and Ancillary Development on Land at Bicker Fen, Boston and South Holland)	AGR Solar 2 Limited	Approved 30/09/2024
B/24/0266	Land off Vicarage Drove, Bicker Fen, Boston	Screening opinion under Regulation 6 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (as amended) to seek clarification on whether the works associated with the proposals to construct a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) would require an EIA	AECOM	EIA Development 25/07/2024
B/24/0245	Bicker Fen, Land off Vicarage Drove, Bicker Fen, Boston	Screening opinion under Regulation 6 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (as amended) with regard to the proposed development of a temporary Energy Storage System (ESS) for a period of up to 40 years, together with associated infrastructure, site levelling works, site access, landscaping and ancillary works	Tetra Tech	Non EIA Development 18/07/2024
B/22/0356/CD4	Land to the west of Cowbridge Road, Bicker, Boston	Application to discharge conditions C16 (Lighting), C17 (Tree Planting), C18 (Landscape and Ecological Management Plan) and C19 (Skylark Mitigation) of permission B/22/0356	AGR Solar 2 Limited	Approved (Partly) 16/07/2024
B/24/0231	Bicker Fen BESS, Land off Vicarage Drove, Bicker Fen, Boston	Screening opinion under Regulation 6 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (as amended) with regard to the proposed development of a battery	Stantec UK Ltd	Non EIA Development 08/07/2024

REFERENCE NUMBER	ADDRESS	DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT	APPLICANT NAME	STATUS
		energy storage system (BESS) with a capacity of up to 400 megawatts (MW)		
B/22/0356/CD5	Land to the west of Cowbridge Road, Bicker, Boston	Application to discharge conditions C13 (Construction Management Plan) and C14 (Public Highways) of permission B/22/0356	AGR Solar 2 Limited	Approved 05/07/2024
B/22/0356/CD6	Land to the west of Cowbridge Road, Bicker, Boston	Application to discharge condition C8 (Highways Safety - Construction and Decommissioning) of permission B/22/0356	AGR Solar 2 Limited	Approved 05/07/2024
B/21/0443/CD4	Land North West of Bicker, Vicarage Drove Solar Farm	Application to discharge Conditions 10 (Archaeological Investigation), C11 (Archaeological Evaluation) & C12 (Detailed Site Layout Plan) of permission B/21/0443	Vicarage Drove Energy Centre Limited	Accepted 03/07/2024
B/21/0443/CD5	Land North West of Bicker, Vicarage Drove Solar Farm, Bicker, Boston	Application to discharge Conditions C7 (Material Development Plan) & C8 (Construction Management Plan) of permission B/21/0443	Vicarage Drove Energy Centre Limited	Accepted 02/07/2024
B/22/0198/CD2	Land adj North West of Bicker Fen Substation, Bicker, Boston PE20 3BQ	Application to discharge conditions C3 (Selected Route Plan) and C4 (Construction Method Statement) of Permission B/22/0198 (Construction and installation of a 132kV underground electrical cable to connect Bicker Solar Farm to Bicker Fen Substation)	Vicarage Drove Energy Centre Limited	Approved 23/05/2024

REFERENCE NUMBER	ADDRESS	DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT	APPLICANT NAME	STATUS
B/21/0443/CD7	Land North West of Bicker, Vicarage Drove Solar Farm, Bicker, Boston	Application to discharge Condition 18 (Skylark Mitigation) of permission B/21/0443	Vicarage Drove Energy Centre Limited	Accepted 15/05/2024
B/21/0443/CD6	Land North West of Bicker, Vicarage Drove Solar Farm, Bicker, Boston	Application to discharge Conditions C15 (Landscaping Scheme) of permission B/21/0443	Vicarage Drove Energy Centre Limited	Accepted 07/05/2024
B/22/0198/CD3	Land adj North West of Bicker Fen Substation, Bicker, Boston PE20 3BQ	Application to discharge condition C6 (Construction Ecological Management Plan) of Permission B/22/0198 (Construction and installation of a 132kV underground electrical cable to connect Bicker Solar Farm to Bicker Fen Substation)	Vicarage Drove Energy Centre Limited	Approved 30/04/2024
B/22/0356/CD3	Land to the west of Cowbridge Road, Bicker, Boston	Application to discharge condition C12 (Foul & Surface Water Drainage Scheme) of permission B/22/0356	AGR Solar 2 Limited	Approved 25/03/2024
B/22/0198/CD1	Land adj North West of Bicker Fen Substation, Bicker, Boston PE20 3BQ	Application to discharge condition C5 (Scheme of Archaeological Investigation) of Permission B/22/0198 (Construction and installation of a 132kV underground electrical cable to connect Bicker Solar Farm to Bicker Fen Substation)	Vicarage Drove Energy Centre Limited	26/02/2024
B/23/0423	Land to South of Vicarage Drove, Bicker, Boston PE20 3BF	Screening opinion under Regulation 6 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 for proposed development of a battery storage facility	Axis	EIA Development 23/01/2024

REFERENCE NUMBER	ADDRESS	DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT	APPLICANT NAME	STATUS
B/22/0356/CD1	Land to the west of Cowbridge Road, Bicker, Boston	Application to discharge condition 20 (Training and Employment Management Plan) of permission B/22/0356	AGR Solar 2 Limited	Approved 22/12/2023
B/22/0356/CD2	Land to the west of Cowbridge Road, Bicker, Boston	Application to discharge condition 20 (Training and Employment Management Plan) of permission B/22/0356	AGR Solar 2 Limited	Approved 22/12/2023
B/22/0356	Land to the west of Cowbridge Road, Bicker, Boston	Proposed Development of a Photovoltaic Solar Array, Grid Connection, Access Improvements Works and Ancillary Development on Land at Bicker Fen, Boston and South Holland	AGR Solar 2 Limited	Approved 21/07/2023
B/22/0198	Land adj North West of Bicker Fen Substation, Bicker, Boston PE20 3BQ	Construction and installation of a 132kV underground electrical cable to connect	Renewable Connections Developments Ltd	23/09/2022
B/22/0276	South-West of Folkingham to Bicker Fen Bulk Supply Point, Boston PE20 3BF	Consultation EN010126 from the Planning Inspectorate to BBC for an Order granting Development Consent for the Temple Oaks Renewable Energy Park (the Proposed Development)	The Planning Inspectorate, Environmental Services	BBC Consultation Response 01/08/2022
B/21/0443	Land North West of Bicker, Vicarage Drove Solar Farm	Proposed construction and operation of a solar photovoltaic farm, battery storage and associated infrastructure, including inverters, batteries, substation compound, security cameras, fencing, access tracks and landscaping	Renewable Connections Developments Ltd	Accepted 17/02/2022

REFERENCE NUMBER	ADDRESS	DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT	APPLICANT NAME	STATUS
B/21/0412	Land to the North and West of Northorpe and to the West of Bicker	Request for a Screening Opinion under Regulation 6 of the Town and Country Planning (Environment Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 for a proposed Solar Farm including grid connection cabling extending to the national grid substation	C/O Axis	EIA Development 11/10/2021
B/21/0121	Land at Vicarage Drove, Bicker, Boston, PE20 3BF	Screening opinion under Regulation 6 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 for proposed solar farm, battery storage and associated infrastructure	Bowen	Non EIA 29/03/2021
B/19/0281	Land off Vicarage Drove, Bicker Fen, Boston, PE20 3BN	Construction of 20m by 15m fire appliance access and hardstanding near Triton Knoll substation	Triton Knoll Offshore Wind Farm Limited	Accepted 30/09/2019
B/17/0340	Land off Vicarage Drove, Bicker Fen, Boston, PE20 3BN	Installation of underground high voltage Direct Current cables for the Viking Link Interconnector project between proposed landfall at Boygrift in East Lindsey to a proposed converter station at North Ing Drove in South Holland; installation of underground alternating current cables from the converter station to the existing Bicker Fen 400 kV NGET Substation; as well as permanent access road to converter station, temporary facilities required during construction such as compounds and works areas are included within Boston Borough. (This application is for Environmental Impact Assessment development by virtue of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulation 2017	National Grid Viking Link Limited	Accepted 12/09/2018

REFERENCE NUMBER	ADDRESS	DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT	APPLICANT NAME	STATUS
B/18/0168	White House Barn, North Drove, Bicker, Boston, Lincolnshire, PE20 3BQ	Erection of two storey side extension	Mann	Accepted 20/06/2018
B/13/0424	Bicker Fen Substation, Vicarage Drove, Bicker Fen, Boston, PE20 3BF	Erection of a 25m high lattice tower, including 2 No. antenna dishes	Western Power Distribution	Accepted 05/02/2014
B/07/0731	Bicker Fen Wind Farm, Poplar Tree Farm, Bicker Drove, Bicker, Boston, Lincs	Application to vary position of the hard standings associated with the 13 wind turbines and associated development approved by permission B/03/0189 and erection of 57.5m high met. mast/tower. (Part retrospective)	Morleymor Fisher	Accepted 30/01/2008
B/07/0627	Land at VILLA FARM, Bicker Drove, Bicker, Boston, Lincolnshire, PE20 3BJ	Erection of 11,000 volt overhead line on wooden poles, with a tolerance of 30m either side of the route shown on drawing 130010617	Central Networks East	BBC Consultation 19/12/2007
B/07/0252	Land at Bicker Fen, Boston, Lincolnshire	Erection of 13 external transformers associated with approved wind turbines	Wind Prospect	Accepted 15/06/2007
B/07/0051	Land off Bicker Drove and near Poplartree Farm, Bicker, Boston	To erect an 11,000 volt overhead line on wood poles in the Parish of Bicker Fen with a tolerance of 30m either side of the route	Central Networks East	BBC Consultation no objections – 20/03/2007

Appendix 1C: South Holland District Council Planning History

Table 1C: South Holland District Council Planning History

REFERENCE NUMBER	ADDRESS	DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT	APPLICANT NAME	STATUS
H04-0769-24	Land to the West of Cowbridge Road Bicker Fen Boston Lincolnshire (Red Line Boundary crosses LPAs)	Proposed development of a photovoltaic solar array, grid connection, access improvement works & ancillary development on land at Bicker Fen, Boston and South Holland - approved under H04-0849-22. Amendment to remove the Solar Switchgear Building, Solar Control Building and Solar Storage Building adjacent to Cowbridge Road in Boston district. Revised Compound Layout and relocation of the above elements from the site entrance in Boston district.	AGR Solar 2 Limited	Approved 03/10/2024
H04-0849-22	Land West of Cowbridge Road Bicker Fen Boston (Red Line Boundary crosses LPAs)	Proposed development of a photovoltaic solar array, grid connection, access improvement works & ancillary development on land at Bicker Fen, Boston and South Holland	AGR Solar 2 Ltd	Approved 21/07/2023

Appendix 1D: Planning Inspectorate Planning History

Table 1D: Planning Inspectorate Planning History

REFERENCE NUMBER	ADDRESS	DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT	APPLICANT NAME	STATUS
EN0210006	The project is located at the boundary of the English/Scottish territorial waters, routing south to landfall on the Lincolnshire coast and then over land to two separate grid connection points within Lincolnshire.	Ossian is planned to have a generation capacity of up to 3.6GW and includes both the offshore and onshore infrastructure required to generate and transmit electricity from the Array to a power transmission substation.	Ossian Offshores Wind Farm Limited	Pre-application
EN010123	The site is located on land to the north of East Heckington and 3.5km south east of South Kyme (Connects to same substation as Proposed Development)	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	33km off the Lincolnshire coast to the Triton Knoll Substation in Lincolnshire (Connects to same substation)	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

Appendix 2: Site Selection Report

BEACON FEN ENERGY PARK

Planning Inspectorate Reference: EN010151

Site Selection Report
Document Reference: 5.5 (Appendix 2)
December 2025



The Planning Act 2008
The Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed Forms and Procedure) Regulations 2009 - Regulation 5(2)(q)

Quality information

Prepared by	Checked by	Verified by	Approved by
JM	CT	CT	CT

Revision History

Revision	Revision date	Details	Authorized	Name	Position
2	Dec 2025	Updated Sequential Test	Dec 2025	Lauren McGlil	Project Manager

Glossary

Abbreviation	Description
AC	Alternating Current
AIS	Air Insulated Switchgear
ALC	Agricultural Land Classification
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
EN-1	Overarching National Policy Statement for energy
EN-3	National Policy Statement for renewable energy infrastructure
EN-5	National Policy Statement for electricity networks infrastructure
GIS	Gas Insulated Switchgear
HV	High Voltage
IDB	Internal Drainage Board
LCC	Lincolnshire County Council
Low Carbon	Low Carbon Ltd
MW	Megawatts
NESO	National Electricity System Operator
NGR	National Grid Reference
NKDC	North Kesteven District Council
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
NPS	National Policy Statements
NSIP	Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project
Order	The Beacon Fen Energy Park Order
PAS	Potential Alternative Sites
PCU	Power Conversion Unit
PDL	Previously Developed Land
PINS	Planning Inspectorate
PoC	Point of Connection

Abbreviation	Description
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
SoS	Secretary of State
SSR	Site Selection Report

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Executive Summary

1. This Site Selection Report ('SSR') has been prepared by 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').

2. This SSR has followed a four stage assessment to evaluate the proposed Beacon Fen Energy Park location against other potential areas for solar development identified in order to establish whether the Proposed Development is in a comparatively suitable location for a proposed solar development requiring a land area of 300 ha.

3. The assessment resulted in the identification of two Potential Alternative Areas ('PAS') in excess of 300 ha and one which was slightly under but still taken forward. No PAS of suitable size were identified on previously developed land.

4. The PASs have been subject to further evaluation against assessment indicators to consider the suitability of these areas for solar development. The evaluation has concluded that no PASs are lower grade agricultural land than the Proposed Site and all are significantly constrained in comparison due to environmental, technical and land ownership factor.

5. Given the assessment findings it is considered that there are no more suitable locations to make use of the available capacity at Bicker Fen Substation than the proposed Site for the Beacon Fen Energy Park. The Proposed Development's location is therefore assessed to be suitable for the scale of solar development proposed and the basis on which the Applicant has selected the Site accords with the approach to the consideration of alternatives set out by paragraph 4.3.22 of National Policy Statement EN-1.

6. Furthermore, in relation to the Sequential Test, as covered in Annex G, it is considered that there are no suitable and reasonably available sites appropriate for the Proposed Development in areas with a lower risk of flooding and that the Site for the Proposed Development accordingly passes the sequential test.

1. Introduction

1.1 Overview

1.1.1 This Site Selection Report ('SSR') has been prepared by 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, BESS infrastructure and Onsite Substation) 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 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.

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 south-west 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 Asgarby Road and Heckington Road cross 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 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').

1.4.3 A 600MW BESS adjacent to the Onsite Substation is included in the Proposed Development within the Solar Array Area. 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, and the inverters to the onsite transformers. Higher voltage cables are required between the transformers and the switchgear and from switchgear to the Onsite 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 Onsite 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 a standard post and wire, deer fencing up to 3m tall around the Solar Array Area. Security fencing, up to 3.4m will be installed around the Onsite Substation compound 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 Onsite 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 large vehicles

(including first responder access to the BESS and Onsite 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 Proposed Development. The exact route of the permissive path will be determined via the discharge of requirement in the DCO, but it is anticipated to run in a south easterly direction along Car Dyke and then heading south west on the north side of Hodge Dike. An undetermined number of footbridges (unlikely to be more than 8 in number) to cross existing watercourses will be required and will require the usual water course crossing agreements to be sought with the relevant Internal Drainage Board in parallel with the discharge of the requirement.

Cable Route

1.4.11 The Cable Route 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 Vegetation and hedgerows lost during the construction of the Cable Route will be re-instated where possible in relation to easement restrictions.

Bespoke Access Road

1.4.14 A dedicated access from the A17 to the Solar Array Area is required. The Bespoke Access Road will be constructed in advance of material construction commencing on the Solar Array Area and will facilitate construction in that area. During construction, temporary construction compounds will be required which may be anywhere along the route.

1.4.15 The Bespoke Access 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 unless otherwise stated in the relevant Chapter, 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 Vegetation and hedgerows lost during the construction of the Bespoke Access Road will be re-instated.

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 (Document Ref: 3.1)**, and the areas in which each component (the 'Work Numbers') may be constructed are shown on the **Works Plans (Document Ref: 2.1)**.

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.

1.6 Purpose of this Document

1.6.1 The purpose of this report is to outline the reasons behind site selection for the Proposed Development and demonstrate the suitability of the proposed Site by presenting how other sites, which may potentially be suitable for the Proposed Development, perform relative to the Site where the Proposed Development is proposed to be located, taking into consideration a range of planning, environmental and operational factors. This report considers the location of the main operational solar farm site as a whole and does not consider the placement of different elements (for example, reversible and irreversible elements) within the proposed Site, or the selection of the cable route or access road.

1.6.2 This report also considers the application of the Sequential Test[1] with respect to the Proposed Development and the Site in Annex G.

1.6.3 Further details of the above and how other aspects of the Scheme layout have evolved and been selected are provided in the **Design and Access Approach Document (Document Ref: 5.6**) and **ES Chapter 3: Alternatives and Design Evolution (Document Ref. 6.2, ES Vol. 1, 6.2.3**) the latter of which also explains the legal and policy background to the consideration of alternatives.

1.6.4 This report sets out the process, results and conclusions of the SSR as follows:

- Section 2 describes the assessment methodology;
- Section 3 sets out the assessment results; and
- Section 4 summarises and draws conclusions from the assessment.

[1] See https://www.gov.uk/guidance/flood-risk-and-coastal-change#the-sequential-approach-to-the-location-of-development

1.6.5 There are also a number of supporting annexes, comprising:

- **Annex A: References;**
- **Annex B: Assessment Indicators and Evaluation Criteria;**
- **Annex C: Assessment Indicator Policy and Guidance Justification;**
- **Annex D: Assessment Mapping Results;**
- **Annex E: Land Ownership Information;**
- **Annex F: Potential Development Area Proformas; and**
- **Annex G: Sequential Test Assessment**

1.6.6 **Annex D** contains the following Figures:

- Figure 1: Search Area;
- Figure 2: Environmental Designations;
- Figure 3: Archaeology and Built Heritage;
- Figure 4: Public Rights of Way;
- Figure 5: Slope;
- Figure 6: Agricultural Land Classification;
- Figure 7: Flood Zones;
- Figure 8: Other Sites;
- Figure 9: Combined Constraints (less Flood Zones);
- Figure 10: Unconstrained Land;
- Figure 11: Potential Alternative Sites; and
- Figure 11a – 11c: Potential Alternative Sites with Constraints.

2. Background

2.1 Principles of Site Selection adopted by the Applicant

2.1.1 This section sets out the background and approach to the site selection process which the Applicant has undertaken and has resulted in the land that is subject to the Proposed Development being brought forward.

2.1.2 The Applicant has a corporate target to create 20 Gigawatts of renewable energy capacity and is well established in the consenting, developing and operation of solar farms. The Applicant 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.

2.1.3 The Applicant therefore set out to identify a site for a solar farm which:

- Would contribute to meeting the UK's urgent need for clean, renewable, energy generation;
- Would be in viable proximity to an available connection to the national grid;
- Would avoid impacts on local communities and local environments as far as practicable;
- Would be reasonably accessible from the strategic road network;
- Would be able to accommodate on-site energy storage to 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 and provide important balancing services for the national grid; and
- Would have willing landowners so that land could be acquired voluntarily thereby avoiding the need for large scale compulsory acquisition.

2.1.4 EN-3 identifies a number of likely key considerations involved in the siting of a solar farm, and further technical considerations. For the Applicant, the key considerations during the initial identification of a site were considered to be:

- Solar irradiation, which needs to be maximised to in turn maximise carbon emission savings and commercial viability;
- Network connection, which must be available and be of sufficient size to allow for a viable solar farm;
- Capacity of the site, which must allow for sufficient land for solar panels, associated infrastructure (including batteries and Onsite Substations), mitigations and enhancements to produce enough electricity to ensure viability.

2.2 Overview of the Site Selection Process

2.2.1 In comparison to some other areas of the UK, the east of England has a combination of high levels of irradiation and large flat open areas of land. The region also has a significant amount of pre-existing transmission infrastructure, which would reduce the likelihood that any new overhead infrastructure would be required to connect the generator to the transmission system. Therefore, the Applicant was looking for a site in the east of England for a large-scale solar farm.

2.2.2 In order to find a site which meets the above principles, the Applicant initially engaged with the National Electricity System Operator ('NESO') and began to look at a regional level at the general suitability of the South Lincolnshire and wider East Midlands with regards to its grid capacity. It was identified as a potential area due to the large thermal plant on the Trent coming offline (which indicated the future potential for capacity). Furthermore, it is considered to benefit from a general lack of constraints (due to its flat topography, relative lack of Green Belt land and national parks), good solar irradiance and limited tree cover/field boundaries due to the 19th century engineered nature of drainage and fields.

2.2.3 Discussions with NESO then advanced around the Bicker Fen Point of Connection, and connection dates.

2.2.4 The Applicant began to review large landholdings capable of entering into voluntary commercial agreements within timescales that would allow the connection date to be met. There was a particular focus on minimising the extent of Flood Zone 3 and Best and Most Versatile agricultural land. Both of these constraints are common around the Bicker Fen Point of Connection and as a result this search extended several kilometres outwards.

2.2.5 Upon identification of a small number of willing landowners the Applicant entered into negotiations on two continuous sites, known as Beacon Fen North and Beacon Fen South, while firming up the grid offer with NESO.

2.2.6 Beacon Fen South was later removed from the Proposed Development due to conflicts with Anglian Water's proposed Lincolnshire Reservoir while the Beacon Fen North Cable Route Corridor was refined following negotiations and further surveys and design work.

2.2.7 An additional check for land was also conducted at the time of removing BFS as to whether the addition of new areas of land to Beacon Fen North for a further solar array would better meet the project objectives and would allow moderately higher levels of generation within the range identified (i.e. closer to 600MW) but incorporating these would not achieve the connection date element of the project objectives outlined above and were, therefore, not taken forward.

3. Assessment Methodology

3.1 Context

3.1.1 There is no standard methodology for the site selection of solar farms. However, the methodology used in this assessment has been informed by relevant planning policy which is set out in **Annex C**.

3.1.2 The Proposed Development is defined as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project, being a generation project with a generation capacity in excess of 50MW. Therefore, an application for a DCO is required to seek consent for its construction and operation. The application will be considered and examined in public by an Examining Authority of appointed examining inspectors from the Planning Inspectorate. The appointed Examining Authority will examine the application for the Proposed Development and make a recommendation to the SoS who will then decide whether to grant a DCO.

3.1.3 National Policy Statements ('NPS') for Energy including Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy ('EN-1'), National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure ('EN-3') and National Policy Statement for Electricity Networks Infrastructure ('EN-5') which were published in November 2023 and came into force January 2024 are all directly relevant to the Proposed Development. Furthermore, the National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF') most recently updated in December 2024 and local planning policies also may form important and relevant considerations. National and local planning policies (please find references in **Annex A**) have therefore been considered in the development of the SSR methodology.

3.1.4 EN-1 paragraph 4.3.22 states *"the consideration of alternatives in order to comply with policy requirements should be carried out in a proportionate manner."* The assessment of potential solar farm development areas is therefore high level and primarily desk based. This approach is considered reasonable and proportionate and complies with the aforementioned policy.

3.1.5 EN-3 sets out a number of factors which influence site selection and/or design for solar photovoltaic generation. These have been taken into account within this report where relevant and comprise:

1. Irradiance and site topography (paragraphs 2.10.19 – 2.10.20);
2. Network connection (paragraphs 2.10.21 – 2.10.26);
3. Proximity of a site to dwellings (paragraph 2.10.27);
4. Agriculture land classification and land type (paragraph 2.10.28 – 2.10.34);
5. Accessibility (paragraphs 2.10.35 – 2.10.39);
6. Public rights of way (paragraphs 2.10.40 – 2.10.45); and
7. Security and lighting (paragraphs 2.10.46 – 2.10.48).

3.1.6 Security and lighting has not been considered in this report as this is a design matter rather than a site selection matter. Further information on this can be found in the Design and Access Approach Document (**Document Ref: 5.6**).

3.1.7 The NPS also mirrors established national policy in directing development towards areas of lower flood risk or seeking that such development is by exception and is of resilient design. Flood risk is therefore also, clearly, a siting consideration in policy and the Sequential test is considered in Annex G.

3.1.8 The assessment methodology used has been split into four stages which follow a logical and sequential approach to evaluate the proposed Beacon Fen Energy Park location against other potential areas for solar development identified in order to establish whether the Proposed Development is in a comparatively suitable location for a proposed solar development requiring a land area of at least 300 ha.

3.1.9 The performance of the potential alternative sites, along with a number of additional sites identified under a bespoke Sequential Test methodology, is set out in the Sequential Test described within Annex G.

3.2 Stage 1 - Identification of the Search Area

3.2.1 Irradiation (sunlight) levels and topography are key factors when determining the location of solar development. Solar developments are currently found across the UK; however, their efficiency is determined by the levels of irradiation at their location. The whole of England is well located geographically for solar gains. The Applicant therefore has no restrictions on where developments should be, located in relation to irradiation levels.

3.2.2 A viable grid connection is the key requirement for any energy related development. EN-1 paragraph 4.4.3 states that when considering alternative proposals, they should be commercially viable and physically suitable while paragraph 2.10.24 of EN-3 states that *"availability of network capacity, and the distance from the solar farm to the existing network can have a significant effect on the commercial feasibility of a development proposal."*

3.2.3 In order to achieve a viable grid connection, the Applicant had to first identify a potential connection which had capacity to take power onto the electrical grid. Furthermore, the potential connection had to also be available to the Applicant and not reserved for another developer. The Applicant then had to seek agreement for use of this connection.

3.2.4 The Applicant then had to identify an area in which a viable grid connection could likely be achieved between a potential site and the point of connection. If a potential site was located too far from the point of connection, i.e. outside of the search area, then the costs and difficulties of creating and maintaining the connection would make a potential site unviable, in addition to increasing the environmental and social impacts associated with the cable route.

3.3 Stage 2 – Identification of Unconstrained Land

3.3.1 Stage 2 of the SSR has included the mapping of planning, environmental and other spatial constraints which have been identified through a review of the relevant national and local planning policies, as well as potential constraints

relating to viability and cumulative impact such as slope and existing schemes respectively. The constrained areas have been excluded from the area of search identified at Stage 1 and are therefore not considered as suitable locations for the Scheme. The following constraints were mapped and excluded if found within the search area:

a. Certain Environmental Designations – Ancient Woodland, Local Nature Reserves, Sites of Special Scientific Interest and Important Bird Areas were identified and excluded.

b. Certain Archaeological and Built Heritage Designations – Conservation Areas, Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Registered Parks and Gardens were identified and excluded. Listed Buildings were also included on the mapping for reference.

c. Topography – land with a slope of greater than 10% as such topographies are likely to make it more difficult and costly to construct and screen an efficient solar farm, to the point where it is likely to be unviable. Data for topography is derived from OS Terrain.

d. Agricultural Land Classification ('ALC') – agricultural land that was a higher grade than the proposed Site, which is classed as Grade 3 for the purposes of this assessment, according to the nationally available provisional ALC data was excluded (Therefore Grade 1 and 2 agricultural land was excluded). It would not be practical or appropriate to intrusively survey large tracts of agricultural land within the large search area hence predictive mapping data informs he initial site selection process.

e. Other Existing/Proposed Solar Sites – A search of national and local planning registers and satellite imagery was undertaken to identify existing and proposed solar sites within the search area, and the relevant land was excluded. The proposed site of the Lincolnshire Reservoir was also excluded.

f. Urban Areas – Urban areas, identified via the 'Urban' layer in the nationally available provisional ALC data, were excluded.

2.3.2 As much of the Site is located within Flood Zones 2 and 3, these were not included as a constraint at this stage, as it was considered likely that any alternative sites located in Flood Zones 2 and 3 could include similar mitigation measures to the Proposed Development. However,, this has been mapped and consideration of this is included in Stage 4 of the assessment and the Sequential Test Assessment at Annex G.

3.4 Stage 3 – Identification of Potential Alternative Sites

3.4.1 Stage 3 of the SSR identifies potential alternative solar development areas for the location of the Scheme by applying the key operational criteria for large scale solar development - site size and land assembly; and topography. The use of previously developed (brownfield) land and has also been considered. The following sections explain the criteria applied to the unconstrained areas identified at Stage 2.

Greenfield Land Search

3.4.2 Large, open areas of land are ideal for large scale solar development as they have less vegetation to be removed for easy installation of the solar infrastructure. This also reduces the amount of buffering required for tree root protection, avoidance of shading compared to small fields and can reduce the solar development's impact on vegetation such as hedgerows and trees.

3.4.3 The Applicant's analysis regarding the minimum area for large scale solar to be economically viable identified a threshold of at least 300 ha of mainly continuous land for this site. This is considered to be the likely minimum land area (excluding cable route) required to support the 400 MW grid capacity available at the PoC.

3.4.4 The minimum individual site size and overall area threshold is based upon the Applicant's economic analysis of the MW output per ha to be achieved taking into consideration infrastructure costs including the grid connection and the need for a percentage of the land to provide appropriate environmental mitigation as required. A smaller development area would not be able to provide the same output and would result in higher unit costs, so an assessment was made as to the maximum unit cost and therefore minimum site area threshold that would be viable for the Proposed Development to make best use of the grid connection, provide optimal amount of clean power and benefits and to hit the target financial metrics. Furthermore, it should be noted that while 300 ha is the minimum required site size, a larger site would typically be preferable as it would offer potential for the production of more renewable energy.

3.4.5 In order for a site to be considered 'continuous' for the purposes of this assessment, it must comprise agricultural fields which are adjacent and not bisected by any public roads or active railway lines, although a site could cross agricultural tracks and PRoWs. Farmsteads and areas of woodland were included within potential alternative sites unless they were on the edge, in which case they were excluded. Like the Proposed Site, at least part of any alternative site had to be within the 10 km Search Area.

3.4.6 Continuous areas of unconstrained land of at least 300 ha were therefore taken forward to the Stage 4 assessment.

3.4.7 As the proposed Site is continuous, collections of non-continuous sites which when taken together cover an area greater than 300 ha were not considered as there would be likely increased costs in surveying, designing, screening, connecting and legally securing (with reference to land ownership) multiple separate sites which would impact viability and make them incomparable to the continuous Proposed Site.

Previously Developed Land ('PDL') Search

3.4.8 Opportunities for solar arrays on previously developed land ('PDL')/brownfield land were explored.

3.4.9 Commercial rooftops have not been considered because (i) there are no known rooftops of sufficient size in the area and (ii) it is considered that assessing the potential for development of multiple rooftops is not comparable or realistic when considered relative to a ground-mounted solar farm, particularly of this scale. Furthermore, paragraph 013 (REF:5-013-20150327)

in the Government's National Planning Practice Guidance states that in considering ground-mounted solar farms, the focus should be on the effective use of previously developed and non-agricultural land. Rooftops are not mentioned.

3.4.10 An assessment of the PDL/brownfield land registers of Local Planning Authorities ('LPAs') within the search area was undertaken to identify potential areas of PDL with an area greater than 300 ha.

3.5 Stage 4 – Evaluation of Potential Alternative Sites

3.5.1 Stage 4 then assesses the potential solar development areas which have been identified as alternatives to the Proposed Development's location in Stage 3. These Potential Alternative Sites ('PAS') have been subjected to a desktop assessment in order to further understand the development constraints of these particular areas and establish how they perform relative to the Proposed Development's location. The evaluation has involved the assessment of the areas against a range of planning, environmental and operational considerations (see **Annex B**) which were developed having regard to relevant national and local planning policy and the optimal functionality of a large scale solar development.

3.5.2 Information sources which include GIS data, online mapping and planning policy documents (see **Annex A**) have been used to inform the assessment. The evidence has then been considered by planning professionals who have awarded a category of red, amber or green against each assessment indicator based on professional judgement, and verified by the Applicant's team (see **Annex F**). A statement setting out the justification for each categorisation has also been provided.

3.5.3 Although not included as a Constraint in Stage 3, Flood Zones 2 and 3 have been included for evaluation in Stage 4 of the Assessment and within the Sequential Test Assessment at Annex G, for which there is a preference for Flood Zone 1 Land.

3.5.4 Areas have then been evaluated on their overall performance against the planning, environmental and operational considerations.

4. Assessment Results

4.1 Stage 1: Identification of the Search Area

4.1.1 As discussed above, the Applicant identified a Point of Connection ('PoC') and then begun to search for a suitable site.

4.1.2 Once the Bicker Fen Substation had been identified as a suitable PoC with capacity for the connection of a solar farm, a suitable search area had to be identified. The closer a site is to the PoC the more likely it is to be viable, with more distant sites requiring longer and more complicated cable connections resulting in higher costs which would eventually make a solar farm the size of the Proposed Development unviable.

4.1.3 With this in mind, given the size of the available capacity at the PoC, and therefore the maximum capacity of any solar farm, the Applicant initially looked for land within a 10km radius of the PoC (the 'Search Area') as it was considered that a solar farm of this maximum capacity could include a connection of around 10km and remain likely to be viable. The cost estimate applied a distance factor of 1.5 to the 10km radius assuming the cable would not run in a straight line and a set of industry assumptions for the cost of the infrastructure by units and distance. Due to constraints around the PoC the closest suitable identified site was just within 10km of the PoC.

4.1.4 The Project originally comprised Beacon Fen North and Beacon Fen South. At that time, the land available within the two land parcels would, conceivably, have allowed for a fully optimised design relative to the grid offer of 600MW export connection and allow for any uncertainties over initial site constraints to be factored in. At the point that Beacon Fen South was removed from the Proposed Development, there was more information available through survey work to demonstrate that Beacon Fen North (now just Beacon Fen Energy Park) is well in excess of the minimum 300 ha and could continue to support 400MW of solar export. The connection agreement is for 600MW import and 600MW export therefore, in relation to the BESS component of the Project, it is still viable and beneficial to continue with a 600MW BESS. Given the decreased solar export capacity of the Proposed Development the length of the cable is considered of increased importance, as an increase in length will have a greater impact on viability.

4.1.5 In light of the above, a 10km Search Area has been used within this SSR as alternative sites outside of this area would have their viability risked by increased distance of a cable connection and not be comparable as alternatives.

4.1.6 Only the closest part of the Proposed Site to the PoC is located within the Search Area and the cable connection will come from this direction. As a result, in the consideration of alternatives only the closest part of any alternative sites to the PoC will need to be located within the Search Area.

4.1.7 Figure 1 of **Annex D** shows the Search Area around the Point of Connection.

4.2 Stage 2: Identification of Unconstrained Land

4.2.1 The results of Stage 2 are identified in Figures 1 – 9 of **Annex D**. These figures map the various planning and environmental constraints identified within the area of search. Figure 10 shows the output from this sift mapping, identifying areas of unconstrained land which have not been excluded from the Stage 1 and 2 sifting exercise.

4.3 Stage 3: Identification of Potential Alternative Sites

4.3.1 As mentioned above, Figure 10 of **Annex D** shows the unconstrained land identified following the Stage 2 exercise. Figure 11 shows all of the PAS identified as being in excess of 300 ha, and one PAS which was included as it came close to 300 ha (PAS2). Figures 11a – 11c show more detailed maps of the individual PAS along with the constraints in their vicinities.

4.3.2 With regards to PDL, a review of the latest available relevant brownfield land registers was undertaken.

4.3.3 The relevant LPAs were NKDC, South Kesteven District Council, South Holland District Council, BBC and East Lindsay District Council. While the Search Area did not overlap with the administrative area of East Lindsay District Council, given the close proximity it was considered possible that a PDL site on the East Lindsay Brownfield Land Register could overlap across administrative borders and into the Search Area. Therefore, the relevant brownfield land registers were as follows:

- North Kesteven Brownfield Land Register, most recently reviewed on 30 November 2023;
- South Kesteven Brownfield Land Register, accessed online 05 February 2024;
- South Holland Brownfield Land Register, dated 2023;
- Boston Brownfield Land Register, dated 2023; and
- East Lindsay Brownfield Land Register, dated 2021/22.

3.3.4 The review of PDL did not identify any PAS in excess of, or close to, 300 ha within the Search Area.

4.4 Stage 4: Evaluation of Potential Alternative Sites

4.4.1 Figures 11a – 11c of **Annex D** show the abovementioned PAS along with their surrounding contexts and constraints, including Flood Zones 2/3.

4.4.2 **Annex D** provides Land Ownership Information for the Proposed Site and each of the PAS. **Annex F** provides the desktop assessment of the three identified PAS against planning, environmental and operational criteria. A summary of each is included in the remainder of this section.

4.4.3 As mentioned above, the alternative sites investigated as part of the alternatives sites assessment within a 10km radius of the Point of Connection ('POC') will all have almost identical irradiance to those assessed for the

Proposed Development. Any differences would be insignificant and as such this was not considered in the assessment.

PAS 1

4.4.4 PAS 1 is located east of the village of Howell, approximately 900 m north of the village of Heckington and southwest of the village of South Kyme and covers an area of approximately 524 ha, within the administrative area of North Kesteven District Council. PAS 1 wraps around the east and south of the Proposed Site. PAS 1 is shown in Figure 11a of **Annex E**.

4.4.5 PAS 1 currently comprises Grade 3 agricultural land with small areas of woodland and water features scattered through it. There are also a number of farmsteads and other agricultural buildings scattered across it.

4.4.6 EIA Screening Requests were submitted to North Kesteven Council in 2014 and 2017 for solar farms located west of PAS 1. However, no planning applications have since been forthcoming. No further relevant planning history was identified. A proposed solar farm is located north west of PAS 1.

4.4.7 The closest point of the PAS 1 is located approximately 8.8 km north of the Point of Connection and a hypothetical cable route would need to cross a railway line, the A17 and South Fort Foot Drain.

4.4.8 PAS 1 is located directly adjacent to a Scheduled Monument in the village of South Kyme known as 'Remains of medieval monastery, moated manor house, fishponds and post-medieval garden'. South Kyme also contains a Grade I Listed Building, two Grade II* Listed Buildings and on Grade II Listed Building.

4.4.9 PAS 1 is made up of 25 different land titles owned by 15 different sets of proprietors. Six of the sets of proprietors comprise multiple owners. The Applicant approached one of the major landowners during the site search and they were not interested in the development of a solar farm on their land.

4.4.10 There are no ecology or landscape designations located on or adjacent to PAS 1. It is considered likely that a suitable construction access to PAS 1 could be provided and that solar array shading and field patterns would not present a constraint relating to the efficiency and construction of a hypothetical solar farm.

4.4.11 Approximately 50% of PAS 1 is located in Flood Zones 2 and 3, but it achieves the minimum 25% of Flood Zone 1 required to accommodate BESS and substations and is adjacent to the Proposed Site where levels were such that appropriate design and mitigation measures ensured it was not a constraint.

4.4.12 As PAS 1 comprises Grade 3 agricultural land according to the nationally available provisional ALC data, it is not known to be lower grade than the Proposed Site.

4.4.13 Due to the proximity of PAS 1 to heritage assets, its large number of different land titles, the majority of which have multiple owners, and the fact one major landowner was previously contacted and has already indicated they were not interested in a potential solar farm, PAS 1 is considered to be significantly constrained compared to the Proposed Site.

PAS 2

4.4.14 PAS 2 is located north of the villages of Northbeck and Scredington, south of the village of Burton Gorse and west of the village of Burton Pedwardine, within the administrative area of North Kesteven District Council, across a railway line, and covers an area of approximately 277 ha. PAS 2 is below the 300 ha minimum size for consideration but was included in this assessment for robustness. PAS 2 is shown in Figure 11b of **Annex F**.

4.4.15 PAS 2 currently comprises Grade 3 agricultural land with small areas of woodland and water features scattered through it. There is also one agricultural building located within it.

4.4.16 A review of the North Kesteven District Council Planning Online interactive map identifies proposed solar farms located directly west (23/1419/FUL), 700 m west (19/0060/FUL) and 750 m north (19/0863/FUL) of PAS 2. There is also an existing solar farm located approximately 470 m north of PAS 2.

4.4.17 The closest point of the PAS 2 is located approximately 8.8 km west of the Point of Connection and a hypothetical cable would need to cross a railway line and South Forty Foot Drain.

4.4.18 A Scheduled Ancient Monument known as 'Thorny Close moated site, Northbeck' is located directly south of PAS 2. Additional Scheduled Monuments known as 'Hall Close moated manorial complex', 'Packhorse bridge, Northbeck', 'Mareham Grange' and 'Boundary cross, Mareham Lane' are located approximately 210 m south, 260 m south' 330 m north and 300 m west of PAS 2 respectively.

4.4.19 There are a number of large areas of woodland located adjacent to and within PAS 2 to its north west. These have the potential to cause shading over a sizeable area of PAS 2.

4.4.20 PAS 2 is made up of five different land titles owned by five different sets of proprietors. Three of the sets of proprietors comprise multiple landowners. The Applicant approached one of the major landowners during the site search and they were not interested in the development of a solar farm on their land.

4.4.21 There are no ecology or landscape designations located on or adjacent to PAS 2. It is considered likely that a suitable construction access to PAS 2 could be provided and that field patterns would not present a constraint relating to the construction of a hypothetical solar farm. Between 75% and 100% of PAS 2 is located in Flood Zone 1.

4.4.22 As PAS 2 comprises Grade 3 agricultural land according to the nationally available provisional ALC data, it is not known to be lower grade than the Proposed Site.

4.4.23 Due to the size of PAS 2 as well as its proximity to heritage assets and other existing/proposed solar farms, a major landowner not being interested and a potential for solar shading PAS 2 is considered to be significantly constrained compared to the Proposed Site.

PAS 3

4.4.24 PAS 3 is located east of Threekingham, south of the A52 (Holland Road), north west of Horbling and approximately 550 m north east of Billingborough covering an area of approximately 313 ha, within the administrative areas of North Kesteven District Council and South Kesteven District Council. PAS 3 is shown in Figure 11c of **Annex F**.

4.4.25 PAS 3 currently comprises Grade 3 agricultural land with small areas of woodland and water features scattered through it. It is also crossed by dismantled railway and briefly by a layby off the A52.

4.4.26 The closest point of PAS 3 is located approximately 8.1 km west of the Point of Connection and a hypothetical cable route would need to cross a railway line, the A52 and Forty Foot Drain.

4.4.27 PAS 3 is crossed by a large number of footpaths and one restricted Byway.

4.4.28 PAS 3 is located directly adjacent to the Horbling Conservation Area and approximately 500 m north of the Billingborough Conservation Area, both of which contain a large number of Listed Buildings including Grade 1 Listed Buildings.

4.4.29 PAS 3 is made up of 10 different land titles owned by five different sets of proprietors. One of the sets of proprietors comprises multiple landowners. PAS 3 is dominated by Crown Land, which it is would introduce potential delivery risk in circumstances where voluntary agreement was not possible, due to inability to exercise compulsory acquisition rights over such land. There is no common land within PAS 3.

4.4.30 There are no ecology or landscape designations located on or adjacent to PAS 3. It is considered likely that a suitable construction access to PAS 3 could be provided and that solar array shading and field patterns would not present a constraint relating to the efficiency and construction of a hypothetical solar farm. Almost 100% of PAS 3 is located within Flood Zone 1.

4.4.31 As PAS 3 comprises Grade 3 agricultural land according to the nationally available provisional ALC data, it is not known to be lower grade than the Proposed Site.

4.4.32 Due to the proximity of PAS 3 to heritage assets, the large PRoW network which crosses it and the presence of significant amounts of Crown Land, PAS 3 is considered to be significantly constrained compared to the Proposed Site.

Sequential Test

4.4.33 The Sequential Test is considered in Annex G of this report. It is considered that there are no suitable and reasonably available sites appropriate for the Proposed Development in areas with a lower risk of flooding and that the Site for the Proposed Development accordingly passes the Sequential Test.

5. Summary and Conclusions

5.1.1 This Site Selection Report has followed a four stage assessment to evaluate the proposed Beacon Fen Energy Park location against other potential areas for solar development identified in order to establish whether the Proposed Development is in a comparatively suitable location for a proposed solar development requiring a land area of 300 ha.

5.1.2 Based on the capacity identified at the PoC, Bicker Fen Substation, and the land searches carried out by the Applicant, the assessment has considered alternatives within a Search Area of 10 km.

5.1.3 Stages 2 and 3 of the assessment have involved GIS mapping to exclude environmental and planning constraints and apply operational considerations such as development area and topography. It was considered that any PAS had to be one continuous site at a minimum size of 300 ha.

5.1.4 The assessment resulted in the identification of two PASs in excess of 300 ha and one which was slightly under but still taken forward. No PAS of suitable size were identified on previously developed land.

5.1.5 The PASs have been subject to further evaluation, as set out in **Annex F**, using readily available information sources, against assessment indicators to consider the suitability of these areas for solar development. The evaluation has concluded that no PASs are lower grade agricultural land than the Proposed Site and all are significantly constrained in comparison due to environmental, technical and land ownership factor.

5.1.6 Given the assessment findings it is considered that there are no more suitable locations to make use of the available capacity at Bicker Fen Substation than the proposed Site for the Beacon Fen Energy Park. The Proposed Development's location is therefore assessed to be suitable for the scale of solar development proposed and the basis on which the Applicant has selected the Site accords with the approach to the consideration of alternatives set out by paragraph 4.3.22 of NPS EN-1.

5.1.7 Furthermore, in relation to the Sequential Test Assessment, as included in Annex G, , it is considered that there are no suitable and reasonably available sites appropriate for the Proposed Development in areas with a lower risk of flooding and that the Site for the Proposed Development accordingly passes the sequential test.

Annex A: Reference Sources

Annex A: Reference Sources

BRE (2013) Planning guidance for the development of large-scale ground mounted solar PV systems.

Local

Central Lincolnshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee (2023) Central Lincolnshire Local Plan 2017 – 2040.

Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (2024) National Planning Policy Framework.

Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (2023) Overarching National Policy Statement for energy (EN-1).

Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (2023) National Policy Statement for renewable energy infrastructure (EN-3).

Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (2023) National Policy Statement for electricity networks infrastructure (EN-5).

East Lindsey District Council (2018) East Lindsey Local Plan Core Strategy.

Lincolnshire County Council (2016) Lincolnshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2016.

South East Lincolnshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee (2019) South East Lincolnshire Local Plan 2011 – 2036.

South Kesteven District Council (2010) South Kesteven Local Plan 2011 – 2036.

The Solar Design Company (2016) Introduction to Solar Shading.

UK Government (2008) Planning Act 2008.

Annex B: Assessment Indicators and Evaluation Criteria BFEP Appendices

Annex B: Assessment Indicators and Evaluation Criteria

B.1 LAND USE

Assessment Indicator: Does the potential alternative site have any existing land uses/development allocations/ safeguarded areas/extant planning permissions within or adjacent to it which would potentially conflict with the proposed development having regard to the following evaluation criteria?

- Type of existing land uses within and adjacent to the potential alternative site
- Extant planning permissions within the potential alternative site
- Local plan/ emerging local plan development allocations within the potential alternative site
- Number and density of public rights of way within the potential alternative site

	The potential alternative site has the potential to conflict with existing land uses, extant planning permissions and policy allocations which would be difficult to avoid.
	The potential alternative site has the potential to conflict with existing land uses, extant planning permissions and policy allocations which can be avoided.
	The potential alternative site has no land use conflicts

B.2 DELIVERABILITY OF GRID CONNECTION

Is the potential alternative site's grid connection likely to encounter constraints e.g. crossing of roads, rivers and railway and sensitive environmental designations and require significant land take, having regard to the following evaluation criteria?

- Type and number of constraints and designations
- Length of connection

	The potential alternative site has potential to have significant constraints to achieve its grid connection which would be very difficult to mitigate/overcome.
	The potential alternative site has potential to have some constraints to achieve its grid connection.
	The potential alternative site is unlikely to encounter any constraints to achieve its grid connection

B.3 ECOLOGY AND BIODIVERSITY

Assessment Indicator: Is the potential alternative site likely to adversely impact any internationally, nationally or locally designated site of ecological, biological or geological importance, habitats identified as being of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity having regard to the following evaluation criteria?

- Proximity of designated sites
- Level of designation and sensitivity of those designated sites
- Potential for provision of mitigation measures

	The potential alternative site has potential to have a significant adverse impact on an internationally, nationally or locally designated site of ecological, biological or geological importance, protected species, habitats identified as being of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity, which may be difficult to mitigate.
	The potential alternative site has potential for some adverse impact on an internationally, nationally or locally designated site of ecological, biological or geological importance, protected species, habitats identified as being of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity, which could be mitigated through appropriate buffers and management measures.
	The potential alternative site is unlikely to impact upon on an internationally, nationally or locally designated site of ecological, biological or geological importance, habitats identified as being of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity.

B.4 LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL

Assessment Indicator: Is the potential alternative site likely to adversely impact a locally or nationally designated landscape, or sensitive viewpoints, having regard to the following evaluation criteria?

- Proximity of the potential alternative site from locally or nationally designated landscape, or sensitive viewpoints
- Sensitivity and number of locally or nationally designated landscape, or potentially sensitive viewpoints such as from public rights of way or other public locations
- Proximity of the potential alternative site from local community receptors
- Location of public rights of way within and adjacent to the potential alternative site
- Potential for provision of screening or other mitigation measures

	The potential alternative site has the potential to have a significant adverse impact on a locally or nationally designated landscape, or important/sensitive viewpoints, which may be difficult to mitigate.
	The potential alternative site has potential to have some adverse impact on a locally or nationally designated landscape, or important/sensitive viewpoints, which may be difficult to mitigate.
	The potential alternative site is unlikely to have an adverse impact on a locally or nationally designated landscape, or important/sensitive viewpoints, other than one which is unlikely to be difficult to mitigate.

B.5 CULTURAL HERITAGE

Assessment Indicator: Is the potential alternative site likely to adversely impact designated heritage assets, having regard to the following evaluation criteria?

- Proximity to designated heritage assets
- Level and sensitivity of designated heritage assets
- Potential for screening the potential alternative site from the asset

	The potential alternative site has potential to have harm to a large number of designated heritage assets, which may be difficult to avoid and mitigate.
	The potential alternative site has potential to have harm to a large number of designated heritage assets but could incorporate mitigation e.g. buffers/screening or has potential to

	have harm to a small number of designated heritage assets which may be difficult to mitigate/avoid.
	The potential alternative site is likely to cause harm to a small number of designated assets and can accommodate appropriate buffers/mitigation measures to reduce impacts.

B.6 ACCESS FOR CONSTRUCTION TRAFFIC

Assessment Indicator: Is the local road network, from the primary road network to the potential alternative site, suitable for HGV access, having regard to the following evaluation criteria?

- General suitability of the public highway
- Distance to the primary road network
- Sensitivity of land uses along the route to the primary road network
- Physical or engineering constraints (bridges, level crossings, visibility, access points etc.)
- Access to fields without having to remove hedgerows
- Potential for construction of new access to public highway if required

	The local road network has significant constraints to HGV access or there is low potential for the construction of a new access.
	The local road network has some constraints to HGV access which can likely be overcome.
	The local road network is suitable for HGV access.

B.7 FLOOD RISK

Assessment Indicator: Is the potential alternative site likely to be constrained by the risk of flooding, having regard to the following evaluation criteria?

- Proximity to nearby watercourses
- Proportion of the potential alternative site within Flood Zone 2 or 3

	The majority of the potential alternative site is within an area with moderate or significant risk of flooding.
	The majority of the potential alternative site is within an area with no or a low risk of flooding, but part of the area is within an area with a moderate or significant risk of flooding.
	The potential alternative site is entirely within an area with no or a low risk of flooding.

B.8 SOLAR ARRAY SHADING

Assessment Indicator: Is the potential alternative site likely to be constrained by features which would result in shading, having regard to the following factors?

- Type and coverage (number) of features that might shade e.g. trees/woodland

	The majority of the potential alternative site is at risk of solar array shading.
	The majority of the potential alternative site is not at risk of solar array shading but part of the site is.
	Almost all of the site is not at risk of solar array shading.

B.9 LAND ASSEMBLAGE

Assessment Indicator: Is the potential alternative site likely to be constrained by land ownership details which could make land assemblage more difficult, having regard to the following evaluation criteria?

- Number of land owners
- Presence of Crown Estate land
- Prescence of common land

	There is Crown Estate or common land present within the potential alternative site, or there are a very larger number of different land owners.
	The potential alternative site is owned by a relatively large number of landowners with no Crown Estate or common land present.
	The potential alternative site is owned by a relatively small number of landowners with no Crown Estate or common land present.

B.10 FIELD PATTERN

Assessment Indicator: Is the potential alternative site made up of fields which are shaped and arranged in a regular pattern which is unlikely to result in additional complexities and costs in construction which could impact viability, having regard to the following evaluation criteria?

- General shape of fields
- Arrangement of fields

	The potential alternative site is largely made up of fields of irregular shape and/or in an extremely long, narrow arrangement
	The potential alternative site features some fields of an irregular shape or in a slightly long, narrow arrangement.
	The potential alternative site is generally made of fields of a regular shape in a compact arrangement.

Annex C: Assessment Indicator Policy and Guidance Justification

Stage 2: Spatial Mapping Constraints/ Stage 4 Assessment Indicator	Justification	Relevant National Planning Policy	Relevant Local Planning Policy
Land Use	National and local planning policy outlines that we should aim to minimise the loss of the 'best and most versatile agricultural land', which includes grades 1, 2 and 3a of Agricultural Land Classification. It is preferable that land that does not come under this classification should be used, such as grades 3b, 4 and 5. Policy also promotes the use of brownfield land (previously developed land). Agricultural land is only to be used in the case of there being no suitable previously developed land. A number of designations are protected by policy, including local amenity, mineral resources, public rights of way and development uses.	**NPS EN-1** Paragraph 5.11.8 Paragraph 5.11.9 Paragraph 5.11.14 Paragraph 5.11.21 **NPS EN-3** Paragraph 2.10.33 Paragraph 2.10.34 **NPPF** Paragraph 88 Paragraph 96 Paragraph 98 Paragraph 100 Paragraph 225	**Central Lincolnshire Local Plan 2017 – 2040 (Adopted April 2023)** S1: The Spatial Strategy and Settlement Hierarchy S2: Growth Levels and Distribution S5: Development in the Countryside S47: Accessibility and Transport S53: Design and Amenity **South East Lincolnshire Local Plan 2011 – 2036 (Adopted March 2019)** Policy 1: Spatial Strategy Policy 2: Development Management Policy 31: Climate Change and Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Policy 33: Delivering a more Sustainable Transport Network **South Kesteven Local Plan 2011 – 2036 (Adopted January 2020)** SP1: Spatial Strategy SP4: Development on the Edge of Settlements SP4: Development in the Open Countryside EN3: Green infrastructure RE1: Renewable Energy Generation ID1: Infrastructure for Growth ID2: Transport and Strategic Transport Infrastructure **East Lindsey Local Plan Core Strategy (Adopted July 2018)** SP1: A Sustainable Pattern of Places SP3: Housing Growth and the Location of Inland Growth SP25: Green Infrastructure SP27: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy **Lincolnshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2016** M11: Safeguarding of Mineral Resources M12: Safeguarding of Existing Mineral Sites and Associated Minerals Infrastructure
Grid Connection	It is beneficial to be as close as possible to the point of connection (POC) to the national grid. This is in order to minimise any potential impacts associated with the longer connection infrastructure, in the forms of cable routes, on the environment and to avoid any complexities regarding land ownership.	**NPS EN-1** Paragraph 4.11.5 Paragraph 4.11.6 **NPS EN-3** Paragraph 2.10.26	**Relevant Guidance The Solar Design Company** https://www.solardesign.co.uk/mcs-shading.php (Accessed November 2024) **BRE: Planning guidance for the development of large scale ground mounted solar PV systems** https://files.bregroup.com/solar/KN5524_Planning_Guidance_reduced.pdf (Accessed November 2024)
Ecology & Biodiversity	National and local planning policy aims to protect designated sites of ecological, biological and geological importance. Protected species, habitats and species of designated importance for conservation are also of consideration. Protected habitats are also to be considered, such as	**NPS EN-1** Paragraph 5.4.3 Paragraph 5.4.6	**Central Lincolnshire Local Plan 2017 – 2040 (Adopted April 2023)** S60: Protecting Biodiversity and Geodiversity S61: Biodiversity Opportunity and Delivering Measurable Net Gains

	ancient woodland. National policy expects applications to be refused if significant harm comes to these designations resulting from the development, unless they can be adequately mitigated or compensated for.	Paragraph 5.4.7 Paragraph 5.4.8 Paragraph 5.4.9 Paragraph 5.4.10 Paragraph 5.4.12 **NPS EN-3** Paragraph 2.10.76 Paragraph 2.10.80 Paragraph 2.10.83 Paragraph 2.10.90 **NPPF** Paragraph 187 Paragraph 193 Paragraph 194 Paragraph 198	**South East Lincolnshire Local Plan 2011 – 2036 (Adopted March 2019)** Policy 19: Rural Exceptions Sites Policy 28: The Natural Environment Policy 31: Climate Change and Renewable and Low Carbon Energy **South Kesteven Local Plan 2011 – 2036 (Adopted January 2020)** EN2: Protecting Biodiversity and Geodiversity **East Lindsey Local Plan Core Strategy (Adopted July 2018)** SP24: Biodiversity and Geodiversity **Lincolnshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2016** DM7: Internationally designated sites of Biodiversity Conservation Value DM9: Local Sites of Biodiversity Conservation Value
Landscape & Visual	Planning policy affords the highest protection to nationally designated landscapes such as National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty) and also aims to avoid impacts on sensitive visual receptors. Outside nationally designated areas, there are local landscapes that may be highly valued locally and protected by local designation. Paragraph 5.10.17 of the NPS EN-1 expects the consideration of local policies for DCO applications where a local development document in England has policies based on landscape character assessment. Paragraph 5.10.14 states that it will need to be determined whether the visual effects on sensitive receptors such as local residents outweigh the benefits of the proposed development. Paragraph 5.10.27 states that adverse landscape and visual effects may be minimised through appropriate siting of infrastructure within its development site and wider setting. The careful consideration of colours and materials will support the delivery of a well-designed scheme. Applications should aim to avoid impacts which would be materially detrimental to nationally designated landscapes such as National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Areas of Great Landscape Value . There are also local landscape designations designated by local policy. The NPS EN-1 seeks to protect local designations. Paragraph 5.10.17 expects the consideration of local policies for DCO applications where a local development document in England has policies based on landscape character assessment.	**NPS EN-1** Paragraph 5.10.5 Paragraph 5.10.8 Paragraph 5.10.14 Paragraph 5.10.16 Paragraph 5.10.17 Paragraph 5.10.18 Paragraph 5.10.19 Paragraph 5.10.27 **NPS EN-5** Paragraph 2.11.2 Paragraph 2.11.3 Paragraph 2.11.4 Paragraph 2.11.5 Paragraph 2.11.6 **NPPF** Paragraph 135 Paragraph 187 Paragraph 189	**Central Lincolnshire Local Plan 2017 – 2040 (Adopted April 2023)** S53: Design and Amenity **South East Lincolnshire Local Plan 2011 – 2036 (Adopted March 2019)** Policy 3: Design of New Development Policy 28: The Natural Environment **South Kesteven Local Plan 2011 – 2036 (Adopted January 2020)** EN1: Landscape Character DE1: Promoting Good Quality Design **East Lindsey Local Plan Core Strategy (Adopted July 2018)** SP10: Design SP23: Landscape **Lincolnshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2016** DM6: Impact on Landscape and Townscape
Cultural Heritage	Designated and undesignated heritage assets must be conserved and protected. Heritage assets vary in significance, with those of the most significance having greater consideration for their conservation. Heritage assets of most significance are most often designated under one of the following: a World heritage site; Scheduled Monument; Protected Wreck Site; Protected Military Remains; Listed Buildings; Registered Park and Gardens; Registered Battlefield; and conservation areas. However, paragraph 5.9.6 of the NPS EN-1 also states that there are heritage assets with archaeological interest that are not currently designated as Scheduled Monuments or Protected Wreck Sites, but which are demonstrably of equivalent significance and therefore in some cases should also be subject to the same policy considerations as those that apply to designated heritage assets.	**NPS EN-1** Paragraph 5.9.6 Paragraph 5.9.9 Paragraph 5.9.10 Paragraph 5.9.11 Paragraph 5.9.12 Paragraph 5.9.27 Paragraph 5.9.28 Paragraph 5.9.31 **NPPF** Paragraph 205	**Central Lincolnshire Local Plan 2017 – 2040 (Adopted April 2023)** S57: The Historic Environment **South East Lincolnshire Local Plan 2011 – 2036 (Adopted March 2019)** Policy 29: The Historic Environment **South Kesteven Local Plan 2011 – 2036 (Adopted January 2020)** EN6: The Historic Environment **East Lindsey Local Plan Core Strategy (Adopted July 2018)** SP11: Historic Environment

	There is a desirability for new development to make a positive contribution to the character and local distinctiveness of the historic environment. Paragraph 205 to 208 of the NPPF introduce the concept that heritage assets can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction or development within their setting. This harm ranges from less than substantial through to substantial. With regard to designated assets such as listed buildings, paragraph 205 states that great weight should be given to an asset's conservation and 'the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be'. This is irrespective of the level of harm to its significance as a result of any proposals. Distinction is drawn between those assets of exceptional interest (e.g. grade I and grade II* listed buildings), and those of special interest (e.g. grade II listed buildings). Paragraph 206 requires any harm or loss of heritage significance to have clear and convincing justification, and substantial harm or loss should be wholly exceptional with regard to those assets of greatest interest. NPPF paragraph 207 explains that in instances where development would cause substantial harm to or total loss of significance of a designated asset, consent should be refused unless that harm or loss is "necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss". In instances where development would cause less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated asset, paragraph 208 states 'this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.'. Significance with regard to heritage planning policy is defined in the Glossary of the NPPF as: 'The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.' Areas of archaeological significance are also of consideration, with paragraph 5.9.6 stating that " Non-designated heritage assets of archaeological interest that are demonstrably of equivalent significance to Scheduled Monuments or Protected Wreck Sites should be considered subject to the policies for designated heritage assets. The absence of designation for such heritage assets does not indicate lower significance or necessarily imply that it is not of national importance."	Paragraph 206 Paragraph 207 Paragraph 208 Paragraph 212 Paragraph 213 Paragraph 214 Paragraph 215 Paragraph 216 Paragraph 218	**Lincolnshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2016** DM4: Historic Environment
Traffic & Access	Local and national planning policy requires the effects of the development on transport to be minimised. Paragraph 115 of the NPPF states *that "applications for development should ensure that any significant impacts from the development on the transport network (in terms of capacity and congestion), or on highway safety, can be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree."* The National Policy Statement (NPS) EN-1 paragraph 5.14.5 states *that "If a project is likely to have significant transport implications, the applicant's ES (see Section 4.3) should include a transport appraisal."* Paragraph 5.14.18 states *that "A new energy NSIP may give rise to substantial impacts on the surrounding transport infrastructure and the Secretary of State should therefore ensure that the applicant has sought to mitigate these impacts, including during the construction phase of the development and by enhancing active, public and shared transport provision and accessibility."*	**NPS EN-1** Paragraph 5.14.1 Paragraph 5.14.4 Paragraph 5.14.5 Paragraph 5.14.16 Paragraph 5.14.18 **NPS EN-3** Paragraph 2.10.122 Paragraph 2.10.121 **NPPF** Paragraph 109 Paragraph 115 Paragraph 118	**Central Lincolnshire Local Plan 2017 – 2040 (Adopted April 2023)** S47: Accessibility and Transport **South East Lincolnshire Local Plan 2011 – 2036 (Adopted March 2019)** Policy 33: Delivering a More Sustainable Transport Network Policy 36: Vehicle and Cycle Parking **South Kesteven Local Plan 2011 – 2036 (Adopted January 2020)** EN3: Green Infrastructure ID1: Infrastructure for Growth ID2: Transport and Strategic Transport Infrastructure **East Lindsey Local Plan Core Strategy (Adopted July 2018)** SP22: Transport and Accessibility

			Lincolnshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2016 DM14: Transport by Road DM13: Sustainable Transport Movements
Flood Risk	Local and National Policy expects the avoidance of areas of high flood risk. Paragraph 5.8.13 of EN-1 outlines that any site within flood zones 2 or 3 requires a flood risk assessment. Sites within Flood Zone 1 will require an assessment if they fall under any of the following parameters: • Sites of 1 hectare or more; • Land which has been identified by the EA or NRW as having critical drainage problems; • Land identified (for example in a local authority strategic flood risk assessment) as being at increased flood risk in future; • Land that may be subject to other sources of flooding (for example surface water); and • Where the EA or NRW, Lead Local Flood Authority, Internal Drainage Board or other body have indicated that there may be drainage problems. Section 2.3 of EN-5 outlines the extent to which electrical connection infrastructure should be resilient to flooding.	**NPS EN-1** Paragraph 5.8.5 Paragraph 5.8.6 Paragraph 5.8.13 Paragraph 5.8.21 Paragraph 5.8.36 Paragraph 5.8.37 Paragraph 5.8.40 Paragraph 5.8.41 Paragraph 5.8.9 Paragraph 5.8.10 Paragraph 5.8.11 Paragraph 5.8.12 Paragraph 5.14.16 **NPS EN-5** Paragraph 2.3.2 Paragraph 2.3.3 **NPPF** Paragraph 170 Paragraph 177 Paragraph 178 Paragraph 181 Paragraph 182 Paragraph 187	**Central Lincolnshire Local Plan 2017 – 2040 (Adopted April 2023)** S21: Flood Risk and Water Resources **South East Lincolnshire Local Plan 2011 – 2036 (Adopted March 2019)** Policy 4: Approach to Flood Risk **South Kesteven Local Plan 2011 – 2036 (Adopted January 2020)** EN5: Water Environment and Flood Risk Management **East Lindsey Local Plan Core Strategy (Adopted July 2018)** SP16: Inland Flood Risk **Lincolnshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2016** DM15: Flooding and Flood Risk
Solar Array Shading	Shading is to be considered when determining the location of individual panels, with it having an impact on solar thermal and photovoltaic system outputs.	**Relevant Guidance** **The Solar Design Company** [redacted] (Accessed November 2024) **BRE: Planning guidance for the development of large scale ground mounted solar PV systems** [redacted] (Accessed November 2024)	
Topography	Flat land which does not undulate significantly is preferred for solar PV energy generation optimisation and makes it easier to visually screen the development.	**Relevant Guidance** **The Solar Design Company** [redacted] (Accessed November 2024) **BRE: Planning guidance for the development of large scale ground mounted solar PV systems** [redacted] (Accessed November 2024)	

Annex D: Assessment Mapping Results

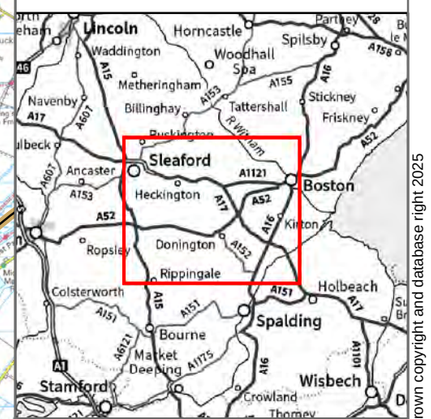
DWD low carbon powering tomorrow

PROJECT NAME:

Beacon Fen Energy Park

KEY:

- Point of connection (POC)
- Main Site
- Cable Route Corridor
- Search Area (10 km from POC)
- Local Authority Boundary



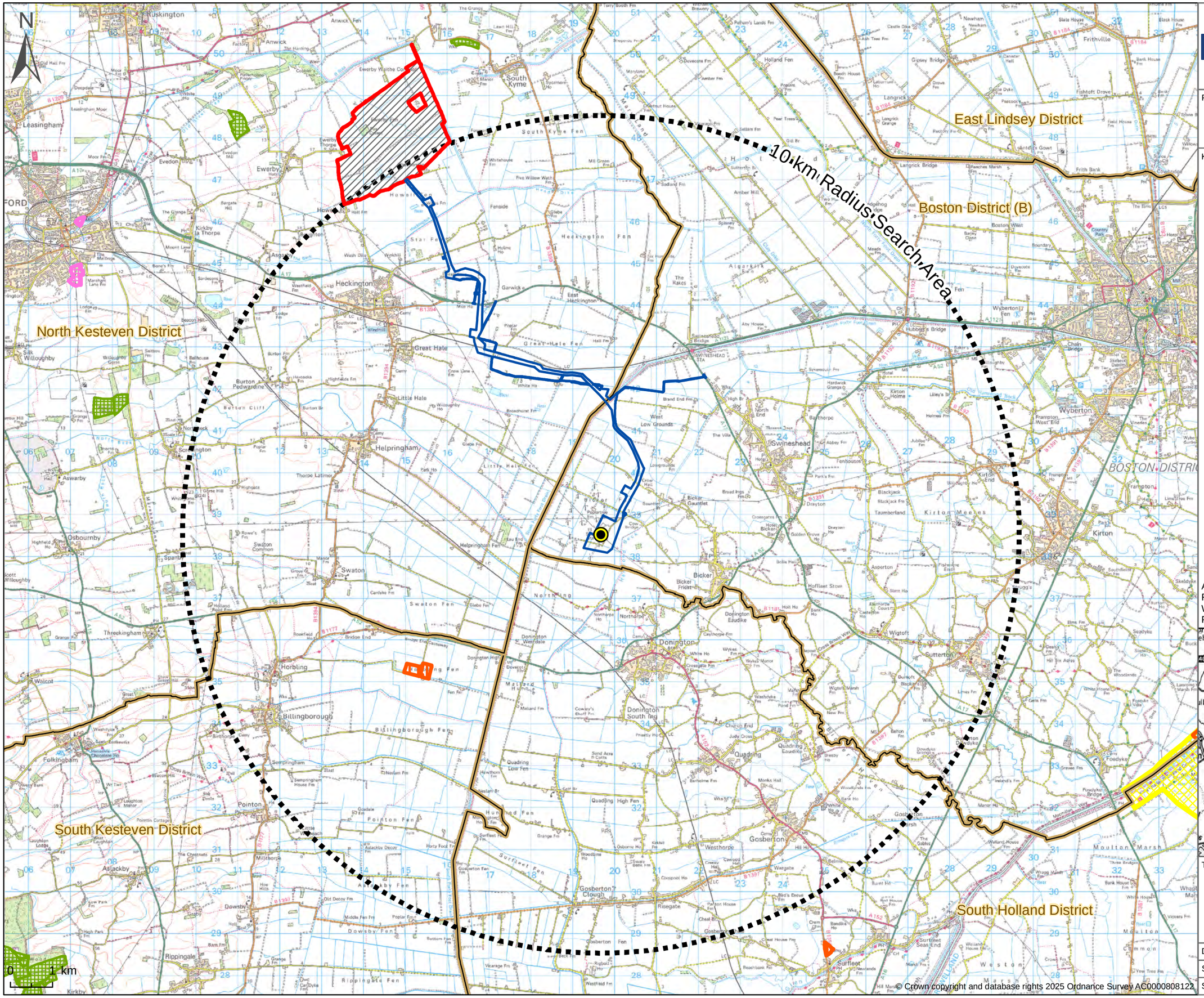
TITLE:

Figure 1
Search Area

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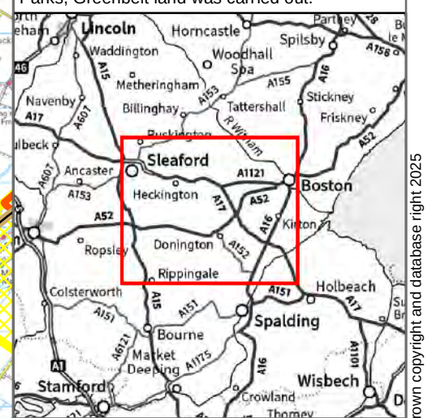
PROJECT NAME:

Beacon Fen Energy Park

KEY:

- Point of connection (POC)
- Main Site
- Cable Route Corridor
- Search Area (10 km from POC)
- Local Authority Boundary Ancient
- Woodland
- Local Nature Reserve
- Site of Special Scientific Interest
- Important Bird Area

A search for IBAs, NNRs, Ramsar Sites, RSPB Reserves, SACs, SPAs, AONBs, SSSIs, Ancient Woodland, Local Nature Reserves, National Parks, Greenbelt land was carried out.



TITLE:

Figure 2
Environmental Designations

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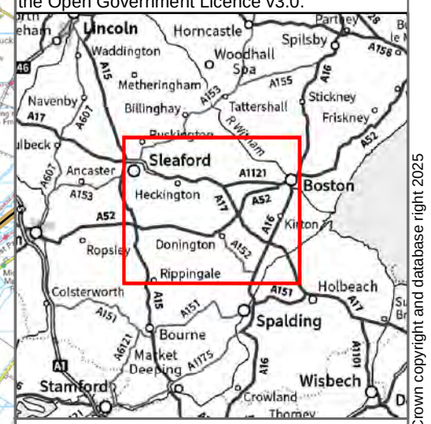
DWD low carbon
powering tomorrow

PROJECT NAME:
Beacon Fen Energy Park

KEY:
- Point of connection (POC)
- Main Site
- Cable Route Corridor
- Search Area (10 km from POC)
- Local Authority Boundary

Listed Buildings
- Grade I
- Grade II*
- Grade II
- Conservation Area
- Scheduled Monuments
- Park and Garden

A search for WHS, Listed Buildings, Registered Battlefields, Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Parks and Gardens was undertaken. Figure contains public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0.

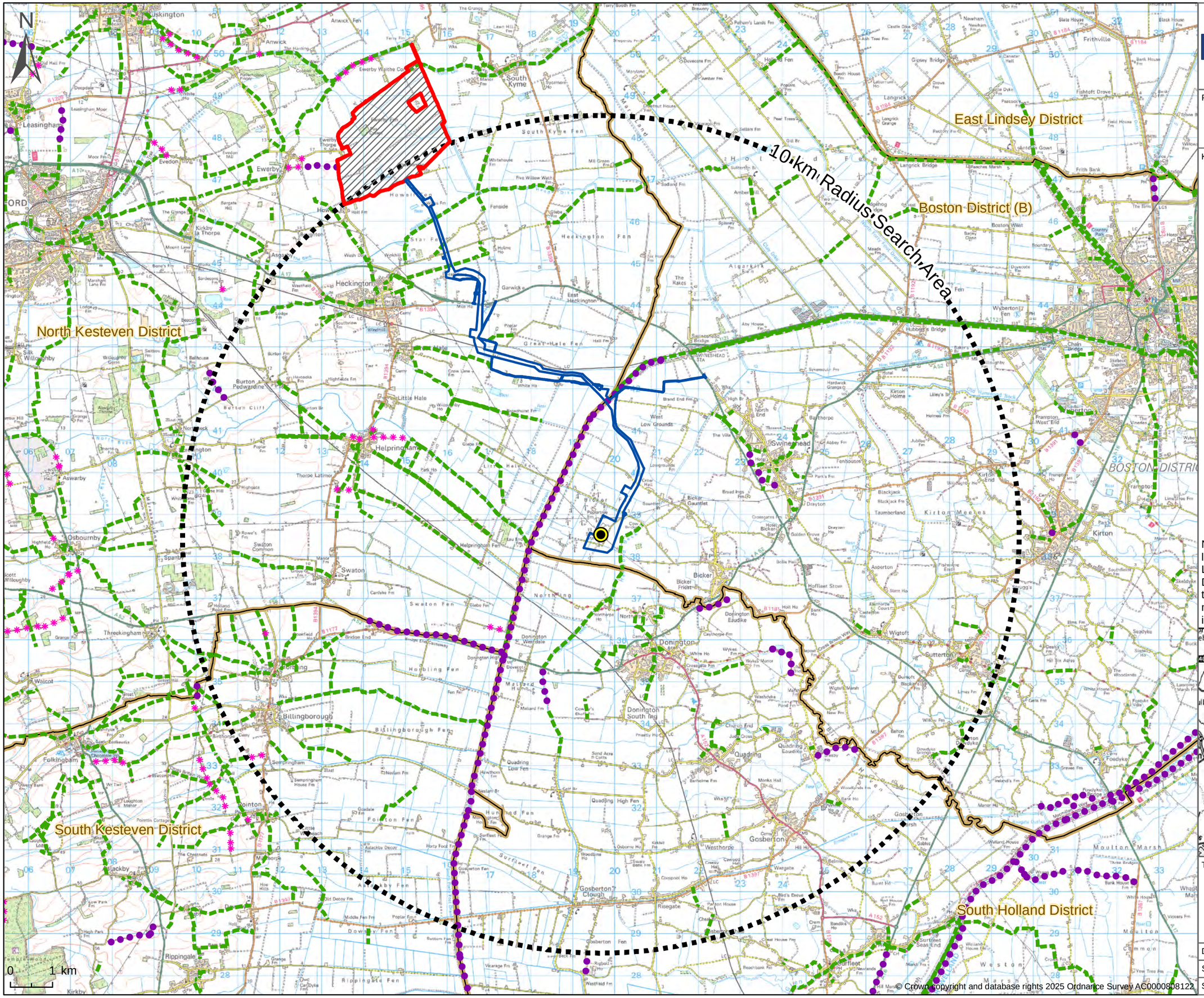


TITLE:
Figure 3
Archaeology and Built Heritage

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PROJECT NAME:

Beacon Fen Energy Park

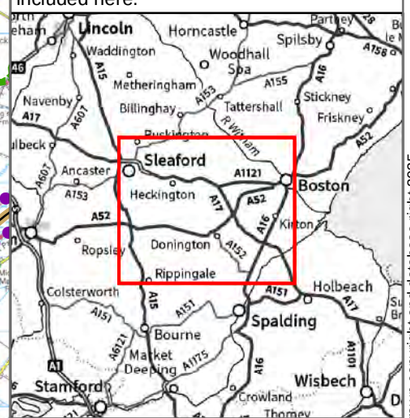
KEY:

- Point of connection (POC)
- Main Site
- Cable Route Corridor
- Search Area (10 km from POC)

PROW

- Footpath
- Bridleway
- Restricted Byway
- Local Authority Boundary

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TITLE:

Figure 4
Public Rights of Way

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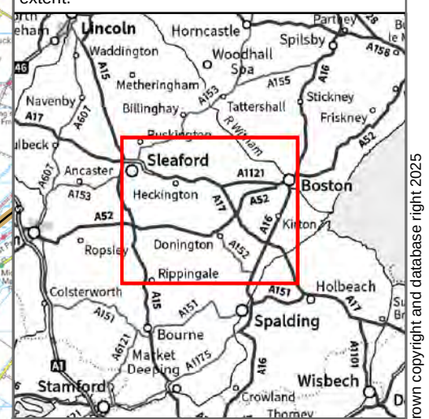
PROJECT NAME:

Beacon Fen Energy Park

KEY:

- Point of connection (POC)
- Main Site
- Cable Route Corridor
- Search Area (10 km from POC)
- Local Authority Boundary Slope
- > 10%

OS Terrain data was used in the analysis
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Please note only a very small amount of land with slope > 10 % is visible to the far west of the map extent.



