Fosse Green Energy

Fosse Green Energy

EN010154

9.19 Applicant's Response to the Examining Authority's Second Written Questions

Planning Act 2008 (as amended)

Regulation 8(1)(k)

Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010

20 March 2026

VOLUME

9

Planning Act 2008

The Infrastructure Planning

(Examination Procedure) Rules

2010

Fosse Green Energy

Development Consent Order 202[ ]

9.19 Applicant's Response to the Examining Authority's Second Written Questions

Regulation Reference	Regulation 8(1)(k)
Planning Inspectorate Scheme Reference	EN010154
Application Document Reference	EN010154/EXAM/9.19
Author	Fosse Green Energy Limited

Version	Date	Issue Purpose
Rev 1	20 March 2026	Deadline 3

Table of Contents

Tables

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of this document

1.1.1 The purpose of this document is to provide Fosse Green Energy's ('the Applicant') response to the Examining Authority's (ExA) Second Written Questions **[PD-016]**, issued on 27 February 2026. This document responds to each of the questions posed to the Applicant, and where the Applicant considered it could provide assistance to the ExA, it has also responded to some questions addressed to other parties.

1.2 Structure of this Document

1.2.1 This report provides a response from the Applicant to the matters raised in the Examining Authority's Second Written Questions **[PD-016]** and is structured as follows:

a. Table 2-1: General and Cross-topic questions: the Applicant's responses to the Examining Authority's General and Cross-topic questions.

b. Table 2-2: Climate Change questions: the Applicant's responses to the Examining Authority's Climate Change questions.

c. Table 2-3: Draft Development Consent Order questions: the Applicant's responses to the Examining Authority's Draft Development Consent Order questions.

d. Table 2-4: Ecology and Nature Conservation questions: the Applicant's responses to the Examining Authority's Ecology and Nature Conservation questions.

e. Table 2-5: Farming and Soils questions: the Applicant's responses to the Examining Authority's Farming and Soils questions.

f. Table 2-6: Historic Environment questions: the Applicant's responses to the Examining Authority's Historic Environment questions.

g. Table 2-7: Land Rights (Compulsory Acquisition (CA) and Temporary Possession questions: the Applicant's responses to the Examining Authority's Land Rights (Compulsory Acquisition (CA) and Temporary Possession questions.

h. Table 2-8: Landscape and Visual questions: the Applicant's responses to the Examining Authority's Landscape and Visual questions.

i. Table 2-9: Population Effects questions: the Applicant's responses to the Examining Authority's Population Effects questions.

j. Table 2-10: Transport and Traffic questions: the Applicant's responses to the Examining Authority's Transport and Traffic questions.

k. Table 2-11: Water Environment, including Hydrology and Flood Risk questions: the Applicant's responses to the Examining Authority's Water Environment, including Hydrology and Flood Risk questions.

1.2.2 For ease of reference, a table of acronyms used in this document is provided in Table 1-1.

Table 1-1: Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Definition
AC	Alternating Current
AIL	Abnormal Indivisible Load
ALC	Agricultural Land Classification
AWS	Anglian Water Services
BESS	Battery Energy Storage System
BMV	Best and Most Versatile Land
BNG	Biodiversity Net Gain
BPA	British Pipeline Agency Limited
BS	British Standard
BSI	British Standards Institution
BSMP	Battery Safety Management Plan
CEMP	Construction Environmental Management Plan
CCGT	Combined Gas Cycle Turbine
CNP	Critical National Priority
CTMP	Construction Traffic Management Plan
DCO	Development Consent Order
DECC	Department of Energy and Climate Change
DEFRA	Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
DEMP	Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan
DMRB	Design Manual for Roads and Bridges
EA	Environment Agency
ECoW	Ecological Clerk of Works
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EPD	Environmental Product Declaration
ERP	Emergency Response Plan
ES	Environmental Statement

Abbreviation	Definition
ESSCP	Employment, Skills and Supply Chain Plan
ExA	Examining Authority
FRA	Flood Risk Assessment
FTE	Full Time Equivalent
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
GPG	Good Practice Guidance
GWh	Gigawatt hours
Ha	Hectares
HDD	Horizontal Directional Drilling
HE	Historic England
HER	Historic Environmental Record
HPA	Health Protection Agency
HV	High Voltage
IEMA	Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment
IP	Interested Party
IRENA	International Renewable Energy Agency
ISEP	Institute of Sustainability and Environmental Professionals
JNCC	Joint Nature Conservation Committee
kV	Kilovolt
LCC	Lincolnshire County Council
LCoW	Landscape Clerk of Works
LEMP	Landscape and Ecological Management Plan
LFRS	Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue Service
LGV	Local Goods Vehicle
LIQ	Land Interest Questionnaire
LIR	Local Impact Report
LNR	Local Nature Reserve
LPA	Local Planning Authority
LSFT	Large Scale Fire Testing
LWS	Local Wildlife Site
LWT	Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust

Abbreviation	Definition
LVIA	Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
MAFF	Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries
MSA	Mineral Safeguarding Area
MW	Megawatt
MWh	Megawatt Hours
NCA	National Character Area
NE	Natural England
NERC	Natural Environment and Rural Communities
NESO	National Electricity System Operator
NFCC	National Fire Chiefs Council
NGED	National Grid Energy Distribution
NGET	National Grid Energy Transmission
NH	National Highways
NHLE	National Heritage List for England
NKDC	North Kesteven District Council
NMU	Non-motorised User
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
NPPG	National Planning Practice Guidance
NPS	National Policy Statement
NRMM	Non-Road Mobile Machinery
NSIP	Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project
OEMP	Operational Environmental Management Plan
PEA	Preliminary Ecological Appraisal
PFAS	per-and poly fluoroalkyl substances
PINS	Planning Inspectorate
PRoW	Public Right of Way
PRoWMP	Public Right of Way Management Plan
PV	Photovoltaic
SF_6	Sulfur Hexafluoride
SMP	Soil Management Plan
SoCG	Statement of Common Ground
SoS	Secretary of State
SRN	Strategic Road Network

Abbreviation	Definition
SSEP	Strategic Spatial Energy Plan
SuDS	Sustainable Drainage Systems
SWDS	Surface Water Drainage Strategy
SWMP	Site Waste Management Plan
TA	Transport Assessment
tCO2e	Tonnes CO2 Equivalent
TEC	Transmission Entry Capacity
TPO	Tree Preservation Order
TTM	Temporary Traffic Management
UKHSA	UK Health Security Agency
WCA	Wildlife and Countryside Act
WEEE	Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment
WSI	Written Scheme of Investigation
WRAP	Waste and Resources Action Programme
WRMP	Water Resources Management Plan
ZoI	Zone of Influence
ZTV	Zone of Theoretical Influence

2. Applicant's Response to the Examining Authority's Second Written Questions

2.1 General and Cross-topic Questions

Table 2-1: Applicant's Response to the Examining Authority's General and Cross-topic Questions

Question Number	Question to:	Question	Applicant Response
General and Cross-topic questions (GC)			
GC.2.01	National Grid Electricity Transmission PLC (NGET)	**Explanation for the selection of a site east of Navenby for the proposed NGET substation** Explain what factors have fed into your identification of a site east of Navenby as the location for siting your proposed new substation. In responding to this question NGET should identify any existing infrastructure, including any available capacity to receive electricity from any new generating stations in the area that may have influenced the choice of a site east of Navenby as a location for a proposed new substation which it is intended the proposed Fosse Green energy project would connect to.	Whilst this question is addressed to NGET, the Applicant notes that NGET's website states that they *"identified this site as the most suitable option through a formal substation siting study, where five possible sites were shortlisted. From these five evaluated sites in the local area, a rigorous optioneering process was carried out, taking into consideration the impact on the local community, proximity to the existing overhead line to reduce the need for new pylons and overhead lines, environmental factors, land availability and much more"*[1]. A PDF of the website can be found at Appendix B.
GC.2.02	Applicant	**Extent of proposed Order Limits** The ExA is mindful of the answers/information provided by the applicant in response to questions it raised during the first round of examination hearings and included in ExQ1 with respect to the extent of the proposed Order Limits. In that regard the ExA is particularly mindful of the information provided by the applicant in: **[REP2-029]** in responding to ExQ1 GC.1.05 **[PD-011]**; Appendix A (final land take required for works forming the proposed development) in **[REP1-045]**; and Appendix D (Biodiversity net gain technical note) in **[REP1-046]**. Notwithstanding the provision of those answers/that information it remains unclear to the ExA: 1) why the proposed Order Limits are comparatively so extensive; and 2) how much land within the proposed Order Limits, following the proposed development's construction, would be needed to operate and maintain a generating station with associated capable for a project with a grid export limit of 240 megawatts (MW). By way of comparison the ExA notes that the nearby proposed Springwell solar farm has been designed to serve a grid export limit of 800MW (alternating current) and has been promoted on the basis of Order Limits of 1,280 hectares (ha) (assumed to include an allowance for flexibility prior to the detailed design being finalised) **[Table 10-1 in REP2-033]**. It appears to the ExA that the proposed Springwell solar farm would have a potential generating output around 3.33 times greater than Fosse Green, whilst	The solar area of the Proposed Development (Works No.1, as per the Works Plans **[AS-105]**) is 454.5ha (1123 acres). With reference to Table 10-1 of the Solar Technology Technical Guide **[REP2-033]**, when comparing this to other solar NSIP schemes with a comparable connection capacity, the difference in solar areas is minimal – for example, Mallard Pass (240MW AC) has a 420ha (1038 ha) solar area, Fenwick Solar Farm (237.5MW AC) has a 407ha (1005 acres) solar area. With comparison to Springwell, some of the main differences that impact the development area are: • Lack of grid corridor - Springwell is closer to the point of connection (approximately 2.8km to the point of connection, compared to the Proposed Development which is approximately 10km and covers approximately 351ha) and as such the grid corridor is much shorter, resulting in less land being assigned to grid connection works within the Work Plans; • Ground Nesting bird mitigation areas - Springwell included the creation of c.100ha (c. 247 acres) of bird mitigation area, which is roughly 2.5 times less than incorporated as part of the Proposed Development. This is due to the ecology baseline of the DCO Site and needing to create large areas of suitable habitat to mitigate likely significant effects;

[1] https://www.nationalgrid.com/electricity-transmission/network-and-infrastructure/infrastructure-projects/navenby-substation

Question Number	Question to:	Question	Applicant Response
		being promoted in a geographically similar area with Order Limits that would be a little less in extent. Given the foregoing background, explain why the Order Limits for the proposed development are intended to be slightly more extensive than those of the proposed Springwell solar farm, whilst having a grid export limit of 240MW which would be around 30% of that for the proposed Springwell project.	• Implementation of bird mitigation land - the landowners within the DCO Site requested that some of the bird mitigation land is delivered within a wider geographical area so that it can be rotated across fields under their control over the 60 year operational period of the Proposed Development, rather than fixed to specific locations. This is to facilitate their preferred farming methods and assist with the continuation of arable farming as much as possible alongside the solar farm, as supported within Section 2.10.11of EN3 (2023) which states that solar and farming can be complementary, supporting each other financially, environmentally and through shared use of land, and encourages deployment of solar technology that delivers environmental benefits, with consideration for ongoing food production or environmental improvement; and • Interconnecting Corridors - Springwell has a more contiguous site layout resulting in less land required for parcels of interconnecting cabling between solar areas and the site substation.
GC.2.03	Applicant Environment Agency	**Waste Management – battery storage** At Deadline 1, updates were made to the Framework Battery Safety Management Plan (FBSMP) **[REP1-042]** and Framework Operational Environmental Management Plan (FOEMP) **[REP1-033, further updated at Deadline 2 as REP2-015]** to address the potential for on-site storage of waste batteries, as described on pages 35 and 36 of **[REP1-047]**. a) As MW-D1 of the Framework Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan (FDEMP) **[REP2-017]** also includes a reference to the storage of waste batteries, should a similar amendment be made to the FDEMP? b) If waste and/or damaged batteries could be stored onsite rather than being removed immediately, would that require any additional consents not already referenced in the draft Development Consent Order (dDCO) **[REP2-005]** or the Consents and Agreements Position Statement **[REP1-011]**?	a. The Applicant has assumed that this question from the ExA should read "*As MW-D1 of the Framework Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan (FDEMP) **[REP2-017]** also includes a reference to the storage of waste batteries, should a similar amendment be made to the F**O**EMP?*". In response to discussions with the Environment Agency, the Framework OEMP has been updated, to be submitted to the Examination at Deadline 3, to note the following at MW-O1: "*In the event of a defective battery module or cell being identified, the defective module shall be immediately placed out of service and electrically disconnected from the system. A specific risk assessment shall be conducted prior to the removal of the defective module to ensure the safety of employees and contractors. Specific protocols for storage and removal will fully align with the supplier's maintenance, decommissioning, and warranty stipulations. Once a defective module is safely removed in accordance with the specific risk assessment, it would be removed from Site the same day by the maintenance company, which would be a licensed waste carrier. In the event it cannot be transported offsite the same day it shall be stored in an approved protective container suitable for the safe storage of BESS battery components prior to being transported offsite for inspection by an authorised manufacturer's representative*." b. As part of Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) discussions, the Environment Agency have advised: "*While we recognise that a separate waste permit would not be required, as this is waste stored at the site of production, requirements for temporary storage where waste is produced applies (NWFD 2 exemption): Temporary storage where waste is produced (NWFD 2 exemption) - GOV.UK"*. As such, in the event a defective battery module or cell cannot be

Question Number	Question to:	Question	Applicant Response
			transported offsite the same day, it may be stored onsite under temporary waste exemptions for up to 12 months (provided it is stored securely) and no additional consents are required beyond those referenced in the Consents and Agreements Position Statement **[REP1-011]**.
GC.2.04	Lincolnshire County Council (LCC)	**Waste management** Confirm whether the applicant's response to your Local Impact Report (LIR) **[REP2-031]** and ExQ1 GC.1.16 **[REP2-029]** addresses your concerns about the consideration given to waste arisings and capacity, and if not, explain why.	**N/A**
GC.2.05	Applicant LCC	**Waste management** In responding to LCC's concerns in its LIR **[REP1-053]** about a lack of information on waste arisings, the applicant states that a separate site waste management plan for the operational phase is not proposed since waste management would be covered in the annual planned maintenance schedule secured via the FOEMP. Comment on whether this should be made more explicit in paragraph 2.3.4 of the FOEMP **[REP2-015]**.	Paragraph 2.3.4 of the Framework OEMP **[REP2-015]** has been updated (to be submitted to the Examination at Deadline 3) to include "*details of anticipated waste arisings by type and quantity*" as a new item.
GC.2.06	Applicant	**Minerals safeguarding** The National Planning Policy Framework states that mineral planning authorities should maintain a landbank of at least 7 years for sand and gravel and 10 years for crushed rock. LCC's response to ExQ1 GC.1.18 **[REP2-043]** identifies that as at the end of 2024, the County had a sand and gravel landbank of 8.01 years and a crushed rock landbank of 9.06 years, and that additional resources will need to be identified during the life of the proposed development. There are existing sand and gravel operations close to the site. As suggested by LCC, has the applicant contacted the site operators to discuss their future plans in order to determine whether the proposed development would constrain any future extensions to the sites? If not, explain whether it is something which the applicant would undertake.	LCC's response to written question G.1.18, set out in **[REP2-043]**, suggests that the Applicant could contact site operators to determine their long term plans, in order to ensure that the Proposed Development does not constrain the extension of existing or delivery of new sand and gravel sites. The Applicant has not contacted the relevant quarries directly to discuss their future proposals. However, it is considered that whilst the current and potential future plans for mineral extraction are unknown at this stage, there are significant constraints for expansion of the quarries onto the site of the Proposed Development, for the reasons set out below: **<u>Whisby Quarry</u>** The preferred site extension to the quarry as set out in the Lincolnshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan Preferred Approach for Updating the Plan Regulation 18 Consultation Site Assessment Report is to the west towards Eagle Hall rather than southwards toward the Order Limits. The presence of Tunman Wood and Morton Hall would preclude to some extent expansion of the quarry southwards. It is considered likely therefore that future extensions would be to the west, north-west of north. **<u>Swinderby Quarry</u>** The presence of the village of Witham St Hughs and previously worked areas would preclude expansion to the east towards the Order Limits. A proposed extension of the quarry to the north towards Ansons Farm was discounted in the Lincolnshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan Preferred Approach for Updating the Plan Regulation

Question Number	Question to:	Question	Applicant Response
			18 Consultation Site Assessment Report June 2024 stating, "clear constraints / planning reasons". It further stated, "existing and currently allocated reserves are considered sufficient to maintain production at this site beyond the plan period". **<u>Norton Bottoms Quarry</u>** Expansion of the quarry to the north-east towards the Order Limits is precluded by the presence of the village of Norton Disney and lakes of previously worked areas. In conclusion, whilst the current and potential future plans for mineral extraction are unknown at this stage, there are significant constraints for expansion onto the site of the Proposed Development, as demonstrated above. An indicative potential quarry expansion plan is provided in Appendix A, Figure WQ2-3.
GC.2.07	Applicant	**Cumulative effects** LCC in its LIR **[paragraph 19.17 in REP1-053]** considers that cumulative amenity impacts could occur for local communities from consecutive construction periods, not only those that overlap. In response, the applicant states that the temporal overlap of cumulative schemes with the proposed development, including the overlap of construction phases was an important consideration during the assessment of cumulative effects **[REP2-031]**. However, the ExA considers the applicant's response has not fully addressed the point being made by LCC, which the ExA interprets as being the effects over an extended period of time from several schemes in a locality with construction periods that follow on from each other, as opposed to construction periods that overlap with each other. An example could be the construction of the A46 Hykeham relief road, followed by the A46 Newark Bypass followed by the proposed development, the impacts of which could affect similar communities over a number of years. How has the applicant's assessment considered that type of cumulative effect?	The Applicant considered the effects from cumulative schemes being built in sequence and simultaneously, however the application has reported on the worst-case effects which result in the event that projects occur simultaneously (i.e. in-combination). Taking noise or traffic as examples, the potential for the highest severity impacts, and therefore the potential for the higher likely significance of effects, occur during periods where there is overlap of construction works from different projects. Should these be sequential instead of overlapping, the severity of impact upon relevant receptors would be lower, albeit over a longer period of time. These assessments in particular compare impacts against specific criterion based on % change in traffic flows or a specific decibel noise level, which is agnostic of duration. Although the duration of an effect is a consideration of assessment, for these assessments – and this logic is the same for other topics – the Applicant considers the cumulative assessment approach taken to be robust, where the greatest (worst-case) effects occur when considering the Proposed Development in combination with the relevant cumulative schemes being built simultaneously. This has a greater potential to affect the scale (and therefore significance) of effect experienced by a relevant receptor. Where the duration of an effect may change if cumulative schemes were considered sequentially, rather than overlapping, this would result in the same or lower significance of effect compared with the projects occurring simultaneously. The longer duration of impact is not considered to outweigh the higher intensity of impact associated with projects occurring together and therefore did not need to be explicitly assessed. The Applicant is not required to assess each and every scenario if they result in lesser effects than has been presented in the ES, and therefore has not specifically outlined the difference in effects in the event that these other schemes are built sequentially. Chapter 15: Cumulative Effects and Interactions **[APP-040]** of the

Question Number	Question to:	Question	Applicant Response
			Environmental Statement (ES) therefore presents the worst-case cumulative effects and the assessment remains valid.
GC.2.08	Applicant	**Interrelationships with other nationally significant infrastructure projects and major development schemes** The applicant in responding to the written representations submitted by various interested parties in **[REP2-030]** has referred to joint interrelationship reports having been submitted in connection with the consideration of other nationally significant infrastructure project (NSIP) applications in Lincolnshire, including for the proposed Springwell solar farm. The ExA is aware that other ExAs have requested the submission of interrelationship reports in areas where multiple solar farm NSIPs are being promoted nearby to one another and which have different project delivery timelines as a way of establishing how the delivery timelines my overlap and what inter project coordination measures have been or might be put in place. The ExA is further aware that the initially submitted interrelationship reports have been revised during the course of examinations as more information about each project reported upon becomes available within the public domain. Given the proximity of the proposed development with the proposed Springwell solar farm and having regard to the fact that an interrelationship report was available during the examination of the application for that NSIP, the ExA considers the applicant should prepare and submit an interrelationships report comparable with that submitted in connection with the examination of the proposed Springwell solar farm.	In response to this comment, the Applicant has prepared an Interrelationships Report, which will be submitted to the Examination at a future Examination deadline.
GC.2.09	Applicant	**Consistency between the Design Approach Document (DAD) and the various submitted framework management plans and terminology used** a) North Kesteven District Council (NKDC) in making comments relating to ExQ1 GC.1.10 in **[REP2-045]** has highlighted an inconsistency between the separation distance between the proposed battery energy storage system (BESS) and offsite residential structures quoted as design commitment BA1 in Appendix A of the DAD **[APP-186]** and the distance quoted in the FBSMP **[REP1-042]**.	a. The Applicant does not consider there to be an inconsistency between the Framework Battery Safety Management Plan (BSMP) **[REP1-041]** and the Design Approach Document **[APP-186]**, whereby the Applicant has clarified the minimum offsets for both the distributed and centralised BESS, including where these commitments are secured, within the Applicant's Response to the Examining Authority's First Written Questions **[REP2-029]**.

Question Number	Question to:	Question	Applicant Response
		Section 6 of the DAD explains that good design post consent would collectively be secured in any made DCO for the proposed development via, amongst other things, the design commitments included in the DAD **[APP-186]** and the provisions of the various management plans to be approved in their final forms pursuant to the relevant requirements included in the dDCO **[REP2-005]**. It is therefore important that there is consistency between the DAD's design commitments and all of the management plans. The applicant must therefore undertake a review of the DAD and all of the submitted framework management plans and ensure there is consistency between those documents and make any amendments to all of those documents to address any inconsistencies. An amended DAD and any framework management documents that require amendment to address any inconsistencies with the DAD must be submitted no later than examination **Deadline 6** b) Many of the framework management plans refer to 'the applicant'. Should references to the applicant in such documents be changed to 'the undertaker', given the applicant may not necessarily be the undertaker, to ensure consistency with the dDCO? If so, any framework management plans and other documents that require amendment to address this point must be submitted no later than examination **Deadline 6**.	With regards to the distributed BESS, the Applicant commits to a minimum separation distance of 150m between the distributed BESS and offsite residential structures (ref. paragraph 2.3.5 of the Framework BSMP **[REP1-041]**). With regards to the centralised BESS, paragraph 2.3.5 of the Framework BSMP **[REP1-041]** recognises that the centralised BESS will not be located closer than 200m to offsite residential structures with reference to the Works Plans, where it is stated "*The Works Plans **[EN010154/APP/2.2]**, which are secured under requirement 6 at Schedule 2 of the draft Development Consent Order **[EN010154/APP/3.1]**, do not locate Solar Stations and the centralised BESS closer than 200m to residential structures offsite*" – i.e. irrespective of the commitment to a 200m minimum offset with regards to the centralised BESS and offsite residential structures stated at Design Commitment BA1 in the Design Approach Document **[APP-186]**, the centralised BESS is fixed in location (restricted by the Works Plans **[AS-105]**) which doesn't allow the centralised BESS to be located closer than 200m from the nearest receptor (approximately 275m from the façade of Grange Cottage). However, for clarity, the Framework BSMP has been updated, to be submitted to the Examination at Deadline 3, to specifically and clearly reference the minimum separation offsets committed to for both the centralised and distributed BESS at paragraph 2.3.5. b. The Applicant is defined in the Planning Statement **[AS-098]**, and throughout the various DCO Application documents, as 'Fosse Green Energy Limited'. In the context of references to 'the Applicant' within the various framework management plans, it is correct that this would be Fosse Green Energy Limited, whereby in the case of the responsibilities in the respective framework management plans for the Proposed Development, the 'Applicant' and the 'Undertaker' are the same entity. The draft DCO defines the undertaker as *""undertaker" means Fosse Green Energy Limited (company number 13438725) or any person who has the benefit of this Order in accordance with articles 34 (Benefit of the Order) and 35 (consent to transfer benefit of the Order)*". It is noted that reference to an 'Applicant' was also the approach taken within the Springwell Solar Farm **[EN010149]** outline management plans. Accordingly, it is not necessary to amend any documents or framework management plans to refer to the 'undertaker'.

2.2 Climate Change Questions

Table 2-2: Applicant's Response to the Examining Authority's Climate Change Questions

Question Number	Question to:	Question	Applicant Response
Climate Change (CC) Questions			
CC.2.01	Applicant	**Assessment of baseline greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions for the proposed Order Limits** In paragraph 6.4.32 of Chapter 6 (Climate Change) of the Environmental Statement (ES) **[REP1-017]** it is stated *"The latest IEMA guidance on assessing GHG emissions (Ref 6-22) states that where there are no physical developments or activity taking place directly on the identified site, it may not be possible to report on current baseline emissions. As this is the case for the DCO Site, a baseline of zero GHG emissions is reported, again in line with IEMA guidance"*. In paragraph 6.4.36 of **[REP1-017]** it is further stated *"… Also, current land use within the DCO Site has minor levels of associated GHG emissions as the land use is largely agricultural. Baseline agricultural GHG emissions are dependent on soil and vegetation present, fuel use for the operation of vehicles and machinery, and other inputs such as fertiliser and pesticide use. Due to the minimal use of the land and as a worst case scenario, current baseline emissions are considered zero."* Explain why you consider it is correct to assess the proposed Order Limits as having a baseline of zero GHG emissions, given that much of the land within the Order Limits is currently being actively farmed and as part of that land use activity there will be some generation of GHG emissions.	Assuming a baseline of zero emissions represents a conservative and worst-case assessment approach. If the existing agricultural emissions had been considered as part of the baseline, the Proposed Development would have been shown to deliver a greater reduction in emissions than is currently reported in the ES due to the cessation of those farming activities. By assuming a baseline of zero it avoids concerns from interested parties that the assessment has overstated the benefit attributed to the Proposed Development. As such, the Applicant has taken the most robust approach, which the Applicant is confident does not overstate the benefits. The Applicant is aware that the conservative nature of this approach with regards to baseline may therefore underestimate the GHG savings from the Proposed Development, whereby the actual benefit afforded by the Proposed Development may be greater than is stated in the ES.
CC.2.02	Applicant	**Generating output for the proposed development** In paragraph 6.4.67 of Chapter 6 of the ES **[REP1-017]** it is estimated for the lifetime of the proposed development it would generate 19,438,499 megawatt hours (MWh) of renewable generation. Clarify whether the figure of 19,438,499MWh of electricity generation is for direct current prior to inversion or grid exportable alternating current.	This figure represents grid exportable alternating current (AC) output at the grid injection point accounting for all modelled losses between the modules and the grid injection point.
CC.2.03	Applicant	**Assessment of GHG emissions offset (carbon savings) compared with other forms of electricity generation** The ExA notes the applicant response in **[REP2-029]** to ExQ1 CC.1.01 (assessment of GHG emissions offset), most particularly the view that *"As this grid intensity is unlikely to decrease without projects like the Proposed Development, it is considered reasonable to compare the carbon intensity of the Proposed Development against the counterfactual scenario of no decarbonisation to the national grid, particularly for the short-term period …"*. In replying to ExQ1 CC.1.01 the applicant has placed some reliance on the assessment of this matter undertaken by various ExAs in making recommendations to the Secretary of State (SoS), including for example Gate Burton Energy Park. The ExA notes that the recommendation report for Gate Buton Energy Park was submitted on 4 April 2024, which predates the publication of the Clean Power	The Applicant does not believe using the anticipated carbon intensity for electricity generation in May 2033 is an appropriate measure to quantify the carbon reduction benefits brought forward at the Proposed Development for two reasons. Firstly, the Applicant would note that any anticipated carbon intensity for electricity generation in 2033 will be dependent on the deployment and operation of schemes such as the Proposed Development. Any anticipated value which assumes that government's capacity ranges are met (noting that the Proposed Development contributes to meeting these ranges) therefore does not constitute a realistic scenario for if the Proposed Development does not go ahead. Conversely, any anticipated value which assumes that the Proposed Development does not go ahead would be expected

Question Number	Question to:	Question	Applicant Response
		2030 Action Plan (December 2024) and the making of numerous DCOs for renewal energy generating stations (offshore wind farms and solar farms). The ExA further notes that under the terms of the extant grid connection agreement the proposed development's date of connection has been scheduled for 30 May 2033 (paragraph 2.1.2 in **[APP-200]**). Taking account of the previously mentioned factors the ExA considers it would be reasonable to expect that the carbon intensity for electricity generated in the United Kingdom by 30 May 2033 will be appreciably lower than the 2025 grid average density relied upon by the applicant in Chapter 6 (Climate Change) of the ES, with the carbon intensity in 2025 considered to be unrepresentative. Accordingly, the applicant is requested to undertake an assessment for GHG emissions offsetting based on the anticipated carbon intensity for electricity generation in May 2033.	to have a higher intensity for electricity generation in 2033 than the case that it does go ahead, thereby increasing the benefit arising from the Proposed Development. For reference, the carbon savings compared to generation in May 2033 would be 225,115tCO_{2e}, but as noted above this is not seen as a realistic or helpful comparison. The Secretary of State reviewed and accepted the use of unabated Combined Cycle Gas Turbines (CCGT) as a counterfactual in the DCO of Morecambe offshore windfarm (paragraphs 4.10 and 4.11 of the decision letter EN010121 dated 1 December 2025). The grid connection date for this offshore wind farm is currently notified on National Grid's connections register as being June 2029. The carbon intensity used for Morecambe is far higher than the carbon intensity value of the grid in 2025 which was used in Chapter 6: Climate Change of the ES **[REP1-017]** for the Proposed Development. In that regard, and in comparison to the Morecambe assessment, the Applicant's analysis is conservative. The Clean Power Action Plan also states that "*Delivering Clean Power 2030 also paves the way to decarbonising the wider economy by 2050 as we pursue the electrification of heat in buildings, transport, and industry. By 2050, annual electricity demand is likely to at least double*". Even considering the decarbonisation of the grid by 2033 in line with the Clean Power Action Plan, the Proposed Development would not principally be displacing existing grid electricity in 2033, but instead would be increasing supply to enable 'the rapid growth in power demand expected over the 2030s and 40s' (p11). NESO's Future Energy Scenario pathways include an annual increase in total GB electricity system demand of between 197TWh and 241TWh (depending on the pathway selected) of between 2030 and 2039 (DB.ES1 of FES 2025 Data Workbook). Looking at the electrification of heating buildings, transport and industrial demand, the energy from the Proposed Development would be displacing petrol/diesel and natural gas or other fossil fuel sources respectively in each sector. Each of these uses, if not electrified, have a higher carbon intensity of emissions than the grid in 2025, so the current position of the Chapter 6: Climate Change of the ES **[REP1-017]** is a conservative worst case representation of the benefits arising, and does not need to be updated or assessed against the projected 2033 grid intensity. The carbon savings presented through the chapter are a worst case assessment considering the likely activities that the Proposed Development will replace in 2033, and therefore the significance conclusion, benefits assessment and alignment with net zero presented in the chapter remain unchanged. In any event, the Applicant notes that NPS EN-1 (2023) Paras 3.2.6 - 3.2.8 provides that there is an urgent need for the Proposed Development, that substantial weight

Question Number	Question to:	Question	Applicant Response
			should be given to the need for the Proposed Development, and that the specific contribution of the Proposed Development towards meeting that need does not require separate consideration.
CC.2.04	Applicant	**Sulphur Hexafluoride** Table 6-3 in ES Chapter 6: Climate Change **[REP1-017]** summarises the key anticipated GHG emissions sources associated with the proposed development. This includes the potential for there to be emissions of sulphur hexafluoride. Having regard to the guidance relating to sulphur hexafluoride stated in paragraphs 2.9.59 to 2.9.64 of National Policy Statement (NPS) EN-5 (2023), explain fully why consideration is being given to the use of this GHG and why alternatives might be unsuitable.	The Proposed Development design has sought to avoid the use of Sulphur Hexafluoride (SF_6) where possible in line with paragraph 2.9.61 of NPS EN-5 (2023). The main source of SF_6 from electricity generation developments is the 400kV switchgear within the 400kV Substation (referred to as the 'Onsite Substation' in the application). As noted in Table 6-3 of ES Chapter 6: Climate Change **[REP1-017]**, the Onsite Substation will consist of air-insulated switchgear, which does not use any SF_6, therefore avoids any risk of SF_6 emissions. There is a possibility that gas insulated SF_6 based options may be required for the 33kV switchgear and transformers at the Solar Stations, although typically air insulated switchgear is more widely available and more cost effective and therefore more likely to be used for the Proposed Development. These are much smaller in scale than switchgear and transformers used at 400kV substations so emissions will be minimal compared to the overarching emissions and fewer alternatives exist on the market. The Applicant will seek to avoid SF_6-reliant assets through procurement process, and where the use of SF_6 is unavoidable due to supply chain availability or technical feasibility – which is likely for 33kV infrastructure - this decision will be communicated to the Council in the detailed design as part of Requirement 6 of the draft DCO **[REP2-005].** In line with 2.9.64 of NPS EN-5 (2023), where SF_6-reliant assets are included, these will be closed systems that are sealed for life and will be managed as part of regular maintenance and monitoring, as noted at CC-O1 of the Framework OEMP **[REP2-015]**). In terms of disposal of these at their end of life, standard practice will be followed, whereby strict waste management protocols will be adhered to (as set out in MW-D1 of the Framework DEMP **[REP2-017]**) and all components containing SF_6 will be disposed of appropriately and responsibly in line with industry guidance, without releases to the atmosphere. Any trace SF_6 gases that do escape from the closed loop system would be negligible and will not lead to likely significant effects.
CC.2.05	Applicant	**Resilience** Explain how the impacts of climate change on the proposed development have been taken into account and how the proposed development has been developed to respond to the challenges of climate change, for example an increase in frequency of extreme weather events.	Climate change impacts on the Proposed Development have been assessed in line with best practice methodology set out in Section 6.5 of ES Chapter 6: Climate Change **[REP1-017]**. The impacts and specific hazards associated with the Proposed Development are presented in ES Appendix 6-B: Climate Change Risk Assessment **[APP-122]**. The key adaptations and adjustments for extreme weather events are presented in Table 3 of the Framework OEMP **[REP2-015]**. These are listed below in summarised bullet points: • Use materials and equipment resilient to heat, drought, and extreme weather.

Question Number	Question to:	Question	Applicant Response
			• Select inverters and BESS with appropriate cooling to remain efficient under rising temperatures. • Maintain plant and machinery to ensure resilience to future climate stressors. • Implement health and safety procedures addressing heatwaves, flooding and extreme weather. For example, provide suitable worker protection (shade, rest periods, hydration, PPE) during hot weather and halt outdoor/non-essential work during dangerous weather conditions • Appoint personnel to monitor weather forecasts routinely and plan work around conditions. • Monitor weather and Environment Agency flood alerts and adjust or cease work during extreme events. • Store materials outside of flood risk zones wherever feasible. • Incorporate SuDS and additional attenuation to manage surface water and climate driven rainfall increases. • Ensure drainage systems prevent increased flood risk to site or surroundings. • Implement rainwater harvesting to reduce reliance on external water sources.
CC.2.06	Applicant	**In-combination climate change impact (ICCI) assessment** Paragraph 6.6.4 in ES Chapter 6: Climate Change **[REP1-017]** explains that the ICCI assessment considers the ways in which projected climate change will influence the significance of the impact of the proposed development on receptors in the surrounding environment. Should anything be inferred by the fact that ES Chapter 12: Socio-Economics and Land Use is not referenced in paragraph 6.6.21 of ES Chapter 6 where it lists ES chapters that did not identify any significant ICCIs as part of their assessment?	Socio-Economics and Land Use is not listed in Paragraph 6.6.21 of ES Chapter 6: Climate Change **[REP1-017]** as risks associated with this discipline were identified, assessed and presented in Table 1 of ES Appendix 6-C: In-Combination Climate Change Impact Assessment **[APP-123]**. The risk of increased precipitation is assessed as not significant here. Paragraph 6.6.21 of ES Chapter 6: Climate Change **[REP1-017]** lists the disciplines that did not identify or assess any risks in ES Appendix 6-C: In-Combination Climate Change Impact Assessment **[APP-123]**.
CC.2.07	Applicant	**ICCI assessment** Appendix 6C **[APP-123]** identifies and describes the results of the ICCI assessment. The climate hazard identified in **[APP-123]** for socio-economics and land use is increased precipitation. Would an increase in mean temperature and increased number of dry days affect soil health? If so, should these be included as climate hazards in **[APP-123]** and how would this affect the assessment?	Soil health is a holistic term addressing soil as a living, functioning and sustainable ecosystem, but it does not refer to functional properties (the soil quality) for a specific crop or habitat. Whilst precipitation can displace soil particles (and has been described in the ICCI assessment), changes to the number of dry days and droughtiness does not adversely affect a living, functioning soil: it creates a new equilibrium. The change may be to soil quality for a specific objective for the land. Resilience has sometimes been associated with soil health, such that healthy soils are sometimes described as more resilient to extreme weather, but this is in the context of specific land use and crop selection. By minimising soil disturbance and maximising soil cover, resilience would be improved. Consideration of changes to the number or duration of dry days on soil health is not considered necessary for the ICCI assessment.

Question Number	Question to:	Question	Applicant Response
CC.2.08	Applicant	**Consistency** With respect to the climate change risk assessment, confirm the consistency of the assessment presented in paragraphs 6.7.3 and 6.7.4 in Chapter 6 of the ES **[REP1-017]** with the conclusions on significant residual effects presented in paragraph 6.8.3 and Table 6-25.	There is an inconsistency in Paragraph 6.8.3 of Chapter 6: Climate Change of the ES **[REP1-017]**. Paragraph 6.8.3 of Chapter 6: Climate Change has therefore been updated (and will be submitted to the Examination at Deadline 3) to read as follows : "*There have been no significant residual effects identified in the CCR assessment for the construction ~~and decommissioning~~ periods, and three significant adverse effects identified for the operational and decommissioning periods following additional adaptation and monitoring measures".* In addition, for completeness, **Table 6-26** of Chapter 6: Climate Change **[REP1-017]** has also been updated (and will be submitted to the Examination at Deadline 3) within the 'Significance column' for 'the Proposed Development (including workforce)' receptor to state "*Low to High – Significant*". This does not affect the conclusions of the assessment contained within Chapter 6: Climate Change .

2.3 Draft Development Consent Order Questions

Table 2-3: Applicant's Response to the Examining Authority's Draft Development Consent Order Questions

Question Number	Question to:	Question	Applicant Response
Note All references to the numbering of Articles and Schedules (including Requirements) refer to those used in the version of the dDCO submitted at Deadline 2 [REP2-005]			
Draft Development Consent Order (DCO) Questions			
Articles			
DCO.2.01	Applicant	**Article 2 – interpretation ("maintain") and Article 5 - power to maintain authorised development** NKDC in its response to ExQ1 DCO.1.04 **[REP2-045]** has raised concerns about the potential for the undertaking of *"wholesale replacement"* of elements of the proposed development, having regard to the indicative design life for "key equipment" outlined in Table 2 in the FOEMP **[REP2-015]**. For example, the indicative design life for solar panels installed as part of the proposed development is identified as being between 25 and 40 years in Table 2 of the FOEMP and that solar panel lifespan suggests they would need to be replaced at least once and during a relatively short period of time. The ExA notes the applicant's response to ExQ1 DCO.1.04 in **[REP2-029]**, including the intention as part of the FOEMP **[REP2-015]** that a maintenance schedule would be submitted to the relevant planning authority annually setting out the maintenance arrangements for the year ahead. To assist interested parties' and the ExA's understanding of the equipment replacement arrangements for the proposed development, the applicant should submit an indicative set of maintenance schedules for each of operational years 25 to 40. (For any years when it is anticipated the maintenance activities for any of operational years between 25 to 40 would be very similar the applicant should highlight those instances rather than submit detailed schedules for those years.)	As requested, the Applicant has prepared an indicative maintenance schedule which includes an indicative scheduled maintenance checklist, anticipated replacement rates of the components of the solar farm and a separate estimate for the "repowering period" of years 29-33. This is provided at Appendix C to this document.
DCO.2.02	LCC	**Article 10 - power to alter layout, etc. of streets** In response to ExQ1 DCO.2.08 **[REP2-029]**, the applicant considers that a limit on the generality of the power is afforded by paragraph 4 which provides that the general power provided for under paragraph 2 may not be exercised without the prior consent of the street authority. Such consent to be in a form reasonably required by the street authority. If paragraph 4 would not enable LCC to secure the technical details it requires, submit suggested wording that would cover the provisions being sought in relation to the approval of technical details.	**N/A**
DCO.2.03	Applicant LCC	**Article 16 - traffic regulation measures** In response to ExQ1 DCO.1.11 in **[REP2-029]**, the applicant considers that the general power in paragraph 2 is necessary in the interests of public safety and the power is appropriately regulated by paragraph 4, which	Permit Schemes are made under Part 3 of the Traffic Management Act 2004 and the Traffic Management Permit Scheme (England) Regulations 2007. They generally permit the carrying out of street works by statutory undertakers, but also permit works for road purposes (eg maintenance and improvement works). Where a permit is obtained it does

		states that prior to exercising the power conferred by paragraph 2, the undertaker must consult with the chief officer of police in whose area the road is situated and obtain the written consent of the traffic authority. a) **Applicant** - Comment on the suggestion by LCC in **[REP2-043]** that temporary traffic regulation orders and measures to enable safe working on the public highway can be agreed with the contractor through its Permitting Scheme rather than through the general power sought in paragraph 2. b) **LCC** - Comment on whether paragraph 4 would provide an acceptable control mechanism to ensure that traffic regulation measures that may be undertaken under paragraph 2 would allow for the safe operation of the highway.	not authorise the closure of the street. Where a closure is required, the person seeking to carry out the works must seek a temporary traffic regulation order, which is governed by a separate regime under Part II of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 ("1984 Act"). It is not therefore technically correct to say that temporary traffic regulation orders and measures to enable safe working on the public highway can be agreed with the contractor through its Permitting Scheme. In practice a person applying for a permit would need to go through a separate process to seek a temporary TRO to allow the closure of the street. Article 16(2) must be considered in the context of Article 12 (Temporary prohibition or restriction of the use of streets and public rights of way) of the draft DCO **[REP2-005]** – which is based on article 11 of the General Model Provisions. Article 12 provides a power to temporarily close streets, and means that the Applicant does not need to obtain a temporary TRO under Section 14(1) of the 1984 Act for such closures. Article 16(2) can therefore be broadly viewed in this context, as enabling measures which are ancillary to an Article 12 closure. For example, the closure of a particular road may increase traffic on another road, and, in the interests of safety, it may be necessary to prohibit waiting on that road for the duration of the closure and to reduce the speed of those vehicles. In this sense, Article 16(2) is analogous to Section 14(4) of the 1984 Act which allows temporary TROs made under Section 14(1) to impose ancillary measures such as temporary speed limits and waiting restrictions. Article 12 is designed to ensure that road closures can be introduced in a timely manner. It includes a consent provision but also, importantly, allows the issue of consent to be submitted to arbitration if it is unreasonably refused. This important mechanism would be undermined if the undertaker could not deal with these ancillary measures under Article 16(2) in the same way.
DCO.2.04	Applicant	**Article 38 (Planning permission, etc)** The ExA notes the applicant's reply to ExQ1 DCO.1.28 in **[REP2-029]**, including the cited precedents relating to the inclusion of articles equivalent to Article 38 in the submitted dDCO. However, notwithstanding the Supreme Court's ruling in Hillside Parks Ltd v Snowdonia National Park Authority 2022 UKSC **[30]**, the SoS in their recent decision making has consistently considered it unnecessary that an article of proposed Article 38's nature be included in made DCOs. Given the SoS's recent approach to this matter, were they minded to make a DCO for the proposed development the ExA considers it likely that proposed Article 38 would not be included in the resulting made DCO. The applicant should therefore reconsider the need for Article 38's inclusion in any made DCO for the proposed development and:	As per the Applicant's oral submissions during Issue Specific Hearing 4 (ISH4) on Friday 13 March 2026, the Applicant is continuing to seek the inclusion of Article 38 in the draft DCO **[REP2-005]**. There are two parts to this Article. The purpose of the first part is to deal with drop-in TCPA planning permissions, where development (not itself an NSIP) required to complete the Proposed Development is granted planning permission and implemented under the TCPA 1990. The Article deals with the risk of a conflict between the drop in permission and the Order itself. As a hypothetical example, if fire regulations were to change to require a fixed mains water supply for the BESS (as opposed to water tanks), this would likely require an application for planning permission under the TCPA 1990. Any application would likely extend outside of the Order Limits, so it would not be proportionate to deal with this by way of material change to the DCO, rather than seeking planning permission under the TCPA 1990. In addition, this may not be permitted under general permitted development rights, because development by statutory undertakers under permitted rights is usually

		• either delete Article 38 from the next version of the dDCO to be submitted; or • justify precisely why, in the context of the proposed development, Article 38's inclusion in any made DCO for the proposed development would be necessary, identifying any developments benefiting from extant planning permissions granted under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) or potential developments that might benefit from any such planning permissions, which it is considered would fall within proposed Article 38's ambit. Should the applicant be minded to delete Article 38 from the dDCO, the ExA would recommend that its text be deleted but its number be retained and marked as an 'unused number' and left as such until the final version of the dDCO is submitted. That would maintain consistency in article numbering while discussions about the dDCO's content are being undertaken during the examination. Should the applicant continue to be of the view that Article 38 would be necessary then the response to this question should also be incorporated into the Explanatory Memorandum (EM) **[REP2-007]** when that document is next updated and submitted.	only permitted for the purpose of their undertaking as opposed to the purpose of facilitating third party development. The provision is included to deal with this sort of unknown which is outside of the Applicant's control. Once the potential to use a drop-in permission is accepted (e.g. the hypothetical example above), it is necessary to deal with the Hillside (Hillside Parks Ltd v Snowdonia National Park Authority 2022 UKSC **[30]**) risks of implementing a subsequent permission and the impact on the Order which may not have been fully built out. For example, if a separate planning permission was required to address future safety or regulatory requirements, this may need to be implemented before the Proposed Development is fully built out and could be inconsistent with the layout of the Proposed Development under the Order. It would not be in the public interest if the remaining development under the Order could not be implemented or operated in these circumstances, especially where the Proposed Development is not phased. The Applicant has updated the Explanatory Memorandum **[REP2-007]** to incorporate a more detailed justification in this respect, which will be submitted at Deadline 3A (24 March 2026).
DCO.2.05	LCC	**Article 39 (Felling or lopping of trees and removal of hedgerows)** On page 93 of LCC's LIR **[REP1-053]**, there is a suggestion to include an annual maintenance schedule which would detail any tree removals and whether replacements are planned. Given the wording in paragraphs 2.3.3 and 2.3.4 of the FOEMP **[REP2-015]** which describe the submission of a planned maintenance schedule and what it must include, explain what additional wording you consider should be added to address this matter and in what document.	N/A
DCO.2.06	Applicant	**Article 40 (Trees subject to tree preservation orders)** Submit a copy of the tree preservation order referred to in Article 40(1).	There is no tree preservation order referred to in Article 40(1) of the draft DCO **[REP2-005]**. Under the Article 40(1) powers, the undertaker can fell or lop trees within or which overhang the Order Limits (subject to certain limitations) even if those trees are made the subject of a tree preservation order after the date specified in Article 40(1). This date will be amended in the draft DCO **[REP2-005]** to refer to 10 April 2025 (instead of 30 June 2025) which is the date when the statutory designation searches were undertaken, as set out in Section 5.2.1 of the Arboricultural Impact Assessment Report **[APP-155]**. Article 40(1) therefore refers to prospective tree preservation orders which have not yet been made but which may be made in the future. To the Applicant's knowledge, no tree preservation orders have been made since 10 April 2025 in respect of trees within or overhanging the Order Limits. The rationale for Article 40 is to ensure that tree preservation orders are not made in the future which might prevent or delay the Proposed Development from coming forward (if granted). All trees which may be affected by Article 40 (whether subject to a tree preservation or not) have been assessed in Appendix 10-H Arboricultural Impact Assessment of the Environmental Statement (ES) **[APP-155]**. This document contains a list of trees subject to tree preservation orders at Table 6 (page 23) which are also shown

			on the Tree Constraints Plan at Annex A (commencing at page 55). The assessment confirms that, at the date of writing, there are no trees subject to a tree preservation order or within a conservation area to be removed as a result of the Proposed Development.
DCO.2.07	Applicant IPs who fall within the definition of 'consenting authority' under Article 46(7)	**Article 46 (Procedure in relation to certain approvals etc.)** a) **Applicant** – Article 46 seeks to explain the procedure for seeking approvals for matters other than those subject to the requirements included in Schedule 2, with the procedure for discharging requirements being stated in Schedule 15. The ExA considers the drafting of Article 46 is unnecessarily complicated and could be simplified through amending paragraph (1) to make it clear that Article 46 concerns approvals other than requirements, which would be subject to the approval procedure set out in Schedule 15 and then: deleting paragraph (3); amending paragraphs (4) and (6) to remove the references to Schedule 15; and amend paragraph (7) as necessary. b) In their LIRs, NKDC and LCC consider that a time period of ten weeks would be more consistent with the timeframe for the discharge of requirements in Schedule 15. 1. **Applicant** - Explain the rationale for the different timescales. 2. **Other IPs** - Confirm whether or not your organisation is content with the eight-week period for determinations under Article 46 and if not explain why that is the case.	a) The wording used in Article 46 of the draft DCO **[REP2-005]** has precedent in the following made Orders: • The Tillbridge Solar Order 2025; and The Mallard Pass Solar Farm Order 2024. It is also precedent in the following made Orders (save for a different timescale of 10 weeks rather than 8 weeks for determination): • The Gate Burton Energy Park Order 2024; • The West Burton Solar Project Order 2025; and • The Cottam Solar Project Order 2024. Additionally, the same wording, save for a different timescale of 10 weeks rather than 8 weeks for determination, can be found in the draft DCO for the proposed Springwell Solar Farm (Reference: EN010149). Given the precedented position, the Applicant considers that careful thought should be given to any amendments proposed to Article 46. The Applicant is concerned that the re-drafting of paragraph (3) into paragraph (1), and the consequent deletion of paragraph (3), would result in only paragraph (1) and paragraph (2) not being applicable to Schedule 15. As proposed in the ExA's question, this could lead to confusion as to whether paragraph (4) would apply to Schedule 15 or whether its provisions operated to disapply an 8 week determination period and deemed approval. It would be more usual for the drafting of a statutory instrument to have a stand alone paragraph in the Article to confirm whether the Article does (or does not) have effect in relation to Schedule 15 (which is the effect of the existing paragraph (3)). The retention of paragraph (6) is also considered necessary to provide clarity that Schedule 15 does not apply to determinations under Schedule 14 (protective provisions), and that these are therefore governed instead under Article 46. Clarity is important in the drafting of statutory instruments for development consent orders given the implications that breach of a DCO would give rise to a criminal offence. b) Article 46 applies to any consent, agreement or approval required under the provisions of the Order except for those required pursuant to the Requirements set out in Schedule 2 of the draft DCO **[REP2-005]**. The justification for the eight week time frame in this Article is that these discharges will not require a significant amount of consideration or review of detailed information prior to approval. This is in contrast to the discharge of Requirements dealt with under Schedule 15, where more detailed information will be submitted for consideration before the Requirements can be discharged. These discharges also require consultation with other bodies, and potentially requests for further information, hence the longer timescale of ten weeks applies.