TITLE:

Figure 5
Slope

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N

10 km Radius Search Area

North Kesteven District

East Lindsey District

Boston District (B)

South Kesteven District

South Holland District

0 1 km

DWD low carbon powering tomorrow

PROJECT NAME:

Beacon Fen Energy Park

KEY:

- Point of connection (POC)
- Main Site
- Cable Route Corridor
- Search Area (10 km from POC)
- Local Authority Boundary

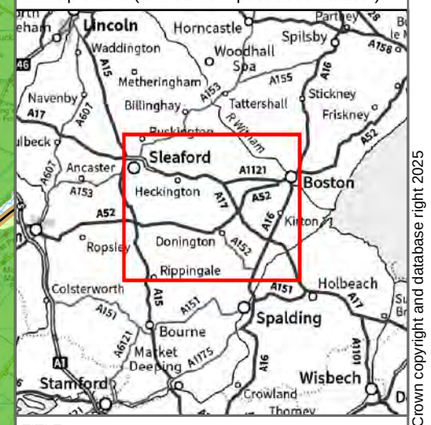
ALC Grade - Post 1988:

- Grade 1
- Grade 2
- Grade 3a
- Other

ALC Grade - Provisional:

- Grade 1 - Excellent Quality
- Grade 2 - Very Good Quality
- Grade 3 - Good to Moderate Quality
- Non Agricultural
- Urban

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TITLE:

Figure 6
Agricultural Land Classification

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N

East Lindsey District

10 km Radius Search Area

Boston District (B)

North Kesteven District

South Kesteven District

South Holland District

0 1 km

DWD low carbon powering tomorrow

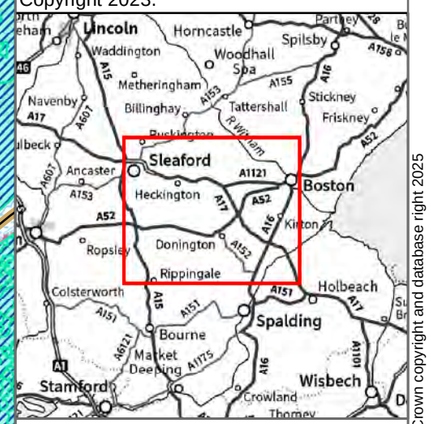
PROJECT NAME:

Beacon Fen Energy Park

KEY:

- Point of connection (POC)
- Main Site
- Cable Route Corridor
- Search Area (10 km from POC)
- Local Authority Boundary Flood
- Zone 3
- Flood Zone 2

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TITLE:

Figure 7
Fllood Zones

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PROJECT NAME:

Beacon Fen Energy Park

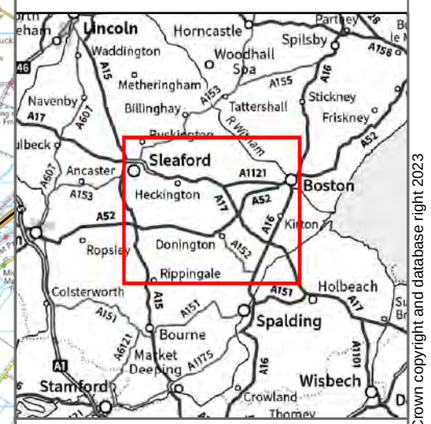
KEY:

- Point of connection (POC)
- Main Site
- Cable Route Corridor
- Search Area (10 km from POC)
- Local Authority Boundary Proposed
- Lincolnshire Reservoir Other
- Existing/Proposed Solar Sites

Alternative Sites and respective councils

1 H04-0849-22 (SHD and BD)
2 23/0460/EIASCR East Site (NKD)
3 23/0460/EIASCR West Site (NKD)
4 23/1021/FUL (NKD)
5 19/0060/FUL (NKD)
6 19/0863/FUL (NKD)
7 18/0161/FUL (NKD)
8 17/1762/EIASCR (NKD)
9 12/1242/FUL East Site (NKD)
10 12/1242/FUL West Site (NKD)
11 14/0952/FUL (NKD)
12 B/22/0356 (BD and SHD)
13 B/21/0443 (BD)
14 B/15/0001 (BD)
15 B/14/0267 East Site (BD)
16 B/14/0267 West Site (BD)
17 B/13/0345 (BD)
18 Heckington Fen Solar Park (NKD)
19 Temple Oaks Renewable Energy Park (SKD)
20 S/054/02433/14 (ELD)

NKD North Kesteven District
SKD South Kesteven District
SHD South Holland District
BD Boston District
ELD East Lindsey District



TITLE:

Figure 8
Other sites

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PROJECT NAME:

Beacon Fen Energy Park

KEY:

- Point of connection (POC)
- Main Site
- Cable Route Corridor
- Search Area (10 km from POC)

Listed Buildings

- Grade I
- Grade II*
- Grade II

PROW

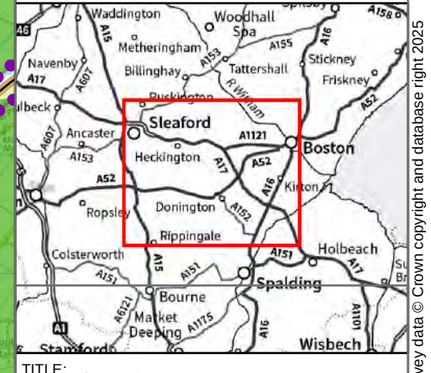
- Footpath
- Bridleway
- Restricted Byway
- Local Authority Boundary
- Other Existing or Proposed Solar Site
- Ancient Woodland
- Local Nature Reserve
- Site of Special Scientific Interest
- Important Bird Area
- Conservation Area
- Scheduled Monuments
- Park and Garden
- Slope > 10%
- Proposed Lincolnshire Reservoir

ALC Grade - Post 1988:

- Grade 1
- Grade 2

ALC Grade - Provisional:

- Grade 1 - Excellent Quality
- Grade 2 - Very Good Quality
- Non Agricultural
- Urban



TITLE:

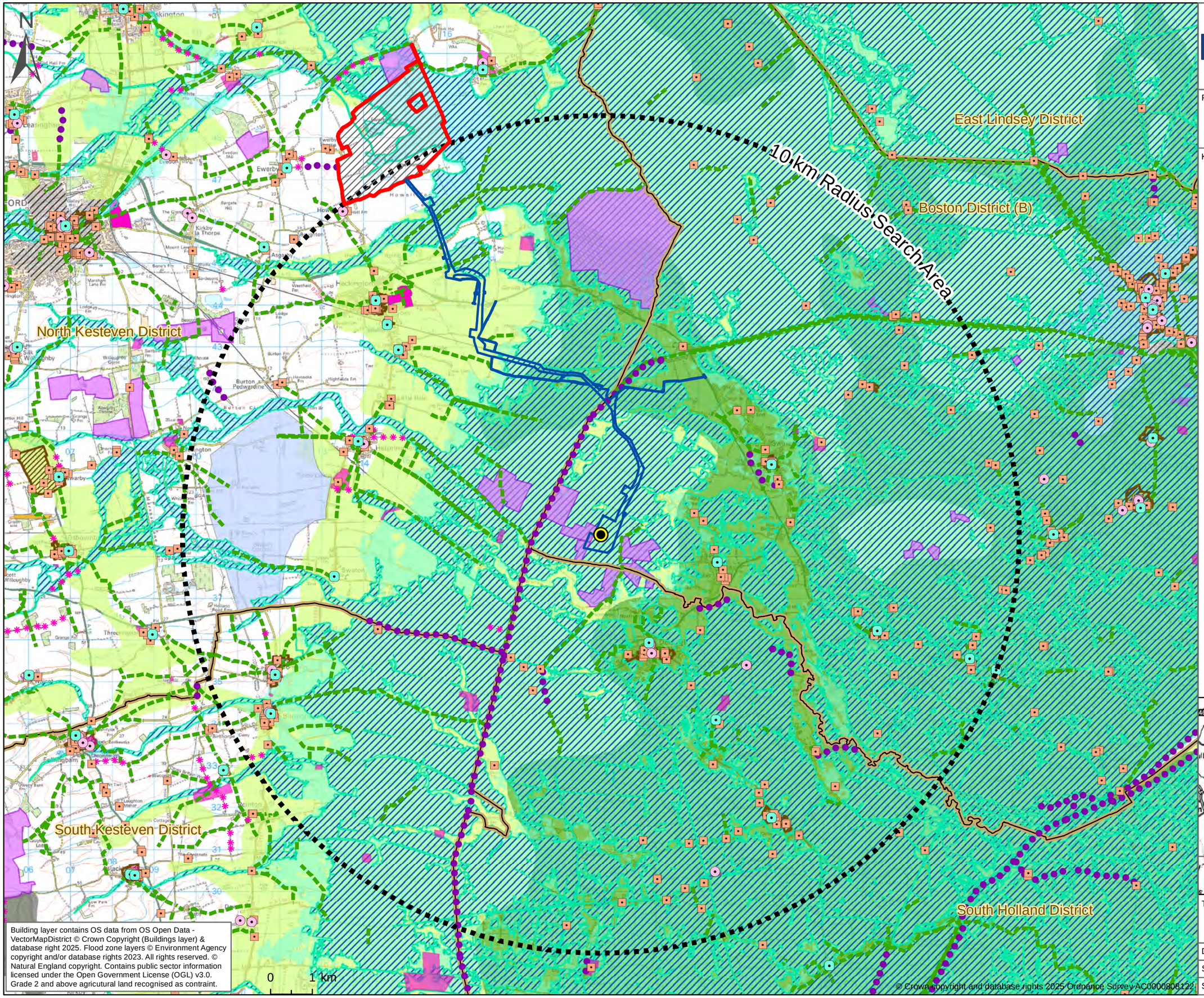
Figure 9
Combined Constraints
(less flood zones)

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DWD low carbon powering tomorrow

PROJECT NAME:

Beacon Fen Energy Park

KEY:

- Point of connection (POC)
- Main Site
- Cable Route Corridor
- Search Area (10 km from POC)

Listed Buildings

- Grade I
- Grade II*
- Grade II

PROW

- Footpath
- Bridleway
- Restricted Byway
- Local Authority Boundary
- Alternative Site
- Ancient Woodland
- Local Nature Reserve
- Site of Special Scientific Interest
- Important Bird Area
- Conservation Area
- Scheduled Monuments
- SKDC_Conservation_Areas
- Park and Garden
- Slope > 10%
- Flood Zone 3
- Flood Zone 2
- Proposed Lincolnshire Reservoir

ALC Grade - Post 1988:

- Grade 1
- Grade 2

ALC Grade - Provisional:

- Grade 1 - Excellent Quality
- Grade 2 - Very Good Quality
- Non Agricultural
- Urban

TITLE:

Figure 9
Combined Constraints

DATE: 26/02/2025	DRAWN BY: CH
SIZE: A4	CHECKED BY: CH
SCALE: 1:82,500	CO-ORD SYSTEM: BNG

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N

10-km Radius Search Area

East Lindsey District

Boston District (B)

North Kesteven District

South Kesteven District

South Holland District

BOSTON DISTRICT

The map shows land that is not constrained by the constraints presented in Figure 9 - these include Grade 2 (and above) agricutural land.

0 1 km

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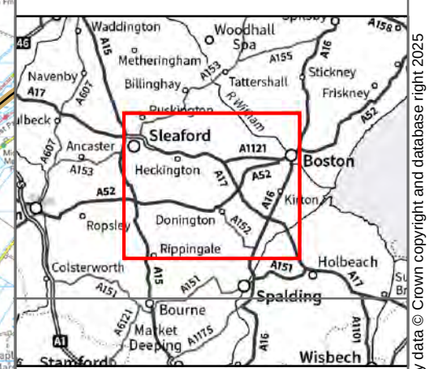
DWD low carbon powering tomorrow

PROJECT NAME:

Beacon Fen Energy Park

KEY:

- Point of connection (POC)
- Main Site
- Cable Route Corridor
- Search Area (10 km from POC)
- Local Authority Boundary
- Unconstrained Land



TITLE:

Figure 10
Unconstrained Land

DATE: 26/02/2025	DRAWN BY: CH
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SCALE: 1:82,500	CO-ORD SYSTEM: BNG

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N

East Lindsey District

10 km Radius Search Area

Boston District (B)

North Kesteven District

South Kesteven District

South Holland District

The map shows land that is not constrained by the constraints presented in Figure 9 - these include Grade 2 (and above) agricutural land as well as flood zones data.

0 1 km

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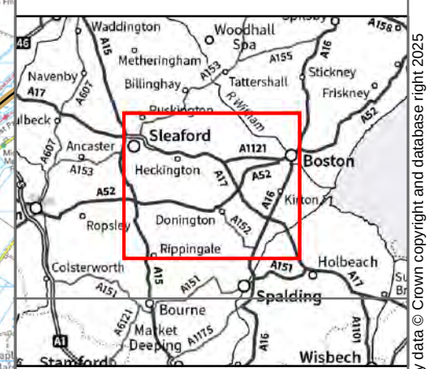
DWD low carbon powering tomorrow

PROJECT NAME:

Beacon Fen Energy Park

KEY:

- Point of connection (POC)
- Main Site
- Cable Route Corridor
- Search Area (10 km from POC)
- Local Authority Boundary
- Unconstrained Land



TITLE:

Figure 10
Unconstrained Land

DATE: 26/02/2025	DRAWN BY: CH
SIZE: A4	CHECKED BY: CH
SCALE: 1:82,500	CO-ORD SYSTEM: BNG

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DWD low carbon powering tomorrow

PROJECT NAME:

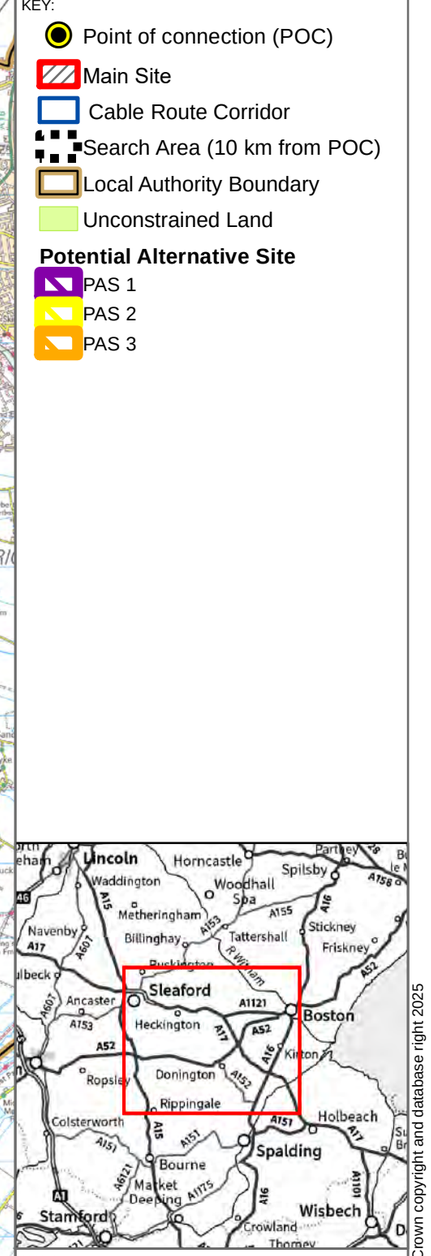
Beacon Fen Energy Park

KEY:

- Point of connection (POC)
- Main Site
- Cable Route Corridor
- Search Area (10 km from POC)
- Local Authority Boundary
- Unconstrained Land

Potential Alternative Site

- PAS 1
- PAS 2
- PAS 3



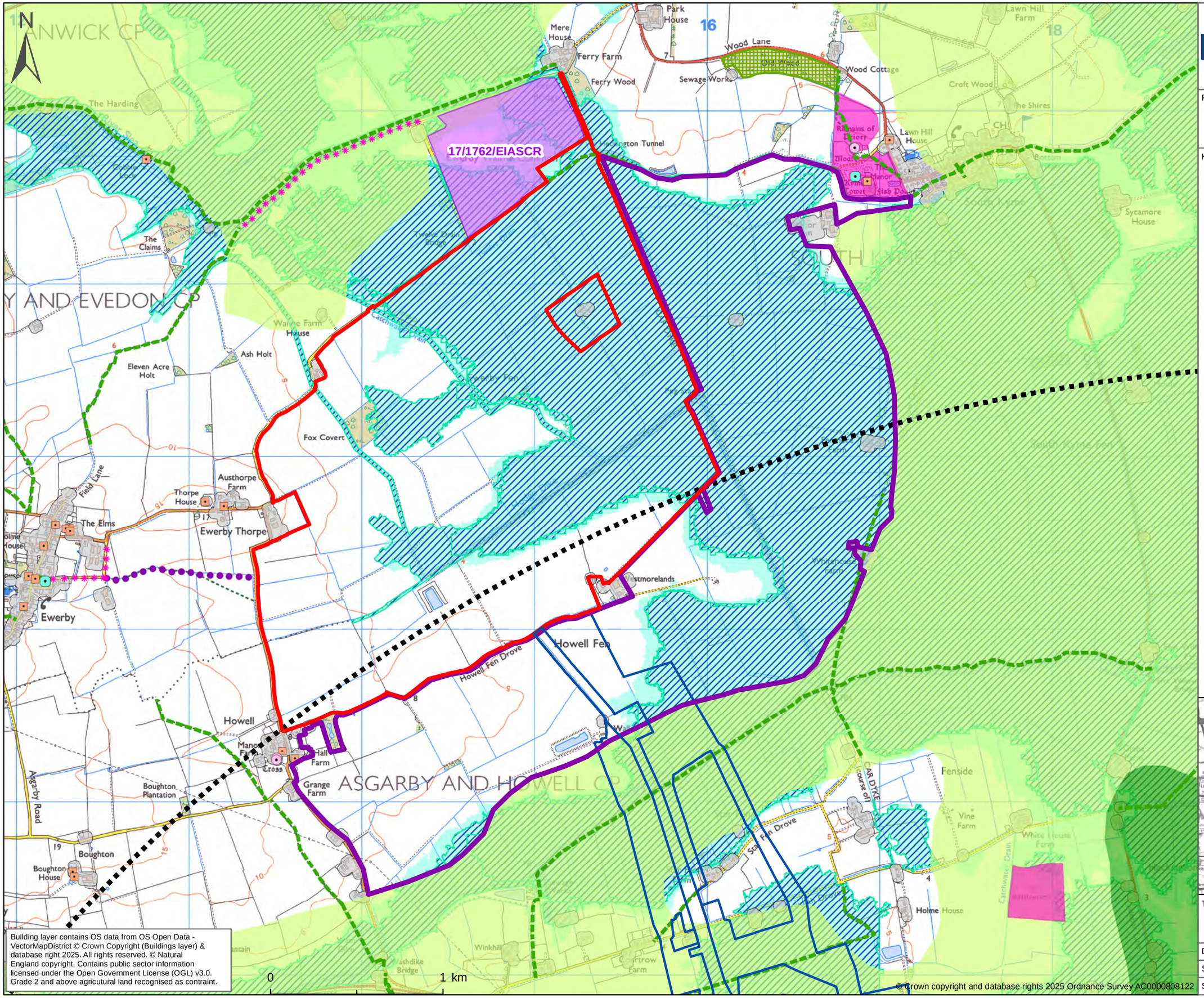
TITLE:

Figure 11
Potential Alternative Sites with Unconstrained Land

DATE: 26/02/2025	DRAWN BY: CH
SIZE: A4	CHECKED BY: CH
SCALE: 1:82,500	CO-ORD SYSTEM: BNG

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PROJECT NAME:

Beacon Fen Energy Park

KEY:

- Point of connection (POC)
- PAS 1
- Main SIte
- Cable Route Corridor
- Search Area (10 km from POC)

Listed Buildings

- Grade I
- Grade II*
- Grade II

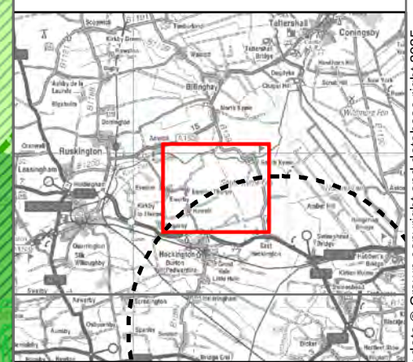
PROW

- Footpath
- Bridleway
- Restricted Byway
- Other Existing or Proposed Solar Site
- Ancient Woodland
- Scheduled Monuments
- Park and Garden

ALC Grade - Provisional:

- Grade 1 - Excellent Quality
- Grade 2 - Very Good Quality
- Non Agricultural
- Urban
- Building (25 m buffer)
- Flood Zone 3
- Flood Zone 2

Please note:
Of the constraints found within the extent of the whole study area, within the extent shown here for PAS1, there were no LNRs, SSSIs or IBAs identified. In addition, there are no Conservation Areas, no Parks and Gardens and no areas where slope > 10 %.There are no areas of Grades 1 & 2 from ALC - Post 1988 data.

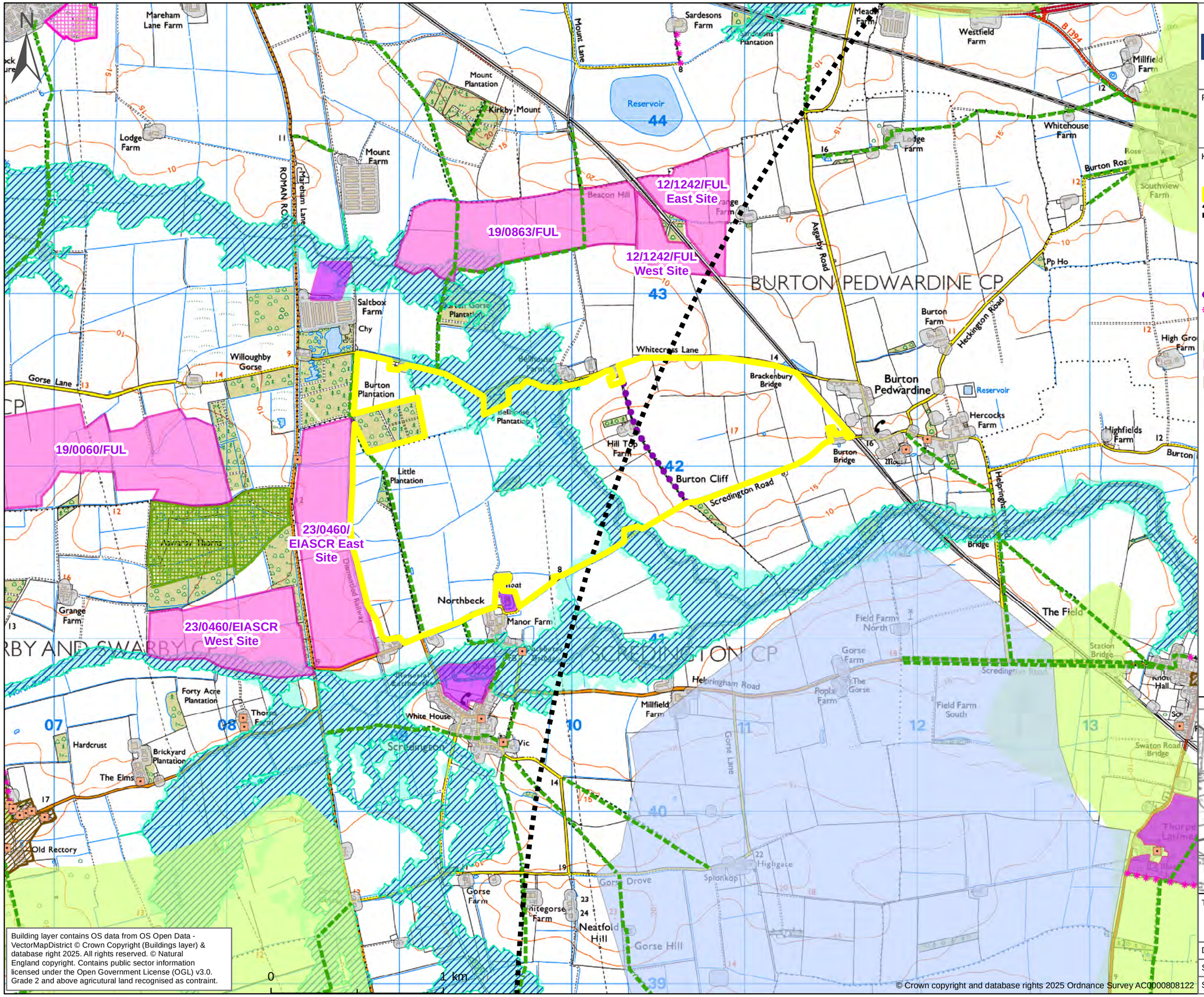


TITLE:

Figure11a
PAS1 with Constraints

DATE: 26/02/2025	DRAWN BY: CH
SIZE: A4	CHECKED BY: CH
SCALE: 1:20,000	CO-ORD SYSTEM: BNG

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PROJECT NAME:
Beacon Fen Energy Park

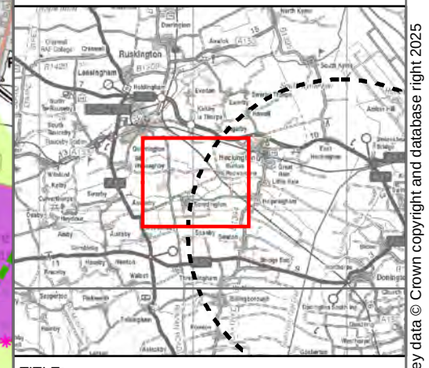
KEY:
- Point of connection (POC)
- PAS 2
- Search Area (10 km from POC)

Listed Buildings
- Grade II

PROW
- Footpath
- Bridleway
- Restricted Byway
- Other Existing or Proposed Solar Site
- Ancient Woodland
- Local Nature Reserve
- Conservation Area
- Scheduled Monuments
- Park and Garden
- Proposed Lincolnshire Reservoir

ALC Grade - Provisional:
- Grade 2 - Very Good Quality
- Flood Zone 3
- Flood Zone 2
- Building (25 m buffer)

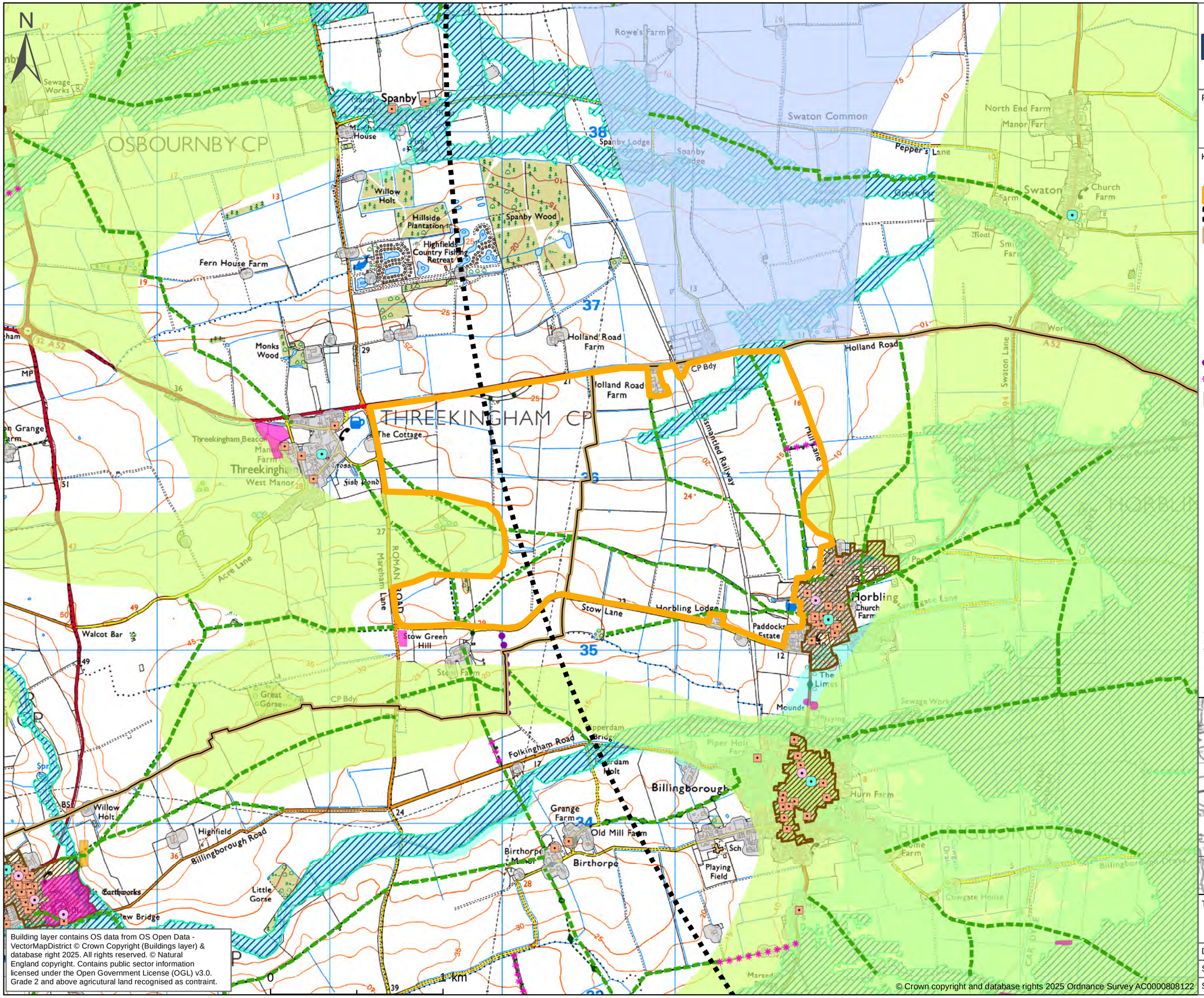
Please note:
Of the constraints found within the extent of the whole study area, within the extent shown here for PAS2, there were no Grade I listed buildings or Grade II In addition, no SSSIs or IBAs are identified nor are there any Conservation Areas, There are no areas where slope > 10 %.and, lastly, no areas from ALC - Post 1988 data and no Grade 1 ALC.



TITLE:
Figure11b
PAS2 with Constraints

DATE: 26/02/2025	DRAWN BY: CH
SIZE: A4	CHECKED BY: CH
SCALE: 1:20,000	CO-ORD SYSTEM: BNG

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DWD low carbon
powering tomorrow

PROJECT NAME:
Beacon Fen Energy Park

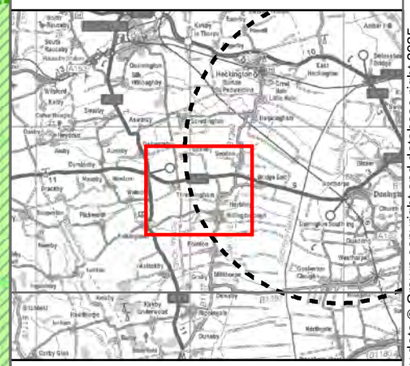
KEY:
- Point of connection (POC)
- PAS 3
- Search Area (10 km from POC)
- Local Authority Boundary

Listed Buildings
- Grade I
- Grade II*
- Grade II

PROW
- Footpath
- Bridleway
- Restricted Byway
- Conservation Area
- Scheduled Monuments
- Slope > 10%
- Proposed Lincolnshire Reservoir

ALC Grade - Provisional:
- Grade 2 - Very Good Quality
- Building (25 m buffer)
- Flood Zone 3
- Flood Zone 2

Please note:
Of the constraints found within the extent of the whole study area, within the extent shown here for PAS3, there were no Ancient Woodlands, LNRs, SSSIs or IBAs identified. In addition, there are no 'Alternative Sites' as identified in Figure 9. No Parks and Gardens are present here and no data from ALC - Post 1988. Grade 1 ALC is also not present.

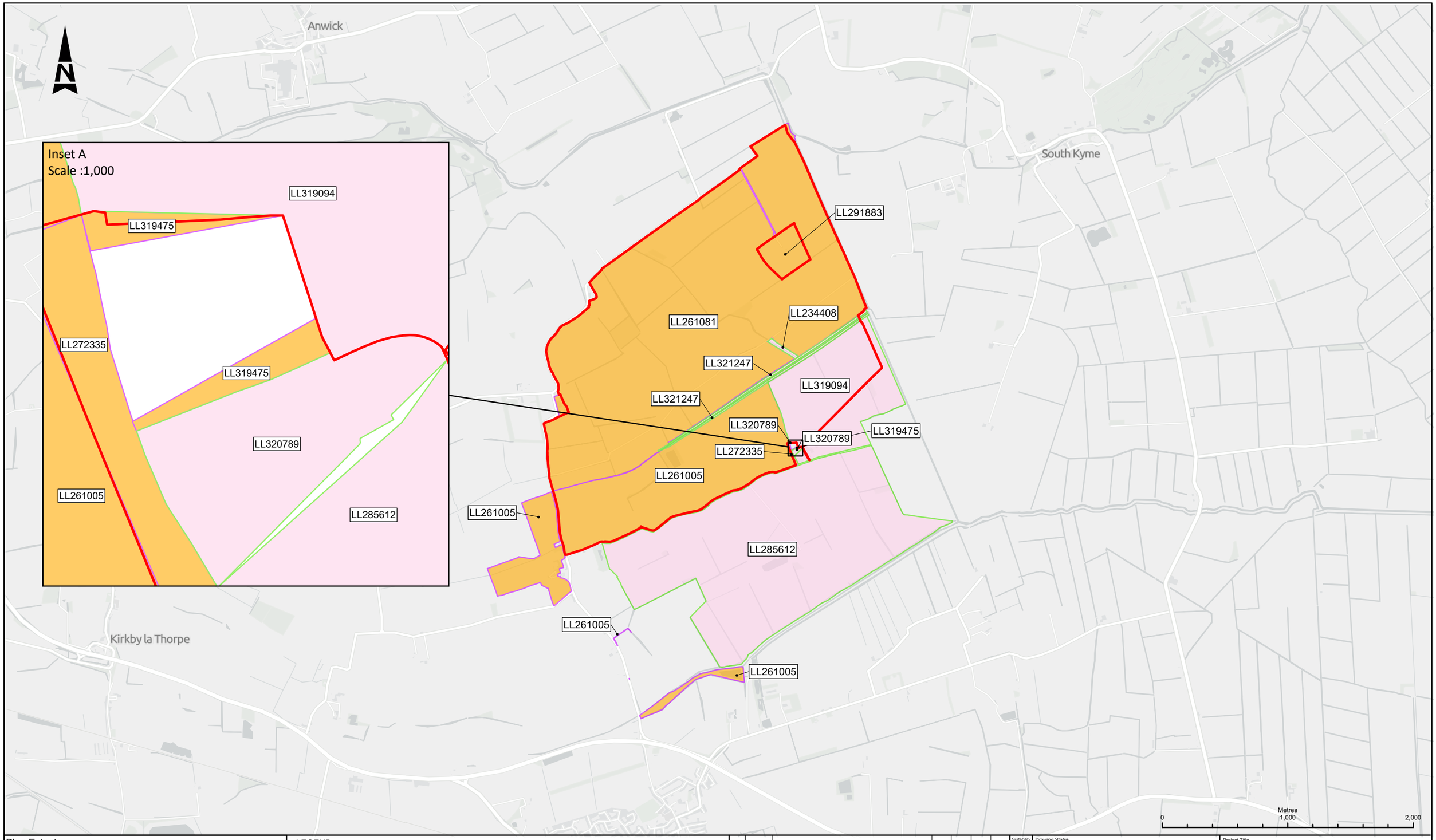


TITLE:
Figure11c
PAS3 with Constraints

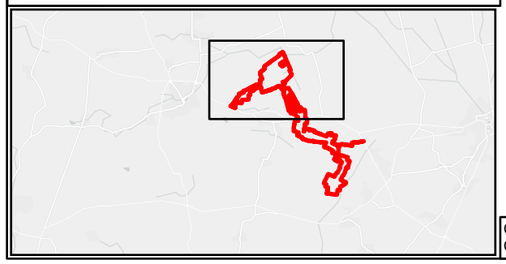
DATE: 26/02/2025	DRAWN BY: CH
SIZE: A4	CHECKED BY: CH
SCALE: 1:20,000	CO-ORD SYSTEM: BNG

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Annex E: Land Ownership Information



Plan Extent



LEGEND

- Main Site
- Multiple Owners
- No Restrictions

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Contains data from OS Zoomstack

Rev.	Date	Description	Drawn	Checked	Review'd	Approv'd
P01	09/02/24	ISSUED FOR INFORMATION	JT	L'O	AM	CP

Suitability: S0
Drawing Status: FOR ISSUE

Ardent

Client: low carbon — powering tomorrow

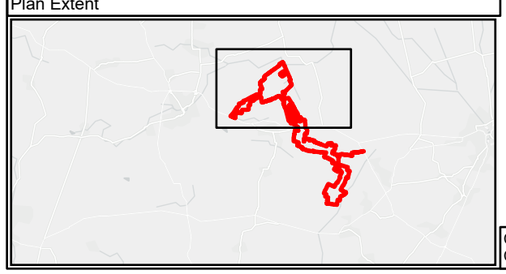
Project Title: Beacon Fen Energy Park

Drawing Title: ALTERNATIVE SITE ASSESSMENT PLAN
MAIN SITE

Scale: 1:28,000 @A3
Spatial Reference System: British National Grid
Revision: P01

Anwick
South Kyme
Ewerby
Evedon
Kirkby la Thorpe
LL359520
LL359520
LL329985
LL329985
LL329985
LL229201
LL229201
LL233999
LL233999
LL57129
LL57129
LL355380
LL333151
LL105702
LL333151
LL243174
LL321298
LL321247
LL321247
LL285612
LL321298
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LL291362
LL285612
LL261005
LL138453
LL285105
LL138459
LL272380
LL360260
LL273912
LL261005
LL367377
LL261005
LL261005
Metres
0
1,000
2,000

Plan Extent



LEGEND

PAS 1

Multiple Owners

No Restrictions

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Contains data from OS Zoomstack

Rev.	Date	Description	Drawn	Checked	Review'd	Approv'd
P01	09/02/24	ISSUED FOR INFORMATION	JT	L'O	AM	CP

Suitability: S0
Drawing Status: FOR ISSUE

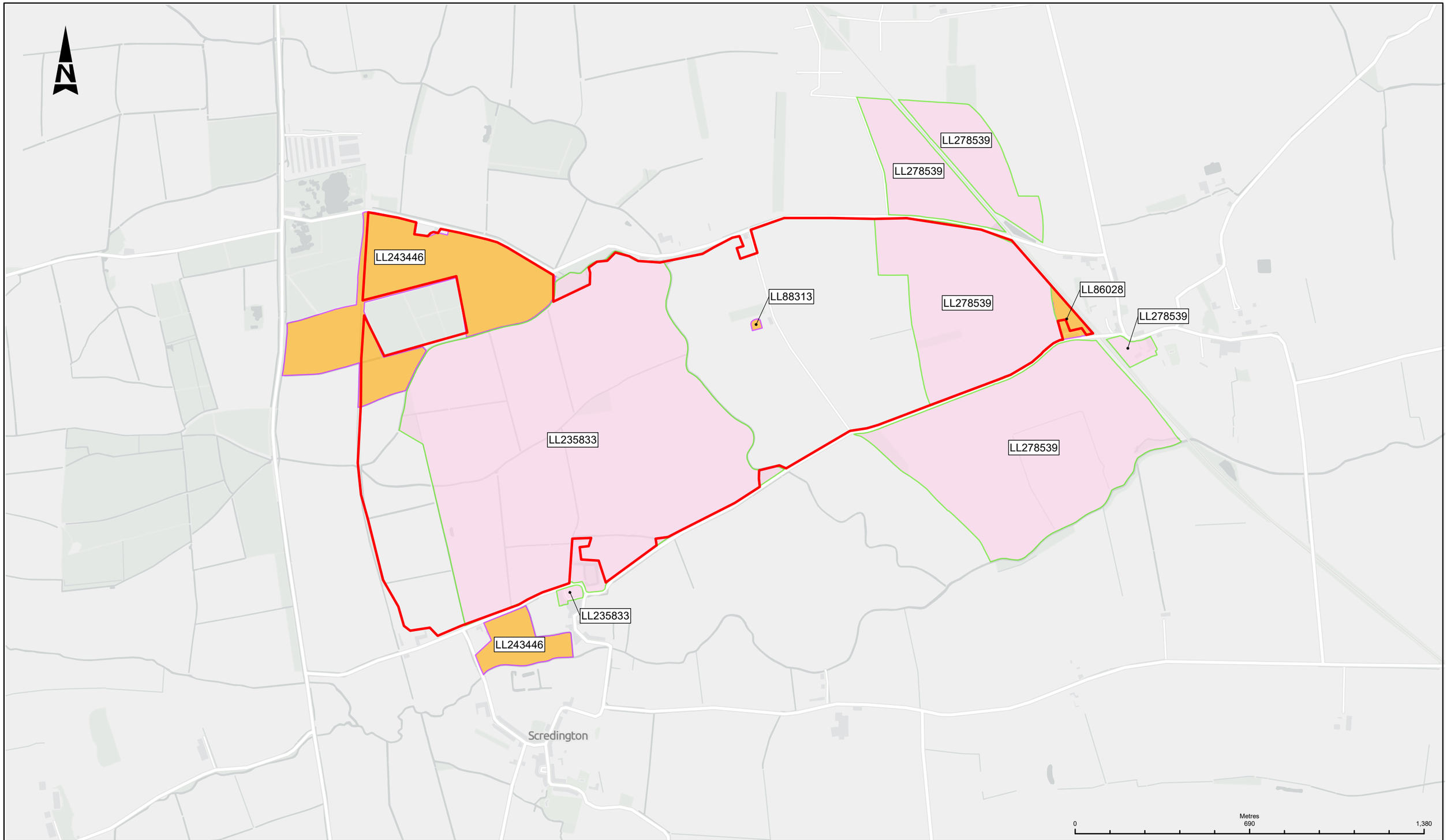
Ardent

Client: low carbon powering tomorrow

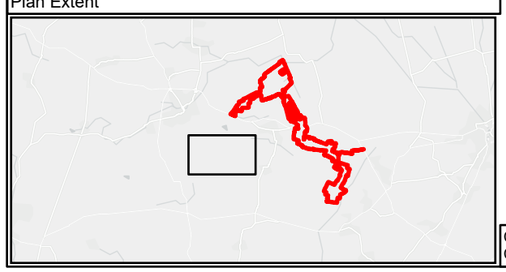
Project Title: Beacon Fen Energy Park

Drawing Title: ALTERNATIVE SITE ASSESSMENT PLAN
PAS 1

Scale: 1:28,000 @A3
Spatial Reference System: British National Grid
Revision: P01



Plan Extent



LEGEND

- PAS 2
- Multiple Owners
- No Restrictions

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Rev.	Date	Description	Drawn	Checked	Review'd	Approv'd
P01	09/02/24	ISSUED FOR INFORMATION	JT	L'O	AM	CP

Suitability: S0
Drawing Status: FOR ISSUE

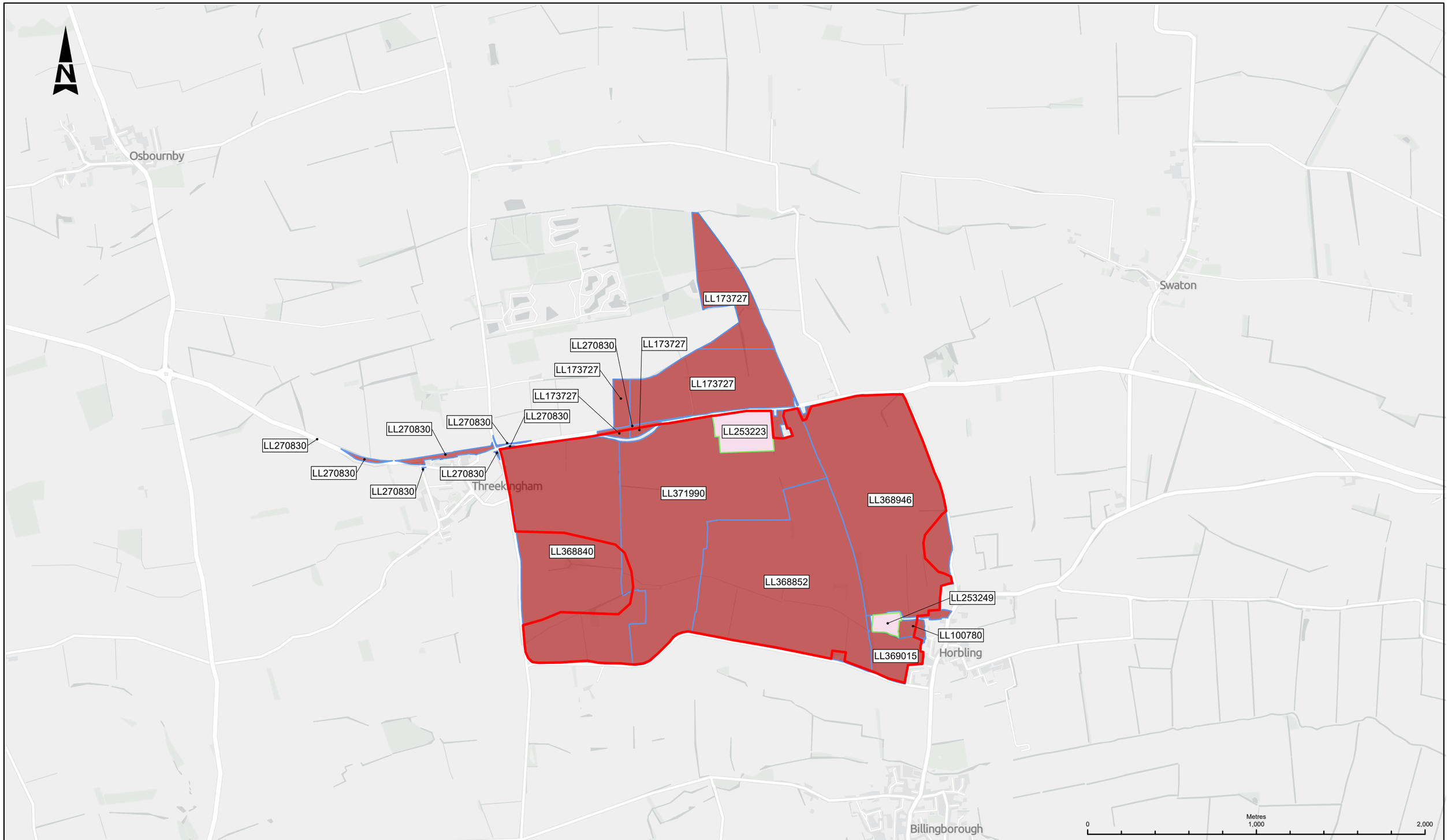
Ardent

Client: low carbon powering tomorrow

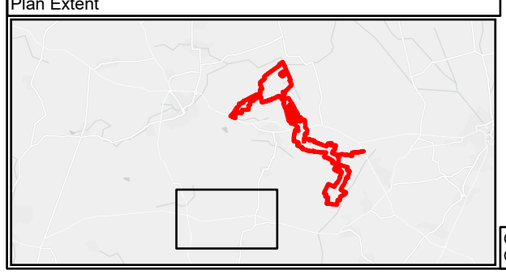
Project Title: Beacon Fen Energy Park

Drawing Title: ALTERNATIVE SITE ASSESSMENT PLAN PAS 2

Scale: 1:14,000 @A3
Spatial Reference System: British National Grid
Revision: P01



Plan Extent



LEGEND

- PAS 3
- Crown Land
- No Restrictions

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Rev.	Date	Description	Drawn	Checked	Review'd	Approv'd
P01	09/02/24	ISSUED FOR INFORMATION	JT	L'O	AM	CP

Suitability: S0
Drawing Status: FOR ISSUE

Ardent

Client: low carbon — powering tomorrow

Project Title: Beacon Fen Energy Park

Drawing Title: ALTERNATIVE SITE ASSESSMENT PLAN
PAS 3

Scale: 1:21,000 @A3
Spatial Reference System: British National Grid
Revision: P01

Annex F: Potential Alternative Site Proformas

Annex F: Potential Alternative Sites Proformas

	PAS 1		PAS 2		PAS 3		Proposed Site	
Size (hectares)	524		277		313		535	
Indicator	RAG	Justification	RAG	Justification	RAG	Justification	RAG	Justification
Land Use		PAS 1 currently comprises agricultural land with small areas of woodland and water features scattered through it. There are also a number of farmsteads and other agricultural buildings scattered across it. According to the nationally available provisional Agricultural land Classification data, PAS 1 is made up of Grade 3 agricultural land. According to the North Kesteven Interactive Policy Map, much of the Proposed Site is located within the Designated Rural Area and a Strategic Green Corridor. Much of the Site is marked as "Locations suitable in principle for large scale wind turbines". EIA Screening Requests were submitted to North Kesteven Council in 2014 and 2017 for solar farms located west of PAS 1. However, no application has been forthcoming. No further relevant planning history was identified. A proposed solar farm is located north west of PAS 1.		PAS 2 currently comprises agricultural land with small areas of woodland and water features scattered through it. There is also one agricultural building located within it. According to the nationally available provisional Agricultural land Classification data, PAS 1 is made up of Grade 3 agricultural land. According to the North Kesteven Interactive Policy Map, PAS 2 is located within the Designated Rural Area and has a few areas of Green Infrastructure within it. Some eastern fields are marked as "Locations suitable in principle for large scale wind turbines" while a Strategic Green Access Link runs through PAS 2. PAS 2 is also located adjacent to some Green Infrastructure to its west with "high biodiversity value". A review of the North Kesteven District Council Planning Online interactive map identifies proposed solar farms located directly west (23/1419/FUL), 700 m west (19/0060/FUL) and 750 m north (19/0863/FUL) of PAS 2. There is also an existing solar farm located approximately 470 m north of PAS 2. This high density of existing/proposed solar farms is considered to increase potential for cumulative impacts. There is no relevant planning history located within PAS 2.		PAS 3 currently comprises agricultural land with small areas of woodland and water features scattered through it. It is also crossed by dismantled railway and briefly by a layby off the A52. According to the nationally available provisional Agricultural land Classification data, PAS 1 is made up of Grade 3 agricultural land. According to the North Kesteven Interactive Policy Map, PAS 3 is located within the Designated Rural Area and has a few areas of Green Infrastructure within it. According to the South Kesteven Policy Map, PAS 3 is located in the Open Countryside. A review of the North Kesteven District Councils and South Kesteven District Councils Planning Online interactive map does not identify any planning applications located on or adjacent to PAS 3. PAS 3 is crossed by a large number of footpaths and one restricted Byway. This high density of PRoWs is considered to constrain the developable potential of the land.		The Proposed Site currently comprises agricultural land with small areas of woodland and water features scattered through it. According to the latest Agricultural Land Classification Survey carried out the Solar Array Area is made up of 2.8% Grade 2, 44.6% Subgrade 3a, 49.5% Subgrade 3b agricultural land and 3.1% other land. According to the North Kesteven Interactive Policy Map, much of the Proposed Site is located within the Designated Rural Area and it is wholly located within a Strategic Green Corridor. Much of the Site is marked as "Locations suitable in principle for large scale wind turbines". An EIA Screening Request was submitted to North Kesteven Council in 2014 for a solar farm located within the north east of the Proposed Site and a further request was submitted in 2017 for a solar farm directly north of the Proposed Site. However, no application has been forthcoming. No further relevant planning history was identified.
Deliverability of Grid Connection		The closest point of the PAS 1 is located approximately 8.8 km north of the Point of Connection. The cable route will need to cross a railway line and the A17. The cable route will need to cross South Forty Foot Drain.		The closest point of the PAS 2 is located approximately 8.8 km west of the Point of Connection. The cable route will need to cross a railway line. The cable route will need to cross South Forty Foot Drain.		The closest point of PAS 3 is located approximately 8.1 km west of the Point of Connection. The cable route will need to cross a railway line and the A52. The cable route will need to cross South Forty Foot Drain.		The closest point of the Proposed Site is located approximately 9.6 km north of the Point of Connection. The cable route will need to cross a railway line and the A17. The cable route will need to cross South Forty Foot Drain.

Ecology and Biodiversity		There are no international, national or locally designated areas either within or adjacent to PAS 1.		There are no international, national or locally designated areas either within or adjacent to PAS 2.		There are no international, national or locally designated areas either within or adjacent to PAS 3.		There are no international, national or locally designated areas either within or adjacent to the Proposed Site.
Landscape and Visual		There are no locally designated Areas of Great Landscape Value located within or adjacent to PAS 1. PAS 1 borders the villages of South Kyme and Howell. A footpath runs through/along a small part of PAS 1 to its south east. Further footpaths are located in the vicinity of PAS 1. PAS 1 is not located within or adjacent to any National Parks or Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.		There are no locally designated Areas of Great Landscape Value located within or adjacent to PAS 2. PAS 2 is located adjacent to buildings within the village of Burton Pedwardine and in close proximity to the village of Screington. PAS 2 is dissected north to south by a footpath and a bridleway. Other sections of footpath abut, run alongside and are in the vicinity of PAS 2. PAS 2 is not located within or adjacent to any National Parks or Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.		There are no locally designated Areas of Great Landscape Value located within or adjacent to PAS 3. PAS 3 is located adjacent to the village of Horbling and in close proximity to the village of Threekingham. PAS 3 is crossed by a large number of footpaths and one restricted Byway. This high density of PRoWs is considered to create potential for significant landscape and visual impacts. PAS 3 is not located within or adjacent to any National Parks or Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.		There are no locally designated Areas of Great Landscape Value located within or adjacent to the Proposed Site. The Proposed Site borders buildings within the villages of Howell and Ewerby Thorpe. A small section of footpath runs through/abuts a small part of the north east of the Proposed Site while a bridleway abuts it to its west. Further footpaths are located in the vicinity of PAS 1. The Proposed Site is not located within or adjacent to any National Parks or Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
Cultural Heritage		PAS 1 is located directly adjacent to a Scheduled Monument in the village of South Kyme known as 'Remains of medieval monastery, moated manor house, fishponds and post-medieval garden'. South Kyme also contains a Grade I Listed Building, two Grade II* Listed Buildings and on Grade II Listed Building. PAS 1 is also directly adjacent to two Grade II Listed Buildings and one Grade I Listed Building in the village of Howell. Given the number sensitivity and proximity of the above mentioned assets to PAS 1 it is considered it will be somewhat difficult to screen and mitigate the impact of a solar farm.		A Scheduled Ancient Monument known as 'Thorny Close moated site, Northbeck' is located directly south of PAS 2. Additional Scheduled Monuments known as 'Hall Close moated manorial complex', 'Packhorse bridge, Northbeck', 'Mareham Grange' and 'Boundary cross, Mareham Lane' are located approximately 210 m south, 260 m south' 330 m north and 300 m west of PAS 2 respectively. The closest other heritage assets to PAS 2 comprise Grade II Listed Buildings located within the villages of Scredington (260 m south), Burton Pedwardine (330 m east) and on Mareham Lane (300 m west). Due to the distance between PAS 2 and Grade II Listed Buildings along with the number of existing buildings between them and their relatively low sensitivity, it is considered likely that appropriate screening could be developed. However, the proximity of Scheduled Monuments is likely to create more difficulty.		PAS 3 is located directly adjacent to the Horbling Conservation Area and approximately 500 m north of the Billingborough Conservation Area, both of which contain a large number of Listed Buildings including Grade 1 Listed Buildings. PAS 3 is also located directly to the north of a Scheduled Monument known as 'Site of Anglo-Saxon nunnery and medieval chapel, Stow Green'. Four more Grade II Listed Buildings, one Grade 1 Listed Building and a Scheduled Monument known as 'Post medieval formal garden remains and medieval enclosures, Manor Farm' are located in the village of Threekingham which is located west of PAS1 Given the number of heritage assets, their sensitivity and their proximity to PAS 3 it is considered it will be extremely difficult to screen and mitigate the impact of a solar farm.		The closest heritage assets to Proposed Site comprise two Grade II Listed Buildings and one Grade I Listed Building in the village of Howell directly to its south west and two Grade II Listed Buildings in the village of Ewerby Thorpe directly to its west.
Access for Construction Traffic		There do not appear to be and significant constraints between PAS 1 and the A17, located approximately 150 m to its south, which would make the		The closest A Road to PAS 2 comprises the A15 located 2.7 km to the south east. Local roads connect the site to the A15 and it is considered likely for a suitable construction access to be created or gained.		PAS 3 is located directly south of the A52 and it is considered likely to be feasible to secure a suitable construction access directly off this road.		The Proposed Site will be accessed during construction by a bespoke access from the A17, which is located approximately 1.5 km to the south. Reinstatement planting around the Access Route Corridor perimeter to

		construction of bespoke access impossible.						provide visual amenity, reduce landscape impacts, and provide net gains for biodiversity.
Flood Risk		A majority of PAS 1 is located within Flood Zones 2 and 3. However, it is directly adjacent to the Proposed Site at which flood depths are not a constraint to development and as a result it is considered likely to be similar for PAS 1.		A small strip of Flood Zones 2 and 3 runs through the centre of PAS 2 from north to south. Given the small area and the potential for mitigation it is considered unlikely that this will present a constraint to development.		There is a small area of Flood Zones 2 and 3 located to the north east of PAS 3. Given the small area and the potential for mitigation it is considered unlikely that this will present a constraint to development.		Approximately half of the site is located in Flood Zone 1 while approximately half is located in Flood Zones 2 and 3. As set out in the ES Chapter 11 (Water Resources and Flood Risk) (Application Document Ref 6.2.11), flood depths are not a constraint to development.
Solar Array Shading		A small number of pockets of trees/woodland can be found across and adjacent to PAS 1, however given their size relative to the size of the Sites these are unlikely to affect field shading.		There are a number of large areas of woodland located adjacent to and within PAS 2 to its north west. These have the potential to cause shading over a sizeable area of PAS 2 which is already below the 300 ha minimum size.		A small number of pockets of trees/woodland can be found across and adjacent to the Proposed Site, however given their size relative to the size of the Sites these are unlikely to affect field shading.		A small number of pockets of trees/woodland can be found across and adjacent to the Proposed Site, however given their size relative to the size of the Sites these are unlikely to affect field shading.
Land Assemblage (Please refer to Annex E of the Site Selection Report)		PAS 1 is made up of 25 different land titles owned by 15 different sets of proprietors. Six of the sets of proprietors comprise multiple owners. There is no common land or Crown land within PAS 1. The Applicant approached one of the major landowners during the site search and they were not interested in the development of a solar farm on their land.		PAS 2 is made up of five different land titles owned by five different sets of proprietors. Three of the sets of proprietors comprise multiple landowners. There is no common land or Crown land within the PAS 2. The Applicant approached the owner of one of the major landowners during the site search and they were not interested.		PAS 3 is made up of 10 different land titles owned by five different sets of proprietors. One of the sets of proprietors comprises multiple landowners. PAS 3 is dominated by Crown Land which is considered to be difficult to secure land agreements. There is no common land within PAS 3.		The Proposed Site is made up of 10 different land titles owned by nine different sets of proprietors. Four of the sets of proprietors comprise multiple landowners. There is no common land or Crown Land Ownership within the Proposed Site. The site has willing landowners and no land use conflicts.
Field Pattern		The PAS 1 is made up of a number of fields of a regular size and shape which are arrangement in a regular pattern.		The PAS 2 is made up of a number of fields of a regular size and shape which are arrangement in a regular pattern.		The PAS 3 is made up of a number of fields of a regular size and shape which are arrangement in a regular pattern.		The Proposed Site is made up of a number of fields of a regular size and shape which are arrangement in a regular pattern.

Annex G: Sequential Test Assessment

BEACON FEN ENERGY PARK

Planning Inspectorate Reference: EN010151

Sequential Test Assessment
Annex G, Site Selection Report
(Appendix 2, Planning Statement) (Document Ref. 5.5)
December 2025



The Planning Act 2008
The Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed Forms and Procedure) Regulations 2009 - Regulation 5(2)(q)

Quality information

Prepared by	Checked by	Verified by	Approved by
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Glossary

Abbreviation	Description
AAS	Additional Alternative Site
AC	Alternating Current
AIS	Air Insulated Switchgear
ALC	Agricultural Land Classification
Applicant	Beacon Fen Energy Park Ltd
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
LPA	Local Planning Authority
MW	Megawatt
NGR	National Grid Reference
NKDC	North Kesteven District Council
NSIP	Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project
Order	The Beacon Fen Energy Park Order
PAS	Potential Alternative Site
PCU	Power Conversion Unit
PDL	Previously Developed Land
PINS	Planning Inspectorate
PPG	Planning Practice Guidance
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
SoS	Secretary of State
SSR	Site Selection Report

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Appendices

PLANS G1 – G8

1. Background

1.1.1 This **Sequential Test Assessment (Annex G of the Site Selection Report (SSR), Appendix 2 of the Planning Statement (Document Ref. 5.5))** 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 Sequential Test was previously considered as an integrated part of the SSR and considered the identified Potential Alternative Sites (PAS) in the context of the Sequential Test.

1.1.3 In their **Local Impact Report (REP1-044)**, Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) stated:

"11.20 The applicant's methodology also excludes sites that are not considered to be continuous as increased cost would be likely and would impact viability (SSR paragraph 3.4.7). However, there are several other NSIP scale solar projects in Lincolnshire, some of which have had a DCO granted or are currently in examination that are non-continuous, such as Cottam, West Burton, One Earth and Springwell. The Council therefore questions the applicant's assertion that the site must be continuous for viability.

11.21 As such there is considered to be insufficient information/evidence provided in the Beacon Fen DCO application to properly interrogate the assertion that the sequential test has been passed with regard to site selection. Further evidence is therefore required to ensure the sequential and exception tests have been appropriately applied."

1.1.4 The purpose of this SSR is to provide a policy level assessment that confirms or otherwise that there are no more suitable and reasonably available locations to make use of the available capacity at Bicker Fen Substation than the proposed Site for the Beacon Fen Energy Park, while seeking to provide the additional information sought by LCC. This has been prepared as a standalone annex.

1.1.5 The SSR is in accordance with Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy ('EN-1') at paragraphs 4.3.22 – 4.3.23, which sets out how only alternatives that meet the objectives of the proposed development need be considered (this is also set out in the same paragraphs of the Government's latest Draft EN-1, published November 2025 which are due to come into force soon).

1.1.6 With regards to the Sequential Test, Paragraph 027 of the Flood Risk and Coastal Change Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) states: "*a proportionate approach should be taken. Where a site-specific flood risk assessment demonstrates clearly that the proposed layout, design, and mitigation measures would ensure that occupiers and users would remain safe from current and future surface water flood risk for the lifetime of the development (therefore addressing the risks identified e.g. by Environment Agency flood*

risk mapping), without increasing flood risk elsewhere, then the sequential test need not be applied".

1.1.7 The Sequential Test also need only consider "reasonably available" sites under EN-1 policy. Paragraph 5.8.21 of EN-1 states that *"The Sequential Test ensures that a sequential, risk-based approach is followed to steer new development to areas with the lowest risk of flooding, taking all sources of flood risk and climate change into account. Where it is not possible to locate development in low-risk areas, the Sequential Test should go on to compare reasonably available sites with medium risk areas and then, only where there are no reasonably available sites in low and medium risk areas, within high-risk areas."*

1.1.8 The PPG, consistently with the NPS, provides that in applying the Sequential Test, consideration is to be given to 'reasonably available' sites, particularly where these are in areas of lowest flood risk.

1.1.9 The PPG states that *"It may also, in some cases, be relevant to consider whether large scale development could be split across a number of alternative sites at lower risk of flooding, but only where those alternative sites would be capable of accommodating the development in a way which would still serve its intended market(s) as effectively."* However, importantly it also states that "*The sequential test should be applied proportionately, focusing on realistic alternatives in areas of lower flood risk that could meet the same development need".*

1.1.10 The Applicant's original Sequential Test methodology considered continuous sites that are comparable to the Proposed Site. Continuous collections of non-contiguous sites which, when taken together cover an area greater than 300 ha, are not considered. This was because it would typically result in:

- More civil work related to the panels - e.g. more fencing, more accesses, more CCTV. This causes additional environmental impacts as well as increasing the cost, impacting viability.
- Additional substations for component parcels meaning more civil work, more hardstanding, more equipment. This also causes additional environmental impacts and greatly increases the cost, impacting viability. Furthermore, one larger contiguous site may just need a 33kV to 400kV substation where more substations can introduce the need for intermediate voltages, i.e. 132kV, which can lead to some system losses (reduced electrical efficiency) albeit relatively small overall.
- More overall cabling to link the constituent parts together due to fragmentation. This causes additional environmental impacts and involves a greater number of land, landowners and other parties. In turn this can cause delay and greatly increase costs, impacting feasibility and viability.

1.1.11 Together these cause them to be incomparable to a continuous site, in the particular circumstances of the development. This is similar to how a longer cable route may be possible in other contexts, but for this project impact viability and feasibility.

1.1.12 For the reasons outlined above, assessment of contiguous alternatives that meet the same development need as the Proposed Development is

considered to be proportionate and in line with the PPG, while looking at separated sites which do not meet the same development need is considered to be disproportionate. In other contexts separated sites would be technically feasible (in the same way that a longer cable route may be feasible in other contexts), however separated sites would be unable to meet the same development needs due to loss of efficiency and technical and engineering considerations associated with additional infrastructure, and are also unlikely to have a reasonable prospect of being developed in the same timeframe as the Proposed Development due to the need for additional agreements. The pragmatic and realistic approach in the PPG is reflective of recent case law. [1]

1.1.13 Nevertheless, despite the Applicant's justifiable preference for one contiguous site, the Applicant has agreed to consider non-contiguous sites specifically for the purposes of this Sequential Test. In order to do this, the Sequential Test Assessment has been rerun with additional sites identified under a separate methodology.

1.1.14 Furthermore, with respect to the Applicant's application of the Sequential Test, and in line with the PPG and case law, this has not been undertaken in an overly prescriptive manner and does not reflect only the corporate attributes and requirements of this specific developer. For example, the Proposed Development is approximately 529 ha and that reflects choices by the Applicant to provide a specific amount of mitigation and biodiversity net gain, and to approach the design of the scheme in a specific way including providing various offsets. Yet this Sequential Test has been undertaken looking for a smaller site of 300 ha, in order to ensure flexibility in the approach and accepting that there may be different approaches to the design of the site, and mitigations and enhancements proposed within the project. The approach has been informed by the need in this location and centred around this grid connection point. The characteristics applied as to what will be an appropriate site and location reflect considerations that are suitable for a large scale solar project.

1.1.15 To recap, Beacon Fen Energy Park is able to manage the existing surface water flood risks appropriately and safely as demonstrated in the Flood Risk Assessment. As such a Sequential Test does not need performing in relation to surface water flooding.

1.1.16 A Sequential Test has been carried out due to the fluvial flood risk, as identified on the Flood Map for Planning, in parts of the Solar Array Area in the latest NAFRA2 flood mapping. It should be noted that Beacon Fen Energy Park was identified for development in 2022 at which time flood mapping showed less extensive fluvial flood risk affecting the Solar Array Area. The 2022 public mapping is shown in Figure 2 of Appendix 2 of the submitted **FRA (APP-162)**, while July 2023 modelled extents from EA are depicted in Appendix 1 of the same.

1 This includes the High Court's decision of R (Mead and Redrow) v SoS LUHC [2024] EWHC 279 (Admin) (a decision that was subsequently upheld by the Court of Appeal) in relation to the application of the sequential test (in the context of planning permissions under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and considering the NPPF and PPG provisions in relation to reasonable available sites). The judgment referred to the approach taken to the sequential assessment in the context of retail policy and the need for "flexibility and realism" in the approach. This referenced that there was a balance between a developer taking an inflexible approach to their requirements and on the other hand, that a local planning authority refusing permission based on an alternate site may be effectively taking an entirely inappropriate business decision on behalf of the developer.

1.1.17 The Bespoke Access Road has been sited in Flood Zone 1, and would provide access to the Solar Array Area from the A17 for construction, operation and decommissioning. The **Bespoke Access Road Appraisal (Appendix 3.2 of the ES Volume 2, Document Ref: 6.3.10)** references other route options considered for this component of the development, some of which were located partly in areas of flood risk.

1.1.18 The remainder of the document is structured as follows:

- Section 2 – Assessment Methodology;
- Section 3 – Assessment Results; and
- Section 4 – Summary and Conclusions.

2. Assessment Methodology

2.1.1 This Sequential Test report considers the Proposed Development against both the PAS which are comparable to the Proposed Development and non-contiguous sites, separated by public roads and active railways, which are not comparable to the Proposed Development.

2.1.2 The methodology for identification of the non-contiguous sites is similar to that set out in the main body of the SSR which identified the PAS. The key differences are outlined below:

2.2 Stage 1 – Identification of the Search Area

2.2.1 For the purposes of the Sequential Test, the Search Area is the same as the SSR, as if a potential site was located too far from the point of connection, i.e. outside of the search area, then the costs and difficulties of creating and maintaining the connection would make a site unviable even where contiguous.

2.2.2 This is in accordance with Paragraph 027a of the Flood Risk PPG which states:

"For individual planning applications subject to the sequential test, the area to which the test needs to be applied will be governed by local circumstances relating to the catchment area for the type of development proposed and the needs it is proposing to address. The catchment area should always be appropriate to the nature and scale of the proposal and the settlement it is proposed for.

…

The sequential test should be applied proportionately, focusing on realistic alternatives in areas of lower flood risk that could meet the same development need."

2.3 Stage 2 – Identification of Unconstrained Land

2.3.1 As per the SSR, the following constraints were mapped and excluded if found within the search area (further information can be found in the main body of the SSE), reflecting that the presence of these constraints would make sites unsuitable for large scale solar development:

- Certain Environmental Designations.
- Certain Archaeological and Built Heritage Designations.
- Topography.
- Agricultural Land Classification (ALC).
- Other Existing/Proposed Solar Sites.
- Urban Areas.

2.4 Stage 3 – Identification of Additional Alternative Sites

2.4.1 As set out in the SSR, the Applicant's analysis regarding the minimum area for large scale solar to be economically viable identified a threshold of at least 300 ha of contiguous land for this site. This is considered to be the likely minimum land area (excluding cable route) required to support the 400 MW grid capacity available at the PoC.

2.4.2 However, for the purposes of the Sequential Test, non-contiguous alternatives which cross public highways, active railway lines and water bodies have been considered alongside other similar sites in the closest proximity. This approach represents an overly precautionary to the consideration of alternatives approach, and a more proportionate and realistic approach would be to not consider a series of smaller sites that would need to be connected via a cable corridor crossing major highways, active railway lines or water bodies, given the logistical, technical and financial implications of doing so.

2.4.3 In the event that there are non-contiguous sites that are not adjacent to enough other non-contiguous sites to create an Additional Alternative Site with an area of 300 ha, the assessment would group together sites of a minimum size of 50 ha at a maximum distance of 100 m.

2.4.4 As per the SSR, commercial rooftops were not considered because (i) there are no known rooftops of sufficient size in the area and (ii) it is considered that assessing the potential for development of multiple rooftops is not comparable or realistic when considered relative to a ground-mounted solar farm, particularly of this scale.

2.4.5 A further assessment of the Previously Developed Land (PDL)/brownfield land registers of Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) within the search area was undertaken to identify potential areas of PDL with an area greater than 300 ha.

2.5 Stage 4 – Evaluation of Additional Alternative Sites

2.5.1 As the Site is located approximately half in Flood Zone 1, for a site to be considered preferable in terms of the Sequential Test it must be located approximately 75% or more in Flood Zone 1 or 50% or more in Flood Zone 2.

2.5.2 In line with Paragraph: 028 Reference ID: 7-028-20220825 of the Flood Risk PPG, Stage 4 considers whether alternatives are suitable for the type of development proposed, if they are able to meet the same development needs and if they have a reasonable prospect of being developed at the same time as the proposal, with reference to planning, environmental and operational considerations.

3. Assessment Results

3.1 Stage 1: Identification of the Search Area

3.1.1 As mentioned above, the same Search Area of 10km as used within the SSR has been applied.

3.2 Stage 2: Identification of Unconstrained Land

3.2.1 The results of Stage 2 are identified in Figure G1.

3.3 Stage 3: Identification of Additional Alternative Sites

3.3.1 Figures G2 to G8 show the Additional Alternative Sites ('AAS') along with their surrounding contexts and constraints, including Flood Zones 2/3.

3.3.2 The nature of the constraints within the Search Area means that the unconstrained land is found in the western part of the Search Area. The contiguous sites have already been drawn out as part of the SSR but the remainder of the unconstrained land comprises a number of smaller sites separated by public roads, active railway lines and other features but otherwise in proximity. Therefore, these smaller sties have been grouped by proximity, collating sites which are separated by physical features but otherwise adjacent.

3.3.3 With regards to PDL, a review of the latest available relevant brownfield land registers was undertaken.

3.3.4 The relevant LPAs were NKDC, South Kesteven District Council, South Holland District Council, BBC and East Lindsey District Council. While the Search Area did not overlap with the administrative area of East Lindsey District Council, given the proximity it was considered possible that a PDL site on the East Lindsey Brownfield Land Register could overlap across administrative borders and into the Search Area. Therefore, the relevant brownfield land registers were as follows:

- North Kesteven Brownfield Land Register, most recently reviewed on 27 November 2025;
- South Kesteven Brownfield Land Register, most recently reviewed on 27 November 2025;
- South Holland Brownfield Land Register, dated 2024;
- Boston Brownfield Land Register, dated 2024; and
- East Lindsey Brownfield Land Register, most recently reviewed on 27 November 2025.

3.3.5 The review of PDL did not identify any PAS in excess of, or close to, 300 ha within the Search Area.

3.4 Stage 4: Evaluation of Additional Alternative Sites

3.4.1 An evaluation of each AAS with respect to its potential to meet the same development needs as the Proposed Development is provided below. With regards to PAS 1, PAS 2 and PAS 3, further detail on their suitability is included within the main body of the SSR.

3.4.2 The Environment Agency's Flood Risk Mapping has been updated since this evaluation but the Applicant has reviewed this latest data and confirmed that the below conclusions for PAS, PAS 2 and PAS 3 have not changed.

PAS 1

3.4.3 PAS 1 is located approximately 50% in Flood Zones 2with small areas of Flood Zone 2, like the Proposed Site, therefore is not considered to form a lower risk area relative to it and is therefore not a preferable site according to the Sequential Test.

PAS 2

3.4.4 While PAS 2 is located largely within Flood Zone 1, which is preferable to the Proposed Site, it does not meet the minimum size criteria and is significantly constrained by proximity to heritage assets and other existing/proposed solar farms (making it unsuitable for a large scale solar farm) and therefore it is not considered to comprise a feasible alternative with respect to the Sequential Test as it will be unable to meet the same development needs.

PAS 3

3.4.5 PAS 3 is located almost entirely within Flood Zone 1, which is preferable to the Proposed Site. However, due to proximity to heritage assets, a large PRoW network and the presence of significant amounts of Crown land, it is significantly constrained (making it unsuitable for a large scale solar farm) and therefore it is not considered to comprise a feasible alternative with respect to the Sequential Test as it will be unable to meet the same development needs and there is no reasonable prospect of it being developed at the same time as the Proposed Development.

AAS 1

3.4.6 AAS 1 is located directly west of Howell, south of Ewerby and directly north east of Asgarby within the administrative area of North Kesteven District Council and covers an area of approximately 311 hectares.

3.4.7 AAS 1 is located entirely within Flood Zone 1, which is preferable to the Proposed Site in flood risk terms.

3.4.8 However, it contains two Grade II Listed Buildings within its boundary and is directly adjacent to a number of Listed Buildings in Asgarby, including a Grade I Listed Building. These are considered to comprise constraints that would require setbacks, reducing the total number of panels, limiting development potential on the site and making it unsuitable for a large scale solar farm.

3.4.9 AAS 1 is divided into three parts by public roads which would require additional agreements for cabling, additional engineering difficulty, reduced efficiency and potentially long routeing and make it incomparable to the Proposed Site

as it will be unable to meet the same development needs. AAS 1 is also crossed by one Public Right of Way ('PRoW'), restricting development due to the likely need for set-backs.

3.4.10 Furthermore, efforts were made to contact the landowner of the majority of the site in 2021 before the extent of constraints within this site were known but there was a lack of interest, meaning there is no reasonable prospect of it being developed at the same time as the Proposed Development.

3.4.11 In light of the above, it is considered that AAS 1 is unable to meet the same development needs as the Proposed Site and does not have a reasonable prospect of being developed at the same time as the Proposed Development.

AAS 2

3.4.12 AAS 2 is located directly north west of Burton Pedwardine within the administrative area of North Kesteven District Council and covers an area approximately 305 hectares.

3.4.13 AAS 2 is located largely in Flood Zone 1, with small areas in Flood Zones 2 and 3, which is preferable to the Proposed Site in flood risk terms.

3.4.14 However, it wraps around and is directly adjacent to two existing solar farms which increase the potential for cumulative impacts that would require setbacks, reducing the total number of panels, limiting development potential on the site and making it unsuitable for a large scale solar farm.

3.4.15 AAS 2 is divided into three parts by active railway lines which would require additional agreements for cabling, additional engineering difficulty, reduced effeciency and potentially long routeing. The longer routeing is because railway operators may request routeing via existing crossings of the railway instead of new crossings. These constraints make it incomparable to the Proposed Site as it will be unable to meet the same development needs. AAS 2 is also crossed by one PRoW, restricting development due to the likely need for set-backs.

3.4.16 Furthermore, efforts were made to contact two of the landowners, who together make up a majority of the site, in 2021 before the extent of constraints within this site were known but there was a lack of interest, meaning there is no reasonable prospect of it being developed at the same time as the Proposed Development.

3.4.17 In light of the above, it is considered that AAS 2 is unable to meet the same developments needs as the Site and does not have a reasonable prospect of being developed at the same time as the Proposed Development.

AAS 3

3.4.18 AAS 3 is located directly west of Heckington and directly north of Burton Pedwardine within the administrative area of North Kesteven District Council and covers an area of approximately 325 hectares.

3.4.19 AAS 3 is located almost entirely within Flood Zone 1, which is preferable to the Proposed Site in flood risk terms.

3.4.20 However, it is located in close proximity to residential areas of Heckington (which also includes a Conservation Area) which increases the potential for various impacts that would require setbacks, reducing the total number of

panels, limiting development potential on the site and making it unsuitable for a large scale solar farm.

3.4.21 AAS 3 is divided into four parts by two public roads and an active railway line which would require additional agreements for cabling, additional engineering complexity, reduced efficiency and potentially longer cable routeing, and make it incomparable to the Proposed Site as it will be unable to meet the same development needs. AAS 3 is also crossed by two PRoWs, restricting development due to the likely need for set-backs.

3.4.22 In light of the above, it is considered that AAS 3 is unable to meet the same development needs as the Proposed Site.

AAS 4

3.4.23 AAS 4 is located directly north of Helpringham and directly west of Burton Pedwardine within the administrative area of North Kesteven District Council and covers an area of approximately 385 hectares. It is also in close proximity to Heckington, Great Hale and Little Hale.

3.4.24 AAS 4 is located almost entirely within Flood Zone 1, which is preferable to the Proposed Site in flood risk terms.

3.4.25 However, it is located adjacent to Helpringham (which contains a Conservation Area with a number of Listed Buildings) and Burton Pedwardine, and in close proximity to Heckington, Great Hale and Little Hale, which increase the potential for various impacts that would require setbacks, reducing the total number of panels, limiting development potential on the site and making it unsuitable for a large scale solar farm.

3.4.26 AAS 4 is divided into five parts by two public roads, an active railway line and North Beck which would require additional agreements for cabling, additional engineering difficulty, reduced efficiency and potentially long routeing, and make it incomparable to the Proposed Site as it will be unable to meet the same development needs. AAS 4 is also crossed by three PRoWs and two Restricted Byways, restricting development due to the likely need for set-backs.

3.4.27 Furthermore, efforts were made to contact the landowner of a significant portion of the site in 2021 before the extent of constraints within this site were known but there was a lack of interest, meaning there is no reasonable prospect of it being developed at the same time as the Proposed Development.

3.4.28 AAS 4 slightly overlaps with the proposed Lincolnshire Reservoir by Anglian Water and is overwise adjacent. This project was announced in 2023, and its design and precise siting is being developed at present, with a DCO application not yet submitted. It is a large and permanent form of infrastructure involving substantial civil engineering as well as various connecting pipeline corridors. Cumulative impacts in relation to landscape, transport, and other areas would reduce the developable area of a solar farm adjacent.

3.4.29 In light of the above, it is considered that AAS 4 is unable to meet the same developments needs as the Proposed Site and does not have a reasonable prospect of being developed at the same time as the Proposed Development.

AAS 5

3.4.30 AAS 5 is located directly south west of Burton Pedwardine and directly south of Northbeck within the administrative area of North Kesteven District Council. AAS 5 contains the village of Scredington and a Scheduled Monument, if these areas are discounted PAS 8 covers an area of approximately 409 hectares.

3.4.31 AAS 5 located largely in Flood Zone 1, with approximately 25% locatedbetween Flood Zones 2 and 3, which is preferable to the Proposed Site in flood risk terms.

3.4.32 Furthermore, AAS 5 surrounds a village and Scheduled Monument are AAS 5, with villages and a further Scheduled Monument located in close proximity, which increase the potential for various impacts and limit development potential on the site. As AAS 5 surrounds a Scheduled Monument, this is likely to result in additional archaeological evaluation requirements with a higher risk of finds and preservation in situ, reducing the potential developable area. This would require setbacks, reducing the total number of panels, limiting development potential on the site and making it unsuitable for a large scale solar farm There is a higher risk of heritage harm in policy terms which would require special justification.

3.4.33 AAS 5 significantly overlaps with the proposed Lincolnshire Reservoir by Anglian Water meaning a large section of the site is unlikely to be available. This project was announced in 2023 and its design and precise siting is being developed at present, with a DCO application not yet submitted. It is a large and permanent form of infrastructure involving substantial civil engineering as well as various connecting pipeline corridors. Furthermore, cumulative impacts in relation to landscape, transport, and other topics would reduce the developable area of a solar farm adjacent.

3.4.34 AAS 5 is divided into eight parts by a network of public roads, an active railway line and North Beck which would require additional agreements for cabling, additional engineering difficulty, reduce efficiency and potentially long routeing, and make it incomparable to the Proposed Site as it will be unable to meet the same development needs. AAS 5 is also crossed by five PRoWs, restricting development due to the likely need for set-backs.

3.4.35 In light of the above, it is considered that AAS 5 is unable to meet the same development needs as the Proposed Site.

AAS 6

3.4.36 AAS 6 is located north of Holland Road (A52) and east of Mareham Lane within the administrative area of North Kesteven District Council and covers an area of approximately 393 hectares. It encompasses the village of Spanby, which covers an area of approximately 3 hectares.

3.4.37 AAS 6 is located almost entirely within Flood Zone 1, which is preferable to the Proposed Site in flood risk terms.

3.4.38 Furthermore, AAS 6 encompasses the village of Spanby and wraps around a holiday park, which increase the potential for various impacts that would require setbacks, reducing the total number of panels, limiting development potential on the site and making it unsuitable for a large scale solar farm

3.4.39 AAS 6 significantly overlaps with the proposed Lincolnshire Reservoir by Anglian Water meaning a large section of the site is unlikely to be available. This project was announced in 2023 and its design and precise siting is being developed at present, with a DCO application not yet submitted. It is a large and permanent form of infrastructure involving substantial civil engineering as well as various connecting pipeline corridors meaning there is no reasonable prospect of it being developed at the same time as the Proposed Development. Furthermore, cumulative impacts in relation to landscape, transport, and other topics would reduce the developable area of a solar farm adjacent.

3.4.40 AAS 6 is divided into two parts by a public road which would require additional agreements for cabling, additional engineering difficulty, reduce efficiency and potentially long routeing, and make it incomparable to the Proposed Site as it will be unable to meet the same development needs. AAS 6 is also crossed by a PRoW, restricting development due to the likely need for set-backs.

3.4.41 In light of the above, it is considered that AAS 6 is unable to meet the same development needs as the Proposed Site.

AAS 7

3.4.42 AAS 7 is located directly east of Billingborough in the administrative area of South Holland District Council covering an area of approximately 364 hectares. It encompasses the village of Birthorpe which covers an area of approximately 6 hectares.

3.4.43 AAS 7 is located almost entirely within Flood Zone 1, which is preferable to the Proposed Site in flood risk terms.

3.4.44 However, AAS 7 encompasses the village of Birthorpe and is adjacent to the village of Billingborough, which increase the potential for various impacts and limit development potential on the site due to residential setbacks. Furthermore, there are Listed Buildings within Birthorpe and elsewhere within PAS 10, and a large number in close proximity Billingborough, largely located within a Conservation Area due to heritage setbacks. There is also a Scheduled Monument adjacent to AAS 7. Related setbacks would reduce the total number of panels, limiting development potential on the site and making it unsuitable for a large scale solar farm.

3.4.45 AAS 7 is divided into four parts by a number of public roads which would require additional agreements for cabling, additional engineering difficulty, reduced efficiency and potentially long routeing, and make it incomparable to the Proposed Site as it will be unable to meet the same development needs. AAS 7 is also crossed by approximately six PRoWs and a Restricted Byway, restricting development due to the likely need for set-backs.

3.4.46 In light of the above, it is considered that AAS 7 is unable to meet the same development needs as the Proposed Site.

4. Summary and Conclusion

4.1.1 In light of the above, it is considered that there are no suitable and reasonably available sites appropriate for the Proposed Development in areas with a lower risk of flooding and that the Site for the Proposed Development accordingly passes the Sequential Test.

4.1.2 Furthermore, as set out in the in the **ES Chapter 11: Water Resources and Floor Risk (Document Ref: 6.2)** and **Appendix 11.1: Flood Risk Assessment (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol. 2, 6.3.81)**, the Applicant also undertook a sequential approach to the layout and design of the Proposed Development within the Site to ensure the most vulnerable infrastructure was located in the areas at lowest risk of flooding (i.e., Flood Zone 1).

4.1.3 Land nearby to the north, south and east of the Bicker Fen substation is located within Flood Zone 3. Owing to the size (i.e. 529ha) of the Solar Array Area, it would not be feasible to locate all panels and infrastructure solely within areas of Flood Zone 1 and 2 to the west of Bicker Fern Substation.

4.1.4 The FRA confirms that no parts of the development will be impacted by flooding from any source, rendering it inoperable and is considered, therefore, that the Sequential Test has been passed.

4.1.5 Information on the Exception Test can be found within the main body of the **Planning Statement (Document Ref: 5.5)**.

PLANS G1 – G8

N

PAS 1

AAS 1

AAS 2

AAS 3

AAS 4

PAS 2

AAS 5

AAS 6

PAS 3

AAS 7

10-km Radius Search Area

North Kesteven District

South Kesteven District

East Lindsey District

Boston District (B)

South Holland District

0 1 km

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PROJECT NAME:

Beacon Fen Energy Park

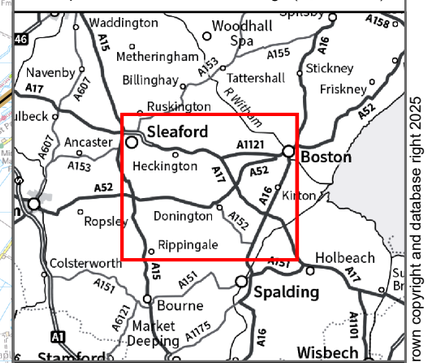
KEY:

- Point of connection (POC)
- Planning Application Boundary
- Cable Route Corridor
- Search Area (10 km from POC)
- Local Authority Boundary
- Unconstrained Land

Potential Alternative Site 1-3

- PAS 1
- PAS 2
- PAS 3
- Additional Alternative Site 4-10

Note: The' Unconstrained Land' layer is land that is not covered by the following constraints: ALC grades 1 and 2, Ancient Woodland, Local Nature Reserve, SSSI, IBA, Scheduled Ancient Monument, Conservation Area, Parks & Gardens, slope > 10%, the Proposed Lincolnshire Reservoir, Other Existing or Proposed Solar Site and buildings (25 m buffer).