Requirements (Schedule 2)			
DCO.2.08	Applicant	**Potential for authorised works being undertaken in advance of NGET's proposed Navenby substation being granted planning permission** a) The ExA notes the applicant's response to ExQ1 DCO.1.29 in **[REP2-029]**. That response gave a partial answer to ExQ1 DCO.1.29, however, it did not address the request that the applicant *"… outline the internal processes it would follow after the making of any DCO for the proposed development and the final decision being made to commence works on the proposed development, including what factors would influence a decision being made as to whether to the implement any consented development and the point(s) at which any funding decisions would be made"*. In asking this question the ExA was expecting the applicant to outline the matters that it would take into account and the steps involved in reaching a final investment decision about whether or not to proceed with the implementation of the proposed development should it be consented by the SoS. The applicant should provide a response to the part of ExQ1 DCO.1.29 not given in **[REP2-029]**. b) In the light of the concerns that have been raised by NKDC and LCC about the potential for preliminary works (tree, hedgerow and other vegetation clearance) to be undertaken on an abortive basis if NGET's proposed Navenby substation was not to be granted planning permission, of the £340 million estimated capital cost for the proposed development **[paragraph 1.3.1 in AS-014]** how much of the budget has been allocated for the undertaking of preliminary works?	To respond to part (a), there are a number of stages (many of which are inter-related) that would need to be reached in order for a decision to proceed with implementation to be reached. (1) The project would have to be ready to build (RTB), ie has all the necessary consents and permissions including a viable connection. (2) The capital structure and returns provided by the development would have to be determined to be acceptable. (3) The project involves significant capital expenditure (Capex). To reduce Capex and speed up project delivery, providers are offering combined EPC/ICP, turnkey, and "Balance of Plant" (BOP) services for solar projects. Thus, an acceptable Capex combined with an EPC/ICP agreement would need to be in place. (4) A final construction programme would have to be agreed since that informs (1), (2) and (3) above. (5) A route to market would have to be in place, since this secures the revenue from the supply of energy. A Route to Market (RTM) for solar projects refers to the strategy used to sell generated electricity, with Contracts for Difference (CfD) being a primary, government-backed mechanism to secure revenue stability. To respond to part (b), prior to intrusive permitted preliminary works (PPW) being undertaken, the archaeological works secured under Requirement 11 of Schedule 2 to the draft DCO **[REP2-005]** would have to be carried out. It is therefore difficult to quantify a precise cost estimate for the PPW at this stage. However, the Applicant does acknowledge the concern raised by NKDC and LCC. To address this concern, the Applicant is proposing that the PPW will be undertaken in accordance with the mitigation contained in a new detailed plan (to be known as the PPW EMP) to be submitted to the Examination at or before Deadline 5. This will be a certified document under Article 41 and compliance with the mitigation contained in it will be secured within the Requirements of the draft DCO. As this will be a detailed plan, no approval mechanism will be necessary under the Requirements. In addition, it is proposed that the PPW EMP will contain a commitment that in the event that the PPW are undertaken on an abortive basis the land on which the PPW has been undertaken will be restored. This will mean that if PPW are undertaken but the Proposed Development is not commenced within five years from the date of the Order in accordance with Requirement 2, the land on which the PPW have been undertaken would be restored. The Applicant considers that this should adequately address NKDC and LCC's concern.
DCO.2.09	Applicant NKDC LCC	**Permitted Preliminary Works** In responding to ExQ1 DCO.1.03 **[REP2-029]**, the applicant has stated that the permitted preliminary works would be governed by the parameters	As per the Applicant's oral submissions during Issue Specific Hearing 4 (ISH4) on Friday 13 March 2026, the Applicant has reviewed the inter-relationship between the drafting in

	Environment Agency Historic England Natural England	assessed in the ES and the provisions of the framework management plans, which are intended to ensure that those works would not result in new or materially different effects from those assessed in the ES impacts. However, there does not appear to be a clear statement in all of the framework management plans to demonstrate that the permitted preliminary works would be governed by their provisions. For example, the Framework Construction Environmental Management Plan (FCEMP) **[REP2-013]** does not appear to expressly refer to the proposed permitted preliminary works. In responding to ExQ1 DCO.1.03, NKDC **[REP2-045]**, LCC **[REP2-043]** and Natural England **[REP2-053]** raised concerns about the approach to permitted preliminary works, which the ExA shares. The ExA considers there are three options: 1. To have no permitted preliminary works and remove their definition in Article 2 of the dDCO 2. To have a shortened list of permitted preliminary works defined in Article 2, with those retained being justified in the EM **[REP2-007]** 3. To extend the use of exceptions in the relevant requirements to exclude preliminary works on a specific basis Comment on the acceptability or otherwise of the identified options, providing the reasons for your position. Your comments should also include, where relevant, activities which you consider should not be included in the list of permitted preliminary works and the permitted preliminary works which should be excluded on a specific basis.	relation to the Permitted Preliminary Works (PPW) and recognises that it is necessary to ensure mitigation required for any PPW is properly secured. The Applicant proposes to re-order the definition of the PPW to distinguish between intrusive and non-intrusive works, such that Requirement 11 can be amended to allow non-intrusive works to be undertaken in advance of the archaeological trial trenching works and approval of the Written Schemes of Investigation. Whilst it is not proposed to remove any of the PPW from the definition (save for the deletion of archaeological investigations which will all be undertaken in accordance with Requirement 11), the Applicant is proposing to prepare a new detailed plan (to be known as the PPW EMP) which is to be submitted to the Examination at or before Deadline 5. This PPW EMP will set out the full mitigation in accordance with which the PPW must be undertaken and will be a certified document under Article 41. Compliance with the mitigation contained in the PPW EMP will be secured within the Requirements of the draft DCO. As this will be a detailed plan, no approval mechanism will be necessary under the Requirements. The relevant amendments to the draft DCO will be incorporated in the version to be submitted at Deadline 3A (24 March 2026).
DCO.2.10	Applicant NKDC LCC	**Management Plan requirements using substantially in accordance phraseology** a) **Applicant** - in relation to the inclusion of *"substantially in accordance"* phraseology in Requirements 7, 8, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19 and 20 the ExA notes the applicant's reply to ExQ1 DCO.1.16 in **[REP2-029]**. Notwithstanding the design flexibility sought by the applicant, the ExA considers that the substantially in accordance phraseology lacks precision and in that regard the ExA finds support for its view following the SoS's recent making of the DCOs for the Stonestreet Green solar farm and the Outer Dowsing and Five Estuaries offshore wind farms and their comparable requirements which do not include substantially in their wording. Accordingly, the ExA considers "substantially" should be deleted from the wording of the relevant requirements and the applicant should incorporate that change in the next version of the dDCO that it submits. **b) NKDC and LCC** – do you have any observations to make about whether "substantially in accordance" should or should not be used or whether suitable alternative wording should be used in Requirements 7, 8, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19 and 20 of the dDCO?	a) The detailed design of the Proposed Development is not settled and for that reason the phrasing "substantially in accordance" has been used in the Requirements contained in Schedule 2 of the draft DCO **[REP2-005]** in relation to the submission of various detailed management plans. In particular, it affords flexibility for the design of mitigation to reflect the final detailed design of the Proposed Development and will ensure that best practice guidance, which may have been updated, can be incorporated into the final detailed management plans. Without this flexibility, the final plan submitted would not be able to deviate from the framework plan, in which case it would not be necessary to seek approval of the plan from the discharging body. The detailed design phase will take place post-consent, and at that time, it may be necessary for the Applicant to carry out further surveys or investigations. This may mean the measures outlined in the various framework management plans are no longer necessary or require revision. Additionally, some measures may need to be made more specific to ensure that they effectively deliver the precise mitigation that is necessary. Flexibility also allows for innovation in the provision of certain mitigation measures that may evolve prior to construction, and which might provide a more effective

			method of delivering the management or mitigation measures to be provided than those suggested at the stage that the framework plan was drafted. The use of the wording "substantially" has recent precedent in the Fenwick Solar Order 2026 (made 18 February 2026), as well as in the Tillbridge Solar Order 2025, the Gate Burton Energy Park Order 2024, The Mallard Pass Solar Farm Order 2024, and Heckington Fen Solar Park Order 2025. The Applicant notes that with regards to the wording "substantially in accordance", in its post-hearing submission **[REP1-085]**, NKDC stated *"the Council is content with this wording. It is approved in case law (see Swire) and there is the protection that LPA has to approve details anyway. Therefore, gives it desirable latitude to accept minor variations which may be better."* This was again confirmed at Issue Specific Hearing 4 (ISH4) on Friday 13 March 2026 by NKDC, as well as by LCC who stated they were content with the proposed use of 'substantially in accordance' in respect to the relevant Requirements. b) As set out above NKDC and LCC's oral submissions during ISH4 on Friday 13 March 2026 confirmed that both LPAs support the inclusion of this phraseology and that this support would be conveyed in writing in the post-hearing submissions for ISH4. **Response to ISH4 Action Point 2 [EV6-002]** The Applicant's position on the inclusion of "substantially in accordance" is set out in detail above. In response to the Examining Authority's question as to whether the wording "to accord with the principles stated in the framework management plan" would be appropriate, the Applicant's position remains as stated during ISH4 – that if this wording were to be used, it would be necessary to define the 'principles' which could result in unnecessary complexities, and that this wording would have the effect of allowing the Applicant more flexibility than would be afforded if the wording "substantially in accordance" is retained.
DCO.2.11	Applicant	**Requirement 6 (Detailed design)** a) The ExA notes the applicant's reply to ExQ1 DCO.1.15 in **[REP2-029]**, nevertheless the ExA considers the wording of paragraph (1) should be amended in the interests of certainty to read as follows or something similar "No part of the authorised development is to be commenced until for that part details of (a) … (h) have been submitted to and approved by the relevant planning authority …" **b)** The ExA is mindful of the applicant's reply to ExQ1 DCO.1.19 in **[REP2-029]** with respect to the relevant planning authority being advised under paragraph (6) as to whether the authorised development would involve the implementation of proposed Work No.2 (centralised BESS) or Work No.3 (distributed BESS). Whilst the ExA agrees there would be a need for the relevant planning authority to be	a) The Applicant has amended the wording of paragraph (1) in line with the ExA's comments. This will be reflected in the updated draft DCO to be submitted at Deadline 3A (24 March 2026). b) The Applicant notes the ExA's comment and has amended sub-paragraph (6) of Requirement 6 of Schedule 2 accordingly. This will be reflected in the updated draft DCO to be submitted at Deadline 3A (24 March 2026).

		notified of the undertaker's decision as to which type of BESS would be installed, it does not consider it necessary for the undertaker to provide an explanation of its choice. That is because any made DCO for the proposed development would authorise the installation of one or other of the proposed BESS types. The ExA therefore considers that wording of sub-paragraph (6) should be simplified so that the relevant planning authority would simply be notified that authorised development would be implemented with either Work No.2 or No.3.	
DCO.2.12	Applicant	**Requirement 8 (Landscape and ecological management plan)** The ExA notes the applicant's reply to ExQ1 DCO.1.15 in **[REP2-029]**, nevertheless the ExA considers the wording of paragraph (1) should be amended in the interests of certainty to read as follows or something similar "No part of the authorised development, including any preliminary vegetation clearance works for that part, is to be commenced until a landscape and ecological management plan for that part has been submitted to and approved by the relevant planning authority …".	The Applicant has amended the wording of paragraph (1) in line with the ExA's comments. This will be reflected in the updated draft DCO to be submitted at Deadline 3A (24 March 2026).
DCO.2.13	Applicant	**Requirement 8 – consultees** National Highways in **[REP2-052]** maintains its request to be included as a consultee on Requirement 8, which appears to relate mainly to ensuring that a suitable monitoring programme is included. Confirm whether you are agreeable to making that change and if not explain why that is the case?	The Applicant is agreeable to including National Highways as a consultee on Requirement 8 (Landscape and ecological management plan) with the caveat that National Highways' consultation on the detailed LEMP is limited to mitigation works within 15m of the A46. The Applicant has amended the wording of the requirement accordingly. This will be reflected in the updated draft DCO to be submitted at Deadline 3A (24 March 2026).
DCO.2.14	Applicant	**Requirement 9 (Fencing and other means of enclosure)** The ExA notes the applicant's reply to ExQ1 DCO.1.15 in **[REP2-029]**, nevertheless the ExA considers the wording of paragraph (1) should be amended in the interests of certainty to read as follows or something similar "No part of the authorised development, including any preliminary works for that part comprising the provision of temporary means of enclosure for that part, is to be commenced until written details …"	The Applicant has amended the wording of paragraph (1) in line with the ExA's comments. This will be reflected in the updated draft DCO to be submitted at Deadline 3A (24 March 2026).
DCO.2.15	National Highways	**Requirement 9 (Fencing and other means of enclosure)** In **[REP2-052]** you have advised further information is required on the proposed fencing and other means of enclosure before you can confirm your position with respect to Requirement 9. On pages 35 and 36 of its post hearing summaries in **[REP2-032]**, the applicant signposts the fencing details and identifies that the FCEMP was updated at Deadline 1 to confirm that any fencing would be located behind existing hedgerows adjoining the A46. a) Does the information provided in **[REP2-032]** address your concerns about fencing and other means of enclosure? **b)** If not, would you want the applicant to submit further details during the examination (and if so what) or would being added as a consultee to Requirement 9 address any remaining concerns about fencing and other means of enclosure you have?	N/A

DCO.2.16	Applicant	**Requirement 10 (Surface and foul water)** The ExA notes the applicant's reply to ExQ1 DCO.1.15 in **[REP2-029]**, nevertheless the ExA considers the wording of paragraph (1) should be amended in the interests of certainty to read as follows or something similar "No part of the authorised development is to be commenced until written details of …"	The Applicant has amended the wording of paragraph (1) in line with the ExA's comments. This will be reflected in the updated draft DCO to be submitted at Deadline 3A (24 March 2026).
DCO.2.17	Applicant	**Requirement 11 (Archaeology)** The ExA notes the applicant's reply to ExQ1 DCO.1.15 in **[REP2-029]**, nevertheless the ExA considers the wording of paragraph (1) should be amended in the interests of certainty to read as follows or something similar "The authorised development must not be commenced until written details of …"	The Applicant has amended the wording of paragraph (1) in line with the ExA's comments. This will be reflected in the updated draft DCO to be submitted at Deadline 3A (24 March 2026). In addition, as the archaeological investigations may be undertaken in 'parts' rather than in respect of the whole site, Requirement 11 will also be updated to prevent commencement for that 'part', in the same way the other Requirements have been drafted. As explained in response to DCO.2.09 above, some further amendments are proposed to Requirement 11 to permit non-intrusive Preliminary Permitted Works (PPW) to be undertaken in advance of trial trenching and approval of Written Schemes of Investigation (WSI). This is necessary because some of the non-intrusive PPW may inform or be required in advance of the trial trenching. Finally, it is proposed to include a tail piece to Requirement 11. This is considered appropriate to allow certain intrusive PPW (i.e. geotechnical surveys) in areas of the site where trial trenching is not required or where WSIs do not need to be put in place before such works are undertaken. This is a valid tailpiece because it would not allow works to be undertaken which have not been environmentally assessed, but rather permit a pragmatic approach to agreeing that certain intrusive preliminary works can take place based on the local authority officer's professional judgement and best practice.
DCO.2.18	Applicant	**Requirement 12 (Construction environmental management plan)** The ExA notes the applicant's reply to ExQ1 DCO.1.15 in **[REP2-029]**, nevertheless the ExA considers the wording of paragraph (1) should be amended in the interests of certainty to read as follows or something similar "No part of the authorised development is to be commenced until a construction environmental management plan for that part has been submitted to and approved by the relevant planning authority …"	The Applicant has amended the wording of paragraph (1) in line with the ExA's comments. This will be reflected in the updated draft DCO to be submitted at Deadline 3A (24 March 2026).
DCO.2.19	Applicant	**Requirement 13 (Operational environmental management plan) and section 6 of the FOEMP [REP2-015]** Paragraph 6.1.4 of the FOEMP states *"The Applicant agrees to keep the relevant planning authorities updated following the Period of Extended Outage until the re-commencement of operation. The above does not apply if it was a force majeure event[1], the outage occurred as a result of National Grid undertaking any activities to the transmission network, the relevant planning authority agree otherwise (acting reasonably), including where the relevant planning authority agree otherwise following decommissioning commencing pursuant to an approved decommissioning environmental management plan"* (Highlighting added by the ExA). Explain what the highlighted text in the preceding quotation would mean in practice.	The first part of the highlighted text means that the Applicant would not need to keep the relevant planning authorities updated following a Period of Extended Outage if the relevant planning authority agrees. For example, the planning authority may agree updates are not required if the Applicant has already stated in writing that it intends to commence decommissioning in the near future. The second part means that the Applicant would not need to keep the relevant planning authorities updated if the relevant planning authority agrees to this following decommissioning commencing. This is to avoid needless updates from the Applicant on progress towards re-commencement if the Applicant is already commencing activities to decommission the works and has no intent to re-commence operation.

DCO.2.20	Applicant	**Requirement 14 (Construction traffic management plan)** The ExA notes the applicant's reply to ExQ1 DCO.1.15 in **[REP2-029]**, nevertheless the ExA considers the wording of paragraph (1) should be amended in the interests of certainty to read as follows or something similar "No part of the authorised development is to be commenced until a construction traffic management plan for that part has been submitted to and approved by the relevant planning authority …"	The Applicant has amended the wording of paragraph (1) in line with the ExA's comments. This will be reflected in the updated draft DCO to be submitted at Deadline 3A (24 March 2026).
DCO.2.21	Applicant LCC National Highways	**Requirement 14 (Construction traffic management plan)** National Highways has confirmed in **[REP2-052]** that it is seeking an approval role for the Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) rather than a consultee role. a) Suggest wording for Requirement 14 where National Highways would be the discharging authority for the A46 in consultation with LCC (insofar as the A46 has interfaces with the local highway network) and where LCC would be the discharging authority for the local highway network in consultation with National Highways where there is an interface with the A46. b) **Applicant** - if National Highways is added to Requirement 14 as a discharging authority, amendments should be made to Schedule 15 to accommodate National Highways role as a discharging authority.	(a) It would be highly unusual for National Highways to be named in the DCO (if granted) as a discharging body in place of the relevant local authority. Whilst the draft DCO includes two separate discharging bodies split between the county's and district's functions, this is in respect of separate Requirements, and further, it is likely that the forthcoming local government re-organisation will result in one discharging body for these DCO requirements in due course. Further, Local authorities are well versed in discharging DCO Requirements (as well as conditions of planning permissions) and have a number of processes and procedures in place to do so, including engaging statutory consultees prior to making a discharge decision. Lincolnshire County Council will also be interested to ensure that construction of the Proposed Development does not have adverse impacts on the strategic network, because such impacts are likely to have knock-on effects to their own local highway network. In these circumstances, it is highly unlikely that a local authority would fail to discharge a Requirement (as suggested by National Highways) such that deemed approval would apply. In contrast, National Highways would not normally discharge matters under a DCO, and the Applicant is not aware of any made DCOs for solar schemes which name National Highways as a discharging authority. To add in a further discharging authority to a single plan would add unnecessary complexity and the potential for delay, especially in circumstances where one discharging authority is content to approve the Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) but the other is not. In addition, National Highways would have no enforcement powers in the event of any breach of the Requirement. Accordingly, the Applicant does not propose to include any amendments to Requirement 14 of the draft DCO in relation to National Highways request. (b) It is not proposed to add National Highways as an approving body to Requirement 14 and accordingly, no consequential amendments need to be made to Schedule 15.
DCO.2.22	Applicant	**Requirement 15 (Soil management plan)** The ExA notes the applicant's reply to ExQ1 DCO.1.15 in **[REP2-029]**, nevertheless the ExA considers the wording of paragraph (1) should be amended in the interests of certainty to read as follows or something similar "No part of the authorised development is to be commenced until a soil management plan for that part has been submitted to and approved by the relevant planning authority …"	The Applicant has amended the wording of paragraph (1) in line with the ExA's comments. This will be reflected in the updated draft DCO to be submitted at Deadline 3A (24 March 2026).

DCO.2.23	Applicant	**Requirement 16 (Operational noise)** The ExA notes the applicant's reply to ExQ1 DCO.1.15 in **[REP2-029]**, nevertheless the ExA considers the wording of paragraph (1) should be amended in the interests of certainty to read as follows or something similar "No part of the authorised development is to be brought into operational use until an operational noise assessment for that part of the authorised development has been submitted to and approved by the relevant planning authority. The operational noise assessment or assessments to be submitted for the approval of the relevant planning authority must demonstrate how the design of the authorised development has incorporated mitigation to ensure that the operational noise rating levels set out in Table 11-21 of Chapter 11 of the environmental statement have been compiled with. …"	The Applicant has amended the wording of paragraph (1) in line with the ExA's comments. This will be reflected in the updated draft DCO to be submitted at Deadline 3A (24 March 2026).
DCO.2.24	Applicant LCC NKDC	**Requirement 17 (Permissive paths)** The ExA notes the applicant's response to ExQ1 DCO.1.22, nevertheless it considers any made DCO for the proposed development should 'on its face' make it clear that the proposed permissive paths would be available for 364 days a year unless maintenance works, emergencies or unforeseen circumstances necessitate the temporary closure of a permissive route, with the reason for any temporary closures to be notified in writing to the relevant planning authority. The ExA considers that reliance on the single reference to the availability of the permissive paths in paragraph 6.1.2 of the Framework Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (FLEMP) **[REP2-021]** would be too tenuous because:1) the final version of the Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) submitted for approval pursuant to Requirement 8 would only have to be *"substantially in accordance"* with the FLEMP and the FLEMP therefore remains subject to change; and 2) within Requirement 17 there is no cross reference to the provisions of Requirement 8 and the enforcing local planning authority, potentially decades into the future, would be expected to be familiar with any controls for permissive paths included in the finally approved version of the LEMP. Accordingly, the ExA considers the applicant should amend the wording for requirement 17 to make it clear that the proposed permissive paths would be available for use for 364 days a year unless any temporary closures would be required to undertake maintenance works or be necessitated by emergencies or other unforeseen circumstances. Such an approach would be consistent with how the delivery of the proposed biodiversity net gain (BNG) commitments would be secured, with those commitments being written on the face of any made having regard to the proposed drafting for Requirement 8.	The Applicant is concerned to ensure that securing the availability of the permissive paths does not result in the use of those paths becoming 'as of right', such that they would be treated as public rights of way at the end of the operational lifetime of the Proposed Development. In order to avoid this, the Applicant must have the authority to withdraw permission for the use of the paths at any given time during the operational period. For this reason, the Applicant does not consider it appropriate to amend Requirement 17 of Schedule 2 to the draft DCO **[REP2-005]** to prescribe that the paths must be made available for 364 days per year, subject to maintenance, emergencies or other unforeseen circumstances. The Applicant acknowledges that the ExA wish to ensure that the permissive paths are made available and the Applicant is of the view that this is best achieved through a combination of Requirement 17 and the Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP). The Framework LEMP **[REP2-021]** is a certified document under Article 41 and Schedule 12 of the draft DCO **[REP2-005]**. It contains measures for post-construction monitoring which will apply throughout the operation of the Proposed Development, in particular in years 1, 3, 5, 10, 15, 20, 30, 40, 50 and 60. As such, it will be a document which is familiar to the local planning authority throughout the entire operational period, notwithstanding the passage of time. The Applicant proposes to update the wording in paragraph 6.1.2 of the Framework LEMP as follows: *"6.1.2 The permissive paths will be made available to the public ~~for up to 364 days a year~~ during operation of the Proposed Development, ~~with~~ provided that the Applicant ~~reserving the right to~~ may withdraw permission to use the paths and periodically exclude the public by closing the path for up to seven days in any calendar year. In addition, the paths may be closed ~~either to ensure that the way does not become a highway or~~ to carry out repair and maintenance works, although in practice such closures are likely to be infrequent. ~~They~~ The paths will be managed by the Applicant and signage may be displayed to confirm that their use by the public is with ~~will include signs to make clear that its use is for the public by~~ permission of the ~~Land~~owner. At the end of the Proposed Development's operation (with further detail to be included in the DEMP), when the land will be in private*

			ownership, the Landowner will be free to permanently withdraw permission and bring the permitted public use to an end~~will cease~~." Whilst Requirement 8 secures the LEMP 'substantially in accordance' with the certified Framework, NKDC have confirmed that they are content with this approach and that their ability to approve the LEMP gives sufficient control to ensure its measures are delivered. This would include the availability of the permissive paths. The wording of Requirement 17 will be amended to reference and signpost section 6 of the LEMP and these amendments will be reflected in the updated draft DCO to be submitted at Deadline 3A (24 March 2026). The Applicant considers that these amendments are sufficient to address the ExA's concerns without risk that the permissive paths become public rights of way by virtue of long use 'as of right'.
DCO.2.25	Applicant	**Requirement 18 (Public rights of way)** The ExA notes the applicant's reply to ExQ1 DCO.1.15 in **[REP2-029]**, nevertheless the ExA considers the wording of paragraph (1) should be amended in the interests of certainty to read as follows or something similar "No part of the authorised development is to be commenced until a public rights of way management plan for that part has been submitted to and approved by the relevant planning authority …"	The Applicant has amended the wording of paragraph (1) in line with the ExA's comments. This will be reflected in the updated draft DCO to be submitted at Deadline 3A (24 March 2026).
DCO.2.26	Applicant	**Requirement 19 (Employment, skills and supply chain)** The ExA notes the applicant's reply to ExQ1 DCO.1.15 in **[REP2-029]**, nevertheless the ExA considers the wording of paragraph (1) should be amended in the interests of certainty to read as follows or something similar "No part of the authorised development is to be commenced until an employment, skills and supply chain plan in relation to that part has been submitted to and approved by the relevant planning authority …"	The Applicant has amended the wording of paragraph (1) in line with the ExA's comments. This will be reflected in the updated draft DCO to be submitted at Deadline 3A (24 March 2026).
DCO.2.27	Applicant NKDC LCC	**Requirement 20 (Decommissioning) and the duration of the proposed development** Having regard to the provisions of paragraph 2.10.66 of NPS EN-3 (time limited consents) and in the interests of precision should a requirement be added to the dDCO that expressly states that the proposed development must cease not later than 60 years following the date of final commissioning or should Requirement 20(1) be amended to that effect? The ExA considers that paragraph 2.10.66 of NPS EN-3 in referring to time limited consents/temporary permissions is promoting the type of conditions imposed on developments involving mineral extraction or waste landfilling. The applicant, NKDC and LCC, on a without prejudice basis, should each submit suggested wording either for a standalone temporary permission type requirement or provide amended wording for Requirement 20(1) that would fulfil the same role as a standalone requirement and suggest any consequent amendments to the remainder of Requirement 20.	With reference to paragraph 2.10.66 of NPS EN-3 (time limited consents), the Applicant considers that Requirement 20 of the draft DCO **[REP2-005]** already fulfils the purpose referred to by the ExA. In particular, Requirement 20 has the effect that *"..there is a finite period for which it **[the Proposed Development]** 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." (emphasis added by the Applicant)* Extending the consent is not a matter for consideration in relation to this DCO application and would require a further consenting process. Requirement 20 has the effect that decommissioning of the Proposed Development would need to be commenced no later than 60 years following the date of final commissioning. Therefore, it is not necessary to include an additional 'temporary' Requirement to give effect to paragraph 2.10.66 of NPS EN-3.

			There is precedent for drafting the Requirement in the form proposed by the Applicant for other solar NSIPs, see in particular the Mallard Pass Solar Farm Order 2024 and the Tillbridge Solar Order 2025. None of these projects contain a temporary condition in the form suggested by the ExA. Indeed, since a DCO is a statutory instrument, the Applicant does not consider it appropriate to draft a Requirement in the form suggested by the ExA. This would have the effect that the statutory instrument would expire after the relevant period (unless varied), which would be equivalent to a 'sunset' provision . As such, it would need to be an article within the Order itself if it were to be included at all. The Applicant is not aware of sunset provisions or clauses being included in any other DCOs to date. Notwithstanding the above, the Applicant notes that if such a clause or Requirement is to be included, it should be clear that it is the operation of the Proposed Development which is to cease not later than 60 years following the date of final commissioning, rather than the Proposed Development, which wider expression includes, for example, landscaping mitigation works and decommissioning. The environmental impact assessment of the Proposed Development has been conducted on the basis of an assumed period of 60 years following the date of final commissioning. To require the Proposed Development to cease within 60 years would result in a shorter period of operation since it would have to be decommissioned earlier in order to decommission within the 60-year period. That is not a form of development that has been the subject of environmental impact assessment.
DCO.2.28	Applicant	**Requirement 20 and funding for decommissioning** The ExA notes the applicant's answer to ExQ1 GC.1.15 in **[REP2-029]**, most particularly the view that the provisions of proposed Requirement 20 would be sufficient to secure the undertaking of decommissioning works following the cessation of the operation of the proposed development. What would the costs of decommissioning be and explain what internal arrangements would be put in place by the applicant and/or undertaker to ensure that the funding required to undertake decommissioning works would be available when the proposed development ceased to be operational?	The Applicant considers that the provision of security for decommissioning costs is a matter that is more appropriately dealt with as part of the regulation of the electricity sector overall, as opposed to being dealt with ad-hoc as part of the consenting process for individual projects. Under the Electricity Act 1989, the Secretary of State for the Department of Energy, Security and Net Zero (**DESNZ**) and the Gas and Electricity Markets Authority (**Ofgem**) are given the duty of protecting the interests of current and future consumers of electricity in Great Britain. There are a number of tools that DESNZ and Ofgem can use to carry out this duty. including in Ofgem's case, granting licences to the operators of generating stations. In order to operate a generating station, a company must hold a generation licence. Companies must apply to Ofgem for a generation licence. Ofgem will review the application, consider the evidence provided and determine whether or not to grant the licence. As part of this, the suitability of licence applicants is assessed by Ofgem. Amongst other things, Ofgem assesses all prospective licence holders to determine whether all individuals with significant managerial responsibility or influence are fit and proper for their roles. Further, generation licences include conditions. If a licence is granted, then the generation licence holder must meet the standard conditions, and any special conditions applied by Ofgem, in relation to the licensed activity. Ofgem issues guidance about meeting licence conditions and also about how it monitors companies to check if they are complying with the licence conditions.

			The question of decommissioning of energy assets has been addressed on a number of occasions, including in respect of: 1. Offshore wind electricity generation – sections 105 to 114 of the Energy Act 2004; 2. Nuclear electricity generation – the Energy Act 2008; and 3. Offshore oil & gas – the Petroleum Act 1988. The common thread in each of these cases is that, when the Government makes a policy decision that financial security should be provided in relation to the decommissioning of a certain form of electricity generation or energy production, the Government has: 4. Carried out consultation with the relevant part of the industry before introducing the requirements; and 5. The power to create the obligations to provide security for decommissioning costs have been created by way of primary legislation. As explained in Issue Specific Hearing 4 (ISH4) on Friday 13 March 2026, the Government's current policy is not to secure funding for decommissioning works in respect of solar projects. This was set out by DESNZ in a written response to a written parliamentary question tabled on 2 June 2025 raised by Lord Kirkhope of Harrogate as follows: *"To ask His Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the need to require that solar farm and battery energy storage system developments are backed by sufficient performance or decommissioning bonds to guarantee the removal of infrastructure and the full reversion of land to its former use in the event of insolvency or project failure."* Lord Wilson of Sedgefield responded as follows on 16 June 2025: *"We do not currently have plans to require solar and battery projects to be covered by decommissioning bonds.* *Solar farms are normally temporary structures and planning conditions can be used to ensure that the installations are removed when no longer in use and the land is restored to its previous use. Solar panels can be decommissioned relatively easily and cheaply. It is a legal requirement for any company that imports, manufactures or rebrands solar products to join a 'Producer Compliance Scheme', which then ensures their legal obligations are met, most significantly for the collection and recycling of old PV panels."* As can be seen from the response, it is not restricted to solar schemes granted planning permission under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and applies equally to DCO schemes. Further, the Applicant notes that National Policy Statement (EN-3) (dated December 2025) reiterates at section 2.10.60 the point that "Solar panels can be decommissioned relatively easily and cheaply".

			The Government currently supports the development of large-scale solar projects by way of the Contracts for Difference scheme. Under this scheme, developers bid for the lowest price of electricity sales that they require for their project to be viable. In this process, solar projects compete with a number of non-offshore wind technologies for contracts. The costs of providing the Contracts for Difference scheme are recovered from the electricity suppliers in the market. As a result, the costs of the scheme are ultimately paid for by the electricity consumer. If solar projects, either on an individual or collective basis, were obliged to provide security for decommissioning costs, the costs of providing that security would have to be included in their Contracts for Difference bids leading to higher bids. As a result, the costs of the Contracts for Difference for these projects would increase. There has been mention of the Helios Renewable Energy Project providing precedent for the inclusion of a Requirement for the Applicant to notify the LPA that security for decommissioning (in the form required by landowners) has been put in place by year 15 of operation. However, this Requirement was accepted by the applicant for that scheme; it was not a contentious issue on which the ExA made a recommendation, or the Secretary of State made a determination. Further, it was agreed by the applicant for the Helios scheme at their first Compulsory Acquisition Hearing which was held on 5 December 2024, and therefore in advance of the Government's response to the above written question. Accordingly, the approach taken in Helios cannot be relied on as providing any precedent to include a Requirement to secure funds for decommissioning. In addition, as secured under Requirement 20 of Schedule 2 to the draft DCO **[REP2-0005]**, decommissioning works must commence no later than 60 years following the date of final commissioning. The Proposed Development will be decommissioned in line with the controls set out within the Framework Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan (DEMP). The provision of a detailed DEMP, which is to be substantially in accordance with the framework, is secured by virtue of the same requirement. The requirements of a DCO are enforceable by the local planning authority and breach of a DCO requirement is criminal offence. Not only can the breach of a DCO requirement lead to prosecution, but there is an array of legislation which provides for injunctive relief. Anyone who does not comply with an injunction would face a prison sentence, the length of which would be at the discretion of the court. The Proposed Development will comprise a valuable asset which would exceed the costs of decommissioning to an extent that it would be in an undertaker's financial and commercial interests to decommission the Proposed Development in order to sell or recycle the solar PV panels and other components. The value of the assets also means that the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 acts as a further deterrent to ensure an undertaker complies with decommissioning requirements under a DCO. A requirement for an undertaker to provide security from, or even prior to, commencement, is disproportionate and would significantly affect project viability for a

			number of reasons. This includes, but is not limited to, the financial and operational implications of capital being locked for a 60-year period and a higher cost of capital, both of which result in an increased risk for lenders and/or funders. Furthermore, the cost of this could lead to lower project returns and impact on viability. A number of interested parties have sought to justify the need for a decommissioning security on the basis that this would secure decommissioning in the event the undertaker went into liquidation or became insolvent. For the reasons given above, the assets would be sold to fund the decommissioning of the Proposed Development if the undertaker went into liquidation or receivership. However, there are several reasons why insolvency is highly unlikely. In particular, solar SPV's are asset-backed and those assets remain recoverable even in insolvency. Creditors are incentivised to realise value and are therefore highly unlikely to abandon a site. As noted above, the asset value of the components of a project such as the Proposed Development would exceed the costs of decommissioning. Finally, before taking FID, the Proposed Development will have secured a contracted revenue with a bankable off-taker or a government-backed CFD. Notwithstanding the above, in response to the ExA's question, the amount included for decommissioning at this stage is 3 pence per watt. The undertaker would accrue this sum over the lifetime of the Proposed Development to ensure that the funding required to undertake decommissioning works would be available when the Proposed Development ceased to be operational.
DCO.2.29	Applicant Network Rail	**Network Rail protective provisions infrastructure for inclusion in Schedule 14** a) **Both** – clarify, including by reference to a plan or plans, precisely what Network Rail operational infrastructure and/or non-operational land assets it is considered would be affected by the proposed development. b) **Network Rail** – explain why you consider that any Network Rail operational infrastructure and/or land assets would need to be made the subject of protective provisions.	Although Network Rail have provided their standard form protective provisions, the Applicant does not agree that bespoke protective provisions are required because the Proposed Development does not pose any risk to Network Rail's ability to safely operate and maintain active railway land. Network Rail has an interest in respect of restrictive covenants and easements in Plot 13/3 and in respect of rights and access in Plot 13/6 derived from two separate conveyances dated November 1977. These plots are required for the installation of the Cable Corridor (Work No. 5A) from the main solar PV site. The Applicant has thoroughly reviewed the relevant conveyances and used both the Land Registry Map Search and Google Maps to inspect the relevant areas. It is apparent that there is no operational railway infrastructure within these plots or in the surrounding area. The Land Registry plan indicates a "disused railway" and Google Maps shows this area to be a field with no noticeable infrastructure or access points to the supposed track stretches. In short, there is no existing infrastructure that warrants the implementation of bespoke protective provisions. The Applicant has put this to Network Rail via its legal representatives, requesting the provision of further information with regards to the direct and indirect impacts which Network Rail believe the Proposed Development will have on its assets and rights. In particular, it was requested that, if there are any rights held by NRIL in respect of the Proposed Development in addition to those known to the Applicant, details were to be

			provided. It was noted that the Applicant recently carried out a refresh of HM Land Registry data (prior to Deadline 2) which did not identify any new Network Rail interests. In addition to the above, the Applicant provided a draft Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) directly to Network Rail in December 2025. The response received from Network Rail's Buried Services Team stated that the Proposed Development is some distance from any of Network Rail's infrastructure. As a result of discussions with Network Rail on the SoCG, the Applicant understands that Network Rail has outstanding concerns in respect of two matters: • That the northern portion of the Proposed Development may affect glint and glare on signals for the Lincoln to Nottingham railway line which is located outside of the Order Limits; and • That there may be impacts on railway crossings or railway bridges arising from deliveries of abnormal indivisible loads. Discussions between the Applicant and Network Rail are ongoing in this respect, however, with respect to glint and glare, the Applicant would comment that ES Appendix 14-D Glint and Glare Assessment Report Part 1 **[REP1-027]** presents the glint and glare assessment undertaken for the Proposed Development. This report has considered impacts on rail lines at 20 modelled rail receptors. As noted at paragraph 4.24 of Appendix 14-D Glint and Glare Assessment Report Part 1 **[REP1-027]**, the "*Rail driver's eye level was assumed to be 2.75m above the rail for signal signing purposes and therefore this is the height used for assessment purposes*" – as such, the modelled/assessed height of rail receptors inherently considers potential impacts upon the signal sighting by rail drivers. Seven rail receptors were screened out as they are located within the no reflection zones. Geometric analysis was conducted at the remaining 13 locations. The assessment shows solar reflections are theoretically possible at all 13 rail receptors assessed within the 1km study area – see receptor locations illustrated in Figure 3 of Appendix A of Appendix 14-D Glint and Glare Assessment Report Part 1 **[REP1-027]**. The initial bald-earth scenario (assuming none of the existing vegetation exists) identified potential impacts as High at five receptors and Low at eight receptors. Upon reviewing the actual visibility of the receptors, taking into account gradient, vegetation and structures, glint and glare impacts are reduced to None for all rail receptors. Therefore, overall impacts on rail receptors are considered to be None in the report. It should be noted that discussions on this point are ongoing and will be reflected in the Statement of Common Ground between the Applicant and Network Rail. In relation to deliveries of abnormal indivisible loads, the Framework Construction Traffic Management Plan **[REP2-023]** provides a proposed route for the transformer. Figure 13-5 Abnormal Indivisible Load Routing **[AS-073]** shows the anticipated abnormal indivisible load (AIL) routing to the Site of the Proposed Development. The transformer is explicitly mentioned because it is the component (for the Onsite Substation) that requires AILs for the solar farm construction. No other components require AILs, save for the buried export

			cable circuit which may also require AIL for the cable drums. The route for the cable drums is also shown on this drawing. Chapter 3 The Proposed Development of the ES **[REP1-015]** also explains "It is also anticipated that there would be two to three AIL deliveries in total to deliver the transformers for the Onsite Substation, and possibly also the 400kV cable drum". Therefore, it is considered that there will be no impact on the railway network as a result of AILs. Discussions are ongoing and will be reflected in the Statement of Common Ground between the Applicant and Network Rail.
DCO.2.30	Applicant LCC NKDC Historic England Environment Agency National Highways Natural England	**Schedule 15 – deemed approval provisions** a) **Applicant**: Paragraphs 2(3) and 2(4) appear to allow for a situation where an application to discharge a requirement could give rise to materially new or materially different environmental effects compared to those in the ES. Explain how such a situation could arise, given that the ES adopts a 'Rochdale Envelope' approach which, as paragraph 3.3.2 of ES Chapter 3 **[REP1-015]** advises, seeks to ensure the likely significant effects of the proposed development would not exceed the reasonable worst-case scenario presented in the ES. b) **All:** Paragraph 2(2) provides that a deemed approval would be granted to an application for the discharge of a requirement if the relevant planning authority did not give notice of its decision prior to the expiry of the time periods specified in paragraph 2(1). The exception to this is where the subject matter of the discharge application would be likely to give rise to any materially new or materially different environmental effects. In such cases, where the relevant planning authority did not determine the application within the specified period, then the application would be deemed to have been refused at the expiry of the time periods specified in paragraph 2(1). Comment on whether a deemed refusal would or would not be a more appropriate approach for all discharge applications if the relevant planning authority did not give notice of its decision prior to the expiry of the time periods specified in paragraph 2(1).	a) As the Applicant explained in ISH4, inclusion of paragraphs 2(3) and 2(4) is necessary to ensure the provision is lawful pursuant to the ruling in R v. North Yorks CC ex parte Brown **[2000]** 1 AC 397. In this case, the House of Lords held that a legislative provision which deemed the grant of consent for EIA development without first complying with EIA procedural requirements was unlawful. b) Also, as the Applicant stated during ISH4, it would not be appropriate to include a deemed refusal for all discharge applications under Schedule 15 if the relevant planning authority did not give notice of its decision prior to the expiry of the stated time periods. This would lead to unnecessary delay of a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project which would not be in the public interest. At ISH4, both LCC and NKDC confirmed that they agreed a deemed refusal would not be appropriate in these circumstances and that this was not something which either party was seeking as an amendment to the draft DCO.
DCO.2.31	Applicant LCC NKDC	**Schedule 15 - fees** Comment on whether there should be a provision to ensure that fees would be increased in line with the consumer price index or other similar index over the lifetime of the proposed development.	The Applicant does not consider it is necessary to include an inflationary index to increase the fees contained in Schedule 15. Pursuant to Requirement 2 of the draft DCO **[REP2-005]**, the Proposed Development must be commenced within 5 years from the date that the Order comes into force. The majority of Requirements will be discharged prior to or during the construction period, which is expected to take place between 2031 and 2033. In fact, the only Requirement which will be discharged at a later date is Requirement 20 in respect of approval of the Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan. Further, the fees due will not be affected by inflation in the same way in which, for example, costs of construction would be. In summary, given that the time period within which the majority of the Requirements will be discharged is relatively short, inclusion of an inflationary index is considered unnecessary.

DCO.2.32	Environment Agency LCC	**Schedule 15 – time periods** Paragraph 2(5) of schedule 15 was amended at Deadline 1 in **[REP1-007]** to include a reference to giving consultees no less than 15 working days to respond to the relevant planning authority. This amendment was made to address the Environment Agency's EA03 issue in **[RR-089]** and **[REP1-071]**. However, LCC in **[REP2-043]** considers that addition to be unnecessary on the basis that timescales to respond are already referenced within the schedule at paragraphs 2(1) and 3(3) and the addition of a further timescale could create confusion, particularly when if timescales were running concurrently. a) **Environment Agency:** Explain why a specific consultation period is required in addition to the timescale stated in paragraph 2(1), which gives the relevant planning authority 10 weeks to make a decision on the discharge of a requirement. b) **LCC:** Explain in what way there could be confusion with the various timescales as they appear to relate to different matters.	N/A

2.4 Ecology and Nature Conservation Questions

Table 2-4: Applicant's Response to the Examining Authority's Ecology and Nature Conservation Questions

Question Number	Question to:	Question	Applicant Response
Ecology and Nature Conservation (ENC) Questions			
ENC.2.01	Applicant NKDC LCC	**BNG - methodology** In responding to ExQ1, the applicant, NKDC and LCC refer to a meeting having been held to discuss the BNG methodology, with indications those discussions are ongoing. Provide a summary update on your respective positions, including any remaining areas of disagreement.	The Applicant provided NKDC and LCC with an updated Biodiversity Net Gain Report for review on 9th March 2026. In summary, the Applicant has addressed the following queries from NKDC and LCC: • Further clarification of the habitat mapping classification and condition rating used; • approach to application of Strategic Significance; • confirmation of no pre-application degradation of habitats; • approach used for determining ancient and veteran trees; • consideration of addressing trading rule compliance; • parameters used for assessing flexibility in panel type; and • clarification on measures applied for hedgerow enhancements. The Applicant is awaiting a response from NKDC and LCC on the updates made to the BNG Report, as submitted to the Examination at Deadline 3. A summary of party positions and agreements is set out within the SoCG between the Applicant and LCC/NKDC, and will be submitted to the Examination at Deadline 3A. The Applicant is confident that agreement will be reached before the end of Examination on the BNG methodology and findings.
ENC.2.02	Applicant	**BNG** In the Written Summaries of Oral Submissions for ISH1 **[REP1-046]**, the applicant states that BNG has been calculated *"holistically"* across the entire order limits. How has the amount of habitat that is a net gain therefore been determined, given the need to provide mitigation for the proposed development's effects identified in ES Chapter 8: Ecology and Nature Conservation **[REP1-019]**?	The Applicant used the term *'holistically'* simply to imply that no specific area has been included within the Order Limits with the sole purpose of delivering Biodiversity Net Gain. When undertaking the BNG assessment, the first stage is to follow the mitigation hierarchy, where avoidance of impacts is preferable. If avoidance of impacts isn't possible then mitigation and/or compensation may be required. For example, if a proposal results in the loss of a specific habitat, then that specific habitat will be replaced. In effect this returns the baseline back to zero. Once avoidance of impacts has been assessed the BNG assessment considers how to achieve gains. This can be achieved by creating additional habitat on top of the habitat required for mitigation and/or compensation. This additional habitat is what generates the unit gains. The Biodiversity Net Gain Report **[APP-194]** submitted by the Applicant has followed the above methodology. As set out in Tables 8-16 and 8-17 of Chapter 8: Ecology and Nature Conservation of the ES **[REP1-019]**, the Applicant has largely avoided impacts on ecology and therefore

			the requirement for habitat creation as mitigation is limited. This has been achieved via sensitive and considerate design and the application of the mitigation hierarchy, i.e., seeking to avoid important ecological features and biodiversity. This is reflected in Section 8.13 of Chapter 8: Ecology and Nature Conservation of the ES **[REP1-019]**, which identifies no additional mitigation measures are required beyond the embedded avoidance and mitigation. Where undeveloped areas are required for ground-nesting birds, noting that these species are currently occurring in an extensively managed arable context, opportunities to maximise the biodiversity value of habitats such as permanent grasslands, beyond the requirement for ground-nesting birds, have been sought. Therefore, the Biodiversity Net Gain reported in the Biodiversity Net Gain Report **[APP-194]** has identified the existing habitats and their condition, noting that the habitats within the Order limits are dominated by ecologically low value intensively managed arable farmland. The existing habitats were used to calculate the baseline units pre-development. Next, the requirement for any specific habitat mitigation was identified, i.e., to offset for any specific habitat losses, and then following this the wide range of proposed habitat creations and enhancements, i.e., grasslands within the solar arrays, wide grass margins around existing field boundaries and planting required for visual screening, as set out in the Framework LEMP **[REP2-021]**, was applied to calculate the post-development units achievable by the Proposed Development and shown on Figure 7.15-1: Landscape Mitigation Plan **[REP2-021].** There is no counting of mitigation required for specific ecological features towards the unit uplifts presented in the Biodiversity Net Gain Report **[APP-194].** As mentioned above, the Applicant provided NKDC and LCC with an updated Biodiversity Net Gain Report for review on 9th March 2026 and has submitted the updated report to the Examination at Deadline 3.
ENC.2.03	Applicant	**Bird mitigation** Table 8-13 in ES Chapter 8 **[REP1-019]** identifies that areas have been incorporated into the design of the proposed development to offset the impact of loss of arable farmland for breeding skylark, lapwing and other ground nesting birds. Those areas are identified as a minimum of 64ha of permanent grassland and 181ha of managed arable in **[REP1-019]** and in other application documents such as the FLEMP **[REP2-021]** and the applicant's response to ExQ1 **[REP2-029]**. Explain, with any tabulation that may assist, how the figures of 64ha of permanent grassland and 181ha of managed arable for ground nesting birds mitigation have been derived, including identifying the amount of existing arable farmland used by ground nesting birds that would be impacted by the proposed development. Identify any guidance that has been used to quantify the amount of mitigation identified as being necessary and how the application of any such guidance has been used to calculate the proposed mitigation land areas.	The Applicant has avoided attempting to try to directly calculate an area required for ground-nesting bird mitigation based on a particular formula, because there is an extensive range of variables that make this approach unreliable and there is no standard guidance to provide a robust and evidence-based result. Rather, the Applicant has taken the starting point that although Skylark is a Species of Principal Importance and of priority conservation importance, the main driver for the species decline is the poor quality of arable habitats for species, particularly the prevalence of autumn sown cereals which make the habitat (through crop height) unsuitable for Skylark during a significant part of their nesting season. So, whilst the breeding bird surveys determined that 227 Skylark territories were found to be present it is unlikely that these territorial males are successfully making enough breeding attempts and fledging enough young to maintain the population, i.e., for all the territorial males present there aren't enough young being produced or surviving to be able to replace these birds.

			As such, the Applicant acknowledges that they are not replacing like-for-like in terms of the quantum of current habitat present, i.e., poor quality arable farmland. Instead, the Applicant has focussed on providing the following (in line with mitigation discussed with the councils, and as secured by the Framework LEMP **[REP2-021]**, which will be developed into a detailed plan substantially in accordance with the framework plan under Requirement 8 of the Draft DCO **[REP2-005]**): • Creation annually of Skylark plots within the 181ha of retained arable fields. Skylark plots have been shown to increase territory densities threefold; • Creation of a stable habitat resource. Skylark are thought to need to successfully fledge two broods to maintain population levels. In habitats which are available throughout the nesting season up to four broods are possible; and • Increased foraging opportunities across the Order Limits. The extensive creation of grassland and removal of pesticide use will increase invertebrate prey abundance. Similarly for Lapwing, whilst 22 territorial birds were recorded there was limited evidence of successful raising of young to fledging and most birds had departed by mid-May. The permanent grassland areas provide enough space for nesting and defence against predators, noting they may nest in close proximity to others in optimal habitat, preferring large, open fields (>5 ha) to maintain a wide view. The permanent grassland and managed arable land is intended to support and maintain the current population. In summary, the figures of 64ha of permanent grassland and 181ha of managed arable for ground nesting bird mitigation have not been calculated from any particular guidance but have been sized to maximise the nesting opportunities and foraging habitats within the Order Limits that aims to achieve suitable mitigation, including a higher breeding success rate and additional foraging enhancement for ground nesting birds.
ENC.2.04	Applicant	**Bird mitigation** Paragraphs 8.12.22 to 8.12.12.25 of ES Chapter 8 **[REP1-019]** describe the management measures proposed for the bird mitigation areas (64ha of permanent grassland and 181ha of retained arable). This includes: creating skylark plots; annually leaving a field as fallow with no skylark plots to encourage nesting lapwing; the use of wide grassland margins alongside undeveloped corners of fields; and an avoidance of passages for mammals in the perimeter security fencing in areas where existing woodlands and mature hedgerows may provide attraction to predators. Paragraph 8.12.26 of ES Chapter 8 concludes that the measures would reduce the magnitude of habitat loss for ground nesting birds to low, resulting in a minor adverse, and not significant, effect. Paragraph D.1.21 of the applicant's Written Summaries of Oral Submissions for ISH1 **[REP1-046]** explains that the *"Bird Mitigation Area – Managed Arable"* may be rotated with retained arable or grassland' providing the principles in paragraph 5.2.19 and 5.2.20 of the FLEMP **[REP2-021]** are met. This rotation is also referenced in paragraph 5.2.18 of the FLEMP.	a) The Applicant would be responsible for annually identifying suitable fields for Skylark plots (i.e., at least approximately 5ha in size) based on landowners' crop rotations and following the prescriptions set out in paragraph 5.2.20 – 5.2.22 of the Framework LEMP **[REP2-021].** It is anticipated that these will predominantly be in Areas A-F, as set out in Section 5.2.19 of the Framework LEMP **[REP2-021]** and shown on Figure 8-5 Bird Mitigation Land Allocation **[APP-081]**. However, the Applicant has retained some flexibility to be able to deliver these in undeveloped areas elsewhere in the Order Limits, should the crop rotation in any given year not result in suitable crop for the bird mitigation in Areas A-F. As set out in paragraph 7.1.1 of the Framework LEMP **[REP2-021]**, monitoring is required in order to determine that the functions documented within the LEMP are being achieved, inclusive of bird mitigation. As noted at paragraph 7.1.9, post-construction monitoring for birds (breeding and non-breeding) will be undertaken in the respective seasons, in years 1, 3, 5, 10 and 15 post construction and thereafter every ten years from years 20 to 60. Paragraph 7.1.11 further explains that results from the post-construction monitoring will feed into the management plan and, if required, management may be amended accordingly based on this monitoring. Any material changes proposed to the approved detailed LEMP management proposals, in

		a) Explain how any field rotation would be managed and monitored to ensure that not only field size was appropriate but that the other management measures described in paragraphs 8.12.22 to 8.12.12.25 of ES Chapter 8 would be incorporated. b) Has the approach of rotating bird mitigation areas for skylark, lapwing and other ground nesting birds been used on other schemes and if so, how successful was it? **c)** How will this rotational approach also ensure that the 30% net gain for permanent grassland is achieved?	response to the findings of post-construction monitoring, will be sent to the host authorities for their review and approval prior to their implementation. As such, this post-construction monitoring will ensure that the management controls are effectively implemented for bird mitigation purposes. b) The Applicant is aware of bird mitigation land being rotated within a wider area on other solar farms (e.g. Wickham Hall Solar Farm in Suffolk – 26 off-site skylark plots established across adjacent arable fields, creating habitat "bank" capacity that can be moved between crops each season, and Lark Hill Solar which has plots rotated annually within the same wider farm holding to maintain sward heterogeneity) but the Applicant is not aware of monitoring on the success of these. Nevertheless, the principle is no different to whether it is delivered on the same fields year after year over 60 years. The distribution of ground-nesting birds such as Skylark and Lapwing is currently being driven by the crop type present in a particular field in any given year, within the existing farming context. Therefore, a certain amount of movement between fields is likely to already be occurring. The Applicant is simply enhancing the current baseline conditions to make these fields more suitable on an annual basis for Skylark and Lapwing. This approach to creation of Skylark and Lapwing plots is consistent with current agri-environmental prescriptions set out under the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs' Countryside Stewardship Scheme. The Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier CAB5 and AHW4 provides the requirements for nesting plots for Lapwing and Skylark plots respectively. The guidance states the plots can be moved or fixed in the same place every year. For Skylark, fallow plots would be created within the autumn/winter within a winter cereal crop and retained as fallow plots until the winter cereal crop is harvested in the following summer. c) The 30% net gain is for all habitat units, not just grassland, as explained in the Biodiversity Net Gain Report **[APP-194]**. There will be no rotation of grassland, these will all remain in place for the lifetime of the Proposed Development. Any rotation of arable mitigation areas will only be in areas retained within the Order Limits for continuation of arable farming.
ENC.2.05	Applicant	**Tree planting** In its response to ExQ1, the Forestry Commission has identified benefits associated with additional woodland planting, especially adjacent to the ancient woodland **[REP2-050]**. Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust makes a similar point **[REP2-055]**. Explain the rationale for a grassland buffer around the ancient woodland.	As stated in paragraph 5.3.13 'Natural Regeneration Buffer to Woodland' of the updated Framework LEMP submitted at Deadline 3 a natural regeneration woodland buffer of up to 30m wide will be provided to the west, south and east of the Ancient Woodland (i.e., Tunman Wood and Housham Wood) that will be encouraged to naturally regenerate from grassland and former cropland. Natural regeneration allows native trees to recolonise areas naturally, offering superior biodiversity, lower costs, and better climate resilience compared to active tree planting. While planting allows for species selection and faster initial coverage, natural regeneration often results in stronger, better-adapted woodland with higher carbon sequestration potential. Outside of this buffer within and surrounding the solar infrastructure will be grassland habitat that will provide additional benefits for biodiversity, including pollinators and new foraging habitats for species associated with the adjacent woodland.
ENC.2.06	Applicant NKDC	**Mitigation - Navenby Green Man Road Verges Local Wildlife Site (LWS)**	The Applicant has updated the wording of ECO-C1 part b of the Framework CEMP, with the specific measures stated in Chapter 8: Ecology and Nature Conservation of the ES