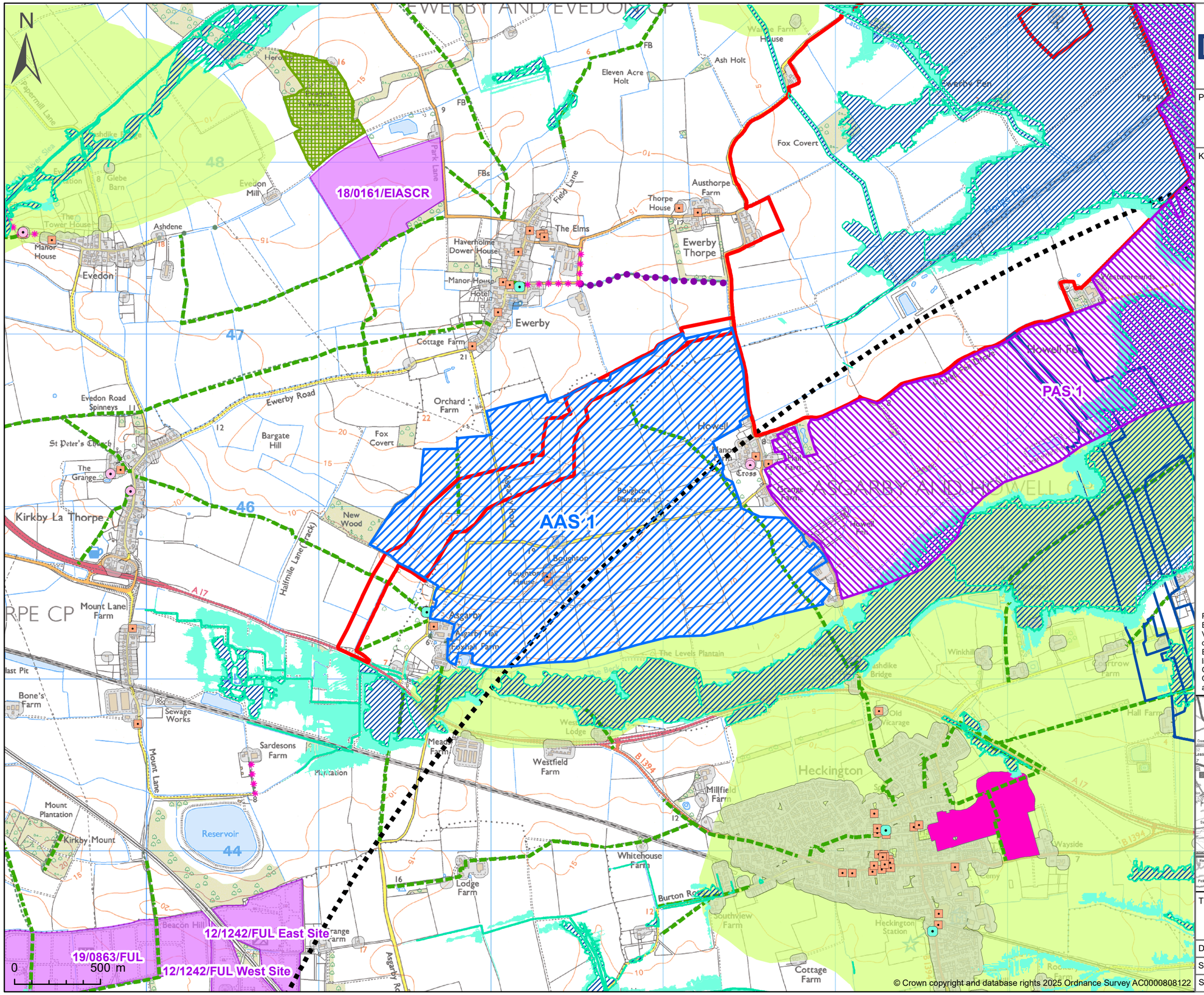


TITLE:

Figure G1
Unconstrained Land and Additional Alternative Sites (AAS 1 -AAS 7)

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PROJECT NAME:

Beacon Fen Energy Park

KEY:

- Additional Alternative Site (4-10)
- Potential Alternative Site (1-3)
- Planning Application Boundary
- Cable Route Corridor
- Search Area (10 km from POC)

Listed Buildings

- Grade I
- Grade II*
- Grade II

PROW

- Footpath
- Bridleway
- Restricted Byway
- Ancient Woodland
- Conservation Area
- Building (25 m buffer)
- Flood Zone 2
- Flood Zone 3

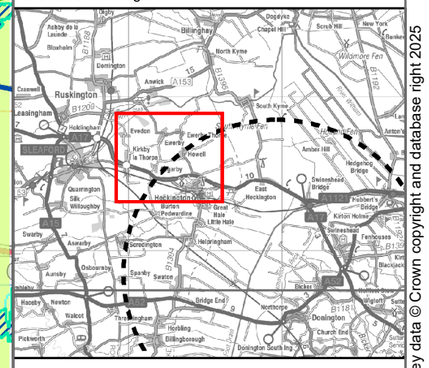
ALC Grade - Post 1988:

- Grade 2

ALC Grade - Provisional:

- Grade 2 - Very Good Quality
- Other Existing or Proposed Solar Site

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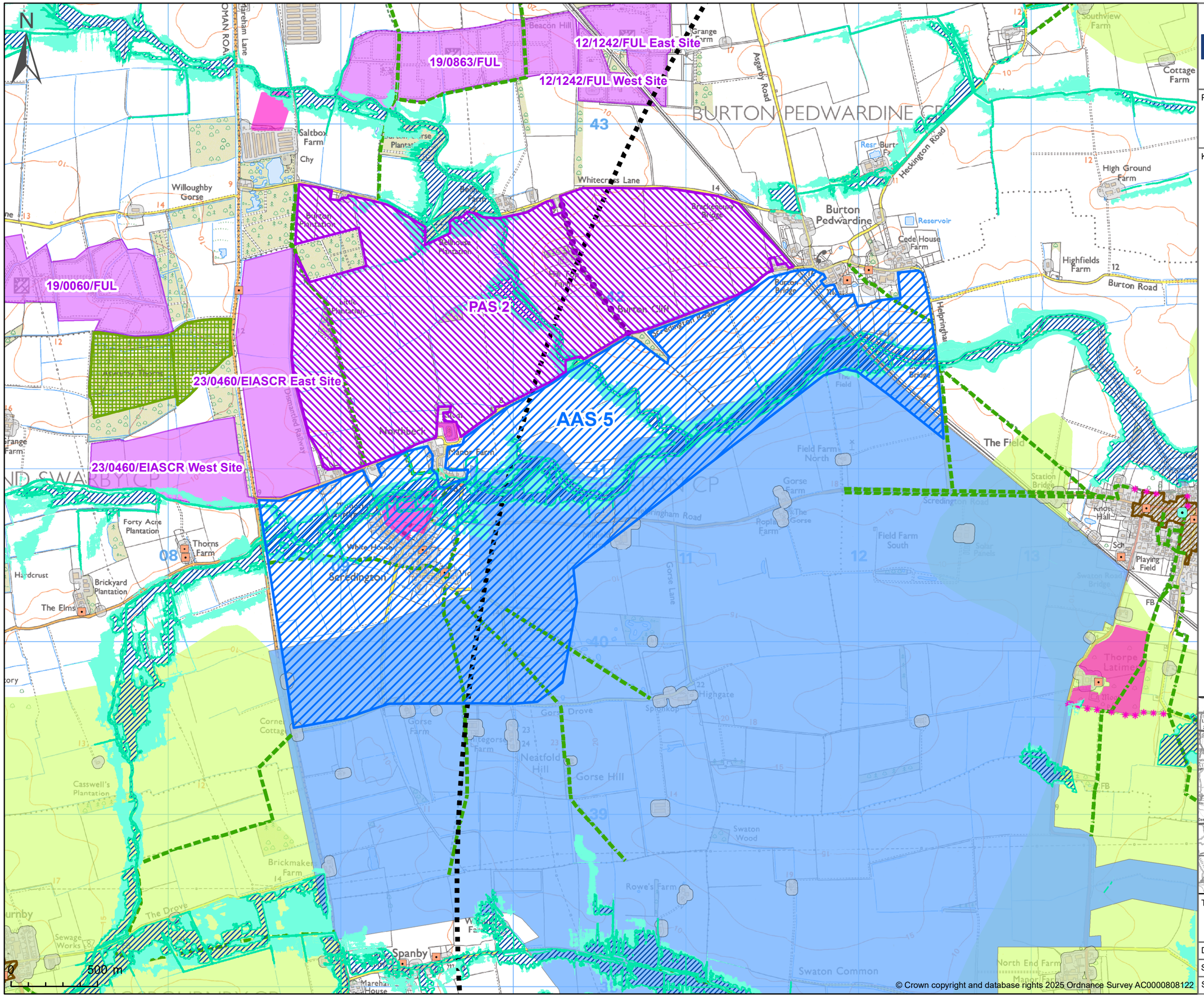


TITLE:

Figure G2
AAS1 with Constraints

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PROJECT NAME:
Beacon Fen Energy Park

KEY:

- Additional Alternative Site (4-10)
- Potential Alternative Site (1-3)
- Search Area (10 km from POC)

Listed Buildings

- Grade I
- Grade II

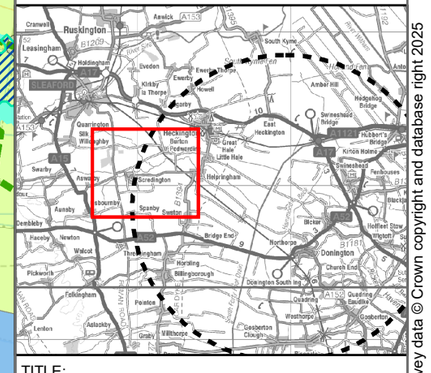
PROW

- Footpath
- Bridleway
- Restricted Byway
- Ancient Woodland
- Conservation Area
- Scheduled Monument
- Building (25 m buffer)
- Proposed Lincolnshire Reservoir
- Flood Zone 2
- Flood Zone 3

ALC Grade - Provisional:

- Grade 2 - Very Good Quality
- Other Existing or Proposed Solar Site

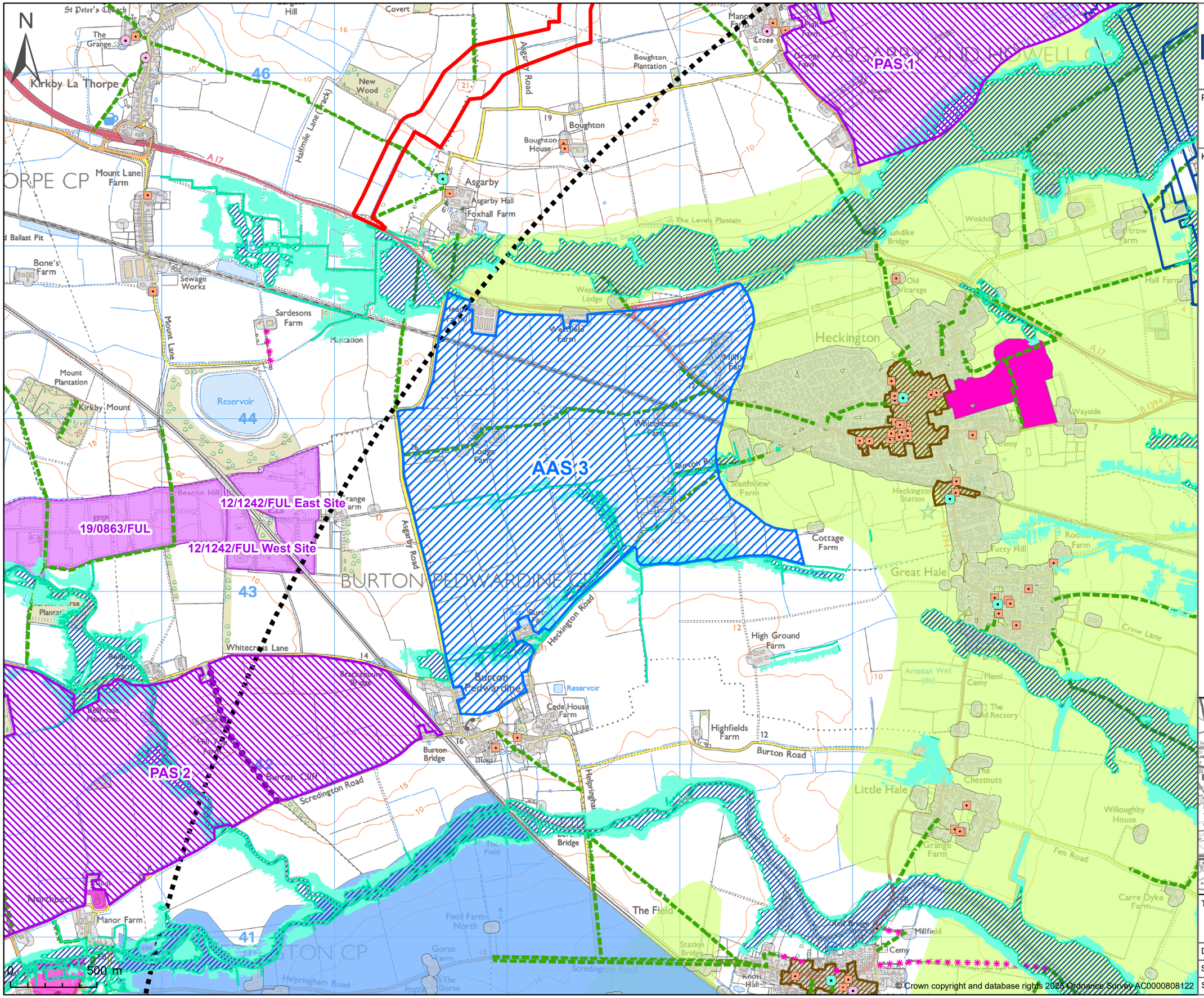
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Figure G6
AAS 5 with Constraints

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PROJECT NAME:
Beacon Fen Energy Park

KEY:
- Additional Alternative Site (4-10)
- Potential Alternative Site (1-3)
- Planning Application Boundary
- Cable Route Corridor
- Search Area (10 km from POC)

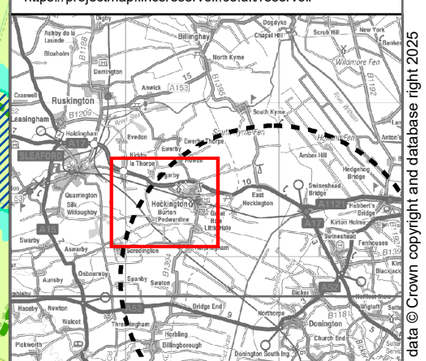
Listed Buildings
- Grade I
- Grade II*
- Grade II

PROW
- Footpath
- Bridleway
- Restricted Byway
- Conservation Area
- Scheduled Monument
- Building (25 m buffer)
- Proposed Lincolnshire Reservoir
- Flood Zone 2
- Flood Zone 3

ALC Grade - Post 1988:
- Grade 2

ALC Grade - Provisional:
- Grade 2 - Very Good Quality
- Other Existing or Proposed Solar Site

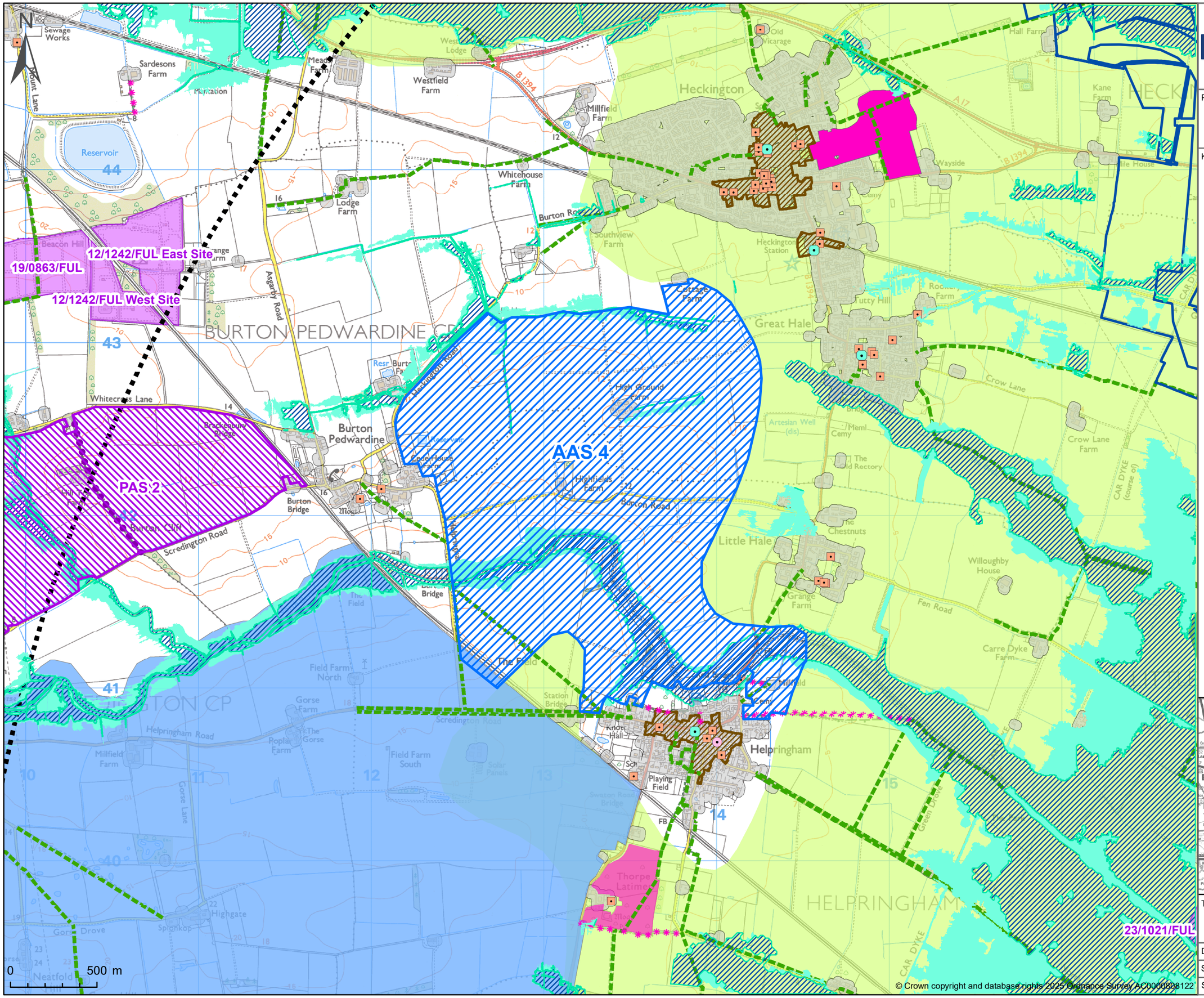
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AAS 3 with Constraints

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PROJECT NAME:
Beacon Fen Energy Park

KEY:

- Additional Alternative Site (4-10)
- Potential Alternative Site (1-3)
- Cable Route Corridor
- Search Area (10 km from POC)

Listed Buildings

- Grade I
- Grade II*
- Grade II

PROW

- Footpath
- Bridleway
- Restricted Byway
- Conservation Area
- Scheduled Monument
- Proposed Lincolnshire Reservoir
- Building (25 m buffer)
- Flood Zone 2
- Flood Zone 3

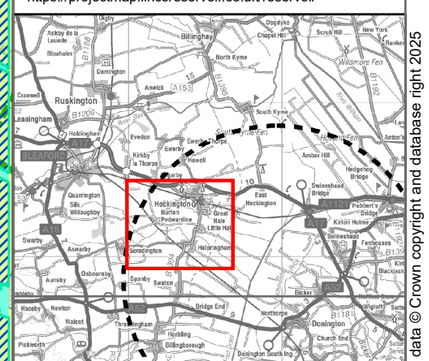
ALC Grade - Post 1988:

- Grade 2

ALC Grade - Provisional:

- Grade 1 - Excellent Quality
- Grade 2 - Very Good Quality
- Other Existing or Proposed Solar Site

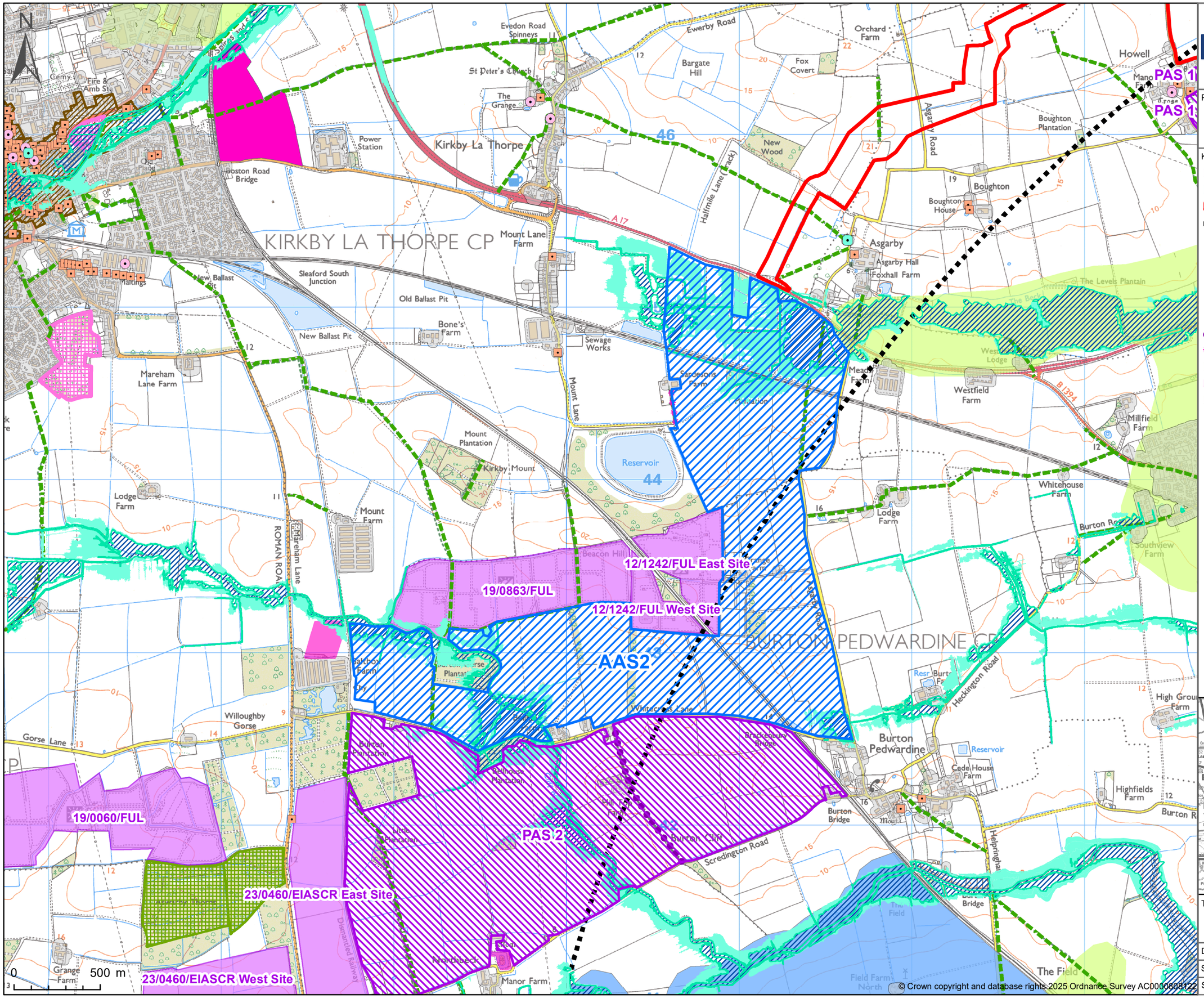
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Figure G5
AAS 4 with Constraints

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PROJECT NAME:
Beacon Fen Energy Park

KEY:
- Potential Alternative Site (1-3)
- Additional Alternative Site (4-10)
- Planning Application Boundary
- Search Area (10 km from POC)

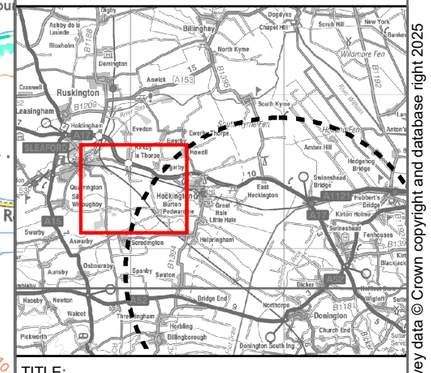
Listed Buildings
- Grade I
- Grade II*
- Grade II

PROW
- Footpath
- Bridleway
- Restricted Byway
- Ancient Woodland
- Local Nature Reserve
- Conservation Area
- Scheduled Monument
- Building (25 m buffer)
- Proposed Lincolnshire Reservoir
- Flood Zone 2
- Flood Zone 3

ALC Grade - Post 1988:
- Grade 2

ALC Grade - Provisional:
- Grade 2 - Very Good Quality
- Other Existing or Proposed Solar Site

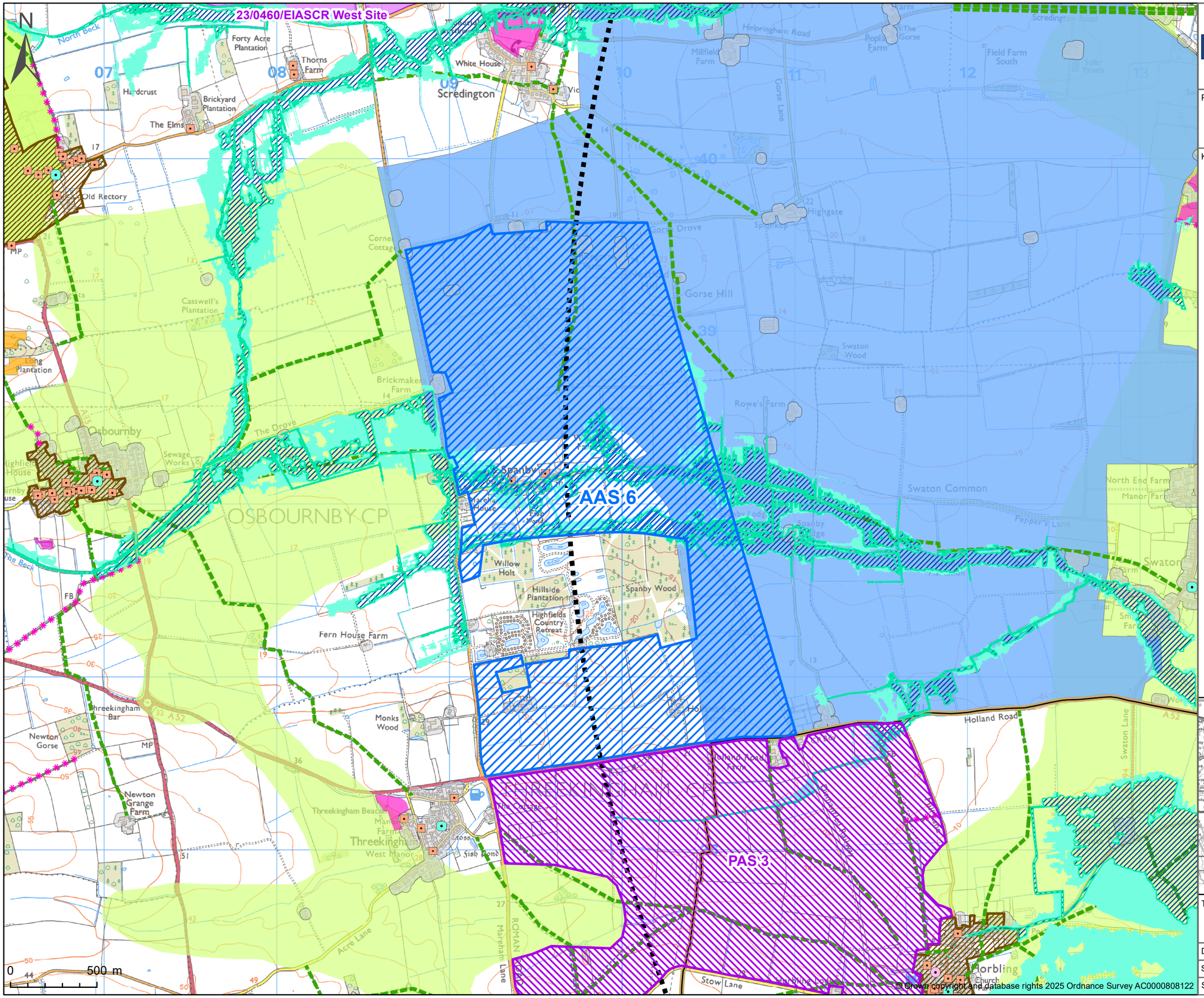
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AAS 2 with Constraints

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23/0460/EIASCR West Site
AAS 6
PAS 3
OSBOURNBY CP
THREEKINGHAM CP
Sedgebrook
Scredington
Osbournby
Threekingham
Swaton
Swaton Common
Gorse Hill
Spanby Wood
Willow Holt
Hillside Plantation
Highfields Country Retreat
Fern House Farm
Monks Wood
Newton Gorse
Newton Grange Farm
Threekingham Bar
Holland Road
Holland Road Farm
Forty Acre Plantation
Thorns Farm
Brickyard Plantation
The Elms
Hardcrust
White House
Old Rectory
Casswell's Plantation
Long Plantation
Brickmakers Farm
Sewage Works
Highfield House
Helpringham Road
Millfield Farm
Poplar Farm
Field Farm South
Gorse Lane
Highgate
Sportsman
Swaton Wood
Rowe's Farm
Spanby Lodge
Spanby Bridge
Peppers Lane
North End Farm
Manor Farm
Swaton Grange
Swaton Lane
Threekingham Beacon Manor Farm
Threekingham West Manor
Fish Pond
The Cottage
Mareham Lane
ROMAN BANK
Acre Lane
Stow Lane
Horbling
Horbling Low Fen
Sedgebrook Lodge
Sedgebrook Grange
Sedgebrook Hall
Sedgebrook Manor
Sedgebrook Park
Sedgebrook Park Farm
Sedgebrook Road
Scredington Road
The Beck
The Drove
Corner Cottage
Sedgebrook Drove
Spanby Drove
Spanby Fen Drain
Spanby Fen Lane
Spanby Fen Road
Spanby Fen Road Farm
Spanby Fen Road Farm Cottages
Spanby Fen Road Farm Cottages
Spanby Fen Road Farm Cottages

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PROJECT NAME:
Beacon Fen Energy Park

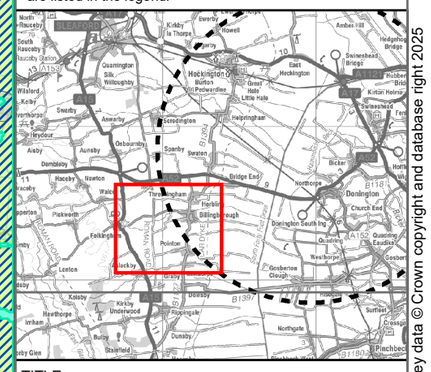
KEY:
- Potential Alternative Site (1-3)
- Additional Alternative Site (4-10)
- Search Area (10 km from POC)
- Local Authority Boundary

Listed Buildings
- Grade I
- Grade II*
- Grade II

PROW
- Footpath
- Bridleway
- Restricted Byway
- Conservation Area
- Scheduled Monument
- Building (25 m buffer)
- Proposed Lincolnshire Reservoir
- Flood Zone 2
- Flood Zone 3

ALC Grade - Provisional:
- Grade 2 - Very Good Quality

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TITLE:
Figure G8
AAS 7 with Constraints

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0 500 m

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Appendix 3A: Policy Compliance Table – NPS EN-1

Table 3A: Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1) Part 5 – Table of Compliance

PART	EN-1 POLICY TEXT	ASSESSMENT
5.2 Air Quality and Emissions *Applicant Assessment*	5.2.8 Where the project is likely to have adverse effects on air quality the applicant should undertake an assessment of the impacts of the proposed project as part of the ES.	**ES Chapter 16: Air Quality (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.16)** assesses the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development on local air quality. The assessment provides an overview of the relevant legislation and policy, the consultation and scope of assessment, assessment methodology and significance criteria, the existing baseline conditions for the study area, followed by an assessment of likely significant effects arising from the construction, operation (including maintenance), and decommissioning stages of the Proposed Development on air quality, mitigation, residual effects and an assessment of cumulative effects.
	5.2.9 The ES should describe: • existing air quality concentrations and the relative change in air quality from existing levels; • any significant air quality effects, mitigation action taken and any residual effects, distinguishing between the project stages and taking account of any significant emissions from any road traffic generated by the project; • the predicted absolute emissions, concentration change and absolute concentrations as a result of	**ES Chapter 16: Air Quality (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.16)** includes a desk-based review to determine the air quality baseline conditions within the study area. The baseline data sources are sufficient to provide an assessment of potential air quality impacts arising from the Proposed Development and have been agreed upon with North Kesteven District Council during technical consultation. **ES Chapter 16: Air Quality (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.16)** provides an assessment of the air quality impacts and potential for likely significant effects due to construction, operation (including maintenance) and decommissioning stages of the Proposed Development, including those associated with road traffic exhaust emissions.

PART	EN-1 POLICY TEXT	ASSESSMENT
	the proposed project, after mitigation methods have been applied; and • any potential eutrophication impacts.	**ES Chapter 16: Air Quality (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.16)** outlines that no embedded mitigation measures have been considered in relation to the operational phase assessment. Based upon the outcomes of the assessments, Section 16.7 of **ES Chapter 16: Air Quality (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.16)** outlines additional mitigation measures to mitigate the air quality impacts of the Proposed Development. Including additional mitigation measures, no significant residual effects were identified. Mitigation measures to be documented within and secured by the **Appendix 9.3: Outline Construction Traffic Management Plan (OCTMP) (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol 2, 6.3.79)**, **Appendix 2.4: Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (OCEMP) (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol 2, 6.3.7)**, and **Appendix 2.5: Outline Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan (ODEMP) (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.8)** that have been prepared to support the application and are secured by requirements in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**. Table 12.4: Absolute/Total Emissions of **Chapter 12: Climate Change (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.12)** outlines the predicted absolute emissions from the Proposed Development. Eutrophication is not expected since the Proposed Development does not require water for cooling or cause additional nutrient runoff into waterbodies.
	5.2.10 In addition, applicants should consider the Environment Targets (Fine Particulate Matter)	A qualitative assessment of the likely significant effects of construction and decommissioning phase dust and particulate matter at sensitive receptors have been undertaken. Follow the

PART	EN-1 POLICY TEXT	ASSESSMENT
	(England) Regulations 2022 and associated Defra guidance.	Environment Targets (Fine Particulate Matter) (England) Regulations 2023 and Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) Local Air Quality Management Technical Guidance. Three separate potential dust impacts have been considered for Human Receptors in Table 16.4: Construction Phase Dust Assessment for Human Receptors in **ES Chapter 16: Air Quality (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.16)**: • Sensitivity of Closest Receptors; • Sensitivity of Area to Dust Soiling Effects; and • Sensitivity of Area to Human Health Effects. The effect of construction dust and particulate matter from the Proposed Development on human receptors and designated sites is considered not significant with the implementation of site-specific mitigation measures, which are secured by the **Appendix 9.3: OCTMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol 2, 6.3.79)**, **Appendix 2.4: OCEMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol 2, 6.3.7)**, and **Appendix 2.5: ODEMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.8)** that have been prepared to support the application and are secured by Requirements in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**.
	5.2.11 Defra publishes future national projections of air quality based on estimates of future levels of emissions, traffic, and vehicle fleet. Projections are updated as the evidence base changes and the applicant should ensure these are current at the point of an	In 2023, the Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP) outlined updates to the PM2.5 Air Quality Objective for future years. These are a long-term target of 10 µg/m3 by 2040 and an interim target of 12 µg/m3 by 2028. In 2028, the first anticipated year of operation, Defra predicted background concentrations of PM2.5 were between 7.9 – 8.2 µg/m3 across the Order Limits, which is comfortably below the 12

PART	EN-1 POLICY TEXT	ASSESSMENT
	application. The applicant's assessment should be consistent with this but may include more detailed modelling and evaluation to demonstrate local and national impacts. If an applicant believes they have robust additional supporting evidence, to the extent they could affect the conclusions of the assessment, they should include this in their representations to the Examining Authority along with the source.	µg/m3 interim target. No future projections have been made by Defra past 2030, so it is not possible to consider concentrations up to 2040, when the long-term target of 10 µg/m3 should be achieved. However, there are not expected to be significant sources of PM2.5 when the solar farm is operational. Table 16.3: Background NOx, NO2, PM10 and PM2.5 Concentrations Obtained from the 2021-Based Defra Default Concentration Maps of **Chapter 16: Air Quality (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.16)** outlines the 2025 background concentrations. At the time of writing there had been no further updates to relevant Air Quality Objectives for other pollutants considered in the Air Quality ES Chapter.
	5.2.12 Where a proposed development is likely to lead to a breach of any relevant statutory air quality limits, objectives or targets, or affect the ability of a non-compliant area to achieve compliance within the timescales set out in the most recent relevant air quality plan/strategy at the time of the decision, the applicant should work with the relevant authorities to secure appropriate mitigation measures to ensure that those statutory limits, objectives or targets are not breached.	The Proposed Development would not lead to a breach of any relevant statutory air quality thresholds or affect the ability of a non-compliant area to achieve compliance.

PART	EN-1 POLICY TEXT	ASSESSMENT
	5.2.13 The Secretary of State should consider whether mitigation measures are needed both for operational and construction emissions over and above any which may form part of the project application. A construction management plan may help codify mitigation at this stage. In doing so the Secretary of State should have regard to the Air Quality Strategy in England, or the Clean Air Plan for Wales in Wales, or any successors to these and should consider relevant advice within Local Air Quality Management guidance and PM2.5 targets guidance	**ES Chapter 16: Air Quality (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.16)**: conducts a qualitative assessment of the likely significant effects of construction and decommissioning phase dust and particulate matter at sensitive receptors have been undertaken following the Defra Local Air Quality Management Technical Guidance and PM2.5 Target Guidance. The assessment concludes that there are no anticipated significant residual effects on air quality as a result of the Proposed Development. Mitigation measures following IAQM guidance are presented in **Appendix 9.3: OCTMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol 2, 6.3.79)**, **Appendix 2.4: OCEMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol 2, 6.3.7)** and **Appendix 2.5: ODEMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.8)** that have been prepared to support the application and preparation, approval and implementation of detailed versions of these are secured by Requirements in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**.
	5.2.14 The mitigations identified in Section 5.14 on traffic and transport impacts will help mitigate the effects of air emissions from transport.	Mitigation measures are outlined in Sections 9.6: Assessment of Impacts and Section 9.7: Mitigation of **Chapter 9: Access and Traffic (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.9)**. During construction, mitigation includes but is not limited to the principal construction access to the Site being from the A17, with a left-in/left-out arrangement with connectivity to the site via the Bespoke Access Road. All construction traffic will be the subject of a detailed Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) and Delivery Management Plan (DMP), which will together set out suitable measures to safely manage and monitor construction traffic, ensuring that highway safety and the free flow of traffic on public highway is maintained. An **OCTMP** is provided at **Appendix 9.3**

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		(Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol. 2, 6.3.78) and preparation, approval and implementation of a detailed CTMP is secured in a requirement in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**. A Construction Staff Travel Plan (TP) will be implemented to minimise the impacts of construction staff travel to/from the site and the resultant impact on existing road users. An outline Construction Staff TP is included as part of the **Appendix 9.3 OCTMP (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.78)**. The TP will achieve sustainable travel through provision of minibuses from local pick-up points for construction workers to maximise use of shared transport. HGV movements will be managed to avoid diversion through Heckington in the event of A17 closure. The Bespoke Access Road is a substantial form of mitigation since it will considerably reduce the potential for temporary air quality impacts in the villages. Once the Proposed Development is operational, activities will be limited to maintenance and the associated transport to infrastructure elements of the Proposed Development. Planned maintenance will comprise limited planned site visits and vehicle trips associated with component replacement (all types of electrical equipment) is expected to be considerably lower than the level of vehicle trips generated during construction. The effects associated with operational road traffic exhaust emissions are considered to be not significant in terms of the EIA Regulations. Any effects on air quality from traffic during the construction and decommissioning of the Proposed Development will be temporary (i.e. during the construction/decommissioning period only) and can be suitably controlled by the employment of mitigation measures. These are documented within **Appendix 9.3: OCTMP (Document**

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		Ref: 6.3, ES Vol 2, 6.3.79) and **Appendix 2.5: ODEMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.8)** which are secured by Requirements in Schedule 2 of the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**. No specific operational phase mitigation measures are required for road traffic exhaust emissions during operation (including maintenance). Nevertheless, best practice mitigation measures can be considered to further reduce any residual effects on air quality.
Secretary of State decision making	5.2.15 Many activities involving air emissions are subject to pollution control. The considerations set out in Section 4.12 on the interface between planning and pollution control therefore apply. The Secretary of State must also consider duties under other legislation including duties under the Environment Act 2021 in relation to environmental targets and have regard to policies set out in the Government's Environmental Improvement Plan 2023.	Air quality impacts on human receptors during the construction phase have been fully assessed and are detailed in **ES Chapter 16: Air Quality (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.16)**: This assesses potential significant effects from the Proposed Development during the construction phase on human receptors. The assessment has identified that the Proposed Development could have the potential to affect human receptors during the construction phase. Therefore, site-specific mitigation measures have been proposed to minimise the impacts of construction dust and exhaust emissions. Any effect on air quality and human receptors during the construction of the Proposed Development can be suitably controlled by the mitigation measures listed within the **Appendix 2.4: OCEMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol 2, 6.3.7)** and the **Appendix 9.3: OCTMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol 2, 6.3.79).** Therefore, the residual effects of the Proposed Development on air quality and human receptors during the construction phase

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		following the implementation of additional mitigation measures are considered to be not significant. **ES Chapter 16: Air Quality (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.16)**: outlines how there are no embedded mitigation measures for air quality. No embedded mitigation measures have been considered in relation to the operational phase assessment, in line with the assessment methodology set out in the IAQM Guidance. Mitigation measures following IAQM guidance are presented in the **Appendix 9.3: OCTMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol 2, 6.3.79)**, **Appendix 2.4: OCEMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol 2, 6.3.7)** and **Appendix 2.5: ODEMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.8)** that have been prepared to support the application and are secured by Requirements in Schedule 2 of the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**.
	5.2.16 The Secretary of State should give air quality considerations substantial weight where a project would lead to a deterioration in air quality. This could for example include where an area breaches any national air quality limits or statutory air quality objectives. However, air quality considerations will also be important where substantial changes in air quality levels are expected, even if this does not lead	**ES Chapter 16: Air Quality (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.16)**: concludes that there are no anticipated significant residual effects on air quality as a result of the Proposed Development. Mitigation measures following IAQM guidance are presented in the **Appendix 9.3: OCTMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol 2, 6.3.79)**, **Appendix 2.4: OCEMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol 2, 6.3.7)** and **Appendix 2.5: ODEMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.8)** that have been prepared to support the application and are secured by requirements in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**.

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	to any breaches of statutory limits, objectives or targets.	
	5.2.17 The Secretary of State should give air quality considerations substantial weight where a project is proposed near a sensitive receptor site, such as an education or healthcare facility, residential use or a sensitive or protected habitat.	As demonstrated in Table 16.2 of **ES Chapter 16: Air Quality (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.16)**, the Site is located within close proximity to a number of existing settlements, and as a consequence, there are a number of high sensitivity receptors in proximity to the Site, such as residential properties, that may be impacted by works associated with the Proposed Development. Two designated sites, being Local Wildlife Sites (LWSs), have been identified within or adjacent to the Order Limits, comprising: • Great Hale Eau LWS; and • South Forty Foot Drain LWS. **ES Chapter 16: Air Quality (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.16)**: concludes that the construction, operation and decommissioning of the Proposed Development will not have a significant effect on air quality. The residual effects of dust and particulate matter emissions during construction and decommissioning and the road traffic exhaust emissions during construction, operation and decommissioning on human receptors and LWSs following the implementation of secured (in the OCEMP and ODEMP) mitigation measures are considered to be not significant.
	5.2.18 Where a project is proposed near to a sensitive receptor site for air quality, if the applicant cannot provide justification for this location, and a suitable mitigation	As demonstrated in Table 16.2 of **ES Chapter 16: Air Quality (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.16)**, the Site is located within close proximity to a number of existing settlements, and as a consequence, there are a number of high sensitivity receptors in

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	plan, the Secretary of State should refuse consent.	proximity to the Site, such as residential properties, that may be impacted by works associated with the Proposed Development. However, the implementation of mitigation measures identified within the **Appendix 9.3: OCTMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol 2, 6.3.79)**, **Appendix 2.4: OCEMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol 2, 6.3.7)** and **Appendix 2.5: ODEMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.8)** that have been prepared to support the application and are secured by requirements in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1),** are expected to prevent any significant impacts on human health from occurring. Residual effects are therefore assessed as being not significant.
	5.2.19 In all cases, the Secretary of State must take account of any relevant statutory air quality limits, objectives and targets. If a project will lead to non-compliance with a statutory limit, objective or target the Secretary of State should refuse consent.	The Proposed Development would not lead to noncompliance with any statutory air quality limit, objective or target.

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5.3 Greenhouse Gas Emission *Applicant Assessment*	5.3.4 All proposals for energy infrastructure projects should include a GHG assessment as part of their ES (See Section 4.3). This should include: • A whole life GHG assessment showing construction, operational and decommissioning GHG impacts, including impacts from change of land use. • An explanation of the steps that have been taken to drive down the climate change impacts at each of those stages. • Measurement of embodied GHG impact from the construction stage. • How reduction in energy demand and consumption during operation has been prioritised in comparison with other measures. • How operational emissions have been reduced as much as possible through the application of best available	**ES Chapter 12: Climate Change (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol 1. 6.2.12)** presents a greenhouse gas (GHG) assessment over the lifetime of the Proposed Development. It concludes that renewable energy generation from the Proposed Development during the first year of operation is estimated to be 543,390MWh, and the total energy generation from the proposed 40-year operational life is approximately 21,735,600 MWh. The GHG impact during construction, operation and decommissioning is assessed as having a significant beneficial effect as it will contribute to achieving the rate of transition required by nationally set policy commitments and supporting the trajectory towards net zero. GHG savings as part of the operation of the Proposed Development and the displacement of fossil-fuel-derived electricity within the national electricity network are expected to be considerable. **ES Chapter 12: Climate Change (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol 1. 6.2.12)** conducted the GHG assessment of construction emissions by calculating life cycle emissions for the building materials and systems, accounting for their embodied emissions, construction, maintenance, repair and replacement emissions. Measures have been taken to limit the effects on climate change at the construction, operation and decommissioning. Operational emissions have been reduced through embedded mitigation measures. GHG mitigation measures are outlined in section 12.6 Assessment of Effects and 12.7 Mitigation of **ES**

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	techniques for that type of technology. • Calculation of operational energy consumption and associated carbon emissions. • Whether and how any residual GHG emissions will be (voluntarily) offset or removed using a recognised framework. • Where there are residual emissions, the level of emissions and the impact of those on national and international efforts to limit climate change, both alone and where relevant in combination with other developments at a regional or national level, or sector level, if sectoral targets are developed.	**Chapter 12: Climate Change (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol 1. 6.2.12)** which are secured within the **Appendix 2.4: OCEMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol 2, 6.3.7)** and the **Appendix 2.5: ODEMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.8)** which are secured via requirements in the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**. Embedded Mitigations include: • Construction phase will follow industry standard practices regarding construction vehicles and equipment as set out in the **Appendix 2.4: OCEMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol 2, 6.3.7)** and **Appendix 2.5: ODEMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.8)**, which are secured via requirements in the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**, to mitigate against increased emissions from construction traffic and equipment; • To reduce emissions during the operational phase, there will be regular, planned maintenance, in accordance with manufacturer recommendations and specifications, of the Solar Array Area to optimise the efficiency of the infrastructure; • To maximise generation and carbon savings, site maintenance will take place to and ensure that no undue shading or other site management issues occur (see **Appendix 6.7 – Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (OLEMP) (Document Ref 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.19)**); • Embodied carbons will be an element of the determination criteria during the procurement process (where technically and economically viable to do so) This is subject to further investigation during detailed design;
Migration	5.3.5 A GHG assessment should be used to drive down GHG emissions at every stage of the proposed development and ensure that emissions are minimised as far as possible for the type of technology, taking into account the overall objectives of ensuring our	

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	supply of energy always remains secure, reliable and affordable, as we transition to net zero. 5.3.6 Applicants should look for opportunities within the proposed development to embed nature-based or technological solutions to mitigate or offset the emissions of construction and decommissioning 5.3.7 Steps taken to minimise and offset emissions should be set out in a GHG Reduction Strategy, secured under the Development Consent Order. The GHG Reduction Strategy should consider the creation and preservation of carbon stores and sinks including through woodland creation, hedgerow creation and restoration, peatland restoration and through other natural habitats.	• Strategies will be implemented to minimise material use and avoid waste generation through the construction process (see **Appendix 2.4: OCEMP (Document Ref 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.7)**); • Reuse of materials onsite and recycling of waste materials as seen in **Appendix 17.2: Waste and Recycling Strategy (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.103)**; • Reuse/recycling of applicable materials following decommissioning as seen in **Appendix 2.5: ODEMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.8)** • Optimisation of transportation and construction efficiency and minimisation of fuel use as seen in section 9.6 Assessment of Effects of **ES Chapter 9: Access and Traffic (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.9)**; and • A strategy for landscape enhancement, planting and biodiversity net gain will be adopted as seen in section 6.6 Assessment of Effects and section 6.7 Mitigation of **ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.6)** and section 7.6 Assessment of Effects and section 7.7 Mitigation of **ES Chapter 7: Ecology (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.7).** **ES Chapter 12: Climate Change (Document Ref: 6.2, Vol.1, 6.2.12)** sets out that the decommissioning phase is assumed to take place after the country achieves its net zero target and therefore there will be no residual effects during decommissioning. The assessment concludes that overall, the Proposed Development is considered to have a beneficial effect that is

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		Significant. It is anticipated that 8,330,640 tCO2e will be saved over the lifespan of the Proposed Development. An **Appendix 2.4: OCEMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol 2, 6.3.7)** and **Appendix 2.5: ODEMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.8)** have been prepared to accompany the DCO application. These identify a range of mitigation measures that have been embedded into the Proposed Development to limit the GHG impact.
Secretary of State decision making	5.3.8 The Secretary of State must be satisfied that the applicant has as far as possible assessed the GHG emissions of all stages of the development. 5.3.9 The Secretary of State should be content that the applicant has taken all reasonable steps to reduce the GHG emissions of the construction and decommissioning stage of the development. 5.3.10 The Secretary of State should give appropriate weight to projects that embed nature-based or technological processes to mitigate or offset the emissions of construction and decommissioning within the proposed development. However, in light of the vital role energy infrastructure plays in the process of economy wide	**ES Chapter 12: Climate Change (Document Ref: 6.2 Vol.1, 6.2.12)** includes a Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions Assessment. The assessment considers GHG emissions and in combination climate change impacts. After assessing all stages of the Proposed Development (Construction, Operation and Decommissioning), the assessment concludes that overall, the Proposed Development is considered to have a beneficial effect that is Significant. It is anticipated that 8,330,640 tCO2e will be saved over the lifespan of the Proposed Development. The GHG assessment of construction emissions has calculated the life cycle emissions for the building materials and systems, accounting for their embodied emissions, construction, maintenance, repair and replacement emissions. The decommissioning phase will largely involve the reverse of the construction phase, with broadly similar activities involved in removing the components from the Site as required to install them. The GHG assessment for the decommissioning phase of the Proposed Development has determined that it is not possible to accurately predict the technological advancements that may occur before decommissioning phase takes place, but there could be considerable decarbonisation of vehicles and processes before

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	decarbonisation, the Secretary of State must accept that there are likely to be some residual emissions from construction and decommissioning of energy infrastructure.	that time. It is reasonable to assume that, by the time the Proposed Development is decommissioned, the UK will have been fully decarbonised, having gone beyond the legally required 2050 net zero targets. Assuming the net zero targets are realised, then decommissioning emissions are assumed to be zero. Renewable energy generation from the Proposed Development during the first year of operation is estimated to be 543,390 MWh, and the total energy generation from the proposed 40-year operational life is approximately 21,735,600 MWh. A reasonable, worst-case scenario has been adopted throughout this assessment, including assumptions concerning source countries of components, method of component manufacture, and associated transportation.
	5.3.11 Operational GHG emissions are a significant adverse impact from some types of energy infrastructure which cannot be totally avoided (even with full deployment of CCS technology). Given the characteristics of these and other technologies, as noted in Part 3 of this NPS, and the range of non-planning policies that can be used to decarbonise electricity generation, such as the UK ETS (see Section 2.4), government has determined that operational GHG emissions are not reasons to	To assess the GHG savings of the Proposed Development, operational emissions from a Combined Cycle Gas Turbine (CCGT) have been used as a comparison. Reasons for CCGT being used in comparison is outlined in Section 12.5: Baseline Conditions of **ES Chapter 12: Climate Change (Document Ref: 6.2, Vol.1, 6.2.12)**. The Baseline Emissions of CCGT over the proposed 40-year lifetime has been considered in the calculation of the total emissions saved by comparing it with the Absolute Emissions of the Proposed Development. It is anticipated that. 8,201,109 tCO2e will be saved over the lifespan of the Proposed Development. This is not a direct comparison as the Proposed Development Absolute Emissions calculated here is a lifecycle carbon value, whilst the Baseline Emissions for the CCGT is assumed to represent operational emissions (not including maintenance, replacement and repair of components).

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	prohibit the consenting of energy projects or to impose more restrictions on them in the planning policy framework than are set out in the energy NPSs (e.g. the CCR requirements). Any carbon assessment will include an assessment of operational GHG emissions, but the policies set out in Part 2, including the UK ETS, can be applied to these emissions.	As set out in **ES Chapter 12: Climate Change (Document Ref: 6.2 Vol.1, 6.2.12)** the absence of any more appropriate identified methodology, this assessment considers that this approach, i.e. a comparison to Combined Cycle Gas Turbine emissions, is a robust and appropriate method to understand the level of GHG savings from the Proposed Development.
	5.3.12 Operational emissions will be addressed in a managed, economy-wide manner, to ensure consistency with carbon budgets, net zero and our international climate commitments. The Secretary of State does not, therefore need to assess individual applications for planning consent against operational carbon emissions and their contribution to carbon budgets, net zero and our international climate commitments.	The Proposed Development will provide electricity to the national grid that may otherwise be generated by processes with higher carbon intensities, and the benefit of the Proposed Development, with regards to climate, is to replace the electricity generation from fossil fuels. Therefore, to assess the GHG savings of the Proposed Development, operational emissions from a Combined Cycle Gas Turbine have been used as a comparison, as it is currently the most carbon-efficient fossil-fuelled technology available. In decision letters for some other recent solar DCO applications, including the 'Gate Burton Energy Park' and the 'West Burton Solar Project', the Secretary of State (SoS) concluded that "comparison to a counterfactual Combine Cycle Gas Turbine (CCGT) facility is an inappropriate baseline, noting that NPS EN-1 requires all combustion power stations with a capacity over 300MW to be constructed Carbon Capture Ready, and the SoS therefore did not consider it viable to use unmitigated emissions as a baseline". Although the baseline comparison in this assessment is being made against the introduction of a hypothetical new CCGT power

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		plant, in order to capture the embodied emissions associated with it, the real purpose of this Proposed Development is to displace the existing fossil fuel generation on the grid, whose embodied carbon has already been expended and which still contributes significant emissions to the global atmosphere. From this perspective, it is considered that it is still legitimate to draw comparison against the fossil fuel generator, although comparison against the UK grid average and an alternative renewable energy generator is also provided. The Baseline Emissions of CCGT over the proposed 40-year lifetime has been considered in the calculation of the total emissions saved by comparing it with the Absolute Emissions of the Proposed Development. It is anticipated that. 8,201,109 tCO2e will be saved over the lifespan of the Proposed Development. This is not a direct comparison as the Proposed Development Absolute Emissions calculated here is a lifecycle carbon value, whilst the Baseline Emissions for the CCGT is assumed to represent operational emissions (not including maintenance, replacement and repair of components).
5.4 Biodiversity and Geological Conservation *Applicant Assessment*	5.4.17 Where the development is subject to EIA, the applicant should ensure that the ES clearly sets out any effects on internationally, nationally, and locally designated sites of ecological or geological conservation importance (including those outside England), on protected species and on habitats and other species identified as	**ES Chapter 7: Ecology (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.7)** and **Appendix 7.3: Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.22)** set out all the designated sites of ecological conservation importance including ancient woodland; habitats; protected and notable species; and important ecological features, within the relevant ecological Zone of Influence of the Proposed Development. Section 7.4 and 7.5 of **ES Chapter 7: Ecology (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.7)** sets out the identified receptors, which includes internationally, nationally and locally designated sites that could potentially be affected by the

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	being of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity, including irreplaceable habitats.	Proposed Development. The assessed receptors include three internationally designated sites and two nationally designated sites (Sites of Special Scientific Interest) within 15 km of the site and ten Local Wildlife Sites (LWSs) within 2 km of the site. There are no National Nature Reserves (NNRs) or Local Natures Reserves (LNRs) within 2 km of the Site. Section 7.6 of **ES Chapter 7: Ecology (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.7)** sets out the potential likely effects on the identified receptors during the construction, operation and decommissioning of the Proposed Development. During the construction and decommissioning phases, the principal impacts will comprise of land loss, habitat destruction for protected species (birds, bats, badgers), contamination of nearby habitats, and disturbance or fragmentation of wildlife habitats due to gaps in hedgerows or lighting. However, with the application of proposed mitigation measures set out in Sections 7.6 and 7.7 of **ES Chapter 7: Ecology (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.7)** is anticipated to eliminate any significant impacts of the Proposed Development. During the operational phase, ecology will benefit as created habitats will mature, including grasslands and hedgerows. Reduced agricultural activity will lower fertiliser and pesticide use, improving water quality and supporting diverse wildlife. The proposed mitigation measures and benefits are secured within **Appendix 2.4: OCEMP (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.7)** and **Appendix 6.7: OLEMP (Document Ref 6.3, ES Vol 2, 6.3.19)**, of which preparation, approval and implementation of detailed

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		versions is secured through requirements in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**.
	5.4.19 The applicant should show how the project has taken advantage of opportunities to conserve and enhance biodiversity and geological conservation interests.	The initial Bespoke Access Road and cable route options underwent appraisal and refinements to ensure the most efficient and direct access to the Proposed Development in a manner that is technically feasible and minimises the impact to environmental features (see **Appendix 3.1: Grid Connection Corridor Appraisal (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.9)** and **ES Appendix 3.2: Bespoke Access Road Appraisal (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.10).** As outlined in **ES Chapter 7: Ecology (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.7),** the following mitigation hierarchy was adopted: • Avoid impacts (e.g. move aspects of the Proposed Developments to avoid features entirely); • Minimise impacts (e.g. reducing the area of land take); and • Restore after impacts (e.g. restoring a habitat damaged during construction). When none of the above can be carried out, compensation (e.g. creating habitat where it was not previously found) will be undertaken. As much as possible, the Proposed Development design has been guided to avoid ecological impacts, and mitigation focusses on minimising, restoring and compensating for impacts that cannot be avoided. The Ecological Impact Assessment within **ES Chapter 7: Ecology (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.7)** outlines how site selection minimised disturbance to designated conservation areas and
	5.4.20 Applicants should consider wider ecosystem services and benefits of natural capital when designing enhancement measures.	
	5.4.21 As set out in Section 4.7, the design process should embed opportunities for nature inclusive design. Energy infrastructure projects have the potential to deliver significant benefits and enhancements beyond Biodiversity Net Gain, which result in wider environmental gains (see Section 4.6 on Environmental and Biodiversity Net Gain). The scope of potential gains will be dependent on the type, scale, and location of each project.	

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		sensitive habitats (ancient woodlands, wetlands) were avoided where possible. It also sets out appropriate mitigation measures to ensure compliance with policy objectives, including implementation of species-specific protections (e.g. relocation), ecological corridors designed to maintain connectivity, creation of compensatory habitats to offset habitat loss, noise and light pollution controls to minimise species disturbance, habitat connectivity improvements to reduce fragmentation, and pre-construction surveys to identify and protect protected species (bats, birds, badgers). These measures ensure that any potential ecological impacts are effectively mitigated and do not result in significant residual effects are secured through commitments in **Appendix 2.4: OCEMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.7)** and **Appendix 6.7: OLEMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.19)**, of which preparation, approval and implementation of detailed versions is secured through requirements in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**. In addition to the above additional mitigation measures, the Proposed Development incorporates biodiversity enhancement measures outlined in **ES Chapter 7: Ecology (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.7)**, in support of biodiversity net gain. These measures include the enhancement of waterbodies to provide suitable habitat for great crested newts, installation of artificial nesting and roosting boxes for birds and bats and creation of habitat piles and hibernaculum for amphibians, reptiles and invertebrates. As detailed in the **Appendix 6.7: OLEMP (Document Ref 6.3 ES Vol 2 6.3.19)** and secured through a requirement in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**, biodiversity enhancement areas with native shrub planting will be

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		introduced around the Solar Array Area perimeter. New hedgerow will be planted, neutral grassland will be introduced to the solar array area, a wildflower meadow and floodplain grazing marsh areas will be introduced, existing ponds and waterbodies will be retained and integrated, and newly created habitats and species populations will be established and maintained. The Proposed Development aligns with Biodiversity Net Gain principles by increasing habitat diversity within the site. Long-term benefits secured through **Appendix 6.7: OLEMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol 2, 6.3.19)**, of which preparation, approval and implementation of a detailed version is secured through a requirement in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1),** ensuring continued conservation efforts post-construction. These measures ensure that the development actively enhances biodiversity beyond mitigation requirements and that the Proposed Development is committed to achieving significant biodiversity net gain on-site. The **Design and Access Approach Document (DAAD) (Document Ref: 5.6)** sets out the design evolution of the Proposed Development and shows that design objectives were established including in relation to biodiversity that guided the design process. The Proposed Development has, therefore, taken advantage of opportunities to conserve and enhance biodiversity and accords with this policy.
	5.4.22 The design of energy NSIP proposals will need to consider the movement of mobile/migratory species such as birds, fish and	As set out in **ES Chapter 7: Ecology (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.7),** the Proposed Development has considered the impact on the movement of mobile species, such as birds and badgers. **ES Chapter 7: Ecology (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1,**

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	marine and terrestrial mammals and their potential to interact with infrastructure. As energy infrastructure could occur anywhere within England and Wales, both inland and onshore and offshore, the potential to affect mobile and migratory species across the UK and more widely across Europe (transboundary effects) requires consideration, depending on the location of development.	**6.2.7)** and **Appendix 7.3: Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.22)** ensures that impacts to all mobile/migratory species such as birds, fish and marine and terrestrial mammals have been assessed and given appropriate consideration. By integrating biodiversity prioritisation into the project design, the Proposed Development ensures compliance with national and international conservation priorities. As detailed in **Appendix 7.6: Breeding Bird Report (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.25),** surveys were undertaken to record breeding bird data, and it is acknowledged that construction and operation of the Proposed Development will result in the loss of habitat for breeding birds and ground-nesting birds such as skylarks, and will have a low adverse impact. The proposed mitigation and enhancement measures are set out in **Appendix 6.7: OLEMP (Document Ref 6.3, ES Vol 2, 6.3.19).** For example, noting that habitat fragmentation is a key concern for mobile species, strategies to maintain ecological connectivity include retaining and reinforcing hedgerows to act as wildlife corridors, using directional lighting to minimise habitat fragmentation and providing culverts and underpasses where necessary. Habitats will be improved for ground nesting birds, including skylark, within open buffer areas (e.g. though creation of skylark plots). This will increase the density of birds replacing the areas lost. Details of these habitat enhancements are included in **Appendix 6.7: OLEMP (Document Ref 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.19)**, of which preparation, approval and implementation of a detailed

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		version is secured through a requirement in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**. As set out in Section 7.6 of **ES Chapter 7: Ecology (Document Ref 6.2, ES Vol 1, 6.2.7)**, it is expected that disturbance during construction will have a temporary low adverse impact on wintering and breeding birds. For ground nesting birds, there is anticipated to be a permanent low adverse impact because of the loss of nesting habitat. The land occupied by the solar development will be released post development, and there will continue to be field margins/ buffer areas which provide suitable nesting and foraging provision for ground nesting birds, and will have a beneficial impact on breeding birds. Overall, the assessment concludes that, due to the embedded design and mitigation measures, no significant adverse effects are anticipated to arise on any protected species and habitats as a result of the construction, operation or decommissioning of the Proposed Development. Transboundary effects are not anticipated.
Habitats Regulations	5.4.25 The applicant should seek the advice of the appropriate SNCB and provide the Secretary of State with such information as the Secretary of State may reasonably require, to determine whether an HRA Appropriate Assessment (AA) is required. Applicants can request and agree 'Evidence Plans' with SNCBs, which is a way to record	A **Shadow Habitats Regulations Assessment ('HRA') (Document Ref: 5.2)** has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (Habitats Regulations) to undertake a screening process to consider whether or not the Proposed Development would cause 'likely significant effects' on the qualifying features of Natura 2000 (European) sites (and their overlapping designations where appropriate), specifically the: • The Wash (Ramsar & Special Protection Area ('SPA') & SSSI)

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	upfront the information the applicant needs to supply with its application, so that the HRA can be efficiently carried out. If an AA is required, the applicant must provide the Secretary of State with such information as may reasonably be required to enable the Secretary of State to conduct the AA. This should include information on any mitigation measures that are proposed to minimise or avoid likely significant effects.	• The Wash & North Norfolk Coast ('SAC') This report has been submitted in support of the DCO Application for the Proposed Development. The Applicant consulted with the appropriate SNCB (Natural England), who advised that for bird species (which are associated with and are the qualifying feature of the Wash SPA), a full assessment and mitigation will be required in the **Shadow HRA (Document Ref: 5.2)**. The Proposed Development has been assessed as having a likely significant effect upon National Network sites (RAMSAR/SPA/SAC). This is due to loss of functionally linked habitats and the risk of pollution and run-off into the waterways during construction works of the project.
	5.4.26 If, during the pre-application stage, the SNCB indicate that the proposed development is likely to adversely impact the integrity of habitat sites, the applicant must include with their application such information as may reasonably be required to assess a potential derogation under the Habitats Regulations	The potential for the Site to be functionally linked and further mitigation has been included in the Appropriate Assessment in the **Shadow HRA (Document Ref: 5.2)**. <u>Loss of functionally linked habitats</u> To mitigate the impacts on the qualifying species, works around the reservoir will take place outside the wintering period, and the plant and techniques used will be chosen considering noise impacts on the species. Where this would not result in avoidance of impacts, acoustic and visual barriers will be used. For otters, pre-construction surveys will be undertaken to determine if any additional mitigation is required. <u>Changes to Water Quality</u> To avoid the risk of downstream pollution impacts to otters and the Wash, pollution prevention measures have been detailed within

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		the **Appendix 2.4: OCEMP (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.7)** which will be developed into a detailed CEMP prior to construction as is secured via a requirement in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**. No in-combination effects are anticipated. Mitigation measures have been recommended to avoid or minimise the risk of these adverse effects and it is therefore considered that development can proceed without the requirement for further assessment.
	5.4.27 If the SNCB gives such an indication at a later stage in the development consent process, the applicant must provide this information as soon as is reasonably possible and before the close of the examination. This information must include assessment of alternative solutions, a case for Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest (IROPI) and appropriate environmental compensation. 5.4.28 Provision of such information will not be taken as an acceptance of adverse impacts and if an applicant disputes the likelihood of adverse impacts, it can provide this information as part of	If a project will have a significant adverse effect upon a European site, and this effect cannot be either avoided or mitigated, the project cannot proceed unless it passes the IROPI test. In order to pass the test, it must be objectively concluded that no alternative solutions exist. The project must be referred to the Secretary of State on the grounds that there are Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest as to why the project should nonetheless proceed. The **Shadow HRA (Document Ref: 5.2)** submitted with the DCO Application deals with the first stage of Habitat Regulations Assessment – the Likely Significant Effect Test and the second stage – Appropriate Assessment. If Natural England gives an indication at a later stage that adverse effects on the integrity of the relevant site(s) cannot be avoided or mitigated, appropriate information will be provided to confirm that the Proposed Development meets the three derogation tests (No Reasonable Alternatives, Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest and adequate compensation).

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	its application 'without prejudice' to the Secretary of State's final decision on the impacts of the potential development. If, in these circumstances, an applicant does not supply information required for the assessment of a potential derogation, there will be no expectation that the Secretary of State will allow the applicant the opportunity to provide such information following the examination.	
	5.4.29 It is vital that applicants consider the need for compensation as early as possible in the design process as 'retrofitting' compensatory measures will introduce delays and uncertainty to the consenting process.	The Applicant consulted with the appropriate SNCB (Natural England) throughout the pre-application process on a number of matters, and the **Shadow HRA (Document Ref: 5.2)** will be reviewed by Natural England. A discretionary advice service request was submitted to Natural England but the response was delayed, so it was not possible to discuss pre-submission and will be undertaken post-submission. The Appropriate Assessment within the **Shadow HRA (Document Ref: 5.2)** concludes that the proposed mitigation measures will avoid or minimise the risk of adverse effects to designated sites as a result of the Proposed Development The mitigation includes: • During detailed design identifying plant and techniques to avoid disturbance on species which are qualifying features of the SAC and SPA;
	5.4.30 Applicants should work closely at an early stage in the pre-application process with SNCB and Defra/Welsh Government to develop a compensation plan for all protected sites adversely affected by the development. Applicants should engage with the relevant	

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	Local Planning Authority at an early stage regarding the proposed location of compensatory measures. Applicants should also take account of any strategic plan level compensation plans in developing project level compensation plans.	• Where practical amending timings of works to avoid disturbance; and • Using acoustic and visual barriers to minimise disturbance to species.
	5.4.31 Before submitting an application, applicants should seek the views of the SNCB and Defra/Welsh Government as to the suitability, securability and effectiveness of the compensation plan to ensure the development will not hinder the achievement of the conservation objectives for the protected site. In cases where such views are provided, the applicant should include a copy of this information with the compensation plan in their application for further consideration by the Examining Authority.	
Ancient woodland, ancient trees, veteran trees and other	5.4.32 Applicants should include measures to mitigate fully the direct and indirect effects of development on ancient woodland, ancient and veteran trees or other irreplaceable	The Proposed Development has been designed to avoid key nature conservation and ecological features present within or adjacent to the Site. Habitats such as woodlands, mature trees and hedgerows have been avoided where possible.

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irreplaceable habitats	habitats during both construction and operational phases.	A small number of ancient/veteran trees were found on Site during the arboricultural impact assessment. These trees are all due to be retained post development. **ES Chapter 7: Ecology (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.7)** confirms that no direct impacts on ancient woodland or veteran trees are anticipated. Protective buffer zones of at least 15m will be maintained around woodland and root protection measures will be implemented for trees. This is secured by **ES Appendix 6.7: OLEMP (6.3, ES Vol. 2, 6.3.19)**, of which preparation, approval and implementation of a detailed version is secured through a requirement in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**. Further details including the locations of trees, root protection areas and precautionary mitigation are outlined within **Appendix 6.6: Arboricultural Impact Assessment (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.18)**. Impacts related to dust suppression and measures to mitigate for this are outlined within **ES Chapter 16: Air Quality (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.16)**. Measures to protect retained trees and hedgerows will be put in place and secured through preparation and delivery of a detailed CEMP, DEMP and LEMP. These measures will need to be substantially in accordance with the measures set out in **Appendix 6.7: OLEMP (Document Ref 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.19), Appendix 2.4: OCEMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.7)** and **Appendix 2.5: ODEMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.8)** that have been prepared to support the application and are secured by requirements in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1),** to ensure that impacts are minimised and that the Proposed

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		Development is implemented in accordance with the detailed management plans.
Protection and enhancement of habitats and species	5.4.33 Applicants should consider any reasonable opportunities to maximise the restoration, creation, and enhancement of wider biodiversity, and the protection and restoration of the ability of habitats to store or sequester carbon as set out under Section 4.6.	**ES Chapter 7: Ecology (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.7)** sets out the Proposed Development's embedded mitigation measures implemented through project design as well as the additional mitigation and enhancement measures that would be implemented to maximise the restoration, creation and enhancement of biodiversity. Through delivery of the measures set out in the OLEMP, the Applicant is committing to delivering at least 30% biodiversity net gain for habitat units; at least 10% biodiversity net gain for hedgerow units; and at least 10% biodiversity net gain for watercourse units, calculated using The Statutory Biodiversity Metric published by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on July 2024. The delivery of these measures will be monitored for no less than 30 years as part of a wider package of landscaping and habitat proposals described in the OLEMP. A **Biodiversity Net Gain Strategy (Document Ref: 7.3**) has also been prepared for the Application and reports the BNG figures that the Proposed Development is presently expected to deliver. It should be noted that the above numbers represent the minimum commitments, as the exact numbers will be finalised through detailed design. The Applicant is committed to delivering higher biodiversity net gain where possible when the routing and design is finalised.
	5.4.34 Consideration should be given to improvements to, and impacts on, habitats and species in, around and beyond developments, for wider ecosystem services and natural capital benefits, beyond those under protection and identified as being of principal importance. This may include considerations and opportunities identified through Local Nature Recovery Strategies, and national goals and targets set through the Environment Act 2021 and the Environmental Improvement Plan 2023.	

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Mitigation	5.4.35 Applicants should include appropriate avoidance, mitigation, compensation and enhancement measures as an integral part of the proposed development. In particular, the applicant should demonstrate that: • during construction, they will seek to ensure that activities will be confined to the minimum areas required for the works; • the timing of construction has been planned to avoid or limit disturbance; • during construction and operation best practice will be followed to ensure that risk of disturbance or damage to species or habitats is minimised, including as a consequence of transport access arrangements; • habitats will, where practicable, be restored after construction works have finished; • opportunities will be taken to enhance existing habitats	Section 7.4 of the **ES Chapter 7: Ecology (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.7)** outlines compensation measures for unavoidable biodiversity loss, ensuring compliance with the mitigation hierarchy: • Avoidance – The development footprint is designed to minimise habitat loss by retaining key ecological features. • Minimisation – Direct impacts are mitigated through buffer zones, pollution prevention, and phased construction to reduce disturbance. • Restoration – Disturbed habitats will be restored post-construction, with habitat creation to offset temporary losses. • Compensation – Where full on-site mitigation is not feasible, off-site biodiversity enhancements will be considered. These compensation measures align with Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) principles. The design has been led by the mitigation hierarchy to avoid impact or at least mitigate where possible. Production of detailed **CEMP**, **OEMP** and **DEMP** are secured via requirements within Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1).** Best practice monitoring requirements to avoid harm to for habitats and species, such as nesting bird checks, badger checks and pollution prevention control measures, are also documented and secured within **Appendix 6.7: OLEMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.19), Appendix 2.4: OCEMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.7)** and **Appendix 2.5: ODEMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.8)** of which preparation, approval and implementation of detailed versions is secured through requirements in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**.

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	rather than replace them, and where practicable, create new habitats of value within the site landscaping proposals. Where habitat creation is required as mitigation, compensation, or enhancement, the location and quality will be of key importance. In this regard habitat creation should be focused on areas where the most ecological and ecosystems benefits can be realized; and • mitigations required as a result of legal protection of habitats or species will be complied with.	Sections 7.6 and 7.7 of **ES Chapter 7: Ecology (Document Ref. 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.7)** outlines the mitigation measures pertaining to habitat avoidance, creation and replacement measures that comply with this part of the policy.
	5.4.36 Applicants should produce and implement a Biodiversity Management Strategy as part of their development proposals. This could include provision for biodiversity awareness training to employees and contractors so as to avoid unnecessary adverse impacts on biodiversity during the construction and operation stages.	As outlined in **ES Chapter 7: Ecology (Document Ref. 6.2, ES Vol. 1, 6.2.7),** there are a number of key sensitive ecological features across the Site. Section 5.4 of **Appendix 2.4: OCEMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.7)**, of which preparation, approval and implementation of a detailed version is secured through a requirement in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1),** sets out the measures that will be implemented to manage biodiversity impact during the construction phase. It also sets out that the Principal Contractor will ensure that appropriate training and site briefings are administered to ensure awareness

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		of local sensitivities which could include, for example, biodiversity awareness. The **Appendix 6.7: OLEMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.19)** sets out the approach to vegetation removal and retention to minimise the requirement for removal as much as is feasible and retain existing woodland blocks. It sets out a framework for the Applicant's approach to ensuring the successful establishment of landscape and ecological measures, both in the short term and during the operation of the Proposed Development. A detailed LEMP, secured through a requirement in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**, will provide a series of agreed mitigation measures to be implemented during the construction phase
Secretary of State decision making	5.4.39 The government's 25 Year Environment Plan and the Environment Act 2021 mark a step change in ambition for wildlife and the natural environment. The Secretary of State should have regard to the aims and goals of the government's Environmental Improvement Plan 2023, and in Wales the objectives of the Nature Recovery Plan, and any relevant measures and targets, including statutory targets set under the Environment Act or elsewhere.	**ES Chapter 7: Ecology (Document Ref. 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.7)** has been produced with regard to the aims of the 25-Year Environment Plan 2023 and the statutory requirements of the Environment Act 2021, as evidenced by the extensive habitat to be provided pursuant to the **Appendix 6.7: OLEMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.19),** which strengthens green and blue corridors through the site and into the wider landscape and also delivers significant Biodiversity Net Gain, and secured through implementation of a LEMP as per a requirement in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**. The Applicant has also considered the Environment Act 2021, as evidenced by the **Biodiversity Net Gain Strategy (Document Ref. 7.3)** and the Applicant's commitment to achieving BNG through the Proposed Development. It is therefore considered the Proposed Development is compliant with this aspect of the policy.

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		The Proposed Development has the potential to deliver significant amounts of low-carbon electricity and make a material contribution to help meet the UK's commitments to decrease carbon emissions and reach net zero by 2050, which in turn is beneficial for biodiversity and geological conservation interests.
	5.4.41 The benefits of nationally significant low carbon energy infrastructure development may include benefits for biodiversity and geological conservation interests and these benefits may outweigh harm to these interests. The Secretary of State may take account of any such net benefit in cases where it can be demonstrated.	The Proposed Development has the potential to deliver biodiversity benefits as a result of its embedded mitigation and enhancement measures, as set out in the **ES Chapter 7: Ecology (Document Ref. 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.7)**, as well as **Appendix 6.7: OLEMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.19)** and **Appendix 2.4: OCEMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.7)**, the final versions of which are secured through requirements in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**. The proposed mitigation is anticipated to eliminate any significant impacts, and monitoring of habitats (as per the licence requirements or LEMP) will ensure they establish and are maintained in good condition in the long term. Through delivery of the measures set out in the OLEMP, the Applicant is committing to delivering at least 30% biodiversity net gain for habitat units; at least 10% biodiversity net gain for hedgerow units; and at least 10% biodiversity net gain for watercourse units, calculated using The Statutory Biodiversity Metric published by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs in July 2024. The delivery of these measures will be monitored for no less than 30 years as part of a wider package of landscaping and habitat proposals described in the OLEMP. A **Biodiversity Net Gain Strategy (Document Ref: 7.3**) has also been prepared for the Application and reports the BNG figures that

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		the Proposed Development is presently expected to deliver. The Proposed Development has, therefore, taken advantage of opportunities to conserve and enhance biodiversity conservation interests and accords with this policy.
	5.4.42 As a general principle, and subject to the specific policies below, development should, in line with the mitigation hierarchy, aim to avoid significant harm to biodiversity and geological conservation interests, including through consideration of reasonable alternatives (as set out in Section 4.3 above). Where significant harm cannot be avoided, impacts should be mitigated and as a last resort, appropriate compensation measures should be sought.	As outlined in **ES Chapter 7: Ecology (Document Ref. 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.7)**, the following mitigation hierarchy was adopted: • Avoid impacts, through site selection and minimising habitat loss by retaining key ecological features; • Minimise impacts, such as reducing the area of land take, buffer zones or phased construction to reduce disturbance; and • Restore after impacts, with habitat creation to offset temporary losses. Only when none of the above can be carried out, will compensation (e.g. off-site biodiversity enhancements through creating habitat where it was not previously found) be undertaken. As much as possible, the Proposed Development design has been guided to avoid ecological impacts, and mitigation focusses on minimising, restoring and compensating for impacts that cannot be avoided.
	5.4.43 If significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (for example through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then the Secretary of State will give	As set out in **ES Chapter 7: Ecology (Document Ref. 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.7)**, with the application of embedded design and mitigation measures, no significant adverse effects have been identified on designated ecological sites, habitats or protected species during construction, operation or decommissioning of the Proposed Development.

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	significant weight to any residual harm.	Embedded mitigation measures are outlined in Section 7.6 of **ES Chapter 7: Ecology (Document Ref. 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.7)** and additional mitigation measures are set out in Section 7.7. Mitigation measures are also set out in **Appendix 6.7: OLEMP (Document Ref 6.3, ES Vol 2, 6.3.19)**, and **Appendix 2.4: OCEMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.7),** the final versions of which are secured through requirements in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1).** These include habitat avoidance, mitigation, creation and replacement measures; mitigation relating to protected and notable species; and standard mitigation measures that comply with industry good practice and environmental legislation.
	5.4.44 The Secretary of State should consider what appropriate requirements should be attached to any consent and/or in any planning obligations entered into, in order to ensure that any mitigation or biodiversity net gain measures, if offered, are delivered and maintained. Any habitat creation or enhancement delivered including linkages with existing habitats for compensation or biodiversity net gain should generally be maintained for a minimum period of 30 years, or for the lifetime of the project, if longer.	**Appendix 6.7: OLEMP (Document Ref 6.3, ES Vol 2, 6.3.19)** and the **Appendix 2.4: OCEMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.7)** set out measures to mitigate and habitat management for a period of at least 30 years to achieve biodiversity net gain. These will be developed into detailed documents and secured by requirements in Schedule 2 of the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1).** The Applicant has also prepared a **Biodiversity Net Gain Strategy (Document Ref. 7.3)** as part of the Application.