	LCC	In responding to ExQ1 ENC.1.10 **[REP2-029]**, the applicant identifies ECO-C1 part b of the FCEMP **[REP2-013]** and the methods for re-instating species-rich grassland outlined in the FLEMP **[from paragraph 5.3.36 in REP2-021]** as adequately covering all necessary features to avoid and mitigate impacts for the LWS. Paragraph 8.12.7 of ES Chapter 8 **[REP1-019]** refers to ensuring the removal, storage, management and watering of turves from the LWS until they can be replaced in the verge. Reference is also made to how verge topsoil and subsoil would be stored. However, Table 8-13 in ES Chapter 8 (summary of embedded avoidance and mitigation measures) and ECO-C1 part b of the FCEMP **[REP2-013]** only refer to removing, storing and reinstating soil. The FCEMP and the FLEMP do not therefore appear to address the safeguarding of turves for reuse, which paragraph 8.12.7 indicates is needed to limit the potential impacts for the LWS. Paragraph 8.12.8 of ES Chapter 8 states that it may be possible to supplement the re-instated areas with seed collected from more diverse areas of the LWS, while Table 8-13 of ES Chapter 8 and ECO-C1 part b of the FCEMP refer only to the use of locally collected seed from nearby higher quality calcareous grassland where practicable. The section on species rich grassland within the FLEMP includes a reference at paragraph 5.3.40 to obtaining seed from a local source for the purpose of maintaining continuity with local species-rich grassland where practicable. Comment on whether the FCEMP should more closely reflect the mitigation measures identified in in ES Chapter 8 relating to turves and soil storage and whether it should include a specific reference to the collection of seed from within the LWS.	**[APP-033]** paragraphs 8.12.7 and 8.12.8 regarding storage of turves, collection of seed from the LWS and supplementary planting of locally sourced seed. The updated Framework CEMP, reflecting these changes, has been submitted to the Examination at Deadline 3.
ENC.2.07	Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust	**Navenby Green Man Road Verges LWS** Explain what more detail you require on where and how the LWS would be impacted in addition to what is presented in Tables 8-13 and 8-14 and paragraphs 8.12.5 to 8.12. 9 in ES Chapter 8 **[REP1-019]**.	**N/A**
ENC.2.08	Applicant Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust	**Grass Verges LWSs** In its Deadline 2 response **[REP2-055]**, Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust requests evidence in the form of a detailed map showing the proposed development's relationship with other grass verge LWSs, namely Boothby Graffoe Road Verge; High Dike, Coleby Mill to Harmston Verges; Gorse Lane; and Navenby Heath Road Verges. The assessment in Table 8-14 in **[REP1-019]** concludes that there would be no potential for an effect to occur on Navenby Heath Road Verges, Gorse Lane, High Dike and Coleby Mill to Harmston Verges. Table 8-9 in **[REP1-019]** identifies that the Boothby Graffoe Road Verge is around 595m from the site. a) **Applicant -** Confirm whether the plan requested by Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust can be provided. **b) Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust** - Would the provision of this plan together with the information presented in **[REP1-019]** provide sufficient evidence for you to conclude whether there would or would not be any impacts on the LWSs?	A detailed plan of the DCO Site in relation to Boothby Graffoe Road Verge Local Wildlife Site (LWS), High Dike, Coleby Mill to Harmston Verges LWS, Gorse Lane LWS, and Navenby Heath Road Verges LWS is provided in Appendix A (see Figure WQ2-2). As stated in Chapter 8: Ecology and Nature Conservation of the ES **[REP1-019]** there would be no potential for an effect to occur to any of these LWS, noting that whilst Navenby Heath Road Verges LWS is shown partly within the DCO Site, it will not be directly impacted and will be protected and buffered from the Proposed Development. Further details of any proposed development in relation to this area of the DCO Site close to the Navenby Heath Road Verges LWS is provided on Sheet 16 in the Streets, Rights of Way and Access Plans **[REP2-004]**.
ENC.2.09	NKDC	**Suggested BNG monitoring section 106 (s106) planning obligation**	**N/A**

		Further to the applicant's comments about there being no need for a BNG monitoring fee in response your LIR **[REP2-031]**, provide a detailed justification for the suggested s106 planning obligation to secure funding for undertaking BNG monitoring. In replying to this question, explain whether: 1) the suggested planning obligation would meet the conditions for entering into obligations; and 2) the proposed development would be unacceptable in the absence of the obligation sought.	

2.5 Farming and Soils Questions

Table 2-5: Applicant's Response to the Examining Authority's Farming and Soils Questions

Question Number	Question to:	Question	Applicant Response
Farming and Soils (FS) Questions			
FS.2.01	Applicant	**Agricultural land sensitivity** Provide examples of other solar NSIP schemes where grade 3a land was not assigned a 'high' sensitivity in the assessment presented in their ES.	Longfield Solar Farm ES Chapter 12: Socio-Economics and Land Use (Document Reference EN010118/APP/6.1), Fenwick Solar Farm ES Chapter 12: Socio-Economics and Land Use (Document Reference: EN010152/APP/6.1) and Gate Burton Energy Park ES Chapter 12: Socio-Economics and Land Use (Document Reference: EN010131/APP/3.1) each provide examples of solar Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) where medium sensitivity for Subgrade 3a land has been adopted. Medium sensitivity was applied to 'Agricultural land predominantly in Grade 3a or containing some Grade 1 and 2' in each example. DCOs for these projects have since been granted. The Applicant understands Natural England and the councils are satisfied that, although they might have preferred the terminology in the methodology to have differed slightly, this has had no bearing on the conclusions of the assessment. The SoCG between the Applicant and Natural England, to be submitted to the Examination at Deadline 3A, will present the agreed position with regards to this.
FS.2.02	Applicant LCC	**Temporary and permanent loss of agricultural land** Paragraph 12.7.44 of ES Chapter 12: Socio-Economics and Land Use **[AS-016]** advises that the only areas of agricultural land that would be permanently taken out of agricultural production would be areas of planting and habitat creation introduced as part of the proposed development. The applicant considers that areas that would be used by, for example, the BESS, substation, and access tracks, would not be classed as permanently lost. Paragraph 15.20 of LCC's LIR **[REP1-053]** suggests that is in contrast with how applicants for other NSIP solar projects have approached the matter of built infrastructure. Give examples of NSIP solar projects where land to be used for BESS, substations, access tracks and other similar equipment/development has been treated as resulting in a permanent loss of agricultural land for assessment purposes.	NSIP projects typically differentiate between temporary and permanent development as assessment categories. In keeping with ISEP guidance, differentiation may be made between 'hard' and 'soft' development, where hard development involves soil sealing. Soil sealing that is to be reversed may still be regarded as temporary. The Applicant is not aware of other solar NSIPs including areas of built 'hard' infrastructure (access roads, compounds, BESS, substations) within the calculation of land permanently lost, except where an applicant is not proposing to decommission these works. There are other schemes where the applicant has left flexibility for leaving new tracks in place in case the landowners would like these retained, or where the applicant does not own the onsite substation and therefore needs to leave this in place following decommissioning. As such, some projects have recognised, as 'worst-case', the potential for permanent change even when the proposal is for a return of the land to agriculture following decommissioning. For example, a bespoke access road within Beacon Fen Energy Park **[EN010151]** was assessed in this way. The Applicant is not seeking flexibility to leave any above-ground infrastructure in place (including access tracks) following decommissioning, and therefore the approach taken in the ES is considered to be robust. Note, as set out in paragraph 2.3.2 of the Framework DEMP **[REP2-017]**, cabling and/or cable ducting in the Cable Corridor may remain in-situ at decommissioning, whereby the mode of cable decommissioning for the Cable Corridor and interconnecting cables will be dependent upon government policy and best practice at that time. Currently, some local authorities consider the most environmentally acceptable option to be leaving the cables or cable ducting in situ, as this avoids disturbance to overlying land and

<table>
<tr><th>Question Number</th><th>Question to:</th><th>Question</th><th>Applicant Response</th></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>habitats and to neighbouring communities. Alternatively, the cables or cable ducting can be removed by opening the ground at regular intervals and pulling the cable through to the extraction point, avoiding the need to open up the entire length of the cable route.</td></tr>
<tr><td>FS.2.03</td><td>Applicant</td><td>Retention of agricultural land during operation
Different figures have been quoted in various documents for the area (ha) proposed for "bird mitigation areas – managed arable" and "species rich grassland or retained arable – outside solar pv areas". For example:
species rich grassland or retained arable -
156.34ha in paragraph D.1.19 of Written Summaries of Oral Submissions ISH1 [REP1-046]
308ha on page 59 of Applicant's Response to Relevant Representations [REP1-047]
308ha on page 22 of the FLEMP [REP2-021]
308ha on page 119 of Applicant's Response to Written Representations [REP2-030]
bird mitigation areas – managed arable
181ha on page 126 of ES Chapter 8 [REP1-019]
156.67ha on page 59 of [REP1-047]
181ha in paragraph 5.2.18 of the FLEMP [REP2-021]
156.7ha on page 119 of [REP2-030]
Consequently, for consistency and clarity, provide a table setting out the total area proposed, the area's agricultural land classification, and whether the area would remain available for agricultural use during the operational phase for the following:
Species rich grassland – outside solar pv areas
Species rich grassland or retained arable – outside solar pv areas
Bird mitigation areas – managed arable
Bird mitigation areas – permanent grassland</td><td>Some discrepancies were caused by the omission of the land without ALC data. Please refer to the below table for the information requested for the Principal Site:

<table>
<tr><th>Habitat type in the Principal Site</th><th>Total area</th><th>Agricultural land classification</th><th>Availability for agricultural use during the operational phase</th></tr>
<tr><td>Species rich grassland – outside solar pv areas</td><td>19.9ha</td><td>Grade 1: 0ha
Grade 2: 0ha
Grade 3a: 8.8ha
Grade 3b: 11.1ha
Grade 4: 0ha
No ALC data: 0ha</td><td>Not for arable farming.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Species rich grassland or retained arable – outside solar pv areas</td><td>308ha</td><td>Grade 1: 0ha
Grade 2: 0ha
Grade 3a: 110.4ha
Grade 3b: 181.5ha
Grade 4: 0ha
No ALC data: 16.1ha</td><td>Yes - available for arable use, but with the flexibility to be species rich grassland.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Bird mitigation areas – managed arable</td><td>181ha</td><td>Grade 1: 0ha
Grade 2: 0ha
Grade 3a: 34.1ha
Grade 3b: 122.6ha
Grade 4: 0ha
No ALC data: 24.3ha</td><td>Yes – this would be arable farming.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Bird mitigation areas – permanent grassland</td><td>82.8ha. Note a minimum 64ha will be provided.</td><td>Grade 1: 0ha
Grade 2: 0ha
Grade 3a: 5.6ha
Grade 3b: 58.9ha
Grade 4: 0ha
No ALC data: 18.3ha</td><td>Not for arable farming. *</td></tr>
</table>

* A minimum 64ha Bird Mitigation Area – Permanent Grassland will be delivered within the 82.8ha shown in the Order limits for this purpose. The residual land not used for this purpose will be available for arable farming; the landowner wishes to reserve the ability to rotate the bird mitigation land within the wider land available for this purpose.</td></tr>
</table>

Question Number	Question to:	Question	Applicant Response
FS.2.04	Applicant	**Use of best and most versatile (BMV) land** The plan in Appendix A of the Applicant's Response to the Examining Authority's First Written Questions **[REP2-029]** illustrates that areas of solar pv arrays would be on BMV land while nearby *"bird mitigation areas – managed arable"* would not be. Having regard to the statement in paragraph 2.10.29 of NPS EN-3 relating to avoiding the use of BMV agricultural land where possible, together with the fact that bird mitigation areas – managed arable would appear to be available for farming during the life of the proposed development, explain why that is the case.	The location of bird mitigation land was selected to meet the requirements of selected bird species. This included: • Fields reasonably evenly distributed across the Site, taking account of the current distribution to minimise the geographical displacement and provide breeding habitat as close to fields that are well used currently. • Fields needing to be a minimum 5ha size and ideally over 10ha size, to enable breeding plots at least 50m from perimeter hedges and created at a rate of 2 per ha, comprising essentially a small uncropped/fallow area at least 3m wide and between 16 and 24 m2 in area (e.g. 4 x 4m) (paragraph 5.2.20 of the Framework LEMP **[REP2-021]**). In addition, the Applicant sought to deliver a Proposed Development that maximises the renewable energy generation for the agreed connection offer, and therefore due to constraints such as intervisibility of heritage assets and landscape and visual amenity for example, the Applicant avoided solar PV in certain fields to avoid likely significant effects, resulting in some BMV land being used for solar PV. Fields omitted from the solar PV areas for this reason then became available for bird mitigation land if the aforementioned criteria was met.
FS.2.05	Applicant	**Framework Soil Management Plan – offsite uses** In responding to ExQ1 FS.1.13 **[REP2-029]**, the applicant confirms that removal of soils is not expected or planned, although does give as examples the prior extraction of minerals or if contamination was found, both of which the applicant considers to be unlikely. Within this context, and given the importance of topsoil for site restoration, the ExA considers that the applicant should amend the wording of paragraph 6.7.1 of the Framework Soil Management Plan (FSMP) to remove *"commercial topsoil sale"* **[REP1-037]**.	The importance of topsoil retention for restoration is acknowledged. Reference to commercial topsoil sale is not considered to be applicable and therefore the Framework Soil Management Plan (SMP) has been updated to reflect intent to retain all soils on-site for sustainable re-use. Section 6.7 of the Framework SMP has been amended to remove reference to the commercial sale of materials and the section now reads as follows: *"It is not anticipated that soil will be exported. Soils are to be retained on site for sustainable re-use. Soil volumes will be quantified to determine depth of topsoil/subsoil layers and shallow rock features."* The updated Framework SMP has been submitted to the Examination at Deadline 3.
FS.2.06	Applicant NKDC LCC Natural England	**Framework Soil Management Plan – aftercare** In responding to ExQ1 FS.1.15 **[REP1-029]**, the applicant suggests that the host authorities and Natural England would agree whether aftercare intervention is required following the review of each monitoring report. Comment on whether that should be stated in the FSMP.	The Applicant considers this is a matter for the detailed SMP. The Framework SMP **[REP1-037]** already establishes the principle of a monitoring schedule and also states at paragraph 6.9.1 that "*In the event that unsatisfactory growing conditions are observed during the monitoring and maintenance period a Landscape Specialist is to be consulted to provide recommendations for corrective action*". The Applicant has a duty to consult with the Council on and fulfil the recommendations for corrective action and this would be addressed in the detailed SMP.
FS.2.07	Applicant	**Framework Soil Management Plan – aftercare** Natural England advises that aftercare must also apply to areas that would be returned to an agricultural use following construction, such as in the cable corridor, as well as those areas being returned to agricultural use following decommissioning **[REP2-053]**.	Areas returned to agricultural use, following construction, following cable trenching and following decommissioning, would be subject to the advice of a specialist soil consultant. The role of the landscape specialist is to recognise and advise on visual indicators of unsatisfactory growing conditions. The detailed SMP will clarify that corrective actions will be additionally

Question Number	Question to:	Question	Applicant Response
		Given that would apply to the *"Principal Site"*, comment on whether the specialist soils consultant should be included in section 6.9 of the FSMP **[REP1-037]** in addition to the landscape consultant.	advised, as appropriate, by qualified specialists, such as a soil specialist and/or expertise from within the agricultural community. The Framework SMP **[REP1-037]** notes in Section 6.9 that specific roles and responsibilities relevant to the SMP shall be allocated for the project prior to construction and these persons shall be outlined in the detailed SMP. This is considered to be sufficient. Paragraph 4.5.1 of the Framework SMP **[REP1-037]** already notes that a soil specialist will be appointed, whose responsibilities include "*assessing compliance of the work on site with the SMP; and location or task specific construction method statements (where required); signing off the quality of reinstatement (with respect to soils) to allow for the commencement of the aftercare; ensuring the adequacy of the detailed aftercare programme and its annual updates (if required); soil sampling and production of annual aftercare reports; and signing off completion of the aftercare*". The aftercare will not be completed without the soil specialist having signed off on this matter. The lack of reference to a soil specialist in Section 6.9 does not mean Paragraph 4.5.1 is redundant; the measures in both sections of the SMP would be implemented.
FS.2.08	Applicant NKDC LCC Natural England	**Framework Soil Management Plan – monitoring** In responding to ExQ1 FS.1.17 **[REP2-029]**, the applicant sets out information on the aims for monitoring and what it would cover. Comment on whether the level of detail currently provided in the FSMP **[REP1-037]** and the approval mechanism in Requirement 15 would be sufficient to secure appropriate monitoring or whether more detail, such as that described by the applicant on page 77 of **[REP2-029]**, should be included in the FSMP.	The Framework SMP **[REP1-037]** captures the soil maintenance objectives by identifying unsatisfactory growing conditions as a first stage of aftercare requirements. The Framework SMP commits to post-construction monitoring of re-vegetation and retained vegetation and for recommendations for corrective action. At this stage the Framework SMP sets out the principles of monitoring, which will be further developed in the detailed SMP after any future consent. Detailed monitoring arrangements (including locations, frequency and specific methodologies) will depend on the final construction programme, phasing and detailed soil handling proposals, which will become available following detailed design, post consent and – where the Works Areas allow flexibility - may depend on the nature of works that take place. As noted in the Applicant's response to FS.1.17 **[REP2-029]**, the monitoring schedule would be determined by the soil expert prior to compilation of the SMP and then presented in the SMP for the consideration of the councils and Natural England. Paragraph 7.2.3 of the Framework SMP **[REP1-037]** clarifies this by saying the monitoring schedule will be "*determined and set out within the SMP* ". Requirement 15 secures the preparation of a detailed SMP and requires that no part of the authorised development may commence until a detailed soil management plan (which must be substantially in accordance with the Framework Soil Management Plan **[REP1-037]**) has been submitted to and approved by the relevant planning authority. Through this mechanism, the detailed SMP will provide the additional detail on monitoring arrangements (such as those outlined in the Applicant's response on Page 77 of the Applicant's Response to the Examining Authorities First Written Questions **[REP2-029]**), once the relevant site-specific information is available.

Question Number	Question to:	Question	Applicant Response
			The responses to FS2.06 and FS2.07 above indicate how the detailed SMP will provide additional detail to the Framework SMP. The Applicant therefore considers that it is appropriate for the Framework SMP to set out the monitoring objectives and commitments, with the detailed monitoring methodology secured through Requirement 15, and that this provides sufficient control to secure appropriate monitoring. The detailed soil management plan must be implemented as approved.
FS.2.09	Applicant	**Farm holdings** Paragraph 12.7.52 of ES Chapter 12 **[AS-016]** states that *"It has been confirmed by all landowners that there is expected to be no job losses resulting from the removal of agricultural land."* Extracts from email correspondence with landowners was submitted by the applicant in response to ExQ1 FS.1.19 **[Appendix D in REP2-029]**. The introductory sentence to Appendix D identifies that the email extracts are *"responses from landowners **who replied** to the applicant on whether they would reduce employment due to Fosse Green Energy"* (ExA emphasis). Confirm whether all relevant landowners replied to the applicant on this matter. If not, explain the implications for the assessment on farm holdings.	The Applicant's Response to the Examining Authority's First Written Questions **[REP2-029]** included emails from all but two landowners on the Principal Site. The remaining two landowners had confirmed verbally that there would be no job losses from their businesses due to the Proposed Development. One of these landowners has since written to the Applicant to confirm: "*Further to your email my answers to your questions:* 1. *there will be no negative affect to our employment status* 2. *there will be no job losses it is more likely to create jobs* 3. *there is likely to be job creation from the extra revenue so as to facilitate more capital expenditure and there for more employment*" The Applicant does not expect any impact on employment within the Cable Corridor. Works will be short term within the Cable Corridor and the land returned to its current status after reinstatement, allowing arable farming throughout operation of the Proposed Development.

2.6 Historic Environment Questions

Table 2-6: Applicant's Response to the Examining Authority's Historic Environment Questions

Question Number	Question to:	Question	Applicant Response
Historic Environment (HE) Questions			
HE.2.01		The ExA has no specific written questions relating to the historic environment to ask at this time. However, the ExA notes that: a) In relation to effects for designated heritage assets up to 5 kilometres (km) from the Order Limits for the proposed *"principal site"*, the applicant intends to submit a technical note as an examination document providing summary details of the designated heritage assets in the area up to 5km from the principal site in response to concerns raised by NKDC and LCC **[electronic page 128 in REP2-030]**; and b) With respect to the consideration of buried archaeology, the extant Framework Written Scheme of Investigation **[AS-001]** is being updated and the updated version is to be submitted as an examination document **[electronic pages 42 and 154 in REP2-030]**. The ExA considers the **technical note relating to designated above ground heritage assets** should be made available to NKDC and LCC as soon as possible and should be submitted as an examination document by **no later than Deadline 3A**. Following the submission of the technical note the ExA may find it necessary to ask questions about its contents and/or undertake unaccompanied site inspections, hence the reason for why it must be submitted no later than Deadline 3A. The ExA is similarly of the view that the **updated Framework Written Scheme of Investigation** must be submitted as an examination document **no later than Deadline 3A** to assist with addressing the extensive submissions that LCC and the applicant have already made to date relating to effects for buried archaeology.	The Applicant notes the ExA's requests for the submission of the Heritage Technical Note relating to designated above ground heritage assets to the Examination no later than Deadline 3A. The Applicant provided the Heritage Technical Note to LCC and NKDC for information on 11th March 2026. The Applicant also notes the ExA's request for the submission of the updated Framework Written Scheme of Investigation to the Examination no later than Deadline 3A. The Applicant shared a draft of the updated Framework Written Scheme of Investigation with LCC and HE for comment on 5th January 2026. Following receipt of comments, and a meeting with HE and LCC on 5th March 2026, the updated Framework Written Scheme of Investigation was provided to LCC and HE on 12th March 2026 for further comment. These documents will be submitted to the Examination at Deadline 3A, with the up-to-date position of Applicant, LCC, HE and NKDC on these items presented in the SoCGs, to be submitted to the Examination at Deadline 3A, as relevant.

2.7 Land rights (Compulsory Acquisition and Temporary Possession) Questions

Table 2-7: Applicant's Response to the Examining Authority's Land rights (Compulsory Acquisition and Temporary Possession) Questions

Question Number	Question to:	Question	Applicant Response
Land rights (Compulsory Acquisition (CA) and Temporary Possession (TP)) (LR) Questions			
LR.2.01	NKDC	**Clarification as to whether any of the land included in the Order Limits for the proposed development should be considered as being commons or open spaces for the purposes of s131 and/or s132 of the Planning Act 2008 (PA2008)** The ExA notes the Council's reply to ExQ1 LR.1.03 in **[REP2-045]** advising of its intention to provide a full reply at Deadline 3. With respect to the applicant's seeking of compulsory acquisition (CA) powers and the very particular implications there would be for applicant should any of the land it is seeking CA powers over be special category land for the purposes of s131 and/or s132 of the PA2008, the Council must submit a full response to ExQ1 **no later than Deadline 3**. Notwithstanding the requirement to respond to this question by no later than Deadline 3, should the Council reach the view as part of its investigations that any of the land subject to the CA powers sought by the applicant constitutes special category land for the purposes of s131 and/or s132 that information should be communicated to the applicant as soon as possible in advance of Deadline 3.	**N/A**
LR.2.02	Applicant	**Proposals for providing BNG and meeting the conditions for the CA of land under s122 of PA2008** The ExA notes the applicant's reply to ExQ1 LR.1.04 in **[REP2-029]**, including: 1) confirmation that its proposals do not include the CA of land expressly for the purpose of BNG provision, with that provision forming part of the multi faceted Work No. 9 (works to create, enhance, and maintain green infrastructure and environmental mitigation); and 2) not precluding proposed BNG units being traded with other developers unable to meet their own on site BNG unit provision. Given the applicant's various submissions to date concerning BNG provision, the ExA considers in relation to proposed Work No. 9, it has not been demonstrated that of all of the land identified on the Works Plans **[AS-105]** for Work No. 9 would be required: either for the proposed development; or to facilitate/be incidental to the proposed development and thus meet the conditions stated in s122(2)(a) and (b) of PA2008. That is because land subject to proposed Work No. 9 could be made available to other developers to address their developments' need to provide BNG units, with the result that some of the land for which CA powers are sought would not necessarily be required to deliver the proposed development. Accordingly, the ExA further considers that the applicant has not demonstrated in relation to the land subject to proposed Work No. 9 *"… that there is a compelling case in the public interest for the land to be acquired compulsorily"* to meet the condition stated in s122(3).	As explained in relation to agenda item 3.1(b) during the course of Issue Specific Hearing 3 (ISH3), and set out in the Written Summaries of Oral Submissions **[EN010154/EXAM/9.16]**, the Applicant has approached the design of the Proposed Development by first identifying the land required to render the Proposed Development acceptable in planning terms in relation to its impacts upon birds. That process has also taken into account the requirements of the existing landowners for rotation in relation to their agricultural undertakings. All of the land identified in Work No. 9 is required to ensure that the Proposed Development is acceptable in planning terms and meets the relevant tests in the NPSs in relation to the need to mitigate impacts upon birds. As such, since that land is required by policy to enable the Proposed Development to come forward, and the Proposed Development is of a type for which there is a critical national need, there is a compelling case in the public interest for the compulsory acquisition powers in relation to that land. That is the case even where the Applicant has acquired rights via the option agreements that have been secured, since breach of such agreements might otherwise delay or inhibit the delivery of the Proposed Development, and it is also necessary to defeat any otherwise unidentified rights that may exist. The compulsory acquisition powers thus ensure the delivery of a development that is in the national interest, accords with policy and meets a critical national need.