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	5.4.45 The Secretary of State will need to take account of what mitigation measures may have been agreed between the applicant and the SNCB and the MMO/NRW (where appropriate). The Secretary of State will also need to consider whether the SNCB or the MMO/NRW has granted or refused, or intends to grant or refuse, any relevant licences, including protected species mitigation licences.	Section 7.3 of **ES Chapter 7: Ecology (Document Ref. 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.7)** sets out the stakeholder engagement conducted in relation to biodiversity. The **Consultation Report (Document Ref: 5.1)** and its appendices set out the feedback received during non-statutory, statutory and targeted consultation and how regard has been afforded by the Applicant to each matter raised. Natural England was consulted at the scoping opinion stage of the Proposed Development in May 2023, and again in March 2024 through statutory consultation. Natural England's comments on the proposal and a summary of how the Applicant has responded to those comments is included in Table 7.1 of **ES Chapter 7: Ecology (Document Ref. 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.7).**
	5.4.46 Development proposals provide many opportunities for building-in beneficial biodiversity or geological features as part of good design. The Secretary of State should give appropriate weight to environmental and biodiversity enhancements, although any weight given to gains provided to meet a legal requirement (for example under the Environment Act 2021) is likely to be limited.	As detailed in the **DAAD (Document Ref: 5.6)**, the Proposed Development has undergone an iterative design process which has resulted in the delivery of a functional and efficient design which will deliver a large amount of renewable and low carbon electricity while being sensitive to the local context and surrounding area, avoiding and minimising impacts on the environment as far as practicable. In addition to the project benefits from habitat restoration to enhance biodiversity, there will be the strategic benefit of improving national energy security and contributing to sustainable energy goals, as well as supporting local and regional economic development. Through delivery of the measures set out in the OLEMP, the Applicant is committing to delivering at least 30% biodiversity net gain for habitat units; at least 10% biodiversity net gain for

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		hedgerow units; and at least 10% biodiversity net gain for watercourse units, calculated using The Statutory Biodiversity Metric published by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on July 2024. The delivery of these measures will be monitored for no less than 30 years as part of a wider package of landscaping and habitat proposals described in the OLEMP. A **Biodiversity Net Gain Strategy (Document Ref: 7.3**) has also been prepared for the Application and reports the BNG figures that the Proposed Development is presently expected to deliver. The Proposed Development has, therefore, taken advantage of opportunities to conserve and enhance biodiversity.
	5.4.47 When considering proposals, the Secretary of State should maximise such reasonable opportunities in and around developments, using requirements or planning obligations where appropriate. This can help towards delivering biodiversity net gain as part of or in addition to the approach set out at Section 4.6.	It is unclear at this stage of the consent process whether an obligation development consent obligations under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) will be required, or regarding what matter, and therefore no draft heads of terms can be provided at this stage. The Applicant does not consider it likely that one will be required, as they are not commonly requested or necessary for solar DCOs.
	5.4.48 In taking decisions, the Secretary of State should ensure that appropriate weight is attached to designated sites of international, national, and local importance; protected species; habitats and other species of principal importance for the conservation of	Appropriate weight has been attached to designated sites of international, national and local importance; protected species; habitats and other species of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity; and to biodiversity and geological interests within the wider environment, with an assessment of the Proposed Development's impact on these set out in **ES Chapter 7: Ecology (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.7).**

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	biodiversity; and to biodiversity and geological interests within the wider environment.	
Secretary of State decision making – Habitats Regulations	5.4.49 The Secretary of State must consider whether the project is likely to have a significant effect on a protected site which is part of the National Site Network (a habitat site), a protected marine site, or on any site to which the same protection is applied as a matter of policy, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.	A **Shadow HRA (Document Ref: 5.2)** has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (Habitats Regulations) to document the process of considering whether or not the Proposed Development would cause 'likely significant effects' on the qualifying features of Natura 2000 (European) sites (and their overlapping designations where appropriate), specifically the: • The Wash (Ramsar & SPA & SSSI) • The Wash & North Norfolk Coast (SAC) This report is submitted in support of the DCO Application for the Proposed Development. The Proposed Development has been assessed as having a likely significant effect upon National Network sites (RAMSAR/SPA/SAC). This is due to potential (theoretical) loss of functionally linked habitats and the risk of pollution and run-off into the waterways during construction works of the project. No in-combination effects are anticipated. Mitigation measures have been recommended to avoid or minimise the risk of these adverse effects and it is therefore considered that development can proceed without the requirement for further assessment.
Secretary of State decision making – Sites of	5.4.50 The Secretary of State should use requirements and/or planning obligations to mitigate the	There are five statutory designated sites within the study area (2 km from the site for National Nature Reserves (NNR) and Local Nature Reserves (LNR), 10 km for SSSIs and 20 km for

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Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)	harmful aspects of the development and, where possible, to ensure the conservation and enhancement of the site's biodiversity or geological interest.	international sites) including: The Wash RAMSAR, The Wash SPA, The Wash and North Norfolk Coast SAC, Horbling Fen SSSI and Wilsford & Rauceby Warrens SSSI. There are no NNR or LNR present within 2 km of the Site. The impacts to these sites were considered throughout the **ES Chapter 7: Ecology (Document Ref. 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.7)**, which concluded that impacts would be negligible to low and not significant. No further requirements or obligations are required beyond those secured in the OCEMP, OLEMP and ODEMP.
Secretary of State decision making – Regional and Local Sites	5.4.52 The Secretary of State should give due consideration to regional or local designations. However, given the need for new nationally significant infrastructure, these designations should not be used in themselves to refuse development consent.	Figure 7.3 and Table 7.6 of **ES Chapter 7: Ecology (Document Ref. 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.7)** show the Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) within 2km of the Site. There are two located within the Site; Great Hale Eau LWS and South Forty Foot Drain LWS. Following the proposed mitigation of retaining habitats as seed bank in topsoil/turfs and restoring once works are completed, negligible impacts to these LWS's are anticipated. For all other LWS within 2km, no significant impacts are anticipated.
Secretary of State decision making – Ancient woodland, ancient trees, veteran trees and other irreplaceable habitats	5.4.53 The Secretary of State should not grant development consent for any development that would result in the loss or deterioration of any irreplaceable habitats, including ancient woodland, and ancient and veteran trees unless there are wholly	**ES Chapter 7: Ecology (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.7)** concludes there would be no loss of ancient woodland or veteran trees as a result of the Proposed Development. A small number of ancient/veteran trees have been found on Site while undertaking the arboricultural impact assessment. These trees are all due to be retained post development. Further details including the locations of trees, root protection areas and precautionary mitigation are outlined within **Appendix 6.6:**

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	exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists.	**Arboricultural Impact Assessment (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol 2, 6.3.18).** As set out in **ES Chapter 7: Ecology (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.7)**, all trees (within hedgerows and individual) will be protected by clearly defined root protection areas, concordant with the requirements for each individual tree. This measure is confirmed in **Appendix 6.7: OLEMP (Document Ref 6.3, ES Vol 2, 6.3.19)**, of which preparation, approval and implementation of a detailed version is secured through a requirement in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**.
Secretary of State decision making – Protection and enhancement of habitats and species	5.4.54 The Secretary of State should ensure that species and habitats identified as being of importance for the conservation of biodiversity are protected from the adverse effects of development by using requirements, planning obligations, or licence conditions where appropriate.	Tables 7.9 to 7.11 of **ES Chapter 7: Ecology (Document Ref. 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.7)** set out that there would be no residual significant adverse effects on any species and habitats as a result of the construction, operation or decommissioning of the Proposed Development. From the surveys undertaken and avoidance in the design of the Proposed Development, one European Protected Species mitigation licence is necessary to permit construction work given the nearby great crested newts populations. Further surveys to assess population sizes will inform the licence application. Should it be found that any other protected species licences are required, i.e. following further update surveys for mobile species such as badgers and bats, then they would be protected by the appropriate methods and timings of works as per license conditions.

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	5.4.55 The Secretary of State should refuse consent where harm to a protected species and relevant habitat would result, unless there is an overriding public interest and the other relevant legal tests are met. In this context the Secretary of State should give substantial weight to any such harm to the detriment of biodiversity features of national or regional importance or the climate resilience and the capacity of habitats to store carbon, which they consider may result from a proposed development.	**ES Chapter 7: Ecology (Document Ref. 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.7)** sets out that there would be no residual significant adverse effects on any species and habitats as a result of the Proposed Development. Through delivery of enhancement measures secured via the OLEMP and its Requirement, the Applicant is committing to delivering at least 30% biodiversity net gain for habitat units; at least 10% biodiversity net gain for hedgerow units; and at least 10% biodiversity net gain for watercourse units, calculated using the statutory Biodiversity Metric published by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on July 2024 applicable to non NSIP projects. The delivery of these measures will be monitored for no less than 30 years as part of a wider package of landscaping and habitat proposals described in the OLEMP. For further information refer to the **Biodiversity Net Gain Strategy (Document Ref: 7.3**) which reports the BNG metric outputs which meet and exceed the levels the Applicant is committed to delivering.
5.5 - Civil and military aviation and defence interests *Applicant Assessment*	5.5.37 Where the proposed development may affect the performance of civil or military aviation CNS, meteorological radars and/or other defence assets an assessment of potential effects should be set out in the ES (see Section 4.3).	**Appendix 13.2a: ForgeSolar Glint Report ES: Road, Railway & Aviation (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.89)** and **Appendix 13.2b: ForgeSolar Glint Report: OPs1-40 (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.90)** of **ES Chapter 13: Glint and Glare (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.13)** has undertaken an assessment of the potential impacts of glint and glare on surrounding road users, railway operations, dwellings, PRoW, bridleways and aviation activity.
	5.5.38 The requirement for ATC and non-cooperative surveillance – i.e. radar/tracking technologies –	The modelling in this Chapter is based on an assumed panel angle of 15° from horizontal, which was selected to accord with the layout for the Solar Array Area shown on the **Indicative Site Layout Plan**

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	forms part of the environmental baseline for proposed developments. 5.5.39 The applicant should consult the MOD, Met Office, Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), NATS and any aerodrome – licensed or otherwise – likely to be affected by the proposed development in preparing an assessment of the proposal on aviation, meteorological or other defence interests. 5.5.40 Any assessment of effects on aviation, meteorological or other defence interests should include potential impacts of the project upon the operation of CNS infrastructure, flight patterns (both civil and military), generation of weather warnings and forecasts, other defence assets (including radar) and aerodrome operational procedures. It should also assess the demonstratable cumulative effects of the project with other relevant projects in relation to	**(Document Ref: 6.4.4)**. This is the panel angle most likely to be adopted at the detailed design stage of the Project and accords with the typical panel angles utilised on other constructed solar photovoltaic projects. Given the present stage of detailed design, the final adopted angle may vary (for some or all of the panels) within a range of 10° - 45° to the horizontal. In such case the effects at individual receptors will likely vary slightly (e.g. timings, durations, and possibly glare intensity could be subject to some differences). However, the significance of effects across the full aggregated set of receptors would be unlikely to differ materially from the significance of effects concluded in this Chapter. The Applicant has considered all relevant guidance in relation to glint and glare and further detail on the guidance and methodology used for the assessment is set out below. Guidelines exist in the UK (produced by the Civil Aviation Authority) and in the USA (produced by the Federal Aviation Administration) with respect to solar developments and aviation activity. The UK CAA guidance is relatively high-level and does not prescribe a formal methodology. In the absence of any detailed UK guidance from the CAA in respect of solar PV, the FAA, guidance has been adopted as default best practice over the previous eight years. There is railway guidance with respect to signal sighting; however, no guidance with respect to glint and glare from solar developments upon railway operations and infrastructure has been specifically produced. Pager Power has, however, produced guidance for glint and glare and solar photovoltaic developments which was published in early 2017, with the fourth edition published in 2022. This methodology defines a comprehensive process for determining the impact upon railway infrastructure and operations,

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	aviation, meteorological and defence.	and aviation activity and this has been used to inform the glint and glare assessment provided in **Appendix 13.2a: ForgeSolar Glint Report ES: Road, Railway & Aviation (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.89)** and **Appendix 13.2b: ForgeSolar Glint Report: OPs1-40 (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.90)**. The CAA guidance documents explain that glare should be a safeguarding consideration for aerodromes and that the responsibility of safeguarding lies with the aerodrome. The glint and glare study has assessed the potential safety impacts upon surrounding aviation activities and operations, and consultation is ongoing with aerodromes where appropriate. The Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) have been consulted through the preparation of the Application. The Applicant received a response from the DIO in response to the PIER and received feedback in relation to flight paths and MOD aerodromes of consideration. The National Air Traffic Services (NATS) have also been consulted and have determined that the Site is at a distance that does not need to be considered. This is due to the Solar Array Area being located 20+km from any NATS installations. The MoD have been consulted under Section 42 of the 2008 Act during the preparation of the Application. The Applicant received a response from the MoD and received feedback in relation to Aerodrome Safeguarding and Bird Strike Statutory Safeguarding Zones.

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		The Applicant is not aware of any adverse effect from the Proposed Development but will engage with NATS, the MoD and DIO in this respect if required. The cumulative effects of the Proposed Development with other Sites have been assessed in Section 13.9: Assessment of Cumulative Effects of **ES Chapter 13: Glint and Glare (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.13)** and **ES Chapter 18: Cumulative Effects (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol. 1, 6.2.18)**.
	5.5.41 In addition, consideration of developments near aerodromes should take into account the following factors: • Bird Strike Risk – Aircraft are vulnerable to wildlife strike, in particular bird strike. Birds and other wildlife may be attracted to the vicinity of an aerodrome by various types of development, for example, large buildings with perching/roosting opportunities for birds. It is therefore important that infrastructure, buildings and other elements from energy installations, as well as environmental mitigation are designed in such a way so as	**ES Chapter 7: Ecology (Document Ref. 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.7)** considers the impacts to birds. There is not anticipated to be an increase in risk of bird strike due to the Proposed Development as there are no proposals to create wetland or significant areas of woodland or scrub which would attract significant assemblages of birds. The Proposed Development does not propose significant buildings or structures; therefore, turbulence has not been assessed. Thermal Plume Turbulence is not considered relevant as the Proposed Development does not propose dry cooling systems.

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	not to increase the bird strike risk to the airport for developments within 13km (this can vary). • Building Induced Turbulence – If a significant building or structure is proposed close to the airport/runways, there is potential for building induced turbulence/wind shear to be created which has the potential to impact on aircraft on take-off and landing. Studies may be required to identify the extent of any turbulence resulting from the energy infrastructure. • Thermal Plume Turbulence – This is caused under certain conditions by the release of hot air from a power plant equipped with a dry cooling system. The plumes generated by these facilities have the potential to create invisible turbulence that can affect the manoeuvrability of aircraft.	
	5.5.42 If any relevant changes are made to proposals during the pre-	The **Consultation Report (Document Ref: 5.1)** shows that the Ministry of Defence (MoD) have been consulted throughout the

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	application and determination period, it is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that the relevant aviation, meteorological and defence consultees are informed as soon as reasonably possible.	preparation of the DCO application. The MoD were consulted during the Targeted Consultation, Second Targeted Consultation and Section 42 Consultation. The Applicant received feedback from the MoD relating to Aerodrome Safeguarding and Bird Strike Statutory Safeguarding Zones. No response was received from the MoD to the Targeted Consultation and Second Targeted Consultation. NATS have been consulted as part of the Section 42 Consultation and indicated that they have no infrastructure which operates within 10km of the site and anticipate no impact. The Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) have been consulted as part of the Section 42 Consultation and provided a response in relation to flight paths and MoD aerodromes of consideration. The applicant will continue to engage with these relevant consultees if required.
Mitigation	5.5.43 The applicant should include appropriate mitigation measures as an integral part of the proposed development.	**ES Chapter 13: Glint and Glare (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.13)** outlines the mitigation measures taken into consideration for the Proposed Development. Proposed planting to screen the Proposed Development from nearby receptors, the use of fixed panels over tracking panels, panel inclination and orientation, as well as the arrangement and heights of panel arrays have all been consciously designed to affect the amount of glare at specific receptors. The use of anti-reflective coating (ARC) on the panels further reduces their reflective properties. The Applicant does not expect any adverse glint or glare effect from the Proposed Development.

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	5.5.44 litigation for infringement of OLS may include: • agreed changes to operational procedures of the aerodromes in accordance with relevant guidance, provided that safety assurances can be provided by the operator that are acceptable to the CAA where the changes are proposed to a civilian aerodrome. Applicants should engage airport operators at an early stage of the planning process to understand the potential impacts of development on aviation operations and develop mitigations if appropriate; or • installation of obstacle lighting and/or by notification in Aeronautical Information Service publications	**Appendix 13.2a: ForgeSolar Glint Report ES: Road, Railway & Aviation (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.89)** and **Appendix 13.2b: ForgeSolar Glint Report: OPs1-40 (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.90)** of **ES Chapter 13: Glint and Glare (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.13)** has undertaken an assessment of the potential impacts of glint and glare on surrounding road users, railway operations, dwellings, PRoW, bridleways and aviation activity. For aviation receptors, at most low intensity green glare with no potential for temporary afterimage is predicted on final approach to all the runways assessed. This is a Minor Adverse effect and Not Significant. The Applicant will engage further with the relevant aviation consultees if required.
Secretary of State decision making	5.5.49 The Secretary of State should be satisfied that the effects on meteorological radars, civil and military aerodromes, aviation technical sites and other defence assets or operations have been	**Appendix 13.2a: ForgeSolar Glint Report ES: Road, Railway & Aviation (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.89)** and **Appendix 13.2b: ForgeSolar Glint Report: OPs1-40 (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.90)** of **ES Chapter 13: Glint and Glare (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.13)** has undertaken an assessment of the potential impacts of glint and glare on surrounding road users,

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	addressed by the applicant and that any necessary assessment of the proposal on aviation, NSWWS or defence interests has been carried out.	railway operations, dwellings, PRoW, bridleways and aviation activity. For aviation receptors, at most low intensity green glare with no potential for temporary afterimage is predicted on final approach to all the runways assessed. This is a Minor Adverse effect and Not Significant. As set out in in the **Consultation Report (Document Ref: 5.1)** following consultation and engagement with the MoD, no concerns were identified regarding the Aerodrome Heights Safeguarding Zones. However, the MoD has identified the Bird Strike Statutory Safeguarding Zone as a cause of concern. **ES Chapter 7: Ecology (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.7)** outlines that the majority of habitats proposed on Site are not suitable for flocking/ large bird species.
	5.5.50 In particular, the Secretary of State should be satisfied that the proposal has been designed, where possible, to minimise adverse impacts on the operation and safety of aerodromes and that realistically achievable mitigation is carried out on existing surveillance systems such as radar/tracking technologies. It is incumbent on Operators of aerodromes to regularly review the possibility of agreeing to make reasonable changes to operational procedures.	The **Consultation Report (Document Ref: 5.1)** sets out the MoD's comments pertaining to glint and glare. The MoD asked that the glint and glare assessment take into account standard landing and take-off routes, as well as the final approach paths out to two miles. The MoD also requested the criteria to determine the significance of effect to use three levels of impact criteria (high intensity impacts, medium intensity impacts and low intensity impacts). **Appendix 13.2a: ForgeSolar Glint Report ES: Road, Railway & Aviation (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.89)** and **Appendix 13.2b: ForgeSolar Glint Report: OPs1-40 (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.90)** of **ES Chapter 13: Glint and Glare (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.13)** has undertaken an assessment of the potential impacts of glint and glare. Following consultation and

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		engagement with the MoD, the requested receptors have been assessed and deemed to have Not Significant effects.
	5.5.51 When assessing the necessity, acceptability, and reasonableness of operational changes to aerodromes, the Secretary of State should be satisfied that they have the necessary information regarding the operational procedures along with any demonstrable risks or harm of such changes, taking into account the cases put forward by all parties. When making such a judgement in the case of military aerodromes, the Secretary of State should have regard to interests of defence and national security.	No operational changes to aerodromes are required or proposed.
	5.5.53 If there are conflicts between the government's energy and transport policies and military interests in relation to the application, the Secretary of State should expect the relevant parties to have made appropriate efforts to work together to identify realistic and pragmatic solutions to the conflicts. In so doing, the parties should seek to protect the aims and	The **Consultation Report (Document Ref: 5.1)** sets out the MoD's comments pertaining to glint and glare. The MoD asked that the glint and glare assessment take into account standard landing and take-off routes, as well as the final approach paths out to two miles. The MoD also requested the criteria to determine the significance of effect to use three levels of impact criteria (high intensity impacts, medium intensity impacts and low intensity impacts). **Appendix 13.2a: ForgeSolar Glint Report ES: Road, Railway & Aviation (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.89)** and **Appendix**

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	interests of the other parties as far as possible, recognising simultaneously the evolving landscape in terms of the UK's energy security and the need to tackle climate change, which necessitates the installation of wind turbines and the need to maintain air safety and national defence and the national weather warning service.	**13.2b: ForgeSolar Glint Report: OPs1-40 (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.90)** of **ES Chapter 13: Glint and Glare (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.13)** has undertaken an assessment of the potential impacts of glint and glare. Following consultation and engagement with the MoD, the requested receptors have been assessed and deemed to have Not Significant effects.
	5.5.54 There are statutory requirements concerning lighting to tall structures. Where lighting is requested on structures that goes beyond statutory requirements by any of the relevant aviation and defence consultees, the Secretary of State should be satisfied of the necessity of such lighting taking into account the case put forward by the consultees. The effect of such lighting on the landscape and ecology may be a relevant consideration.	No tall structures (whether 150m or greater as per the Air Navigation Order 2016 threshold for mandatory lighting, or of a lower height than this threshold but still subjectively tall i.e. 50m or more) are proposed. Any temporary cranes for larger equipment are not expected to require aviation lighting.
	5.5.55 Lighting must also be designed in such a way as to ensure that there is no glare or dazzle to pilots and/or ATC,	The **Statutory Nuisance Statement (Document Ref: 5.3)** confirms that no light nuisance is anticipated and by extension no dazzle effects would be experienced. There are no tall structures

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	aerodrome ground lighting is not obscured and that any lighting does not diminish the effectiveness of aeronautical ground lighting and cannot be confused with aeronautical lighting. Lighting may also need to be compatible with night vision devices for military low flying purposes.	or substantial operational lighting proposals in the Proposed Development.
	5.5.57 Where suitable technological solutions have not yet been developed or proven, the Secretary of State will need to consider the likelihood of a solution becoming available within the time limit for implementation of the Development Consent Order.	
	5.5.58 Where a proposed energy infrastructure development would significantly impede or compromise the safe and effective use of civil or military aviation, meteorological radars, defence assets and/or significantly limit military training, the Secretary of State may consider the use of 'Grampian conditions', or other forms of requirement which relate to the use of current or future technological	

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	solutions, to mitigate impacts on legacy CNS equipment.	
	5.5.59 Where, after reasonable mitigation, operational changes, obligations and requirements have been proposed, the Secretary of State should consider whether: • a development would prevent a licensed aerodrome from maintaining its licence and the defence, or result in substantial local/national economic loss, or emergency service needs • it would cause harm to aerodromes' training or emergency service needs • the development would impede or compromise the safe and effective use of defence assets or unacceptably limit military training • the development would have a negative impact on the safe and efficient provision of en-route air traffic control services for civil aviation, in	

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	particular through an adverse effect on CNS infrastructure • the development would compromise the effective provision of weather warnings by the NSWWS, or flood warnings by the UK's flood agencies	
	5.5.60 Provided that the Secretary of State is satisfied that the impacts of proposed energy developments do not present risks to national security and physical safety, and where they do, provided that the Secretary of State is satisfied that appropriate mitigation can be achieved, or appropriate requirements can be attached to any Development Consent Order to secure those mitigations, consent may be granted.	The Applicant is not aware of any matter in the Proposed Development that would present a safety or security related compromise to the MoD and its assets, following engagement as set out above and within the **Consultation Report (Document Ref: 5.1)**. No requirements are therefore necessary on this matter.
5.7 - Dust, odour, artificial light, smoke, steam and insect infestation	5.7.5 The applicant should assess the potential for insect infestation and emissions of odour, dust, steam, smoke, and artificial light to have a detrimental impact on amenity, as part of the ES.	The **Statutory Nuisance Statement (Document Ref: 5.3)** confirms that no light nuisance, noise nuisance or air emission nuisance is anticipated with the application of the mitigation secured through the requirements in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**.

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Applicant Assessment	5.7.6 In particular, the assessment provided by the applicant should describe: • the type, quantity, and timing of emissions; • aspects of the development which may give rise to emissions; • premises or locations that may be affected by the emissions; • effects of the emission on identified premises or locations; • measures to be employed in preventing or mitigating the emissions.	
	5.7.7 The applicant is advised to consult the relevant local planning authority and, where appropriate, the EA about the scope and methodology of the assessment.	Section 16.3: Scope of Assessment of **ES Chapter 16: Air Quality (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.16)** outlines the consultation adopted in informing the Air Quality ES Chapter. North Kesteven District Council (NKDC) was consulted during statutory consultation and was consulted directly in a Direct Topic-Specific Consultation. Resulting from this consultation, a Construction Dust Assessment has been included in Section 16.6: Assessment of Effects of **ES Chapter 16: Air Quality (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.16)**.

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		The Environment Agency (EA) and Natural England (NE) were also contacted during the Direct Topic-Specific Consultation, with their requests being addressed within the chapter.
Mitigation	5.7.8 Mitigation measures may include one or more of the following: • engineering: prevention of a specific emission at the point of generation; control, containment and abatement of emissions if generated; • lay-out: adequate distance between source and sensitive receptors; reduced transport or handling of material; • administrative: limiting operating times; restricting activities allowed on the site; implementing management plans.	**ES Chapter 16: Air Quality (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.16)** sets out the likely effects of the Proposed Development on air quality, which are construction phase related, and sets out mitigation measures specific for each phase of the Proposed Development. These include but are not limited to: • Adopting and adhering to industry approved best practice throughout the construction phase; • Avoiding activities that generate large amounts of dust during windy conditions; • Avoiding dry sweeping of large areas; • Using water-assisted dust sweeper(s) on access and local roads to remove, as necessary, any material tracked out of the Site. This may require the sweeper being continuously in use; • Ensuring vehicles entering and leaving the Site are covered to prevent escape of materials during transport; • Implementing a wheel washing system (with rumble grids to dislodge accumulated dust and mud prior to leaving the Site where reasonably practicable); • Minimising of vehicle movements and limitation of vehicle speeds (the slower the vehicle speeds, the lower the dust generation); • Ensuring there's an adequate area of hard surfaces road between the wheel wash facility and the Site exit, wherever the size and layout permits; and

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		• Access gates to be located at least 10m from receptors where possible. Mitigation measures are documented within and are secured by the **Appendix 2.4: OCEMP (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.7)** and **Appendix 2.5: ODEMP (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.8**), of which preparation, approval and implementation of versions detailed is secured through requirements in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1),** A Dust Mitigation Plan (DMP) will further outline site specific mitigation as part of the CEMP. Detailed air dispersion modelling of unplanned emissions from BESS modules during a thermal runaway event has been undertaken to assess the impact on sensitive receptors, such as residents of nearby properties, and is appended to the **Outline Battery Safety Management Plan (Document Ref: 7.2)**. The assessment predicts that the overall impact of such emissions on existing sensitive human receptors would not be significant.
	5.7.9 Construction should be undertaken in a way that reduces emissions, for example the use of low emission mobile plant during the construction, and demolition phases as appropriate, and consideration should be given to making these mandatory in Development Consent Order requirements.	**ES Chapter 16: Air Quality (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.16)** considers the likely significant effects of construction and decommissioning of the Proposed Development on air quality. A dust risk assessment for the construction and decommissioning phases is presented in Section 16.6: Assessment of Effects of **ES Chapter 16: Air Quality (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.16)**. Mitigation measures to reduce emissions during the construction and demolition phases have been outlined in Section 16.7: Mitigation of **ES Chapter 16: Air Quality (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.16)** as well as in the **Appendix 2.4: OCEMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol 2, 6.3.7)** and **Appendix 2.5: ODEMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.8)**, of which preparation, approval and
	5.7.10 Demolition considerations should be embedded into designs	

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	at the outset to enable demolition techniques to be adopted that remove the need for explosive demolition.	implementation of detailed versions is secured through requirements in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**. Explosive demolition is not adopted as a demolition technique and the design and specification of the Proposed Development does not entail substantial reinforced masonry or concrete structures that would require explosive demolition during decommissioning of the Proposed Development.
	5.7.11 A construction management plan may help clarify and secure mitigation.	The application includes an **Appendix 2.4: OCEMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol 2, 6.3.7)**, of which preparation, approval and implementation of a detailed version is secured through a requirement in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**, which secures embedded and additional mitigation measures and best practices in relation to air quality.
Secretary of State decision making	5.7.12 The Secretary of State should satisfy itself that: • an assessment of the potential for artificial light, dust, odour, smoke, steam and insect infestation to have a detrimental impact on amenity has been carried out • that all reasonable steps have been taken, and will be taken, to minimise any such detrimental impacts	The **Statutory Nuisance Statement (Document Ref: 5.3)** concludes that the only matters addressed by the EPA 1990 which have been assessed as potentially being significant for the Proposed Development are those associated with health, air emissions, artificial light, noise and vibration. It is demonstrated in this Statement that the Proposed Development would not have significant effects following the implementation of the identified mitigation measures. Mitigation measures to reduce light, noise and air emissions during the construction and decommissioning phases have been outlined in Section 16.7: Mitigation of **ES Chapter 16: Air Quality (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.16)** as well as in the **Appendix 2.4: OCEMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol 2, 6.3.7)** and **Appendix**

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		2.5: ODEMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.8) of which preparation, approval and implementation of detailed versions is secured through requirements in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1),**
	5.7.13 If development consent is granted for a project, the Secretary of State should consider whether there is a justification for all of the authorised project (including any associated development) to be covered by a defence of statutory authority against nuisance claims. If the Secretary of State cannot conclude that this is justified, the Secretary of State should disapply in whole or in part the defence through a provision in the Development Consent Order.	As set out in the **Explanatory Memorandum (Document Ref: 3.2)**, Article 10 provides that no person is able to bring statutory nuisance proceedings under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 in respect of noise if the noise is created in the course of constructing, operating, maintaining or decommissioning the authorised development and for which notice has been given under Section 60 or consent obtained under Section 61 of the Control of Pollution Act 1974 or which cannot be reasonably avoided as a consequence of the authorised development. Article 10 is a model provision, in recognition that such noise will arise and that provision to define its consequences in an appropriate and balanced manner will be needed. This will be true of the Proposed Development and for this reason it is necessary to include the Article in the Order. This provision appears in numerous made DCOs, including all made solar DCOs. Please see, for example, the **Mallard Pass Solar Farm Order 2024** (Article 7) and **Gate Burton Energy Park Order 2024** (Article 7). The rationale is that if works are authorised under the Order, they are subject to appropriate levels of controls and should be permitted to proceed to construction and operation (and eventually decommissioning).
	5.7.14 Where the Secretary of State believes it appropriate, the Secretary of State may consider attaching requirements to the	The Applicant considers that all relevant mitigation has been secured via appropriate mechanisms within the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**.

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	development consent, to secure certain mitigation measures.	
	5.7.15 In particular, the Secretary of State should consider whether to require the applicant to abide by a scheme of management and mitigation concerning insect infestation and emissions of odour, dust, steam, smoke, and artificial light from the development. The Secretary of State should consider the need for such a scheme to reduce any loss to amenity which might arise during the construction, operation and decommissioning of the development. A construction management plan may help codify mitigation at that stage.	The Applicant considers that all relevant mitigation has been secured via appropriate mechanisms within the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)** and no scheme of management or mitigation relating to these nuisances is required.
5.8 - Flood Risk	5.8.8 Proposals that aim to facilitate the relocation of existing energy infrastructure from unsustainable locations which are or will be at unacceptable risk of flooding, should be supported where it would result in climate-resilient infrastructure.	The Proposed Development does not comprise the relocation of existing infrastructure.

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	5.8.9 If, following application of the Sequential Test, it is not possible, (taking into account wider sustainable development objectives), for the project to be located in areas of lower flood risk the Exception Test can be applied as defined in https://www.gov.uk/guidance/flood-risk-and-coastal-change#table2. The test provides a method of allowing necessary development to go ahead in situations where suitable sites at lower risk of flooding are not available.	The Proposed Development is categorised as essential infrastructure in Annex 3: Flood risk vulnerability classification of the NPPG. The **Site Selection Report (Document Ref: 5.5, Appendix 2)** includes application of the Sequential Test, and considers the Site against a number of Potential Alternative Sites ('PAS') identified within the Search Area. Three PAS were identified. The first was also in Flood Zones 2/3 like the Site and was therefore not considered to be preferable. The second did not meet the minimum sizing requirements. The third was significantly constrained due to proximity to heritage assets, a large PRoW network and the presence of significant amounts of crown land. In light of the above, it is considered that there are no suitable and reasonably available sites appropriate for the Proposed Development in areas with a lower risk of flooding and that the Site for the Proposed Development accordingly passes the sequential test. Furthermore, the Applicant also undertook a sequential approach to the layout and design of the Proposed Development within the Site to ensure the most vulnerable infrastructure was located in the areas at lowest risk of flooding (i.e., Flood Zone 1). Land nearby to the north, south and east of the Bicker Fen substation is located within Flood Zone 3. Owing to the size (i.e. 529ha) of the Solar Array Area, it would not be feasible to locate all panels and infrastructure solely within areas of Flood Zone 1 and 2 to the west of the substation. The Bespoke Access Road has been sited in Flood Zone 1 and would provide access to the Solar Array Area from the A17 for
	5.8.10 The Exception Test is only appropriate for use where the Sequential Test alone cannot deliver an acceptable site. It would only be appropriate to move onto the Exception Test when the Sequential Test has identified reasonably available, lower risk sites appropriate for the proposed development where, accounting for wider sustainable development objectives, application of relevant policies would provide a clear reason for refusing development in	

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	any alternative locations identified. Examples could include alternative site(s) that are subject to national designations such as landscape, heritage and nature conservation designations, for example Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs), SSSIs and World Heritage Sites (WHS) which would not usually be considered appropriate. 5.8.11 Both elements of the Exception Test will have to be satisfied for development to be consented. To pass the Exception Test it should be demonstrated that: • the project would provide wider sustainability benefits to the community that outweigh flood risk; and • the project will be safe for its lifetime taking account of the vulnerability of its users, without increasing flood risk elsewhere, and, where possible will reduce flood risk overall.	construction, operation and decommissioning. The **Bespoke Access Road Appraisal (Appendix 3.2 of the ES Volume 2, Document Ref: 6.3.10)** references other route options considered for this component of the development, some of which were located partly in areas of flood risk. With regards to the Exception Test, the Proposed Development performs as follows: • The Proposed Development would provide significant wider sustainability benefits throughout the production of clean, renewable energy for which there is a substantial need and a CNP as set out in sections 3 and 4 of this report. The Proposed Development will also provide biodiversity net gain as set out in the **Biodiversity Net Gain Strategy (Document Ref: 7.3)**. • It has been demonstrated within **Appendix 11.1: Flood Risk Assessment (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol. 2, 6.3.81)** that the Proposed Development will remain operational and be safe for its users at all times. Surface water runoff generated within the development will be managed sustainably within the Site, and necessary fluvial floodplain compensation will be provided to ensure that the risk of flooding elsewhere is not increased as a result of the Proposed Development.

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	5.8.12 Development should be designed to ensure there is no increase in flood risk elsewhere, accounting for the predicted impacts of climate change throughout the lifetime of the development. There should be no net loss of floodplain storage and any deflection or constriction of flood flow routes should be safely managed within the site. Mitigation measures should make as much use as possible of natural flood management techniques.	As set out in the **Appendix 11.1: Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) (Document Ref: 6.2. ES Vol.2, 6.3.81)**, the management of surface water runoff will ensure that flood risk from the Site is not increased as a result of the Proposed Development. Dedicated flood modelling was carried out by the Applicant at its expense to investigate flood risks and allow optimisation of panel heights in the Solar Array Area. This is reported in **ES Chapter 11: Water Resources & Flood Risk (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol 1, 6.2.11)**. Embedded mitigation measures relating to flood risk measures include: • A minimum preferred separation distance of up to 5 m from built development was applied where appropriate along or around every watercourse and waterbody and was taken into consideration into the Proposed Development design, as far as possible. The preferred separation distance has not been implemented near existing access tracks nor proposed watercourse crossing locations, as by their nature watercourse crossings are required to be in proximity to watercourses; • The access tracks within the Site have been routed to make as much use of existing tracks across the Site as possible, upgrading where required, to minimise the requirement for entirely new tracks and watercourse crossings; • Underground cabling will, wherever possible, aim to follow the same route as the access tracks to reduce the ground disturbance across the Site. Where trenchless techniques are proposed, the shortest practicable route will be used and where open cut crossings are proposed, measures will be

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		implemented to maintain water flows downstream of the crossing during construction and these crossings will be designed to prevent scour of the watercourse bed. The routing of access tracks and cabling will be designed to minimise the overall environmental effect and to limit the number of watercourse crossings; • SuDS will be developed and maintained throughout the Proposed Development. SuDS will be utilised within the Site to provide conveyance and storage for surface water runoff, as well as water quality treatment and enhancing biodiversity. SuDS mitigation includes use of swales and detention basins, which are to be monitored to maintain effectiveness; • Solar panels to be raised up to 600 mm above depth of flooding; • Transformers will be constructed on raised bunds up to 600 mm above the 1 in 100+ climate change breach flood depth; • Watercourse crossings will be designed so the soffit level of the bridge complies with the requirements of the EA and IDB to ensure that there is no increase in the risk of flooding as a result of the proposed bridges; • Base fence panels will be designed to have sufficient width to allow debris to flow and prevent blockage; and • All proposed bridge crossings, temporary and permanent, will be constructed in accordance with flood permits granted by the EA, LCC or the IDB to ensure there would be no increased flood risk upstream or to the Site itself. Where proposed transformer units are within the design flood extent, minor ground raising will be required. This will have a minimal impact on existing overland flow pathways and floodplain

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		storage. Similarly, the north-eastern corner of the BESS and Substation site encroaches into the design flood extent. The construction of a level plateau, and a kerb to prevent floodwater ingress onto the plateau in this locality, may displace a small volume of floodplain storage. Floodplain compensation in the form of shallow scrapes/ground lowering in areas currently unaffected by flooding in the design storm event will, therefore, be provided within the Site. Mitigation measures during the construction and decommissioning of the Proposed Development are secured by the detailed CEMP and detailed DEMP, which will be based on **Appendix 2.4: OCEMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.7)** and **Appendix 2.5: ODEMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.8)** that have been prepared to support the application and are secured by requirements in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**. As a result of the above all residual effects were considered to be not significant therefore no further additional mitigation measures were required.
Application Assessment	5.8.13 A site-specific flood risk assessment should be provided for all energy projects in Flood Zones 2 and 3 in England or Zones B and C in Wales. In Flood Zone 1 in England or Zone A in Wales, an assessment should accompany all proposals involving: • sites of 1 hectare or more	The proposed Solar Array Area includes areas of Flood Zones 2 and 3 lying in the northeast and east. The Cable Route Corridor and Bespoke Access Road will be located in a mix of Flood Zones 1, 2 and 3. **Appendix 11.1: FRA (Document Ref: 6.2. ES Vol.2, 6.3.81)** has been carried out in accordance with NPS EN-1 and NPS EN-3 and associated NPPG, including dedicated flood modelling, and confirms that from a flood risk perspective, with appropriate

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	• land which has been identified by the EA or NRW as having critical drainage problems • land identified (for example in a local authority strategic flood risk assessment) as being at increased flood risk in future • land that may be subject to other sources of flooding (for example surface water) • where the EA or NRW, Lead Local Flood Authority, Internal Drainage Board or other body have indicated that there may be drainage problems.	mitigation measures the Site is likely to be suitable for the Proposed Development subject to the proposed mitigation measures, and includes an Outline Drainage Strategy of which preparation, approval and implementation of a detailed version is secured through a requirement in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1),**
	5.8.14 This assessment should identify and assess the risks of all forms of flooding to and from the project and demonstrate how these flood risks will be managed, taking climate change into account.	The **Appendix 11.1: FRA (Document Ref: 6.2. ES Vol.2, 6.3.81)** assesses the risk of flooding to the Proposed Development from fluvial, surface water, groundwater and artificial sources varies across the Site, and takes account of climate change. Areas of the Site are shown to be at risk of flooding from fluvial, surface water and artificial sources. Climate change and increases in impermeable area are likely to result in increased surface water runoff rates and volumes, and it is possible that design standards of any proposed flood risk management measures will be exceeded by an extreme storm event. As any mitigation will be designed in accordance with the Environment Agency guidelines

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		to account for predicted climate change effects, it is considered that the residual risk will be minimal.
	5.8.15 The minimum requirements for Flood Risk Assessments (FRA) are that they should: • be proportionate to the risk and appropriate to the scale, nature and location of the project; • consider the risk of flooding arising from the project in addition to the risk of flooding to the project; • take the impacts of climate change into account, across a range of climate scenarios, clearly stating the development lifetime over which the assessment has been made; • be undertaken by competent people, as early as possible in the process of preparing the proposal; • consider both the potential adverse and beneficial effects of flood risk management infrastructure, including	The **Appendix 11.1: FRA (Document Ref: 6.2. ES Vol.2, 6.3.81)** has been carried out in accordance with NPS EN-1 and NPS EN-3 and associated NPPG, including additional dedicated flood modelling, and confirms that from a flood risk perspective, with appropriate mitigation measures the Site is likely to be suitable for the Proposed Development subject to the proposed mitigation measures. The FRA was carried out by competent experts and contains the required information. It also considers the impacts of the Proposed Development on drainage and includes an Outline Drainage Strategy, of which preparation, approval and implementation of a detailed version is secured through a requirement in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1),**

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	raised defences, flow channels, flood storage areas and other artificial features, together with the consequences of their failure and exceedance; • consider the vulnerability of those using the site, including arrangements for safe access and escape; • consider and quantify the different types of flooding (whether from natural and human sources and including joint and cumulative effects) and include information on flood likelihood, speed-of-onset, depth, velocity, hazard and duration; • identify and secure opportunities to reduce the causes and impacts of flooding overall, making as much use as possible of natural flood management techniques as part of an integrated approach to flood risk management; • consider the effects of a range of flooding events	

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	including extreme events on people, property, the natural and historic environment and river and coastal processes; • include the assessment of the remaining (known as 'residual') risk after risk reduction measures have been taken into account and demonstrate that these risks can be safely managed, ensuring people will not be exposed to hazardous flooding; • consider how the ability of water to soak into the ground may change with development, along with how the proposed layout of the project may affect drainage systems. Information should include: i. Describe the existing surface water drainage arrangements for the site ii. Set out (approximately) the existing rates and volumes of surface water run-off generated by the site. Detail the proposals	

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	for restricting discharge rates iii. Set out proposals for managing and discharging surface water from the site using sustainable drainage systems and accounting for the predicted impacts of climate change. If sustainable drainage systems have been rejected, present clear evidence of why their inclusion would be inappropriate iv. Demonstrate how the hierarchy of drainage options has been followed. v. Explain and justify why the types of SuDS and method of discharge have been selected and why they are considered appropriate. vi. Explain how sustainable drainage systems have been integrated with other aspects of the development such as open space or green	

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	infrastructure, so as to ensure an efficient use of the site vii. Describe the multifunctional benefits the sustainable drainage system will provide viii. Set out which opportunities to reduce the causes and impacts of flooding have been identified and included as part of the proposed sustainable drainage system ix. Explain how run-off from the completed development will be prevented from causing an impact elsewhere x. Explain how the sustainable drainage system been designed to facilitate maintenance and, where relevant, adoption. Set out plans for ensuring an acceptable standard of operation and maintenance throughout	

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	the lifetime of the development • detail those measures that will be included to ensure the development will be safe and remain operational during a flooding event throughout the development's lifetime without increasing flood risk elsewhere; • identify and secure opportunities to reduce the causes and impacts of flooding overall during the period of construction; and • be supported by appropriate data and information, including historical information on previous events.	
	5.8.16 Further guidance can be found in the Planning Practice Guidance Flood Risk and Coastal Change section which accompanies the NPPF, TAN15 for Wales or successor documents.	The **Appendix 11.1: FRA (Document Ref: 6.2. ES Vol.2, 6.3.81)** has been carried out in accordance with NPS EN-1 and NPS EN-3 and the referenced part of the NPPG.
	5.8.17 Development (including construction works) will need to account for any existing	**ES Chapter 11: Water Resources & Flood Risk (Document Ref: 6.2 Vol.1, 6.2.11)** considers potential construction and operational

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	watercourses and flood and coastal erosion risk management structures or features, or any land likely to be needed for future structures or features so as to ensure: • Access, clearances and sufficient land are retained to enable their maintenance, repair, operation, and replacement, as necessary • Their standard of protection is not reduced • Their condition or structural integrity is not reduced	impacts on a number of water resource sensitive receptors which are at risk from the Proposed Development. With embedded mitigation there would not be any significant adverse impacts on these receptors.
	5.8.18 Applicants for projects which may be affected by, or may add to, flood risk should arrange pre-application discussions before the official pre-application stage of the NSIP process with the EA or NRW, and, where relevant, other bodies such as Lead Local Flood Authorities, Internal Drainage Boards, sewerage undertakers, navigation authorities, highways authorities and reservoir owners and operators.	During the pre-application period the Applicant undertook statutory consultation on the Proposed Development and has received written feedback from the Environment Agency, NKDC, Anglian Water, Lincolnshire County Council and Black Sluice Internal Drainage Board. The **ES Chapter 11: Water Resources & Flood Risk (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol 1, 6.2.11)** and the **Consultation Report (5.1)** set out the written feedback and how that has impacted the FRA and the design of the Proposed Development.

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	5.8.19 Such discussions should identify the likelihood and possible extent and nature of the flood risk, help scope the FRA, and identify the information that will be required by the Secretary of State to reach a decision on the application when it is submitted. The Secretary of State should advise applicants to undertake these steps where they appear necessary but have not yet been addressed.	
	5.8.20 If the EA, NRW or another flood risk management authority has reasonable concerns about the proposal on flood risk grounds, the applicant should discuss these concerns with the EA or NRW and take all reasonable steps to agree ways in which the proposal might be amended, or additional information provided, which would satisfy the authority's concerns.	
	5.8.21 The Sequential Test ensures that a sequential, risk-based approach is followed to steer new development to areas with the lowest risk of flooding, taking all sources of flood risk and climate	A sequential approach was taken to the selection of the Site. More information on this can be found in the **Site Selection Report (Appendix 2 of the Planning Statement, Document Ref: 5.5)** which demonstrates that there are no suitable and reasonably available sites appropriate for the Proposed Development in areas with a lower risk of flooding and that the Site for the Proposed

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	change into account. Where it is not possible to locate development in low-risk areas, the Sequential Test should go on to compare reasonably available sites with medium risk areas and then, only where there are no reasonably available sites in low and medium risk areas, within high-risk areas.	Development. The Site is considered to be at medium risk of flooding and the Site Selection Report identifies two areas at lower risk of flooding, however, both are otherwise constrained and do not therefore comprise feasible alternatives to the Proposed Development. The Site Selection Report also identifies a Site of equal risk of flooding which is not considered to comprise a more feasible alternative.
	5.8.22 The technology specific NPSs set out some exceptions to the application of the Sequential Test. However, when seeking development consent on a site allocated in a development plan through the application of the Sequential Test, informed by a strategic flood risk assessment, applicants need not apply the Sequential Test, provided the proposed development is consistent with the use for which the site was allocated and there is no new flood risk information that would have affected the outcome of the test.	The **Site Selection Report (Document Ref: 5.5, Appendix 2)** includes application of the Sequential Test, and considers the Site against a number of Potential Alternative Sites ('PAS') identified within the Search Area. Three PAS were identified. The first was also in Flood Zones 2/3 like the Site and was therefore not considered to be preferable. The second did not meet the minimum sizing requirements. The third was significantly constrained due to proximity to heritage assets, a large PRoW network and the presence of significant amounts of crown land. In light of the above, it is considered that there are no suitable and reasonably available sites appropriate for the Proposed Development in areas with a lower risk of flooding and that the Site for the Proposed Development accordingly passes the sequential test.
	5.8.23 Consideration of alternative sites should take account of the policy on alternatives set out in	

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	Section 4.3 above. All projects should apply the Sequential Test to locating development within the site.	
Mitigation	5.8.24 To satisfactorily manage flood risk, arrangements are required to manage surface water and the impact of the natural water cycle on people and property.	The design objectives described in the **DAAD (Document Reference: 5.6)** show that suitable setbacks from existing watercourses and other measures to minimise impacts on the existing water environment were adopted as part of a good design process. **ES Chapter 11: Water Resources & Flood Risk (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.11)** considers the potential effects of changes to water quality and the hydrological regime and sets out a number of embedded mitigation measures including: • A minimum preferred separation distance of up to 5 m from built development was applied where appropriate along or around every watercourse and waterbody and was taken into consideration into the Proposed Development design, as far as possible. The preferred separation distance has not been implemented near existing access tracks nor at proposed watercourse crossing locations, as by their nature watercourse crossings are required to be in proximity to watercourses; • The access tracks within the Site have been routed to make as much use of existing tracks across the Site as possible, upgrading where required, to minimise the requirement for entirely new tracks and watercourse crossings; • Underground cabling will, wherever possible, aim to follow the same route as the access tracks to reduce the ground

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		disturbance across the Site. Where trenchless techniques are proposed, the shortest practicable route will be used and where open cut crossing are proposed, measures will be implemented to maintain water flows downstream of the crossing during construction and these crossings will be designed to prevent scour of the watercourse bed; • SuDS will be developed and maintained throughout the Proposed Development. SuDS will be utilised within the Site to provide conveyance and storage for surface water runoff, as well as water quality treatment and enhancing biodiversity; • Solar panels will be raised up to 600 mm above the depth of flooding; • Transformers will be constructed on raised bunds up to 600 mm above the 1 in 100+ climate change breach flood depth; • Watercourse crossings will be designed so the soffit level of the bridge complies with the requirements of the EA and IDB to ensure that there is no increase in the risk of flooding as a result of the proposed bridges; • Base fence panels will be designed to have sufficient width to allow debris to flow and prevent blockage; • All proposed bridge crossings, temporary and permanent, will be constructed in accordance with flood permits granted by the Environment Agency, LCC or the Internal Drainage Board (IDB) to ensure there would be no increased flood risk upstream or to the Site itself; and • Co-location of the Onsite Substation and BESS to allow for appropriate drainage solution and raising/ bunding to defend against flood risk.

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	5.8.25 In this NPS, the term SuDS refers to the whole range of sustainable approaches to surface water drainage management including, where appropriate: • source control measures including rainwater recycling and drainage • infiltration devices to allow water to soak into the ground, that can include individual soakaways and communal facilities • filter strips and swales, which are vegetated features that hold and drain water downhill mimicking natural drainage patterns • filter drains and porous pavements to allow rainwater and run-off to infiltrate into permeable material below ground and provide storage if needed • basins, ponds and tanks to hold excess water after rain and allow controlled discharge that avoids flooding	An Outline Drainage Strategy has been included within the **Appendix 11.1: FRA (Document Ref: 6.3. ES Vol.2, 6.3.81)** which sets out how surface water runoff from the Proposed Development will be controlled on the Site to ensure that there is no increase in risk of flooding to areas downstream of the Site and the Proposed Development itself, in accordance with the mitigation hierarchy. It also includes SuDS Management and Maintenance measures. Preparation, approval and implementation of a detailed drainage strategy, substantially in accordance with the Outline Drainage Strategy is secured via a Requirement in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1).** The Outline Drainage Strategy has been developed with respect to drainage hierarchy and includes management and maintenance measures, including remedial actions. With regards to the Bespoke Access Road, for the single slope road, a single swale will be required, located down slope of the road, with a bank-to-bank width of 2.6m, and a depth of 0.35m. Where the dual slope roads are proposed, a swale will be required either side of the access track to ensure all runoff is captured. Each swale would need to be 1.9m wide bank-to-bank, and of 0.25m depth to provide the required attenuation volume. The swale will also retain runoff from the soil stockpiles extending along the track. For the side of the bund facing away from the track, it is proposed to use precautionary swales along the toe of the stockpile. As set out in the **Outline Battery Safety Management Plan (Document Ref: 7.2)**, in the unlikely event of a fire within the BESS area, and the further unlikely event of water being deployed directly onto the fire (as opposed to the more likely scenario of it being used solely for cooling of adjoining units only) or heavy rainfall coinciding, fire

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	• flood routes to carry and direct excess water through developments to minimise the impact of severe rainfall flooding	water can be contained within a lined lagoon at the centre of the BESS platform if necessary, e.g., in the further unlikely event that water is deployed directly onto the fire (as opposed to the more likely scenario of being used solely for the cooling of adjacent units), or heavy rainfall coinciding. Shutoff valves could be used by fire crews to contain and reuse water or to prevent potentially contaminated water from being discharged to the watercourse. After the fire has been managed, such contained firewater will be tested and either released to the watercourse or removed from the Site for treatment and off-site disposal. This would be detailed within the Emergency Response Plan and Battery Safety Management Plan developed in collaboration with Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue Service pursuant to the relevant requirement in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**.
	5.8.26 Site layout and surface water drainage systems should cope with events that exceed the design capacity of the system, so that excess water can be safely stored on or conveyed from the site without adverse impacts.	The Outline Drainage Strategy included within the **Appendix 11.1: FRA (Document Ref: 6.2. ES Vol.2, 6.3.81)** accounts for the impacts of climate change. For example, in the Solar Array Area to ensure there is no increase in the risk of flooding to downstream areas as a result of the Proposed Development, swales will have sufficient capacity to retain the additional runoff volume generated from the impermeable surface during the 1 in 100 year plus 40% climate change 6-hour storm event, compared to the pre-development greenfield surface.
	5.8.27 The surface water drainage arrangements for any project should, accounting for the predicted impacts of climate change throughout the development's lifetime, be such that the volumes and peak flow rates of surface water leaving the	

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	site are no greater than the rates prior to the proposed project, unless specific off-site arrangements are made and result in the same net effect.	
	5.8.28 It may be necessary to provide surface water storage and infiltration to limit and reduce both the peak rate of discharge from the site and the total volume discharged from the site. There may be circumstances where it is appropriate for infiltration facilities or attenuation storage to be provided outside the project site, if necessary through the use of a planning obligation.	An Outline Drainage Strategy has been included within the **Appendix 11.1: FRA (Document Ref: 6.2. ES Vol.2, 6.3.81)** which sets out how surface water runoff from the Proposed Development will be controlled on the Site to ensure that there is no increase in risk of flooding to areas downstream of the Site and the Proposed Development itself, in accordance with the mitigation hierarchy. It also includes SuDS Management and Maintenance measures. Preparation, approval and implementation of a detailed drainage strategy, substantially in accordance with the Outline Drainage Strategy is secured via a Requirement in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1).**
	5.8.29 The sequential approach should be applied to the layout and design of the project. Vulnerable aspects of the development should be located on parts of the site at lower risk and residual risk of flooding. Applicants should seek opportunities to use open space for multiple purposes such as amenity, wildlife.	The Proposed Development is classed as essential infrastructure under Annex 3: Flood risk vulnerability classification of the NPPF. The Applicant undertook a sequential approach to the layout and design of the Proposed Development within the Site to ensure the most vulnerable infrastructure was located in the areas at lowest risk of flooding (i.e., Flood Zone 1). While some infrastructure, such as solar panels, remain in areas of Flood Risk, mitigation measures have been included, such as raised panels to a maximum height of 3.9 m, to ensure it will remain operable during a flood event.

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		Appendix 11.1: Flood Risk Assessment (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol. 2, 6.3.81) and Section 6.2 of this **Planning Statement (Document Ref: 5.5)** advise how the Sequential Test has been met. It is considered that there are no suitable and reasonably available sites appropriate for the Proposed Development in areas with a lower risk of flooding and that the Site for the Proposed Development accordingly passes the sequential test.
	5.8.30 Where a development may result in an increase in flood risk elsewhere through the loss of flood storage, on-site level-for-level compensatory storage, accounting for the predicted impacts of climate change over the lifetime of the development, should be provided.	As set out in the **Appendix 11.1: FRA (Document Ref: 6.2. ES Vol.2, 6.3.81)** which accounts for the impacts of climate chance, the management of surface water runoff will ensure that flood risk from the Site is not increased as a result of the Proposed Development. Where proposed transformer units are within the design flood extent, minor ground raising will be required. This will have a minimal impact on existing overland flow pathways and floodplain storage. Similarly, the north-eastern corner of the BESS and Substation site encroaches into the design flood extent. The construction of a level plateau, and a kerb to prevent floodwater ingress onto the plateau in this locality, may displace a small volume of floodplain storage. Floodplain compensation in the form of shallow scrapes/ground lowering in areas currently unaffected by flooding in the design storm event will, therefore, be provided within the Site. There will be a negligible increase in impermeable ground at the Site as a result of the Proposed Development. The management of surface water runoff will ensure that flood risk from the Site is not increased as a result of the Proposed Development. Any offsite
	5.8.31 Where it is not possible to provide compensatory storage on site, it may be acceptable to provide it off-site if it is hydraulically and hydrologically linked. Where development may cause the deflection or constriction of flood flow routes, these will need to be safely managed within the site.	

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		discharges of surface water will be restricted to greenfield runoff rates for all storm events up to an including the 1 in 100 year plus 40% climate change return period. Any flows in excess of this will be attenuated on site. There will be a negligible increase in impermeable ground at the Site as a result of the Proposed Development. The management of surface water runoff will ensure that flood risk from the Site is not increased as a result of the Proposed Development. Any offsite discharges of surface water will be restricted to greenfield runoff rates for all storm events up to an including the 1 in 100 year plus 40% climate change return period. Any flows in excess of this will be attenuated on site.
	5.8.32 Where development may contribute to a cumulative increase in flood risk elsewhere, the provision of multifunctional sustainable drainage systems, natural flood management and green infrastructure can also make a valuable contribution to mitigating this risk whilst providing wider benefits.	**ES Chapter 11: Water Resources & Flood Risk (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.11)** finds that there could be overlap between the Proposed Development's construction and / or decommissioning phases and one or more construction phases for other developments within the same catchment(s) as the Site. This is also covered in **ES Chapter 18: Cumulative Effects (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol. 1, 6.2.18).** All developments need to comply with the strict planning guidance and regulation relating to the water environment to be acceptable in planning terms. As such, the design of these other developments will need to incorporate appropriate mitigation measures and drainage design (as is the case for the Proposed Development). As set out in **ES Chapter 18: Cumulative Effects (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol. 1, 6.2.18)** On the basis of the implementation of appropriate mitigation measures, potential inter-cumulative effects during construction and / or decommissioning are considered to be

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		Negligible (Not Significant). In terms of the operational phase(s), no significant effects are anticipated. With the mitigation measures related to dust management set out within the **OCEMP (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.7)** and **ODEMP (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.8)**; the Outline Drainage Strategy within the **Flood Risk Assessment (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.81)**; and the mitigation measures set out within the **OSMP (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.95)** in place, no significant intra-cumulative effects are anticipated.
	5.8.33 The receipt of and response to warnings of floods is an essential element in the management of the residual risk of flooding. Flood Warning and evacuation plans should be in place for those areas at an identified risk of flooding.	As set out in the **Appendix 11.1: FRA (Document Ref: 6.2. ES Vol.2, 6.3.81)**, a flood warning and evacuation plan will be prepared for the Proposed Development and are secured via the requirement to produce and implement a detailed drainage strategy which is secured by a requirement in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.3)**. The plan will provide detail on the Environment Agency Flood Warning service and what actions should be taken following the notification of a potential flood event such as establishing safe access and egress routes, and safe refuge locations. Lincolnshire County Council were consulted as part of the Applicant's Statutory Consultation, and the nature of the consultation, LCC's response and how it was taken account of can be found in the **Consultation Report (Document Ref: 5.1)**.
	5.8.34 The applicant should take advice from the local authority emergency planning team, emergency services and, where appropriate, from the local resilience forum when producing an evacuation plan for a manned energy project as part of the FRA. Any emergency planning documents, flood warning and evacuation procedures that are	

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	required should be identified in the FRA.	
	5.8.35 Flood resistant and resilient materials and design should be adopted to minimise damage and speed recovery in the event of a flood.	Resilience measures have been incorporated including: • Solar panels will be raised up to 600 mm above the depth of flooding; • Transformers will be constructed on raised bunds up to 600 mm above the 1 in 100+ climate change breach flood depth; • Watercourse crossings will be designed so the soffit level of the bridge complies with the requirements of the EA and IDB to ensure that there is no increase in the risk of flooding as a result of the proposed bridges; and • Co-location of BESS and Onsite Substation at a suitable finished level. All buildings and infrastructure will incorporate flood resilient design and construction principles where practical as set out in the **Outline Design Principles** at Appendix 1 of the **DAAD (Document Ref: 5.6)**.
Secretary of State decision making	5.8.36 In determining an application for development consent, the Secretary of State should be satisfied that where relevant: • the application is supported by an appropriate FRA	The Application is accompanied by **Appendix 11.1: FRA (Document Ref: 6.2. ES Vol.2, 6.3.81)**, in line with relevant national and local requirements, includes the results of dedicated flood modelling and sets out how the proposal is in line with relevant national and local flood risk management strategies and addresses and avoids flood risks and does not create flood risk impacts elsewhere. The **Site Selection Report (Document Ref: 5.5, Appendix 2)**, demonstrates that a sequential test has been applied in site selection and at a site level.

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	• the Sequential Test has been applied and satisfied as part of site selection • a sequential approach has been applied at the site level to minimise risk by directing the most vulnerable uses to areas of lowest flood risk • the proposal is in line with any relevant national and local flood risk management strategy • SuDS (as required in the next paragraph on National Standards) have been used unless there is clear evidence that their use would be inappropriate • in flood risk areas the project is designed and constructed to remain safe and operational during its lifetime, without increasing flood risk elsewhere (subject to the exceptions set out in paragraph 5.8.42) • the project includes safe access and escape routes where required, as part of an agreed emergency plan, and	An Outline Drainage Strategy has been included within the **Appendix 11.1: FRA (Document Ref: 6.2. ES Vol.2, 6.3.81)** which sets out how surface water runoff from the Proposed Development will be controlled on the Site to ensure that there is no increase in risk of flooding to areas downstream of the Site and the Proposed Development itself, in accordance with the mitigation hierarchy. It also includes SuDS Management and Maintenance measures. Preparation, approval and implementation of a detailed drainage strategy, substantially in accordance with the Outline Drainage Strategy is secured via a Requirement in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1).** The Proposed Development will remain operational and be safe for its users at all times. Surface water runoff generated within the development will be managed sustainably within the Site, and necessary fluvial floodplain compensation will be provided to ensure that the risk of flooding elsewhere is not increased as a result of the Proposed Development. To the Applicant's knowledge, there is no requirement for any of the land within the Order Limits to be safeguarded for future flood risk management.

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	that any residual risk can be safely managed over the lifetime of the development • land that is likely to be needed for present or future flood risk management infrastructure has been appropriately safeguarded from development to the extent that development would not prevent or hinder its construction, operation or maintenance	
	5.8.37 For energy projects which have drainage implications, approval for the project's drainage system, including during the construction period, will form part of the development consent issued by the Secretary of State. The Secretary of State will therefore need to be satisfied that the proposed drainage system complies with any National Standards published by Ministers under paragraph 5(1) of Schedule 3 to the Flood and Water Management Act 2010.	An Outline Drainage Strategy has been included within **Appendix 11.1: FRA (Document Ref: 6.2. ES Vol.2, 6.3.81)** which sets out how surface water runoff from the Proposed Development will be controlled on the Site to ensure that there is no increase in risk of flooding to areas downstream of the Site and the Proposed Development itself, in accordance with the mitigation hierarchy. It also includes SuDS Management and Maintenance measures. Preparation, approval and implementation of a detailed drainage strategy, substantially in accordance with the Outline Drainage Strategy is secured via a Requirement in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1).** **ES Chapter 11 Water Resources & Flood Risk (Document Ref: 6.2 Vol.1, 6.2.11)** has considered the Flood and Water Management Act 2010.

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	5.8.38 In addition, the Development Consent Order, or any associated planning obligations, will need to make provision for appropriate operation and maintenance of any SuDS throughout the project's lifetime. Where this is secured through the adoption of any SuDS features, any necessary access rights to property will need to be granted.	An Outline Drainage Strategy has been included within the **Appendix 11.1: FRA (Document Ref: 6.2. ES Vol.2, 6.3.81)** which sets out how surface water runoff from the Proposed Development will be controlled on the Site to ensure that there is no increase in risk of flooding to areas downstream of the Site and the Proposed Development itself, in accordance with the mitigation hierarchy. It also includes SuDS Management and Maintenance measures. Preparation, approval and implementation of a detailed drainage strategy, substantially in accordance with the Outline Drainage Strategy is secured via a Requirement in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1).**
	5.8.39 Where relevant, the Secretary of State should be satisfied that the most appropriate body is being given the responsibility for maintaining any SuDS, taking into account the nature and security of the infrastructure on the proposed site. Responsible bodies could include, for example the landowner, the relevant lead local flood authority or water and sewerage company (through the Ofwat approved Sewerage Sector Guidance), or another body, such as an Internal Drainage Board.	The Outline Drainage Strategy for the Proposed Development including the use of SuDS is set out in the **Appendix 11.1: Flood Risk Assessment (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.81)**. Responsibility for maintenance will be with the Applicant during the operational period.

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	5.8.40 If the EA, NRW or another flood risk management authority continues to have concerns and objects to the grant of development consent on the grounds of flood risk, the Secretary of State can grant consent, but would need to be satisfied before deciding whether or not to do so that all reasonable steps have been taken by the applicant and the authority to try to resolve the concerns.	The Applicant consulted with these bodies during the Section 42 consultation and via direct technical engagement and is not aware of a reason for them to object to the making of the DCO. A Statement of Common Ground will be prepared with the Environment Agency ahead of or during examination.
	5.8.41 Energy projects should not normally be consented within Flood Zone 3b, or Zone C2 in Wales, or on land expected to fall within these zones within its predicted lifetime. This may also apply where land is subject to other sources of flooding (for example surface water). However, where essential energy infrastructure has to be located in such areas, for operational reasons, they should only be consented if the development will not result in a net loss of floodplain storage, and will not impede water flows.	The **Appendix 11.1: FRA (Document Ref: 6.2. ES Vol.2, 6.3.81)** demonstrates that the Site is shown by the EA Flood Map for Planning extends across a number of Flood Zones. The eastern and central areas of the Solar Array Area lie within Flood Zone 3, including the area adjacent to Hodge Dike. However dedicated flood modelling carried out and reported in that document shows reduced and different flood depths and extents. The Proposed Development is a form of essential infrastructure as defined in NPPG. It will remain operational and be safe for its users. Necessary fluvial floodplain compensation will be provided to ensure that the risk of flooding elsewhere is not increased as a result of the Proposed Development.

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	5.8.42 Exceptionally, where an increase in flood risk elsewhere cannot be avoided or wholly mitigated, the Secretary of State may grant consent if they are satisfied that the increase in present and future flood risk can be mitigated to an acceptable and safe level and taking account of the benefits of, including the need for, nationally significant energy infrastructure as set out in Part 3 above. In any such case the Secretary of State should make clear how, in reaching their decision, they have weighed up the increased flood risk against the benefits of the project, taking account of the nature and degree of the risk, the future impacts on climate change, and advice provided by the EA or NRW and other relevant bodies.	As set out in the **ES Chapter 11: Water Resources & Flood Risk (Document Ref: 6.2 Vol.1, 6.2.11)** and **Appendix 11.1: FRA (Document Ref: 6.2. ES Vol.2, 6.3.81)**, the Proposed Development will be safe and resilient in relation to flood risks, and surface water runoff generated within the development will be managed sustainably within the Site and necessary fluvial floodplain compensation will be provided to ensure that the risk of flooding elsewhere is not increased as a result of the Proposed Development. As set out in the **Planning Statement (Document Ref: 5.5)** the Proposed Development will result in a number of benefits including contributing to meeting the need for nationally significant renewable energy infrastructure.
Part 5.9 - Historic Environment	5.9.9 The applicant should undertake an assessment of any likely significant heritage impacts of the proposed development as part of the EIA, and describe these along with how the mitigation	**ES Chapter 8: Cultural Heritage (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.8)** reports the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development on cultural heritage receptors in terms of Cultural Heritage in the context of the Site and surrounding area. In particular it considers the potential for the Proposed Development to give rise to likely significant effects of the development on the

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Applicant Assessment	hierarchy has been applied in the ES (see Section 4.3). This should include consideration of heritage assets above, at, and below the surface of the ground. Consideration will also need to be given to the possible impacts, including cumulative, on the wider historic environment. The assessment should include reference to any historic landscape or seascape character assessment and associated studies as a means of assessing impacts relevant to the proposed project.	cultural heritage resource (comprising built heritage, archaeology and historic landscape). It includes consideration and assessment of impacts on above and below ground heritage assets, historic landscapes and designated and non-designated heritage assets and includes assessment of cumulative effects. It confirms that the Lincolnshire Historic Environment Records were received. As set out in the ES **Appendix 8.11: Archaeological Mitigation Strategy (Document Ref: 6.3, Vol. 2, 6.3.75)**, if archaeological assets of high significance are identified during the phased programme of archaeological mitigation, consideration will be given to preserving the asset in situ, where possible and proportionate to its significance. This approach will be undertaken following discussions with and may involve micro-siting infrastructure around the identified asset. All excavated archaeological contexts will be recorded in full through provision of a detailed written context records, which will include details of extent, location, relationships, samples, finds, and cross-references to any relevant contexts. A programme of archaeological mitigation is proposed for each area of the Proposed Development during the construction phase. The Solar Array Area has been evaluated by LiDAR, geophysical survey and trial trenching, and areas of significant archaeology were designed out and this area will not require mitigation. The Bespoke Access Road has had targeted trial trenching, and would not require further trenching. The Cable Route Corridor will require targeted trenching on areas of anomalies.
	5.9.10 As part of the ES the applicant should provide a description of the significance of the heritage assets affected by the proposed development, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the importance of the heritage assets and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum, the applicant should have consulted the relevant Historic	

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	Environment Record (or, where the development is in English or Welsh waters, Historic England or Cadw) and assessed the heritage assets themselves using expertise where necessary according to the proposed development's impact.	An Archaeological Mitigation Strategy (see **Appendix 8.11 Archaeological Mitigation Strategy (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.74)**) has been prepared and is secured by a requirement in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**, likely in the form of a Written Scheme of Investigation, and subject to agreement with LCC. Works will be required prior to the construction stage; this is likely to comprise targeted trial trenching or an archaeological watching brief (monitoring and recording during the strip of topsoils), or another appropriate method of archaeological investigation. This would ensure that areas of archaeological significance are identified at detailed design stage and appropriate mitigation measures will be put in place to avoid any significant effects and offset any residual effects.
	5.9.11 Where a site on which development is proposed includes, or the available evidence suggests it has the potential to include, heritage assets with an archaeological interest, the applicant should carry out appropriate desk-based assessment and, where such desk-based research is insufficient to properly assess the interest, a field evaluation. Where proposed development will affect the setting	**ES Chapter 8: Cultural Heritage (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.8)** has been informed by an **Archaeological Desk Based Assessment (Appendix 8.1), Heritage Statement (Appendix 8.2), Aerial and LiDAR Assessments (Appendices 8.3-8.4), Geophysical Survey (Appendices 8.6 and 8.8)** and **Trial Trenching (Appendices 8.9,8.10, 8.11)**. Findings are represented on **Figures 8.5 – 8.8 (Document Refs: 6.4.53 - 6.4.56**).

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	of a heritage asset, accurate representative visualisations may be necessary to explain the impact.	
	5.9.12 The applicant should ensure that the extent of the impact of the proposed development on the significance of any heritage assets affected can be adequately understood from the application and supporting documents. Studies will be required on those heritage assets affected by noise, vibration, light and indirect impacts, the extent and detail of these studies will be proportionate to the significance of the heritage asset affected.	**ES Chapter 8: Cultural Heritage (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.8)** reports the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development in terms of Cultural Heritage in the context of the Site and surrounding area. This is supported by the following documents **(Document Refs: 6.3.45 – 6.3.75)**: • **Appendix 8.1: Archaeological Desk Based Assessment** • **Appendix 8.2: Heritage Statement** • **Appendix 8.3: Aerial and LiDAR Assessment (Solar Array)** • **Appendix 8.4: Aerial and LiDAR Assessment (Access and Cable Routes)** • **Appendix 8.5: Written Scheme of Investigation for Geophysical Survey on the Solar Array Area** • **Appendix 8.6: Geophysical Survey Summary Report (Solar Array)** • **Appendix 8.7: Written Scheme of Investigation for Geophysical Survey on the Cable and Access Routes** • **Appendix 8.8: Geophysical Survey Report (Cable and Access Routes)** • **Appendix 8.9: Written Scheme of Investigation for Trial Trenching** • **Appendix 8.10: 10a Trial Trenching Report (Solar Array) and 10b Trial Trenching Report (Targeted Area on the Access Route)** • **Appendix 8.11: Archaeological Mitigation Strategy** • **Appendix 8.12: Legislation and Policy**

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	5.9.13 The applicant is encouraged, where opportunities exist, to prepare proposals which can make a positive contribution to the historic environment, and to consider how their scheme takes account of the significance of heritage assets affected. This can include, where possible: • enhancing, through a range of measures such a sensitive design, the significance of heritage assets or setting affected • considering where required the development of archive capacity which could deliver significant public benefits • considering how visual or noise impacts can affect heritage assets, and whether there may be opportunities to enhance access to, or interpretation, understanding and appreciation of, the heritage assets affected by the scheme	**ES Chapter 8: Cultural Heritage (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.8)** sets out a number of forms of embedded mitigation which have been assumed as part of the assessment, namely: • The design has carefully considered heritage assets in the proximity of the Site, including creating buffer areas to increase the distance between the Site and the nearby assets.; • Trackways are anticipated to, where possible, follow existing field boundaries. • The landscaping plan includes creating wildflower areas, improving hedgerows, and increasing vegetation buffers, particularly near Ewerby Thorpe and Howell. • The Cable Route will be installed underground, preserving the visual landscape and reducing potential harm to heritage assets. Upon decommissioning, the cabling will remain in place, which minimises further construction activity and disturbance in the wider area. • The Proposed Development will use motion-activated security lighting, which will only activate when necessary. Operational lighting will be installed solely for emergency purposes. This careful lighting strategy helps retain the current light levels experienced by nearby heritage assets, preserving their current night-time ambiance. **ES Chapter 8: Cultural Heritage (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.8)** confirms that it has been informed by the **Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) (refer to Chapter 6 Landscape and Views)** and the **Noise Assessment (refer to Chapter 10 Noise).**

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	5.9.14 Careful consideration in preparing the scheme will be required on whether the impacts on the historic environment will be direct or indirect, temporary, or permanent.	**ES Chapter 8: Cultural Heritage (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.8)** reports the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development in terms of Cultural Heritage in the context of the Site and surrounding area including direct and indirect, and temporary or permanent effects. It is notable that the Proposed Development is time-limited and temporary, and as a result any above-ground heritage impacts are time limited. Upon the removal of the Proposed Development elements, the land will be restored to agricultural land meaning and any impacts upon the existing historic landscape character will be removed. The likely significant residual effects of the Proposed Development are considered in Table 8.11 of **ES Chapter 8: Cultural Heritage (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.8).**
	5.9.15 Applicants should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably.	**ES Chapter 8: Cultural Heritage (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.8)** identifies Heckington Village Conservation Area and Heckington Station Conservation Area as being key sensitive designated receptors within the vicinity of the Site and concludes that the Proposed Development will have neutral impacts on both. The Proposed Development would not lead to any significant adverse effects on any of these conservation areas, in accordance with this policy. There are no World Heritage Sites affected by the Proposed Development.
Mitigation,	5.9.16 A documentary record of our past is not as valuable as retaining the heritage asset, and therefore	As set out in the ES **Appendix 8.11: Archaeological Mitigation Strategy (Document Ref: 6.3, Vol. 2, 6.3.75)**, if archaeological assets of high significance are identified during the phased

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	the ability to record evidence of the asset should not be a factor in deciding whether such loss should be permitted, and whether or not consent should be given.	programme of archaeological mitigation, consideration will be given to preserving the asset in situ, where possible and proportionate to its significance. This approach will be undertaken following discussions with and may involve micro-siting infrastructure around the identified asset. All excavated archaeological contexts will be recorded in full through provision of a detailed written context records, which will include details of extent, location, relationships, samples, finds, and cross-references to any relevant contexts.
	5.9.17 Where the loss of the whole or part of a heritage asset's significance is justified, the Secretary of State will require the applicant to record and advance understanding of the significance of the heritage asset before it is lost (wholly or in part). The extent of the requirement should be proportionate to the asset's importance and significance and the impact. The applicant should be required to publish this evidence and to deposit copies of the reports with the relevant Historic Environmental Record. They should also be required to deposit the archive generated in a local	A programme of archaeological mitigation is proposed for each area of the Proposed Development during the construction phase. The Solar Array Area has been evaluated by LiDAR, geophysical survey and trial trenching, and areas of significant archaeology were designed out and this area will not require mitigation. The Bespoke Access Road has been subject to targeted trial trenching and would not require further trenching. The Cable Route Corridor will require targeted trenching on areas of anomalies. An Archaeological Mitigation Strategy (see **Appendix 8.11 Archaeological Mitigation Strategy (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.74)**) has been prepared in relation to onsite works to understand the process for mitigation either by design or record and demarking the known areas of impact. This is secured by a requirement in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**, likely in the form of a Written Scheme of Investigation, and subject to agreement with LCC. This will ensure that areas of archaeological significance are identified at detailed design stage and appropriate mitigation

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	museum or other public repository willing to receive it.	measures will be put in place to avoid any significant effects and offset any residual effects.
	5.9.18 Where appropriate, the Secretary of State will impose requirements on the Development Consent Order to ensure that the work is undertaken in a timely manner, in accordance with a written scheme of investigation that complies with the policy in this NPS and which has been agreed in writing with the relevant local authority, and to ensure that the completion of the exercise is properly secured.	**ES Appendix 8.11: Archaeological Mitigation Strategy (Document Ref: 3.2, ES Vol. 2, 6.3.75)** set out the mitigation proposed and to outline the scope, guiding principles, and methods for planning and implementing further archaeological mitigation works. A requirement in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)** secures that the Proposed Development must be implemented in accordance with the **Archaeological Mitigation Strategy.**
	5.9.19 Where the loss of significance of any heritage asset has been justified by the applicant on the merits of the new development and the significance of the asset in question, the Secretary of State should consider: • imposing a requirement in the Development Consent Order • requiring the applicant to enter into an obligation	**ES Chapter 8: Cultural Heritage (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.8)** reports the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development in terms of Cultural Heritage in the context of the Site and surrounding area including direct and indirect, and temporary or permanent effects. The likely significant residual effects of the Proposed Development are considered in Table 8.11 of **ES Chapter 8: Cultural Heritage (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.8)** which also includes specific mitigation measures**.** As set out in **Appendix 8.2: Heritage Statement (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.46)**, the following designated heritage assets would be subject to a slight adverse effect (not significant): Kyme Tower (Grade I Listed Building; NHLE 1204786) and Remains of
	5.9.20 That will prevent the loss occurring until the relevant part of	

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	the development has commenced, or it is reasonably certain that the relevant part of the development is to proceed.	medieval monastery, moated manor house, fishponds and post-medieval garden (Scheduled Monument; NHLE 1008317); Church of St Marys and All Saints, South Kyme (Grade II* Listed Building; NHLE 1061749); Church of St Denys, Kirkby la Thorpe (Grade II* Listed Building; NHLE 1360592); The Old Rectory (Grade II Listed Building; NHLE 1061834); Boughton House, Grade II Listed (NHLE 1061835); Austhorpe Farm (Grade II Listed Building; NHLE 1306847); and Thorpe House (Grade II Listed Building; NHLE 1360566). The Church of St Andrew, Heckington, Grade I listed (NHLE 1360562) would experience a neutral effect. These effects would be long term during operation, but ultimately only temporary and result in less than substantial harm. The Church of St Oswald, Howell, (Grade II* Listed Building; NHLE 1061833); and, Churchyard Cross, St Oswald's Churchyard (Scheduled Monument; NHLE 1009228); and Church of St Andrew, Ewerby and Evedon (Grade I Listed Building; NHLE 1360562) would experience slight adverse effect, which would be long term during operation and short term during construction and decommissioning. This impact would be temporary and result in less than substantial harm. The Church of St Andrew, Asgarby, Grade I listed (NHLE 1061832) would experience a moderate effect (significant) during construction and decommissioning, but this would be short term and temporary. During operation, the impact would be long term but would reduce to low, slight adverse effect and would be temporary. Four designated heritage assets identified in the **Appendix 8.2: Heritage Statement (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.46** (The

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		Manor (Grade II Listed Building; NHLE 1360601); Heckington Village Conservation Area and Heckington Station Conservation Area; Asgarby Hall (Grade II Listed; NHLE 1168367); and Rookery Farmhouse (Grade II Listed Building; NHLE 1061803)) were concluded to have no harm to significance anticipated This less than substantial harm is considered to be outweighed by the need and public benefits of the Proposed Development, as set out in the **Planning Statement (Document Ref: 5.5)**. In summary, urgent and unprecedented actions are required on a global scale to halt climate change. A rapid increase in the supply of low carbon electricity is needed for the UK to meet its legally binding climate change targets. Solar generation and battery storage are a critical part of the UK's strategy to achieve net zero by 2050, a key step towards which is the government's national mission for 'Clean Power by 2030'. The Proposed Development is capable of connecting to the grid before 2030.
	5.9.21 Where there is a high probability (based on an adequate assessment) that a development site may include, as yet undiscovered heritage assets with archaeological interest, the Secretary of State will consider requirements to ensure appropriate procedures are in place for the identification and treatment of such assets discovered during construction.	A programme of archaeological mitigation is proposed for the Proposed Development during the construction phase. The Solar Array Area has been evaluated by LiDAR, geophysical survey and trial trenching, and areas of significant archaeology were designed out and this area will not require mitigation. The Bespoke Access Road has been subject to targeted trial trenching, and would not require further trenching. The Cable Route Corridor will require targeted trenching on areas of anomalies. An Archaeological Mitigation Strategy (see **Appendix 8.11 Archaeological Mitigation Strategy (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.74)**) has been prepared in relation to onsite works to understand the process for mitigation either by design or record

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		and demarking the known areas of impact. This is secured by a requirement in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**, likely in the form of a Written Scheme of Investigation, and subject to agreement with LCC.
Secretary of State decision making	5.9.22 In determining applications, the Secretary of State should seek to identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by the proposed development, including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset (including assets whose setting may be affected by the proposed development), taking account of: • relevant information provided with the application and, where applicable, relevant information submitted during the examination of the application • any designation records, including those on the National Heritage List for England, or included on Cof Cymru for Wales. • historic landscape character records	**ES Chapter 8: Cultural Heritage (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.8)** considers the potential for likely significant effects of the development on the cultural heritage resource (comprising built heritage, archaeology and historic landscape). As set out in **Appendix 8.2: Heritage Statement (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.46)**, **DAAD (Document Ref: 5.6)** and **the Site Selection Report (Appendix 2** to the **Planning Statement**), the Applicant considered the mitigation hierarchy throughout the process of site selection, project design and design refinement, to ensure that impacts to heritage assets are minimised as much as possible. Where it is not possible to avoid impacts, the Applicant has worked to minimise the extent of the impact and implement mitigate measures. As set out in **Appendix 8.2: Heritage Statement (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.46)**, the following designated heritage assets would be subject to a slight adverse effect (not significant): Kyme Tower (Grade I Listed Building; NHLE 1204786) and Remains of medieval monastery, moated manor house, fishponds and post-medieval garden (Scheduled Monument; NHLE 1008317); Church of St Marys and All Saints, South Kyme (Grade II* Listed Building; NHLE 1061749); Church of St Denys, Kirkby la Thorpe (Grade II* Listed Building; NHLE 1360592); The Old Rectory (Grade II Listed Building; NHLE 1061834); Boughton House, Grade II Listed

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	• the relevant Historic Environment Record(s), and similar sources of information • representations made by interested parties during the examination process • expert advice, where appropriate, and when the need to understand the significance of the heritage asset demands it 5.9.23 The Secretary of State must also comply with the requirements on listed buildings, conservation areas and scheduled monuments, set out in Regulation 3 of the Infrastructure Planning (Decisions) Regulations 2010.	(NHLE 1061835); Austhorpe Farm (Grade II Listed Building; NHLE 1306847); and Thorpe House (Grade II Listed Building; NHLE 1360566). The Church of St Andrew, Heckington, Grade I listed (NHLE 1360562) would experience a neutral effect. These effects would be long term during operation, but ultimately only temporary and result in less than substantial harm. The Church of St Oswald, Howell, (Grade II* Listed Building; NHLE 1061833); and, Churchyard Cross, St Oswald's Churchyard (Scheduled Monument; NHLE 1009228); and Church of St Andrew, Ewerby and Evedon (Grade I Listed Building; NHLE 1360562) would experience slight adverse effect, which would be long term during operation and short term during construction and decommissioning. This impact would be temporary and result in less than substantial harm. The Church of St Andrew, Asgarby, Grade I listed (NHLE 1061832) would experience a moderate effect (significant) during construction and decommissioning, but this would be short term and temporary. During operation, the impact would be long term but would reduce to low, slight adverse effect and would be temporary. Four designated heritage assets identified in the **Appendix 8.2: Heritage Statement (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.46** (The Manor (Grade II Listed Building; NHLE 1360601); Heckington Village Conservation Area and Heckington Station Conservation Area; Asgarby Hall (Grade II Listed; NHLE 1168367); and Rookery Farmhouse (Grade II Listed Building; NHLE 1061803)) were concluded to have no harm to significance anticipated

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	5.9.25 The Secretary of State should consider the desirability of sustaining and, where appropriate, enhancing the significance of heritage assets, the contribution of their settings and the positive contribution that their conservation can make to sustainable communities, including to their quality of life, their economic vitality, and to the public's enjoyment of these assets.	**ES Chapter 8: Cultural Heritage (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.8)** reports on mitigations for heritage impacts that reinforce local character and distinctiveness such as the temporary re-introduction of a footpath through the permissive path and the creation of landscaping buffers and screening.
	5.9.26 The Secretary of State should also consider the desirability of the new development making a positive contribution to the character and local distinctiveness of the historic environment. The consideration of design should include scale, height, massing, alignment, materials, use and landscaping (for example, screen planting).	
	5.9.27 When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, the Secretary of State should give great weight to the asset's conservation. The more	As set out in **ES Chapter 8: Cultural Heritage (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.8)** the Proposed Development is predicted to have significant impacts on one heritage asset during the construction phase, known as Asgarby Church (Grade I Listed Building). Specific mitigation measures are proposed as much as possible in relation to each impact including through the re-

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	important the asset, the greater the weight should be. This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss, or less than substantial harm to its significance. 5.9.28 The Secretary of State should give considerable importance and weight to the desirability of preserving all heritage assets. Any harm or loss of significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting) should require clear and convincing justification. 5.9.29 Substantial harm to or loss of significance of a grade II Listed Building or a grade II Registered Park or Garden should be exceptional. 5.9.30 Substantial harm to or loss of significance of assets of the highest significance, including Scheduled Monuments; Protected Wreck Sites; Registered Battlefields; grade I and II* Listed	introduction/maintenance of footpaths and landscape buffers and screening for above ground assets, and preservation by record or preservation in situ of below ground assets. The accompanying **Heritage Statement (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.46)** identifies eleven designated heritage assets in which the changes introduced by the Proposed Development would potentially result in harm to their significance. However, it sets out that the Proposed Development will cause less than substantial harm to these assets, primarily affecting the wider setting of these designated assets, which contributes less to their overall significance than the immediate setting and or key views or association. Importantly, no physical harm will occur to any designated heritage assets. Changes to the wider setting, which is of limited contribution to the asset's significance, will result in some harm but in less than substantial harm. As set out in **Appendix 8.2: Heritage Statement (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.46)**, there would be slight adverse effect (not significant) to seven identified designated heritage assets, and a neutral effect on one; the Church of St Andrew, Heckington. These effects would be long term during operation, but ultimately only temporary and result in less than substantial harm. Three designated assets would experience slight adverse effect, which would be long term during operation and short-term during construction and decommissioning. This impact would be temporary and result in less than substantial harm. The Church of St Andrew, Asgarby, Grade I listed (NHLE 1061832) would experience a moderate effect (significant) during

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	Buildings; grade I and II* Registered Parks and Gardens; and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.	construction and decommissioning, but this would be short term and temporary. During operation, the impact would be long term but would reduce to low, slight adverse effect and would be temporary.
	5.9.31 Where the proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset the Secretary of State should refuse consent unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm to, or loss of, significance is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all the following apply: • the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site • no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation • conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible	Four designated heritage assets identified in the **Appendix 8.2: Heritage Statement (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.46** were concluded to have no harm to significance anticipated. This less than substantial harm is considered to be outweighed by the public benefits of the Proposed Development, as set out in the **Planning Statement (Document Ref: 5.5)**. In summary, urgent and unprecedented actions are required on a global scale to halt climate change. A rapid increase in the supply of low carbon electricity is needed for the UK to meet its legally binding climate change targets. Solar generation and battery storage are a critical part of the UK's strategy to achieve net zero by 2050, a key step towards which is the government's national mission for 'Clean Power by 2030'. The Proposed Development is capable of connecting to the grid before 2030.

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	• the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use	
	5.9.32 Where the proposed development will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of the designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including, where appropriate securing its optimum viable use.	
	5.9.33 In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.	
	5.9.34 Not all elements of a Conservation Area or World Heritage Site will necessarily contribute to its significance. Loss of a building (or other element) which makes a positive contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site should be treated either as substantial harm under	**ES Chapter 8: Cultural Heritage (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.8)** identifies Heckington Village Conservation Area and Heckington Station Conservation Area as being key sensitive designated receptors within the vicinity of the Site and concludes that the Proposed Development will have neutral impacts on both. There are no World Heritage Sites affected by the Proposed Development.

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	paragraph 5.9.30 or less than substantial harm under paragraph 5.9.32, as appropriate, considering the relative significance of the element affected and its contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site as a whole.	
	5.9.35 Where there is evidence of deliberate neglect of, or damage to, a heritage asset, the Secretary of State should not take its deteriorated state into account in any decision.	As set out in **ES Chapter 8: Cultural Heritage (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.8)** the Proposed Development is predicted to have significant impacts on a number of heritage assets. Specific mitigation measures are proposed in relation to each impact including through the re-introduction/maintenance of footpaths and landscape buffers and screening for above ground assets, and preservation by record or preservation in situ of below ground assets. The accompanying **Heritage Statement (Document Ref: 8.2)** sets out that the Proposed Development will cause less than substantial harm to the heritage assets, primarily affecting the wider setting of these designated assets, which contributes less to their overall significance than the immediate setting and or key views or association.
	5.9.36 When considering applications for development affecting the setting of a designated heritage asset, the Secretary of State should give appropriate weight to the desirability of preserving the setting such assets and treat favourably applications that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to, or better reveal the significance of, the asset. When considering applications that do not do this, the Secretary of State should give great weight to any	

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	negative effects, when weighing them against the wider benefits of the application. The greater the negative impact on the significance of the designated heritage asset, the greater the benefits that will be needed to justify approval.	
Part 5.10 - Landscape and Visual *Applicant Assessment*	5.10.5 Virtually all nationally significant energy infrastructure projects will have adverse effects on the landscape, but there may also be beneficial landscape character impacts arising from mitigation. 5.10.6 Projects need to be designed carefully, taking account of the potential impact on the landscape. Having regard to siting, operational and other relevant constraints the aim should be to minimise harm to the landscape, providing reasonable mitigation where possible and appropriate.	**ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.6)** reports the assessment of the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development on Landscape and Visual receptors. It comprises a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) which considers the potential for likely significant effects during construction, operation and decommissioning of the Proposed Development on landscape character and visual amenity. It includes information on embedded mitigation measures. Following the undertaking of **Appendix 11.1: Flood Risk Assessment (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol. 2, 6.3.81)** panel heights have been optimised to reduce visual impacts by limiting heights to 3.9m in flood areas and 3.5 m elsewhere, compared to 4.5m at PEIR stage. This has reduced the Zone of Theoretical Visibility. The **DAAD (Document Ref: 5.6)** sets out landscape impact has fed into the design of the Proposed Development throughout the pre-application period through the use of Design Objectives.

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	5.10.7 National Parks, the Broads and AONBs have been confirmed by the government as having the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and natural beauty. Each of these designated areas has specific statutory purposes. Projects should be designed sensitively given the various siting, operational, and other relevant constraints. For development proposals located within designated landscapes the Secretary of State should be satisfied that measures which seek to further purposes of the designation are sufficient, appropriate and proportionate to the type and scale of the development.	**ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.6)** concludes that the Proposed Development is not located within, or within the setting of, any national statutory landscape designation.
	5.10.8 The duty to seek to further the purposes of nationally designated landscapes also applies when considering applications for projects outside the boundaries of these areas which may have impacts within them. In these locations, projects should be designed sensitively given the	

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	various siting, operational, and other relevant constraints. The Secretary of State should be satisfied that measures which seek to further the purposes of the designation are sufficient, appropriate and proportionate to the type and scale of the development.	
	5.10.11 Development within a Heritage Coast (that is not also a National Park, The Broads or an AONB) is unlikely to be appropriate, unless it is compatible with the natural beauty and special character of the area.	**ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.6)** does not identify the Site or its immediately surrounding context as falling within a Heritage Coast.
	5.10.12 Outside nationally designated areas, there are local landscapes that may be highly valued locally. Where a local development document in England or a local development plan in Wales has policies based on landscape or waterscape character assessment, these should be paid particular attention. However, locally valued landscapes should not be used in themselves to refuse	**ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.6)** confirms that there are no landscape designations on the Site or within the study area.

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	consent, as this may unduly restrict acceptable development.	
	5.10.13 All proposed energy infrastructure is likely to have visual effects for many receptors around proposed sites.	Within the **ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.6)** the assessment of visual effects has principally been undertaken through Site appraisal and further informed by using the range of agreed representative viewpoints.
	5.10.14 The Secretary of State will have to judge whether the visual effects on sensitive receptors, such as local residents, and other receptors, such as visitors to the local area, outweigh the benefits of the project.	**ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.6)** explores the potential impacts on sensitive receptors. As set out within **Appendix 6.5: Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.17)** Gashes Barn would reach the Residential Amenity Threshold at various stages. This is not an EIA impact (it is appended to the ES due to its linkage with the LVIA) but relates to wider planning principles. In this location arises because of the manner in which the property would be encompassed by the Solar Arrays and there would be views of energy infrastructure from several locations around the property. This is judged to be perceived as 'overwhelming' but not 'overbearing' in the medium term. This scenario would persist until the proposed mitigation planting became established and sufficiently mature to provide effective screening of energy infrastructure from the property and associated access road. It is anticipated that this level of visual assimilation would be reached after approximately 10 years after which following implementation of the landscape scheme after which the Residential Amenity Threshold would no longer be reached. NPS policy refers to residential amenity in a landscape and visual context (Part 5.10 of EN-1) but does not establish any test or principle that impacts must be avoided: it describes the assessment, design and screening with

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		regard to avoiding and minimising landscape and visual effects in line with the mitigation hierarchy. Landscape and visual impacts have been avoided where possible as set out in the **ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.6)** and **DAAD (Document Ref: 5.6)**. Where impacts cannot be avoided, the proposed mitigation measures include a comprehensive landscape restoration and enhancement scheme illustrated in **Figure 6.31: Landscape Strategy Plan (Document Ref: 6.4, ES Vol.3, 6.4.42)**. The **Draft Development Consent Order (Document Ref: 3.1)** will secure this through the submission and approval of a detailed LEMP based on the **Appendix 6.7: OLEMP (Document Ref 6.3, ES Vol 2, 6.3.19).** It is considered that Policy 5.10.4 is met: it requires a balancing judgement of the substantial project level benefits against these demonstrably minimised impacts. Furthermore, as the Proposed Development is CNP infrastructure, it is considered that the presumption described in paragraph 4.2.15 applies in relation to these specified residual impacts identified in relation to the specific landscape and visual effects, including residential visual amenity and heritage setting effects, as the Applicant has demonstrated application of the mitigation hierarchy. Further detail on the overall need and benefits for the Proposed Development is provided in the **Planning Statement** (**Document Ref: 5.5**).
Applicant assessment	5.10.16 The applicant should carry out a landscape and visual impact assessment and report it in the ES, including cumulative effects (see Section 4.3). Several guides have	**ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.6)** reports the assessment of the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development on Landscape and Visual receptors, including cumulative effects, which are also covered in and **ES Chapter 18: Cumulative Effects (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol. 1,**

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	been produced to assist in addressing landscape issues. 5.10.17 The landscape and visual assessment should include reference to any landscape character assessment and associated studies as a means of assessing landscape impacts relevant to the proposed project. The applicant's assessment should also take account of any relevant policies based on these assessments in local development documents in England and local development plans in Wales.	**6.2.18)**. It comprises a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) which considers the potential for likely significant effects during construction, operation and decommissioning of the Proposed Development on landscape character and visual amenity. It takes account of the latest policy and other relevant guidance. No significant cumulative landscape or visual effects are predicted.
	5.10.18 For seascapes, applicants should consult the Seascape Character Assessment and the Marine Plan Seascape Character Assessments, and any successors to them.	The Proposed Development will not impact any Seascapes.
	5.10.19 The applicant should consider landscape and visual matters in the early stages of siting and design, where site choices and design principles are being established. This will allow the applicant to demonstrate in the ES	The **DAAD (Document Ref: 5.6)** sets out landscape impact has fed into the design of the Proposed Development through Design Objectives. **ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.6)** reports the assessment of the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development on Landscape and Visual receptors.

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	how negative effects have been minimised and opportunities for creating positive benefits or enhancement have been recognised and incorporated into the design, delivery and operation of the scheme.	It also sets out the key embedded mitigation measures and table 6.1 outlines how consultation has fed into the assessment. It concludes that during construction there will be significant landscape impacts on the Landscape Character of the Site, Fenland Scrub Area and Holland Reclaimed Fen, and significant visual impacts on a number of visual receptors. The impacts will decrease during operation as screening improves but at year 15 there will still be landscape impacts on the Landscape Character of the Site, and Visual impacts on a handful of visual receptors.
	5.10.20 The assessment should include the effects on landscape components and character during construction and operation. For projects which may affect a National Park, The Broads or an AONBs the assessment should include effects on the natural beauty and special qualities of these areas.	Following the undertaking of **Appendix 11.1: Flood Risk Assessment (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol. 2, 6.3.81)** panel heights have been optimised to reduce visual impacts by limiting heights to 3.9m in flood areas and 3.5 m elsewhere, compared to 4.5m at PEIR stage. This has reduced the Zone of Theoretical Visibility. The Proposed Development will not affect a National Park, The Broads or an AONB.
	5.10.21 The assessment should include the visibility and conspicuousness of the project during construction and of the presence and operation of the project and potential impacts on views and visual amenity. This should include light pollution effects, including on dark skies, local amenity, and nature conservation.	As set out in **ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.6)** viewpoints have been selected to inform the potential visual effects of the Proposed Development. The viewpoints are representative of the range of views and viewer types likely to experience views of the Proposed Development (paragraphs 6.19 and 6.20 of GLVIA 3). The selection of viewpoints was informed by the ZTV analysis, fieldwork, and by desk research on access and recreation, including footpaths, bridleways and public access land, tourism including popular vantage points, and distribution of population. A range of viewpoints were selected representing views at a range of

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		elevations, orientations, distances, and aspects. The viewpoints were also selected to capture the views from recreational routes, panoramic views and views from promoted recreational routes. The detailed location of each viewpoint was considered as typical or representative of the view likely to be experienced. The initial selection of viewpoints was submitted with the Scoping Report. The comments received with the **Appendix 1.2: Scoping Opinion (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.2)** informed the addition of a further six viewpoints alongside the identification of three photomontage locations.
	5.10.22 The assessment should also address the landscape and visual effects of noise and light pollution, and other emissions (see Section 5.2 and Section 5.7), from construction and operational activities on residential amenity and on sensitive locations, receptors and views, how these will be minimised.	**ES Chapter 10: Noise and Vibration (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.10)** considers the effects of the impact of noise and vibration of the Proposed Development. It sets out that noise effects can impact upon landscape character, and noise mitigation can have visual impacts; however, proposed mitigation is incorporated into the noise generating equipment. The potential effects are considered in **ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.6)**, which concludes that these effects will not be significant. Lighting and associated mitigation measures, which will prevent or minimise light spill and pollution during construction and operation, are considered within ES **Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual Impact (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol, 2, 6.2.6)**. The **Statutory Nuisance Statement (Document Ref: 5.3)** confirms that with implementation of the mitigation measures, no claim against statutory nuisance is envisaged in respect of statutory nuisance under Section 79(1)(fb) of the EPA.

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	5.10.24 Applicants should consider how landscapes can be enhanced using landscape management plans, as this will help to enhance environmental assets where they contribute to landscape and townscape quality.	The proposed mitigation measures include a comprehensive landscape restoration and enhancement scheme illustrated in the **Landscape Strategy Plan (Figure 6.31, Document Ref: 6.4 ES Vol.3, 6.4.42**). The **DAAD (Document Ref: 5.6)** sets out the good design process adopted and the engagement with near neighbours that informed setbacks from properties. Preparation, approval and implementation of a detailed Landscape and Ecological Management Plan ('LEMP'), based on **Appendix 6.7: OLEMP (Document Ref 6.3 ES Vol 2 6.3.19)** is secured by a requirement in Schedule 2 to the **draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1).** During the establishment aftercare, proposed mitigation planting will be routinely inspected in accordance with the requirements stipulated in the detailed LEMP. Inspection will ensure management and maintenance of landscape elements, as identified in the detailed LEMP, are undertaken and that the proposed planting achieve their intended environmental function and objective. Monitoring of the establishment, growth and maintenance of landscape planting will be undertaken during the establishment aftercare period to ensure its successful establishment. The duration of monitoring during establishment period and long-term management will be outlined within the LEMP.
	5.10.25 In considering visual effects it may be helpful for applicants to draw attention, in the supporting evidence to their applications, to any examples of	Section 6.5 of **ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.6)** establishes the baseline by describing the landscape and visual characteristics of the Site and the wider 5km LVIA study area.

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	existing permitted infrastructure they are aware of with a similar magnitude of impact on equally sensitive receptors. This may assist the Secretary of State in judging the weight they should give to the assessed visual impacts of the proposed development.	
Mitigation	5.10.26 Reducing the scale of a project can help to mitigate the visual and landscape effects of a proposed project. However, reducing the scale or otherwise amending the design of a proposed energy infrastructure project may result in a significant operational constraint and reduction in function – for example, electricity generation output. There may, however, be exceptional circumstances, where mitigation could have a very significant benefit and warrant a small reduction in function. In these circumstances, the Secretary of State may decide that the benefits of the mitigation to reduce the landscape and/or visual effects outweigh the marginal loss of function.	The **DAAD (Document Ref: 5.6)** sets out landscape impact has fed into the design of the Proposed Development. This includes the establishment of Design Objectives at an early stage to minimise landscape and visual impact. **ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.6)** sets out embedded mitigations which have been used to minimise adverse landscape and visual effects, including a reduction in the extent of the proposed solar PV panels to provide buffers from nearby residential receptors and Public Rights of Way as much as possible without constraining the electricity generation output to an intolerable amount. Following the undertaking of **Appendix 11.1: Flood Risk Assessment (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol. 2, 6.3.81)** panel heights have been optimised to reduce visual impacts by limiting heights to 3.9m in flood areas and 3.5 m elsewhere, compared to 4.5m at PEIR stage. This has reduced the Zone of Theoretical Visibility.

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	5.10.27 Adverse landscape and visual effects may be minimised through appropriate siting of infrastructure within its development site and wider setting. The careful consideration of colours and materials will support the delivery of a well-designed scheme, as will sympathetic landscaping and management of its immediate surroundings.	
	5.10.28 Depending on the topography of the surrounding terrain and areas of population it may be appropriate to undertake landscaping off site. For example, filling in gaps in existing tree and hedge lines may mitigate the impact when viewed from a more distant vista.	The Proposed Development does not involve undertaking any landscaping off site as this is not considered necessary to mitigate the impacts of the Proposed Development.
Secretary of State decision making	5.10.29 The Secretary of State should take into consideration the level of detailed design which the applicant has provided and is secured in the Development Consent Order, and the extent to which design details are subject to future approvals.	As set out in **ES Chapter 2: Proposed Development (Document Ref. 6.2)** parameters have been used to maintain flexibility, where relevant the maximum extent has been used to ensure the likely worst-case impacts are reported in the ES, as is standard practice for a development of this scale and type. Good design outcomes are secured by **the Outline Design Principles** at Appendix 1 of the **DAAD (Document Ref: 5.6).** Adherence to the Outline Design Principles at the detailed design

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	5.10.30 The Secretary of State should be satisfied that local authorities will have sufficient design content secured to ensure future consenting will meet landscape, visual and good design objectives.	stage of the Proposed Development is secured via a requirement in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1).**
	5.10.31 When considering visual impacts of thermal combustion generating stations, the Secretary of State should presume that the adverse impacts would be less if a hybrid or direct cooling system is used. The Secretary of State should therefore expect information in the application justifying BAT for the use of a cooling system that involves visible steam plumes or has a high visible structure, such as a natural draught cooling tower, and be satisfied that the application of modern hybrid cooling technology or other technologies is not reasonably practicable before giving consent to a development with natural draught cooling towers.	The Proposed Development is not a thermal combustion generating station.
	5.10.32 When considering applications for development within National Parks, the Broads and	**ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.6)** concludes that the Proposed Development is not

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	AONBs the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty should be given substantial weight by the Secretary of State in deciding on applications for development consent in these areas. The Secretary of State may grant development consent in these areas in exceptional circumstances. Such development should be demonstrated to be in the public interest and consideration of such applications should include an assessment of: • the need for the development, including in terms of national considerations, and the impact of consenting or not consenting it upon the local economy; • the cost of, and scope for, developing all or part of the development elsewhere outside the designated area or meeting the need for it in some other way, taking account of the policy on alternatives set out in Section 4.3; and	located within, or within the setting of, any national statutory landscape designation.

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	any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated.	
	5.10.33 For development proposals located within designated landscapes the Secretary of State should be satisfied that measures which seek to further purposes of the designation are sufficient, appropriate and proportionate to the type and scale of the development. The Secretary of State should ensure that any projects consented in these designated areas should be carried out to high environmental standards, including through the application of appropriate requirements where necessary.	
	5.10.34 The duty to seek to further the purposes of nationally designated landscapes also applies when considering applications for projects outside the boundaries of these areas, which may have impacts within them. The	

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	aim should be to avoid harming the purposes of designation or to minimise adverse effects on designated landscapes, and such projects should be designed sensitively given the various siting, operational, and other relevant constraints. The fact that a proposed project will be visible from within a designated area should not in itself be a reason for the Secretary of State to refuse consent.	
	5.10.35 The scale of energy projects means that they will often be visible across a very wide area. The Secretary of State should judge whether any adverse impact on the landscape would be so damaging that it is not offset by the benefits (including need) of the project.	**ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.6)** concludes that, after accounting for mitigation measures, during construction there will be significant landscape impacts on the Landscape Character of the Site, Fenland Scrub Area and Holland Reclaimed Fen, and this would continue at year 0 for the former two. However, by year 15 the Proposed Development would only result in significant residual effects for the Landscape Character of the Site. While there will be a number of significant adverse impacts, these are considered to be outweighed by the public benefits of the Proposed Development, as discussed in the **Planning Statement (Document Ref: 5.5)**. In summary, urgent and unprecedented actions are required on a global scale to halt climate change. A rapid increase in the supply of low carbon electricity is needed for the UK to meet its legally binding climate change targets. Solar generation and battery storage are a critical part of the UK's strategy to achieve

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		net zero by 2050, a key step towards which is the government's national mission for 'Clean Power by 2030'. The Proposed Development is capable of connecting to the grid before 2030.
	5.10.36 In reaching a judgement, the Secretary of State should consider whether any adverse impact is temporary, such as during construction, and/or whether any adverse impact on the landscape will be capable of being reversed in a timescale that the Secretary of State considers reasonable.	**ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.6)** concludes that, after accounting for mitigation measures, during construction there will be significant landscape impacts on the Landscape Character of the Site, Fenland Scrub Area and Holland Reclaimed Fen, and significant visual impacts on a number of visual receptors. The impacts will decrease during operation as screening improves but at year 15 there will still be landscape impacts on the Landscape Character of the Site, and Visual impacts on a handful of visual receptors. These effects will be reversed at decommissioning stage. Works associated with the decommissioning phase will not require the removal of trees and hedgerows at the Solar Array Area. However, the neutral grassland typically proposed under the PV panels are likely to be replaced by arable use. Otherwise, the Proposed Development will introduce a range of habitats and planting that will be retained during decommissioning, such as perimeter planting and this green infrastructure will continue to contribute towards landscape structure. As such the green infrastructure that remains after decommissioning will have a long-term beneficial effect. **ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.6)** identifies a number of negligible adverse or neutral and not significant landscape and visual effects during decommissioning. The substantial benefits and need for the Proposed Development are set out in the **Planning Statement (Document Ref: 5.5)**,

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		including the delivery of Critical National Priority Infrastructure to contribute towards meeting national energy objectives outweigh the residual landscape effects when applying the planning balancing exercise to the Proposed Development.
	5.10.37 The Secretary of State should consider whether the project has been designed carefully, taking account of environmental effects on the landscape and siting, operational and other relevant constraints, to minimise harm to the landscape, including by appropriate mitigation.	As set out in **ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.6),** the Proposed Development includes a number of key embedded mitigation measures to reduce adverse landscape and visual impacts. Following the undertaking of **Appendix 11.1: Flood Risk Assessment (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol. 2, 6.3.81)** panel heights have been optimised to reduce visual impacts by limiting heights to 3.9m in flood areas and 3.5 m elsewhere, compared to 4.5m at PEIR stage. This has reduced the Zone of Theoretical Visibility. Significant adverse impacts have been identified at a number of residential receptors within **Appendix 6.5: Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.17)**. The proposed mitigation measures include a comprehensive landscape restoration and enhancement scheme illustrated in the indicative landscape Proposals **Figure 6.31 Landscape Strategy Plan (Document Ref: 6.4 ES Vol.3, 6.4.42)**. The landscape strategy plan comprises proposals for replacement planting where vegetation has been lost to facilitate implementation, enhanced planting to mitigate adverse visual effects for sensitive visual receptors and measures to enhance biodiversity value developed in association with the project ecologists. The measures within the landscape strategy plan are secured through the OLEMP, **Appendix 6.7 OLEMP (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol. 2, 6.3.19**), of which preparation,

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		approval and implementation of a detailed version is secured by a requirement in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)** Only Gashes Barn would reach the Residential Amenity Threshold. This is because the property would have views across extensive parts of the Solar Array Area. This would likely to be perceived as 'overwhelming' but not 'overbearing' in the medium term. This scenario would remain until the proposed mitigation planting became established and sufficiently mature to provide effective screening of energy infrastructure from the property and associated access road. It is anticipated that this level of visual assimilation would be reached after approximately 10 years after which following implementation of the landscape scheme after which the Residential Amenity Threshold would no longer be reached. The **Planning Statement (Document Ref: 5.5)** assesses the national need for new energy infrastructure, including solar generating stations. In summary, urgent and unprecedented actions are required on a global scale to halt climate change. Therefore, the need for the development is deemed to outweigh the effects on visual amenity at Gashes Barn and other residential receptors.
	5.10.38 The Secretary of State should consider whether requirements to the consent are needed requiring the incorporation of particular design details that are in keeping with the statutory and technical requirements for landscape and visual impacts.	Good design outcomes are secured by the **DAAD (Document Ref: 5.6)**. Adherence to the Outline Design Principles at the detailed design stage of the Proposed Development is secured via a requirement in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1).**

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Part 5.11 Land Use, Including Open Space, Green Infrastructure, and Green Belt *Applicant Assessment*	5.11.8 The ES (see Section 4.3) should identify existing and proposed land uses near the project, any effects of replacing an existing development or use of the site with the proposed project or preventing a development or use on a neighbouring site from continuing. Applicants should also assess any effects of precluding a new development or use proposed in the development plan. The assessment should be proportionate to the scale of the preferred scheme and its likely impacts on such receptors. For developments on previously developed land, the applicant should ensure that they have considered the risk posed by land contamination and how it is proposed to address this.	**ES Chapter 14: Soils and Agricultural Land (Document Ref: 6.2 S Vol.1, 6.2.14)** identifies the existing land uses within the Order limits, confirming that the majority of the land is under agricultural use. The **Planning Statement (Document Ref: 5.5)** identified allocations within the surrounding Local Development Plans, as well as designations within and adjacent to the Order Limits. The Site has been selected and designed to avoid designated areas. The surrounding land is also predominantly agricultural, and the Proposed Development is considered to not impact its continued use. The scale of the Proposed Development has been taken into consideration, with the extent of the Study Area identified in Section 14.4: Assessment Methodology & Significance Criteria of **ES Chapter 14: Soils and Agricultural Land (Document Ref: 6.2 S Vol.1, 6.2.14)**. The Proposed Development is not on previously developed land, though measures relating to unanticipated ground conditions are included within the **Appendix 2.4: OCEMP (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.7)**, of which preparation, approval and implementation of a detailed version is secured through a requirement in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**.
	5.11.9 Applicants will need to consult the local community on their proposals to build on existing open space, sports or recreational buildings and land. Taking account	The Proposed Development does not impact any open space, sports or recreational buildings or land.

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	of the consultations, applicants should consider providing new or additional open space including green and blue infrastructure, sport or recreation facilities, to substitute for any losses as a result of their proposal. When considering proposals for green infrastructure, Applicant's should refer to the Green Infrastructure Framework.	
	5.11.10 Applicants should use any up-to-date local authority assessment or, if there is none, provide an independent assessment to show whether the existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land is surplus to requirements.	
	5.11.11 During any pre-application discussions with the applicant the LPA should identify any concerns it has about the impacts of the application on land use, having regard to the development plan and relevant applications and including, where relevant, whether it agrees with any independent assessment	Section 14.3: Consultation of the **ES Chapter 14: Soils and Agricultural Land (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.14)** outlines the discussions between the relevant LPAs and what actions were taken based on these discussions. Further detail is provided within the **Consultation Report (Document Ref: 5.1).**

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	that the land is surplus to requirements.	
	5.11.12 Applicants should seek to minimise impacts on the best and most versatile agricultural land (defined as land in grades 1, 2 and 3a of the Agricultural Land Classification) and preferably use land in areas of poorer quality (grades 3b, 4 and 5).	**Appendix 2: Site Selection Report** of this **Planning Statement (Document Ref: 5.5)** outlines that agricultural land quality, and seeking to minimise impacts on BMV land, was a key consideration in the Applicant's site selection process. **ES Chapter 14: Soils and Agricultural Land (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.14)** sets out how the Applicant has sought to avoid and reduce the amount of BMV land used for hard infrastructure associated with the Proposed Development. However, given the context of the quality of land locally and within the Order Limits it has not been practicable to remove all BMV. Table 14.13 of **ES Chapter 14: Soils and Agricultural Land (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.14)** outlines that within the Order Limits, a total of 205.97 ha of BMV land is proposed to accommodate the Solar PV array area or associated infrastructure, 68.08 ha of BMV is within the Cable Route Corridor and 3.42 ha of BMV is within the Bespoke Access Corridor. It has not been confirmed whether the Solar Array Area will continue to be in agricultural use during the operational phase via sheep grazing. The Solar Array Area has been designed to maintain and integrate existing field patterns and associated boundary features including hedgerows, trees and scrub as far as feasible. An on-site reservoir will be retained for supply of water for irrigation of onsite habitats. These measures will help facilitate reversion of the land to agricultural use at decommissioning. Following cable instalment, soil will be reinstated above the cable trench, access tracks would be removed and the land returned to agricultural use. Suitable agricultural land drainage will be reinstated

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		/ repaired as part of the restoration works and will be included in the detailed in **Appendix 2.4: OCEMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol 2, 6.3.7)**, which are secured through a Requirement in Schedule 2 of the **Draft Development Consent Order (Document Ref: 3.1)**. While the Bespoke Access Road would not be restored to agriculture use until after decommissioning, it could be used by landowners to facilitate agricultural operations and could be retained post-decommissioning if it is the landowner's preference. **Appendix 14.4: Outline Soil Management Plan (OSMP) (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.95)** includes measures to mitigate damage to agricultural drainage within the Site and guidance on best practice measures regarding soil management, handling, storage, replace and mitigation. Preparation, approval and implementation of detailed versions of the OSMP is secured through a requirement in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**.Infrastructure from the Proposed Development would be removed at decommissioning as outlined in **Appendix 2.5: ODEMP (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.8)**. The land would then be restored to how it was before the Proposed Development, opening it up to full agricultural use. The Applicant has also sought to reduce the amount of BMV land used for permanent green infrastructure (all proposed planting). This will be implemented and managed within **Appendix 6.7: OLEMP (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.19)**.
	5.11.13 Applicants should also identify any effects and seek to minimise impacts on soil health and protect and improve soil quality	**ES Chapter 14: Soils and Agricultural Land (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.14)** identifies effects on soil health and sets out the

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	taking into account any mitigation measures proposed.	embedded mitigation measures which minimise impacts on soil health and improve soil quality.
	5.11.14 Applicants are encouraged to develop and implement a Soil Management Plan which could help minimise potential land contamination. The sustainable reuse of soils needs to be carefully considered in line with good practice guidance where large quantities of soils are surplus to requirements or are affected by contamination.	An **Appendix 14.4: Outline Soil Management Plan (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.95)** has been prepared which sets out the measures to manage any potential impacts to the soil (and agricultural land) during construction, operation and decommissioning phases. Preparation, approval and implementation of detailed versions of the OSMP is secured through a requirement in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**. The **Appendix 14.4: Outline Soil Management Plan (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.95)** identifies which areas within the Site are at higher risk of damage, such as the temporary access tracks and construction compounds. The **Appendix 14.4: Outline Soil Management Plan (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.95)** also details measures for soil management and follow the principles of best practice to maintain the physical properties of the soil, with the aim of restoring the land to its pre-construction condition both following the temporary construction use and at the end of the lifetime of the Proposed Development. Appropriate soil management planning and adopting best practice guidance, as set out in the OSMP, through the preparation of a Soil Management Plan and adopting best practice guidance will ensure that this potential impacts on the soil resource are minimal and reversable.
	5.11.15 Developments should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by preventing new and existing	The effects of the Proposed Development on the natural and local environment are considered within **ES Chapters 6 to 16 of the ES (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1 6.2.6 to 6.2.16)**. The Proposed Development does not anticipate any adverse or beneficial

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	developments from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability.	significant effects in its own right or cumulatively with other developments on air quality, noise, water resources, land contamination or land instability as outlined in **ES Chapter 18: Cumulative Impacts (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol. 1, 6.2.18)**.
	5.11.16 Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans.	
	5.11.17 Applicants should ensure that a site is suitable for its proposed use, taking account of ground conditions and any risks arising from land instability and contamination.	A Ground Conditions Desk Study was undertaken by Wardell Armstrong to support the application for the Proposed Development and is presented at **Appendix 17.1: Ground Conditions Desk Study (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.102)**. The desk study summarised the available information relating to ground and the potential risks associated with ground and the Site.
	5.11.18 For developments on previously developed land, applicants should ensure that they have considered the risk posed by land contamination, and where contamination is present, applicants should consider opportunities for remediation where possible. It is important to do this as	The Site is considered to present an overall low risk from past land use, surrounding land use, ground instability and contamination. This is attributed to the fact that the Site has generally remained in agricultural use throughout history. Therefore, the likely sources of potential contamination are from agricultural activities and practices. The Preliminary Conceptual Site Model (PCSM) indicated a low risk to receptors, considering the nature of the identified potential sources, the sensitivity of the receptors and the probability of a

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	early as possible as part of engagement with the relevant bodies before the official pre-application stage.	viable source-pathway-receptor linkage being present. Significant contamination is not anticipated at the Site. Any potential contamination risks at the Site would be adequately addressed through industry best practice in accordance with standard construction environmental management and occupational health procedures. **Appendix 2.4: OCEMP (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.7)** has been prepared to support this application which includes sections related to contamination. Preparation, approval and implementation of a detailed version of the OCEMP is secured through a requirement in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**. Further to this, a geotechnical ground investigation will be conducted for design purposes will incorporate contamination testing of the soils, informed by the findings of the desk study, to provide verification of the preliminary qualitative risk assessments of the desk study.
	5.11.19 Applicants should safeguard any mineral resources on the proposed site as far as possible, taking into account the long-term potential of the land use after any future decommissioning has taken place.	The **Planning Statement (Document Ref: 5.5)** identifies that a small portion of the site is located within a Sand and Gravel Mineral Safeguarding Area. Policies M11 and M12 of the Lincolnshire Minerals and Waste Plan (Core Strategy and Development Management Policies adopted 2016 and Site Locations adopted 2017) is considered within the **Planning Statement (Document Ref: 5.5).** The operational life of Proposed Development will be up to 40 years, and the Site will be decommissioned at the end of its operational life. Post-decommissioning, the landowner will have the right to use their land as they would now, and any minerals would not be

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		permanently sterilised and would be available to exploit if required at a future date. Further, the area of mineral safeguarding area within the Order Limits is a relatively small part of the overall designation being intersected by an existing drainage ditch (Car Dyke) with limited road access, so may not be viable to extract in future. The DCO Application demonstrates an overwhelming need for the Proposed Development and that the development could not reasonably be sited elsewhere, in line with the Requirements of Policies M11 and M12 of the Lincolnshire Minerals and Waste Core Strategy and Development Management Policies
Mitigation	5.11.23 Although in the case of most energy infrastructure there may be little that can be done to mitigate the direct effects of an energy project on the existing use of the proposed site (assuming that some of that use can still be retained post project construction) applicants should nevertheless seek to minimise these effects and the effects on existing or planned uses near the site by the application of good design principles, including the layout of the project and the protection of soils during construction.	The existing use of the site is mainly agricultural land. Agricultural land quality was a key consideration in the Applicant's site selection process. The Proposed Development has prioritised the use of non-BMV land for arable use where practicable. **ES Chapter 14: Soils and Agricultural Land (Document Ref. 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.14)** assesses the reversible and irreversible impacts of the Proposed Development on Land, Soils and Groundwater. The order limits have gone through a process of design evolution and refinement in order to reduce use of BMV land. **Appendix 14.4: Outline Soil Management Plan (OSMP) (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.95)** includes measures to mitigate damage to agricultural drainage within the Site and guidance on best practice measures regarding soil management, handling, storage, replace and mitigation. Preparation, approval and

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		implementation of detailed versions of the OSMP is secured through a requirement in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**. Embedded mitigation measures are outlined in Section 14.7: Assessment of Effects of **ES Chapter 14: Soils and Agricultural Land (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.14)** and include the following: • No trafficking of vehicles / plant or material storage to occur upon unprotected topsoil (traffic on subsoil should be minimised and localised, with the use of temporary running surfaces recommended); • No trafficking of vehicles / plant on reinstated soil unless for cultivation and then only in suitable soil moisture and weather conditions; • All plant and machinery must always be maintained in a safe and efficient working condition; • No soil handling to be carried out when the soil moisture content is above the lower plastic limit; • No mixing of topsoil with subsoil, or soil resources from different units (soil types) or mixing of soil with other materials; • Soil is only to be stored in pre-planned, marked, and mapped soil storage areas away from potential sources of contamination; • A daily record of the Site and soil conditions, and operations undertaken to be maintained; • Soils should only be moved under the driest practicable conditions, and this must take account of prevailing weather conditions; and

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		• Local drainage required as part of the Proposed Development will be integrated to support local drainage conditions and will be detailed along with ALC restoration planning in the Construction Management Plan. Following decommissioning of the Proposed Development, any disturbed soil will be reinstated and restored to agricultural land. It has not been confirmed whether the Solar Array Area will continue to be in agricultural use during the operational phase via sheep grazing. The Solar Array Area has been designed to maintain and integrate existing field patterns and associated boundary features including hedgerows, trees and scrub as far as feasible. An on-site reservoir will be retained for supply of water for irrigation of onsite habitats. These measures will help facilitate reversion of the land to agricultural use at decommissioning. Following cable instalment, soil will be reinstated above the cable trench, access tracks would be removed and the land returned to agricultural use. Suitable agricultural land drainage will be reinstated / repaired as part of the restoration works and will be included in the detailed in **Appendix 2.4: OCEMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol 2, 6.3.7)**, of which preparation, approval and implementation of detailed version is secured through a requirement in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**. While the Bespoke Access Road would not be restored to agriculture use until after decommissioning, it could be used by landowners to facilitate agricultural operations and could be retained post-decommissioning if it is the landowner's preference. Although the Proposed Development is to be operational for a long term, it will be temporary with a requirement in Schedule 2 of the

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		Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1) securing that the operational life of the Proposed Development must be no longer than 40 years.
	5.11.24 Where green infrastructure is affected, the Secretary of State should consider imposing requirements to ensure the functionality and connectivity of the green infrastructure network is maintained in the vicinity of the development and that any necessary works are undertaken, where possible, to mitigate any adverse impact and, where appropriate, to improve that network and other areas of open space including appropriate access to National Trails and other public rights of way and new coastal access routes.	The **Appendix 6.7: OLEMP (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.19),** of which preparation, approval and implementation of detailed version is secured through a requirement in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**, sets out the incorporated green infrastructure proposed in the Proposed Development. This includes how existing green infrastructure is to be maintained, as well as where enhancements are to be made to mitigate adverse impacts. Figure 15.3: Public Rights of Way of **ES Chapter 15: Socio-economic (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.15)** illustrates the different PRoWs within the order limit and which ones are to be temporarily closed during construction. Section 15.6: Assessment of Effects of **ES Chapter 15: Socio-economic (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.15)** and **Appendix 2.4: Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.8)** outlines mitigation measures for effects on PRoWs. This includes the following: • Installation and maintenance of signage indicating temporary closure of Public Rights of Way (PRoW); • Installation and maintenance of hoarding where necessary to provide screening for PRoW; • The PRoWs that will be affected by the construction of the Bespoke Access Road will be temporarily closed during the construction of the Bespoke Access Road and then subject to managed crossing points (see **Appendix 2.2: Bespoke Access Road Construction Method Statement (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol. 2, 6.3.5**) for details);

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		• Sufficient protection/ separation distances will be provided between existing PRoWs and construction routes (where necessary); • Managing areas where the proposed construction routes cross any existing PRoWs or local access roads by maximising visibility between construction vehicles and other users (pedestrians and road users) and implementing traffic management; and • 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. The permissive path is illustrated in **Figure 6.31 Landscape Strategy Plan (Document Ref: 6.4 ES Vol.3, 6.4.42)**. • The **Outline Design Principles (Appendix 1 of the Design Approach Document, Document Ref. 5.6)** secure mitigations for PRoW during operation, such as an interpretation signboard along the permissive path if it passes in the vicinity of the BESS to explain the function of the infrastructure. It is considered that following mitigation for PRoWs, the effect on them is not significant.
	5.11.27 Existing trees and woodlands should be retained wherever possible. In the EIP, the	**ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.6)** sets out that vegetation clearance will be limited as the Site has been designed to leave an offset from existing vegetation.

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	Government committed to increase the tree canopy and woodland cover to 16.5% of total land area of England by 2050. The applicant should assess the impacts on, and loss of, all trees and woodlands within the project boundary and develop mitigation measures to minimise adverse impacts and any risk of net deforestation as a result of the scheme. Mitigation may include, but is not limited to, the use of buffers to enhance resilience, improvements to connectivity, and improved woodland management. Where woodland loss is unavoidable, compensation schemes will be required, and the long-term management and maintenance of newly planted trees should be secured	Existing vegetation will be retained as far as reasonably practicable in order to preserve its function as a natural screen to the elements of the Proposed Development. Further details including the locations of trees, root protection areas and precautionary mitigation are outlined within **Appendix 6.6: Arboricultural Impact Assessment (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.18)**. The **Appendix 2.4: OCEMP (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.7)** ensures that existing vegetation is retained and protected during construction, except where indicated in the **Figure 6.32: Vegetation Removal Plan (Document Ref: 6.4 ES Vol.3, 6.4.43)**. It is assumed that all other woodland, tree and hedgerow vegetation within the Order Limits that aren't included in the Vegetation Removal Plan would be retained. The **Appendix 6.7: OLEMP (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.7)** demonstrates that the broad landscape and ecological mitigation measures, as set out in the landscape and ecology submission documents, are achievable. There will be a minimum 10m offset from areas of woodland to the solar PV arrays. Preparation, approval and implementation of the detailed LEMP is secured through a requirement in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**.
	5.11.28 Where a proposed development has an impact upon a Mineral Safeguarding Area (MSA), the Secretary of State should ensure that appropriate mitigation	The **Planning Statement (Document Ref: 5.5)** identifies that a small portion of the site is located within a Sand and Gravel Mineral Safeguarding Area. Policies M11 and M12 of the Lincolnshire Minerals and Waste Plan (Core Strategy and Development Management Policies adopted 2016 and Site Locations adopted

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	measures have been put in place to safeguard mineral resources.	2017) is considered within the **Planning Statement (Document Ref: 5.5).**
	5.11.29 Where a project has a sterilising effect on land use (for example in some cases under transmission lines) there may be scope for this to be mitigated through, for example, using or incorporating the land for nature conservation or wildlife corridors or for parking and storage in employment areas.	The operational life of Proposed Development will be up to 40 years, and the Site will be decommissioned at the end of its operational life. Post-decommissioning, the landowner will have the right to use their land as they would now, and any minerals would not be permanently sterilised and would be available to exploit if required at a future date. Further, the area of mineral safeguarding area within the Order Limits is a relatively small part of the overall designation being intersected by an existing drainage ditch (Car Dyke) with limited road access, so may not be viable to extract in future. The DCO Application demonstrates an overwhelming need for the Proposed Development and that the development could not reasonably be sited elsewhere, in line with the Requirements of Policies M11 and M12 of the Lincolnshire Minerals and Waste Core Strategy and Development Management Policies.
	5.11.30 Public Rights of way, National Trails, and other rights of access to land are important recreational facilities for example for walkers, cyclists and horse riders. The Secretary of State should expect applicants to take appropriate mitigation measures to address adverse effects on coastal	**ES Chapter 15: Socio Economics (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.15)** provides an assessment of the Proposed Development's impact on public rights of way which will be impacted by the Proposed Development. The Proposed Development includes opportunities for enhancement such as the extension of the existing mapped (but not present) inaccessible LL|Ewer|12/1 PRoW stub by creating a footbridge over a dyke on the northeast border of the Solar Array Area, and a several kilometre long permissive path connecting the

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	access, National Trails, other rights of way and open access land and, where appropriate, to consider what opportunities there may be to improve or create new access. In considering revisions to an existing right of way, consideration should be given to the use, character, attractiveness, and convenience of the right of way.	PRoW to a wider network during the operational lifetime of the Proposed Development. Interpretation boards for this, along with safe crossing points will be created for any PRoWs that cross the Bespoke Access Road, as secured in the **Outline Design Principles (Appendix 1** of the **Design Approach Document, Document Ref. 5.6).** A number of existing PRoW traverse the Proposed Development and are illustrated in **Figure 15.3: Public Rights of Way (Document Ref: 6.4 ES Vol.3, 6.4.79)**. The **Appendix 2.4: Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.8)**,of which preparation, approval and implementation of a detailed version is secured through a requirement in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**, sets out mitigation measures for PRoW, including: • Installation and maintenance of signage indicating temporary closure of Public Rights of Way (PRoW); • The PRoWs that will be affected by the construction of the Bespoke Access Road will be temporarily closed during the construction of the Bespoke Access Road and then subject to managed crossing points (see **Appendix 2.2: Bespoke Access Road Construction Method Statement (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol. 2, 6.3.5**) for details); • Sufficient protection/ separation distances will be provided between existing PRoWs and construction routes (where necessary); and Managing areas where the proposed construction routes cross any existing PRoWs or local access roads by maximising visibility

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		between construction vehicles and other users (pedestrians and road users) and implementing traffic management.
	5.11.31 The Secretary of State should consider whether the mitigation measures put forward by an applicant are acceptable and whether requirements or other	Section 15.6: Assessment of Effects of **ES Chapter 15: Socio Economics (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.15)** sets out the embedded mitigation measures for the Proposed Development, including those that the Proposed Development seeks to protect and enhance the existing PRoW network.
Secretary of State Decision Making	5.11.32 The Secretary of State should not grant consent for development on existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land unless an assessment has been undertaken either by the local authority or independently, which has shown the open space or the buildings and land to be surplus to requirements or the Secretary of State determines that the benefits of the project (including need), outweigh the potential loss of such facilities, taking into account any positive proposals made by the applicant to provide new, improved or compensatory land or facilities.	The Proposed Development does not propose development on existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land.
	5.11.33 The loss of playing fields should only be allowed where applicants can demonstrate that	The Proposed Development does not involve the loss of playing fields.

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	they will be replaced with facilities of equivalent or better quantity or quality in a suitable location.	
	5.11.34 The Secretary of State should ensure that applicants do not site their scheme on the best and most versatile agricultural land without justification. Where schemes are to be sited on best and most versatile agricultural land the Secretary of State should take into account the economic and other benefits of that land. Where development of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary, areas of poorer quality land should be preferred to those of a higher quality.	**Appendix 2: Site Selection Report** of this **Planning Statement (Document Ref: 5.5)** sets out how agricultural land quality, and particularly BMV land, was a relevant consideration in the site selection process. The Applicant identified that land close to the point of connection was typically subject to higher flood risks and/or higher agricultural land classification and sought land that was slightly more distant from the point of connection to minimise the extent of such land being used for solar generation. During the four-stage analysis, all of the alternative sites identified all presented similar or higher quantities of BMV in comparison to the Proposed Development. It is also important to recognise that while ALC was an important consideration in site selection, it was one of several factors which were balanced to determine a favoured site. Given that the other sites identified by the Applicant during site selection displayed similar ALC qualities, this however was not a determining factor in the choice of site location. According to **ES Chapter 3: Alternatives and Design Evolution (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.3)** during design evolution, there was a particular focus on minimising the extent of us of BMV land. In relation to the economic impact of BMV, solar panels would cover 191.71ha of BMV land, whilst 203.92ha is subgrade 3b. The Proposed Development layout has been designed as to minimise the use of BMV land for hard standing and has been designed as to allow for reinstatement of land for agricultural use following decommissioning. In particular, **Appendix 14.4: Outline**

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		Soil Management Plan (OSMP) (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.95) includes measures to mitigate and reverse effects on soils and agricultural drainage within the Site and guidance on best practice measures regarding soil management, handling, storage, replace and mitigation. Preparation, approval and implementation of detailed versions of the OSMP is secured through a requirement in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**.
Part 5.12 - Noise and Vibration *Applicant Assessment*	5.12.6 Where noise impacts are likely to arise from the proposed development, the applicant should include the following in the noise assessment: • a description of the noise generating aspects of the development proposal leading to noise impacts, including the identification of any distinctive tonal characteristics, if the noise is impulsive, whether the noise contains particular high or low frequency content or any temporal characteristics of the noise • identification of noise sensitive receptors and noise sensitive areas that may be affected • the characteristics of the existing noise environment	**ES Chapter 10: Noise and Vibration (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.10)** presents a noise assessment in accordance with the requirements of this policy. This includes a description of the noise generating aspects of the Proposed Development. The representative ESRs (Environmentally Sensitive Receptor) nearest to the Proposed Development were identified through a desktop study of the surrounding land using available maps and aerial photography. Figure 10.1 and Table 10.12 of **ES Chapter 10: Noise and Vibration (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.10)** shows the most likely ESRs to be affected by noise from the Proposed Development. Sensitive dwellings and community facilities beyond the selected ESRs could also be affected by noise from the Proposed Development. The effect of noise and vibration on these receptors have been considered during the construction, decommissioning and operational phases of the Proposed Development. Section 10.5: Assessment of Effects of **ES Chapter 10: Noise and Vibration (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.10)** outlines the noise generating aspects of the Proposed Development. Section 10.4: Identification of Baseline Conditions of **ES Chapter 10: Noise and Vibration (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.10)**

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	• a prediction of how the noise environment will change with the proposed development
	  ○ in the shorter term, such as during the construction period
	  ○ in the longer term, during the operating life of the infrastructure
	  ○ at particular times of the day, evening and night (and weekends) as appropriate, and at different times of year
	• an assessment of the effect of predicted changes in the noise environment on any noise-sensitive receptors, including an assessment of any likely impact on health and quality of life / well-being where appropriate, particularly among those disadvantaged by other factors who are often disproportionately affected by noise-sensitive areas
	• if likely to cause disturbance, an assessment of the effect of underwater or subterranean noise
		outlines the existing noise levels of the site, specifically in Table 10.11, at four set monitoring locations.
		
		Section 10.5: Assessment of Effects of **ES Chapter 10: Noise and Vibration (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.10)** outlines the predicted noise levels during the construction phase and during the operational phase. The core working hours have also been considered within this section as these help to inform when noise levels will be highest during the construction period.
		
		ES Chapter 10: Noise and Vibration (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.10) assesses the effects of the predicted change in noise at construction, operation and decommissioning on identified sensitive receptors. Embedded mitigation at the construction and operation phases of the Proposed Development are also included, with respect to noise and vibration, and are set out within **Appendix 2.4: OCEMP (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.7)** a full version of which is secured by Requirement in Schedule 2 of the **draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**.
		
		Sections 10.5 and 10.7 of **ES Chapter 10: Noise and Vibration (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.10)** assesses the likely noise and vibration effects and residual effects on receptors during the construction, operating and decommissioning stages of the Proposed Development, specifically looking at particular times of day and night to effectively assess the effect on noise levels.

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	all reasonable steps taken to mitigate and minimise potential adverse effects on health and quality of life	
	5.12.7 The nature and extent of the noise assessment should be proportionate to the likely noise impact.	The noise assessment is proportionate to the likely noise impact. Section 2 of **ES Chapter 10: Noise and Vibration (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.10)** sets out what was included within the Scope and what was scoped out of the assessment.
	5.12.8 Applicants should consider the noise impact of ancillary activities associated with the development, such as increased road and rail traffic movements, or other forms of transportation.	**ES Chapter 10: Noise and Vibration (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.10)** considers the noise impact of ancillary activities associated with the development, such as increased road traffic movements, or other forms of transportation. It concludes that with the implementation of mitigation measures significant adverse noise and vibration effects during the construction, operation and decommissioning of the Proposed Development will be avoided at sensitive receptors. This is due in part to the adoption of a Bespoke Access Road which will route larger vehicles away from settlements. Mitigation measures have been included into the Proposed Development's design and construction methodology to minimise adverse effects, as set out in Section 10.6: Assessment of Effects of **ES Chapter 10: Noise and Vibration (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.10)**. Measures set out within the **Appendix 2.4 OCEMP (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.7)** and **Appendix 2.5: ODEMP (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.8)** to mitigate the effects of noise from the construction and decommissioning phases on the Proposed Development. Preparation, approval and implementation of detailed

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		versions of these documents is secured through requirements in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**.
	5.12.9 Operational noise, with respect to human receptors, should be assessed using the principles of the relevant British Standards and other guidance. Further information on assessment of particular noise sources may be contained in the technology specific NPSs. In particular, for renewables (EN-3) and electricity networks (EN-5) there is assessment guidance for specific features of those technologies. For the prediction, assessment and management of construction noise, reference should be made to any relevant British Standards and other guidance which also give examples of mitigation strategies.	**ES Chapter 10: Noise and Vibration (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.10)** assesses operational noise at the identified sensitive noise receptors following BS 4142 guidance and BS 8233 standards. Construction and decommissioning noise and vibration impacts have been assessed per BS 5228-1 guidance and BS 5228-2 standards.
	5.12.10 Some noise impacts will be controlled through environmental permits and parallel tracking is encouraged where noise impacts determined by an environmental permit interface with planning issues (i.e. physical design and location of development). The	The **Other Consents and Licences Document (Document Ref: 5.4)** has been prepared as part of the DCO Application and should be read in conjunction with the other documents submitted with the application. The purpose of this document is to provide information on the additional consents and licences potentially required for the Proposed Development, in addition to the DCO.

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	applicant should consult the EA and/or the SNCB, and other relevant bodies, such the MMO or NRW, as necessary, and in particular regarding assessment of noise on protected species or other wildlife. The results of any noise surveys and predictions may inform the ecological assessment. The seasonality of potentially affected species in nearby sites may also need to be considered.	Section 7.3 of **ES Chapter 7: Ecology (Document Ref. 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.7)** sets out the stakeholder engagement conducted in relation to biodiversity. Natural England and the Environment Agency were initially consulted at the scoping opinion stage of the Proposed Development in May 2023, and again in March 2024 through statutory consultation. The **Consultation Report (Document Ref: 5.1)** confirms that neither Natural England nor the Environment Agency make specific mention of noise during consultation. **ES Chapter 7: Ecology (Document Ref. 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.7)** considers the impacts of noise on protected species and other wildlife, having regard to the results of noise surveys and predications and the seasonality of potentially affected species.
	5.12.11 In the marine environment, applicants should consider noise impacts on protected species, as well as other noise sensitive receptors, both at the individual project level and in-combination with other marine activities.	The Proposed Development does not affect the marine environment.
	5.12.12 Applicants should submit a detailed impact assessment and mitigation plan as part of any development plan, including the use of noise mitigation and noise abatement technologies during construction and operation.	**ES Chapter 10: Noise and Vibration (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.10)** provides an impact assessment and proposed mitigations for noise and vibration impacts. Embedded mitigation measures for the operational phase are considered in the assessment. Once a detailed layout is confirmed a detailed noise assessment will be undertaken in order to identify the specific mitigation required at that time (taking into consideration advances in technology and changes in equipment

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		specifications).This is secured by a requirement in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**.
Mitigation	5.12.13 The Secretary of State should consider whether mitigation measures are needed both for operational and construction noise over and above any which may form part of the project application. In doing so the Secretary of State may wish to impose mitigation measures. Any such mitigation measures should take account of the NPPF or any successor to it and the Planning Practice Guidance on Noise. 5.12.14 Mitigation measures may include one or more of the following: • engineering: reducing the noise generated at source and/or containing the noise generated • lay-out: where possible, optimising the distance between the source and noise-sensitive receptors and/or incorporating good design to minimise noise transmission	Section 10.5: Assessment of Effects of **ES Chapter 10: Noise and Vibration (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.10)** details the embedded mitigation measures which have been included within the Proposed Development's design and construction methodology to minimise adverse effects where possible. The **Appendix 2.4: Outline CEMP (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.7)** outlines how the noise impact would be managed throughout construction. Preparation, approval and implementation of the detailed CEMP is secured through a requirement in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**. Consideration has also been given to traffic routing, timing and access points to the Proposed Development to minimise impacts from noise at existing receptors and the management of construction traffic on the highways network through the implementation of the **Appendix 9.3: OCTMP (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.79)**. Preparation, approval and implementation of the detailed CTMP is secured through a requirement in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**. All considered mitigation measures take account of the NPPF and Planning Practice Guidance Notes on Noise.

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	through the use of screening by natural or purpose-built barriers, or other buildings • administrative: using planning conditions/obligations to restrict activities allowed on the site at certain times and/or specifying permissible noise limits/noise levels, differentiating as appropriate between different times of day, such as evenings and late at night, and taking into account seasonality of wildlife in nearby designated sites insulation: mitigating the impact on areas likely to be affected by noise including through noise insulation when the impact is on a building.	
	5.12.15 The project should demonstrate good design through selection of the quietest or most acceptable cost-effective plant available; containment of noise within buildings wherever possible, taking into account any other adverse impacts that such containment might cause (e.g. on landscape and visual impacts;	The Proposed Development demonstrated good design through the implementation of noise and vibration mitigation measures. Section 10.5: Assessment of Effects of **ES Chapter 10: Noise and Vibration (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.10)** details the embedded mitigation measures for the construction and operational phases. Some of the operational mitigation measures outlined include: • As shown on the **Works Plan (Document Ref: 2.4)** the BESS and Onsite Substation will be located within the centre of the Site to maximise the distance from ESRs; and buffers have

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	optimisation of plant layout to minimise noise emissions; and, where possible, the use of landscaping, bunds or noise barriers to reduce noise transmission).	been included to nearby ESRs, ensuring a minimum distance to any noise emitting plant; and • 23 inverters and 45 PCUs will incorporate silencer packs which reduce the sound level by 9dB for the inverters and 6 dB for the PCUs. **ES Chapter 6 Landscape and Visual (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.6)** sets out an assessment of how the design of the Proposed Development, which includes embedded mitigation measures, will have an effect on landscape and visual impacts.
	5.12.16 A development must be undertaken in accordance with statutory requirements for noise. Due regard must be given to the relevant sections of the Noise Policy Statement for England, the NPPF, and the government's associated planning guidance on noise. In Wales the relevant policy will be PPW and the TANs, as well as the Welsh Government's Noise and Soundscape Action Plan	**ES Chapter 10: Noise and Vibration (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.10)** considers the relevant sections of the Noise Policy Statement, and the government's NPPG on noise, within the assessment. Other relevant guidance includes British Standards 4142, 8233, 5228 and 7445 and the following Acts are relevant to the assessment of Noise: • The Infrastructure Planning Regulations • The Environmental Protection Act 1990 (as amended by the Noise and Statutory Nuisance Act 19931) (particularly Section 79) (EPA); and • The Control of Pollution Act 1974 (particularly Sections 60 and 61) (CoPA). • The Planning Act 2008 The Environmental Noise (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended)
	5.12.17 The Secretary of State should not grant development consent unless they are satisfied	**ES Chapter 10: Noise and Vibration (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.10)** assesses the potential impacts of the Proposed Development on noise and vibration, including temporary and

1 Noise and Statutory Nuisance Act 1993 [online]. Available at https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1993/40/ contents/made [Accessed 09/03/2022]

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Secretary of State decision making	that the proposals will meet the following aims, through the effective management and control of noise: • avoid significant adverse impacts on health and quality of life from noise • mitigate and minimise other adverse impacts on health and quality of life from noise where possible, contribute to improvements to health and quality of life through the effective management and control of noise.	permanent effects at the construction, operational and decommissioning phase. It outlines that there are no significant effects associated with noise and vibration at the construction, operational and decommissioning phases. Therefore, there will be no significant effects to human receptors as a result of noise and vibration.
	5.12.18 When preparing the Development Consent Order, the Secretary of State should consider including measurable requirements or specifying the mitigation measures to be put in place to ensure that noise levels do not exceed any limits specified in the development consent. These requirements or mitigation measures may apply to the construction, operation, and decommissioning of the energy infrastructure development.	Section 10.6: Assessment of Effects of **ES Chapter 10: Noise and Vibration (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.10** and set out within the **Appendix 2.4: OCEMP (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.7)** includes mitigations for the Construction and Decommissioning Phases and is secured by a Requirement: • All plant and machinery will be regularly maintained to control noise emissions, with particular emphasis on lubrication of bearings and the integrity of silencers; • A programme of all works will be distributed to all identified ESRs in the area and updated as the Proposed Development progresses; • Broadband reversing alarms will be used instead of tonal alarms;

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		• Site staff will be made aware that they are working adjacent to a residential area and avoid all unnecessary noise due to misuse of tools and equipment, unnecessary shouting and radios; • A further measure to reduce noise levels at the ESRs will include, as far as possible, the avoidance of two noisy operations occurring simultaneously in close proximity to the same ESR; • Adherence to the restriction of construction working hours imposed by Lincolnshire County Council; • Ensure engines are turned off where possible: • Should construction activities need to be carried out during night-time hours, this will be discussed with the local authority; and • Where noise and vibration levels have the possibility to exceed the threshold of significant adverse effect, bespoke monitoring will be undertaken at the ESRs to ensure that levels are not exceeded. This are secured through implementation of the CEMP. Embedded mitigation measures for the operational phase are also included in the assessment. Once a detailed layout is confirmed a detailed noise assessment will be undertaken in order to identify the specific mitigation required at that time (taking into consideration advances in technology and changes in equipment specifications), and this is secured by Requirement in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**. **ES Chapter 10: Noise and Vibration (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.1** ensures that by adopting the additional control

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		measures as outlined above, it is considered that any residual impacts during operation will be not significant as the sound level with a partially open window is unlikely to exceed recommended internal ambient sound levels in accordance with BS 8233.
Part 5.13 - Socio-economic *Applicant Assessment*	5.13.2 Where the project is likely to have socio-economic impacts at local or regional levels, the applicant should undertake and include in their application an assessment of these impacts as part of the ES (see Section 4.3).	An assessment of these impacts is undertaken in **ES Chapter 15: Socio-economics (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.15).**
	5.13.3 The applicant is strongly encouraged to engage with relevant local authorities during early stages of project development so that the applicant can gain a better understanding of local or regional issues and opportunities.	The Applicant has engaged with Boston Borough Council, North Kesteven District Council and Lincolnshire County Council, as outlined in section 15.3 of **ES Chapter 15: Socio-economics (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.15)**, and with all three relevant local planning authorities as evidenced in the Statements of Common Ground submitted with the application **(Document Refs: 8.1-8.3).** Details on the feedback received from statutory consultation and the response to each matter raised and how this has been addressed in detail are in **Appendix 15.2: Consultation: (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.97)** of **ES Chapter 15: Socio-economics (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.15)**
	5.13.4 The applicant's assessment should consider all relevant socio-economic impacts, which may include:	**ES Chapter 15: Socio-economics (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.15)** provides an assessment of all potential socio-economic impacts of the Proposed Development, in accordance with this policy and **ES Chapter 18: Cumulative Effects (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol. 1, 6.2.18)** covers cumulative effects.

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	• 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 (positive and negative) on tourism and other users of the area impacted • the impact of a changing influx of workers during the different construction, operation and	To help maximise the gain for the local economy from the beneficial effect arising from employment generation during the construction and operational (including maintenance) phase, an **Appendix 15.3: Outline Skills, Supply Chain and Employment Plan (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.98)** supports the DCO Application. Preparation, approval and implementation of a detailed plan is secured through a requirement in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**. As set out in the **Appendix 15.3: Outline Skills, Supply Chain and Employment Plan (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.98)** and Table 15.10 of **ES Chapter 15: Socio-economics (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.15)**, the Proposed Development will provide construction job opportunities over the anticipated 24-36-months construction phase. 417 FTE (full-time equivalent) jobs are expected during the construction phase. This is a total number and will fluctuate during the construction period. During operation there are expected to be 15 FTE jobs. This details commitments to work with partners and the local and regional construction supply chain to enhance the proportion of activities that can be accessed by local people (both in employment, unemployed and economically inactive or outside of the current labour market) and firms with relevant experience and competencies. The main objectives of the **Appendix 15.3: Outline Skills, Supply Chain and Employment Plan (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.98)** are detailed below: • Prioritising local employment and local procurement;

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	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 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	• Reskilling of temporary farm workers to avoid economic displacement, and/or support in finding alternative agricultural work; • Reskilling of workers during operational phase; • Collaboration with neighbouring projects to manage worker demand; • Enhancing supply chain opportunities; and • Potential upskilling of local residents through apprenticeships and partnerships with local educational institutions. **ES Chapter 15: Socio-economics (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.15)** assesses the impacts of the Proposed Development on Tourism. The construction phase is unlikely to have a measurable change on tourist and recreation baseline conditions, it will be very short term, localised and affecting a limited number of social receptors, resulting in low magnitude (the baseline conditions will not be considerably affected). The impact on tourist attractions will be minor adverse and the effect is Not Significant. The operational phase will have long-term effects but will affect a low number of receptors. The impact is Negligible Adverse, resulting in a Not Significant effect. Section 15.9 of **ES Chapter 15: Socio-economics (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.15)** and **ES Chapter 18: Cumulative Impacts (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.18)** assesses the cumulative impact on population effects. Mitigation measures will be implemented in line with the **Appendix 15.3: Outline Skills, Supply Chain and Employment Plan (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.98)**, which aims to hire workers locally, avoiding the need for additional accommodation. Other cumulative accommodation mitigation measures include: Disclosure of construction timescales

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		with other developments, and coordination of timescales to avoid overlap of peak construction worker months when practical Cooperation with NKDC to understand most up-to-date accommodation demands and If the overlap of peak construction months cannot be avoided, the Applicant will review accommodation capacity in NKDC and suggest alternative accommodation to workers, outside of NKDC, if necessary.
	5.13.5 Applicants should describe the existing socio-economic conditions in the areas surrounding the proposed development and should also refer to how the development's socio-economic impacts correlate with local planning policies.	Section 15.5 of **ES Chapter 15: Socio-economics (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.15)** describes the existing socio-economic baseline conditions of the Study Area. The land use within the Order Limits comprises mostly land that is used for agricultural purposes. The Cable Route Corridor will have a temporary impact on farming during its construction, but the avoidance of overhead lines means that there are no permanent overhead line towers occupying land. Once the cable is installed farming activities other than the planting of trees will be able to continue within the easement. There are no accessible PRoWs within the Solar Array Area, however there are PRoWs crossing the Cable Route Corridor and the Access Route which are illustrated on Figure 15.3 of **ES Chapter 15: Socio-economics (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.15).** Minimisation of impacts to these, and the enhancement during operation through the provision of a substantial permissive path connecting existing PRoWs, is described in the chapter. The Proposed Development's accordance with local policies is considered in Table A3.5 of this **Planning Statement (Document Ref: 5.5).**

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	5.13.6 Socio-economic impacts may be linked to other impacts, for example visual impacts considered in Section 5.10 but may also have an impact on tourism and local businesses. Applicants are encouraged, where possible, to demonstrate that local suppliers have been considered in any supply chain.	An **Appendix 15.3: Outline Skills, Supply Chain and Employment Plan (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.98)** has been prepared to help maximise the gain for the local economy from the beneficial effect arising from employment generation during the construction and operational phase. Preparation, approval and implementation of a detailed plan is secured through a requirement in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**. The jobs created by the Proposed Development will be in the renewable energy sector, specifically relating to solar installation, but also electricity transmission and supply chain. Where possible, there will be a preference for local staffing, and it is likely that the appointed contractors will employ trainees and apprentices as part of the construction workforce.
	5.13.7 Applicants should consider developing accommodation strategies where appropriate, especially during construction and decommissioning phases, that would include the need to provide temporary accommodation for construction workers if required.	**ES Chapter 15: Socio-economics (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.15)** assesses the Proposed Development's impact on occupancy rates as a result of increased visitor numbers to the area. Table 15.14 of **ES Chapter 15: Socio-economics (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.15)** outlines the total estimated number of construction workers requiring accommodation, as well as the estimated number requiring accommodation in scoped in developments with potential cumulative effects. Assessment of inter-cumulative effects has suggested a Significant adverse effect on accommodation capacity before mitigation. No other significant cumulative impacts are expected, and no significant effects post-mitigation are expected. The effect on accommodation occupancy and capacity has been identified as significant, with further investigation recommended to

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		determine capacity of accommodation and the design of suitable mitigation measures. The **Appendix 15.3: Outline Skills, Supply Chain and Employment Plan (OSSCEP) (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.98)** outlines mitigation measures to reduce the potential for there to be cumulative effects on accommodation provision.
Mitigation	5.13.8 The Secretary of State should consider whether mitigation measures are necessary to mitigate any adverse socio-economic impacts of the development. For example, high quality design can improve the visual and environmental experience for visitors and the local community alike.	**ES Chapter 15: Socio-economics (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.15)** concludes that there would be no significant adverse effects in relation to socioeconomics following the implementation of embedded mitigation measures as part of the Proposed Development, including: • Noise minimising measures to be laid out in the **Appendix 2.4: OCEMP (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.7)**, of which preparation, approval and implementation of a detailed version is secured through a requirement in Schedule 2 to the Draft DCO **(Document Ref: 3.1)**, as well as stakeholder engagement activities to ensure all residential neighbours are aware of periods of potentially noisy activity. Noisier activities will be avoided in close proximity to residential receptors as far as possible. Operational noise will also be reduced through measures including adjustments to equipment location and numbers, placement of noise barriers, sourcing of silenced or quieter equipment and use of alternative equipment. The **Appendix 15.3: Outline Skills, Supply Chain and Employment Plan (Document Ref 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.98)** will mitigate impacts related to loss of employment and enhances beneficial impacts from employment creation. This will be through the implementation of measures prioritising local employment,

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		reskilling of temporary workers to avoid economic displacement or support in finding alternative work, reskilling of workers post operational phase and potential upskilling of local residents through apprenticeships.
Secretary of State decision making	5.13.9 The Secretary of State should have regard to the potential socio-economic impacts of new energy infrastructure identified by the applicant and from any other sources that the Secretary of State considers to be both relevant and important to its decision. 5.13.10 The Secretary of State may conclude that limited weight is to be given to assertions of socio-economic impacts that are not supported by evidence (particularly in view of the need for energy infrastructure as set out in this NPS).	**ES Chapter 15: Socio-economics (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.15)** provides an assessment of all potential socio-economic impacts of the Proposed Development, in accordance with this policy. **ES Chapter 15: Socio-economics (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.15)** undertakes an assessment of the likely effects arising from the construction and operation (including maintenance) of the Proposed Development upon socio-economic factors. The likely level of effect during decommissioning is expected to be similar to or less than that experienced during construction. Therefore, the significance of effect during construction is expected to represent the level of effect during decommissioning. **ES Chapter 15: Socio-economics (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.15)** concludes that there would be no significant adverse effects in relation to socioeconomics, following the implementation of embedded mitigation measures as a part of the Proposed Development. It also discusses beneficial impacts for GVA and the local workforce. **Appendix 15.3: Outline Skills, Supply Chain and Employment Plan (Document Ref 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.98)** has been prepared to help maximise the gain for the local economy from the beneficial effect arising from employment generation during and construction and operational phase. Preparation, approval and implementation of

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		a detailed plan is secured through a requirement in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**.
	5.13.11 The Secretary of State should consider any relevant positive provisions the applicant has made or is proposing to make to mitigate impacts (for example through planning obligations) and any legacy benefits that may arise as well as any options for phasing development in relation to the socio-economic impacts.	Beneficial effects of the Proposed Development, through mitigation and legacy benefits are outlined within **Chapter 15: Socio-economic (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.15)** and gone into further detail in the **Appendix 15.3: Outline Skills, Supply Chain and Employment Plan (Document Ref 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.98)**. Proposed measures include prioritising local employment; reskilling of temporary farm workers to avoid economic displacement or support in finding alternative agricultural work; reskilling of workers after operational phase; and potential upskilling of local residents through apprenticeships.
	5.13.12 The Secretary of State may wish to include a requirement that specifies the approval by the local authority of an employment and skills plan detailing arrangements to promote local employment and skills development opportunities, including apprenticeships, education, engagement with local schools and colleges and training programmes to be enacted.	**Appendix 15.3: Outline Skills, Supply Chain and Employment Plan (Document Ref 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.98)** has been prepared to help maximise the gain for the local economy from the beneficial effect arising from employment generation during the construction and operational phase. Preparation, approval and implementation of a detailed plan is secured through a requirement in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**. The jobs created by the Proposed Development will be in the renewable energy sector, specifically relating to solar installation, but also electricity transmission and supply chain. Where possible, there will be a preference for local staffing, and it is likely that the appointed contractors will employ trainees and apprentices as part of the construction workforce.
	5.14.5 If a project is likely to have significant transport implications,	**Appendix 9.1: Transport Assessment (Document Ref; 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.76)** of **ES Chapter 9: Access and Traffic (Document**

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Part 5.14 - Traffic and Transport *Applicant Assessment*	the applicant's ES (see Section 4.3) should include a transport appraisal. The DfT's Transport Analysis Guidance (TAG) and Welsh Governments WelTAG provides guidance on modelling and assessing the impacts of transport schemes.	**Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.9)** has been prepared in accordance with appropriate guidance including Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), Guidance on Travel Plans, Transport Assessments and Statements (March 2014), and Department for Transport (DfT) Circular 01/2022, Guidance on Strategic Road Network and the Delivery of Sustainable Development.
	5.14.6 National Highways and Highways Authorities are statutory consultees on NSIP applications including energy infrastructure where it is expected to affect the strategic road network and / or have an impact on the local road network. Applicants should consult with National Highways and Highways Authorities as appropriate on the assessment and mitigation to inform the application to be submitted.	The applicant has consulted with the relevant Highways Authorities regarding the assessment. Comments from these stakeholders are included in Section 9.3 of **ES Chapter 9: Access and Traffic and Transport** of the **ES (Document Ref. 6.2).**
	5.14.7 The applicant should prepare a travel plan including demand management and monitoring measures to mitigate transport impacts. The applicant should also provide details of proposed measures to improve	**Appendix 9.3: OCTMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol. 2, 6.3.79)** contains an **Outline Construction Staff Travel Plan (OCSTP)**, which outlines the proposed measures to minimise the impact of construction staff travel to/from the site and maximise use of shared transport, during the construction phase. All construction staff will be made aware of the travel plan and its key objectives are to:

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	access by active, public and shared transport to: • reduce the need for parking associated with the proposal; • contribute to decarbonisation of the transport network; improve user travel options by offering genuine modal choice.	• Contribute to traffic reduction and other sustainable transport objectives set out in national and local planning policies. • Improve accessibility of the site by sustainable modes of transport and address traffic and parking issues. • Widen choice of travel mode for all those travelling to/from the Site. **ES Chapter 9: Access and Transport (Document Ref. 6.2, ES Vol.2, 6.2.9)** considers the potential impacts and disruptions to services and infrastructure, and the travel plan sets out the existing conditions in and around the site (including pedestrian provision, cycle provision and public transport) and the impact to these provisions. In the **OCSTP** in **Appendix 9.3: OCTMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol. 2, 6.3.79)**, emphasis is placed on promoting sustainable modes of travel that present a viable option as alternatives to single occupancy car travel. Based on existing conditions, it is considered that shared transport (car share or minibus) is presently the most viable option for journeys to/from the site. A Bespoke Access Road is proposed to allow larger vehicles to safely access the Solar Array Area for construction and secondarily to reduce impacts on local roads and settlements. This will then be retained during operation to allow it to be used in the event of transformer failure during operation (which would necessitate further abnormal indivisible load deliveries) and avoid disruption from relaying it for decommissioning when it will again be specifically necessary for a number of decommissioning activities. It has been designed to be of the minimum scale needed to perform its function and will not be open to the public but will have the appearance of a
	5.14.8 The assessment should also consider any possible disruption to services and infrastructure (such as road, rail and airports).	
	5.14.9 If additional transport infrastructure is needed or proposed, it should always include good quality walking, wheeling and cycle routes, and associated facilities (changing/storage etc.) needed to enhance active transport provision.	

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		rural track or driveway without white lines and lighting, and will have safe crossing points for existing PRoW, which is secured in the **Outline Design Principles** at Appendix 1 of the **DAAD (Document Ref: 5.6)**. As such it is not proposed to create permissive walking or cycling routes associated with the Bespoke Access Road. The **Appendix 9.3: OCTMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol 2, 6.3.79)** has been prepared to manage traffic associated with construction of the development. It aims to: • Protect the amenity of neighbouring properties; • Ensure that construction traffic impacts on the local highway network are minimised, and; • Maintain safety for all road users. As set out in **ES Chapter 9: Access & Traffic (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol, 1, 6.2.9)**, experience of solar park construction elsewhere and based on information from solar panel manufacturers suggests that replacing circa 25% of the solar panels at the Proposed Development could generate 1,000 two-way HGV movements. Adopting a robust assumption that this would take place over three months and with no additional works on Site would lead to an indicative AADT traffic impact of 11 HGVs or approximately 25% of the HGV impact of the Proposed Development construction. Given that the Construction Effects of the Proposed Development are negligible it is very likely that Equipment Replacement would have negligible and Not Significant effects.
Mitigation	5.14.11 Where mitigation is needed, possible demand management measures must be	**ES Chapter 9: Access and Transport (Document Ref. 6.2)** confirms that due to measures proposed for construction, the Proposed Development will not result in residual adverse effects

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	considered. This could include identifying opportunities to: • reduce the need to travel by consolidating trips; • locate development in areas already accessible by active travel and public transport; • provide opportunities for shared mobility; • re-mode by shifting travel to a sustainable mode that is more beneficial to the network; • retime travel outside of the known peak times; reroute to use parts of the network that are less busy.	upon highway safety or generate any highway capacity issues. Proposed mitigation measures include: • Construction access to the Site will be from the A17 with a left-in/left-out only arrangement; • Construction traffic will be safely managed and monitored via a CTMP, which will include a DMP. Preparation, approval and implementation of the detailed CTMP is secured through a requirement in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1);** • Abnormal load delivery types and numbers are as yet uncertain, but will be addressed through an Abnormal Loads DMP and will be subject to agreement with the relevant highway authorities and police through the ESDAL system; and • The measures in the **OCSTP** in **Appendix 9.3: OCTMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol. 2, 6.3.79)** will minimise the impacts of construction staff travel to/from the Site and maximise the use of collective transport, particularly minibuses.
	5.14.12 If feasible and operationally reasonable, such mitigation should be required, before considering requirements for the provision of new inland transport infrastructure to deal with remaining transport impacts. All stages of the project should support and encourage a modal shift of freight from road to more environmentally sustainable alternatives, such as rail, cargo	As set out in **ES Chapter 9: Access & Traffic (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol, 1, 6.2.9)**, Experience of solar park construction elsewhere and based on information from solar panel manufacturers suggests that replacing circa 25% of the solar panels at the Proposed Development could generate 1,000 two-way HGV movements. Adopting a robust assumption that this would take place over three months and with no additional works on Site would lead to an indicative AADT traffic impact of 11 HGVs or approximately 25% of the HGV impact of the Proposed Development construction. Given that the Construction Effects of the Proposed Development are negligible it is very likely that Equipment Replacement would have negligible and Not Significant effects.