Question Number	Question to:	Question	Applicant Response
		The ExA therefore considers there is a need for the applicant to: 1) undertake a review of the CA powers sought in connection with the delivery of proposed Work No. 9 to demonstrate that the CA powers sought would be no more than necessary to meet the conditions stated in s122 of PA2008; and make any amendments to the Land Plans **[AS-104]**, the Works Plans **[AS-105]** and other submitted application documents, as necessary, and submit any amended plans or documents.	Having identified the land that is required for the Proposed Development, the Applicant's design process has asked whether, in addition to fulfilling a mitigation function, that land could be used to secure BNG. The answer to that question is yes. To be clear, no compulsory acquisition of land for the delivery of BNG is required. If the Proposed Development did not include proposals for BNG, the same amount of land would still have to be compulsorily acquired in order to provide policy-compliant mitigation of the impact upon birds. Requirement 8(2) of Schedule 2 to the draft DCO **[REP2-005]** secures the provision of that BNG and its retention in relation to the Proposed Development, during its operational lifetime. As a result, BNG units would be available to third parties only if BNG is, in fact, delivered above the secured minimum levels that are proposed as a benefit of the Proposed Development. On this basis, the BNG that is secured is a matter that can, and indeed must, be taken into account as a benefit of the Proposed Development. As a result, the Applicant maintains its submission that the compulsory acquisition powers are no more than is necessary to meet the conditions stated in s122 of the Planning Act 2008 and no amendments to the Land Plans **[AS-104]**, the Works Plans **[AS-105]** and other submitted application documents are required.

2.8 Landscape and Visual Questions

Table 2-8: Applicant's Response to the Examining Authority's Landscape and Visual Questions

Question Number	Question to:	Question	Applicant Response
Landscape and Visual (LV)			
LV.2.01	Applicant	**Plans showing the locations for viewpoints and photomontages** The ExA notes the applicant's response to ExQ1 LV.1.01 (Plans showing the locations for viewpoints and photomontages), most particularly the reliance placed on ES Figure 10-7 Zone of Theoretical Visibility – Barrier Earth, with Viewpoint Locations (Rev B) **[AS-059]** as the means for identifying the locations for the viewpoints and photomontages used in the submitted assessment of the proposed development's landscape and visual amenity effects. However, ES Figure 10-7 **[AS-059]** is affected by limited contextual mapping information relating to road/street and property naming that the ExA referred to in item 1(a) in its procedural decision letter dated 22 August 2025 **[PD-005]**. That, taken together with the scale of ES Figure 10-7 (1:60,000), makes it difficult to identify the precise locations for some of the viewpoints and photomontages without recourse to other submitted figures. The ExA therefore considers the answer to ExQ1 LV.1.01 to be unsatisfactory. Accordingly, the applicant should submit a plan (or plans) appropriately scaled with adequate contextual information to enable the locations for the viewpoints and photomontage to be clearly identified.	Please see Figure WQ2-1 provided in Appendix A, which illustrates the location of the viewpoints at a 1:12,000 scale with additional contextual location information. Figure 10-8 Viewpoint Photography **[APP-095]** and Figure 10-10: Photomontages **[APP-097]** and **[AS-119]** of the ES also provide locational information (such as location coordinates) beneath each respective image.
LV.2.02	Applicant	**Effectiveness of the proposed roadside screen planting** In responding to ExQ1 LV.1.05 in **[REP2-029]** you have stated *"There are likely to be instances across the Order Limits where the effectiveness of screening from proposed roadside hedgerow planting would be less if they were managed at 1.5m to 2.0m in height above carriageway level. However, the extent of this will be very much context-specific and will depend on factors such as topography, presence of other vegetation, and distance between the viewer and edge of built development"*. Identify the roadside locations where you consider proposed roadside hedgerow planting managed to a height of between 1.5 and 2.0 metres might be ineffective.	New hedgerows adjacent to the highway are only required for visual mitigation along Clay Lane and Bassingham Road between Norton Disney and River Farm. In these locations the hedgerows will be maintained at a sufficient height to provide effective visual screening in line with the Framework LEMP **[REP2-021]**. As such, there are no locations where visual screening is required where a hedgerow will be maintained at a height of 1.5 - 2m. Relevant sections of the Framework LEMP state: All existing hedgerows within the Order limits will be managed to a minimum height of 3m as set out in paragraph 5.2.10 of the Framework LEMP **[REP2-021]**. Similarly, proposed hedgerows, once established, will be maintained at a height of between 3-4m. However, where these new hedgerows are not required for visual screening but rather proposed as part of the wider ecological strategy, the Framework LEMP **[REP2-021]** allows for them to be maintained at a height below 3m to maintain an open view. The management of individual hedgerows will be agreed with the host authorities as part of the detailed LEMP under Requirement 8 of the Draft DCO **[REP2-005]**. The Applicant will take over the cutting of all hedges within the Order limits from the current farmers when construction of the Proposed Development commences, allowing them to grow taller than they are at current and in line with the Framework LEMP **[REP2-021]**.

Question Number	Question to:	Question	Applicant Response
LV.2.03	Applicant NKDC LCC	**Perception of solar panels in the landscape** In paragraph 3.3 of Appendix 7-D of the ES (Detailed Heritage Asset Setting Assessment) **[APP-127]** when referring to solar panels it is stated that within the landscape they are perceived differently by different individuals *"…Some will perceive them as unwanted, industrial and urbanising; others will see them as important, sensitive, rural and even agricultural. When solar farms were first introduced to our landscapes, they would have seemed alien. However, the prevalence of these features within the countryside, a function of nearly 20 years of construction and operation, requires recognition that solar farms have become a more commonplace landscape character type, much in the same way we acknowledge golf courses or greenhouses / polytunnels. Furthermore, it has been recognised that beyond a certain distance, solar arrays lose definition and assume a 'washed-over' appearance. As a result, solar farms are perceived as blocks of faded colour within an established agricultural landscape. …"* a) **Applicant** - identify the evidential basis underpinning the above mentioned quotation in **[APP-127]** and comment on whether historic and/or visual perceptions relating to existing solar farms in the countryside should be applied to a solar farm of the scale associated with the proposed development, given that to date only one NSIP scale solar farm (Cleve Hill) has been constructed and become operational. b) **NKDC and LCC** – do you agree with the views expressed by the applicant: 1) that as solar farms in the countryside have become more commonplace they are being perceived like golf courses or greenhouses/polytunnels; and 2) that with distance solar farms have a washed over appearance and are being perceived as blocks of faded over colour within established agricultural landscapes. If you disagree with either one or other or both of those propositions explain why that is the case.	**Appendix 1-C: Statement of Competence** of the ES **[APP-120]** sets out the capability of the companies and the competency of the individuals responsible for undertaking and reporting the EIA. Table 1 of the Statement of Competence sets out the qualifications, memberships, accreditations, years of experience and relevant project experience of the Cultural Heritage Technical Lead. Paragraph 3.3 of **Appendix 7-D: Detailed Heritage Asset Setting Assessment** of the ES **[APP-127]** draws from the Applicant's 25 years of professional practice and expert assessment of historic landscape matters, with the last 15 years focusing on the way solar developments in particular change the character of rural environments. The Applicant has specific expertise in the assessment, and recognition, of the importance of, 20th century heritage and landscape character. The references to '*unwanted, industrial and urbanising...*' or '*...important, sensitive, rural and agricultural..*' represent a small cross-section of the opinions directed at the Cultural Heritage Technical Lead from heritage and landscape stakeholders plus interested members of the public engaged with planning for new solar developments, both DCO and non-DCO schemes, in the past 15 years. A similar array of comments has been directed towards the Proposed Development. Furthermore, positions such as this can be found in recent Appeal Decisions, comprising (amongst others) Land at Park Farm, Gillingham, Dorset (Appeal Ref: APP/D1265/W/22/3300299), where the Inspector remarked (on the matter of the character of solar farms) *"... are becoming gradually accepted in rural areas.*". Furthermore, according to Lancaster University's 2025 study[2] of 32 sites examining plant cover, soil health, and ecosystem function, highlighting both impacts and mitigation opportunities, "*solar farms are expected to become increasingly common features of agricultural landscapes in coming decades as part of the low-carbon energy transition*". The authors at University of Lancaster wrote on the university's website that "*Ground-mounted solar farms have become a familiar sight across the UK's agricultural landscape*". Regarding the 'washed over' appearance of the Proposed Development the Visual Assessment (Appendix 10-F: Visual Assessment of the ES **[AS-120]**) found that, to recreational users of Vikings Way, the Principal Site will be barely perceptible due to the approximate distance of at least 4.4km, and that the Principle Site will result in a change of colour and texture across the fields, compared to baseline conditions. Regarding the scale of the solar farm, visual impacts arising from the Proposed Development typically result from people's views of a relatively small part of the wider Site, given that the Proposed Development is not visible in its entirety from an individual location. As such the overall scale of the Proposed Development has less of

[2] Carvalho et al 2025. *Plant and soil responses to ground-mounted solar panels in temperate agricultural systems*.

Question Number	Question to:	Question	Applicant Response
			an impact on a static visual receptor than the design and layout of the part of the Order limits closest to them.
LV.2.04	Applicant	**Views experienced by recreational users of public rights of way (PRoW)** With respect to the assessment of visual susceptibility for recreational users of PRoW in Tables 31 to 36 and 38 to 44 in Appendix 10-F of the ES (Visual Assessment) **[AS-120]** the phrase *"…where appreciation of the view is unlikely to be the primary interest …"* has repeatedly been used. Explain what is meant by that repeatedly used phrase and what is the primary interest for the users of the PRoWs that are being referred to in Tables 31 to 36 and 38 to 44 in **[AS-120]**?	The Applicant's approach to assessing visual susceptibility is set out in Appendix 10-B: LVIA Methodology **[APP-149]** (ref. paragraph 1.2.47) of the ES. This includes reference to GLVIA 3 which notes at paragraph 6.32 that the susceptibility of visual receptors to changes in views and visual amenity is mainly a function of: *The occupation or activity of people experiencing the view at particular locations; and* - *The extent to which their attention or interest may therefore be focussed on the view and the visual amenity they experience at particular locations.* Table 7: Visual Susceptibility Criteria of Appendix 10-B: LVIA Methodology of the ES **[APP-149]** is the LVIA assessors' professional interpretation of paragraphs 6.33 and 6.34 of GLVIA3 which lists the visual receptors that are likely to be more or less susceptible to change. For example, paragraph 6.33 of GLVIA3 notes *'people, whether residents or visitors, who are engaged in outdoor recreation, including use of public rights of way, whose attention or interest is likely to be focussed on the landscape and on particular views'* as one example of a visual receptor most susceptible to change, whereas paragraph 6.34 of GLVIA3 notes *'people engaged in outdoor sport or recreation which does not involve or depend upon appreciation of views of the landscape'* as one example of a visual receptor less susceptible to change. Paragraph 6.33 of GLVIA3 also notes that travellers of other transport routes tend to fall into an intermediate category. The Applicant has distinguished between the visual susceptibility of people using long distance walking routes i.e. the Viking Way and people using local PRoW. This is on the basis that long distance walking routes generally form extended walks in rural areas so it is assumed for the purposes of the assessment, that people undertake these walks to appreciate the inherent characteristics of the landscape they pass through and therefore the focus of these people will be on the landscape and particular views. Local PRoW on the other hand have evolved from historic desire lines that the public used over time, and so it is assumed for the purposes of the assessment that people choose to use these routes for other means such as exercise or routine travel, and therefore, although the landscape forms part of their experience, the visual experience is not the specific reason for people choosing to use them. The Stepping Out Walks were judged to fall within the same category as local PRoW on the basis that they have seemingly been derived with the objective of connecting people to nature and encouraging healthy activity, rather than to experience landscape characteristics or particular views.
LV.2.05	NKDC LCC	**Significance of identified negative landscape and visual impacts**	**N/A**

Question Number	Question to:	Question	Applicant Response
		In your respective LIRs, **[REP1-056]** and **[REP1-053]**, you have each concluded that the proposed development would have *"negative landscape and visual impacts"*. Do you consider those negative landscape and visual impacts would or would not amount to a reason for consent being withheld for the proposed development? Your response to this question should include any necessary elaboration.	
LV.2.06	Applicant	**Sequential effects** The cumulative impact assessment covers an area in the vicinity of the site. While sequential impacts are referred to in paragraph 10.10.5 of ES Chapter 10: Landscape and Visual Amenity **[AS-117]**, there does not appear to be a sequential visual assessment. What consideration was given to sequential effects that might be experienced by visual receptors travelling through a landscape that might be affected by the presence of a number of NSIP scale solar farms?	The approach to assessing cumulative landscape and visual effects is consistent with PINS Guidance on Cumulative Effects and follows a proportionate methodology as outlined in GLVIA3. In the Landscape Technical Memo 3 (November 2024) contained at Appendix A of NKDC's LIR **[REP1-056]** the landscape consultants representing the Councils welcomed this approach and accepted its robustness and appropriateness in assessing the cumulative effects on landscape and visual amenity. The cumulative assessment contained in Chapter 10: Landscape and Visual Amenity of the ES **[AS-117]** primarily focusses on the cumulative schemes within the 2km Zone of Influence (ZoI), as this was judged to be the geographic area across which landscape and visual effects were most likely to occur, although the nearest NSIP scale solar schemes beyond 2km were also scoped in given their similar scale and typology to the Proposed Development. This is noted in Appendix A of NKDC's LIR **[REP1-056]** within the Landscape and Visual Review (November 2025) as an appropriate approach (ref. paragraph 6.2). Furthermore, negligible residual effects noted within the standalone assessment of the Proposed Development were excluded from the cumulative assessment as, by virtue of their definition, they are considered to be imperceptible and are unlikely to lead to a significant in-combination effect. The cumulative landscape and visual assessment provided at Chapter 10: Landscape and Visual Amenity **[AS-117]** of the ES does consider sequential cumulative visual effects. An example of this is evident at paragraph 10.10.21 which identifies major adverse cumulative effects on users of the Viking Way as a result of the construction of the North Hykeham Relief Road in addition to the Proposed Development being noticeable from greater lengths of the route. With regard to sequential cumulative effects with other NSIP scale solar farms, it is considered that there are very limited routes beyond the 2km ZoI where these could be experienced sequentially and, in any case, the substantial tracts of land outside of and between the different projects would serve to provide visual relief such that any cumulative changes to sequential views would be negligible and not significant.
LV.2.07	NKDC	**Glint and glare**	**N/A**

Question Number	Question to:	Question	Applicant Response
		Confirm whether the applicant's response in **[REP2-031]** to section 22 of the Council's LIR addresses the concerns about the reliance placed on landscaping to provide mitigation for glint and glare effects, and if not, explain why.	

2.9 Population Effects Questions

Table 2-9: Applicant's Response to the Examining Authority's Population Effects Questions

Question Number	Question to:	Question	Applicant Response
Population Effects (PE) Questions			
PE.2.01	Applicant	**Health and wellbeing** The applicant's comments about the approach established at the environmental impact assessment (EIA) scoping stage with respect to incorporating human health matters within relevant ES chapters in its response to relevant representations (RRs) (for example, page 136 of **[REP1-047]**) are noted. Page 34 of the Scoping Opinion **[electronic page 38 in APP-119]** advises *"The ES should ensure sufficient clarification and cross referencing is present. Consideration should be given to direct and indirect impacts on human health receptors. The assessment should be informed by relevant guidance such as the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) 2022 guidance 'Determining Significance for Human Health in Environmental Impact Assessment'"*. None of the ES chapters identified in paragraph 5.1.11 of ES Chapter 5: Environmental Impact Assessment Methodology **[APP-030]** appear to make reference to the advice about human health included in the scoping opinion. Health is specifically mentioned in the ES chapters covering Noise and Vibration **[APP-036]**, Traffic and Transport **[APP-038]** and Other Environmental Topics **[APP-039]** but does not seem to be explicitly referenced in Water Environment **[REP1-021]** or Landscape and Visual Amenity **[AS-117]**. In this context, explain how the ES provides sufficient clarification and cross referencing with respect to: human health matters; the consideration given to direct and indirect impacts on human health receptors; and the account taken of relevant guidance.	The Applicant considers that it would be beneficial to provide a comprehensive document that sets out the approach to the consideration and assessment of direct and indirect impacts of the Proposed Development on human health matters in accordance with guidance that has been undertaken in the ES. A Health and Wellbeing Summary Statement has therefore been prepared **[EN010154/EXAM/9.21],** which the Applicant has submitted to the ExA at Deadline 3. A draft of the Health and Wellbeing Summary Statement has been shared with NKDC and LCC, and the Applicant will aim to address any comments from the Councils, as relevant, prior to its submission into Examination. The document includes a 'wayfinding' guide to clarify where health has been considered both in the ES relevant application documents including the ES management plans, and other documents with appropriate cross-referencing. This includes reference to the ES chapters identified in paragraph 5.1.11 of Chapter 5: EIA Methodology of the ES **[APP-030]** – i.e. Chapter 9: Water Environment **[REP1-021]**, Chapter 10: Landscape and Visual Amenity **[AS-117]**, Chapter 11: Noise and Vibration **[APP-036]**, Chapter 13: Traffic and Transport **[APP-038]** and Chapter 14: Other Environmental Topics **[APP-039]**. It also provides a background to the Applicant's approach to the consideration of health pathways, determinants, and populations through the scoping, pre-application, and consultation phases of the application, in the context of guidance around the consideration of health in Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). It sets out how the assessment of direct and indirect impacts and likely significant effects presented in the ES has had regard to pathways, health determinants, and the characteristics of receptors, to inform a conclusion that no significant adverse effects on human health would be likely to occur. This is done with reference to relevant guidance from IEMA 'Effective Scoping of Human Health in Environmental Impact' (2022)[3] and 'Determining Significance for Human Health in Environmental Impact Assessment' (2022)[4]. For each pathway it sets out the: • Health and wellbeing determinants relevant to the assessment and pathway drawn from IEMA guidance; • Sensitive/vulnerable population groups as receptors; • Assessment of significant effects by phase on receptors • The direct and indirect impacts of these on health receptors;

[3] IEMA (2022) Effective Scoping of Human Health in Environmental Impact
[4] IEMA (2022) Determining Significance for Human Health in Environmental Impact Assessment

Question Number	Question to:	Question	Applicant Response
Population Effects (PE) Questions			
			• Approach to mitigation and enhancement measures relevant to human health; and • Conclusion as to whether there are likely to be significant human health effects. The Health and Wellbeing Summary Statement **[EN010154/EXAM/9.21]** provides this for all assessment/pathways deemed of relevance to human health based on the IEMA guidance including in respect of both Landscape and Visual Amenity and the Water Environment - see Land and Water Contamination. The approach to the assessment of In-combination (Intra-Project) and Cumulative (Inter-Project) Effects in respect of human health for the identified pathways is also set out within the Summary statement, with reference to direct and indirect impacts on human health receptors with an explanation of how this approach accords with relevant IEMA guidance.
PE.2.02	Applicant	**Mental health** In its response to RRs (page 139 of **[REP1-047]**) the applicant recognises that elements of the proposed development would have the potential to affect mental health. The response goes on to state that, to address such concerns and support the long-term wellbeing of the community, including mental health, the proposed development has been iteratively and holistically designed to minimise impacts on health and wellbeing through undertaking a comprehensive and robust EIA and consultation process to identify and implement beneficial design opportunities. a) Explain what design opportunities were identified and implemented to mitigate adverse effects on mental health. b) Provide evidence that demonstrates that these design opportunities would mitigate adverse effects on mental health.	In response to the Councils' comments on health and wellbeing at previous deadlines, the Applicant has summarised the mental health impacts, design measures, and conclusions on mental health in a Health and Wellbeing Summary Statement **[EN010154/APP/9.21]** that has been shared informally with LCC and NKDC and which the Applicant will submit to the ExA at Deadline 3. Mental health can be affected by poor physical health (findings from the Adult Psychiatric Morbidity Survey (2014) by the NHS) but good mental health is also defined by the IEMA/ISEP 'Guide to Effective Scoping of Human Health in EIA' as being where individuals can realise their potential, manage everyday stress, work productively, and contribute to their community. Additionally, impacts such as noise can affect sleep quality and therefore overall wellbeing (as evidenced in a recent study 'Noise and mental health: evidence, mechanisms, and Consequence', Hahad et al, 2024, which notes recognition of noise exposure as a prominent environmental determinant of public health). Good design is therefore important to mitigate adverse effects on mental health. Approximately 9.5 km of new permissive paths will be provided during the operation phase of the Proposed Development (it is noted that this figure is under review, as set out in TT.2.04), along with a 1.8ha (4.5 acres) community orchard with open access. The purpose of the community orchard is for use by residents and the community to enable open access to the area, enjoyment of the space and to allow residents and the community to pick fruit from the trees grown within this orchard. This additional recreational access is identified as a minor beneficial effect on health and wellbeing in Chapter 12: Socio-economics and Land Use of the ES **[AS-016]**. Chapter 13: Traffic and Transport of the ES **[APP-038]** also considers the potential impacts upon PRoW and permissive paths, which are used for recreational purposes. The evidence linking

Question Number	Question to:	Question	Applicant Response
Population Effects (PE) Questions			
			recreation and physical mental health outcomes is well established. The IEMA guidance, 'Guide to Effective Scoping of Health', reflects this by indicating, in respect of leisure and play, that mental health benefits are supported by access to greenspace. Evidence beyond the IEMA guidance demonstrates that positive environmental conditions, such as access to nature, recreational walking, natural soundscapes and biodiversity, deliver mental health benefits. A 2024 systematic review, 'Effectiveness of nature-based walking interventions in improving mental health in adults: a systematic review' (Ma, Lin & Williams, 2024), found that nature-based walking improves mood, reduces stress and anxiety, and enhances overall wellbeing. Further research from 'Nature-Based Exercise Linked to Improved Mental Health' (Psychreg News Team, 2025) shows consistent gains in mood, sleep, resilience and reduced anxiety when outdoor physical activity takes place in natural settings. A 2025 meta-analysis reported in 'Acute mental health benefits of urban nature' (Li et al., 2025) demonstrates that exposure to urban nature reduces depression and anxiety and improves emotional regulation and psychological wellbeing across all age groups. In addition, evidence from the scoping review 'Exploring the relationship between mental health and urban green space soundscapes: A scoping review' (Ahmadi et al., 2026) shows that natural soundscapes such as birdsong and water promote stress reduction and cognitive restoration, while mechanical noise is associated with adverse mental health outcomes. In providing leisure opportunity and new permissive paths, the Proposed Development will therefore have an inherent mental health benefit, as well as a physical and wellbeing aspect. Through incorporating these paths into the design of the Proposed Development the Applicant has identified and taken the opportunity to minimise adverse effects on mental health in a means which reflects the evidence. The Framework LEMP **[REP2-021]** also allows for successful establishment and future management of biodiversity, habitat creation, and landscaping works associated with the Proposed Development. As part of this, the Applicant has committed to deliver a minimum of 30% biodiversity net gain in habitat units, 50% biodiversity net gain in hedgerow units and 10% biodiversity net gain in watercourse units. The commitment to deliver further biodiversity gains in various landscapes will support enhancement to the natural environment, promoting the area as attractive for recreational use and access. As noted already above improving recreational opportunity can serve to support mental health benefits as evidenced by the IEMA scoping guidance. Several measures were identified and incorporated into the design of the Proposed Development to reduce impacts from changes in views. The opportunities taken to do this include substantial new planting to screen views as set out in the Framework LEMP **[REP2-021]** and by incorporating a design amendment to remove solar PV in Field 46

Question Number	Question to:	Question	Applicant Response
Population Effects (PE) Questions			
			following feedback received during the consultation period and discussions with the resident of Grange Cottage. In light of this design change in Field 46, the visual impact at Grange Cottage is reduced to not significant in Years 1 and 15 of operation of the Proposed Development, as set out in the updated version of Chapter 10: Landscape and Visual Amenity of the ES **[AS-117]**. The Proposed Development has been sensitively designed to ensure that noise and vibration impacts were minimised through the implementation of measures such as limiting timing of piling activities, committing to minimum distances between solar stations and BESS and residential receptors, and construction working hours (secured within the Design Commitments within the Design Approach Document **[APP-186]**, the Framework CEMP **[REP2-013]**, Framework OEMP **[REP2-015]** and Framework DEMP **[REP2-017]**. In incorporating opportunities to maintain a standard of sound environment that is conducive to health including mental health as proposed in the IEMA scoping guidance, the Applicant has sought to mitigate adverse effects on mental health in a manner consistent with good practice. The Applicant will work with the Local Authorities to minimise adverse impacts on the local community. The Applicant is also proposing a community benefits package as part of the Proposed Development. In proposing to implement its plans by taking opportunities to contribute to a positive community identity, it is also seeking to accord with the IEMA guidance in respect of an important health determinant identified by it; community identity, culture, resilience and influence. Furthermore, Requirement 5 of Schedule 2 to the Draft DCO **[REP2-005]** secures the establishment of a Community Liaison Group (CLG) prior to commencement of the Proposed Development. The Applicant has already established this CLG, with the initial meeting having taken place in April 2025 and the second meeting being held in March 2026. The purpose of the CLG is to engage with and inform the community about the Proposed Development. In terms of disruption during the construction, operational and decommissioning phases and in recognition of the potential for impacts on mental health that could arise from activities on site, and within the surroundings, there are measures set out in the Framework CEMP **[REP2-013]** Framework OEMP **[REP2-015]** and Framework DEMP **[REP2-017]** to control and reduce or avoid human health and wellbeing related impacts, including mental health impacts. These will inform separate detailed CEMP, OEMP and DEMP that will need to be approved by the Local Planning Authority (/Authorities) prior to construction, and this is secured by Requirements 12, 13 and 20 respectively in Schedule 2 of the draft DCO **[REP2-005]**, each of which require the relevant detailed management plan(s) to be substantially in accordance with the framework plans submitted as part of the DCO Application.