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	bike, maritime and inland waterways, as well as making appropriate provision for and infrastructure needed to support the use of alternative fuels including charging for electric vehicles.	Through the **OCSTP** in **Appendix 9.3: OCTMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol. 2, 6.3.79)**, emphasis is placed on promoting sustainable modes of travel that present a viable option as alternatives to single occupancy car travel.
	5.14.13 Regard should always be given to the needs of freight at all stages in the construction and operation of the development including the need to provide appropriate facilities for HGV drivers as appropriate. 5.14.14 The Secretary of State may attach requirements to a consent where there is likely to be substantial HGV traffic that: • control numbers of HGV movements to and from the site in a specified period during its construction and possibly on the routing of such movements; • make sufficient provision for HGV parking, and associated high quality drive facilities either on the site or at	**Section 9.6** of **ES Chapter 9: Access and Transport (Document Ref: 6.2)** confirms that due to measures proposed for construction, the Access and Traffic effects of the Proposed Development during construction are negligible and not significant. All trips to the Bicker Fen Substation will use A17/Triton Knoll Substation Access. 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 allow larger vehicles to access the Solar Array Area during construction and operation. As set out in **ES Appendix 3.2 Bespoke Access Road Appraisal (Document Ref: 6.3.10)**, this would minimise impacts on local roads and existing road users and reduce the risk of traffic management issues. The Bespoke Access Road which will remain in place throughout the operational life of the development to reduce disruption involved in removing then relaying it in the event of a transformer failure and again for decommissioning. The Bespoke Access Road options were shared at the statutory consultation in the Preliminary Environmental Impact Report and within the consultation boards as set out in the **Consultation Report (Document Ref: 5.1)**.

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	dedicated facilities elsewhere, to support driver welfare, avoid 'overspill' parking on public roads, prolonged queuing on approach roads and uncontrolled on-street HGV parking in normal operating conditions; ensure satisfactory arrangements for reasonably foreseeable abnormal disruption, in consultation with network providers and the responsible police force.	There will be one primary operational access on the western edge of the Solar Array Area and a secondary access to the north both of which will allow access by large vehicles (including first responder access to the BESS and on-site substation). Tertiary operational access primarily for smaller vehicles will be provided to the north-west and south. All construction traffic will utilise the existing local highway network, with HGVs limited to specific designated routes as set out in **Appendix 9.3**: **OCTMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol 2, 6.3.79).** Measures to enforce adherence to these routes is set out in the same document, specifically in the Outline Delivery Management Plan (Outline 'DMP') (included in **Appendix 9.3: OCTMP Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol 2, 6.3.79)**). The Contractor will prepare and implement the CTMP which will describe the traffic management, safety and control measures proposed during construction of the Proposed Development. Preparation, approval and implementation of the detailed CTMP is secured through a requirement in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**. The detailed CTMP will include details of the parking arrangements. Traffic flow diagrams showing how the trips have been distributed on the road network are contained within **Appendix 9.1: Transport Assessment (Document Ref 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.76)**.
	5.14.15 The Secretary of State should have regard to the cost-effectiveness of demand management measures compared to new transport infrastructure, as well as the aim to secure more sustainable patterns of transport	In relation to construction phase, the **OCSTP** in **Appendix 9.3: OCTMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol. 2, 6.3.79)**, emphasis is placed on promoting sustainable modes of travel that present a viable option as alternatives to single occupancy car travel. Based on existing conditions, it is considered that shared transport (car

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	development when considering mitigation measures.	share or minibus) is presently the most viable option for journeys to/from the site. The Proposed Development will not be occupied on a permanent basis during operation and as such demand management measures are not considered to be relevant. Access will be required occasionally for visiting operatives for maintenance and for bringing materials/equipment in/out of the Solar Array Area.
	5.14.16 Applicants should consider the DfT policy guidance "Water Preferred Policy Guidelines for the movement of abnormal indivisible loads" when preparing their application.	The Strategic Road Network is considered in detail within **Appendix 9.1: Transport Assessment (Document Ref 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.76),** where impacts are expected to be limited. The majority of construction vehicles accessing the Construction Compounds will be standard/normal size LGVs and HGVs. However, it is expected that there will also be a small number of Abnormal Indivisible Loads (AIL) movements associated with transformer components, subject to further assessment during detailed design. In line with the Department for Transport's Water Preferred Policy which requires that the nearest practicable port of access is used to deliver Special Order AIL's, National Highways has advised that the ports of Boston or Sutton Bridge are preferred to Immingham as the nearest port. LCC has advised that the road route from the port of Boston is not acceptable due to the loads being in excess of the capacity of Haven Bridge and the road route from the port of Sutton Bridge will require more detailed structural assessment. The feasibility analysis undertaken as part of **Appendix 9.3: OCTMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.79)** concluded that the route from Immingham is

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		technically possible. Therefore, as outlined in Section 4.5 of **Appendix 9.1: Transport Assessment (Document Ref 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.76),** it is anticipated that construction components for the Proposed Development will arrive from either Immingham Port to the north of the Site or Port Sutton Bridge to the south-east of the Site.
	5.14.17 If an applicant suggests that the costs of meeting any obligations or requirements would make the proposal economically unviable this should not in itself justify the relaxation by the Secretary of State of any obligations or requirements needed to secure the mitigation.	The Applicant has not proposed or been requested to provide transport related obligations, since none are required for the construction phase. Articles 12 and 13 of the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)** provide the Applicant with powers to alter streets or alter the layout of streets and includes a duty to restore the street to the reasonable satisfaction of the highway authority. It is not anticipated that the highway authority would carry out works that require financial obligations upon the Applicant.
Secretary of State decision making	5.14.18 A new energy NSIP may give rise to substantial impacts on the surrounding transport infrastructure and the Secretary of State should therefore ensure that the applicant has sought to mitigate these impacts, including during the construction phase of the development and by enhancing active, public and shared transport provision and accessibility.	The potential significant impacts of the Proposed Development on surrounding transport infrastructure would be during construction and decommissioning in relation to the proposed vehicle numbers and sizes. Swept Path Analysis of proposed access arrangements to the Bespoke Access Road, solar array area and cable route construction compounds has been undertaken and shows that the design of the junctions can accommodate maximum length HGVs and AILs required to facilitate construction and decommissioning. **ES Chapter 9: Access and Traffic (Document Ref: 6.3)** confirms that due to measures proposed for construction, the access and traffic effects of the Proposed Development during construction are negligible and not significant.
	5.14.19 Where the proposed mitigation measures are insufficient	

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	to reduce the impact on the transport infrastructure to acceptable levels, the Secretary of State should consider requirements to mitigate adverse impacts on transport networks arising from the development, as set out below.	Proposed mitigation measures include: • Construction access to the Site will be from the A17 with a left-in/left-out only arrangement; • Construction traffic will be safely managed and monitored via a CTMP, which will include a DMP. Preparation, approval and implementation of the detailed CTMP is secured through a requirement in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**; • Abnormal load delivery types and numbers are as yet uncertain, but will be addressed through an Abnormal Loads DMP and will be subject to agreement with the relevant highway authorities and police through the ESDAL system; and • The measures in the **OCSTP** in **Appendix 9.3: OCTMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol. 2, 6.3.79)** will minimise the impacts of construction staff travel to/from the Site and maximise the use of collective transport, particularly minibuses. **ES Chapter 9: Access and Traffic (Document Ref 6.3)** concludes that overall, the effect on road safety is considered to be not significant. **ES Chapter 18: Cumulative Effects (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol. 1, 6.2.18)** outlines the cumulative effects.
	5.14.20 Development consent should not be withheld provided that the applicant is willing to enter into planning obligations for funding new infrastructure or requirements can be imposed to mitigate transport impacts. In this situation the Secretary of State should apply appropriately limited weight to residual effects on the surrounding transport infrastructure.	
	5.14.21 The Secretary of State should only consider refusing development on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe, or it does not show how consideration has been given to the provision of	

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	adequate active public or shared transport access and provision.	
Part 5.15 – Resource and Waste Management *Applicant Assessment*	5.15.6 Applicants must demonstrate that development proposals are in line with Defra's policy position on the role of energy from waste in treating residual waste.	**Appendix 17.2: Waste and Recycling Strategy (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.82)** has been developed to support the application for the Proposed Development. The Waste and Recycling Strategy considers the aims of international, national and local policy in regard to commitments to manage resources more efficiently in order to prevent and minimise waste where possible, to sustainably manage waste and increase overall recycling rates. The construction phase of the Proposed Development is not anticipated to generate large amounts of waste owing to the absence of large-scale earthworks and the fact that the electrical infrastructure will be manufactured offsite and delivered for installation when required. The types of waste associated with construction include (but are not limited to) general waste from site welfare facilities, packaging waste from incoming materials, and waste from construction of supporting infrastructure, such as fencing and access tracks / roads. The Waste and Recycling Strategy provides an estimated calculation of site welfare waste using the anticipated worst-case number of staff during peak deployment. Approximately 281tonnes per annum of welfare waste is anticipated. This is considered to have a negligible impact on the waste management facilities expected to deal with the waste. Similarly, due to the small number of structures to be constructed as part of the Proposed Development, the wider construction waste volume is also estimated to be negligible.
	5.15.7 The proposed plant must not compete with greater waste prevention, re-use, or recycling, or result in over-capacity of EfW or similar processes for the treatment of residual waste at a national or local level.	
	5.15.8 The applicant should set out the arrangements that are proposed for managing any waste produced and prepare a report that sets out the sustainable management of waste and use of resources throughout any relevant demolition, excavation, and construction activities.	
	5.15.9 The arrangements described and a report setting out the sustainable management of	

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	waste and use of resources should include information on how re-use and recycling will be maximised in addition to the proposed waste recovery and disposal system for all waste generated by the development. They should also include an assessment of the impact of the waste arising from development on the capacity of waste management facilities to deal with other waste arising in the area for at least five years of operation. 5.15.10 The applicant is encouraged to refer to the Waste Prevention Programme for England: Maximising Resources Minimising Waste and 'Towards Zero Waste: Our Waste Strategy for Wales' and should seek to minimise the volume of waste produced and the volume of waste sent for disposal unless it can be demonstrated that this is the best overall environmental outcome. 5.15.11 If the applicant's assessment includes dredged material, the assessment should	Operationally, waste will be associated with potential equipment / panel replacements and workers carrying out onsite maintenance, which might include packaging, dry recycling, residual waste and potentially food waste. It is not likely that a significant number of solar panels will need to be replaced throughout the development lifetime, with only ad-hoc replacements following damage, being probable, based on the experience of other solar farms across England. Transformers, inverters and switchgear onsite are likely to be recycled if this failure occurs. Solar panel treatment and recycling is anticipated to be a sector that will be expanding throughout the lifetime of the facility, as a growing number of offtakers exist within the UK, as well as for the batteries used by the Proposed Development. As the lifespan of the Proposed Development is anticipated to be ~40 years, it is not possible at this stage to identify either the waste management routes or specific waste facilities to be utilised during the decommissioning phase. Any waste generated during the decommissioning phase will be managed in a phased approach, in accordance with **Appendix 2.5: ODEMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.8)** that has been prepared to support the Application. Preparation, approval and implementation of the detailed DEMP is secured through a requirement in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**.

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	also include other uses of such material before disposal to sea, for example through re-use in the construction process.	
	5.15.12 The UK is committed to moving towards a more 'circular economy'. Where possible, applicants are encouraged to source materials from recycled or reused sources and use low carbon materials, sustainable sources and local suppliers. Construction best practices should be used to ensure that material is reused or recycled onsite where possible.	
	5.15.13 Applicants are also encouraged to use construction best practices in relation to storing materials in an adequate and protected place on site to prevent waste, for example, from damage or vandalism. The use of Building Information Management tools (or similar) to record the materials used in construction can help to reduce waste in future decommissioning of facilities, by	

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	identifying materials that can be recycled or reused.	
Secretary of State decision making	5.15.14 The Secretary of State should consider the extent to which the applicant has proposed an effective system for managing hazardous and non-hazardous waste arising from the construction, operation and decommissioning of the proposed development.	**Appendix 17.2: Waste and Recycling Strategy (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.82)** has been developed by Wardell Armstrong to support the application for the Proposed Development. The Waste and Recycling Strategy considers the aims of international, national and local policy in regard to commitments to manage resources more efficiently in order to prevent and minimise waste where possible, to sustainably manage waste and increase overall recycling rates.
	5.15.15 The Secretary of State should be satisfied that: • any such waste will be properly managed, both on-site and off-site. • the waste from the proposed facility can be dealt with appropriately by the waste infrastructure which is, or is likely to be, available. Such waste arisings should not have an adverse effect on the capacity of existing waste management facilities to deal with other waste arisings in the area. adequate steps have been taken to minimise the volume of waste	As the lifespan of the Proposed Development is anticipated to be ~40 years, it is not possible at this stage to identify either the waste management routes or specific waste facilities to be utilised during the decommissioning phase. Nationally, there are limited off-takers, and none currently process materials beyond initial shredding and metal separation. This market is anticipated to grow and evolve, and any waste generated during the decommissioning phase will be managed in a phased approach, in accordance with **Appendix 2.5: ODEMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.8)** that has been prepared to support the Application. Preparation, approval and implementation of the detailed DEMP is secured through a requirement in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**.

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	arisings, and of the volume of waste arisings sent for recovery or disposal, except where that is the best overall environmental outcome.	
	5.15.16 Where necessary, the Secretary of State should use requirements or obligations to ensure that appropriate measures for waste management are applied.	
	5.15.17 The Secretary of State may wish to include a condition on revision of waste management plans at reasonable intervals when giving consent.	
	5.15.18 Where the project will be subject to the Environmental Permitting regime, waste management arrangements during operations will be covered by the permit and the considerations set out in Section 4.12 will apply.	
	5.15.19 The Secretary of State should have regard to any potential impacts on the achievement of resource efficiency and waste reduction targets set under the	

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	Environment Act 2021 or wider goals set out in the government's Environmental Improvement Plan 2023.	
Part 5.16 - Water Quality and Resources *Applicant assessment*	5.16.3 Where the project is likely to have effects on the water environment, the applicant should undertake an assessment of the existing status of, and impacts of the proposed project on, water quality, water resources and physical characteristics of the water environment, and how this might change due to the impact of climate change on rainfall patterns and consequently water availability across the water environment, as part of the ES or equivalent (see Section 4.3 and 4.10).	**ES Chapter 11: Water Resources and Flood Risk (Document Ref: 6.2 Vol.1, 6.2.11)** reports the assessment of the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development on Water Resources and Flood Risk. In particular it considers the potential for effects on surface water features and takes account of the likely impacts of climate change.
	5.16.5 Where possible, applicants are encouraged to manage surface water during construction by treating surface water runoff from exposed topsoil prior to discharging and to limit the discharge of suspended solids e.g. from car parks or other areas of hard standing, during operation.	The implementation of embedded mitigation measures and best practice control measures to manage surface water during the construction of the Proposed Development are set out in **Appendix 2.4: OCEMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol 2, 6.3.7)**. Preparation, approval and implementation of the detailed CEMP is secured through a requirement in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**.

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	5.16.6 Applicants are encouraged to consider protective measures to control the risk of pollution to groundwater beyond those outlined in River Basin Management Plans and Groundwater Protection Zones – this could include, for example, the use of protective barriers.	
	5.16.7 The ES should in particular describe: • the existing quality of waters affected by the proposed project and the impacts of the proposed project on water quality, noting any relevant existing discharges, proposed new discharges and proposed changes to discharges • existing water resources affected by the proposed project and the impacts of the proposed project on water resources, noting any relevant existing abstraction rates, proposed new abstraction rates and proposed changes to • abstraction rates (including any impact on or use of mains	**ES Chapter 11: Water Resources and Flood Risk (Document Ref: 6.2 Vol.1, 6.2.11)** reports the assessment of the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development on Water Resources and Flood Risk with respect to the likely impacts of climate change. In particular it considers the potential for likely significant effects of changes to water quality and the hydrological regime. **ES Chapter 18: Cumulative Effects (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol. 1, 6.2.18)** sets out cumulative effects. The **Appendix 11.6: Water Framework Directive Compliance Assessment (Document Ref. 6.3, Vol.2, 6.3.86)** has considered the potential for the Proposed Development to affect the Black Sluice IDB area draining to the South Forty Foot Drain Water Body. It has found that the Site is unlikely to include any activities that are likely to cause deterioration in the WFD status for the water body or prevent the Water Body from achieving its WFD objectives, provided that best practice and established guidance are adhered to.

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	supplies and reference to Abstraction Licensing Strategies) and also demonstrate how proposals minimise the use of water resources and water consumption in the first instance • existing physical characteristics of the water environment (including quantity and dynamics of flow) affected by the proposed project and any impact of physical modifications to these characteristics • any impacts of the proposed project on water bodies or protected areas (including shellfish protected areas) under the Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations 2017 and source protection zones (SPZs) around potable groundwater abstractions • how climate change could impact any of the above in the future	

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	any cumulative effects	
Mitigation	5.16.8 The Secretary of State should consider whether mitigation measures are needed over and above any which may form part of the project application. A construction management plan may help codify mitigation at that stage.	The implementation of embedded mitigation measures and best practice control measures to manage surface water during the construction of the Proposed Development are set out in **Appendix 2.4: OCEMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol 2, 6.3.7)**.Preparation, approval and implementation of the detailed CEMP is secured through a requirement in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**. As set out in **ES Chapter 11: Water Resources & Flood Risk (Document Ref: 6.2 Vol.1, 6.2.11)** embedded mitigation in the design of the Proposed Development includes: • A minimum preferred separation distance of up to 5 m from built development was applied along, where appropriate, or around every watercourse and waterbody and was taken into consideration into the Proposed Development design, as far as possible. The preferred separation distance has not been implemented at proposed watercourse crossing locations, as by their nature watercourse crossings are required to be in proximity to watercourses, nor along existing access tracks; • The access tracks within the Site are being routed to make as much use of existing tracks across the Site as possible, upgrading where required, to minimise the requirement for entirely new tracks and watercourse crossings; • Underground cabling will, wherever possible, aim to follow the same route as the access tracks to reduce the ground disturbance across the Site. Where trenchless techniques are proposed, the shortest practicable route will be used and where open cut crossing are proposed, measures will be implemented to maintain water flows downstream of the crossing during
	5.16.9 The risk of impacts on the water environment can be reduced through careful design to facilitate adherence to good pollution control practice. For example, designated areas for storage and unloading, with appropriate drainage facilities, should be clearly marked.	
	5.16.10 The impact on local water resources can be minimised through planning and design for the efficient use of water, including water recycling. If a development needs new water infrastructure, significant supplies or impacts other water supplies, the applicant should consult with the local water company and the EA or NRW.	

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		construction and these crossings will be designed to prevent scour of the watercourse bed; • SuDS will be developed and maintained throughout the Proposed Development. SuDS will be utilised within the Site to provide conveyance and storage for surface water runoff, as well as water quality treatment and enhancing biodiversity; • Solar panels will be raised up to 600 mm above the depth of flooding; • Transformers will be constructed on raised bunds up to 600 mm above the 1 in 100+ climate change breach flood depth; • Watercourse crossings will be designed so the soffit level of the bridge complies with the requirements of the EA and IDB to ensure that there is no increase in the risk of flooding as a result of the proposed bridges; • Base fence panels will be designed to have sufficient width to allow debris to flow and prevent blockage; • All proposed bridge crossings, temporary and permanent, will be constructed in accordance with flood permits granted by the Environment Agency, LCC or the Internal Drainage Board (IDB) to ensure there would be no increased flood risk upstream or to the Site itself; and Co-location of the Onsite Substation and BESS to allow for appropriate drainage solution and raising/ bunding to defend against flood risk.
Secretary of State decision making	5.16.11 Activities that discharge to the water environment are subject to pollution control. The considerations set out in Section 4.12 on the interface between	The implementation of embedded mitigation measures and best practice control measures to manage surface water during the construction of the Proposed Development are set out in **Appendix 2.4: OCEMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol 2, 6.3.7)**.Preparation, approval and implementation of the detailed CEMP is secured

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	planning and pollution control therefore apply. These considerations will also apply in an analogous way to the abstraction licensing regime regulating activities that take water from the water environment, and to the control regimes relating to works to, and structures in, on, or under controlled waters.	through a requirement in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**. As set out in **ES Chapter 11: Water Resources & Flood Risk (Document Ref: 6.2 Vol.1, 6.2.11)** a number of mitigation measures are embedded in the design of the Proposed Development. Following the application of embedded mitigation measures there are expected to be no significant effects, so no additional mitigation is required. **Appendix 11.6: Water Framework Directive Compliance Assessment (Document Ref. 6.3, Vol.2, 6.3.86)** has considered the potential for the Proposed Development to affect the Black Sluice IDB area draining to the South Forty Foot Drain Water Body. It has found that the Site is unlikely to include any activities that are likely to cause deterioration in the WFD status for the water body or prevent the Water Body from achieving its WFD objectives, provided that best practice and established guidance are adhered to.
	5.16.12 The Secretary of State will need to give impacts on the water environment more weight where a project would have an adverse effect on the achievement of the environmental objectives established under the Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations 2017.	
	5.16.13 The Secretary of State must also consider duties under other legislation including duties under the Environment Act 2021 in relation to environmental targets and have regard to the policies set out in the Government's	**ES Chapter 11: Water Resources & Flood Risk (Document Ref: 6.2 Vol.1, 6.2.11)** has regard to The Environment Act 2021.

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	Environmental Improvement Plan 2023.	
	5.16.14 The Secretary of State should be satisfied that a proposal has regard to current River Basin Management Plans and meets the requirements of the Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations 2017 (including regulation 19). The specific objectives for particular river basins are set out in River Basin Management Plans. The Secretary of State must refuse development consent where a project is likely to cause deterioration of a water body or its failure to achieve good status or good potential, unless the requirements set out in Regulation 19 are met. A project may be approved in the absence of a qualifying Overriding Public Interest test only if there is sufficient certainty that it will not cause deterioration or compromise the achievement of good status or good potential.	The **Appendix 11.6: Water Framework Directive Compliance Assessment (Document Ref. 6.3, Vol.2, 6.3.86)**, which includes a review of the River Basin Management Plan, has considered the potential for the Proposed Development to affect the Black Sluice IDB area draining to the South Forty Foot Drain Water Body. It has found that the Site is unlikely to include any activities that are likely to cause deterioration in the WFD status for the water body or prevent the Water Body from achieving its WFD objectives, provided that best practice and established guidance are adhered to.

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	5.16.15 The Secretary of State should also consider the interactions of the proposed project with other plans such as Water Resources Management Plans and Shoreline Management Plans.	The Proposed Development does not interact with any Water Resources Management Plans or Shoreline Management Plans.
	5.16.16 The Secretary of State should consider proposals to mitigate adverse effects on the water environment and any enhancement measures put forward by the applicant and whether appropriate requirements should be attached to any development consent and/or planning obligations are necessary	The implementation of embedded mitigation measures and best practice control measures to manage surface water during the construction of the Proposed Development are set out in **Appendix 2.4: OCEMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol 2, 6.3.7)**. Preparation, approval and implementation of the detailed CEMP is secured through a requirement in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**. As set out in **ES Chapter 11: Water Resources & Flood Risk (Document Ref: 6.2 Vol.1, 6.2.11)** a number of mitigation measures are embedded in the design of the Proposed Development.

Appendix 3B: Policy Compliance Table – NPS EN-3

Table 3B: National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3) Part 2 – Table of Compliance – Assessment and Technology Specific Information

POLICY	EN-3 POLICY TEXT	ASSESSMENT
Part 2.4 Climate change adaptation	2.4.11 Solar photovoltaic (PV) sites may also be proposed in low lying exposed sites. For these proposals, applicants should consider, in particular, how plant will be resilient to: • increased risk of flooding; and • impact of higher temperatures	**ES Chapter 12: Climate Change (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.12)** confirms that the impact of increased temperature from the projected climatic changes on the efficiency of the panels is negligible. Embedded flood risk mitigation measures, such as the avoidance of hydrologically sensitive areas and flood zones where possible, have been incorporated into the design of the Proposed Development. However, **Appendix 11.1: Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.81)** takes account of the climate change allowances, such as the increase in groundwater levels and associated groundwater flooding. The **Appendix 11.1: FRA (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.81)** identified that all effects were considered to be not significant and therefore no further additional mitigation measures were required. Areas of the Site are shown to be at risk of flooding from fluvial, surface water and artificial sources. Climate change and increases in impermeable area are likely to result in increased surface water runoff rates and volumes, and it is possible that design standards of any proposed flood risk management measures will be exceeded by an extreme storm event. As any mitigation will be designed in accordance with the Environment Agency guidelines to account for predicted climate change effects, it is considered that the residual risk will be minimal.

POLICY	EN-3 POLICY TEXT	ASSESSMENT
		Embedded mitigation measures relating to flood risk resilience of the PV include: • A minimum preferred separation distance of up to 5 m from built development was applied along or around every watercourse where appropriate and waterbody and was taken into consideration into the Proposed Development design, as far as possible. The preferred separation distance has not been implemented along existing access tracks nor at proposed watercourse crossing locations, as by their nature watercourse crossings are required to be in proximity to watercourses; • SuDS will be developed and maintained throughout the Proposed Development. SuDS will be utilised within the Site to provide conveyance and storage for surface water runoff, as well as water quality treatment and enhancing biodiversity. SuDS mitigation includes use of swales and detention basins, which are to be monitored to maintain effectiveness; • Solar panels to be raised up to 600 mm above depth of flooding; • Transformers will be constructed on raised bunds up to 600 mm above the 1 in 100+ climate change breach flood depth; • Base fence panels will be designed to have sufficient width to allow debris to flow and prevent blockage; and • All proposed bridge crossings, temporary and permanent, will be constructed in accordance with flood permits granted by the EA, LCC or the IDB to ensure there would be no increased flood risk upstream or to the Site itself. **Appendix 11.1: FRA (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol. 2, 6.3.81)** confirms that from a flood risk perspective, with appropriate

POLICY	EN-3 POLICY TEXT	ASSESSMENT
		mitigation measures the Site is likely to be suitable for the Proposed Development subject to the proposed mitigation measures. An Outline Drainage Strategy has been included within the **Appendix 11.1: FRA (Document Ref: 6.3. ES Vol.2, 6.3.81)** which sets out how surface water runoff from the Proposed Development will be controlled on the Site to ensure that there is no increase in risk of flooding to areas downstream of the Site and the Proposed Development itself, in accordance with the mitigation hierarchy. It also includes SuDS Management and Maintenance measures. Preparation, approval and implementation of a detailed drainage strategy, substantially in accordance with the Outline Drainage Strategy is secured via a Requirement in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1).** As discussed in Section 6.2 of the **Planning Statement (Document Ref: 5.5)**, it is considered that there are no suitable and reasonably available sites appropriate for the Proposed Development in areas with a lower risk of flooding and that the Site for the Proposed Development accordingly passes the Sequential Test. **ES Chapter 11: Water Resources & Flood Risk (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.11)** confirms that flood risk during construction and at decommissioning will also be managed through the Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan (DEMP), preparation, approval and implementation of which are secured by requirements in Schedule 2 to the **Draft Development Consent Order (Document Ref: 3.1)** and required to be in accordance with the **Appendix 2.4: Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan ('OCEMP') (Document**

POLICY	EN-3 POLICY TEXT	ASSESSMENT
		Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.7), and the **Appendix 2.5: Outline Decommissioning Environmental Management ('ODEMP') (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.8)**.
Part 2.5 – Consideration of good design for energy infrastructure	2.5.1 Section 4.7 of EN-1 sets out the criteria for good design that should be applied to all energy infrastructure. 2.5.2 Proposals for renewable energy infrastructure should demonstrate good design, particularly in respect of landscape and visual amenity, opportunities for co-existence/co-location with other marine and terrestrial uses, and in the design of the project to mitigate impacts such as noise and effects on ecology and heritage.	As detailed in section 4 of the **Design and Access Approach Document (Document Ref. 5.6) ('DAAD')** and **ES Chapter 3: Alternatives & Design Evolution (Document Ref. 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.3)**, good design has been a fundamental consideration in the development of the Proposed Development. The **DAAD (Document Ref. 5.6)** demonstrates how the Proposed Development has been developed in accordance with good design policy in the NPSs. This has included the adoption of project level Design Objectives at an early stage, and Outline Design Principles which are set out in **Appendix 1** of the **DAAD (Document Ref: 5.6)** to guide embed good design outcomes in the detailed design of the Proposed Development. The latter are secured by a requirement in the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**. The Design Objectives have been used to steer and influence the design of the Proposed Development to avoid and reduce adverse impacts wherever possible, make the most of opportunities for enhancement and balance the need for appropriate flexibility within the DCO Application. **ES Chapter 3: Alternatives & Design Evolution (Document Ref. 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.3)** notes that the Proposed Development has been designed with embedded mitigation, including setbacks from residential areas and sensitive viewpoints to minimise visual impacts. The Proposed Development has retained flexibility in solar panel heights to balance efficiency and minimise visibility. Panel

POLICY	EN-3 POLICY TEXT	ASSESSMENT
		heights were reduced after flood modelling results showed lower elevations were feasible. In the Solar Array Area, the Onsite Substation and battery storage areas have been sited away from visually sensitive locations, with the Onsite Substation placed centrally, in a less prominent section of the Site. Opportunities for co-existence/co-location have been maximised where feasible, particularly in maintaining existing field boundaries and avoiding fragmentation of productive farmland. Flood risk considerations influenced the elevation of solar panels to ensure climate resilience. The project maximises energy efficiency through an optimized layout and use of underground cabling within the Cable Route to reduce landscape impact. As shown on the **Works Plan (Document Ref: 2.4)** the BESS and Onsite Substation will be located within the centre of the Site to maximise the distance from sensitive receptors; and buffers have been included to nearby properties, ensuring a minimum distance to other noise emitting plant. The layout has been refined to avoid sensitive ecological habitats. Hedgerows and green corridors are retained and enhanced to support biodiversity, and the flood risk assessment has incorporated sustainable drainage solutions to prevent runoff impacts on adjacent habitats. Following identification of the need for a Bespoke Access Road to provide suitable access to the Proposed Development, the Applicant undertook an iterative process to refine and evolve the design and route of the road corridor. This included internal workshops, options appraisals and stakeholder engagement. **ES Appendix 3.2 Bespoke Access Road Appraisal (Document Ref: 6.3.10)** demonstrates that implementation of a Bespoke Access Road to facilitate material construction traffic rather than the use of the existing public highway network to reduce potential

POLICY	EN-3 POLICY TEXT	ASSESSMENT
		impacts on existing road users and the risk of traffic management issues. As outlined in the **DAAD (Document Ref. 5.6),** the subsequent refinement of the Bespoke Access Corridor included archaeological investigation (such as geophysical surveys and trial trenching) and consideration of the location of veteran trees and hedgerows. The Cable Route Corridor generally follows existing linear infrastructure (e.g., roads and drainage channels) to minimise additional land disruption. Engagement with landowners and statutory consultees including North Kesteven District Council, Lincolnshire County Council, Boston Borough Council, Natural England, Historic England, Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust and the Environment Agency has formed an important part of the design process and helped to identify opportunities for co-existence and co-location with other terrestrial uses. A full appraisal of the Cable Route Corridor options can be found in **ES Appendix 3.1 Grid Connection Corridor Appraisal (Document Ref: 6.3.9)** and demonstrates how the corridor minimises potential environmental effects as far as possible whilst ensuring the corridor is feasible from technical, engineering and planning perspectives. As a result of the design approach adopted by the Applicant, the Proposed Development would deliver a number of environmental, social and economic benefits in addition to the generation of secure, low cost, decarbonised, clean, renewable energy. Please refer to the **Design and Access Approach Document (Document Ref: 5.6)** for further information on

POLICY	EN-3 POLICY TEXT	ASSESSMENT
		how good design in conformity with NPS policy is achieved and secured**.**
2.6 Flexibility in the project details	2.6.1 Where details are still to be finalised, applicants should explain in the application which elements of the proposal have yet to be finalised, and the reason why this is the case. 2.6.2 Where flexibility is sought in the consent as a result, applicants should, to the best of their knowledge, assess the likely worst-case environmental, social and economic effects of the proposed development to ensure that the impacts of the project as it may be constructed have been properly assessed. 2.6.3 Full guidance on how applicants and the Secretary of State should manage flexibility is set out in Section 4.3 of EN-1.	As set out in the **DAAD (Document Ref: 5.6)**, it is not possible at this stage of the process to finalise the detailed design of the Proposed Development. Following the granting of the DCO, making of the final investment decision and award of a contractor(s), the appointed contractor will carry out detailed design studies to inform the final design. This would make effective use of available technologies and optimise the design and layout. The final detailed design of the Proposed Development would be subject to approval by the relevant planning authority, as secured by a requirement in Schedule 2 of the **Draft Development Consent Order (Document Ref: 3.1)**. The Applicant wishes to retain flexibility regarding the design detail of certain components of the Proposed Development. The extent of flexibility required is described in Section 2.4 of **ES Chapter 2: Proposed Development (Document Ref. 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.2)** and set out in the **DAAD (Document Ref: 5.6).** A key reason for this is to allow the potential incorporation of technological advancements, allowing for the latest solar panel and electrical technologies to be incorporated that could increase the benefits of the infrastructure beyond those currently envisaged. The Applicant's approach to EIA, including the use of the Rochdale envelope to assess the maximum design parameters for the elements where flexibility needs to be retained, is set out in **ES Chapter 4: Scope and Methodology (Document Ref: 6.2, Vol.1, 6.2.4).**

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		The **Works Plan (Document Ref: 2.4)** defines maximum spatial extents within which each numbered work must be constructed and operated. The **Indicative Site Layout Plan (Document Ref: 6.4, ES Vol.3, 6.4.4)** represents an illustrative example of a scheme that could be constructed in line with the parameters identified in Section 2.4 of the ES. Where flexibility has been retained, the ES assesses the likely significant effects of the relevant maximum extent parameter to ensure a conservative 'worst-case' assessment has been carried out. Establishing the maximum parameters enables a robust assessment of likely significant environmental effects to be undertaken within this ES for topics where the nature of the assessment requires a specific level of detail, such as maximum heights, massing, or noise levels. Thus, the assessment parameters form the basis of the assessment. The assessment parameters are detailed in the works descriptions which are linked to Schedule 1 within the **Draft Development Consent Order (Document Ref: 3.1)** and are in **Section 2.4: Design Parameters** of **ES Chapter 2: Proposed Development (Document Ref: 6.2),** and a number of Control Documents as listed within the **Application Guide (Document Ref. 1.3)** and supported by the figures presented in **ES Volume 3 (Document Ref: 6.4)**.
Part 2.10 Solar Photovoltaic Generation		
Applicant Assessment –	2.10.19 Irradiance will be a key consideration for the applicant in identifying a potential site as the amount of electricity generated on site is directly	The **Site Selection Report** (**Appendix 2** of **Planning Statement, Document Ref: 5.5**) considered irradiance as a key factor. In comparison to some other areas of the UK, the east of England has a combination of high levels of irradiation

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Irradiance and site topography	affected by irradiance levels. Irradiance of a site will in turn be affected by surrounding topography, with an uncovered or exposed site of good elevation and favourable south-facing aspect more likely to increase year-round irradiance levels. This in turn affects the carbon emission savings and the commercial viability of the site. 2.10.20 In order to maximise irradiance, applicants may choose a site and design its layout with variable and diverse panel types and aspects, and panel arrays may also follow the movement of the sun in order further to maximise the solar resource.	and large flat open areas of land. Lincolnshire is generally flat or with a gently undulating topography, which is suitable and beneficial for solar. This increases the likelihood of being able to identify a suitable site capable of producing a large amount of electricity. Therefore, this influenced the location of the Order Limits within proximity to the grid capacity. The land in this area of the East Midlands was chosen due to future potential for grid capacity, general lack of constraints (due to its flat topography, good solar irradiance and limited tree cover/field boundaries. The Site Selection Report confirms that alternative locations within a 10km radius had similar irradiance but were less suitable due to other constraints. The Proposed Development would utilise fixed south-facing panel orientation is chosen to maximise year-round solar resource. Due to the fast-evolving pace of solar PV technology, the Proposed Development allows some flexibility to be able to choose specific technology closer to the construction within the parameters defined in the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**. This will enable the optimum production of renewable energy within the Proposed Development.
Applicant Assessment – *Network Connection*	2.10.21 Applicants should consider important issues relating to network connection at Section 4.11 of EN-1 and in EN-5. In particular, and where appropriate, applicants should proceed in a manner consistent with the regulatory regime for offshore transmission networks established by	The Applicant initially engaged with the National Electricity System Operator ('NESO') as the point of contact for new connection requests to discuss the potential opportunities for a connection offer within the target region identified.

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	Ofgem, details of which are set out in EN-5.	The Applicant began to review large landholdings capable of entering into voluntary commercial agreements within timescales that would allow the connection date to be met. Upon identification of a small number of willing landowners the Applicant entered into negotiations on two continuous sites, then known as Beacon Fen North and Beacon Fen South, while firming up the grid offer with NESO. Beacon Fen South was later removed from the Proposed Development due to conflicts with Anglian Water's Lincolnshire Reservoir while Beacon Fen North was retained and associated Cable Route Corridor was refined following further surveys and design work. The **Site Selection Report** (**Appendix 2** of **Planning Statement, Document Ref: 5.5**) explains the Applicant's subsequent assessment of reasonable alternatives using a logical and sequential approach. The Proposed Development has secured a grid connection agreement to allow export and import of electricity to and from the National Grid. The Bicker Fen Substation would facilitate the export and import of electricity from the Proposed Development to the National Grid. **ES Chapter 3: Alternatives & Design Evolution (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.3)** and the **Electricity Grid Connection Statement (Document Ref. 7.1)** provide further information on the proposed grid connection. The cumulative impact of the Proposed Development and developments within the surrounding area is included in **ES Chapter 18: Cumulative Effects (Document Ref: 6.2, Vol.1, 6.2.18).** The chapter sets out the short list of other
	2.10.22 Many solar farms are connected into the local distribution network. The capacity of the local grid network to accept the likely output from a proposed solar farm is critical to the technical and commercial feasibility of a development proposal.	
	2.10.23 Larger developments may seek connection to the transmission network if there is available network capacity and/or supportive infrastructure.	
	2.10.24 In either case the connection voltage, availability of network capacity, and the distance from the solar farm to the existing network can have a significant effect on the commercial feasibility of a development proposal.	
	2.10.25 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.	
	2.10.26 Where this is the case, applicants should consider the cumulative impacts of situating a solar	

POLICY	EN-3 POLICY TEXT	ASSESSMENT
	farm in proximity to other energy generating stations and infrastructure.	existing development and/or approved development accounted for in the chapter's cumulative assessment.
Applicant Assessment – *Proximity of site to dwellings*	2.10.27 Utility-scale solar farms are large sites that may have a significant zone of visual influence. The two main impact issues that determine distances to sensitive receptors are therefore likely to be visual amenity and glint and glare. These are considered in Landscape, Visual and Residential Amenity (paragraphs 2.10.93-2.10.101) and Glint and Glare (paragraphs 2.10.102 – 2.10.106) impact sections below.	As set out in the **Site Selection Report** (**Appendix 2** of **Planning Statement, Document Ref: 5.5**), the proximity of dwellings was a key consideration in site selection. In selecting the Solar Array Area location, the Applicant considered that there was sufficient land available to be able to provide offsets to residential receptors through a combination of setbacks, natural screening as well as existing and proposed landscape improvements. **ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.6)** assesses the visual impact of the Proposed Development. It comprises a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) which considers the potential for likely significant effects during construction, operation and decommissioning of the Proposed Development on landscape character and visual amenity. It includes information on embedded mitigation measures. However, it concludes that during construction there will be significant landscape impacts on the Landscape Character of the Site, Fenland Scrub Area and Holland Reclaimed Fen, and significant visual impacts on a number of visual receptors. The impacts will decrease during operation as measures from the Landscape and Ecological Management Plan ('LEMP') are implemented, which is secured by Requirement in Schedule 2 of the **Draft Development Consent Order (Document Ref: 3.1)** will be based on the **Outline LEMP ES Appendix 6.7 (Document Ref: 6.3, Vol 3, 6.3.19)** but at year 15 there will still be landscape impacts on the Landscape Character of the Site, and Visual impacts

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		on a handful of visual receptors. There will also be significant Landscape and Visual effects during the decommissioning phase. The **ES Chapter 13: Glint and Glare (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.13)** confirms that potential effects on residential receptors have been considered, with mitigation measures proposed where necessary to minimise visual impact.
Applicant Assessment – *Agriculture Land Classification and land type*	2.10.28 Solar is a highly flexible technology and as such can be deployed on a wide variety of land types. 2.10.29 While land type should not be a predominating factor in determining the suitability of the site location applicants should, where possible, utilise suitable previously developed land, brownfield land, contaminated land and industrial land. Where the proposed use of any agricultural land has been shown to be necessary, poorer quality land should be preferred to higher quality land avoiding the use of "Best and Most Versatile" agricultural land where possible. 'Best and Most Versatile agricultural land is defined as land in grades 1, 2 and 3a of the Agricultural Land Classification 2.10.30 Whilst the development of ground mounted solar arrays is not prohibited on Best and Most Versatile agricultural land, or sites designated for their natural beauty, or recognised for	As set out in the **Site Selection Report** (**Appendix 2** of **Planning Statement, Document Ref: 5.5**), the land in the vicinity of the point of connection is mainly agricultural and has flood risk present and areas of Grade 2 agricultural land. The Solar Array Area primarily comprises Grade 3 agricultural land and has limited areas of flood risk. The Agricultural Land Classification assessment confirmed that the design objectives for the Proposed Development sought to avoid Best and Most Versatile ('BMV') land wherever possible, while also taking into account flood risk and noise impact reduction. **Appendix 14.4: Outline Soil Management Plan (OSMP) (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.95)** includes measures to mitigate damage to agricultural drainage within the Site and guidance on best practice measures regarding soil management, handling, storage, replace and mitigation. Preparation, approval and implementation of detailed versions of the OSMP is secured through a Requirement in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1).** The **Site Selection Report** (**Appendix 2** of **Planning Statement, Document Ref: 5.5**) explains the Applicant's approach to selection of an appropriate site to take forward. The report explains that as per EN-3, initially there are three

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	ecological or archaeological importance, the impacts of such are expected to be considered and are discussed under paragraphs 2.10.73 – 92 and 2.10.107 – 2.10.126.	fundamental attributes required to develop NSIP scale solar project: suitable irradiance and topography; a connection to the National Grid, and; available land. These three attributes identified locations which may be suitable for such solar development and focused the Applicant's search on sites in the east of England and particularly the South Lincolnshire and wider East Midlands area (where the Applicant was aware there was capacity in the National Grid infrastructure). Once the search area was determined, the Applicant applied specific environmental search criteria, including agricultural land grade to find appropriate land which would be able to deliver its objectives. BMV land is a common constraint around the Beacon Fen Point of Connection and as a result this search extended several kilometres outwards, and efforts were made to avoid as much as possible. The Applicant's analysis regarded the minimum area for large scale solar to be economically viable identified a threshold of at least 300 ha of continuous land for an individual site. Only 'continuous' sites were considered in selection in order to maximise the potential energy generation and assist with deliverability and management of potential impacts of a proposed solar development**.** The Site Selection Report goes on to explain the Applicant's subsequent assessment of reasonable alternatives using a logical and sequential approach that pays reference to EN-3. Stage 1 identified potential sites based on grid connection to the Bicker Fen Substation; Stage 2 considered major environmental constraints, land use topography and agricultural land quality; and Stage 3 considered whether potential alternative sites would be more suitable based on
	2.10.31 It is recognised that at this scale, it is likely that applicants' developments will use some agricultural land. Applicants should explain their choice of site, noting the preference for development to be on suitable brownfield, industrial and low and medium grade agricultural land.	
	2.10.32 Where sited on agricultural land, consideration may be given as to whether the proposal allows for continued agricultural use and/or can be co-located with other functions (for example, onshore wind generation, storage, hydrogen electrolysers) to maximise the efficiency of land use.	
	2.10.33 The Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) is the only approved system for grading agricultural quality in England and Wales and, if necessary, field surveys should be used to establish the ALC grades in accordance with the current, or any successor to it, grading criteria and identify the soil types to inform soil management at the	

POLICY	EN-3 POLICY TEXT	ASSESSMENT
	construction, operation, and decommissioning phases in line with the Defra Construction Code.	factors such as size, spatial continuity and topography. Stage 4 evaluated the three potential alternative sites identified at stage 3, by reference to a range of appropriate planning and environmental factors consistent with NPS EN-3 and EN-1. The Applicant's assessment identified that each of the potential alternative sites presented similar land type and ALC grading characteristics (i.e. Grade 3) and therefore there was no obvious preference for a particular site on the basis of the ALC search criteria. The Applicant was equally aware that land quality was one of several important factors in the site selection exercise and had to be considered in the round with other environmental and technical considerations. The assessment findings of the Site Selection Report conclude that there are no obviously more suitable locations to make use of the availability capacity at Bicker Fen Substation than the proposed Site for the Proposed Development as no potential alternative sites would have the capability of meeting the project objectives. Following decommissioning of the Proposed Development, any disturbed soil will be reinstated and restored to agricultural land. It has not been confirmed whether the Solar Array Area will continue to be in agricultural use via sheep grazing during the operational phase, the viability of this will be determined at detailed design. The Solar Array Area has been designed to maintain and integrate existing field patterns and associated boundary features including hedgerows, trees and scrub as far as feasible. An on-site reservoir will be retained for supply of water for irrigation of onsite habitats. These measures will help facilitate reversion of the land to agricultural use at decommissioning.
	2.10.34 Applicants are encouraged to develop and implement a Soil Resources and Management Plan which could help to use and manage soils sustainably and minimise adverse impacts on soil health and potential land contamination. This should be in line with the ambition set out in the Environmental Improvement Plan to bring at least 40% of England's agricultural soils into sustainable management by 2028 and increase this up to 60% by 2030.	

POLICY	EN-3 POLICY TEXT	ASSESSMENT
		Following cable instalment, soil will be reinstated above the cable trench, access tracks would be removed and the land returned to agricultural use. Suitable agricultural land drainage will be repaired / replaced where appropriate as part of the restoration works and will be included in the detailed in **Appendix 2.4: OCEMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol 2, 6.3.7)**, of which preparation, approval and implementation of a detailed version is secured through a requirement in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**. While the Bespoke Access Road would not be restored to agriculture use until after decommissioning, it could be used by landowners to facilitate agricultural operations during the operational phase of the Proposed Development and could be retained post-decommissioning if it is the landowner's preference. **ES Chapter 14: Soils and Agricultural Land (Document Ref. 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.14)** assesses the reversible and irreversible impacts of the Proposed Development on Land, Soils and Groundwater according to the Agricultural Land Classification in line with the Defra Construction Code. The **Outline Soil Management Plan (Appendix 14.4 to ES Chapter 14: Soils and Agricultural Land (Document Ref. 6 ES Vol.1, 6.2.14)** sets out measures and processes required to safeguard the soil and land resources from loss, damage, or disruption as a result of the Proposed Development. It will ensure that the Applicant manages the Soil sustainability and that damage to soil health is minimised by providing measures for soil handling, soil moisture content assessments and storage and trafficking of soils during the construction, operation (including maintenance) and decommissioning phase of the Proposed Development. Preparation, approval and

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		implementation of detailed versions of the OSMP is secured through a requirement in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**. The majority of the Solar Array Area could be available for continued agricultural use via sheep grazing during the operational phase, albeit at a lower productivity than its current arable use. The viability of this will be determined at detailed design. The baseline land capacity is expected to remain unchanged, and the current agricultural infrastructure (fences, tracks, and drainage) will remain unchanged and will be directly returned to agricultural production after decommissioning.
Applicant Assessment – *Accessibility*	2.10.35 Applicants will need to consider the suitability of the access routes to the proposed site for both the construction and operation of the solar farm with the former likely to raise more issues. 2.10.36 Given that potential solar farm sites are largely in rural areas, access for the delivery of solar arrays and associated infrastructure during construction can be a significant consideration for solar farm siting. 2.10.37 Developers will usually need to construct on-site access routes for operation and maintenance activities, such as footpaths, earthworks, or landscaping.	As set out in the **Site Selection Report (Appendix 2** of **Planning Statement, Document Ref: 5.5)**, a key consideration in the selection of a suitable site was that it would be reasonably accessible from the strategic road network. **ES Chapter 3: Alternatives and Design Evolution (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.3)** sets out how the access arrangements impacted the design evolution of the project. The initial access route appraisal identified the need to create a bespoke access route to the solar array area, which then underwent refinements to ensure the most efficient and direct access to the Proposed Development from both the A17 and the A153/B1395, while considering other constraints. A Bespoke Access Road from the A17 has been identified as required to support access to the Proposed Development, to allow larger vehicles to access the Solar Array Area during construction and operation. As set out in **ES Appendix 3.2**

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	2.10.38 In addition, sometimes access routes will need to be constructed to connect solar farms to the public road network. 2.10.39 Applications should include the full extent of the access routes necessary for operation and maintenance and an assessment of their effects.	**Bespoke Access Road Appraisal (Document Ref: 6.3.10)**, this would minimise impacts on local roads and existing road users and reduce the risk of traffic management issues. The Bespoke Access Road will remain in place throughout the operational life of the development to reduce disruption involved in removing then relaying it in the event of a HV transformer failure and again for decommissioning. The Bespoke Access Road options were shared at the statutory consultation, in the Preliminary Environmental Impact Report and within the consultation boards as set out in the **Consultation Report (Document Ref: 5.1)**. During the construction phase, the majority of development traffic will utilise the A17 and Bespoke Access Road to access Cable Route Compound 1, therefore avoiding local roads. Cable Route compounds 2, 5 and 6 will be accessed via private access roads directly from the A17. Therefore, the only local roads that will be used to access construction sites are Carterplot Road/Great Hale Drove for access to the Cable Route Compounds 3 and 4, and Bicker Drove/Vicarage Drove for access to the Bicker Fen substation. As set out in **ES Chapter 9: Access and Traffic (Document Ref: 6.2 Vol.1, 6.2.9)**, the source of imported construction materials is not confirmed, but it is anticipated that construction components for the solar, Cable Route and Bicker Fen Substation will arrive from either Immingham Port to the north of the Site or Port Sutton Bridge to the south-east of the Site. The A17 is the principal road near the Site which will accommodate construction vehicle movements from the

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		wider road network and access for Heavy Goods Vehicles will be restricted to left-in/left-out. **ES Chapter 9: Access and Traffic (Document Ref: 6.2 Vol.1, 6.2.9)** assesses the access routes proposed and confirms that due to measures proposed for construction, the Proposed Development will not result in residual adverse effects upon highway safety or generate any highway capacity issues. Proposed mitigation measures include access from the A17 having a left-in/left-out only arrangement, and implementation of a Construction Traffic Management Plan ('CTMP') and accompanying Delivery Management Plan. An outline CTMP is provided at **Appendix 9.3 (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol. 2, 6.3.78)**. Preparation, approval and implementation of a detailed version of the CTMP is secured through a requirement in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**. As set out in **ES Chapter 2: Proposed Development (Document Ref. 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.2)**, during construction, temporary construction compounds will be required, as well as temporary roadways, to enable access to all the land within the Proposed Development boundary. Access tracks of between 3.5m to 9m in width will be required for construction access and routine maintenance when operational. Access tracks may be located adjacent to drainage ditches and will incorporate the necessary ecological Environment Agency (EA) and/or Internal Drainage Board (IDB) buffers where required.
Applicant Assessment –	2.10.40 Proposed developments may affect the provision of public rights of way networks.	**ES Chapter 15: Socio-economic (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.15)** provides an assessment of the Proposed

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Public Rights of Way	2.10.41 Public rights of way may need to be temporarily closed or diverted to enable construction, however, applicants should keep, as far as is practicable and safe, all public rights of way that cross the proposed development site open during construction and protect users where a public right of way borders or crosses the site. 2.10.42 Applicants are encouraged to design the layout and appearance of the site to ensure continued recreational use of public rights of way where possible during construction, and in particular during operation of the site. 2.10.43 Applicants are encouraged where possible to minimise the visual impacts of the development for those using existing public rights of way, considering the impacts this may have on any other visual amenities in the surrounding landscape. 2.10.44 Applicants should consider and maximise opportunities to facilitate enhancements to the public rights of way and the inclusion, through site layout and design of access, of new opportunities for the public to access and cross proposed solar development	Development's impact on PRoW within the Order Limits, or that will be impacted by the Proposed Development. The Solar Array Area contains no PRoW on the ground. An existing mapped (but not present) inaccessible PRoW stub exists in the northeast corner. A number of existing PRoW traverse the Bespoke Access Corridor and Cable Route Corridor and are presented in **ES Chapter 15: Socio-economic (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.15)** and have been illustrated in **Figure 15.3: Public Rights of Way (Document Ref: 6.4 ES Vol.3, 6.4.79)**. These PRoWs may be temporarily closed during construction; however, mitigation measures have been outlined below. A permissive path including several footbridges over ditches is proposed within the Solar Array Area during the operational phase, thereby connecting the existing PRoW Ewer/12/1 to a wider network during the operational lifetime of the Proposed Development. This is secured by a requirement in Schedule 2 to the **Draft Development Consent Order (Document Ref: 3.1) and** represents an enhancement of the existing situation. The **Chapter 15: Socio-Economic (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.15)** and **Appendix 2.4: Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.8)** sets out mitigation measures for PRoW, including: • Installation and maintenance of hoarding where necessary to provide screening for PRoW;

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	sites (whether via the adoption of new public rights of way or the creation of permissive paths), taking into account, where appropriate, the views of landowners.	• Sufficient protection/ separation distances will be provided between existing PRoWs and construction routes (where necessary); and • Managing areas where the proposed construction routes cross any existing PRoWs or local access roads through temporary closure and/or by implementing traffic management measures. PRoW Ewer/12/1 is being effectively 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 Proposed Development, 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. An indicative route of the permissive path is illustrated in **Figure 6.31 Landscape Strategy Plan (Document Ref: 6.4 ES Vol.3, 6.4.42)**. Due to the time limited nature of the Proposed Development, it is not considered appropriate to propose permanent new or modified rights of way since these would interfere with their private rights long after the decommissioning of the Proposed Development. Measures to ensure the implantation of safe crossing points for each PRoW are secured in the **Outline Design Principles (Appendix 1** of the **Design Approach Document, Document Ref: 5.6)**. Table 6.6 of **ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.6)** sets out embedded measures to mitigate the visual

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		impacts of the Proposed Development for those using public rights of way, including but not limited to: • Minimising the size and extent of land use change and direct landscape effects; • The Onsite Substation and BESS location was informed by landscape considerations, including to minimise its visual presence in the landscape; and • Limiting the loss of existing vegetation including mature trees and hedgerows through siting and design refinements.
	2.10.45 Applicants should set out detail on how public rights of way would be managed to ensure they are safe to use in an outline Public Rights of Way Management Plan.	The PRoWs that will be affected by the construction of the Bespoke Access Road and Cable Route will be temporarily closed during the construction of the respective parts of the development, and then subject to managed crossing points (see **Appendix 2.1: Grid Connection Construction Method Statement (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol. 2, 6.3.4)** and **Appendix 2.2: Bespoke Access Road Construction Method Statement (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol. 2, 6.3.5)** for details). Safe crossing points will be created for any PRoWs that cross the Bespoke Access Road during the operational phase, secured in the **Outline Design Principles (Appendix 1** of the **Design Approach Document, Document Ref: 5.6)**. Therefore, during operation, the Bespoke Access Road will not affect existing PRoWs. A detailed CEMP will set out the full detail of PRoW management during construction, and a detailed DEMP will detail the same for the decommissioning stage of the Proposed Development. Preparation, approval and implementation of detailed versions of these plans is secured

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		through requirements in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**. **Appendix 2.4: OCEMP (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.8)** sets out measures to ensure PRoW are safe to use, including: • Installation and maintenance of signage indicating temporary closure of PRoW; • Sufficient protection/ separation distances will be provided between existing PRoWs and construction routes (where necessary); and • Managing areas where the proposed construction routes cross any existing PRoWs or local access roads by maximising visibility between construction vehicles and other users (pedestrians and road users) and implementing traffic management. As set out in the **OCTMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.79**), driver training will reinforce consideration for pedestrians, cyclists and equestrian on or near PRoWs. Preparation, approval and implementation of a detailed version of the CTMP is secured through a requirement in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**.
Applicant Assessment – *Security and Lighting*	2.10.46 Security of the site is a key consideration for developers. Applicants may wish to consider not only the availability of natural defences such as steep gradients, hedging and rivers but also perimeter security measures such as fencing, electronic security, CCTV	**ES Chapter 2: Proposed Development (Document Ref. 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.2)** outlines the security measures incorporated in the design of the Proposed Development. As set secured by the Outline Design Principles within **Appendix 1** of the **DAAD (Document Ref: 5.6)**, fences will be designed to provide adequate security while keeping landscape and visual impact to a minimum through

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	and lighting, with the measures proposed on a site-specific basis. 2.10.47 Applicants should assess the visual impact of these security measures, as well as the impacts on local residents, including for example issues relating to intrusion from CCTV and light pollution in the vicinity of the site.	measures such as installing them behind hedgerows where possible. Measures will be implemented to reduce the impact of security fencing and lighting (for example, by installing downward light fittings to prevent light spillage), as set out in detail in the **Appendix 6.7: OLEMP (Document Ref 6.3, ES Vol 2, 6.3.19)** and **Appendix 2.4: OCEMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol 2, 6.3.7).** Preparation, approval and implementation of detailed versions of these plans is secured through requirements in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**. Lighting and associated mitigation measures, which will prevent or minimise light spill and pollution during construction and operation, are considered within **ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual Impact (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol, 2, 6.2.6)**. The **Statutory Nuisance Statement (Document Ref: 5.3)** confirms that with implementation of the mitigation measures, no claim against statutory nuisance is envisaged in respect of statutory nuisance under Section 79(1)(f) of the EPA.
Technical Considerations *– Capacity of a site*	2.10.55 The installed generating capacity of a solar farm will decline over time in correlation with the reduction in panel array efficiency. There is a range of sources of degradation that developers need to consider when deciding on a solar panel technology to be used. Applicants may account for this by overplanting solar panel arrays. 2.10.56 AC installed export capacity should not be seen as an appropriate	The Applicant's approach to EIA, including the use of the Rochdale envelope to assess effects, is set out in **ES Chapter 4: Scope and Methodology (Document Ref. 6.2, Vol.1, 6.2.4).** The **Explanatory Memorandum (Document Ref: 3.2)** explains that megawatt capacity (however measured) has not been used to constrain the Proposed Development. The **Works Plan (Document Ref: 2.4)** is one of the means by which the maximum extent has been constrained. It defines maximum spatial extents within which each numbered work must be constructed and operated.

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	tool to constrain the impacts of a solar farm. Applicants should use other measurements, such as panel size, total area and percentage of ground cover to set the maximum extent of development when determining the planning impacts of an application.	
Technical Considerations *– Site layout design, and appearance*	2.10.59 Applicants should consider the criteria for good design set out in EN-1 Section 4.7 at an early stage when developing projects. 2.10.60 As set out above applicants will consider several factors when considering the design and layout of sites, including proximity to available grid capacity to accommodate the scale of generation, orientation, topography, previous land–use, and ability to mitigate environmental impacts and flood risk. 2.10.61 For a solar farm to generate electricity efficiently the panel array spacing should seek to maximise the potential power output of the site. The type, spacing and aspect of panel arrays will depend on the physical characteristics of the site such as site elevation.	As explained in **ES Chapter 3: Alternatives & Design Evolution (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.3)**, and the **Site Selection Report** (**Appendix 2** of **Planning Statement, Document Ref: 5.5**) the Applicant set out to identify a site for a solar farm which: • Would contribute to meeting the UK's urgent need for clean, renewable, energy generation; • Would be in viable proximity to an available connection to the national grid; • Would avoid impacts on local communities and local environments as far as practicable; • Would be accessible from the strategic road network to facilitate construction access; • Would be able to accommodate on-site energy storage to provide important balancing services for the national grid; and • Would have willing landowners so that land could be acquired voluntarily thereby avoiding the need for large scale compulsory acquisition. As detailed in the **ES Chapter 3: Alternatives & Design Evolution (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.3)**, the **Site Selection Report** (**Appendix 2** of **Planning Statement, Document Ref. 5.5**), and the **DAAD (Document Ref: 5.6),** the location and design of the Proposed Development is the

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		result of a comprehensive site selection process that had regard to topography, irradiance and other relevant environmental, and planning factors, in order to avoid and minimise impacts as early as possible. The Site Selection Report describes the four-stage process adopted to evaluate reasonable alternatives and has concluded that there is no obviously more suitable site. Following this, the Proposed Development has undergone an appropriate design process which has resulted in the delivery of a functional and efficient Proposed Development design which will deliver a large amount of renewable and low carbon electricity using solar PV modules, whilst being sensitive to the local context and surrounding area, avoiding and minimising impacts on the environment as far as practicable. The design process and basis of design are set out in the **DAAD (Document Ref: 5.6)**, which sets out the design approach and evolution of the Proposed Development which has been shaped by the Outline Design Principles and has responded to results from environmental surveys, consultation feedback and engagement with stakeholders via an iterative design process.
	2.10.62 In terms of design and layout, applicants may favour a south-facing arrangement of panels to maximise output although other orientations may be chosen. For example, an east-west layout, whilst likely to result in reduced output compared to south-facing panels on a panel-by-panel basis, may allow for	As identified in **ES Chapter 2: Proposed Development (Document Ref. 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.2)** the mounting structure of the Solar PV modules will be designed to face southwards on a fixed platform. The Solar PV modules would be angled at a tilt of 10 to 45 degrees from horizontal to optimise daylight absorption. These details will be further developed through detailed design and engineering details to maximise the development area within Work No.1 to achieve the

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	a greater density of panels to compensate and therefore for generation to be spread more evenly throughout the day.	available capacity. This is secured within the **Outline Design Principles at Appendix 1** of the **DAAD (Document Ref: 5.6)**.
	2.10.63 It is likely that underground and overhead cabling will be required to connect the electrical assets of the site, such as from the substation to the panel arrays or storage facilities.	The cabling works required within the Solar Array Area to connect the generating components to the Onsite Substation are contained in Work No. 1 and Work No. 6 in the **Draft Development Consent Order (Document Ref. 3.1). ES Chapter 2: Proposed Development (Document Ref. 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.2)** sets out that low voltage electrical cabling will be required to connect PV modules and BESS to inverters (typically via 1.0/1.5kV DC cables), and inverters to the onsite transformers (typically via 0.4/1kV AC cables) Higher voltage cables (typically 33kV) are required between transformers and switchgear and from switchgear to the Onsite Substation. Cable trenches within the Solar Array Area will be up to 1.2m in width and 1.64m in depth. Some onsite cabling between PV modules and inverters is anticipated to be above ground level, placed along rows of racks fixed to the mounting structure and underground, between racks and inverters. The Cable Route Corridor comprising the 400kV cable from the Onsite Substation to the Bicker Fen substation would be installed underground in trenches approximately 2m wide x 2.5m deep excavated for each cable subject to design and ground conditions. **Appendix 2.1: Grid Connection Construction Method Statement (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.4)**, the **Appendix 3.1: Grid Connection Corridor Appraisal (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.9)** and the **Electricity**
	2.10.64 In the case of underground cabling, applicants are expected to provide a method statement describing cable trench design, installation methodology, as well as details of the operation and maintenance regime.	

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		Grid Connection Statement (Document Ref. 7.1) describe the grid connection in detail including the Cable Route Corridor, cable trench design, installation methodology, equipment and details of construction and operation.
Technical Considerations *– Project Lifetime*	2.10.65 Applicants should consider the design life of solar panel efficiency over time when determining the period for which consent is required. An upper limit of 40 years is typical, although applicants may seek consent without a time-period or for differing time-periods of operation.	The **ES Chapter 2: Proposed Development (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.2)** specifies that the overall operational lifespan of the Solar Array Area is approximately 40 years, after which it would be safely decommissioned and returned to agricultural use. The **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)** secures that the operational lifetime of the Proposed Development must be no more than 40 years before it is decommissioned.
	2.10.66 Time limited consent, where granted, is described as temporary because there is a finite period for which it exists, after which the project would cease to have consent and therefore must seek to extend the period of consent or be decommissioned and removed.	At the end of the operational (including maintenance) phase, any above-ground infrastructure will be dismantled and removed per industry best practices. The decommissioned materials will be disposed of in accordance with the legislation at the time and will be reused where possible before recycling and disposal are considered. All concrete, hardstanding areas, foundations for the infrastructure and any internal tracks will be removed to a depth of up to 1.2 m. The Cable Route will be left in situ and medium voltage cables would either be removed or remain.
	2.10.67 Solar panel efficiency deteriorates over time and applicants may elect to replace panels during the lifetime of the site.	The Solar PV Site will be decommissioned in accordance with **Appendix 2.5: ODEMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.8).** Preparation, approval (by the relevant planning authority) and implementation of detailed version of the DEMP is secured through a requirement in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**. The **ES Chapter 2: Proposed Development (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.2)** sets out that there will be a

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		requirement for periodic replacement of some or all of the elements of the Proposed Development, including the solar panels. In the instance that full panel replacement is required, this would be programmed in stages to maximise the number of panels which are kept 'live' at any given time and avoid compromising the electricity generating capacity. As set out in **ES Chapter 9: Access & Traffic (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol, 1, 6.2.9)**, Experience of solar park construction elsewhere and based on information from solar panel manufacturers[1] suggests that replacing circa 25% of the solar panels at the Proposed Development could generate 1,000 two-way HGV movements. Adopting a robust assumption that this would take place over three months and with no additional works on Site would lead to an indicative AADT traffic impact of 11 HGVs or approximately 25%[2] of the HGV impact of the Proposed Development construction. Given that the Construction Effects of the Proposed Development are negligible it is very likely that Equipment Replacement would have negligible and Not Significant effects. **ES Chapter 12: Climate Change (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.12)** has considered replacement of the total Solar PV system (which includes panels and inverters) and their respective emissions and included this within the calculation of embodied carbon emissions for the Proposed Development.
Technical Considerations	2.10.68 Solar panels can be decommissioned relatively easily and	At the end of the operational (including maintenance) phase, any above-ground infrastructure will be dismantled and

[1] Limebury Farm Solar Park, planning reference 1/1096/2022/FULM Torridge District Council
[2] 11 divided by the Table 9.10 49 HGVs estimated to be generated on the A17.

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– *Decommissioning*	cheaply. The nature and extent of decommissioning of a site can vary. Generally, it is expected that the panel arrays and mounting structures will be decommissioned, and underground cabling dug out to ensure that prior use of the site can continue 2.10.69 Applicants should set out what would be decommissioned and removed from the site at the end of the operational life of the generating station, considering instances where it may be less harmful for the ecology of the site to keep or retain certain types of infrastructure, for example underground cabling, and where there may be socio-economic benefits in retaining site infrastructure after the operational life, such as retaining pathways through the site or a site substation.	removed per industry best practices. The decommissioned materials will be removed and recycled or disposed of in accordance with good practice following the waste hierarchy as mentioned in Section 1.12 of the **Appendix 2.5: ODEMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.8)**, with materials being reused or recycled wherever possible. Foundations and other below ground infrastructure that are not practicable to remove, will be cut below the surface to enable future ploughing. Any piles will be removed. Buried medium voltage cables would either be removed and the land restored or would be left in situ. The Cable Route will not be removed as part of the decommissioning phase and will, instead remain in situ avoiding impacts to soils and habitats. It is anticipated that the works undertaken as part of the extension at the Bicker Fen substation will also remain in situ (and under National Grid's control). The Bespoke Access Road will likely be the last aspect to be removed as it will be used to facilitate decommissioning of the Solar Array Area. Whilst it is assumed that the road will be removed, it is possible that engagement with the landowners at that time will establish a preference among some landowners for it to be retained. Optionality has been deliberately retained in the Application to facilitate such a scenario. The Solar PV Site will be decommissioned in accordance with the **Appendix 2.5: ODEMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.8)**. Preparation, approval (by the relevant planning authority) and implementation of detailed version of the DEMP is secured through a requirement in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**. Decommissioning is expected to take approximately 12 to 36 months. The decommissioning of the Solar Array Area will include the removal of the paths and potential reversion of grassland

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		underneath the arrays to arable status. Any preference of the landowner for the internal access tracks to be left in situ would be discussed and agreed with the landowners at the time of decommissioning. Biodiversity Net Gain monitoring and maintenance would cease at year 30 of the operational stage but would not be removed during the operational stage. Any landscape planting, such as planting of trees, hedgerows and scrub created to deliver biodiversity mitigation and enhancement associated with the Proposed Development that has potential to contain protected species would be left in situ (where possible) when the land comprising the Site is handed back to landowners. After this point, each landowner will have the ability to manage their land as they wish (within the restrictions of the governing legislation and planning system), and the involvement of the Applicant would cease.
Technical Considerations *– Flexibility in the project details*	2.10.70 In many cases, not all aspects of the proposal may have been settled in precise detail at the point of application. Such aspects may include: • the type, number and dimensions of the panels; • layout and spacing; • the type of inverter or transformer; and • whether storage will be installed (with the option to install further panels as a substitute).	The Applicant wishes to retain flexibility regarding the design detail of certain components of the Proposed Development. The extent of flexibility required is described in Section 2.4 of **ES Chapter 2: Proposed Development (Document Ref. 6.2)** and set out in the **DAAD (Document Ref: 5.6).** **ES Chapter 4: Scope and Methodology (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.4)** and **ES Chapter 2: Proposed Development (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.2)** explain the design parameters which have informed the ES and been used for assessment purposes. Where there is uncertainty, the Applicant has assessed the worst-case scenario for the purposes of the ES.
	2.10.71 Applicants should set out a range of options based on different	The approval of the detailed design of the Proposed Development is controlled via requirements in Schedule 2 to

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	panel numbers, types and layout, with and without storage.	the **Draft Development Consent Order (Document Ref: 3.1)**. The **DAAD (Document Ref. 5.6)** discusses the different options the Applicant has considered, how these evolved and how they will be controlled in the detailed design phase. The **Indicative Site Layout Plan (Document Ref: 6.4, ES Vol.3, 6.4.4)** and the **Illustrative Layout Plan of Battery Energy Storage System and On-Site Substation (Document Ref: 2.6)** describe certain ways in which the Proposed Development could be built out. The **Works Plan (Document Ref: 2.4)** defines maximum spatial extents within which each numbered work must be constructed and operated. While this is compatible with a scenario in which a BESS is not required this is not the proposal of the Applicant, the proposals include a BESS that would have 600MW capacity matching the capacity of the grid connection, and its purpose and contribution to the overall benefits of the Proposed Development are described in the **Statement of Reasons (Document Ref: 4.1)** and the **Planning Statement (Document Ref: 5.5)**.
Impacts – *Biodiversity, ecological, geological conservation and water management*	2.10.76 The applicant's ecological assessments should identify any ecological risk from developing on the proposed site. 2.10.77 Issues that need assessment may include habitats, ground nesting birds, wintering and migratory birds, bats, dormice, reptiles, great crested newts, water voles and badgers.	**ES Chapter 7: Ecology (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.7)** identifies ecological risks from developing the Proposed Development. In particular it considers the potential for likely significant effects arising from land take, airborne and waterborne contamination, habitat fragmentation and disturbance. The Applicant considered ecological constraints during the site selection and design process and used an advising ecologist during the design process to ensure that adverse

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	2.10.78 The applicant should use an advising ecologist during the design process to ensure that adverse impacts are avoided, minimised or mitigated in line with the mitigation hierarchy, and biodiversity enhancements are maximised.	impacts are avoided, minimised or mitigated in line with the mitigation hierarchy, and biodiversity enhancements are maximised. Section 7.6 of **ES Chapter 7: Ecology (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.7)** sets out the potential likely effects on the identified receptors during the construction, operation and decommissioning of the Proposed Development.
	2.10.79 The assessment may be informed by a 'desk study' of existing ecological records, an evaluation of the likely impacts of the solar farm upon ecological features, and should specify mitigation to avoid or minimise these impacts, and any further surveys required.	During the construction and decommissioning phases, the principal impacts will comprise of land loss, habitat destruction for protected species (such as ground resting and migratory birds, bats, great crested newts and badgers), contamination of nearby habitats, and disturbance or fragmentation of wildlife habitats due to gaps in hedgerows or lighting. During the operational phase, ecology will benefit as created habitats will mature, including grasslands and hedgerows. Reduced agricultural activity will lower fertiliser and pesticide use, improving water quality and supporting diverse wildlife. The application of proposed mitigation measures set out in Sections 7.6 and 7.7 of **ES Chapter 7: Ecology (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.7)** is anticipated to eliminate any significant adverse impacts of the Proposed Development. The only significant effect relates to the medium beneficial effect on habitats during operation as a result of Biodiversity Net Gain. Section 7.7 of **ES Chapter 7: Ecology (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.7)** sets embedded and additional mitigation measures relevant to biodiversity, which is secured by a framework **Appendix 2.4: OCEMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES**

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		Vol 2, 6.3.7) and an **Appendix 6.7: OLEMP (Document Ref 6.3, ES Vol 2, 6.3.19).** Preparation, approval and implementation of detailed versions of these plans is secured through requirements in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**. In addition, section 7.8 of **ES Chapter 7: Ecology (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.7)** sets out habitat enhancement will be made in support of biodiversity net gain.
	2.10.80 Applicants should consider earthworks associated with construction compounds, access roads and cable trenching.	**ES Chapter 2: Proposed Development (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.2)** describes the works required for construction of the Proposed Development, including construction compounds, access roads and installation of cables which will include earthworks.
	2.10.81 Where soil stripping occurs, topsoil and subsoil should be stripped, stored, and replaced separately to minimise soil damage and to provide optimal conditions for site restoration. Further details on minimising impacts on soil and soil handling are above at paragraphs 2.10.33 and 2.10.34.	Following decommissioning of the Proposed Development, any disturbed soil will be reinstated and restored to agricultural land. It has not been confirmed whether the Solar Array Area will continue to be in agricultural use during the operational phase. The Solar Array Area has been designed to maintain and integrate existing field patterns and associated boundary features including hedgerows, trees and scrub as far as feasible. An on-site reservoir will be retained for supply of water for irrigation of onsite habitats. These measures will help facilitate reversion of the land to agricultural use at decommissioning. Following cable instalment, soil will be reinstated above the cable trench, access tracks would be removed and the land returned to agricultural use. Suitable agricultural land drainage will be reinstated / repaired as part of the restoration works and will be included in the detailed in **Appendix 2.4: OCEMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol 2, 6.3.7)**. Preparation,

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		approval and implementation of a detailed version of this plan is secured through a requirement in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**. While the Bespoke Access Road would not be restored to agriculture use until after decommissioning, it could be used by landowners to facilitate agricultural operations and could be retained post-decommissioning if it is the landowner's preference. **ES Chapter 14: Soils and Agricultural Land (Document Ref. 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.14)** assesses the reversible and irreversible impacts of the Proposed Development on Land, Soils and Groundwater according to the Agricultural Land Classification in line with the Defra Construction Code. **Appendix 14.4: Outline Soil Management Plan ('SMP') (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.95)** sets out the principles on how the soils will be managed and protected during the construction, operation and decommissioning of the Proposed Development. This includes: • good practice soil handling measures such as appropriate storage of topsoil and measures to avoiding handling of wet soil; • requirements for appropriate storage of topsoil and subsoil and methodology for stripping; • procedures for handling soil in adverse weather conditions; • field testing of soil conditions; and • site-specific measures to safeguard land and soil resources within the Solar Array Area, Cable Route Corridor and Access Route Corridor.

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		A detailed soil management plan, substantially in accordance with the Outline SMP, will be prepared prior to construction as secured by a requirement in Schedule 2 to the **DCO Order (Document Ref: 3.1)**.
	2.10.82 Applicants should consider how security and lighting installations may impact on the local ecology. Where pole mounted CCTV facilities are proposed the location of these facilities should be carefully considered to minimise impact. If lighting is necessary, it should be minimised and directed away from areas of likely habitat.	**ES Chapter 2: Proposed Development (Document Ref. 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.2)** outlines the security measures, including lighting, incorporated in the design of the Proposed Development's design. The Proposed Development's security and lighting have been designed to respond sensitively to ecology and the landscape features. As outlined in Section 7.6 of **ES Chapter 7: Ecology (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.7)** prior to construction there will be a sensitive site lighting scheme will be established, as set out in the **Outline CEMP and DEMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol. 2, 6.2.7-8)**. Preparation, approval and implementation of detailed versions of these plans is secured via requirements in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1).** Lighting will be the minimum required for safety and security and not illuminating key habitat features (river corridors, hedgerows, Priority Habitats, mature trees). Embedded mitigation measures include: • Consideration of hood design, lamp height, and angle, to reduce light spill particularly avoiding illuminating retained foraging and commuting habitat on the site such as mature trees, waterbodies, tree lines, and hedgerows; • Use of LED with less blue light e.g. 'warm white' (~3000K) or red light where appropriate; • No metal halide lamps should be used anywhere on Site; • Minimising hours of lighting to those absolutely necessary for security and safety purposes, where possible lighting

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		should avoid key periods of bat activity (i.e. sunset and sunrise); and • Where security lights are necessary, movement sensors should be installed to avoid constant illumination (with as short an illumination time as reasonably possible).
	2.10.83 Applicants should consider how site boundaries are managed. If any hedges/scrub are to be removed, further surveys may be necessary to account for impacts. Buffer strips between perimeter fencing and hedges may be proposed, and the construction and design of any fencing should account for enabling mammal, reptile and other fauna access into the site if required to do so in the ecological report.	The **ES (Document Refs: 6.1, 6.2, 6.3 and 6.4)** takes account of all works boundaries and hedgerows. Buffers of at least 15 m around woodland and 5 m around hedgerow are included, as set out in **ES Chapter 7: Ecology (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.7)** and secured by **ES Appendix 6.7: Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (6.3, ES Vol. 2, 6.3.19).** A security perimeter fence is due to be implemented will include gaps to allow mammals that may use woodland habitats (such as small deer, badger, and hedgehog) to pass underneath at predetermined points. Areas outlined for ground nesting birds will not include such gaps to prevent mammals eating chicks or eggs.
	2.10.84 Where a Flood Risk Assessment has been carried out this must be submitted alongside the applicant's ES. This will need to consider the impact of drainage. As solar PV panels will drain to the existing ground, the impact will not, in general, be significant.	The DCO application is supported by **Appendix 11.1: Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) (Document Ref: 6.3. ES Vol.2, 6.3.81)** to the **ES Chapter 11: Water Resources and Flood Risk (Document Ref. 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.11)** which considers the impacts of the Proposed Development on drainage and includes an Outline Drainage Strategy, of which preparation, approval and implementation of a detailed version is secured by a requirement in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**.
	2.10.85 Where access tracks need to be provided, permeable tracks should be used, and localised Sustainable	**ES Chapter 11: Water Resources and Flood Risk (Document Ref. 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.11)** considers the potential likely effects of the Proposed Development on

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	Drainage Systems (SuDS), such as swales and infiltration trenches, should be used to control any run-off where recommended.	Water, including the assessment of establishment of construction compounds and access tracks. The recommendations set out in **Appendix 11.1: FRA (Document Ref: 6.3. ES Vol.2, 6.3.81)** include SuDS being developed and maintained throughout the Proposed Development. SuDS will be utilised within the Site to provide conveyance and storage for surface water runoff, as well as water quality treatment and enhancing biodiversity. SuDS mitigation may include use of swales and detention basins, which could be monitored to maintain effectiveness. As set out in **ES Chapter 11: Water Resources and Flood Risk (Document Ref. 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.11)** the indicative layout and locations of the access tracks and ancillary infrastructure have been designed to avoid hydrologically sensitive areas, existing drainage systems and watercourses. As set out in the Outline Design Principles at Appendix 1 of the **DAAD (Document Ref: 5.6),** the Bespoke Access Road will have type 1 surfacing material.
	2.10.86 Given the temporary nature of solar PV farms, sites should be configured or selected to avoid the need to impact on existing drainage systems and watercourses.	
	2.10.87 Culverting existing watercourses/drainage ditches should be avoided.	As set out in **ES Chapter 11: Water Resources and Flood Risk (Document Ref. 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.11),** access tracks within the Site are being routed to make as much use of existing tracks across the Site as possible, upgrading where required, to minimise the requirement for entirely new tracks and watercourse crossings. A minimum preferred separation distance of up to 5 m from built development is applied along or around every watercourse and waterbody to ensure there is no degradation of water quality within watercourses. The preferred separation distance has not been implemented at existing access tracks or proposed watercourse crossing
	2.10.88 Where culverting for access is unavoidable, applicants should demonstrate that no reasonable alternatives exist and where necessary it will only be in place temporarily for the construction period.	

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		locations, as by their nature watercourse crossings are required to be in proximity to watercourses. **Appendix 11.3: Summary of Watercourse Crossings and Photographs (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.83)** summarises the watercourse crossings required, including the type. Watercourse crossings will be designed so the soffit level of the bridge complies with the requirements of the Environment Agency and IDB to ensure that there is no increase in the risk of flooding as a result of the proposed bridges. Illustrative or typical cross sections for the proposed bridge crossings are shown on **Document Ref: 2.17 'Illustrative Temporary Bridge designs for Bridges over Watercourse'** and **Document Ref 2.18 'Illustrative Permanent Bridge Designs for Bridges over Watercourses'.** The **DAAD (Document Ref: 5.6)** sets out the design evolution has avoided and minimised effects on existing watercourses/drainage ditches. As set out in **ES Chapter 11: Water Resources & Flood Risk (Document Ref: 6.2 Vol.1, 6.2.11)** embedded mitigation in the design of the Proposed Development includes: • A minimum preferred separation distance of up to 5 m from built development was applied where appropriate along or around every watercourse and waterbody and was taken into consideration into the Proposed Development design, as far as possible. The preferred separation distance has not been implemented near existing access tracks nor at proposed watercourse crossing locations, as by their

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		nature watercourse crossings are required to be in proximity to watercourses; • The access tracks within the Site are being routed to make as much use of existing tracks across the Site as possible, upgrading where required, to minimise the requirement for entirely new tracks and watercourse crossings; • Base fence panels will be designed to have sufficient width to allow debris to flow and prevent blockage; and • All proposed bridge crossings, temporary and permanent, will be constructed in accordance with flood permits granted by the Environment Agency, LCC or the Internal Drainage Board (IDB) to ensure there would be no increased flood risk upstream or to the Site itself.
	2.10.89 Solar farms have the potential to increase the biodiversity value of a site, especially if the land was previously intensively managed. In some instances, this can result in significant benefits and enhancements beyond Biodiversity Net Gain, which result in wider environmental gains which is encouraged	Through delivery of the measures set out in the OLEMP, the Applicant is committing to delivering at least 30% biodiversity net gain for habitat units; at least 10% biodiversity net gain for hedgerow units; and at least 10% biodiversity net gain for watercourse units, calculated using The Statutory Biodiversity Metric published by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs in July 2024. The delivery of these measures will be monitored for no less than 30 years as part of a wider package of landscaping and habitat proposals described in the OLEMP. A **Biodiversity Net Gain Strategy (Document Ref: 7.3**) has also been prepared for the Application which reports the BNG figures that the Proposed Development is presently expected to deliver. Section 7.8 of **ES Chapter 7: Ecology (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.7)** outlines that in addition to the additional mitigation measures proposed, habitat enhancements will be made in support of biodiversity net gain.
	2.10.90 For projects in England, applicants should consider enhancement, management, and monitoring of biodiversity in line with the ambition set out in the Environmental Improvement Plan and any relevant measures and targets, including statutory targets set under the Environment Act or elsewhere.	

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		Tables 7.9, 7.10 and 7.11 provide a summary of the impacts, mitigation and residual effects from the construction, operation and decommissioning phases respectively. These tables demonstrate that following the proposed mitigation and enhancement measures, the impact of the Proposed Development on ecological receptors during construction and decommissioning will be, in most cases, negligible. During operation, beneficial effects are expected through enhanced habitats supporting a more diverse flora and fauna, along with reduced chemical input onto the land and into watercourses. During statutory consultation, Natural England advised that due to the scale of the development site, there is the unique opportunity to enhance the connectivity of habitats in and around the site. The Applicant has proposed including appropriate planting / habitat management onsite and within the buffer areas. Enhancement of habitats has been included in the landscape design. These enhancements will be monitored and managed as part of the **Biodiversity Net Gain Strategy (Document Ref: 7.3)**, which will require the production of a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan. **ES Chapter 7: Ecology (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.7)** is supported by **Appendix 6.7: OLEMP (Document Ref. 6.3, ES Vol. 2, 6.3.19)**, which ensures the development delivers long term biodiversity compensation and enhancement. Preparation, approval and implementation of a detailed LEMP is secured through a requirement in Schedule 2 to the Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1).

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Impacts – *Landscape, Visual and residential amenity*	2.10.93 Generic landscape and visual impacts are covered in Section 5.10 of EN-1.	**ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual (Document Ref: 6.2, Vol.1, 6.2.6)** reports the assessment of the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development on Landscape and Visual receptors, including cumulative effects. It comprises a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) which considers the potential for likely significant effects during construction, operation and decommissioning of the Proposed Development on landscape character and visual amenity. It takes account of the latest policy and other relevant guidance. **ES Chapter 18: Cumulative Impacts (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol. 1, 6.2.18)** summarises the cumulative impacts. No significant cumulative landscape or visual effects are predicted.
	2.10.94 The approach to assessing cumulative landscape and visual impact of large-scale solar farms is likely to be the same as assessing other onshore energy infrastructure. Solar farms are likely to be in low lying areas of good exposure and as such may have a wider zone of visual influence than other types of onshore energy infrastructure.	
	2.10.95 However, whilst it may be the case that the development covers a significant surface area, in the case of ground-mounted solar panels it should be noted that with effective screening and appropriate land topography, the area of a zone of visual influence could be appropriately minimised.	As set out in **ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual (Document Ref: 6.2, Vol.1, 6.2.6)** viewpoints have been selected to inform the potential visual effects of the Proposed Development. The viewpoints are representative of the range of views and viewer types likely to experience views of the Proposed Development (paragraphs 6.19 and 6.20 of GLVIA 3). The selection of viewpoints was informed by the ZTV analysis, fieldwork, and by desk research on access and recreation, including footpaths, bridleways and public access land, tourism including popular vantage points, and distribution of population. A range of viewpoints were selected representing views at a range of elevations, orientations, distances, and aspects. The viewpoints were also selected to capture the views from recreational routes, panoramic views and views from promoted recreational
	2.10.96 Landscape and visual impacts should be considered carefully pre-application. Potential impacts on the statutory purposes of nationally designated landscapes should form a part of the pre-application process.	
	2.10.97 Applicants should carry out a landscape and visual assessment and	

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	report it in the ES. Visualisations may be required to demonstrate the effects of a proposed solar farm on the setting of heritage assets and any nearby residential areas or viewpoints	routes. The detailed location of each viewpoint was considered as typical or representative of the view likely to be experienced. The initial selection of viewpoints was submitted with the Scoping Report. The comments received with the Scoping Opinion informed the addition of a further six viewpoints alongside the identification of three photomontage locations. Following the undertaking of **Appendix 11.1: Flood Risk Assessment (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol. 2, 6.3.81)** panel heights have been optimised to reduce visual impacts by limiting heights to 3.9m in flood areas and 3.5 m elsewhere, compared to 4.5m at PEIR stage. This has reduced the Zone of Theoretical Visibility. No nationally designated landscapes are affected by the Proposed Development.
	2.10.98 Applicants should follow the criteria for good design set out in Section 4.7 of EN-1 when developing projects and will be expected to direct considerable effort towards minimising the landscape and visual impact of solar PV arrays especially within nationally designated landscapes.	
	2.10.99 Whilst there is an acknowledged need to ensure solar PV installations are adequately secured, required security measures such as fencing should consider the need to minimise the impact on the landscape and visual impact (see paragraphs 2.10.46 – 2.10.48 above).	The **DAAD (Document Ref: 5.6)** sets out how the criteria for good design has fed into the design of the proposed development. This includes the establishment of Design Objectives at an early stage to minimise landscape and visual impact and the securing of Outline Design Principles to govern the detailed design which includes measures relating to fencing and security.
	2.10.100 The applicant should consider as part of the design, layout, construction, and future maintenance plans how to protect and retain, wherever possible, the growth of vegetation on site boundaries, as well as	The proposed mitigation measures include a comprehensive landscape restoration and enhancement scheme illustrated in **Figure 6.31: Landscape Strategy Plan (Document Ref: 6.4, ES Vol.3, 6.4.42**). This has been informed by an **Appendix 6.6: Arboricultural Impact Assessment (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.18)** which assesses the

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	the growth of existing hedges, established vegetation, including mature trees within boundaries. Applicants should also consider opportunities for individual trees within the boundaries to grow on to maturity. 2.10.101 The impact of the proposed development on established trees and hedges should be informed by a tree survey and arboricultural/hedge assessment as appropriate.	known arboricultural impacts arising from the Proposed Development. An Arboricultural Method Statement and updated TPPs shall be completed when the Proposed Development design is fixed to ensure tree and hedgerow protection measures and works within retained trees and hedgerow RPAs and / or crown / canopy spreads, are fully specified and implemented for the construction and decommissioning phases of the Proposed Development. These shall be secured post-consent in the detailed CEMP and DEMP. Preparation, approval and implementation of detailed versions of these plans is secured through requirements in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**. During the establishment aftercare, proposed mitigation planting will be routinely inspected in accordance with the requirements stipulated in the detailed LEMP. Inspection will ensure management and maintenance of landscape elements, as identified in the detailed LEMP, are undertaken and that the proposed planting achieve their intended environmental function and objective. Monitoring of the establishment, growth and maintenance of landscape planting will be undertaken during the establishment aftercare period to ensure its successful establishment. The duration of monitoring during establishment period and long-term management will be outlined within the detailed LEMP.
Impacts *– Glint and Glare*	2.10.104 When a quantitative glint and glare assessment is necessary, applicants are expected to consider the geometric possibility of glint and glare affecting nearby receptors, and provide an assessment of potential impact and	**Appendix 13.2a: ForgeSolar Glint Report: Road, Railway and Aviation (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.89)** and **Appendix 13.2b: ForgeSolar Glint Report: OPs1-40 (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.90)** has undertaken an assessment of potential impacts of glint and glare on

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	impairment based on the angle and duration of incidence and the intensity of the reflection. 2.10.105 The extent of reflectivity analysis required to assess potential impacts will depend on the specific project site and design. This may need to account for 'tracking' panels if they are proposed as these may cause differential diurnal and/or seasonal impacts. 2.10.106 When a glint and glare assessment is undertaken, the potential for solar PV panels, frames and supports to have a combined reflective quality may need to be assessed, although the glint and glare of the frames and supports is likely to be significantly less than the panels.	motorists, railway lines, aerodromes and occupants of dwellings. **ES Chapter 13: Glint and Glare (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.13)** outlines that the Solar PV panels will be fixed with a south-facing orientation. The Panels will be up to 3.9m (in fields to the east of the Solar Array Area) and 3.5m (in fields to the west, south and an isolated field in the north of the Solar Array Area. The modelling in this Chapter is based on an assumed panel angle of 15° from horizontal, which was selected to accord with the layout for the Solar Array Area shown on the Indicative **Site Layout Plan (Document Ref: 6.4.4)**. This is the panel angle most likely to be adopted at the detailed design stage of the Project and accords with the typical panel angles utilised on other constructed solar photovoltaic projects. Given the present stage of detailed design, the final adopted angle may vary (for some or all of the panels) within a range of 10° - 45° to the horizontal. In such case the effects at individual receptors will likely vary slightly (e.g. timings, durations, and possibly glare intensity could be subject to some differences). However, the significance of effects across the full aggregated set of receptors would be unlikely to differ materially from the significance of effects concluded in this Chapter.
Impacts – *Cultural Heritage*	2.10.107 The impacts of solar PV developments on the historic environment will require expert assessment in most cases and may have effect both above and below ground.	**ES Chapter 8: Cultural Heritage (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.8)** reports the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development on cultural heritage receptors in the context of the Site and surrounding area. In particular it considers the potential for the Proposed Development to give rise to likely significant effects of the development on the

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	2.10.108 Above ground impacts may include the effects on the setting of Listed Buildings and other designated heritage assets as well as on Historic Landscape Character.	cultural heritage resource (comprising built heritage, archaeology and historic landscape) as a result of the construction, operation and decommissioning of all parts of the Proposed Development. As recognised in the policy, the solar PV development itself has limited impacts given the small surface area of each pile, relative to the Onsite Substation or the Bespoke Access Road. Solar PV arrays also have the potential to protect assets, and appropriate flexibility has been retained for the detailed layout. The relative impact of the different components of the Proposed Development has informed the approach and timing of evaluation.
	2.10.109 Below ground impacts, although generally limited, may include direct impacts on archaeological deposits through ground disturbance associated with trenching, cabling, foundations, fencing, temporary haul routes etc.	
	2.10.110 Equally, solar PV developments may have a positive effect, for example archaeological assets may be protected by a solar PV farm as the site is removed from regular ploughing and shoes or low-level piling is stipulated.	
	2.10.111 Generic historic environment impacts are covered in Section 5.9 of EN-1.	
	2.10.112 Applicant assessments should be informed by information from Historic Environment Records (HERs) or the local authority.	**ES Chapter 8: Cultural Heritage (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.8)** confirms that the Lincolnshire Historic Environment Records were received and inputted into the assessment.
	2.10.113 Where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage	The value of a heritage asset (i.e. its heritage significance) is guided by its designated status and derived from its heritage interest, which may be archaeological, architectural, artistic

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	assets with archaeological interest, the applicant should submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation. These should be carried out using expertise where necessary and in consultation with the local planning authority, and should identify archaeological study areas and propose appropriate schemes of investigation, and design measures, to ensure the protection of relevant heritage assets.	or historic. The setting of a heritage asset can also contribute to its value. Using professional judgement, the value of heritage assets are assessed on an individual basis and regional variations and individual qualities are taken into account, where applicable. An **Appendix 8.1: Archaeological Desk Based Assessment (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.45)** was submitted with the application. This was carried out using appropriate expertise and both Lincolnshire County Council and North Kesteven District Council were consulted. **ES Chapter 8: Cultural Heritage (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.8)** outlines that the study area for the identification of designated heritage assets potentially sensitive to the Proposed Development is set at 5 km from the Order Limits. **ES Chapter 8: Cultural Heritage (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.8)** also includes embedded mitigation measures and significant mitigations relating to residual impacts. A programme of archaeological mitigation is proposed for the Proposed Development during the construction phase. The Solar Array Area has been evaluated by Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR), geophysical survey and trial trenching, and areas of significant archaeology were designed out and will therefore not require mitigation. The Bespoke Access Road has had targeted trial trenching and will not require further trenching. The Cable Route Corridor will require targeted trenching on areas of anomalies. An Archaeological Mitigation Strategy (see **Appendix 8.11 Archaeological Mitigation Strategy (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.74)**) has been prepared in relation to onsite

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		works to understand the process for mitigation either by design or record and demarking the known areas of impact. A requirement in Schedule 2 of the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**, secures that no part of the Proposed Development may commence until a written scheme of archaeological investigation (which must accord with the **Archaeological Mitigation Strategy**) for that part has been submitted to and approved by the relevant planning authority.
	2.10.114 In some instances, field studies may include investigative work (and may include trial trenching beyond the boundary of the proposed site) to assess the impacts of any ground disturbance, such as proposed cabling, substation foundations or mounting supports for solar panels on archaeological assets.	Archaeological trial trench evaluation has been undertaken for the Proposed Development across the Solar Array Area comprising a large overall extent, and within a targeted areas along the Bespoke Access Road, and not the Cable Route Corridor. The ground disturbance is largely associated with the Onsite Substation, BESS, and Bespoke Access Road, and the evaluation to date is considered proportionate to the sensitivity of and extent of proposed ground disturbance. The most relevant documents are considered to be as follows: • **Appendix 8.9: Written Scheme of Investigation for Trial Trenching (Document Ref: 6.3, Vol.2, 6.3.72)** • **Appendix 8.10a: Trial Trenching Report (Solar Array) (Document Ref: 6.3, Vol.2, 6.3.73)** • **Appendix 8.10b: Trial Trenching Report (Targeted area on the Access Route) (Document Ref: 6.3, Vol.2, 6.3.73)**
	2.10.115 The extent of investigative work should be proportionate to the sensitivity of, and extent of, proposed ground disturbance in the associated study area.	
	2.10.116 Applicants should take account of the results of historic environment assessments in their design proposal.	Archaeological and heritage impacts fed into design of the proposed development, including through a number of embedded design measures including: • The design layout has carefully considered heritage assets in the proximity of the Site, including creating buffer areas to increase the distance between the Site and the nearby assets.
	2.10.117 Applicants should consider what steps can be taken to ensure heritage assets are conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance,	

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	including the impact of proposals on views important to their setting. 2.10.118 As the significance of a heritage asset derives not only from its physical presence but also from its setting, careful consideration should be given to the impact of large-scale solar farms which depending on their scale, design, and prominence, may cause substantial harm to the significance of the asset. 2.10.119 Applicants may need to include visualisations to demonstrate the effects of a proposed solar farm on the setting of heritage assets.	• Trackways are anticipated to, where possible, follow existing field boundaries. • The landscaping plan includes creating wildflower areas, improving hedgerows, and increasing vegetation buffers, particularly near Gashes Barn, Ewerby Thorpe, and Howell. • The Cable Route will be installed underground, preserving the visual landscape and reducing potential harm to heritage assets. Upon decommissioning, the cabling will remain in place, which minimises further construction activity and disturbance in the wider area. • The Proposed Development will use motion-activated security lighting, which will only activate when necessary. Operational lighting will be installed solely for emergency purposes. This careful lighting strategy helps retain the current light levels experienced by nearby heritage assets, preserving their current night-time ambiance. More information on the design of the Proposed Development can be found in the **DAAD (Document Ref: 5.6)**. The **Appendix 8.2: Heritage Statement (Document Ref: 6.3, Vol.2, 6.3.46)** sets out that the Proposed Development will cause less than substantial harm to the heritage assets, primarily affecting the wider setting of these designated assets, which contributes less to their overall significance than the immediate setting and or key views or association. Importantly, no physical harm will occur to any designated heritage assets. Changes to the wider setting, which is of limited contribution to the asset's significance, will result in some harm but in less than substantial harm.

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Impacts *– Construction including traffic and transport noise and vibration*	2.10.123 Applicants should assess the various potential routes to the site for delivery of materials and components where the source of the materials is known at the time of the application, and select the route that is the most appropriate. 2.10.124 Where the exact location of the source of construction materials, such as crushed stone or concrete is not known at the time of the application, applicants should assess the worst-case impact of additional vehicles on the likely potential routes. 2.10.125 Applicants should ensure all sections of roads and bridges on the proposed delivery route can accommodate the weight and volume of the loads and width of vehicles. Although unlikely, where modifications to roads and/or bridges are required, these should be identified, and potential effects addressed in the ES. 2.10.126 Where a cumulative impact is likely because multiple energy infrastructure developments are proposing to use a common port and/or access route and pass through the same towns and villages, applicants should include a cumulative transport	A Bespoke Access Road from the A17 will be required to support access to the Proposed Development, to transport larger vehicles including Abnormal Indivisible Loads and to minimise impacts on local roads. As set out in **ES Chapter 9: Access and Traffic (Document Ref: 6.2 Vol.1, 6.2.9)**, the source of imported construction materials is not confirmed, but it is anticipated that construction components for the solar, Cable Route and Bicker Fen Substation will arrive from either Immingham Port to the north of the Site or Port Sutton Bridge to the south-east of the Site. The A17 is the principal road near the Site which will accommodate construction vehicle movements from the wider road network and access for vehicles will be restricted to left-in/left-out. A specialist consultant investigated feasibility of access for AILs for the Proposed Development, and the findings are summarised as part of the **Appendix 9.3, Outline Construction Traffic Management Plan (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol. 2, 6.3.78) ('OCTMP')**. No permanent off-site improvements are proposed to facilitate delivery of materials. Since the EIA scoping stage, the routes likely to be used for construction access have been refined to exclude the need to use the A52. During early consultation, Lincolnshire County Council (as highway authority) indicated a preference for direct access to the site from the A17, B1395, or A153, with a strong preference for access direct from the A17 if practicable. A review was undertaken of the potential options for a more efficient and direct access route to the Proposed Development from both the A17 and the A153/B1395.

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	assessment as part of the ES. This should consider the impacts of abnormal traffic movements relating to the project in question in combination with those from any other relevant development. Consultation with the relevant local highways authorities is likely to be necessary.	All construction traffic associated with the Solar Array Area will travel via the A17/Bespoke Access Road. All trips to the Bicker Fen Substation will use A17/Triton Knoll Substation Access. It was subsequently decided to retain the Bespoke Access Road for the operational stage to reduce disruption and reduced electricity generation associated with relaying it in the event of transformer failure during operation and again for decommissioning. All construction traffic associated with the Cable Route Corridor will travel to 6 separate primary compounds via 4 different accesses. The detailed breakdown of these trips will not be known until detailed design stage, but the traffic generation and profile is likely to be similar for each compound. As set out in **Appendix 9.1: Transport Assessment (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.6**), for the purposes of distribution and assignment, an equal split is assumed between each compound. Where two compounds utilise the same access route, a robust worst case of both compounds being used simultaneously is assumed for the purpose of assessment. As part of the **Appendix 9.1: Transport Assessment (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.6)**, swept path analysis was undertaken for the proposed access arrangements to the Bespoke Access Road, Solar Array Area and Cable Route Corridor construction compounds and shows that the design of the junctions can accommodate maximum length HGVs and AILs required. It is constructed at the minimum width required for its function which includes carrying vehicles transporting Abnormal Indivisible Loads. The Proposed Development design incorporates mitigation to reduce adverse effects and minimise impacts of traffic, as set out in **ES Chapter 9:**

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		Access and Traffic (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.6) and the associated **Appendix 9.1: Transport Assessment (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.6)**. These measures are outlined in **Appendix 9.3: OCTMP (Document Ref. 6.2, ES Vol 2, 6.3.79)** which includes within it an Outline Delivery Management Plan (Outline DMP), which will together set out suitable measures to safely manage and monitor construction traffic, ensuring that highway safety and the free flow of traffic on public highway is maintained, and an Abnormal Indivisible Loads Delivery Management Plan (AIL DMP). Impacts on hedgerows and trees have also been considered in relation to access, with the only exception regarding vegetation being grass verge cutting which would fall within usual highway maintenance. Preparation, approval and implementation of a detailed version of the CTMP is secured through a requirement in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**. To address any potential short-term construction traffic noise impacts on nearby receptors identified in **ES Chapter 10: Noise and Vibration (Document Ref. 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.10)**, measures have been included within the Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan ('CEMP') will include measures to reduce and minimize sound levels. Preparation, approval and implementation of a detailed version of the CEMP is secured through a requirement in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**. **ES Chapter 9: Access and Traffic (Document Ref. 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.9)**) and **ES Chapter 18: Cumulative Impacts (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol. 1, 6.2.18)** consider the potential cumulative traffic impacts of the Proposed Development and concludes that intra-cumulative effects

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		would be negligible and not significant. No significant inter-cumulative effects were identified as a result of the cumulative impact assessment for the Proposed Development, including Heckington Fen Solar Farm. This was primarily due to the other developments either recording traffic impacts that do not impact the study area for the Proposed Development or that are unlikely to generate traffic during the construction phase of the Proposed Development. For those that do overlap, the cumulative impact assessment for the Proposed Development recorded Negligible (Not Significant) transport effects within the study area during the proposed construction programme.
Mitigations – *Agriculture Land classification and land type*	2.10.127 The Defra Construction code of practice for the sustainable use of soils on construction sites provides guidance on ensuring that damage to soil during construction is mitigated and minimised. Mitigation measures focus on minimising damage to soil that remains in place, and minimising damage to soil being excavated and stockpiled. The measures aim to preserve soil health and soil structure to minimise soil carbon loss and maintain water infiltration and soil biodiversity. Mitigation measures for agricultural soils include use of green cover, multispecies cover crops - especially during the winter minimising compaction and adding soil organic matter.	The **Appendix 14.4: Outline Soil Management Plan (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.95)** takes account of the Defra Construction code of practice for the sustainable use of soils on construction sites and sets out measures and processes required to safeguard the soil and land resources from loss, damage, or disruption as a result of the Proposed Development. It will ensure that the Applicant manages the Soil sustainability and that damage to soil health is minimised by providing measures for soil handling, soil moisture content assessments and storage and trafficking of soils during the construction, operation (including maintenance) and decommissioning phase of the Proposed Development. Preparation, approval and implementation of detailed versions of the OSMP is secured through a requirement in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**.

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Mitigations – *Biodiversity and ecological conservation*	2.10.128 In England, proposed enhancements should take account of the above factors and as set out in Sections 4.6 and 5.4 of EN-1 aim to achieve environmental and biodiversity net gain in line with the ambition set out in the Environmental Improvement Plan and any relevant measures and targets, including statutory targets set under the Environment Act or elsewhere.	Through delivery of the measures set out in the OLEMP, the Applicant is committing to delivering at least 30% biodiversity net gain for habitat units; at least 10% biodiversity net gain for hedgerow units; and at least 10% biodiversity net gain for watercourse units, calculated using The Statutory Biodiversity Metric published by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs in July 2024. The delivery of these measures will be monitored for no less than 30 years as part of a wider package of landscaping and habitat proposals described in the OLEMP. A **Biodiversity Net Gain Strategy (Document Ref: 7.3**) has also been prepared for the Application and reports the BNG figures that the Proposed Development is presently expected to deliver. In addition to this, commitments have been made to mitigate impacts on species. Consideration has been made to avoidance of impacts on protected sites and irreplaceable habitats, including undertaking a **Shadow Habitats Regulations Assessment (Document Ref: 5.2)**. Protected and notable species have been considered with appropriate surveys undertaken and mitigation identified. In all events the mitigation hierarchy has been followed.
	2.10.129 This might include maintaining or extending existing habitats and potentially creating new important habitats, for example by installing cultivated strips/plots for rare arable plants, rough grassland margins, bumble bee plant mixes, and wild bird seed mixes.	As set out in the **Biodiversity Net Gain Strategy (Document Ref. 7.3)**, enhancements to approximately 12.58km of ditch could occur and approximately 486 ha of arable land currently under cultivation could undergo arable reversion to grassland. Approximately 3 ha of the Solar Array Area could be planted with mixed scrub, to provide a visual screening and wildlife corridors at points around the Proposed Development.

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		As set out in **Appendix 6.7: OLEMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.19)**, a number of measures will be implemented to enhance retained habitat, such measures to promote growth of existing hedgerows, arboricultural works to rejuvenate trees in poor condition and enhancement of retained areas of neutral grassland to reduce the presence and spread of undesirable perennial vegetation such as docks and thistles. Preparation, approval and implementation of a detailed LEMP, substantially in accordance with the OLEMP is secured via a requirement in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1).**
	2.10.130 Applicants are advised to develop an ecological monitoring programme to monitor impacts upon the flora of the site and upon any particular ecological receptors (such as bats and wintering birds). Results of the monitoring will then inform any changes needed to the land management of the site, including, if appropriate, any livestock grazing regime.	As set out in **ES Chapter 7: Ecology (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.7),** monitoring of habitats and species will be undertaken in accordance with the species licences and/or precautionary method statements. To deliver BNG, a LEMP will be developed as per **Appendix 6.7: OLEMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.19)** and secured by Requirement 7 in Schedule 2 of the **Draft Development Consent Order (Document Ref: 3.1)**. This will include monitoring and maintenance of created habitats. Any licences, method statements, LEMP or equivalent will include measures to determine success of the mitigation and enhancement measures.
Mitigations – *Landscape, Visual and Residential Amenity*	2.10.131 Applicants should consider the potential to mitigate landscape and visual impacts through, for example, screening with native hedges, trees and woodlands.	The proposed mitigation measures include a comprehensive landscape restoration and enhancement scheme illustrated in **Figure 3.1: Landscape Strategy Plan (Document Ref: 6.4, ES Vol.3, 6.4.42**). This has been informed by **Appendix 6.6: Arboricultural Impact Assessment (Document Ref: 6.3, Vol.2, 6.3.18).**

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		The **DAAD (Document Ref: 6.6)** sets out the good design process adopted and the engagement with near neighbours that informed setbacks from properties. A **Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Volume 1, 6.2.2)** has been prepared. It finds that a single property, R4 Gashes Barn, would reach the Residential Amenity Threshold. This is because of the manner in which the property would be encompassed by the Solar PV Arrays and there would be views of energy infrastructure from all aspects of the property and access road. This would likely to be perceived as 'overwhelming' but not 'overbearing' in the medium term. This scenario would persist until the proposed mitigation planting became established and sufficiently mature to provide effective screening of energy infrastructure from the property and associated access road. It is anticipated that this level of visual assimilation would be reached after approximately 10 years after which following implementation of the landscape scheme after which the Residential Amenity Threshold would no longer be reached.
	2.10.132 Applicants should aim to minimise the use and height of security fencing. Where possible applicants should utilise existing features, such as hedges or landscaping, to assist in site security, or screen security fencing.	The **DAAD (Document Ref: 5.6)** sets out how both landscape and security considerations have fed into the design and will be secured by the Outline Design Principles at **Appendix 1**.

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	2.10.133 Applicants should minimise the use of security lighting. Any lighting should utilise a passive infra-red (PIR) technology and should be designed and installed in a manner which minimises impact.	**ES Chapter 2: Proposed Development (Document Ref. 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.2)** outlines the security measures, including lighting, incorporated in the design of the Proposed Development's design. As outlined in Section 7.6 of **ES Chapter 7: Ecology (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.7)** prior to construction there will be a sensitive site lighting scheme will be established. Lighting will be the minimum required for safety and security and not illuminating key habitat features (river corridors, hedgerows, Priority Habitats, mature trees). As set out in **ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.6)** one form of embedded mitigation measure is that lighting will be designed, positioned and directed to prevent or minimise light disturbance to nearby receptors.
Mitigations – *Glint and Glare*	2.10.134 Applicants should consider using, and in some cases the Secretary of State may require, solar panels to comprise of (or be covered with) anti-glare/anti-reflective coating with a specified angle of maximum reflection attenuation for the lifetime of the permission. 2.10.135 Applicants may consider using screening between potentially affected receptors and the reflecting panels to mitigate the effects. 2.10.136 Applicants may consider adjusting the azimuth alignment of, or	**Appendix 13.2a: ForgeSolar Glint Report: Road, Railway and Aviation (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.89)** and **Appendix 13.2b: ForgeSolar Glint Report: OPs1-40 (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.90)** has undertaken an assessment of potential impacts of glint and glare on motorists, railway lines, aerodromes and occupants of dwellings. **ES Chapter 13: Glint and Glare (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.13)** considers the potential glint and glare effects from solar photovoltaic (PV) arrays associated with the Solar Array Area of the Beacon Fen Energy Park ('the Proposed Development') on land at Beacon Fen. It considers the potential for likely significant effects of glint and glare caused by the PV array elements of the Proposed Development on ground-based receptors, including road, rail and local

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	changing the elevation tilt angle of, a solar panel within the economically viable range, to alter the angle of incidence. In practice this is unlikely to remove the potential impact altogether but in marginal cases may contribute to a mitigation strategy.	residential dwellings. In addition, glint and glare effects on aircraft operating in the surrounding area have also been considered. It takes account of embedded mitigation in the form of new planting, the choice of fixed panels over tracking and the use of anti-reflective coating on the panels to reduce their reflective properties. It concludes that there will be no likely significant residual effects.
Mitigations – *Cultural Heritage*	2.10.137 The ability of the applicants to microsite specific elements of the proposed development during the construction phase should be an important consideration by the Secretary of State when assessing the risk of damage to archaeology. 2.10.138 Where requested by the applicant, the Secretary of State should consider granting consents which allow for the micro siting within a specified tolerance of elements of the permitted infrastructure, so that precise locations can be amended during the construction phase if unforeseen circumstances, such as the discovery of previously unknown archaeology, arise.	**ES Chapter 8: Cultural Heritage (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.8)** reports the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development in terms of Cultural Heritage in the context of the Site and surrounding area. It sets out some mitigation measures relating to significant impacts on heritage assets including the re-introduction of a footpath and landscaping buffers and screening. The Proposed Development will be constructed in accordance with parameters set out in **ES Chapter 2: Proposed Development (Document Ref. 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.2)** and the **Appendix 1: Outline Design Principles** to the **DAAD (Document Ref: 5.6)** providing flexibility to amend the design should significant archaeological finds be discovered as a result of the archaeological mitigation works prior to the construction stage. An **Appendix 8.11: Archaeological Mitigation Strategy (AMS) (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.74)** has been prepared in relation to onsite works to understand the process for mitigation either by design or record and demarking known areas of impact. A requirement in

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		Schedule 2 of the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**, secures that no part of the Proposed Development may commence until a written scheme of archaeological investigation (which must accord with the **Archaeological Mitigation Strategy**) for that part has been submitted to and approved by the relevant planning authority.
Mitigation – *Construction including traffic and transport noise and vibration*	2.10.139 In some cases, the local highway authority may request that the Secretary of State impose controls on the number of vehicle movements to and from the solar farm site in a specified period during its construction and, possibly, on the routeing of such movements particularly by heavy vehicles.	Measures required to control any construction traffic impacts (including HGV and AIL routing, and delivery routes) and scheduling have been identified and are secured through the **Appendix 9.3: OCTMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol 2, 6.3.79).** Preparation, approval and implementation of a detailed version of the CTMP is secured through a requirement in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**. Substantial mitigation in the form of the Bespoke Access Road has been incorporated into the Proposed Development, and no further controls are considered to be required.
	2.10.140 Where the Secretary of State agrees that this is necessary, requirements could be imposed on development consent.	
	2.10.141 Where cumulative effects on the local road network or residential amenity are predicted from multiple solar farm developments, it may be appropriate for applicants for various projects to work together to ensure that the number of abnormal loads and deliveries are minimised, and the timings of deliveries are managed and coordinated to ensure that disruption to	**ES Chapter 9: Access and Traffic (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.9)** and **ES Chapter 18: Cumulative Effects (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol. 1, 6.2.18)** consider the potential cumulative traffic impacts of the Proposed Development and concludes that intra-cumulative effects would be negligible and not significant. No significant inter-cumulative effects were identified as a result of the cumulative impact assessment for the Proposed Development. This was primarily due to the other developments either recording traffic impacts that do not

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	residents and other highway users is reasonably minimised.	impact the study area for the Proposed Development or that are unlikely to generate traffic during the construction phase of the Proposed Development. For those that do overlap, the cumulative impact assessment for the Proposed Development recorded Negligible (Not Significant) transport effects within the study area during the proposed construction programme.
	2.10.142 It may also be appropriate for the highway authority to set limits for, and coordinate these deliveries through, active management of the delivery schedules through the abnormal load approval process.	
	2.10.143 Once consent for a scheme has been granted, applicants should liaise with the relevant local highway authority (or other coordinating body) regarding the start of construction and the broad timing of deliveries. Applicants may need to agree a planning obligation to secure appropriate measures, including restoration of roads and verges.	As set out in **Appendix 9.3: OCTMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol 2, 6.3.79**) and secured by Requirement in Schedule 2 of the **Draft Development Consent Order (Document Ref: 3.1)**, the detailed CTMP (including the DMP and AIL DMP) will be agreed with the relevant planning authority in consultation with the relevant highway authority. This will specify measures including planning and preparation, a dedicated point of contact, communication with the public as well as management, coordination with any other nearby AILs and management and reinstatement of any temporary modifications. Temporary planting may be required on Carterplot Road and Great Hale Drove for movements of AILs. This would only be appropriate for other projects to use in the situation that construction periods and routes directly overlap, and none of these have been identified in **Chapter 18: Cumulative Effects (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.18)**. The Bespoke Access Road also provides an example of infrastructure that could be reused, and the Proposed Development is itself making use of previously implemented infrastructure in the form of the Triton Knoll Access Road.
	2.10.144 Further, it may be appropriate for any non-permanent highway improvements carried out for the development (such as temporary road widening) to be made available for use by other subsequent solar farm developments.	

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Secretary of State decision making -* Factors *influencing site selection and design – *Agriculture land classification and land type*	2.10.145 The Secretary of State should take into account the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land. The Secretary of State should ensure that the applicant has put forward appropriate mitigation measures to minimise impacts on soils or soil resources.	The Solar Array Area primarily comprises Grade 3 agricultural land as set out in the **ES Appendix 14.2: Agricultural Land Classification Report, Beacon Fen (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.93)**. **Appendix 14.4: Outline Soil Management Plan (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.95)** sets out measures and processes required to safeguard the soil and land resources from loss, damage, or disruption as a result of the Proposed Development. It will ensure that the Applicant manages the Soil sustainability and that damage to soil health is minimised by providing measures for soil handling, soil moisture content assessments and storage and trafficking of soils during the construction, operation (including maintenance) and decommissioning phase of the Proposed Development. Preparation, approval and implementation of detailed versions of the OSMP is secured through a requirement in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**.
Secretary of State decision making – Technical Considerations *– Project lifetime and decommissioning*	2.10.146 The Secretary of State should ensure that the applicant has put forward outline plans for decommissioning the generating station when no longer in use and restoring the land to a suitable use (taking into account paragraphs 2.10.68 and 2.10.69). 2.10.147 Where the consent for a solar farm is to be time-limited, the DCO should impose a requirement setting	**Appendix 2.5: ODEMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.8)** has been submitted for the decommissioning phase of the Proposed Development as part of this application. Furthermore, **ES Appendix 14.4: Outline Soil Management Plan (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.95)** sets out measures and processes related to decommissioning. Preparation, approval and implementation of detailed versions of these plans is secured through requirements in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**. The decommissioning phase of the Proposed Development is anticipated to last between approximately 12 and 36

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	that time-limit from the date the solar farm starts to generate electricity. 2.10.148 Such a requirement should also secure the decommissioning of the generating station after the expiration of its permitted operation to ensure that inoperative plant is removed after its operational life. 2.10.149 An upper limit of 40 years is typical, although applicants may seek consent without a time period or for differing time-periods for operation. 2.10.150 The time limited nature of the solar farm, where a time limit is sought as a condition of consent, is likely to be an important consideration for the Secretary of State. 2.10.151 The Secretary of State should consider the period of time the applicant is seeking to operate the generating station, as well as the extent to which the site will return to its original state, when assessing impacts such as landscape and visual effects and potential effects on the settings of heritage assets and nationally designated landscapes.	months. It is currently anticipated that the infrastructure within the Solar Array Area would be removed, and the land restored, while the Cable Route and Bicker Fen Substation works would remain in situ. Each **Environmental Statement (Document Ref 6.1 – 6.4)** Chapter has assumed the worst case with regards to retention or removal of the Bespoke Access Road. The **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)** secures that the operational lifetime of the Proposed Development must be no more than 40 years before it is decommissioned. The effects of decommissioning are often similar, or of a lesser magnitude than construction effects and are considered within each chapter of the **Environmental Statement (Document Ref: 6.1 – 6.4)**.
Secretary of State decision making -	2.10.154 Water management is a critical component of site design for ground mount solar plants. Where previous	An Outline Drainage Strategy is included within the **Appendix 11.1: FRA (Document Ref: 6.2. ES Vol.2, 6.3.81)** which sets out how water runoff from the Proposed

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Impacts – *Biodiversity, ecological, geological conservation and water management*	management of the site has involved intensive agricultural practice, solar sites can deliver significant ecosystem services value in the form of drainage, flood attenuation, natural wetland habitat, and water quality management.	Development will be controlled on the Site to ensure that there is no increase in risk of flooding to areas downstream of the Site and the Proposed Development itself. The Outline Drainage Strategy has been developed with respect to drainage hierarchy and includes management and maintenance measures, including remedial actions. Within the Outline Drainage Strategy, with regards to the Bespoke Access Road, it identifies potential swale solutions although the final method adopted would not necessarily match these. For the single slope road, a single swale is possible, located down slope of the road, with a bank-to-bank width of 2.6m, and a depth of 0.35m. Where the dual slope roads are proposed, a swale is possible and would be either side of the access track to ensure all runoff is captured. Each swale would be 1.9m wide bank-to-bank, and of 0.25m depth to provide the required attenuation volume. Preparation, approval and implementation of a detailed drainage strategy, substantially in accordance with the Outline Drainage Strategy is secured via a Requirement in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)** The swale will also retain runoff from the soil stockpiles extending along the track. For the side of the bund facing away from the track, it is proposed to use precautionary swales along the toe of the stockpile. In the unlikely event of a fire within the BESS area, fire water can be contained within a lined lagoon at the centre of the BESS platform, if necessary, e.g., in the further unlikely event that water is deployed directly onto the fire (as opposed to the more likely scenario of being used solely for the cooling of adjacent units), or heavy rainfall coinciding. Shutoff valves

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		could be used by fire crews to contain and reuse water or to prevent potentially contaminated water from being discharged to the watercourse. After the fire has been managed, such contained firewater will be tested and either released to the watercourse or removed from the Site for treatment and off-site disposal. This would be detailed within the Emergency Response Plan and Battery Safety Management Plan developed in collaboration with Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue Service pursuant to the relevant requirement in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**.
	2.10.155 The Secretary of State must consider the worst-case effects in its consideration of the application and consent.	As confirmed in **Appendix 11.1: FRA (Document Ref: 6.2. ES Vol.2, 6.3.81)**, as well as in **ES Chapter 4: Scope and Methodology (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.4)**, the impact assessment within the **ES** has been based on the worst-case parameters for each technical topic and justification is presented within the relevant technical chapter.
Secretary of State decision making - Impacts – *Landscape, visual and residential amenity*	2.10.157 The Secretary of State will consider the landscape and visual impact of any proposed solar PV farm, taking account of any sensitive visual receptors, and the effect of the development on landscape character, together with the possible cumulative effect with any existing or proposed development. Nationally designated landscapes (National Parks, The Broads and Areas of Outstanding Beauty) are afforded extra protection due their statutory purpose. Development in these	**ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.6)** reports the assessment of the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development on Landscape and Visual receptors, including cumulative effects. It comprises a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) which considers the potential for likely significant effects during construction, operation and decommissioning of the Proposed Development on landscape character and visual amenity. It takes account of the latest policy and other relevant guidance. It concludes that the Proposed Development is not located within, or within the setting of, any national statutory landscape designation.

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	areas needs to satisfy policy as set out in EN-1 Section 5.10.	
Secretary of State decision making - Impacts – *Glint and Glare*	2.10.158 Solar PV panels are designed to absorb, not reflect, irradiation. However, the Secretary of State should assess the potential impact of glint and glare on nearby homes, motorists, public rights of way, and aviation infrastructure (including aircraft departure and arrival flight paths). 2.10.159 Whilst there is some evidence that glint and glare from solar farms can be experienced by pilots and air traffic controllers in certain conditions, there is no evidence that glint and glare from solar farms results in significant impairment on aircraft safety. Therefore, unless a significant impairment can be demonstrated, the Secretary of State is unlikely to give any more than limited weight to claims of aviation interference because of glint and glare from solar farms.	**Appendix 13.2a: ForgeSolar Glint Report: Road, Railway and Aviation (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.89)** and **Appendix 13.2b: ForgeSolar Glint Report: OPs1-40 (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.90)** has undertaken an assessment of potential impacts of glint and glare on motorists, railway lines, aerodromes and occupants of dwellings. **ES Chapter 13: Glint and Glare (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.13)** considers the potential glint and glare effects from solar photovoltaic (PV) arrays associated with the Solar Array Area of the Proposed Development. It considers the potential for likely significant effects of glint and glare caused by the PV array elements of the Proposed Development on ground-based receptors, including road, rail and local residential dwellings. In addition, glint and glare effects on aircraft operating in the surrounding area have also been considered. It concludes that there will be no likely significant residual effects.
Secretary of State decision making - Impacts – *Cultural Heritage*	2.10.160 Solar farms are generally consented on the basis that they will be time-limited in operation. The Secretary of State should therefore consider the length of time for which consent is sought when considering the impacts of any indirect effect on the historic	The design life of the Proposed Development is expected to be up to 40 years. **ES Chapter 8: Cultural Heritage (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.8)** considers the potential for likely significant effects of the development on the cultural heritage resource (comprising built heritage, archaeology and historic landscape) through the construction, operation and decommissioning of the Proposed Development. It is

POLICY	EN-3 POLICY TEXT	ASSESSMENT
	environment, such as effects on the setting of designated heritage assets.	notable that the Proposed Development is time-limited and temporary, and as a result any above-ground heritage impacts are also time limited. Upon the removal of elements of the Proposed Development during decommissioning, the land will be restored to agricultural land meaning all impacts upon the existing historic landscape character will be removed.
Secretary of State decision making - Impacts – *Construction including traffic and transport noise and vibration*	2.10.161 Once solar farms are in operation, traffic movements to and from the site are generally very light, in some instances as little as a few visits each month by a light commercial vehicle or car. Should there be a need to replace machine components, this may generate heavier commercial vehicle movements, but these are likely to be infrequent. 2.10.162 The Secretary of State is unlikely to give any more than limited weight to traffic and transport noise and vibration impacts from the operational phase of a project.	**ES Chapter 9: Access and Traffic (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.9)** and the associated **Appendix 9.1: Transport Assessment (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.9)** concludes that once the Proposed Development is operational, only a small number of staff will be required on Site each day so the effect on the local road system is expected to be minimal. These vehicle trips are quantified within **Appendix 9.1: Transport Assessment (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.9)**, and it is concluded there will be no material impact on the local highway network as a result of these trips. The Bespoke Access Road will be available for the 40-year life of the Proposed Development to minimise traffic impacts on local roads and allow for the movement of AILs should equipment require replacing. With regards to equipment replacement, it is estimated that component lifetimes are intermittently dispersed over the Proposed Development's lifetime as follows: • Replacement Inverters - 10 years • Transformer & Switchgear - 30 years • BESS - 10 years • PV panels - 25 years • Cables - 30 years and

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		• Structures - 30 years. As such, it is not considered necessary to include component replacement as part of the operational phase assessment within **Appendix 9.1: Transport Assessment (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.9)**.

Appendix 3C: Policy Accordance Table – NPS EN-5

Table 3C: National Policy Statement for Electricity Networks Infrastructure (EN-5) Part 2 – Table of Accordance – Assessment and Technology Specific Information

POLICY	EN-5 POLICY TEXT	ASSESSMENT
Part 2.2 Factors influencing site selection and design	2.2.8 There will usually be a degree of flexibility in the location of the development's associated substations, and applicants should consider carefully their location, as well as their design.	The **Design and Access Approach Document (Document Ref: 5.6)** sets out how landscape considerations have fed into the design of the Proposed Development. To accommodate the proposed connection, works to the existing Bicker Fen National Grid Substation are required. These are comprised in Work No. 5. The substation extension will be delivered by National Grid Electricity Transmission plc (NGET). The point of connection (Bicker Fen substation) already exists and requires a new bay to be constructed. The design and method of this extension are primarily determined by NGET. The **Electricity Grid Connection Statement (Document Ref: 7.1)** explains that the Heckington Fen Solar Park Order 2025 provides NGET with the necessary powers to carry out the extension works required to then allow the additional generator bay specifically for that development's grid connection. A further bay (i.e. one bay per project) would be required for the Proposed Development. To allow for an eventuality where that development did not go ahead, or did not proceed before the Proposed Development, and has therefore not carried out the extension works prior, the Applicant has taken an approach of incorporating the aggregate powers and land required for the construction of the extension works and both generator bays within the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)** is considered prudent to ensure the delivery of the Beacon Fen Energy Park is not dependent on a third-party development coming forward. This
	2.2.9 In particular, the applicant should consider such characteristics as the local topography, the possibilities for screening of the infrastructure and/or other options to mitigate any impacts.	
	2.2.10 As well as having duties under Section 9 of the Electricity Act 1989, (in relation to developing and maintaining an economical and efficient network), applicants must take into account Schedule 9 to the Electricity Act 1989, which places a duty on all transmission and distribution licence holders, in formulating proposals for new electricity networks infrastructure, to "have regard to the desirability of preserving natural beauty, of conserving flora, fauna and geological or physiographical features of special interest and of protecting sites, buildings and objects of architectural, historic or archaeological interest; and …do what [they] reasonably can to mitigate any effect which the proposals would have on the natural beauty of the	

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	countryside or on any such flora, fauna, features, sites, buildings or objects."	approach was discussed and agreed with NGET in pre-application consultation. The full extent of the works has been considered in the **ES (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1)**. **ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.6)** reports the assessment of the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development on Landscape and Visual receptors. It also sets out the key embedded mitigation measures. These measures include: • Refinement of the Cable Route Corridor to reduce the extent of land use change and direct landscape effects; • Consideration of landscape when locating the substation, including minimising visual presence in the landscape; • Limiting loss of existing vegetation through siting and design; and • A belt of native shrub planting will be introduced to the west of the proposed Onsite Substation to minimise visual impact as perceived from visual receptors to the west and help provide assimilation into the landscape context. Mitigation planting will be more limited within the Cable Route Corridor and will be focused primarily on restoring vegetation removed during the construction stage. The above measures, as well as the embedded and additional mitigation measures set out in **ES Chapter 7: Ecology (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.7)** will maximise the preservation of the Site's natural beauty, flora, fauna and geological features.

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		Impacts to nearby designated sites were considered throughout **ES Chapter 7: Ecology (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.7),** which concluded that impacts would be nil to low. Impacts to buildings and objects of architectural, historic or archaeological interest have been considered in **ES Chapter 8: Cultural Heritage (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.8)**, which established that there will be no designated heritage assets physically impacted by the Proposed Development.
Part 2.3 Climate change adaptation and resilience	2.3.2 As climate change is likely to increase risks to the resilience of some of this infrastructure, from flooding for example, or in situations where it is located near the coast or an estuary or is underground, applicants should in particular set out to what extent the proposed development is expected to be vulnerable, and, as appropriate, how it has been designed to be resilient to: • flooding, particularly for substations that are vital to the network; and especially in light of changes to groundwater levels resulting from climate change; • the effects of wind and storms on overhead lines; • higher average temperatures leading to increased transmission losses;	**ES Chapter 11: Water Resources & Flood Risk (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.11)** and **ES Chapter 12: Climate Change (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.12)** outlines the level of flood risk throughout the site. The Southern and Western areas of the Site are largely located within Flood Zone 1. Southern sections of the Cable Route Corridor and the Bicker Fen National Grid Substation are also located within Flood Zone 3. Table 12.16 of **ES Chapter 12: Climate Change (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.12)** assesses the vulnerability of the Proposed Developments receptors from identified issues of climate change. These issues include temperature, precipitation, snow and ice, gales, storms and extreme weather, solar radiation and cloud cover. The vulnerability was identified as low to medium across all issues, with likelihood being identified as low to very low. Embedded mitigation measures have been included in the design to mitigate flooding within Section 11.7: Assessment of Effects of **ES Chapter 11: Water Resources & Flood**

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	• earth movement or subsidence caused by flooding or drought (for underground cables); and • coastal erosion – for the landfall of offshore transmission cables and their associated substations in the inshore and coastal locations respectively.	**Risk (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.11)** and Section 12.2 Assessment of Effects of **ES Chapter 12: Climate Change (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.12)**. SuDS will be developed and maintained throughout the Proposed Development. SuDS will be utilised within the Site to provide conveyance and storage for surface water runoff, as well as water quality treatment and enhancing biodiversity. SuDS mitigation includes use of swales and detention basins, which are to be monitored to maintain effectiveness. A minimum preferred separation distance of up to 5 m from built development was applied where appropriate along every watercourse and waterbody during the Proposed Development design. Base fence panels will be widened to allow debris to flow and prevent blockage. Underground cabling will, wherever possible, aim to follow the same route as the access tracks to reduce the ground disturbance across the Site. Where trenchless techniques are proposed, the shortest practicable route will be used and where open cut crossing are proposed, measures will be implemented to maintain water flows downstream of the crossing during construction and these crossings will be designed to prevent scour of the watercourse bed. The routing of access tracks and cabling will be designed to minimise the overall environmental effect and to limit the number of watercourse crossings. The Onsite Substation and BESS has been co-located to allow for appropriate drainage solution and raising/ bunding to defend against flood risk.

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		In addition to the flood mitigation measures discussed above, other key points regarding mitigation measures that have been designed into the Proposed Development for certain receptors and climate variables are outlined below and form part of the embedded mitigation measures: • To reduce potential impacts to Site personnel, a health and safety plan will be developed to ensure Site personnel are protected from extreme weather events resulting from climate change; • The retention of the Bespoke Access Road during the operational phase improves ease of access to the Onsite Substation to minimise the downtime associated with any reliability or maintenance issues caused by climate impacts; and • Co-locating Onsite Substation and BESS allows for appropriate drainage solution and raising/bunding to defend against flood risk, reducing requirements to duplicate any flood defences.
	2.3.3 Section 4.10 of EN-1 advises that the resilience of the project to the effects of climate change must be assessed in the Environmental Statement (ES) accompanying an application. For example, future increased risk of flooding would be covered in any flood risk assessment (see Sections 5.8 in EN-1). Consideration should also be given to coastal change (see sections 5.6 in EN1)	The Proposed Development's resilience to the effects of climate change are assessed in Part B: Assessment of Climate Change Resilience of **Chapter 12: Climate Change (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.12)**.

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Part 2.4 – Consideration of good design for energy infrastructure	2.4.1 The Planning Act 2008 requires the Secretary of State to have regard, in designating an NPS, and in determining applications for development consent to the desirability of good design.	The **Design and Access Approach Document (Document Ref: 5.6)** sets out how regard has been given to the surrounding context and a good design decision making process adopted. The selection of underground cabling instead of overhead lines was made prior to the publication of the PEIR and was intended to reduce landscape and visual and above ground heritage impacts, limiting them to the construction phase. Underground cabling is typically more expensive to develop than overhead lines. The selection of an existing point of connection to undertake extension works , and the incorporation of NGET's functional requirements for this extension, along with planting screening, within the powers sought in the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**, have all contributed to good design for the extension of the Bicker fen 400kV Substation, as set out in the **Design and Access Approach Document (Document Ref: 5.6).**
	2.4.2 Applicants should consider the criteria for good design set out in EN-1 Section 4.7 at an early stage when developing projects.	
	2.4.3 However, the Secretary of State should bear in mind that electricity networks infrastructure must in the first instance be safe and secure, and that the functional design constraints of safety and security may limit an applicant's ability to influence the aesthetic appearance of that infrastructure.	The Proposed Development includes security measures including fencing and CCTV.
	2.4.4 While the above principles should govern the design of an electricity networks	

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	infrastructure application to the fullest possible extent – including in its avoidance and/or mitigation of potential adverse impacts (particularly those detailed in Sections 2.9 below) – the functional performance of the infrastructure in respect of security of supply and public and occupational safety must not thereby be threatened.	
Part 2.6 Land Rights and Land Interests	2.6.1 In order to be lawfully able to install, inspect, maintain, repair, adjust, alter, replace or remove an electricity line (above or below ground), its related equipment… and/or its associated mitigation or enhancement schemes, applicants must: i. own the land on, over, or under which the relevant activity is to take place; or ii. hold sufficient rights over or interests in that land (typically in the form of an easement); or iii. have permission for the activity from the present owner or occupier of that land.	As shown in the **Land and Rights Negotiations Tracker (Document Ref: 4.4)**, the Applicant has already negotiated and completed property agreements with the freehold owners of the land comprising the Solar Array Area, which represents the significant majority of the Order Land. The Applicant is in negotiations to enter into voluntary agreements with the remaining freehold owners of the land comprising the Bespoke Access Corridor, Cable Route Corridor and access to the Solar Array Area. As is shown in the tables in the **Land and Rights Negotiations Tracker (Document Ref: 4.4)** agreement is expected to be reached before or during Examination with all of the remaining parties. This means that should the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)** be granted by the Secretary of State for the Proposed Development, the Applicant anticipates that it will be able to exercise option agreements over the majority of the relevant interests in the Site for the lifetime of the Proposed Development. In parallel, the Applicant is also seeking compulsory acquisition powers within the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1).** The Applicant requires compulsory acquisition powers

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		to ensure that it is able to acquire all of the land and interests required for the Proposed Development, including the land and interests for which a private agreement has not yet been reached. Notwithstanding the position reached in respect of the Solar Array Area, it is necessary for the Applicant to be granted the compulsory acquisition powers included in the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)** to protect against a scenario whereby the freehold owners of the Solar Array Area do not grant a lease of their land in accordance with the terms of the completed option agreements, or if agreements in the other areas of the Proposed Development are not completed. The Applicant also needs powers to extinguish private rights to the extent that they would conflict with the Proposed Development. Whilst seeking compulsory acquisition powers, the Applicant will continue to seek to acquire the land and rights and other interests in, on and over the land by agreement in parallel. This approach of making the application for powers of compulsory acquisition in the Application for the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)** and, in parallel, conducting negotiations to acquire land by agreement, accords with relevant compulsory acquisition guidance.
2.7 Holistic Planning	2.7.2 The government envisages that, wherever reasonably possible, applications for new generating stations and their related infrastructure should be contained in a single application to the Secretary of State.	Works No. 1-10, and the "further associated development" defined in Schedule 1 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)** comprise all works which are required to construct, operate and decommission the Proposed Development.

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	However, a consolidated approach of this kind may not always be possible, nor represent the most efficient strategy for delivery of new infrastructure.	
Part 2.8 Strategic Network Planning	2.8.4 The Secretary of State should also take into account that Transmission Owners (TOs) and Distribution Network Operators (DNOs) are required under Section 9 of the Electricity Act 1989 to bring forward efficient and economical proposals in terms of network design.	As outlined in the **Appendix 2.1: Grid Connection Construction Method Statement (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.4)**, the Applicant holds an offer for connection to the National Grid Bicker Fen 400 kV Substation. To accommodate the proposed connection, works to the existing Bicker Fen National Grid Substation are required. These are comprised in Work No. 5, defined in Schedule 1 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1).** The substation extension will be delivered by NGET, which has the benefit of Work No. 5 in the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)** to enable this.
	2.8.5 TOs and DNOs are also required to facilitate competition in the generation and supply of electricity, and electricity distributors have a statutory duty to provide a connection where requested.	
Part 2.9 – Applicant Assessment	2.9.46 All overhead power lines produce EMFs. These tend to be highest directly under a line and decrease to the sides at increasing distance. Although putting cables underground eliminates the electric field, they still produce magnetic fields, which are highest directly above the cable. EMFs can have both direct and indirect effects on human health, aquatic and terrestrial organisms.	As set out in **ES Chapter 17: Other Environmental Topics (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.17)**, the positioning of cables underground minimises the potential effects of EMF since underground cables generally have a negligible electric field with less radiation compared to overhead lines. In addition, electrical fields from the underground power cables will be shielded by the surrounding cable duct and the conducting soil. The cabling within the Cable Route Corridor will not be fully powered during construction, and therefore, the effects of EMFs during construction will be less than or equal to the
	2.9.47 The direct effects occur in terms of impacts on the central nervous system	

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	resulting in its normal functioning being affected. Indirect effects occur through electric charges building up on the surface of the body producing a microshock on contact with a grounded object, or vice versa, which, depending on the field strength and other exposure factors, can range from barely perceptible to being an annoyance or even painful.	effects during operational phase, which represents a worst-case scenario. The Cable Route Corridor was selected following consultation and evolving design and is considered to be the most appropriate in terms of distances from properties and avoiding main settlements, as shown in **Appendix 3.1: Grid Connection Corridor Appraisal (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.9).** Suitable setback distances would also be implemented so that the maximum levels of electromagnetic radiation received at existing residential properties and places of work from the proposed cable routes during operation will be below ICNIRP 1998 reference levels. The positioning of ancillary infrastructure within the main Solar Array Area, such as for the locations of inverters, transformers and other sources of EMFs, have also been considered so they are at safe distances, considering the most advanced technology. These design choices are presented within **ES Chapter 3: Alternatives and Design Evolution (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.3)**.
Part 2.10 - Mitigation	2.10.12 Where it can be shown that the line will comply with the current public exposure guidelines [for EMF] and the policy on phasing, no further mitigation should be necessary.	As set out in **ES Chapter 17: Other Environmental Topics (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.17)**, the Site is considered to present an overall low risk of potential EMF effects. This is attributed to embedded mitigation within the Site, design evolution of the layout and choice for underground cabling. Any potential EMF risks at the Site, and near to the Site are considered to be adequately

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		addressed in-line with DECC's Voluntary Code of Practice 2012.
Part 2.11 – Secretary of State decision making	2.11.10 Before granting consent to an overhead line application, the Secretary of State should be satisfied that the proposal is in accordance with the guidelines, considering the evidence provided by the applicant and any other relevant evidence. It may also need to take expert advice from the Department of Health and Social Care.	This policy is not of particular relevance given that the Proposed Development cabling will be underground, which would minimise the potential effects of EMF. Further the cables will be shielded by the surrounding cable duct and conducting soil. Suitable setback distances would also be implemented so that the maximum levels of electromagnetic radiation received at existing residential properties and places of work from the proposed cable routes during operation will be below ICNIRP 1998 reference levels. As demonstrated in **ES Chapter 17: Other Environmental Topics (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.17)**, the Proposed Development would be in accordance with the guidelines.

Appendix 4A: Policy Accordance Table – National Planning Policy Framework

Table 4A: National Planning Policy Framework – Table of Accordance

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Section 2: Achieving sustainable development. **Paragraph 8**	Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives): a) 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; b) 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; and c) 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.	Section 4 of this Planning Statement sets out how the Proposed Development would contribute substantially to the national need for supply of low carbon energy, in order for the government to meet its net zero objectives and commitments. By generating low carbon electricity and being capable of connecting to the national grid before 2030 at a low marginal cost, large-scale solar power reduces the energy generated by more expensive and more carbon intensive forms of generation. The Proposed Development will therefore help to decarbonise the electricity system and lower the market price of electricity. As set out in the **ES Chapter 3: Alternatives and Design Evolution (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.1, 6.2.3)** and the **Design and Access Approach Document (Document Ref. 5.6)**, the Proposed Development has been designed in a manner that seeks to meet current need for energy infrastructure, minimises impacts and maximises benefits to the environment and mitigate the impacts of climate change, in accordance with Paragraph 11(a) of the NPPF. A number of design principles have been developed to govern detailed scale and design of the Proposed Development. These are secured in the **Outline Design Principles (Appendix 1** of the **Design and Access Approach Document, Document Ref. 5.6)**.

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		The Proposed Development has sought to ensure the needs of the present are met by providing low carbon energy to meet forecasted demand, without comprising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. This is demonstrated through the comprehensive impact assessment undertaken within the **Environmental Statement (Document Refs: 6.1, 6.2** and **6.3)** which consider the short- and long-term impacts of the Proposed Development and ensures adequate mitigation measures are applied to offset any residual impacts. Section 5.3 of this **Planning Statement (Document Ref: 5.5)** summarises the local development plans and policies that are of relevance, and Section 6.11 provides a summary of how the Proposed Development conforms to the relevant local plans and policies. Further, **ES Chapter 15: Socio-Economics (Document Ref. 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.15)** considers the unique characteristics, needs and opportunities of the local area assesses in assessing the social and economic impact of the Proposed Development. It considers the potential effects of the Proposed Development on residential properties within the immediate area and settlements in the wider surrounding area (e.g. in terms of employment, local procurement, increased exposure to noise, air pollution and traffic, tourism, livelihoods, recreation, influx of workers, physical resettlement and wellbeing).

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		From an environmental perspective, **ES Chapter 7: Ecology (Document Ref. 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.7)** outlines how the Applicant has sought to protect and enhance the natural environment as far as practical. The Applicant's assessment and application of the mitigation hierarchy for the Proposed Development has mitigated identified significant adverse effects to a level that is not significant in EIA terms. With embedded mitigation in place, the Proposed Development is deemed in **Chapter 12: Climate Change (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.12)** to be resilient to climate change impacts, even those within the RCP8.5 scenario that are proposed to occur over the 45-year nominal project lifetime.
Section 6: Building a strong, competitive economy. **Paragraph 85**	Planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development. The approach taken should allow each area to build on its strengths, counter any weaknesses and address the challenges of the future. This is particularly important where Britain can be a global leader in driving innovation, and in areas with high levels of productivity, which should be able to capitalise on their performance and potential.	**ES Chapter 15: Socio-Economics (Document Ref. 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.15)** assesses the impacts of the Proposed Development on the local economy. As confirmed in Section 15.5 of **ES Chapter 15: Socio-Economics (Document Ref. 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.15)**, local businesses and economy for the areas of North Kesteven District Council and Boston Borough Council were within the scope of the assessment. The assessment concluded that the Proposed Development will result in residual significant beneficial effects in terms of employment and economic contribution, mostly during construction and operation. The Proposed Development will provide 239 full-time equivalent construction jobs over the anticipated 24-36 month construction programme.
Supporting a prosperous	Planning policies and decisions should enable:	

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rural economy Paragraph 88	a) the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed, new buildings; b) the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses; c) sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside; and d) 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	The jobs created will be in the renewable energy sector and will contribute to the development of skills needed for the UK's net zero transition. The Proposed Development would lead to no residual adverse significant effects from a socio-economic perspective. After applying enhancement measures, during construction, effect from employment generation was assessed to be a significant beneficial effect for Boston Borough. The implementation of **Appendix 15.3: Outline Skills, Supply Chain and Employment Plan (OSSCEP) (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol. 2, 6.3.98)**, which is secured through a requirement in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)** is expected to secure a significant beneficial effect on the workforce and gross value added in Boston Borough, and enhance gross value added beneficial effects and local job creation in North Kesteven.
Section 8: Promoting healthy and safe communities. **Paragraph 96**	Planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which: a) promote social interaction, including opportunities for meetings between people who might not otherwise come into contact with each other – for example through mixed-use developments, strong neighbourhood centres, street layouts that allow for easy pedestrian and cycle connections within and between neighbourhoods, and active street frontages;	**ES Chapter 15: Socio-Economics (Document Ref. 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.15)** outlines how the Proposed Development achieves healthy, inclusive and safe places. During the construction phase, the majority of development traffic will utilise the A17 and Bespoke Access Road to access the main Solar Array Area and Cable Route Compound 1, therefore avoiding local roads. Cable Route

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	b) are safe and accessible, so that crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion – for example through the use of well-designed, clear and legible pedestrian and cycle routes, and high quality public space, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas; and c) enable and support healthy lives, through both promoting good health and preventing ill-health, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs and reduce health inequalities between the most and least deprived communities – for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling.	compounds 2, 5, and 6 will also be accessed via private access roads directly from the A17. Therefore, the only local roads that will be used to access construction sites are Carterplot Road/Great Hale Drove for access to the Cable Route Compounds 3 and 4, and Bicker Drove/Vicarage Drove for access to the Bicker Fen substation. In terms of the impacts on cyclists and horse-riders, the A17 is generally not an attractive cycle or horse-riding route due to very high existing traffic flows and high speeds. It has therefore been assumed that the majority of cycling and horse-riding in the vicinity of the Order Limits is on low traffic local roads. The Proposed Development is therefore not expected to disrupt social interactions in the area by maintaining these ongoing activities, which results in the Proposed Development being unlikely to have a measurable effect on the wellbeing of people. The Proposed Development includes opportunities for enhancement such as proposals to extend an existing mapped (but not present) inaccessible PRoW stub by creating a footbridge over the dyke on the northeast border of the Solar Array Area and a several kilometre long permissive path. This will connect the PRoW to a wider network during the operational lifetime of the Proposed Development. Safe permissive crossing points will be created for any PRoWs that cross the Bespoke Access Road, secured in the **Outline Design Principles (Appendix 1** of the **Design and Access Approach Document, Document Ref: 5.6)**. This

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		encourages the active and continued use of these PRoWs, whilst maintaining safety. This also enables healthy living, with the promotion of good health through these PRoW improvements and cycle routes.
Paragraph 102	Planning policies and decisions should promote public safety and take into account wider security and defence requirements by: a) anticipating and addressing possible malicious threats and other hazards (whether natural or man-made), especially in locations where large numbers of people are expected to congregate. Policies for relevant areas (such as town centre and regeneration frameworks), and the layout and design of developments, should be informed by the most up-to-date information available from the police and other agencies about the nature of potential threats and their implications. This includes appropriate and proportionate steps that can be taken to reduce vulnerability, increase resilience and ensure public safety and security. The safety of children and other vulnerable users in proximity to open water railways and other potential hazards should be considered in planning and assessing proposals for development; and b) recognising and supporting development required for operational defence and security purposes and ensuring that operational sites are not affected adversely by the impact of other development proposed in the area.	The Proposed Development is located in a rural area made up of predominantly arable agricultural land. Therefore, this is not considered an area where large numbers of people are expected to congregate. Consultees, including the relevant police and fire service bodies have been consulted in order to inform the development of the design of the Proposed Development and have not suggested additional security measures are necessary. The Proposed Development will not affect existing operational defence and security sites.

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Paragraph 103	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 and can deliver wider benefits for nature and support efforts to address climate change. Planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the need for open space, sport and recreation facilities (including quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses) and opportunities for new provision. Information gained from the assessments should be used to determine what open space, sport and recreational provision is needed, which plans should then seek to accommodate.	The Proposed Development includes the provision of enhancements to the public access network. **ES Chapter 15: Socio-Economics (Document Ref. 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.15)** and **Appendix 2.4: Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.8)** outlines how PRoWs will be enhanced throughout the Proposed Development through embedded mitigation which includes: • Proposed extension of an existing mapped (but not present) inaccessible PRoW stub by creating an undetermined number of footbridges (unlikely to be more than eight in number) to cross existing watercourses, connecting the PRoW to a wider network of PRoWs. The permissive path is illustrated in **Figure 6.31 Landscape Strategy Plan (Document Ref: 6.4 ES Vol. 3, 6.4.42)**; • Installation and maintenance of signage indicating temporary closure of Public Rights of Way (PRoW); • Installation and maintenance of hoarding where necessary to provide screening for PRoW; • The PRoWs that will be affected by the construction of the Bespoke Access Road will be temporarily closed during the construction of the Bespoke Access Road and then subject to managed crossing points (see **Appendix 2.2: Bespoke Access Road Construction**

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		Method Statement (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol. 2, 6.3.5) for details); • Sufficient protection/ separation distances will be provided between existing PRoWs and construction routes (where necessary); and • Managing areas where the proposed construction routes cross any existing PRoWs or local access roads by maximising visibility between construction vehicles and other users (pedestrians and road users) and implementing traffic management.
Paragraph 105	Planning policies and decisions should protect and enhance public rights of way and access, including taking opportunities to provide better facilities for users, for example by adding links to existing rights of way networks including National Trails.	**ES Chapter 15: Socio-economic (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.15)** outlines how PRoWs will be maintained and enhanced during the operational stage of the Proposed Development through: • Proposed extension of an existing mapped (but not present) inaccessible PRoW stub by creating a footbridge over the dyke on the northeast border and the addition of a several kilometre long permissive path thereby connecting the PRoW to a wider network during the operational lifetime of the Proposed Development; and • Permissive crossing points will be created for any PRoWs that cross the Bespoke Access Road, secured in the **Outline Design Principles (Appendix 1** of the **Design and Access Approach Document, Document Ref. 5.6)**.

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		Short-term closures of PRoWs which interact with the Proposed Development are expected to be required during construction. However, wherever practicable, management measures such as clearly signed crossing points will be used to keep the PRoW open, and to minimise the duration of short-term closures.
Section 9: Promoting sustainable transport. **Paragraph 108**	Transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals, using a vision-led approach to identify transport solutions that deliver well-designed, sustainable and popular places. This should involve: a) Making transport considerations an important part of early engagement with local communities; b) Ensuring patterns of movement, streets, parking and other transport considerations are integral to the design of schemes, and contribute to making high quality places; c) Understanding and addressing the potential impacts of development on transport networks; d) Realising opportunities from existing or proposed transport infrastructure, and changing transport technology and usage – for example in relation to the scale, location or density of development that can be accommodated; e) Identifying and pursuing opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use; and f) Identifying, assessing and taking into account the environmental impacts of traffic and	**ES Chapter 9: Access and Traffic (Document Ref. 6.2, Vol.1, 6.2.9)** and the associated **Appendix 9.1: Transport Assessment (Document Ref: 6.3. Vol.2, 6.3.76)** provides an assessment of the potential traffic and transport impacts related to the Proposed Development, and concludes that impacts at the construction, operation or decommissioning phases will be negligible and not significant in EIA terms. Measures required to control any construction traffic impacts (including HGV and AIL routing, traffic noise impacts, and delivery routes) and scheduling have been identified and are secured through the **OCTMP (Document Ref. 6.3, ES Vol. 2, 6.3.79).** These measures include: • Minimising and managing any overnight closures of the A17 in coordination with Lincolnshire County Council Highways; • Ensuring all staff are aware of required construction traffic route; • Implementing minibus travel to work arrangements and sufficient parking;

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	transport infrastructure – including appropriate opportunities for avoiding and mitigating any adverse effects, and for net environmental gains.	• Road condition surveys before and after construction, and restoration of any dilapidation as necessary; • Consultation with local town and parish councils; • Appropriate signage, lighting and guarding of temporary works; • Scheduling of deliveries to minimise interaction with other vehicles; and • Wheel washing to prevent transfer of materials onto road network. The production of a final Construction Traffic Management Plan is secured by Requirement 13 of the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1).** **Appendix 9.1: Transport Assessment (Document Ref. 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.76)** was produced in accordance with current transport guidance, and demonstrates that the Proposed Development will not result in residual adverse effects upon highway safety or generate any highway capacity issues. **Appendix 9.1: Transport Assessment (Document Ref. 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.76)** includes an **Outline Construction Staff Travel Plan (OCSTP)** which will be implemented (as part of the detailed CTMP) to minimise the impacts of construction staff travel to/from the site and the resultant impact on existing road users.
Paragraph 115	In assessing sites that may be allocated for development in plans, or specific applications for development, it should be ensured that: a) sustainable transport modes are prioritised taking account of the vision for the site, the type of development and its location; b) safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users; c) the design of streets, parking areas, other transport elements and the content of associated standards reflects current national guidance, including the National Design Guide and the National Model Design Code; and d) any significant impacts from the development on the transport network (in terms of capacity and congestion), or on highway safety, can be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree through a vision-led approach.	
Paragraph 115	Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network, following mitigation, would be severe, taking into account all reasonable future scenarios.	
Paragraph 118	All developments that will generate significant amounts of movement should be required to provide a travel plan, and the application should be supported by a vision-led transport statement or	

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	transport assessment so that the likely impacts of the proposal can be assessed and monitored.	**Appendix 9.3: OCTMP (Document Ref. 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.79)** includes an **Outline Delivery Management Plan (ODMP)** and an **AIL DMP** which set out all traffic management and mitigation measures required to ensure safe and efficient transport of construction loads. These plans are secured through the requirement to deliver a detailed CTMP, in requirement 13 in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1).**
Section 11: Making effective use of land **Paragraph 124(a)**	Planning policies and decisions should 'encourage multiple benefits from both urban and rural land, including through […] taking opportunities to achieve net environmental gains – such as developments that would enable new habitat creation […].'	The Proposed Development will exceed 10% BNG, which is non mandatory for NSIPs at present, and is therefore a policy benefit of the Proposed Development. The **Biodiversity Net Gain Strategy (Document Ref. 7.3)** demonstrates that the Proposed Development will achieve higher levels of biodiversity net gain (at least 30% net gain in habitat units, at least 10% net gain in hedgerow units and at least 10% net gain in watercourse units) which would be delivered on-site for 30 years, well in exceedance of policy. This is secured by a Requirement in the **Draft Development Consent Order (Document Ref: 3.1)**. The Proposed Development incorporates biodiversity enhancement measures outlined in **ES Chapter 7: Ecology (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.7)** ensuring compliance with national policy objectives. Mitigation and enhancement measures include: • implementation of species-specific protections;

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		• noise and light pollution controls to minimise species disturbance; • pre-construction surveys to identify and protect protected species (bats, birds, badgers); • buffer planting and distilling measures around waterbodies; • planting up gaps in hedgerows to create ecological corridors, improve connectivity and reduce fragmentation; • restoration of grasslands; • enhancement of buffer areas around ecologically sensitive areas; • enhancement of waterbodies to provide suitable habitat for great crested newts; • installation of artificial nesting and roosting boxes for birds and bats; and • creation of habitat piles and hibernaculum for amphibians, reptiles and invertebrates. These measures are secured in the detailed versions of **Appendix 6.7: OLEMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.19)** and **Appendix 2.4: OCEMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.7)**, must be delivered in accordance with requirements in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**. As outlined in the **Biodiversity Net Gain Strategy (Document Ref: 7.3)** enhancements to approximately 12.58km of ditch will occur and approximately 486 ha of arable land currently

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		under cultivation will undergo arable reversion to grassland. Approximately 3 ha of the Solar Array Area will be planted with mixed scrub (Native shrubs with Trees), to provide a visual screening and wildlife corridors at points around the Proposed Development. The project aligns with Biodiversity Net Gain principles by increasing habitat diversity within the site. Long-term benefits will be secured through **Appendix 6.7: OLEMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.19)**, of which preparation of a detailed version is secured through a Requirement in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1**. These measures ensure that the Proposed Development actively enhances biodiversity beyond mitigation requirements and that it is committed to achieving significant biodiversity net gain on-site.
Section 12: Achieving well-designed places. **Paragraph 131**	The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. Being clear about design expectations, and how these will be tested, is essential for achieving this. So too is effective engagement between applicants, communities, local planning authorities and other interests throughout the process.	As detailed in the **Design and Access Approach Document (Document Ref: 5.6)**, **ES Chapter 3: Alternatives and Design Evolution (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.3)** and **Appendix 2: Site Selection Report** of this **Planning Statement (Document Ref: 5.5)**, the location and design of the Proposed Development is the result of a comprehensive site selection process that resulted in avoidance and minimisation of impacts as early as possible. These documents also demonstrate that the Site is within an area of good solar

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Paragraph 137	Design quality should be considered throughout the evolution and assessment of individual proposals. Early discussion between applicants, the local planning authority and local community about the design and style of emerging schemes is important for clarifying expectations and reconciling local and commercial interests. Applicants should, where applicable, provide sufficient information to demonstrate how their proposals will meet the design expectations set out in local and national policy, and should work closely with those affected by their proposals to evolve designs that take account of the views of the community. Applications that can demonstrate early, proactive and effective engagement with the community should be looked on more favourably than those that cannot.	irradiance and relatively low and flat topography landscape to maximise energy generation. The Proposed Development has undergone an iterative design process which has resulted in the delivery of a functional and efficient Proposed Development design which will deliver a large amount of renewable and low carbon electricity using solar PV arrays, whilst also being sensitive to the local context and surrounding area within which it is located, avoiding and minimising impacts on the environment as far as practicable. As set out in Chapter 5 of the **Design and Access Approach Document (Document Ref: 5.6)**, the design process was informed through effective engagement between applicants, communities, local planning authorities and other interests. A number of design principles have been developed to govern detailed scale and design of the Proposed Development. These are secured in the **Outline Design Principles (Appendix 1** of the **Design and Access Approach Document, Document Ref. 5.6)**.
Paragraph 139	Development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes. Conversely, significant weight should be given to: a) development which reflects local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes; and/or b) outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability, or help raise the standard of design more generally in	

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	an area, so long as they fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings	
Section 14: Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change. **Paragraph 161**	The planning system should support the transition to net zero by 2050 and take full account of all climate impacts including overheating, water scarcity, storm and flood risks and coastal change. It should help to: shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimise vulnerability and improve resilience; encourage the reuse of existing resources, including the conversion of existing buildings; and support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure. Paragraph 154 states that new development should be planned for in ways that: a. avoid increased vulnerability to the range of impacts arising from climate change. When new development is brought forward in areas which are vulnerable, care should be taken to ensure that risks can be managed through suitable adaptation measures, including through the planning of green infrastructure; and b. can help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, such as through its location, orientation and design. Any local requirements for the sustainability of buildings should reflect the Government's policy for national technical standards.	As discussed in Section 4 of this **Planning Statement (Document Ref: 5.5),** the Proposed Development would make a substantial contribution to achieving net zero and meeting the UK's Seventh Carbon Budget. It would also contribute to global commitments to mitigate climate change. By generating low carbon, renewable and low-cost electricity in the UK, the Proposed Development will also help to reduce the UK's reliance on and exposure to volatile international fossil fuel markets, improving energy security. **ES Chapter 12: Climate Change (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.12)** includes a Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions Assessment. The assessment considers GHG emissions and in-combination climate change impacts. The assessment concludes that overall, the Proposed Development is considered to have a beneficial effect that is Significant. It is anticipated that 8,330,640 tCO2e will be saved over the lifespan of the Proposed Development. **ES Chapter 12: Climate Change (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.12)** also includes an assessment of climate change resilience. The assessment considers the impacts of climate change and how the Proposed Development can be resistant to these effects. With embedded
Paragraph 164	New development should be planned for in ways that:	

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	a) avoid increased vulnerability to the range of impacts arising from climate change. When new development is brought forward in areas which are vulnerable, care should be taken to ensure that risks can be managed through suitable adaptation measures, including through incorporating green infrastructure and sustainable drainage systems; and b) help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, such as through its location, orientation and design. Any local requirements for the sustainability of buildings in plans should reflect the Government's policy for national technical standards.	mitigation in place, the Proposed Development is deemed to be resilient to climate change impacts, even those within the RCP8.5 scenario that are proposed to occur over the 45-year nominal project lifetime (40 year operation plus an allowance for construction and decommissioning).
Paragraph 168	When determining planning applications for all forms of renewable and low carbon energy developments and their associated infrastructure, local planning authorities should: a) not require applicants to demonstrate the overall need for renewable or low carbon energy, and give significant weight to the benefits associated with renewable and low carbon energy generation and the proposal's contribution to a net zero future; b) recognise that small-scale and community-led projects provide a valuable contribution to significant cutting greenhouse gas emissions; and c) in the case of applications for the repowering and life-extension of existing renewable sites, give significant weight to the benefits of utilising an established site.	This **Planning Statement (Document Ref: 5.5)** sets out how the Proposed Development will contribute substantially to the need to supply low carbon energy, in order for the government to meet its net zero objectives and commitments. Paragraph 3.3.20 of EN-1 recognises that "*wind and solar are the lowest cost ways of generating electricity, helping reduce costs*". By generating low carbon electricity at a low cost, large-scale solar power reduces the energy generated by more expensive and more carbon intensive forms of generation. The Proposed Development will therefore help to decarbonise the electricity system and lower the market price of electricity.

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Paragraph 169	Once suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy have been identified in plans, local planning authorities should expect subsequent applications for commercial scale projects outside these areas to demonstrate that the proposed location meets the criteria used in identifying suitable areas.	**Appendix 2: Site Selection Report** of the **Planning Statement (Document Ref: 5.5)** outlines how the Site has been assessed against other potential sites around the point of connection and how it has been determined to be the most suitable.
Paragraph 170	Inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk (whether existing or future). Where development is necessary in such areas, the development should be made safe for its lifetime without increasing flood risk elsewhere.	**Chapter 8: Cultural Heritage (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.8)** provides an assessment of the impacts of the Proposed Development on the historic environment, including above and below ground assets. It has been concluded that there would be a medium adverse (significant) impact on the Church of St Andrew, Asgarby, a Grade I Listed building, however this impact would be short term during construction only. There would be no significant impacts to any other designated heritage assets. **Chapter 11: Water Resources and Flood Risk (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.11)** confirms that the Site is located within Flood zones 1, 2 and 3. **Appendix 11.1 Flood Risk Assessment (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.81)** concludes that flooding effects are not anticipated to be significant once mitigation measures have been incorporated. As shown in Table 11.17 of **Chapter 11: Water Resources and Flood Risk (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.11**, no residual effects on Water Resources or flooding are expected on receptors.
Paragraph 181	When determining any planning applications, local planning authorities should ensure that flood risk is not increased elsewhere. Where appropriate, applications should be supported by a site-specific flood-risk assessment. Development should only be allowed in areas at risk of flooding where, in the light of this assessment (and the sequential and exception tests, as applicable) it can be demonstrated that: a) within the site, the most vulnerable development is located in areas of lowest flood risk, unless there are overriding reasons to prefer a different location; b) the development is appropriately flood resistant and resilient such that, in the event of a flood, it could be quickly brought back into use without significant refurbishment;	

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	c) it incorporates sustainable drainage systems, unless there is clear evidence that this would be inappropriate; d) any residual risk can be safely managed; and e) safe access and escape routes are included where appropriate, as part of an agreed emergency plan.	Table 11.16 of **Chapter 11: Water Resources and Flood Risk (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.11)** outlines the potential for cumulative effects of flood risk during construction, operation and / or decommissioning. 88 schemes have been scoped into this assessment and have the potential to generate inter-cumulative effects with the Proposed Development. **Chapter 11: Water Resources and Flood Risk (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.11)** concludes that the potential inter-cumulative effects arising from the Proposed Development and other cumulative development are considered Negligible and Not Significant. A site-specific flood risk assessment (**Appendix 11.1: Flood Risk Assessment (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.81)**) has been prepared for the application which outlines mitigation measures at a high level of detail. Section 11.7: Assessment of Effects of **Chapter 11: Water Resources and Flood Risk (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.11)** outlines how throughout the development of design pre-application, the layout and locations of the access tracks (including the Bespoke Access Road) and ancillary infrastructure have been designed to avoid areas of high flood risk. A minimum preferred separation distance of 5 m from built development was applied along or around each watercourse and waterbody where appropriate.