Question Number	Question to:	Question	Applicant Response
Population Effects (PE) Questions			
			A Health and Wellbeing Summary Statement **[EN010154/EXAM/9.21]** has been prepared, and has been submitted to the Examination at Deadline 3, which outlines the measures taken in design of the Proposed Development that specifically enhance mental health and wellbeing. As well as identifying measures implemented including those referenced above, it summarises the approach taken by the Applicant for community engagement. The statement references that the IEMA guidance 'Determining Significance for Human Health in Environmental Impact Assessment' highlights that people's perceptions of a project can impact their psychological and physiological responses to the change and persistent concerns may increase sensitivity, particularly in relation to mental health. In response, the Applicant concludes that pre-application engagement including statutory and non-statutory consultation, and through its Community Liaison Group (which is already operating and has held two meetings to date), has allowed information to be shared accessibly and has enabled stakeholder feedback to inform the design and assessment process to serve to limit such responses.
PE.2.03	Applicant	**NPS EN-1 (2023) – health and wellbeing** With reference to paragraph 4.4.6 of NPS EN-1 (2023), explain what consideration has been given to promoting local improvements to encourage health and wellbeing, including potential impacts on vulnerable groups within society and impacts on those with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.	The Applicant recognises the need for local people to benefit from the Proposed Development. In accordance with paragraph 4.4.6 of NPS EN-1 (2023), the Applicant has extensively considered opportunities to promote health and wellbeing and to secure positive local outcomes, including for vulnerable groups and persons with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. Consideration has been given throughout the evolution of the design of the Proposed Development, with input from the local community shaping the final design of the Proposed Development. Approximately 9.5 km of new permissive paths (it is noted that this figure is under review, as set out in TT.2.04) will be delivered during the operational phase of the Proposed Development, proposed to be made available for recreational purposes, thereby delivering a tangible health and wellbeing benefit. The Framework LEMP **[REP2-021]** (a detailed version of which is to be developed, substantially in accordance with the framework plan, as secured by Requirement 8 of the Draft DCO **[REP2-005]**) explains that the permissive path network will be available during operation of the Proposed Development providing routes across the Principal Site and enhancing the recreational value within the Order Limits. Implementation of new permissive paths will enhance opportunities for walking, informal recreation and nature engagement, support physical activity and mental wellbeing, improve connectivity between surrounding villages and further enhance accessibility to green infrastructure within the local area. In addition, once the Proposed Development is operational, there will be the provision of a 1.8ha (4.5 acres) of new community orchard with open access, offering a direct benefit for the local community. The community orchard will provide a shared social space, supporting community cohesion, intergenerational interaction and access to locally grown produce, contributing to both physical and social wellbeing.

Question Number	Question to:	Question	Applicant Response
Population Effects (PE) Questions			
			Furthermore, Requirement 5 of Schedule 2 to the Draft DCO **[REP2-005]** secures the establishment of a Community Liaison Group (CLG) prior to commencement of the Proposed Development. The Applicant has already established this CLG, with the initial meeting having taken place in April 2025 and the second meeting being held in March 2026. The CLG will continue throughout the construction of the Proposed Development, and by virtue of Requirement 5 of Schedule 2 to the Draft DCO **[REP2-005]**, will continue until the date of final commissioning of the Proposed Development, which will be the start of the operational phase. The CLG provides an opportunity for the local community to engage with the Applicant, learn about the detailed design process post-consent, express concerns, and be kept up to date. It is expected that the group will play an important role in helping to reduce and minimise stress and contribute to wellbeing. In addition, should the Proposed Development be granted consent, the Applicant will provide a community benefit fund providing a sum of £400 per MW of export capacity, per annum. Whilst this does not form part of the DCO application and does not comprise a benefit in the context of the planning balance, it does comprise a benefit of the Proposed Development to the wider community. This community benefit fund would be available for local projects and causes, as determined by the local community (and could include initiatives promoting physical and mental health, youth engagement programmes and community transport, for example). The Applicant believes those communities living closest to the Proposed Development should benefit from it – with these communities being best placed to determine what a 'community benefit' should be. This mechanism allows local communities to determine how best to enhance wellbeing outcomes, including for vulnerable or disadvantaged groups. A Framework Skills, Supply Chain and Employment Plan **[APP-197]** has been prepared which once implemented will promote local employment and training opportunities during construction and operation. Through targeted engagement with local education providers, job centres and community organisations, the Applicant will seek to encourage participation from under-represented and vulnerable groups, promote apprenticeships and skills development pathways and support equitable access to employment opportunities. This approach aligns with the objectives of paragraph 4.4.6 of NPS EN-1 (2023) by contributing to socio-economic wellbeing and reducing barriers to employment for persons with protected characteristics. A Health and Wellbeing Summary Statement **[EN010154/EXAM/9.21]** has been prepared and will be submitted to the Examination at Deadline 3, which outlines the measures taken in design of the Proposed Development that specifically enhance mental health and wellbeing. As well as identifying measures implemented including

Question Number	Question to:	Question	Applicant Response
Population Effects (PE) Questions			
			those referenced above, it summarises the approach taken by the Applicant for community engagement.
PE.2.04	UK Health Security Agency LCC	**Effects on human health – electromagnetic fields** An assessment of electromagnetic fields is presented in section 14.8 of ES Chapter 14: Other Environmental Topics **[APP-039]**. The applicant provided further information in response to RRs (for example pages 71, 140, 291, 335 in **[REP1-047]**) and LCC's LIR **[REP2-031]**. Confirm whether the explanation provided by the applicant satisfactorily addresses your concerns and if not explain why that is the case.	**N/A**
PE.2.05	NKDC LCC	**Suggested skills and education section 106 (s106) planning obligation** Further to the applicant's comments about there being no need for a skills and an education planning obligation, for example in response to ExQ1 GC.1.19 **[REP2-029]** and in the responses to the submitted LIRs **[included in REP2-031]**, provide a detailed justification for the suggested making of an annual contribution of £50,000 (index linked) per year for the lifetime of the proposed development. In replying to this question, the Councils should explain whether: 1) the suggested planning obligation would meet the conditions for entering into obligations; and 2) the proposed development would be unacceptable in the absence of the obligation sought.	**N/A**
PE.2.06	LCC	**Socio-economic assessment of construction effects – temporary workforce** Confirm whether the applicant's response to your LIR **[REP2-031]** and ExQ1 PE.1.04 and PE.1.05 **[REP2-029]** addresses your concerns about how the *"impact of a changing influx of workers"* has been considered and if not, explain why that is the case.	**N/A**

2.10 Transport and Traffic Questions

Table 2-10: Applicant's Response to the Examining Authority's Traffic and Transport Questions

Question Number	Question to:	Question	Applicant Response
Traffic and Transport (TT) Questions			
TT.2.01	LCC	**Applicant's response to ExQ1 LV.1.05 (Effectiveness of the proposed roadside screen planting)** The applicant in responding to ExQ1 LV.1.05 in **[REP2-029]** has commented *"UK highway authorities have a statutory duty to maintain highway safety, giving them powers (Highways Act 1980 s.154) to cut or require cutting of any vegetation that endangers or obstructs road users. However, it is the Applicant's understanding that where the hedge is not owned by the Council and is demonstrably safe (i.e. its growth does not contradict health and safety requirements), the Applicant can request that the Council do not trim these hedges, or trim them less."*. Is the applicant correct in understanding that where a hedge is not owned by the council and could be demonstrated to be safe, the applicant could request the council not to trim hedges or trim them less.	**N/A**
TT.2.02	Applicant LCC	**Use of PRoWs affected by the proposed development** a) **Both** - provide any counts or survey data that may have been undertaken/gathered relating to the use of PRoWs within or adjoining the proposed Order Limits subject to Work Numbers 1, 2, 3 and 4. (The applicant and LCC should agree amongst themselves as to who is best placed to submit any available data). b) **Applicant** – if no count or survey data has been gathered or is available, explain how the sensitivity of and magnitude of effects for PRoW users (receptors) have been quantified and assessed as part of compiling the submitted ES. c) **Applicant** - if no count or survey data is available, counts should be undertaken and the timescales for undertaking those counts and reporting on their results within the examination should be submitted.	a) The Applicant has not carried out surveys of PRoW users associated with the Proposed Development. The Applicant does not consider there is a need for count data. PRoW have been assigned a low-medium to high sensitivity in Chapter 10: Landscape and Visual of the ES **[AS-117]**, low or very low sensitivity in Chapter 13: Traffic and Transport of the ES **[APP-038]** (except for two bridleways which are medium sensitivity), and low sensitivity in Chapter 12: Socio economics and Land Use of the ES **[AS-016]**. The Applicant does not expect count data would increase this sensitivity, which is largely based on minimal delays to users and alternative routes being available for users to choose, and therefore would not affect the conclusions of the assessment. Count data is obtained for assessments where an applicant is attempting to demonstrate a PRoW is rarely used and should be assigned a lower sensitivity. Nevertheless the Applicant is aware from the ISH that NKDC has count data for some of the PRoW and permissive paths and is collating this with a view to sharing it with the Applicant shortly; this data will be reviewed and the implications explained following receipt of the data. b) The traffic and transport assessment (Chapter 13: Traffic and Transport of the ES **[APP-038]**) of the sensitivity and magnitude of impact has been based on the guidance set out in the ISEP (formerly IEMA) guidelines for the Environmental Assessment of Traffic and Movement. PRoW have been scoped into the assessment of Severance, Pedestrian Delay, Non-Motorised User Amenity and Fear and Intimidation. As summarised in Table 13-28 of Chapter 13: Traffic and Transport of the ES **[APP-038]**, the sensitivity of receptors in these categories are primarily related to the degree to which the receptor is separated/segregated from traffic and the nature of any specific

Question Number	Question to:	Question	Applicant Response
			facilities/infrastructure provided. In terms of magnitude of change, Paragraph 13.7.30 of Chapter 13: Traffic and Transport **[APP-038]** sets out how the magnitude of change criteria have been derived for Severance. In summary, these are addressed through consideration of the need for closure/diversion, the duration of the closure/diversion and the additional distance resulting from diversions. As shown in Table 13-33 of Chapter 13: Traffic and Transport of the ES **[APP-038]**, the number of temporary diversions/construction route crossing points on each PRoW has been considered. The socio-economic assessment (Chapter 12: Socio-Economics and Land Use **[AS-016]**) of the effects on PRoW users focuses on the disruption to existing routes and the resulting changes in journey lengths and times and local travel patterns, whereby the sensitivity of PRoW (as per Table 12-7 of Chapter 12: Socio-Economics and Land Use **[AS-016]**) considers the importance of the PRoW and the availability of alternative routes providing access to the wider network or community infrastructure. The magnitude of impact criteria to assess the impacts on PRoW in the socio-economic assessment (as per Table 12-8 of Chapter 12: Socio-Economics and Land Use **[AS-016]**) focuses on the increase/decrease in journey length and/or travel patterns and increased/decreased opportunities for users to access the wider network and/or community infrastructure. The landscape and visual assessment (Chapter 10: Landscape and Visual Amenity of the ES **[AS-117]**) combines the sensitivity and magnitude of a visual impact to determine the level of effect experienced by a person travelling on a PRoW in accordance with Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition (GLVIA3), whereby the sensitivity of landscape and visual receptors is determined via an assessment of their respective value and susceptibility (see Section 10.4 of Chapter 10: Landscape and Visual Amenity of the ES **[AS-117]**), and magnitude is based upon the alteration to the composition of the existing view and/or degree of exposure to view. c) It is not considered necessary for the number of PRoW users to be quantified for the purposes of the Traffic and Transport assessment presented in the ES **[APP-038]** – or for the landscape and visual assessment or socio-economic assessment - for the following reasons: • The guidelines for the assessment of Traffic and Transport effects do not specifically stipulate that surveys are required; • During the scoping period, it was not requested that surveys should be carried out; • Other similar solar DCO applications have not required surveys of PRoW usage to be undertaken as part of their assessments; and • The traffic and transport assessment has allocated the highest sensitivity to PRoW based on the industry guidance developed by ISEP. Higher sensitivity would only be allocated for on-road pedestrian cycle lanes/routes which have a greater degree of interaction with motor vehicles. Count data is more relevant to the landscape and visual assessment, which assesses impacts on user experience; as mentioned, this assessment already assigns a low-medium to high sensitivity where users have views directly into the Site.

Question Number	Question to:	Question	Applicant Response
			These points are expanded upon in the following paragraphs in relation to the traffic and transport assessment. **<u>Requirements of the Guidance for Assessment of Traffic and Transport Effects for Surveys to be Undertaken</u>** The following is noted with respect to the requirements of the assessment of traffic and transport effects, as set out in the stated methodology contained within the EIA Scoping Report (Appendix 1-A of the ES **[APP-118]**) and ES Chapter 13: Traffic and Transport **[APP-038]**: • The ISEP guidance in relation to Severance is provided in Paragraphs 3.13 to 3.18 of the ISEP guidelines. This also makes reference to DMRB LA112 for determining sensitivity of impact. Although paragraph 3.14 makes passing reference to the number of crossing movements being a consideration in the assessment of severance in addition to traffic-related considerations, the quantification of pedestrians/cyclists/horse riders is not a requirement of the assessment. • The sensitivity of receptors with respect to Severance, Pedestrian Delay, NMU Amenity and Fear and Intimidation are set out in Table 13-33 of ES Chapter 13: Traffic and Transport **[APP-038]**, including a summary justification for each receptor. Overall, the guidance does not state that there is any requirement for the assessment of effects on PRoW to include quantification of the number of NMUs (or WCHs in the language of LA112) affected. In the context of the assessment presented in Chapter 13: Traffic and Transport of the ES **[APP-038]**, the impacts on PRoWs have been undertaken in accordance with the guidance, which identifies the sensitivities, magnitudes of impact and overall effects without reference to the number of PRoW users. Furthermore, the Applicant has not sought to justify reductions in sensitivity or magnitude of impacts on the basis of there being low numbers of PRoW users, nor has low PRoW utilisation been identified as a mitigating circumstance in the consideration of the effects of the Proposed Development. **<u>Agreed Approach to Assessment of Traffic and Transport Effects</u>** The EIA Scoping Report **[APP-118]** included at Paragraph 14.5.1 a list of the data sources which were intended to be used to inform the assessment of effects of the Proposed Development. This list specifically included traffic surveys, but made no reference to surveys of the number of NMUs or PRoW users. Furthermore, Paragraphs 14.5.7 to 14.5.29 set out the intended approach to Impact Assessment Methodology, which included no reference to the quantification of NMUs/PRoW users as part of that methodology. The subsequent EIA Scoping Opinion responses are reproduced in Table 13-1 of Chapter 13: Traffic and Transport of the ES **[APP-038]**, together with details of how the responses have been addressed; the scoping responses do not make any reference to there being a requirement for NMU/PRoW surveys to be undertaken.

Question Number	Question to:	Question	Applicant Response
			<u>Comparison with Other Schemes</u> The ES for the Proposed Development is not unusual in assessing the impacts of solar NSIP schemes on PRoW of this nature (i.e. within an agricultural setting) without the use of survey data. The following is a non-exhaustive list of other similar (consented) solar DCO schemes where NMU/PRoW user surveys were not undertaken as part of the assessments: • Longfield Solar Farm • Gate Burton Energy Park • Tillbridge Solar Project • Fenwick Solar Farm • Byers Gill Solar **<u>Industry standard Methodology</u>** The highest sensitivity for PRoW has been applied to the assessment of traffic and transport based on the industry guidance developed by ISEP. Higher sensitivity would only be allocated for on-road pedestrian cycle lanes/routes which have a greater degree of interaction with motor vehicles, and the Applicant did not consider it necessary to deviate from this industry-standard methodology for assigning sensitivity and assessing significance of effects. Count data is considered to be more relevant to other disciplines such as the landscape and visual assessment, which assesses impacts on user experience. As mentioned above, the landscape and visual assessment already assigns the highest sensitivity where users have views directly into the Site, and therefore count data showing high usage would not change this (and any count data showing low usage would lower this, potentially reducing the significance of effects). It is not considered that there are unique aspects to the Proposed Development which would require PRoW user surveys to be undertaken, when these recently approved applications were not required to carry out similar surveys. Furthermore, the findings of any PRoW user surveys would not affect the sensitivity afforded to PRoW users as part of the traffic and transport assessment, or mitigation secured.
TT.2.03	NKDC	**Status of "Stepping Out Routes"** The applicant in responding to the council's LIR **[REP1-056]** has commented *"It should also be noted that, as shown on the plan submitted by the Council within its Response to Issue Specific Hearing Action Point 6 - Stepping Out Walks **[REP1-136]** whilst the routes of the Stepping Out Walks do partially follow PRoW and existing permissive paths, they also utilise land which is neither designated as PRoW nor permissive paths. Therefore, the Stepping Out Walks are reliant on the use of private land over which the public has no rights of access"* **[electronic page 49 in REP2-031]**. a) Explain how public access to Stepping Out Routes, which in their entirety or in part, are neither a designated PRoW nor a recognised permissive route, is protected under the Stepping Out Routes	**N/A**

Question Number	Question to:	Question	Applicant Response
		initiative. In particular, for Stepping Out Routes that include any privately owned land, explain what stops the owner(s) of that land from precluding access to it by members of the public in pursuance of their use of a route? **b)** Should Stepping Out Routes or parts thereof that are neither designated PRoWs nor recognised permissive routes be considered as genuinely publicly accessible routes?	
TT.2.04	Applicant	**Identification of permissive paths** Paragraph 12.5.34 in ES Chapter 12 **[AS-016]** identifies that there are seven existing permissive paths within the proposed Order Limits, namely: 15BCDE, 15BCD1, 17E42A, 15BCD0, 15BCCF, 15BC81 and 15BCC0. In responding to the LIRs **[pages 43 and 44 in REP2-031]**, the applicant states that Figure 3-3: Proposed Permissive Paths **[AS-024]** identifies *"Retained Permissive Paths"* (i.e. those already in place) and *"Proposed Permissive Paths"*. However, based on the key in Figure 3-3, the existing permissive paths and proposed permissive paths to the east of Witham St Hughes seem to cover much of the same lengths. The majority of the lengths with the notation Retained Permissive Paths in Figure 3-3 are identified as *"new permissive path"* on the Streets, Rights of Way and Access Plans **[REP2-004]** and on Figure 7.15-1 (sheet 5) of the FLEMP **[REP2-021]**. Clarify the location and status of existing and proposed/new permissive paths within the proposed Order Limits and amend any application plans and other documents where there are any inconsistencies between the status of permissive paths that wholly or partially exist and those that are proposed.	Figure 3-3 **[AS-024]** illustrates the retained and proposed permissive paths known by the Applicant. In the absence of any mapping from NKDC or LCC, the Applicant has identified these through discussions with landowners. The Applicant is aware of the Stepping Out Routes and is continuing to liaise with the landowners on this; to establish whether landowners are aware of the Stepping Out Routes across their land. The Applicant is aiming to provide an update on this at Deadline 4. The Applicant notes that, as part of the actions arising from ISH3, NKDC has also been requested to provide clarification in relation to the extent of permissive paths within the Order Limits. The Applicant will review the existing and proposed permissive path network illustrated on figures and plans once further information is available from NKDC and landowners, and will provide any updates (if required/relevant) at a future Examination deadline. It is noted that the Framework LEMP **[REP2-021]** currently sets out the provision of approximately 9.5km of permissive paths. As raised by NKDC at ISH3, this figure will be reviewed in line with the above, and updated if required. The Streets, Rights of Way and Access Plans **[REP2-004]** and Figure 7.15-1 (sheet 5) of the Framework LEMP **[REP2-021]** illustrate the extent of the permissive paths that would be delivered by the Proposed Development for the duration of the operational phase. They do not attempt to distinguish between retained and new, given that the Proposed Development would secure their availability for the full operational lifetime of the Proposed Development (except for up to 7 days in any calendar year and during periods of maintenance or emergency). It is acknowledged that a small section of these paths match existing permissive paths. For clarification, the part of the permissive path network being secured by the Proposed Development for its operational lifetime that already exist as permissive paths, due to landowners having consented to them, are illustrated as 'Retained Permissive Paths' on Figure 3-3 **[AS-024]**.
TT.2.05	Applicant LCC National Highways	**Framework Construction Traffic Management Plan (FCTMP) – conditions surveys** a) **Applicant and LCC** - While noting the responses to ExQ1 TT.1.17, comment on whether the wording in paragraph 7.3.2 of the FCTMP **[REP2-023]** is sufficiently clear to identify who would be responsible for any necessary reinstatement work.	a) A commitment to reinstate/ make good any defects that arise to highways assets/verges during the construction phase due to the Proposed Development has been added into the 'Road Condition Surveys' section of the Framework CTMP, and to the Framework DEMP (ref. TT-D1) in respect of decommissioning (submitted to the Examination at Deadline 3). b) Paragraph 7.3.4 of the Framework CTMP has been updated (submitted to the Examination at Deadline 3) to note: "*In addition, a separate road condition survey ~~may~~ will be carried out for the abnormal vehicle routes (transformer and cable drums) ~~for the transformer~~ to the Principal Site, covering the route between the A46 junction and the proposed site access on Bassingham*

Question Number	Question to:	Question	Applicant Response
		b) Applicant - Explain the decision-making process for determining whether a separate road condition survey *"may"* be carried out for the abnormal indivisible load route for the transformer to the Principal Site, as set out in paragraph 7.3.4 in the FCTMP **[REP2-023]**. **LCC and National Highways**: Do you consider the proposed wording to be adequate?	*Road (C-009) i.e. via Haddington Lane."* This update ensures that a road condition survey will be carried out for the AIL route, for both the AIL for the transformer and also the other (cable drum) AIL routes, between the A46 junction and the proposed site access on Bassingham Road (C-009).
TT.2.06	Applicant LCC NKDC	**Framework Public Rights of Way Management Plan (FPRoWMP)** Paragraph 12.8 of LCC's LIR **[REP1-053]** sets out several comments on the FPRoWMP **[REP2-019]**, with the applicant's responses provided on page 127 in **[REP2-031]**. a) **LCC** - Confirm whether the applicant's responses address the matters you have identified. b) **All** - Given the commitment in paragraph 3.2.3 (item f) of the FPRoWMP that the default would be for construction traffic to give-way to other users, should paragraph 3.2.3 (item a) in the FPRoWMP commit now to not having crossing gates across PRoWs? c) **Applicant** - Where components of the proposed development are proposed on both sides of a PRoW, the minimum offset of 10m from the centreline either side of the PRoW would apply. The applicant's response on page 127 in **[REP2-031]** and design commitment PR1 in the Design Approach Document **[APP-186]** also identify that sections of wider offsets would be integrated to vary the extent of views experienced across the Principal Site *"where practicable"*. How would the decision be made on "where practicable"?	a) **N/A** b) The Applicant is not committing to gated access across PRoWs at this stage and proposes that the detail for how PRoW users are kept safe is agreed with the councils in the detailed Public Rights of Way Management Plan, which is secured by Requirement 18 of the draft DCO **[REP2-005]**. Measures will depend on the nature of the crossing, whether it is a precise crossing point perpendicular to the PRoW or whether the construction vehicles will travel along the PRoW which is the case for The Avenue at Morton, and the expected level of usage of the PRoW. Measures may include (to be established and included within the detailed Public Rights of Way Management Plan, as relevant): • Establishing formalised crossing nodes where PRoWs meet haul roads. • Designing access tracks with adequate forward visibility so drivers see pedestrians early. • Installing speed humps or rumble strips, either side of the crossing to slow vehicles approaching the PRoW • Posting speed limits (often ≤ 15 mph / 25 km h) • Installing "Crossing Ahead" signs before (say 100 m) PRoW junctions (distances adjusted for site speeds). • Erecting temporary information boards at PRoW entry points explaining construction activities, expected vehicle numbers, and safety etiquette. • Allocating trained marshals at busy periods while pedestrians, cyclists, or horse riders pass, and providing two-way radios linking marshals to the site logistics team. The appropriate measure will depend on the specific location and nature of works. It is not expected that crossing gates will be required, and this will be a last resort in the event the Applicant is not satisfied that the above would result in safe usage of PRoWs. c) As set out in Design Commitment PR1 within the Design Approach Document **[APP-186]**, a minimum offset of 10m from the centreline of the PRoW would be maintained where components of the Proposed Development are located on both sides of a PRoW. In addition to this minimum offset, wider offsets may be incorporated in order to vary and enhance the extent of views experienced across the Principal Site. This decision would be taken in detailed design once the final panel selection is made and therefore the sizing, pitch, inter-row spacing, and other factors are known, to inform whether it allows the opportunity to widen spacing around PRoWs. The Councils will have the opportunity to comment on the detailed design as part of the process under Requirement 6 of the draft DCO **[REP2-005]**, which requires approval from NKDC in consultation with LCC on the final details.

Question Number	Question to:	Question	Applicant Response
TT.2.07	Applicant	**Public rights of way – assessment of effects** In responding to NKDC's LIR in **[REP2-031]**, the applicant points to the assessment of effects in ES Chapters 12 **[AS-016]** and 13 **[APP-038]**. The assessment in those chapters appears to focus on closures and diversions and associated mitigation. While ES Chapter 10 **[AS-117]** also considers PRoWs, this does not extend to the range of factors identified by NKDC in paragraph 17.22 of its LIR **[REP1-056]**, namely amenity, recreation, health, and economic benefits, nor is it clear whether these wider factors have informed the definition of *"importance"* in Table 12-7 of ES Chapter 12. Comment on the "holistic approach" to assessing effects sought by NKDC.	Within Chapter 12: Socio Economics and Land Use of the ES **[AS-016]**, PRoWs are considered insofar as they perform a socio-economic, tourism or recreational function. This includes providing access to employment, land uses, services, community facilities, visitor destinations and recreational activities, or where changes could give rise to discernible socio-economic effects. Accordingly, the assessment focuses on the impact of disruption to existing routes and the resulting changes in journey lengths and times and local travel patterns from temporary and permanent closures or diversions that could materially affect such access, and on the effectiveness of proposed mitigation. This focus is considered appropriate because access is the primary pathway through which PRoW-related socio-economic effects would arise. Where no significant effects on access are identified, it is unlikely that there would be consequential significant effects on the wider outcomes identified by NKDC in paragraph 17.22 of its LIR such as amenity, recreation, health or economic benefits. Given this approach, receptor importance in the context of the sensitivity assessment, and in relation to PRoWs within Chapter 12: Socio-Economics and Land Use of the ES **[AS-016]**, is defined using socio-economic criteria, primarily with reference to the level of substitutability and consideration of access, and socio-economic activity. It does not seek to incorporate human health-based considerations in-line with the methodology set out and submitted at the scoping stage (as set out in Appendix 1-A EIA Scoping Report of the ES **[APP-118]**). A Health and Wellbeing Summary Statement **[EN010154/EXAM/9.21]**, submitted to the Examination at Deadline 3, has been prepared which summarises the approach to the consideration and assessment of effects of the Proposed Development on human health and wellbeing, both physical and mental health, that has been undertaken. The Applicant shared this Health and Wellbeing Statement with LCC an NKDC for review and comment in advance of its finalisation. This Health and Wellbeing Summary Statement sets out the consideration given to effects on Public Rights of Way by the Applicant in various assessments, including Landscape and Visual, Traffic and Transport and Socio-economics. In this context, reference is made in the Statement to applicable local strategies such as Lincolnshire Walking Strategy, Lincolnshire Visitor Economy: Strategy for promoting Lincolnshire to Visitors Update, and the North Kesteven Active Travel Strategy.
TT.2.08	Applicant	**Public Rights of Way - Maintenance** Explain what measures would be in place to ensure that any damage/defects caused to PRoWs from the construction, operation, maintenance and decommissioning of the proposed development would be addressed and how they would be secured. For example, from vehicles using routes, or more muddy surfaces caused by the enclosure of paths as indicated by LCC in its LIR **[REP1-053]**.	Measures will be implemented throughout the construction, operation (and maintenance) and decommissioning phases of the Proposed Development to ensure that any damage or defects to PRoWs are avoided where possible and appropriately addressed in the event that they do occur. Should damage or defects occur to PRoW surfaces (for example through construction vehicle use or increased mud deposition), the Applicant would undertake appropriate repairs to restore the affected PRoW to a condition no worse than its pre-construction state.