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		The Proposed Development has been designed to be resilient to major flood events, with critical infrastructure such as solar panels and transformers to be raised up to 600 mm above the 1 in 100+ climate change breach flood depth. Base fence panels will be designed to have sufficient width to allow debris to flow and prevent blockage. **Appendix 11.1 Flood Risk Assessment (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.81)** provides details of the outline drainage strategy including the use of a Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS). The **Appendix 11.1 Flood Risk Assessment (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.81)** provides an assessment of flood risk to and from the Proposed Development from all sources of flooding. The FRA demonstrates how residual flood risk will be managed during construction, operation and decommissioning of the Proposed Development and how the requirements of the Sequential Test and Exceptions Test are satisfied.
Paragraph 182	Applications which could affect drainage on or around the site should incorporate sustainable drainage systems to control flow rates and reduce volumes of runoff, and which are proportionate to the nature and scale of the proposal. These should provide multifunctional benefits wherever possible, through facilitating improvements in water quality and biodiversity, as well as benefits for amenity. Sustainable drainage systems provided as part of proposals for major development should:	Section 8: Outline Drainage Strategy of **Appendix 11.1 Flood Risk Assessment (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.81)** demonstrates that sustainable drainage techniques have been designed into the Proposed Development and will be maintained by the Applicant. The requirement to provide final details of surface water drainage, substantially in accordance with the Outline Drainage Strategy is secured through a

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	a) take account of advice from the Lead Local Flood Authority; b) have appropriate proposed minimum operational standards; c) have maintenance arrangements in place to ensure an acceptable standard of operation for the lifetime of the development.	Requirementin Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1).**
Section 15: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment. **Paragraph 187**	Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by: a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan); b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland; c) maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate; d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures and incorporating features which support priority or threatened species such as swifts, bats and hedgehogs;	**ES Chapter 7: Ecology (Document Ref. 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.7)** identifies the ecological impacts resulting from developing the Proposed Development. It has assessed impacts on protected species, habitats, and other species identified as being of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity. The assessment has been carried out by competent ecologists, who have advised during the design process to ensure that impacts are avoided, minimised and mitigated in line with the mitigation hierarchy, and biodiversity enhancements are maximised. Sections 7.6 and 7.8 of **ES Chapter 7: Ecology (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.7)** set out expected likely significant effects and residual effects, respectively, on the above receptors during construction, operation and decommissioning of the Proposed Development. It concludes that there are no potential significant adverse effects identified on any internationally, nationally, or locally designated sites during construction, operation or decommissioning of the Proposed Development.

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	e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and f) remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.	The Proposed Development will exceed 10% BNG, which is non mandatory for NSIPs at present, and is therefore a policy benefit of the Proposed Development. The **Biodiversity Net Gain Strategy (Document Ref. 7.3)** demonstrates that the Proposed Development will achieve higher levels of biodiversity net gain (at least 30% net gain in habitat units, at least 10% net gain in hedgerow units and at least 10% net gain in watercourse units) which would be delivered and monitored on-site for 30 years as part of a wider package of landscaping and habitat proposals described in the **Appendix 6.7: Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.19)**, well in exceedance of policy. This is secured by a Requirement in the **Draft Development Consent Order (Document Ref: 3.1)**. **ES Chapters 16: Air Quality (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.16)** and **ES Chapter 11: Water Resources and Flood Risk (Document Ref: 6.2 Vol.1, 6.2.11)** assess the impacts to air and water quality respectively, demonstrating that the Proposed Development will not significantly adversely affect air or water quality and outlining the proposed measures to improve local conditions where possible. **ES Chapter 10: Noise and Vibration (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.10)** considers the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development on

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		noise and vibration. The Assessment concludes that no construction, operation or decommissioning impact will result in a residual effect of noise or vibration greater than minor adverse, which is not significant in EIA terms.
Paragraph 188	Plans should: distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites; allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework; take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries.	**ES Chapter 7: Ecology (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.7)**, considers the impacts to designated sites including National Nature Reserves (NNR) and Local Nature Reserves (LNR) within 2 km of the site, SSSIs within 10 km and international sites within 20 km. The assessment concluded that there would be nil to low potential significant adverse effects on any internationally, nationally, or locally designated sites during construction, operation or decommissioning of the Proposed Development. **ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.6)** concludes that the Proposed Development is not located within, or within the setting of, any national statutory landscape designation. There would be no significant landscape effects in relation to nearby NCA's. **ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.6)** concludes that during construction there will be significant landscape impacts on the Landscape Character of the Site, Fenland Scrub Area and Holland Reclaimed Fen, and significant visual impacts on a number of visual receptors. The impacts will

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		decrease during operation as screening improves but at year 15 there will still be landscape impacts on the Landscape Character of the Site, and Visual impacts on a handful of visual receptors. The proposed mitigation measures include a comprehensive landscape restoration and enhancement scheme illustrated in the indicative landscape proposals in **Figure 6.31 Landscape Strategy Plan (Document Ref: 6.4 ES Vol.3, 6.4.42).** The measures within this plan are secured through the requirement to deliver a detailed LEMP, substantially in accordance with **Appendix 6.7: OLEMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.19)**, as set out in requirement 7 of Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**. It is considered that the wider benefits of the Proposed Development, including the delivery of a significant level of low carbon energy generation and biodiversity net gain and the provision of a substantial permissive footpath throughout the operational stage in the Solar Array Area outweigh these impacts, and that the Proposed Development is considered acceptable in terms of overall landscape, visual and residential amenity impacts and the nature of the visual impacts are not considered to outweigh the benefits of the Proposed Development.
Paragraph 189	Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and National	**ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.6)** confirms that the Proposed Development is not located within,

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	Landscapes which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads. The scale and extent of development within all these designated areas should be limited, while development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas.	or within the setting of, any national statutory landscape designation.
Paragraph 193	When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles: a) if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused; b) development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest;	**ES Chapter 7: Ecology (Document Ref. 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.7)** identifies the ecological impacts resulting from developing the Proposed Development. It has assessed impacts on protected species, habitats, and other species identified as being of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity. The assessment has been carried out by competent ecologists, who have advised during the design process to ensure that impacts are avoided, minimised and mitigated in line with the mitigation hierarchy, and biodiversity enhancements are maximised. Sections 7.6 and 7.8 of **ES Chapter 7: Ecology (Document Ref. 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.7)** set out expected likely significant effects and residual effects, respectively, on the above receptors during construction, operation and decommissioning of the Proposed Development. It concludes that there are no potential significant adverse effects identified on any internationally, nationally, or

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	c) development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and d) development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate.	locally designated sites during construction, operation or decommissioning of the Proposed Development. The Proposed Development will exceed 10% BNG, which is non mandatory for NSIPs at present, and is therefore a policy benefit of the Proposed Development. The **Biodiversity Net Gain Strategy (Document Ref. 7.3)** demonstrates that the Proposed Development will achieve higher levels of biodiversity net gain (at least 30% net gain in habitat units, at least 10% net gain in hedgerow units and at least 10% net gain in watercourse units) which would be delivered and monitored on-site for 30 years as part of a wider package of landscaping and habitat proposals described in the **Appendix 6.7: Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.19)**, well in exceedance of policy. This is secured by a Requirement in the **Draft Development Consent Order (Document Ref: 3.1)**. There are five statutory designated sites within the study area (2 km from the site for National Nature Reserves (NNR) and Local Nature Reserves (LNR), 10 km for SSSIs and 20 km for international sites) including: The Wash RAMSAR, The Wash SPA, The Wash and North Norfolk Coast SAC, Horbling Fen SSSI and Wilsford & Rauceby Warrens SSSI. There are no NNR or LNR present within 2 km of the Site. Impacts to these sites were

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		considered throughout the **ES Chapter 7: Ecology (Document Ref. 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.7)**, which concluded that there would be no significant adverse effects on any internationally, nationally, or locally designated sites during construction, operation or decommissioning of the Proposed Development. The **Shadow Habitat Regulations Assessment (Document Ref: 5.2)** outlines that there are no significant effects anticipated on European sites.
Paragraph 196	Planning policies and decisions should ensure that: a) a site is suitable for its proposed use taking account of ground conditions and any risks arising from land instability and contamination. This includes risks arising from natural hazards or former activities such as mining, and any proposals for mitigation including land remediation (as well as potential impacts on the natural environment arising from that remediation); b) after remediation, as a minimum, land should not be capable of being determined as contaminated land under Part IIA of the Environmental Protection Act 1990; and c) adequate site investigation information, prepared by a competent person, is available to inform these assessments.	**ES Chapter 14: Soils and Agricultural Land (Document Ref. 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.14)** and the **Appendix 14.4: Outline Soil Management Plan (OSMP) (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.95)** set out how agricultural land was considered in the design of Proposed Development, the Proposed Development's embedded mitigation measures, and principles on how the soils will be managed and protected during the construction, operation and decommissioning of the Proposed Development. Preparation of detailed Soil Management Plans is secured by a requirement 16 in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**. **Chapter 17: Other Environmental Topics (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.17)** outlines that significant contamination is not anticipated at the Site. Any potential contamination risks will be adequately addressed through industry best practice in accordance with standard construction environmental management and occupational health procedures, as set out in **Appendix 2.4:**

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		OCEMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.7) (which is secured through a requirement in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**).To provide verification of the preliminary qualitative risk assessments of the desk study, during the detailed design stage, a geotechnical ground investigation will be conducted for design purposes, as set out in **Appendix 2.4: OCEMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.7)** a full version of which is secured by Requirement in Schedule 2 of the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**, and as per **Appendix 17.1: Ground Conditions Desk Study (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.102)** will incorporate contamination testing of the soils, informed by the findings of the desk study, to provide verification of the preliminary qualitative risk assessment of the desk study.
Paragraph 198	Planning policies and decisions should also ensure that new development is appropriate for its location taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment, as well as the potential sensitivity of the site or the wider area to impacts that could arise from the development. In doing so they should: a) mitigate and reduce to a minimum potential adverse impacts resulting from noise from new development – and avoid noise giving rise to significant adverse impacts on health and the quality of life; b) identify and protect tranquil areas which have remained relatively undisturbed by noise and	**ES Chapters 16: Air Quality (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.16)** and **Chapter 11: Water Resources & Flood Risk (Document Ref: 6.2 Vol.1, 6.2.11)** assess the impacts to air and water quality respectively, demonstrating that the Proposed Development will not significantly adversely affect air or water quality and outlining the proposed measures to improve local conditions where possible. **ES Chapter 10: Noise and Vibration (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.10)** considers the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development on noise and vibration. The assessment includes mitigation measures embedded into the Proposed Development including:

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	are prized for their recreational and amenity value for this reason; and c) limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation	• Maintenance of plant and machinery to control noise emissions; • A programme of all works will be distributed to all identified receptors in the area and updated as the Proposed Development progresses; • Broadband reversing alarms will be used instead of tonal alarms; • Measures to avoid unnecessary noise generated by staff due to misuse of tools and equipment, unnecessary shouting and radios; • Measure to avoid two noisy operations occurring simultaneously in close proximity to the same receptor; • Adherence to restricted construction working hours imposed by Lincolnshire County Council; • Local authority consultation prior to any required night-time construction activities; and • Undertaking of bespoke monitoring at receptors to ensure noise levels do not exceed the threshold of significant adverse effect. These measures are secured through **Appendix 2.4: OCEMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.7)**, of which preparation of a detailed version is secured through a requirement in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)** and will reduce and minimise sound levels to a minimum along with layout and separation distances. The Assessment concludes that no construction, operation or decommissioning impacts will result in a residual effect of noise or vibration which is

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		greater than minor adverse, which is not significant in EIA terms. **ES Chapter 2: Proposed Development (Document Ref. 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.2)** outlines the security measures, including lighting, incorporated in the design of the Proposed Development's design. Efforts have been made to reduce the impact of security fencing and lighting (for example, by installing downward light fittings to prevent light spillage), as set out in detail in the **Appendix 6.7: OLEMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.19)**, **Appendix 2.4: OCEMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.7)** and **Appendix 2.5: ODEMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.8).** Detailed versions of these documents, substantially in accordance with the outline documents must be prepared for approval in accordance with requirements in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1).**
Paragraph 199	Planning policies and decisions should sustain and contribute towards compliance with relevant limit values or national objectives for pollutants, taking into account the presence of Air Quality Management Areas and Clean Air Zones, and the cumulative impacts from individual sites in local areas. Opportunities to improve air quality or mitigate impacts should be identified, such as through traffic and travel management, and green infrastructure provision and enhancement. So far as possible these opportunities should be considered at the plan-making stage, to ensure a	**ES Chapter 16: Air Quality (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.16)** assesses the impacts of the Proposed Development to air quality, demonstrating that the Proposed Development will not significantly adversely affect air quality and outlining the proposed measures to improve local conditions where possible. The Proposed Development is not located within any declared Air Quality Management Area or Clean Air Zone.

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	strategic approach and limit the need for issues to be reconsidered when determining individual applications. Planning decisions should ensure that any new development in Air Quality Management Areas and Clean Air Zones is consistent with the local air quality action plan.	With appropriate site-specific construction dust mitigation in place, the residual air quality effects on receptors are concluded to be direct, temporary, medium-term and not significant in EIA terms. Consideration of traffic data for the construction phase as part of the assessment has confirmed that the relevant assessment thresholds will not be exceeded, and therefore the residual effects on nearby receptors are not considered to be significant. Based on information detailed in **ES Chapter 9: Access and Traffic (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.9)**, it is considered that the residual effect of operational phase traffic generation on local air quality will not be significant.
Section 16: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment. **Paragraph 207**	In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.	**ES Chapter 8: Cultural Heritage (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.8)** reports the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development on Cultural Heritage receptors in the context of the Site and surrounding area. In particular it considers the potential for likely significant effects resulting from the Proposed Development on the cultural heritage resource (comprising built heritage, archaeology and historic landscape). It includes consideration and assessment of impacts on above and below ground heritage assets, historic landscapes and designated and non-designated heritage assets and includes assessment of cumulative effects. It confirms that the Lincolnshire Historic Environment Records were received.

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Paragraph 213	Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of: a) grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks or gardens, should be exceptional; b) assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered battlefields, grade I and II* listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.	The archaeological baseline was established utilising desk-based methodology and onsite survey works, both intrusive and non-intrusive, which resulted in a good understanding of the archaeological potential of the Site. **ES Chapter 8: Cultural Heritage (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.8)** concludes that no designated heritage assets will be physically impacted by the Proposed Development. The assessment has found that there is potential for impacts to the setting of 14 designated heritage assets and 18 non-designated heritage assets. The impacts are established to be Not Significant for all designated heritage assets following the implementation of mitigation measures, with the exception of the Church of St Andrews, Asgarby, which will experience a medium adverse (Significant) effect during construction. While the assessment identified that there is potential for the effects to be Significant on the remains of a medieval monastery, moated manor house, fishpond and post-medieval garden (Scheduled Monument), Kyme Tower (Grade I Listed Building) and the Church of St Andrews, Asgarby (Grade I Listed Building) during the operational phase, appropriate mitigation measures are anticipated to reduce these potential effects to slight adverse and therefore are considered to be Not Significant in EIA terms.
Paragraph 216	The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.	

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		These measures are secured via the **OCEMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.7),** of which preparation of a detailed version is secured through a requirement in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**. **Appendix 8.2: Heritage Statement (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.46)** has been conducted in accordance with the guidance published by Historic England and the terminology set out in the NPPF. **Appendix 8.2: Heritage Statement (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.46)** identifies a number of designated and non-designated heritage assets to which the changes introduced by the Proposed Development would result in harm when considering the policy texts within the NPPF. However, the assessment concludes that this harm would be less than substantial and primarily affect the wider setting of these designated assets, which contributes less to their overall significance than the immediate setting and or key views or association. Importantly, no physical harm will occur to any designated heritage assets. Changes to the wider setting, which is of limited contribution to the asset's significance, will result in some harm, but in less than substantial harm. In line with national and local policy, the harm to significance should be balanced against the public benefits of the Proposed Development, which are

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		outlined in detail in Sections 4 and 7 of this **Planning Statement (Document Ref: 5.5**). In summary, urgent and unprecedented actions are required on a global scale to halt climate change. A rapid increase in the supply of low carbon electricity is needed for the UK to meet its legally binding climate change targets. Solar generation and battery storage are a critical part of the UK's strategy to achieve net zero by 2050, a key step towards which is the government's national mission for 'Clean Power by 2030'. The Proposed Development is capable of connecting to the grid soon, potentially before 2030. Therefore, the less than substantial harm is considered to be outweighed by the public benefits of the Proposed Development. The likely significant residual effects of the Proposed Development are set out in Table 8.11 of **ES Chapter 8: Cultural Heritage (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.8).**

Appendix 4B: Policy Accordance Table – Central Lincolnshire Local Development Plan

Table 4B: Central Lincolnshire Local Plan 2018-2040 (adopted 2023) Policy Accordance Summary

POLICY NO.	POLICY TITLE	ASSESSMENT
S1	The Spatial Strategy and Settlement Hierarchy	As set out in **Section 4**, the Proposed Development is a substantial infrastructure asset, capable of delivering large amounts of secure, affordable low carbon electricity to local and national networks. The Order Limits do not conflict with any allocations within the Local Plan and would not restrict the achievement of the objectives of Policy S1. The location of the Proposed Development in the countryside is justified due to the nature of solar farms requiring cleared land with generally flat topography, good solar irradiance and limited tree cover/field boundaries, in sufficient proximity of the connection point to the national grid, as outlined in **Appendix 2: Site Selection Report** of this **Planning Statement (Document Ref: 5.5)**. The Proposed Development's delivery of the substantial renewable energy generation and contribution to meeting the established urgent need for renewable energy generation infrastructure provides further justification for the land use. **ES Chapter 15: Socio-economic (Document Ref. 6.2)** assesses the impacts of the Proposed Development on the local economy, in accordance with this policy. As confirmed in Section 15.5, local businesses and economy for North Kesteven District Council (an area which this local plan covers) was within the scope of the assessment. The assessment concluded that the Proposed Development will result in beneficial effects in terms of employment and economic contribution, mostly during construction and operation. The Proposed Development will provide 239 full-time equivalent construction jobs over the anticipated 24-36 month construction programme. The jobs created will be in the renewable energy sector and will contribute to the development of skills needed for the UK's net zero transition. **ES Appendix 15.3: Outline Skills, Supply Chain and Employment Plan (OSSCEP) (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol. 2, 6.3.98)** has been prepared to help

POLICY NO.	POLICY TITLE	ASSESSMENT
		maximise the gain for the local economy and enhance beneficial impacts from employment creation. This plan includes measures such as prioritising local employment, reskilling temporary farm workers to avoid economic displacement, and/or support in finding alternative agricultural work, reskilling of workers during operational phase, collaboration with neighbouring projects to manage worker demand, enhancing supply chain opportunities and the potential upskilling of local residents through apprenticeships and partnerships with local educational institutions. Preparation of a detailed **Skills, Supply Chain and Employment Plan** is secured via Requirement 17 in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**.
S5, Part E	Development in the Countryside (Part E: Non-residential development)	The location of the Proposed Development in the countryside is justified due to the nature of solar farms requiring cleared land with generally flat topography, good solar irradiance and limited tree cover/field boundaries, in sufficient proximity of the connection point to the national grid, as outlined in **Appendix 2: Site Selection Report** of this **Planning Statement (Document Ref: 5.5)**. The Proposed Development's delivery of substantial renewable energy generation and contribution to meeting the established urgent need for renewable energy generation infrastructure provides further justification for the land use. A Bespoke Access Road from the A17 will support access to the Proposed Development and minimise impacts on local roads. **ES Chapter 9: Access and Transport (Document Ref. 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.3.9)** and **Appendix 9.1: Transport Assessment (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.76)** confirms the impact of the proposed level of construction traffic on local links during peak construction is expected to have no significant adverse impact on the operation of the local highway network. As set out in **ES Chapter 14: Soils and Agricultural Land (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.14)**, for solar developments, the impact on land is temporary and it will be restored to agricultural use following the cessation of generation and storage operation.

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		As noted in **ES Chapter 9: Access and Transport (Document Ref. 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.3.9** and **ES Chapter 15: Socio-Economics (Document Ref. 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.15)**, the Bespoke Access Road will remain in place throughout the operational life of the development to reduce disruption involved in removing then relaying it in the event of a transformer failure and again for decommissioning. It is constructed at the minimum width required for its function which includes carrying vehicles transporting Abnormal Indivisible Loads. The Cable Route Corridor will have a temporary impact on farming during its construction but the avoidance of overhead lines as part of the development means that there are no permanent overhead line towers occupying land. The Applicant is in the process of engaging with landowners with the aim to negotiate voluntary agreements. Once the cable is installed, farming activities other than the planting of trees will be able to continue within the easement.
S8	Reducing Energy Consumption – Non-Residential Buildings	By nature of the development being an energy generation facility, the Proposed Development exceeds the expectations of this policy to generate at least the same amount of renewable electricity on-site as it would demand. **ES Chapter 12: Climate Change (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol 1. 6.2.12)** presents a greenhouse gas (GHG) assessment over the lifetime of the Proposed Development. It concludes that renewable energy generation from the Proposed Development during the first year of operation is estimated to be 543,390MWh, and the total energy generation from the proposed 40-year operational life is approximately 21,735,600 MWh.
S9	Decentralised Energy Networks and Combined Heat and Power	As set out in **Section 4** of this Planning Statement, large scale renewable energy generation facilities are urgently needed. The Proposed Development will connect directly to the national grid, to enable the transfer of the renewably generated electricity over a wide geographical area, as per this policy.
S10	Supporting a Circular Economy	The Proposed Development includes embedded design measures to reduce its impact on waste and materials. The waste assessment in **ES Chapter 17: Other Environmental Topics (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.17)** concludes that no significant effects are anticipated provided that the principles set out in **Appendix 17.2: Waste and Recycling Strategy (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.82)** and **Appendix 2.5: Outline Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan (ODEMP) (Document Ref 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.8)** are adhered to, and appropriate

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		legislative controls that are in place meaning that waste can be effectively managed throughout each stage of the Proposed Development. **ES Appendix 17.2: Waste and Recycling Strategy (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.82)** considers the aims of international, national and local policy and commits to managing resources efficiently in order to prevent and minimise waste where possible, to sustainably manage waste and increase overall recycling rates. As set out in **ES Chapter 2: Proposed Development (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.2)**, all relevant equipment will be removed and recycled or disposed of in accordance with good practice and market conditions at the time.
S11	Embodied Carbon	**ES Chapter 12: Climate Change (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.12)** sets out the measures the Proposed Development will take to reduce embodied carbon through the use and sourcing of materials as well as construction and decommissioning methods. The Proposed Development does not entail substantial demolition and associated losses of embodied carbon. The Onsite Substation and BESS will be co-located, allowing sharing of facilities and a reduced footprint compared to separate constructions, as set out in the Outline Design Principles (**Appendix 1** of the **Design Approach Document, Document Ref. 5.6)**. The construction phase will follow industry standard practices regarding construction vehicles and equipment as set out in **Appendix 2.4: Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (OCEMP) (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol. 2, 6.3.7)** and **Appendix 2.5: ODEMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol. 2, 6.3.7)** to mitigate against increased emissions from construction traffic and equipment. Production of final versions of these documents post-consent, as secured by requirements in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**, will ensure the following measures will be implemented to reduce the Proposed Development's carbon: • Sourcing materials locally where possible to reduce travel;

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		• Having embodied carbon part of the determination criteria during the procurement process; • Using local employees and contractors where possible to reduce travel requirements as outlined in the **Appendix 15.3: Outline Skills, Supply Chain and Employment Plan (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.98)**; • Using more efficient, modern construction vehicles and equipment where available; • Using low carbon fuels as far as possible (electric vehicles, blends of biodiesel etc); and • Reusing materials, minimising waste and recycling where possible.
S12	Water Efficiency and Sustainable Water Management	The vast majority of the Proposed Development's footprint will be made up of permeable surfaces. Impermeable surfaces include the co-located BESS and Onsite Substation area of the Solar Array Area and comprise of 10.5 ha. On the regional scale the new impermeable surfaces represent 0.02 % of the Black Sluice IDB_area, which represents a negligible increase. During operation, water usage will be minimal however an onsite reservoir will be retained and used to supply water for irrigation purposes (including irrigation of new habitats) and will remain available for use by fire services. Fire water runoff will be contained within a lined lagoon located in the centre of the BESS platform. As outlined in **ES Chapter 11: Water Resources and Flood Risk (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.11)** water management measures will be implemented and secured through the CEMP and DEMP, as described in **Appendix 2.4: OCEMP (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.7)** and **Appendix 2.5: ODEMP (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.8)**. An Outline Drainage Strategy has been included within the **Appendix 11.1: FRA (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.81)**. Final versions of these documents post-consent are secured by requirements in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**.
S14	Renewable Energy	**Section 4** of this Planning Statement sets out how the Proposed Development would contribute substantially to the need to supply low carbon energy, in order for the government to meet its net zero objectives and commitments. By generating low

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		carbon electricity at a low marginal cost, large-scale solar power reduces the energy generated by more expensive and more carbon intensive forms of generation. The Proposed Development will therefore help to decarbonise the electricity system and lower the market price of electricity. This Planning Statement sets out that the Proposed Development will deliver up to 400 MW of low-carbon, low-cost and UK-located solar electricity generation capacity, capable of connecting to the grid by 2030, significantly contributing to meeting the government's Clean Power 2030 targets. In addition to meeting the urgent national need for secure and affordable low-carbon energy infrastructure and its associated environmental and societal benefits, the Proposed Development delivers wider benefits to the environment and the local community. **ES Chapters 6** to **18 (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol. 1, 6.2.6 to 6.2.18)** assess any direct, indirect, individual and cumulative impacts of the Proposed Development on landscape and visual, ecology, cultural heritage and archaeology, access and traffic, noise and vibration, water resources, climate change, glint and glare, soils and agricultural land, socio-economics and air quality, as well as other environmental topics including waste, health and electromagnetic fields. This Planning Statement, as well as **ES Chapters 6** to **18 (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol. 1, 6.2.6 to 6.2.18)** consider the relevant sections of NPS EN-1, EN-3 and EN-5, the NPPF, the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan 2018-2040, South East Lincolnshire Local Plan 2011-2036 and Lincolnshire Minerals and Waste Plan. Further, the **Appendix 6.7: OLEMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol. 2, 6.3.19)**, **Appendix 2.4: OCEMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol. 2, 6.3.7)** and **Appendix 2.5: ODEMP (Document Ref 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.8)** have been produced as part of the ES to demonstrate how the mitigation measures will be implemented. Production and implementation of final, detailed versions of these plans post-consent is secured by requirements in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**

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		The impacts to agricultural land have been assessed through **ES Chapter 14: Soils and Agricultural Land (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.14)**. As outlined in the **Design and Access Approach Document (Document Ref: 5.6)** and the **Site Selection Report (Appendix 2)**, agricultural land quality was a key consideration in the Applicant's site selection process and in deciding the location for the co-located BESS and Onsite Substation compound, which feature foundations which are more substantial than solar panels on piles, the design objectives of the Proposed Development avoided the Best and Most Versatile land while also taking into account flood risk and noise impact reduction. The Proposed Development will achieve an exceedance of 10% BNG, and the **Biodiversity Net Gain Strategy (Document Ref. 7.3)** demonstrates that the Proposed Development will achieve higher levels of biodiversity net gain (at least 30% net gain in habitat units, at least 10% net gain in hedgerow units and at least 10% net gain in watercourse units) which would be delivered on-site for 30 years. Although the Proposed Development is to be operational for a long term, it will be temporary with a Requirement in the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)** securing a maximum operational period of 40 years. At the decommissioning phase, all relevant equipment will be removed and recycled or disposed of in accordance with good practice measures.
S15	Protecting Renewable Energy Infrastructure	This Planning Statement sets out that the Proposed Development will deliver up to 400 MW of low-carbon, low-cost and UK-located solar electricity generation capacity, capable of connecting to the grid by 2030, significantly contributing to meeting the government's Clean Power 2030 targets. In addition to meeting the urgent national need for secure and affordable low-carbon energy infrastructure and its associated environmental and societal benefits, the Proposed Development delivers wider benefits to the environment and the local community. The cumulative impact of the Proposed Development and developments within the surrounding area is assessed in **ES Chapter 18: Cumulative Effects (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol. 2, 6.3.18)**.

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		The Proposed Development will not harm existing operational renewable energy projects in Lincolnshire and enhances the availability of low carbon energy to the national grid. It is therefore in accordance with this policy.
S16	Wider Energy Infrastructure	The Proposed Development comprises the construction, operation and maintenance, and decommissioning of a solar PV array electricity generating facility with a total capacity in excess of 50 MW and export connection to the national grid, as shown spatially in the **Works Plan (Document Ref: 2.4)**. An onshore generating station with a capacity of more than 50 MW is classed as a NSIP in accordance with the Planning Act 2008 and therefore must consented by way of a DCO. All of the development outlined above will form part of the DCO application (which comprises the NSIP generating station and "associated development"), which has been submitted to the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero. As such, there will be no planning applications submitted to North Kesteven District Council as part of this Proposed Development, as the section 33 of the Planning Act 2008 disapplies the requirement to seek planning permission to the extent that development consent is required for a development.
S20	Resilient and Adaptable Design	As set out in **ES Chapter 12: Climate Change (Document Ref: 6.2, Es Vol.1, 6.2.12),** panels are proposed to be a maximum of 3.5 m or 3.9 m above ground level, depending on the precise location within the Solar Array Area. This will allow for sufficient air flow beneath the mounted structure and reduce heat gain. This will reduce the impact of increasing temperature on output efficiency. With less than a 1.2% change in efficiency and air ventilation over the development's lifetime, the impact of increased temperature on Proposed Development is not significant.
S21	Flood Risk and Water Resources	The eastern areas of the Solar Area are located within fluvial Flood Zone 2 and fluvial Flood Zone 3 as shown on Environment Agency public mapping. Southern and western areas of the Site are largely located within Flood Zone 1. Subsequent flood modelling carried out by the Applicant and reported on in the **Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.87))** has identified that flood impacts to the Solar Array Area are less severe than the public mapping indicates. The Cable Route Corridor and Bespoke Access Corridor are located in a mix of Flood

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		Zones 1, 2 and 3. **ES Chapter 11: Water Resources & Flood Risk (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.11)** and **Chapter 12: Climate Change (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.12)** outlines the level of flood risk throughout the Site. The risk of flooding to the Proposed Development from fluvial, surface water, groundwater and artificial sources varies across the Site. With the exception of the solar panels and some transformers, the majority of structures within the Solar Array Area will be outside of Flood Zone 3 at a low to medium risk of fluvial flooding. The risk of surface water flooding to most of the Site is considered to be very low to low. Some areas are at high risk of surface water flooding with overland flow pathways extending through central areas of the Solar Array Area and sections of the Bespoke Access Corridor and Cable Route Corridor. The mitigation measures proposed for fluvial flooding are considered sufficient to also mitigate the risk of surface water flooding in the areas identified as being at high risk. The risk of surface water flooding to most of the Site is considered to be very low to low. Some areas are at high risk of surface water flooding with overland flow pathways extending through central areas of the Solar Array Area and sections of the Bespoke Access Corridor and Cable Route Corridor. The mitigation measures proposed for fluvial flooding are considered sufficient to also mitigate the risk of surface water flooding in the areas identified as being at high risk. Within Flood Zones 2 and 3, the maximum height of the solar PV modules will be 3.9m above ground level, whilst within Flood Zone 1 it will be 3.5m. The Site design has allowed for the leading edge of the solar panels tables to be raised by up to 600mm in areas shown to be of high flood risk. Transformers will be constructed on raised bunds up to 600mm above the 1 in 100 year +32% climate change breach flood depth. **Appendix 11.1: Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.82)** confirms that from a flood risk perspective, with appropriate mitigation measures the Site is likely to be suitable for the Proposed Development subject to the implementation of proposed mitigation measures, which are secured

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		via Requirement (Surface and foul water drainage) in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**. Where a scheme would be located within, or partially within, Flood Zone 2 or Flood Zone 3 the Sequential Test should be undertaken. **Appendix 11.1: Flood Risk Assessment (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol. 2, 6.3.81)** and Section 6.2 of this **Planning Statement (Document Ref: 5.5)** explain how the Sequential Test has been met. It is considered that there are no suitable and reasonably available sites appropriate for the Proposed Development in areas with a lower risk of flooding and that the Site for the Proposed Development accordingly passes the Sequential Test. Further, essential utility infrastructure including electricity generating power stations, grid and primary substations storage is classed as essential infrastructure under **Annex 3: Flood risk vulnerability classification** of the NPPF. An Outline Drainage Strategy is included within **Appendix 11.1: Flood Risk Assessment (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol. 2, 6.3.81)** which sets out how water runoff from the Proposed Development will be controlled on the Site to ensure that there is no increase in risk of flooding to areas downstream of the Site and the Proposed Development itself. The findings of this assessment, which has been based on the data available, confirm that from a flood risk perspective, the Site is likely to be suitable for the Proposed Development subject to the proposed appropriate mitigation measures including: • Raising Solar panels up to 600 mm above depth of flooding; • Constructing transformers on raised bunds up to 600 mm above the 1 in 100+ climate change breach flood depth; • Designing base fence panels to have sufficient width to allow debris to flow and prevent blockage; • Constructing all proposed bridge crossings, temporary and permanent, in accordance with flood permits granted by the Environment Agency, LCC or the

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		Internal Drainage Board (IDB) to ensure there would be no increased flood risk upstream or to the Site itself; and • Co-location of the Onsite Substation and BESS to allow for appropriate drainage solution and raising/ bunding to defend against flood risk. As noted above a Requirement in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)** secures that no part of the authorised development may commence until written details of the surface water drainage scheme and (if any) foul water drainage system (each substantially in accordance with the principles in the Outline Drainage Strategy) have been submitted to and approved by the relevant planning authority.
S28	Spatial Strategy for Employment	**ES Chapter 15: Socio-economics (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol. 1, 6.2.15)** provides an assessment of all potential socio-economic impacts of the Proposed Development, in accordance with this policy. The Proposed Development will provide 239 full-time equivalent construction jobs over the anticipated 24-36 month construction programme. The jobs created will be in the renewable energy sector and will contribute to the development of skills needed for the UK's net zero transition. **ES Appendix 15.3: OSSCEP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol. 2, 6.3.98)** has been prepared to help maximise the gain for the local economy and enhance beneficial impacts from employment creation. This plan includes measures such as prioritising local employment, reskilling temporary farm workers to avoid economic displacement, and/or support in finding alternative agricultural work, reskilling of workers during the projects operational phase, collaboration with neighbouring projects to manage worker demand, enhancing supply chain opportunities and the potential upskilling of local residents through apprenticeships and partnerships with local educational institutions. Preparation of a detailed **Skills, Supply Chain and Employment Plan** is secured via Requirement 17 in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**.
S34	Non-designated Spatial Strategy for Employment	
S45	Strategic Infrastructure Requirements	The Proposed Development has secured a grid connection agreement to allow export and import of electricity to and from the national grid from 2029. The Bicker Fen Substation will facilitate the export and import of electricity from the Proposed Development to the national grid. Further details are included in the **Electricity Grid Connection Statement (Document Ref: 7.1).**

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S47	Accessibility and Transport	The **Appendix 9.1: Transport Assessment (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol. 2, 6.3.76)** and the **Appendix 9.3: Outline Construction Traffic Management Plan (OCTMP) (Document Ref. 6.3, ES Vol. 2, 6.3.78)** outline measures proposed to mitigate the traffic and transport impacts of the Proposed Development, including sustainable patterns of transport development. Through the **Outline Construction Staff Travel Plan (OCSTP)** (Appendix J to **Appendix 9.1: Transport Assessment (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol. 2, 6.3.76)**), emphasis is placed on promoting sustainable modes of travel that present a viable option as alternatives to single occupancy car travel. Preparation of a final Construction Traffic Management Plan, substantially in accordance with **Appendix 9.3: Outline Construction Traffic Management Plan (OCTMP) (Document Ref. 6.3, ES Vol. 2, 6.3.78)** is secured via a Requirement in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**. **Section 9.6** of **ES Chapter 9: Access and Transport (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.9)** confirms that due to measures proposed, the access and transport effects of the Proposed Development during construction are negligible. The Proposed Development will include a new Bespoke Access Road from the A17 to the Solar Array Area, as well as three secondary access points (two on Halfpenny Toll Lane and one on Howell Fen Drove). 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. The primary means of access to the Solar Array Area during construction will be via the Bespoke Access Road, which will be constructed early in the overall construction phase and remain in operation through to the decommissioning phase. Swept Path Analysis of proposed access arrangements to the Bespoke Access Road, energy park and Cable Route Corridor has been undertaken and shows that the design of the junctions can accommodate maximum length HGVs and AILs required to facilitate construction. **Chapter 3: Alternatives and Design Evolution (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.3)** sets out how the access arrangements impacted the design evolution of the project and how the Bespoke Access Road was conceived and designed.

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		During operation, three secondary access points will be provided to facilitate emergency and operational vehicular access to the Solar Array Area as follows: • Halfpenny Toll Lane near Catchwater Drain, along the northern boundary of the Site (for emergency and operational access); • Halfpenny Toll Lane, approximately 60m east of the junction with Thorpe Road (for operational access only); and • Howell Fen Drove (for operational access only). The Proposed Development includes opportunities for enhancement such as proposals connect two PRoWs by creating a permissive path. Safe crossing points will be created for the PRoWs that cross the Bespoke Access Road. This is stated in the Outline Design Principles (**Appendix 1 of the Design Approach Document, Document Ref. 5.6)** which are secured by a Requirement in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**. **ES Chapter 9: Access and Transport (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.9)** confirms that due to measures proposed for construction, the Proposed Development will not result in residual adverse effects upon highway safety or generate any highway capacity issues. Proposed mitigation measures include: • Construction access to the Site will be from the A17 with a left-in/left-out only arrangement; • Construction traffic will be safely managed and monitored via a CTMP (as per **Appendix 9.3: OCTMP (Document Ref. 6.3, ES Vol. 2, 6.3.78))** and Delivery Management Plan (DMP) to be agreed as part of planning processes; • Abnormal load delivery types and numbers are as yet uncertain, but will be addressed through an Abnormal Loads DMP and will be subject to agreement with the relevant highway authorities and police through the ESDAL system; and • The construction staff Travel Plan will minimise the impacts of construction staff travel to/from the Site and maximise the use of collective transport, particularly minibuses.

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		As noted above, preparation of a final Construction Traffic Management Plan, substantially in accordance with **Appendix 9.3: Outline Construction Traffic Management Plan (OCTMP) (Document Ref. 6.3, ES Vol. 2, 6.3.78)** is secured via a requirement in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**. The above measures will be set out in that plan. The design of the Proposed Development has been guided by design objectives in response to the local context to develop a good design that balances the need to maximise renewable energy generation from the Proposed Development, whilst minimising potential adverse impacts and providing mitigation and enhancement measures where practicable, as set out in the **Design and Access Approach Document (Document Ref: 5.6).**
S48	Walking and Cycling Infrastructure	The location of the Proposed Development and site selection process considered a range of factors including accessibility and public rights of way. As outlined in the **Site Selection Report (Appendix 2)** a key factor in the site selection is that the site would be reasonably accessible from the strategic road network. **Appendix 9.1: Transport Assessment (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol. 2, 6.3.76)** sets out the access strategy for the construction and operation of the Proposed Development. Through the **OCSTP** (contained within **ES Appendix 9.1: Transport Assessment (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol. 2, 6.3.76)**), emphasis is placed on promoting sustainable modes of travel that present a viable option as alternatives to single occupancy car travel. Based on existing conditions, it is considered that shared transport (car share or minibus) present the most viable option for journeys to/from the site. Nonetheless, cycle parking will be provided, which is most likely to be attractive (given the nature of quiet unlit rural roads) to local staff in months when commuting can be undertaken in daylight hours. The **OCSTP** within **ES Appendix 9.1: Transport Assessment (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol. 2, 6.3.76)** outlines the proposed measures to minimise the impact of construction staff travel to/from the site and maximise use of shared transport, during the construction phase. All construction staff will be made aware of the travel plan and its key objectives are to:

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		• Contribute to traffic reduction and other sustainable transport objectives set out in national and local planning policies. • Improve accessibility of the site by sustainable modes of transport and address traffic and parking issues. • Widen choice of travel mode for all those travelling to/from the Site There are no easily accessible PRoWs within the Solar Array Area, however, there are PRoWs crossing the Cable Route Corridor and the Bespoke Access Corridor which are illustrated on Figure 15.3 of **ES Chapter 15: Socio-economics (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.15).** Short-term closures of PRoWs which interact with the Proposed Development may be required during construction. However, wherever practicable, management measures such as clearly signed crossing points will be used to keep the PRoW open, and to minimise the duration of short-term closures. Once construction is completed, signage will be retained at crossing points to ensure the safety of PRoW users and drivers of Site related vehicles. The Proposed Development includes opportunities for enhancement such as proposals to extend an existing mapped (but not present) inaccessible PRoW stub by creating an undetermined number of footbridges (unlikely to be more than eight in number) to cross existing watercourses, connecting the PRoW to a wider network of PRoWs. The permissive path is illustrated in **Figure 6.31 Landscape Strategy Plan (Document Ref: 6.4 ES Vol**. Safe crossing points will be created for the PRoWs that cross the Bespoke Access Road, secured in the **Outline Design Principles (Appendix 1** of the **Design Approach Document, Document Ref. 5.6)**. The design of the Proposed Development has been guided by design objectives in response to the local context to develop a good design that balances the need to maximise renewable energy generation from the Proposed Development, whilst minimising potential adverse impacts and providing mitigation and enhancement

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		measures where practicable, as set out in the **Design and Access Approach Document (Document Ref: 5.6)**.
S49	Parking Provision	As set out in the **OCSTP** in **Appendix 9.3: OCTMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol. 2, 6.3.78),** sufficient parking will be provided within the operations building and construction compounds to accommodate minibuses. There will also be sufficient parking to accommodate car trips related to staff and visitors. These spaces will be reserved for designated staff and visitors only to ensure that vehicle numbers are controlled, and to minimise the impact on the local highway network. It will be the responsibility of the projects travel plan coordinator to monitor car parking on-site. The Applicant has submitted **ES Appendix 9.3: OCTMP (Document Ref. 6.3, ES Vol. 2, 6.3.78)**, which includes measures to implement the minibus travel to work arrangements and sufficient parking. Parking provisions for decommissioning works will be set out within the Decommissioning Traffic Management Plan that will be developed and adhered to during the decommissioning works, in accordance with Requirement 18 in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**.
S53	Design and Amenity	This Planning Statement sets out that the Proposed Development will deliver up to 400 MW of low-carbon, low-cost and UK-located solar electricity generation capacity, capable of connecting to the grid by 2030, significantly contributing to meeting the government's Clean Power 2030 targets. In addition to meeting the urgent national need for secure and affordable low-carbon energy infrastructure and its associated environmental and societal benefits, the Proposed Development delivers wider benefits to the environment and the local community. The Proposed Development is a substantial infrastructure asset, capable of delivering large amounts of secure, affordable low carbon electricity to local and national networks. As set out in **Appendix 2: Site Selection Report** of this Planning Statement, the location and design of the Proposed Development is the result of a comprehensive site selection process that was environmental and planning led to avoid and minimise impacts as early as possible. Following this, the Proposed Development has

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		undergone an iterative design process which has resulted in the delivery of a functional and efficient design which will deliver a large amount of renewable and low carbon electricity using solar PV arrays, whilst also being sensitive to the local context and surrounding area within which it is located, avoiding and minimising impacts on the environment as far as practicable. Design objectives were developed at an early stage and have guided the design response to the local context to develop a good design that balances the need to maximise renewable energy generation from the Proposed Development, whilst minimising potential adverse impacts and providing mitigation and enhancement measures where practicable, as set out in the **Design and Access Approach Document (Document Ref: 5.6)**. The Proposed Development delivers good design, being in accordance with the design policies set out in the relevant NPSs in the context of efficiently delivering large scale renewable energy infrastructure where it is recognised in national policy that the extent to which a scheme can contribute to the enhancement of the quality of the area is limited. The Proposed Development design does however include embedded additional measures that will deliver biodiversity enhancements; improved connectivity and proposes a landscape strategy which is sensitive to its surroundings, by reducing the Proposed Development's impact on the landscape and providing opportunities for screening to protect residential amenities. The Proposed Development includes opportunities for enhancement such as proposals to extend an existing mapped (but not present) inaccessible PRoW stub by creating an undetermined number of footbridges (unlikely to be more than eight in number) to cross existing watercourses, connecting the PRoW to a wider network of PRoWs. The permissive path is illustrated in **Figure 6.31 Landscape Strategy Plan (Document Ref: 6.4 ES Vol**. The location and design of the Proposed Development accords with the site selection and technical considerations set out in NPS EN-3 for large scale solar development.

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		The Proposed Development will also deliver a high-quality solar development design that has responded to the local and surrounding context in accordance with relevant local planning policies. A number of design principles have been developed to govern detailed scale and design of the Proposed Development. These are secured in the **Outline Design Principles (Appendix 1 of the Design and Access Approach Document, Document Ref. 5.6)**.
S54	Health and Wellbeing	The potential impacts of the Proposed Development of relevance to human health were considered by the Applicant throughout the **ES (Document Ref: 6.2)** within the relevant chapters. The temporary increase of traffic during the construction and decommissioning phases, could potentially disrupt the lives of nearby residential and social receptors. However, as outlined in **ES Chapter 9: Access and Traffic (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.9)**, the limited and temporary nature of the traffic increase is not identified to result in any significant residual effects. The Bespoke Access Road will provide dedicated access for abnormal indivisible loads during construction and operation, and decommissioning and will also reduce HGV traffic in local settlements thereby benefitting health, safety, and wellbeing. **ES Chapter 10: Noise and Vibration (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.10)** concludes both potential noise and vibration impacts have been assessed to be not significant. To manage and minimise potential impacts, mitigation measures in the form of best practicable means are implemented through **Appendix 2.4: OCEMP (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.7)** and construction works will follow British Standards 5228-1 & -2:2009 (or equivalent guidance in force during the construction period). **Chapter 11: Water Resources (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.11)** concludes that with appropriate mitigation in place, the scale of potential effects on the water environment are not significant and therefore not significant for human health.

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		ES Chapter 12: Climate Change (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.12) concludes that the potential climate related effects for human health during construction are assessed to be not significant. Further, the development offsets the emissions associated with non-renewable methods of electricity generation and therefore mitigates the impact of climate change to human health. **ES Chapter 15: Socio-Economic (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.15)** concludes that with appropriate mitigation in place, during construction, effect on social factors such as employment generation and GVA was assessed to be Significant Beneficial for Boston Borough. The connection between human health and wellbeing and recreation in the outdoors is well established. **Chapter 15: Socio-Economic (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.15)** has assessed the impacts of restricted access to recreation such as public rights of way (PRoW) and cycle routes as not significant. **ES Chapter 16: Air Quality (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.16)** reports that human health risk (in relation to in relation to dust and particulate matter emissions) is considered low. However, as some activities present a risk above negligible, site-specific mitigation measures will be implemented through **Appendix 2.4: OCEMP (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.7)**. During construction, the risk of dust soiling is low to medium and human health risks are low. Therefore, site-specific mitigation measures implemented via a **Dust Mitigation Plan** will be implemented as part of the detailed CEMP(s) (see **Appendix 2.4: Outline Construction Environment Management Plan (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.7)**) and reduce all dust and particulate impacts to a level which is not significant. Traffic emissions during both construction and operational phases are well below relevant thresholds and no significant impacts are anticipated. The above demonstrates that health impacts have been considered across the Proposed Development and, with the application of suitable mitigation measures, are not significant.

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S57	The Historic Environment	**ES Chapter 8: Cultural Heritage (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.8)** reports the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development in on cultural heritage receptors in the context of the Site and surrounding area. This includes a description of the significance of the heritage assets and the contribution of their setting to their significance. In particular, it considers the potential for the Proposed Development to give rise to likely significant effects on the cultural heritage resource (comprising built heritage, archaeology and historic landscape). Section 8.4 of **ES Chapter 8: Cultural Heritage (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.8)** outlines the assessment methodology and significance criteria to understand how to Proposed Development would change a cultural heritage asset or its setting, assess the degree to which any change would impact on cultural significance and weigh the effect, considering the magnitude of the impact and importance of the cultural heritage. A geophysical survey of the Site has been undertaken for the Proposed Development. The results of the geophysical survey are reported in detail in **Appendices 8.5** to **8.8 (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.49 to 6.3.71).** Archaeological trial trenching was undertaken across the Solar Array Area and the Bespoke Access Corridor to understand significance, the results of which are presented in **Appendices 8.9 to 8.11 (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.72 to 6.3.74).** **ES Chapter 8: Cultural Heritage (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.8)** assesses the likely impacts of the Proposed Development on cultural heritage, including direct and indirect, and temporary or permanent effects. The assessment confirms that there will be no designated heritage assets physically impacted by the Proposed Development. There is potential for impacts to the setting of 14 designated heritage assets and 18 non-designated heritage assets, however the impacts are established to not be significant for all designated heritage assets except the Church of St Andrews at Asgarby, which will experience a moderate adverse (significant) effect during construction.

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		In respect to the remains of a medieval monastery, moated manor house, fishpond and post-medieval garden, Kyme Tower and the Church of St Andrews, Asgarby there is potential for effects to be Significant during the operational phase. However, appropriate mitigation measures will reduce these potential effects to be considered not significant. **Appendix 8.2: Heritage Statement (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.46)** identifies a number of designated and non-designated heritage assets to which the changes introduced by the Proposed Development would result in harm when considering the policy texts within the NPS and NPPF. All of these assets are located within North Kesteven District Council and therefore fall within the scope of the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan. However, the assessment in **Appendix 8.2: Heritage Statement (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.46)** concludes that this harm would be less than substantial and primarily affect the wider setting of these designated assets, which contributes less to their overall significance than the immediate setting and or key views or association. Importantly, no physical harm will occur to any designated heritage assets. Changes to the wider setting, which is of limited contribution to the asset's significance, will result in some harm, but in less than substantial harm. While the impact is acknowledged as long-term, it is important to note that the works are not permanent, though their effects will be sustained over an extended period, making them effectively 'long-term temporary'. This impact must be considered in the context of the public benefits outlined in this **Planning Statement (Document Ref: 5.5)**. In summary, urgent and unprecedented actions are required on a global scale to halt climate change. A rapid increase in the supply of low carbon electricity is needed for the UK to meet its legally binding climate change targets. Solar generation and battery storage are a critical part of the UK's strategy to achieve net zero by 2050, a key step towards which is the government's

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		national mission for 'Clean Power by 2030'. The Proposed Development is capable of connecting to the grid before 2030. The substantial public benefits and need for the Proposed Development, as set out in Section 4 of this Planning Statement, including the delivery of "critical national priority" infrastructure to contribute towards meeting national energy security objectives and carbon reduction commitments, clearly and demonstrably outweigh the less than significant harm to cultural heritage assets.
S59	Green and Blue Infrastructure	The Proposed Development has been designed to avoid, maintain and mitigate all significant adverse effects on internationally, nationally and locally designated sites and other important ecological features such as protected species and habitats, ancient and veteran trees, and green infrastructure during the construction, operation and decommissioning phases. The layout of the Solar Array Area evolved through systematically incorporating the buffers and offsets required for green and blue infrastructure such as hedgerows, waterbodies, drainage ditches, woodland, and other existing habitats. The Proposed Development has been carefully designed to avoid or minimise adverse effects in relation to these features. Furthermore, the layout of the Proposed Development evolved through detailed modelling of surrounding watercourses and associated flood levels and will provide suitable setbacks to these features. The green infrastructure buffers are referred to as ‘embedded mitigation’ because they form an integral part of the design of the Proposed Development. These are set out in **Appendix 2.3: Embedded Mitigation (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol. 2, 6.3.6)** and included but are not limited to: • Vegetation buffers, including minimum stand-offs of 15m from Ancient Woodland and other retained woodland and tree groups, 2m from hedgerows without trees and root protection areas where appropriate; • Buffers of at least 5m around all ditches as appropriate, expect where crossings are required; and

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		• Buffers of 30m around all known badger setts. Part of the Site falls within a mapped strategic green corridor, which is a priority landscape-scale areas for strategic green infrastructure enhancement, linkage and creation. The Proposed Development will incorporate a number of green infrastructure proposals, as set out in **Appendix 6.7: OLEMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.19)** which would enhance the strategic green infrastructure network and around Sleaford. Such proposals include: • enhancement of existing vegetation cover; • native shrub and new hedgerow planting; • introduction of wildflower meadow and floodplain grazing marsh areas; • retention of existing ponds and waterbodies and integration into the wider landscape scheme; and • establishment and maintenance of newly created habitats. The above measures will contribute to local and national objectives by enhancing the habitats to deliver over 10%, with a commitment to deliver at least 30% net gain in habitat units, at least 10% net gain in hedgerow units and at least 10% net gain in watercourse units Biodiversity Net Gain. This is secured via the OLEMP and a Requirement in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**. Further information on the contribution to biodiversity net gain can be found in the **Biodiversity Net Gain Strategy (Document Ref: 7.3)**.
S60	Protecting Biodiversity and Geodiversity	**ES Chapter 7: (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.7)** and **Appendix 7.3: Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.22)** set out all the designated sites of ecological conservation importance; ancient woodland; habitats; protected and notable species; and important ecological features, within the relevant ecological Zone of Influence of the Proposed Development. Section 7.4 of **ES Chapter 7: Ecology (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.7)** sets out the identified

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		receptors, including Local Wildlife Sites (LWS), which could potentially be affected by the Proposed Development. There are five statutory designated sites within the study area (2 km from the site for National Nature Reserves (NNR) and Local Nature Reserves (LNR), 10 km for SSSIs and 20 km for international sites) including: The Wash Ramsar, The Wash SPA, The Wash and North Norfolk Coast SAC, Horbling Fen SSSI and Wilsford & Rauceby Warrens SSSI. There are no NNR or LNR present within 2 km of the Site. The impacts to these sites were considered throughout the **ES Chapter 7: Ecology (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.7)**, which concluded that impacts would be Not Significant. **Figure 7.3 and Table 7.6** of **ES Chapter 7: Ecology (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.7)** show the LWS within 2km of the Site. There are two located within the Site; Great Hale Eau LWS and South Forty Foot Drain LWS. Taking into account the proposed mitigation of retaining habitats as seed bank in topsoil/turfs and restoring once works are completed, negligible impacts to these LWS's are anticipated. For all other LWS's within 2km, no significant impacts are anticipated. **ES Chapter 7: Ecology (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.7)** also sets out appropriate mitigation measures to ensure compliance with policy objectives, including implementation of species-specific protections (e.g. relocation), ecological corridors designed to maintain connectivity, creation of compensatory habitats to offset habitat loss, noise and light pollution controls to minimise species disturbance, habitat connectivity improvements to reduce fragmentation, and pre-construction surveys to identify and protect protected species (bats, birds, badgers). These measures are secured through commitments in the **Appendix 6.7: OLEMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol. 2, 6.3.19)** and **Appendix 2.4: OCEMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol. 2, 6.3.7)** and ensure that any potential ecological impacts are effectively mitigated and do not result in significant residual effects. In addition to the above additional mitigation measures, habitat enhancements will be made in support of biodiversity net gain (as set out in Section 7.8 of **ES Chapter 7:**

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		Ecology (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.7)). These measures include the enhancement of waterbodies to provide suitable habitat for great crested newts, installation of artificial nesting and roosting boxes for birds and bats and creation of habitat piles and hibernaculum for amphibians, reptiles and invertebrates. Production of detailed CEMP(s) and LEMP(s) prior to commencement of construction is secured via requirements in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**. The **Appendix 2.4: OCEMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol. 2, 6.3.7)** includes best practice measures to ensure that activities will be confined to the minimum areas required for the works during construction, in accordance with this part of the policy. The Proposed Development incorporates the biodiversity enhancement measures outlined in **ES Chapter 7: Ecology (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.7)**, including creation of new hedgerows and woodland habitats, restoration of grasslands to support pollinators and bird species, and buffer zones to protect Local Wildlife Sites and wetland areas. It will meet a minimum of 10% and potentially as much as at least 30% net gain in habitat units, at least 10% net gain in hedgerow units and at least 10% net gain in watercourse units, and the **Biodiversity Net Gain Strategy (Document Ref. 7.3)** demonstrates this and the potential to achieve this gain on-site. This would be implemented via the OLEMP which is secured by a Requirement in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**.
S61	Biodiversity Opportunity and Delivering Measurable Net Gains	The Ecological Impact Assessment within **ES Chapter 7: Ecology (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.7)** outlines how site selection minimised disturbance to designated conservation areas and how sensitive habitats (ancient woodlands, wetlands) were avoided where possible. Through the project design and refinement process, the following mitigation hierarchy was adopted: • Avoid impacts (e.g. move aspects of the Proposed Developments to avoid features entirely); • Minimise impacts (e.g. reducing the area of land take); and • Restore after impacts (e.g. restoring any habitat damaged during construction). When none of the above can be carried out, compensation (e.g. creating habitat where it was not previously found) will be undertaken. As much as possible, the

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		Proposed Development design has been guided to avoid ecological impacts, and mitigation focusses on minimising, restoring and compensating for impacts that cannot be avoided. The proposed mitigation and enhancement measures are set out in the **Appendix 6.7: Outline LEMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol. 2, 6.3.19)**. For example, noting that habitat fragmentation is a key concern for mobile species, strategies to maintain ecological connectivity include retaining and reinforcing hedgerows to act as wildlife corridors, using directional lighting to minimise habitat fragmentation and providing culverts and underpasses where necessary. Habitats will be improved for ground nesting birds, including skylark, within open buffer areas (e.g. though creation of skylark plots). This will increase the density of birds replacing the areas lost. Details of these habitat enhancements are included in the **Appendix 6.7: Outline LEMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol. 2, 6.3.19)**. The Proposed Development incorporates biodiversity enhancement measures outlined in **ES Chapter 7: Ecology (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.7)**, including creation of new hedgerows and woodland habitats, restoration of grasslands to support pollinators and bird species, and buffer zones to protect Local Wildlife Sites and wetland areas. It will meet a minimum of 10% and as much as at least 30% net gain in habitat units, at least 10% net gain in hedgerow units and at least 10% net gain in watercourse units, and the **Biodiversity Net Gain Strategy (Document Ref. 7.3)** demonstrates this and the ability to achieve the gain on-site. This is implemented via the OLEMP which is secured via a Requirement in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**.
S66	Tress, Woodland and Hedgerows	The project has been designed to avoid key nature conservation and ecological features present within or adjacent to the Site. Habitats such as woodlands, mature trees and hedgerows have been avoided where possible. A small number of ancient/veteran trees were found on Site during the arboricultural impact assessment. These trees are all due to be retained post development. **ES**

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		Chapter 7: Ecology (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.7) confirms that no direct impacts on ancient woodland or veteran trees are anticipated. Protective buffer zones of at least 15m will be maintained around woodland and 5m around hedgerows, and root protection measures will be implemented for trees. Further details including the locations of trees, root protection areas and precautionary mitigation are outlined within **Appendix 6.6: Arboricultural Impact Assessment (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.18)**. New hedgerows will also be established to supplement the existing, retained hedgerows. Hedgerows will be planted with native, locally occurring species as outlined within the local plan. New and reinforced hedgerows will provide a valuable habitat, forming important wildlife corridors. Measures to protect retained trees and hedgerows will be put in place and are secured through the commitment to have approved and implement detailed CEMP(s), DEMP(s) and LEMP(s), secured via requirements in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**. The detailed plans must be substantially in accordance with the measures set out in the **Appendix 6.7: OLEMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol. 2, 6.3.19)**, **Appendix 2.4: OCEMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol. 2, 6.3.7)** and **Appendix 2.5: ODEMP (Document Ref 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.8)** and will ensure that impacts are minimised. The Proposed Development must be implemented in accordance with the above management plans.
S67	Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land	The impacts to agricultural land have been assessed through **ES Chapter 14: Soils and Agricultural Land (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.14)**. As outlined in the **Design and Access Approach Document (Document Ref: 5.6)** and particularly the **Site Selection Report (Appendix 2)**, agricultural land quality was a key consideration in the Applicant's site selection process and subsequently in deciding the location for the co-located BESS and Onsite Substation compound, which feature foundations which are more substantial than solar panels on piles. The design objectives for the Proposed Development sought to avoid the Best and Most Versatile ('BMV') land wherever possible, having regard also to flood risk and noise impacts.

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		Chapter 14: Soils and Agricultural Land (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.14) sets out how the Applicant has sought to avoid and reduce the amount of BMV land used for hard infrastructure associated with the Proposed Development. However, given the context of the quality of land locally and within the Order Limits it has not been practicable to remove all BMV. Table 14.13 of **Chapter 14: Soils and Agricultural Land (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.14)** outlines that within the Order Limits, a total of 250.12 ha of BMV land is proposed to accommodate the Solar PV array area or associated infrastructure, 65.85ha of BMV is within the Cable Route Corridor and 3.98ha of BMV is within the Bespoke Access Corridor. The land being used for the Solar PV array area or associated infrastructure will not be available as an agricultural resource, aside from potential grazing use, for a period of approximately (including construction and decommissioning) 45 years. **Appendix 14.4: Outline Soil Management Plan (OSMP) (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.95)** includes measures to mitigate damage to agricultural drainage within the Site and guidance on best practice measures regarding soil management, handling, storage, replace and mitigation. The requirement to produce and have approved final versions of this plan prior to commencing construction, final commissioning and decommissioning is secured through a requirement in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1).** Infrastructure comprising the Proposed Development will be removed during decommissioning, as outlined in the **Appendix 2.5: ODEMP (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.8)**. Production, approval and implementation of a final DEMP, substantially in accordance with the ODEMP, is secured by a requirement in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**. The land would then be restored to how it was before the Proposed Development, although landscape planting will be left in situ and landowners may thereafter manage this themselves in line with prevailing planning and other requirements and the required setbacks from highways, transmission lines and the like and will again be available for full agricultural use.

Appendix 4C: Policy Accordance Table – South East Lincolnshire Local Development Plan

Table 4C: South East Lincolnshire Local Plan 2011-2036 (adopted 2019) Policy Accordance Summary

POLICY NO.	POLICY TITLE	ASSESSMENT
1	Spatial Strategy (Part D)	The Site does not fall within the boundary areas of the Settlements described in Parts A to C of Policy 1. As such, it is classified as 'Countryside' (Part D), within which development will be permitted that is necessary to the location and where it can be demonstrated that it meets the sustainable development needs of the area in terms of economic, community or environmental benefits. The location of the Proposed Development in the countryside is justified due to the nature of solar farms requiring cleared land with generally flat topography, good solar irradiance and limited tree cover/field boundaries, in sufficient proximity of the connection point to the National Grid, as outlined in **Appendix 2: Site Selection Report** of this **Planning Statement (Document Ref: 5.5)**. The Proposed Development's delivery of the substantial renewable energy generation and contribution to meeting the established urgent need for renewable energy generation infrastructure provides further justification for the land use. As detailed in the **Design and Access Approach Document (Document Ref. 5.6)**, the Proposed Development has undergone an iterative design process which has resulted in the delivery of a functional and efficient design which will deliver a large amount of renewable electricity while being sensitive to the local context and surrounding area, avoiding and minimising impacts on the environment as far as practicable. The Proposed Development has the potential to deliver significant amounts of low-carbon electricity and make a material contribution to help meet the UK's commitments to decrease carbon emissions and reach net zero by 2050, which in turn is beneficial for biodiversity and geological conservation interests. As evidenced by the **Biodiversity Net Gain Strategy (Document Ref. 7.3)** the Applicant is committed to achieving BNG through the Proposed Development. The Proposed Development has the potential to deliver biodiversity benefits as a result of its embedded mitigation and enhancement measures, as set out in the **ES Chapter 7: Ecology (Document Ref: 6.2)**, **Appendix 6.7: OLEMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol. 2, 6.3.19)** and **Appendix 2.4: OCEMP**

POLICY NO.	POLICY TITLE	ASSESSMENT
		(Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol. 2, 6.3.7). Production and implementation of final, detailed versions of these plans post-consent is secured by requirements in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**. In addition to the benefits of the Proposed Development resulting from habitat restoration to enhance biodiversity, there will be the strategic benefit of improving national energy security and contributing to sustainable energy goals, as well as supporting local and regional economic development. To help maximise the gain for the local economy from the beneficial effect arising from employment generation during the construction and operational (including maintenance) phase, an **OSSCEP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.98)** supports the DCO Application. The **OSSCEP** details commitments to work with partners and the local and regional construction supply chain to enhance the proportion of activities that can be accessed by local people (both in employment, unemployed and economically inactive or outside of the current labour market) and firms with relevant experience and competencies. Preparation of a detailed **Skills, Supply Chain and Employment Plan** is secured via Requirement 17 in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**. As set out in the OSSCEP and Table 15.10 of **ES Chapter 15: Socio-economic (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol. 1, 6.2.15)**, the Proposed Development is expected to provide construction job opportunities over the anticipated 24-36 month construction phase. 239 FTE (full-time equivalent) jobs are expected to be created during the construction phase.
2	Development Management	Section 4 of this Planning Statement sets out how the Proposed Development would contribute substantially to the national need for supply of low carbon energy, in order for the government to meet its net zero objectives and commitments. By generating low carbon electricity at a low marginal cost, large-scale solar power reduces the energy generated by more expensive and more carbon intensive forms of generation. The Proposed Development will therefore help to decarbonise the electricity system and

POLICY NO.	POLICY TITLE	ASSESSMENT
		lower the market price of electricity. As set out in the **Environmental Statement (Document Ref: 6.2)** and the **Design and Access Approach Document (Document Ref: 5.6)**, the Proposed Development has been designed in a manner that seeks to meet the current need for energy infrastructure (which is a "critical national priority"), minimise impacts and maximise benefits to the environment and mitigate the impacts of climate change.
3	Design of New Development	As detailed in the **Design and Access Approach Document (Document Ref: 5.6)**, the Proposed Development has undergone an iterative design process which has resulted in the delivery of a functional and efficient design that is sensitive to the local context and surrounding area, avoiding and minimising impacts on the environment as far as practicable. **ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.6)** concludes that during construction there will be significant landscape impacts on the Landscape Character of the Site, Fenland Scrub Area and Holland Reclaimed Fen, and significant visual impacts on a number of visual receptors. The **Design and Access Approach Document (Document Ref: 5.6)** sets out how landscape impact has fed into the design of the Proposed Development. **ES Chapter 9 Cultural Heritage (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.8)** concludes that with the implementation of appropriate mitigation measures, the impacts on above and below ground heritage assets, historic landscapes and designated and non-designated heritage assets would not be significant, with the exception of one designated asset that would experience medium adverse impacts during construction only. **ES Chapter 9: Access and Transport (Document Ref. 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.9)** considers the potential impacts and disruptions to services and infrastructure, and the travel plan sets out the existing conditions in and around the site (including pedestrian provision, cycle provision and public transport) and the impact to these provisions. In the **OCSTP**, emphasis is placed on promoting sustainable modes of travel that present a viable option

POLICY NO.	POLICY TITLE	ASSESSMENT
		as alternatives to single occupancy car travel. Based on existing conditions, it is considered that shared transport (car share or minibus) present the most viable option for journeys to/from the site. As set out in the **ES Appendix 15.3: OSSCEP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol. 2, 6.3.98)**, the Applicant is committed to developing partnerships with local businesses and organisations such as construction and materials suppliers, local educational institutions providing green job courses and training, employment and training centres assisting with recruiting and upskilling. Preparation of a detailed **Skills, Supply Chain and Employment Plan** is secured via Requirement 17 in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**.
4	Approach to Flood Risk	The eastern areas of the Solar Array Area are located within fluvial Flood Zone 2 and fluvial Flood Zone 3 as shown on Environment Agency public mapping. Southern and western areas of the Site are largely located within Flood Zone 1. Subsequent flood modelling carried out by the Applicant and reported on in the **Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.87))** has identified that flood impacts to the Solar Array Area are considered to be less severe than the public mapping indicates. The Cable Route and Bespoke Access Road will be located in a mix of Flood Zones 1, 2 and 3. **ES Chapter 11: Water Resources & Flood Risk (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.11)** and **Chapter 12: Climate Change (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.12)** outlines the level of flood risk throughout the Site. The risk of flooding to the Proposed Development from fluvial, surface water, groundwater and artificial sources varies across the Site. With the exception of the solar panels and some transformers, the majority of structures within the Solar Array Area will be outside of Flood Zone 3 at a low to medium risk of fluvial flooding. The risk of surface water flooding to most of the Site is considered to be very low to low. Some areas are at high risk of surface water flooding with overland flow pathways extending through central areas of the Solar Array Area and sections of the Bespoke Access Road and Cable Route Corridor. The mitigation measures proposed for fluvial flooding are considered

POLICY NO.	POLICY TITLE	ASSESSMENT
		sufficient to also mitigate the risk of surface water flooding in the areas identified as being at high risk. The risk of surface water flooding to most of the Site is considered to be very low to low. Some areas are at high risk of surface water flooding with overland flow pathways extending through central areas of the Solar Array Area and sections of the Bespoke Access Corridor and Cable Route Corridor. The mitigation measures proposed for fluvial flooding are considered sufficient to also mitigate the risk of surface water flooding in the areas identified as being at high risk. Within Flood Zones 2 and 3, the maximum height of the solar PV modules will be 3.9m above ground level, whilst within Flood Zone 1 it will be 3.5m. The Site design has allowed for the leading edge of the solar panels tables to be raised by up to 600mm in areas shown to be of high flood risk. Transformers will be constructed on raised bunds up to 600mm above the 1 in 100 year +32% climate change breach flood depth. **Appendix 11.1: Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.82)** confirms that from a flood risk perspective, with appropriate mitigation measures the Site is likely to be suitable for the Proposed Development subject to the implementation of proposed mitigation measures, which are secured via a Requirement (Surface and foul water drainage) in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**. Where a scheme would be located within, or partially within, Flood Zone 2 or Flood Zone 3 the Sequential Test should be undertaken. **Appendix 11.1: Flood Risk Assessment (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol. 2, 6.3.81)** and Section 6.2 of this **Planning Statement (Document Ref: 5.5)** explain how the Sequential Test has been met. It is considered that there are no suitable and reasonably available sites appropriate for the Proposed Development in areas with a lower risk of flooding and that the Site for the Proposed Development accordingly passes the Sequential Test. Further, essential utility infrastructure including electricity generating power stations, grid and primary

POLICY NO.	POLICY TITLE	ASSESSMENT
		substations storage is classed as essential infrastructure under **Annex 3: Flood risk vulnerability classification** of the NPPF. An Outline Drainage Strategy is included within **Appendix 11.1: Flood Risk Assessment (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol. 2, 6.3.81)** which sets out how water runoff from the Proposed Development will be controlled on the Site to ensure that there is no increase in risk of flooding to areas downstream of the Site and the Proposed Development itself. The findings of this assessment, which has been based on the data available, confirm that from a flood risk perspective, the Site is likely to be suitable for the Proposed Development subject to the proposed appropriate mitigation measures including: • Raising Solar panels up to 600 mm above depth of flooding; • Constructing transformers on raised bunds up to 600 mm above the 1 in 100+ climate change breach flood depth; • Designing base fence panels to have sufficient width to allow debris to flow and prevent blockage; • Constructing all proposed bridge crossings, temporary and permanent, in accordance with flood permits granted by the Environment Agency, LCC or the Internal Drainage Board (IDB) to ensure there would be no increased flood risk upstream or to the Site itself; and • Co-location of the Onsite Substation and BESS to allow for appropriate drainage solution and raising/ bunding to defend against flood risk. As noted above Requirement 10 in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)** secures that no part of the authorised development may commence until written details of the surface water drainage scheme and (if any) foul water drainage system (both of which must be substantially in accordance with the principles in the Outline Drainage Strategy) have been submitted to and approved by the relevant planning authority.
28	The Natural Environment	**ES Chapter 7: Ecology (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.7)** outlines how the Applicant has sought to protect and enhance the natural environment as far as practical. The Applicant's assessment and application of the mitigation hierarchy for the Proposed

POLICY NO.	POLICY TITLE	ASSESSMENT
		Development has mitigated residual adverse effects to a level which is not significant in EIA terms. **ES Chapter 7: Ecology (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.7)**, considered impacts to designated sites within 2 km from the site for National Nature Reserves (NNR) and Local Nature Reserves (LNR), 10 km for SSSIs and 20 km for international sites. The assessment concluded that there would be no significant adverse effects on any internationally, nationally, or locally designated sites during construction, operation or decommissioning of the Proposed Development.
29	The Historic Environment	**ES Chapter 8: Cultural Heritage (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.8)** reports the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development on the historic environment and cultural heritage resources (comprising built heritage, archaeology and historic landscape), in the context of the Site and surrounding area. Section 8.4 of **ES Chapter 8: Cultural Heritage (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.8)** outlines the assessment methodology and significance criteria to understand how to Proposed Development would change a cultural heritage asset or its setting, assess the degree to which any change would impact on cultural significance and weigh the effect, considering the magnitude of the impact and importance of the cultural heritage. A geophysical survey of the Site has been undertaken for the Proposed Development. The results of the geophysical survey are reported in detail in **Appendices 8.5 to 8.8 (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.49 to 6.3.71).** Archaeological trial trenching was undertaken across the Site to understand significance, the results of which are presented in **Appendices 8.9 to 8.11 (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.72 to 6.3.74).** **ES Chapter 8: Cultural Heritage (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.8)** assesses the likely impacts of the Proposed Development on cultural heritage, including direct and indirect, and temporary or permanent effects. The assessment confirms that there will be no designated heritage assets physically impacted by the Proposed Development. There is potential for impacts to the setting of number of designated heritage assets and

POLICY NO.	POLICY TITLE	ASSESSMENT
		non-designated heritage assets, however the impacts are established to not be significant for all designated heritage assets within the limits of the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan. **Appendix 8.2: Heritage Statement (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol.2, 6.3.46)** identifies a number of designated and non-designated heritage assets in which the changes introduced by the Proposed Development would result in harm when considering the policy tests within the NPS. None of these assets are located within Boston Borough Council and therefore do not fall within the scope of the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan. The substantial public benefits and need for the Proposed Development, as set out in Section 4 of this Planning Statement, including the delivery of "critical national priority" infrastructure to contribute towards meeting national energy security objectives and carbon reduction commitments, clearly and demonstrably outweigh the less than significant harm to cultural heritage assets.
30	Pollution	**ES Chapter 16: Air Quality (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.16)** concludes that there are no anticipated significant residual effects on air quality as a result of the Proposed Development, and with the implementation of mitigation measures identified within the **Appendix 9.3: OCTMP (Document Ref. 6.3, ES Vol. 2, 6.3.78), Appendix 2.4: OCEMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol. 2, 6.3.7)** and **Appendix 2.5: Appendix 2.5: ODEMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol. 2, 6.3.7)** no significant impacts on human health would occur. Preparation, approval and implementation of detailed versions of these documents is secured by a requirement in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**. **Chapter 10: Noise and Vibration (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.10)** concludes that there will be no significant effects from noise and vibration to human health, amenities of the area or the natural or historic environment as a result of noise and vibration. The Proposed Development is not expected to result in significant effects on surface or

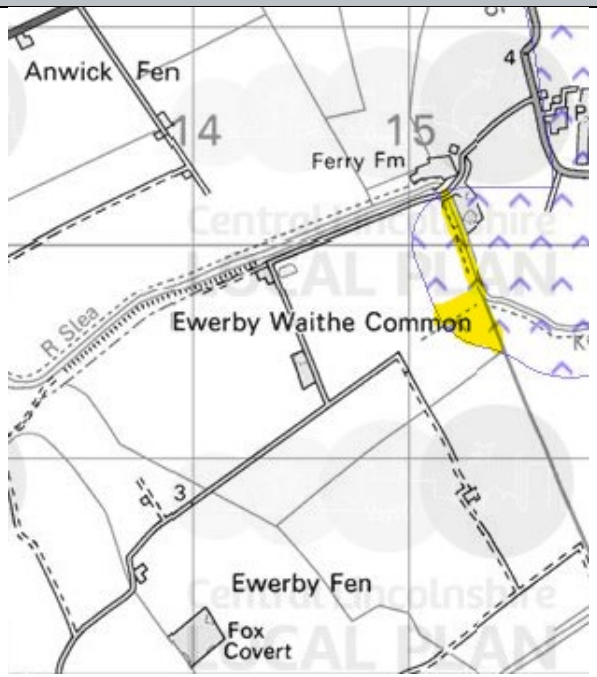
POLICY NO.	POLICY TITLE	ASSESSMENT
		ground water quality, as outlined in **ES Chapter 11: Water Resources and Flood Risk (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.11)**. **Chapter 14: Soils and Agricultural Land (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.14)** identifies effects on soil health and land quality, and sets out the embedded mitigation measures which minimise impacts on soil health and improve soil quality. As demonstrated in **ES Chapter 7: Ecology (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.7)** and **ES Chapter 8: Cultural Heritage (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.8)**, with the implementation of proposed mitigation measures, the Proposed Development would not have unacceptable impacts upon the natural, historic and built environment.
31	Climate Change and Renewable and Low Carbon Energy	As set out in the **Environmental Statement (Document Ref: 6.2)** and the **Design and Access Approach Document (Document Ref: 5.6)**, the Proposed Development has been designed in a manner that seeks to meet the current need for energy infrastructure, minimise impacts and maximise benefits to the environment and mitigate the impacts of climate change. As set out in **ES Chapter 12: Climate Change (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.2, 6.2.12)**, with the proposed embedded mitigation measures incorporated, it is considered that the Proposed Development will be resilient to increased flood risk with climate change. **ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.6), Chapter 10: Noise and Vibration (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.10), Chapter 9: Access and Traffic (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.9), Chapter 14: Soils and Agricultural Land (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.14), Chapter 16: Air Quality (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.16), Chapter 13: Glint and Glare (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.13), Chapter 8: Cultural Heritage (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.8), Chapter 11: Water Resources and Flood Risk (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.11)** and **Chapter 7: Ecology (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.7)** demonstrate that with the embedded mitigation measures and implementation of the proposed additional

POLICY NO.	POLICY TITLE	ASSESSMENT
		mitigation measures, the Proposed Development would not result in significant harm to the features outlined in criteria B1-7 of this policy. As explained in **Appendix 2.4: OCEMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol. 2, 6.3.7),** construction monitoring of the relevant mitigation measures will be undertaken predominantly through provisions in the detailed CEMP, production and implementation of which is secured via a requirement within Schedule 2 of the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**. Provisions for decommissioning of the Proposed Development, including removal of infrastructure and restoration of the Site, are outlined in the respective chapters of the ES and **Appendix 2.5: ODEMP (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol. 2, 6.3.7)**. Production, approval and implementation of a final DEMP, substantially in accordance with the ODEMP, is secured by a requirement in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**.
32	Community, Health and Wellbeing	**Chapter 15: Socio-economic (Document Ref: 6.2 ES Vol.1, 6.2.15)** provides an assessment of the Proposed Development's impact on public rights of way within the Order Limits, and in the wider local area, that will be impacted by the Proposed Development. It also sets out a number of mitigation, management and monitoring measures that will be implemented to maintain and protect the PRoWs through construction and operation of the development. The location of the Proposed Development and site selection process considered a range of factors including accessibility and public rights of way. The Proposed Development includes opportunities for enhancement such as proposals to extend a PRoW by creating a footbridge over the dyke on the northeast border, connecting the PRoW to a wider network of PRoWs. Safe crossing points will be created for the PRoWs that cross the Bespoke Access Road, secured in the **Outline Design Principles (Appendix 1** of the **Design Approach Document, Document Ref. 5.6)**. **ES Appendix 9.1: Transport Assessment (Document Ref: 6.3, ES Vol. 2, 6.3.76)** contains an **OCSTP**, which outlines the proposed measures to minimise the impact of construction staff travel to/from the site and maximise use of shared transport, during

POLICY NO.	POLICY TITLE	ASSESSMENT
		the construction phase. Emphasis is placed on promoting sustainable modes of travel that present a viable option as alternatives to single occupancy car travel. Based on existing conditions, it is considered that shared transport (car share or minibus) presents the most viable option for journeys to/from the site. Nonetheless, cycle parking will be provided, which is most likely to be attractive (given the nature of quiet unlit rural roads) to local staff in months when commuting can be undertaken in daylight hours. All construction staff will be made aware of the travel plan and its key objectives are to: • Contribute to traffic reduction and other sustainable transport objectives set out in national and local planning policies. • Improve accessibility of the site by sustainable modes of transport and address traffic and parking issues. • Widen choice of travel mode for all those travelling to/from the Site **ES Chapter 15: Socio-economic (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.15)** concluded that the impact from influx of workers causing stress on local shops and hospitality services would be Significant for vulnerable groups for the Proposed Development. Additional mitigation outlined in section 15.7 of **ES Chapter 15: Socio-economic (Document Ref: 6.2, ES Vol.1, 6.2.15)** and **Appendix 15.3: Outline Skills, Supply Chain and Employment Plan (OSSCEP) (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.98)** will reduce the impact magnitude to negligible, lowering the impact on vulnerable receptors to minor adverse, Not Significant in EIA terms. Mitigation measures include but are not limited to prioritising local employment, reskilling of temporary farm workers to avoid economic displacement or support in finding alternative agricultural work, reskilling of workers after operational phase, and potential upskilling of local residents through apprenticeships. Preparation of a detailed **Skills, Supply Chain and Employment Plan** is secured via Requirement 17 in Schedule 2 to the **Draft DCO (Document Ref: 3.1)**.

Appendix 4D: Policy Accordance Table – Lincolnshire Local Minerals and Waste Strategy

Table 4D: Lincolnshire Minerals and Waste Plan (Core Strategy and Development Management Policies adopted 2016 and Site Locations adopted 2017) Policy Accordance Summary

POLICY NO.	POLICY TITLE	ASSESSMENT
M11	Safeguarding of Mineral Resources	 - Sand and Gravel Minerals Safeguarding Area - Area of overlap with the Proposed Development Order Limits The operational life of Proposed Development will be up to 40 years, and the Site will be decommissioned at the end of its operational life. This will involve the removal of all solar PV array infrastructure including modules, mounting structures, inverters, transformers, switchgear, the On-site Substation, BESS,
M12	Safeguarding of Existing Mineral Sites and Associated Minerals Infrastructure	

POLICY NO.	POLICY TITLE	ASSESSMENT
		fencing and ancillary infrastructure. The land would be returned to agricultural use. Buried medium voltage cables would either be removed and land restored or remain in situ. The Bespoke Access Road is presently assumed to be removed during decommissioning. However, flexibility is retained as it is possible that engagement with the landowners at that time will establish a preference for it to be retained. Decommissioning will include removing any permissive paths and the land will be returned to the landowner. **Appendix 2.5: Outline Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan (ODEMP) (Document Ref: 6.3 ES Vol.2, 6.3.8)** proposes that any landscape structural planting, including tree planting, hedgerows, scrub, etc., created to deliver biodiversity mitigation and enhancement associated with the Proposed Development would be left in situ when the Site is returned to landowners who can manage it themselves under the prevailing planning and other rules and any setbacks required from highways, transmission lines and the like. Therefore, post decommissioning, the landowner will have the right to use their land as they would now and any minerals would not be permanently sterilised and would be available to exploit if required at a future date. The minerals within the Order Limits will not be permanently sterilised, and post-decommissioning, the land could be worked for minerals. The Proposed Development is reservable by nature, and therefore there is not considered to be any conflict with the M11 mineral safeguarding policy. Further, the area of mineral safeguarding area within the Order Limits is a relatively small part of the overall designation being intersected by an existing

POLICY NO.	POLICY TITLE	ASSESSMENT
		drainage ditch (Car Dyke) with limited road access, so may not be viable to extract in future. As set out in **Section 4** of this Planning Statement, large scale renewable energy generation facilities are urgently needed and projects such as the Proposed Development will be a critical part of the UK's portfolio of renewable energy generation as they are required to decarbonise its energy supply quickly and provide secure and affordable energy supplies. The DCO Application demonstrates an overwhelming need for the Proposed Development and that the development could not reasonably be sited elsewhere, in line with the Requirements of Policies M11 and M12 of the Lincolnshire Minerals and Waste Core Strategy and Development Management Policies.