Question Number	Question to:	Question	Applicant Response
			The Framework PRoWMP and Framework DEMP have been updated to reflect this and have been submitted to the Examination at Deadline 3 to include a commitment to reinstate/make good any defects that arise to PRoW where they are used or crossed by construction vehicles due to the construction, operational maintenance or decommissioning of the Proposed Development. These measures would be secured through the relevant management plans approved pursuant to the requirements of the draft DCO, and through ongoing engagement with Lincolnshire County Council, to ensure that PRoWs remain safe and usable throughout the lifetime of the Proposed Development.
TT.2.09	NKDC	**Public rights of way – mitigation and compensation** A number of mitigation/compensation measures are identified in paragraph 17.22 of the council's LIR **[REP1-056]**. Explain whether you consider that the proposed development would or would not be unacceptable without such measures	**N/A**

2.11 Water Environment, including Hydrology and Flood Risk

Table 2-11: Applicant's Response to the Examining Authority's Water Environment, including Hydrology and Flood Risk Questions

Question Number	Question to:	Question	Applicant Response
Water Environment, including Hydrology and Flood Risk (WE) Questions			
WE.2.01	Applicant Environment Agency LCC	**Sequential Test** The Flood Risk Assessment **[APP-146]** identifies that three solar panel fields would be at least partly within Flood Zone 2 (field 45) and the climate change extent of Flood Zone 3 (fields 54 and 57). Paragraph 6.3.71 of the Planning Statement **[AS-098]** identifies that this has arisen because of the need to balance areas for solar generation with the provision of environmental mitigation and there being no reasonably available locations within the site itself in order for the proposed development to maximise the delivery of low carbon renewable energy. a) **Applicant** - How critical are the areas of solar panels within the higher flood risk areas to the proposed development? If the areas of higher flood risk were not used for the siting of solar arrays, what implications would that have for the generating capacity for the proposed development? In responding to this question, the applicant should identify what the reductions in installed MW capacity and generated output in MWh there would be if fields 45, 54 and 57 were not used for electricity generation purposes. b) **Environment Agency and LCC** – Are you satisfied that, based on the submitted evidence, the proposed development would remain safe from current and future flood risk for the lifetime of the development, without increasing flood risk elsewhere?	The Applicant has amended the Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) (Appendix 9-C of the ES **[REP1-024]**) and the Framework Surface Water Drainage Strategy (SWDS) (Appendix 9-D of the ES **[REP1-025]**) because Annex C of the Framework Surface Water Drainage Strategy **[REP1-025]** showed a slightly earlier design iteration of the proposed solar layout. As the drawing in Annex C has now been updated to reflect the correct layout, consequential updates to the FRA and SWDS were required. These amendments do not change the conclusions of the assessments undertaken and the amendments to the FRA have been discussed and agreed with the Environment Agency. The updated Annex C and amended FRA and SWDS will be submitted to the Examination at Deadline 3. The amendments made to the FRA and Framework SWDS as a result of the updated layout are summarised below: • The previous iteration of Annex A of the Framework SWDS **[REP1-025]** and subsequent assessment of flood risk within the FRA **[REP1-024]** showed solar PV panels within three fields (Field IDs: 45, 54 and 57) that include areas within Flood Zone 2 and Flood Zone 3a, within the Principal Site. The revised Annex A of the Framework SWDS, reflecting the correct solar layout and revised field numbers, shows that solar PV panels are located within areas of Flood Zone 2 and Flood Zone 3a in 11 fields (Field IDs: 44, 45, 48, 51, 53, 55, 57, 59, 60, 61 and 62). Consequently, the previously submitted documents did not account for solar PV areas within Flood Zones 2 and 3a within eight of the fields. • The previous calculation for panel leg volumes, provided in Annex G of the FRA **[REP1-024]**, included an error that over-estimated the flood depth increase from panel legs in flood risk areas. Consequently, following the correction, the overall flood depth increase has reduced, including consideration of the 8 additional solar PV fields assessed. A meeting was held with the Environment Agency on 27 February 2026 to discuss the proposed amendments to the FRA, which now accounts for the solar PV panels within the 11 fields. The Environment Agency was presented with the revised calculations for panel leg volumes and flood depths, and mitigation to raise panels above the design flood level (1% AEP plus 32% climate change) and for the Credible Maximum Scenario (CMS) (1% AEP plus 57% climate change, or the Flood Zone 2 extents, whichever was greater).

Question Number	Question to:	Question	Applicant Response
Water Environment, including Hydrology and Flood Risk (WE) Questions			
			The Environment Agency agreed that the amendment does not change the original conclusions of the FRA and accepted that the revised flood depth increase from panel legs is less than previously calculated (average depth increase is now 0.24mm, previously 0.94mm). The Environment Agency has also accepted panel raising mitigation to provide freeboard for both the design event and CMS event is acceptable. This is reflected in the Statement of Common Ground between the Applicant and the Environment Agency, which is to be submitted at Deadline 3A of the Examination. With regards to Part a) of question WE.2.01, the Applicant's response is set out below: In accordance with paragraph 5.8.23 of NPS EN-1, which states that all projects should apply the Sequential Test to locating development within the site, a sequential approach has been taken in locating infrastructure to avoid areas of flood risk. As reflected in Design Commitment WA4, set out in Appendix A of the Design Approach Document **[APP-186]** and secured via Requirement 6 'Detailed Design Approval' of the Draft DCO **[REP2-005]**, all proposed buildings, compound areas, the substation, transformer stations, BESS, and the majority of solar panels are located within Flood Zone 1 (Low Risk). Only a small number of fields containing solar PV panels are located within Flood Zones 2 and 3a. Solar PV panels and mounting structures will not increase surface water flood risk as they do not alter the existing drainage regime. Appendix 9-C: Flood Risk Assessment of the ES **[REP1-024]** confirms that these areas remain safe for the lifetime of the development and do not increase flood risk elsewhere. The areas of higher flood risk where solar panels are located are critical to the Proposed Development as they contribute to maximising the energy generation capacity of the site. As set out in Paragraph 6.3.71 of the Planning Statement **[AS-098]**, while there are areas of lower flood risk within the Principal Site, the need to balance solar generation with environmental mitigation such as dispersed land for bird mitigation to avoid flocking, and maintaining intervisibility between heritage assets means there are no other reasonably available locations within the Principal Site. It should be noted that the point relating to flocking was raised by the Ministry of Defence in their response to Statutory Consultation who considered that the potential for flocking should be minimised as far as possible. Therefore, the location of solar panels within areas of Flood Zone 2 and 3a is required to maximise the delivery of low-carbon renewable energy for the agreed grid connection. The FRA has been prepared in accordance with feedback received by the Environment Agency, and consultation has been undertaken throughout the preparation of the document. The Environment Agency are in agreement with the proposed solar layout. This is reflected within

Question Number	Question to:	Question	Applicant Response
Water Environment, including Hydrology and Flood Risk (WE) Questions			
			Section 3.7 of the Statement of Common Ground between the Environment Agency and the Applicant, which is to be submitted to the Examination at Deadline 3A. Solar panels located in Flood Zones 2 and 3a contribute 9.9 MW of the total proposed generating capacity of 382 MW. Excluding the higher-risk areas would reduce total capacity by 9.9 MW. Excluding these areas from the Proposed Development would require either: • Reducing the total generating capacity of the Proposed Development, therefore not maximising the renewable energy generation from the grid connection agreement, or • Revising the layout in a way that would not conflict with environmental mitigation requirements, such as reducing buffers for protected habitats or reducing the area required for bird mitigation land by siting panels in other areas. In conclusion, and in accordance with paragraph 5.8.36 of NPS EN-1 which provides that in decision making, the Secretary of State should, amongst other things, be satisfied that the application is supported by an appropriate FRA, 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 and in flood risk areas the project is designed and constructed to remain safe and operational during its lifetime, without increasing flood risk elsewhere, it can be demonstrated that: • The DCO Application is supported by a FRA **[REP1-024]**, which has been prepared in agreement with the Environment Agency. • The Sequential Test has been applied and satisfied as part of site selection, as demonstrated by the Site Selection Report at Appendix A of the Planning Statement **[AS-098]**. • The Sequential Test has been applied to locating development within the site as demonstrated in the Planning Statement **[AS-098]**, ensuring that the majority of infrastructure is located within Flood Zone 1. Where a limited proportion of solar PV panels are situated within Flood Zones 2 and 3a, this is necessary to maximise the delivery of low-carbon renewable energy while maintaining compliance with environmental mitigation requirements. • As demonstrated by the FRA **[REP1-024]**, the embedded mitigation measures and the measures set out in the Framework SWDS **[REP1-025]** ensure that the Proposed Development will be safe for its operational life and will not increase flood risk elsewhere.

Question Number	Question to:	Question	Applicant Response
Water Environment, including Hydrology and Flood Risk (WE) Questions			
WE.2.02	Applicant	**Assessment of effects – groundwater quality** Paragraph 9.7.48 of the ES Chapter 9: Water Environment was updated at Deadline 1 **[REP1-021]** to reflect the most recent guidance on good practice for assessing impacts on ground water quality, as identified in the Environment Agency's RR **[RR-089]**. However, that is still caveated with *"if and where necessary"*. Explain the situations where the guidance would not be followed and the decision-making process for determining "if and where necessary".	Following discussions with the Environment Agency, paragraph 8.7.48 of Chapter 9: Water Environment has been updated to recognise the necessity of following the relevant guidance, and will be submitted to the examination at Deadline 3) to state: "*Nonetheless, prior to construction works commencing, a targeted scheme of Ground Investigation and testing followed by a Quantitative Risk Assessment will be completed. This will be in accordance, ~~if and~~ where necessary, with BS10175:2011+A2:2017 Investigation of Potentially Contaminated Sites: Code of Practice (Ref 9-98), BS 5930:2015+A1:2020 Code of Practice for Ground Investigations (Ref 9-99), and the Environment Agency's Land contamination risk management (LCRM) (Ref 9-97)*."

Appendix A Figures

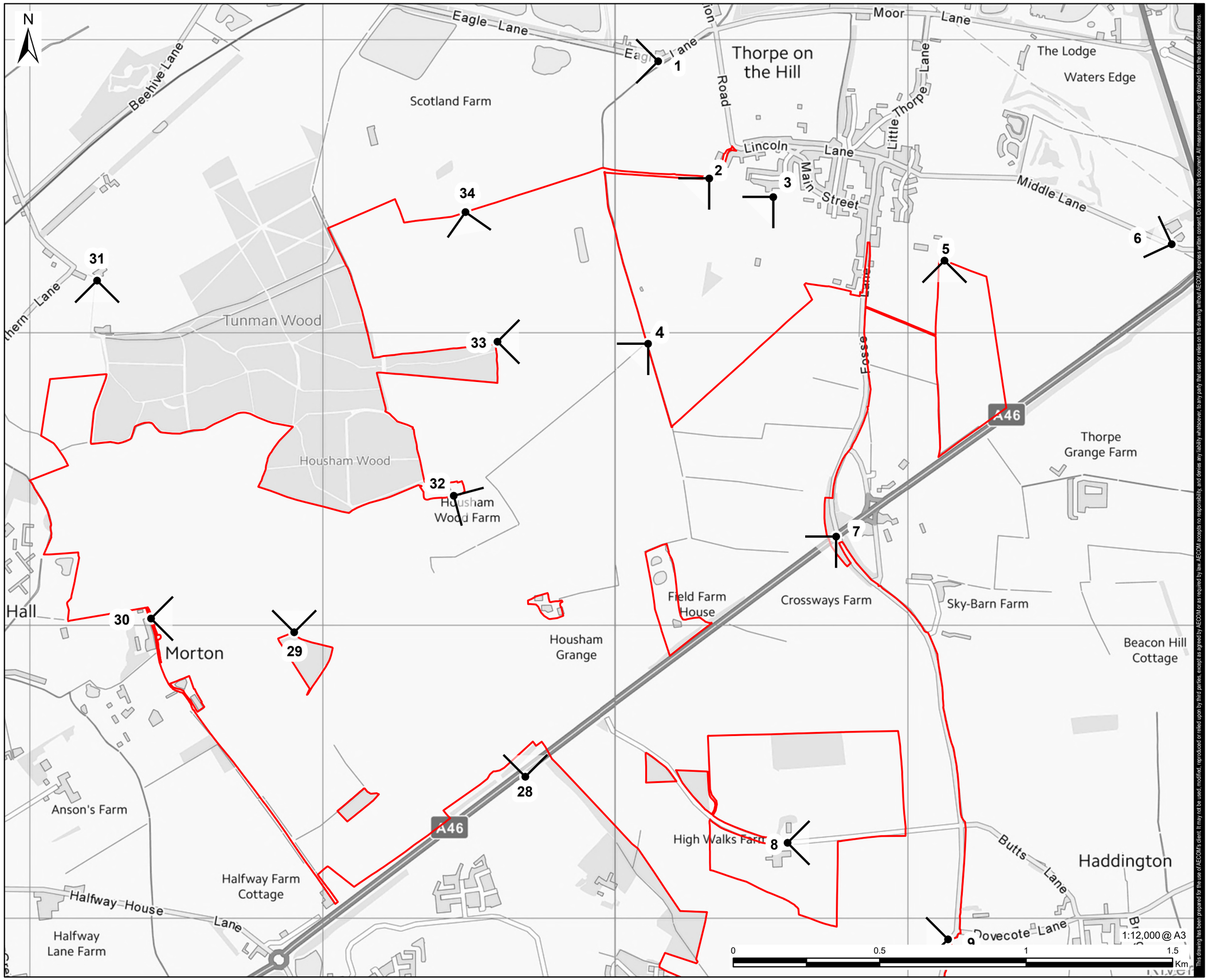
Figure WQ2-1: Landscape and Visual Amenity Viewpoint Locations

Figure WQ2-2: Proximity of Local Wildlife Sites to the Proposed Development

Figure WQ2-3: Indicative Potential Quarry Expansion

Project No.: 60700987 Drawn: HW Checked: AM Approved: LB Date: 2026-03-19

Filename: \\ra.aecomnet.com\fs\EMEA\London-UKLON08\Legacy\UKLON08PFPSW001\UKLON08PFPSW001-V1\DPEL\Library\GIS_DATA\Projects\Fosse Green Energy Park\02_Maps\Environmental Statement\ExaminingAuthorities_Response\FGE_ExO2_Figures\FGE_ExO2_Figure.aprx



Fosse Green Energy

PROJECT

Fosse Green Energy

CLIENT

Fosse Green Energy Ltd

CONSULTANT

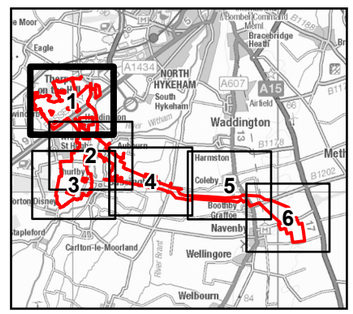
AECOM Limited
Sunley House
4 Bedford Park
Surrey, CR0 2AP, UK
[redacted]

LEGEND

DCO Site Boundary

Viewpoints

SHEET PLAN



NOTES

LEGISLATION

Regulation 8(1)(k) Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010.

ISSUE PURPOSE

Examination Submission

FIGURE TITLE

Landscape and Visual Amenity Viewpoint Locations

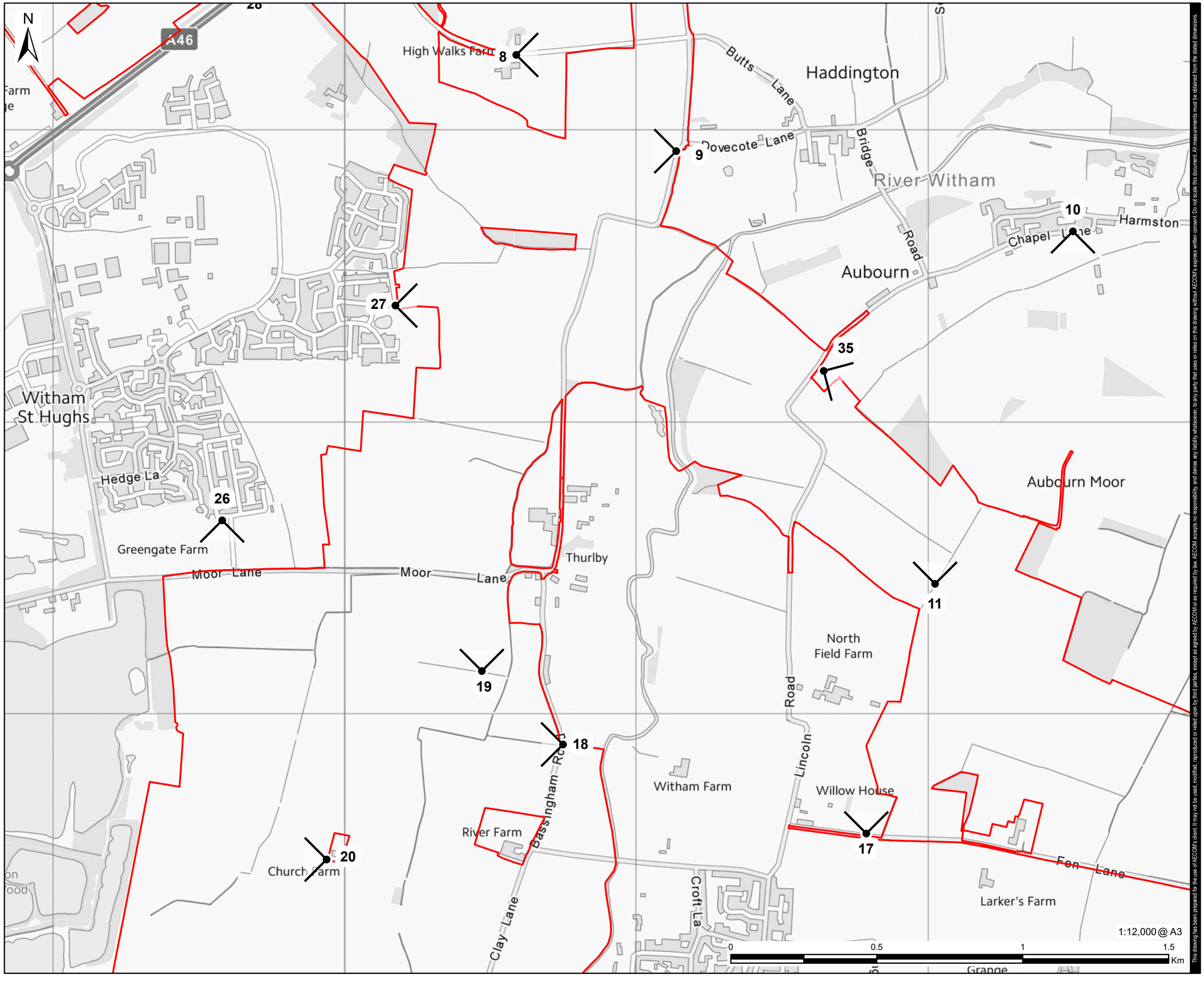
FIGURE NUMBER		REV.
WQ2-1	Sheet 1 of 6	01

DOCUMENT REFERENCE

EN010154/EXAM/9.19

Project No.: 60700987 Drawn: HW Checked: AM Approved: LB Date: 2026-03-19

Filename: \\na.aecomnet.com\fs\EMEA\London-UKLON08Legacy\UKLON08PFPSW001\UKLON08PFPSV001-V1\DPEL\Library\GIS_DATA\Projects\Fosse Green Energy Park\02_Maps\Environmental Statement\Examining Authorities_Response\FGE_ExQ2_Figures\FGE_ExQ2_Figure.apx



Fosse Green Energy

PROJECT

Fosse Green Energy

CLIENT

Fosse Green Energy Ltd

CONSULTANT

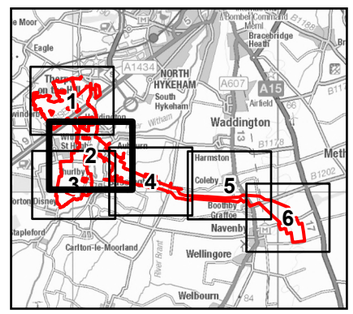
AECOM Limited
Sunley House
4 Bedford Park
Surrey, CR0 2AP, UK

LEGEND

DCO Site Boundary

Viewpoints

SHEET PLAN



NOTES

LEGISLATION

Regulation 8(1)(k) Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010.

ISSUE PURPOSE

Examination Submission

FIGURE TITLE

Landscape and Visual Amenity Viewpoint Locations

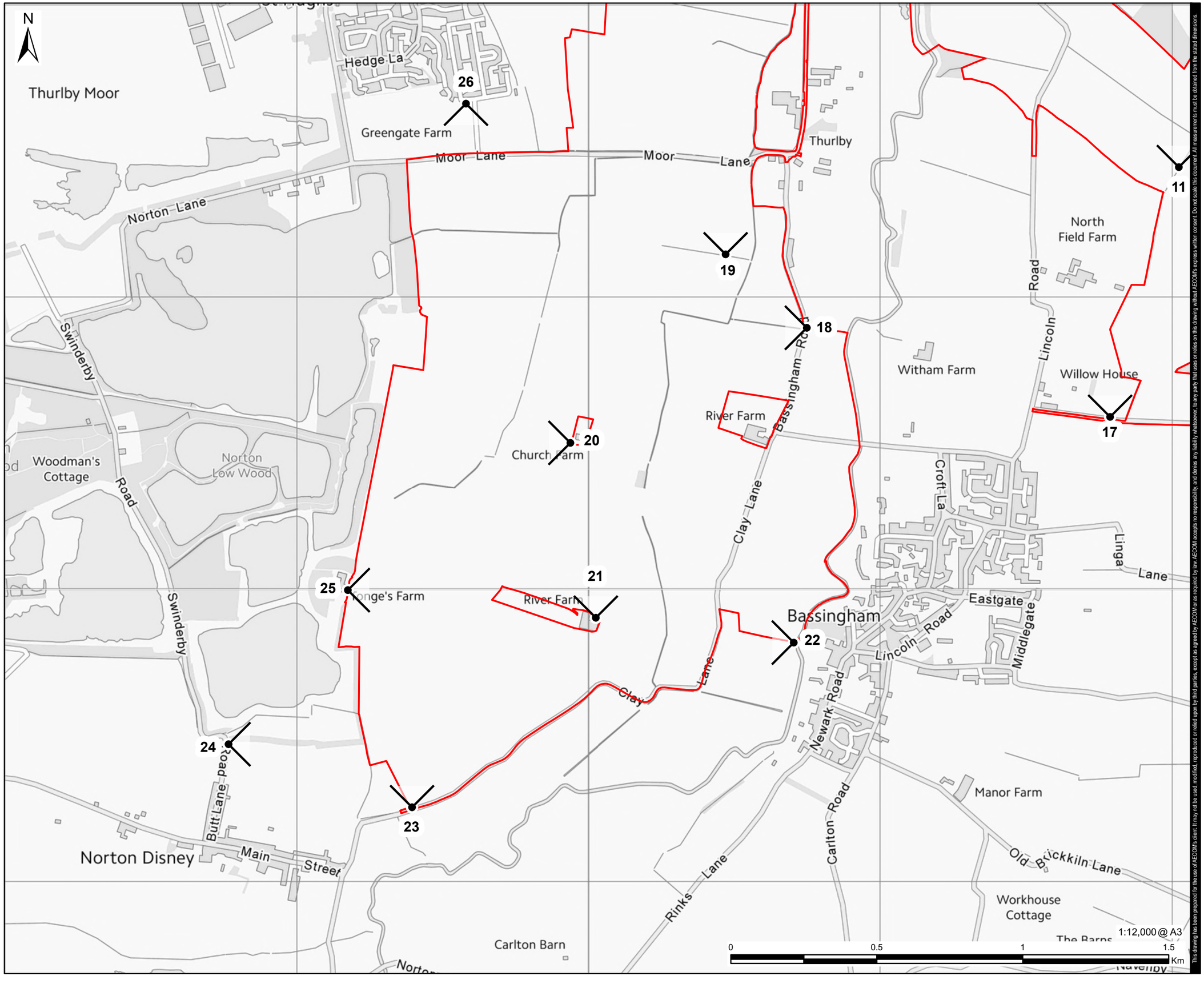
FIGURE NUMBER		REV.
WQ2-1	Sheet 2 of 6	01

DOCUMENT REFERENCE

EN010154/EXAM/9.19

Project No.: 60700987 Drawn: HW Checked: AM Approved: LB Date: 2026-03-19

Filename: \\na.aecomnet.com\file\EMEA\London-UKLON08\Legacy\UKLON08PPSW001\UKLON08PPSW001-V1\DPEL\Library\GIS_DATA\Projects\Fosse Green Energy Park\02_Maps\Environmental Statement\ExaminingAuthorities_Response\FGE_ExQ2_Figure\FGE_ExQ2_Figure.aprx



1:12,000 @ A3

Fosse Green Energy

PROJECT

Fosse Green Energy

CLIENT

Fosse Green Energy Ltd

CONSULTANT

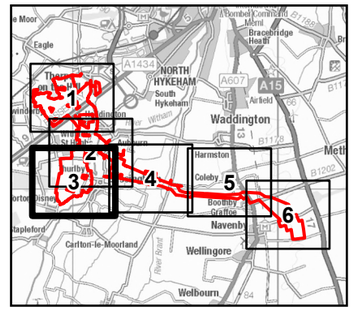
AECOM Limited
Sunley House
4 Bedford Park
Surrey, CR0 2AP, UK
[redacted]

LEGEND

DCO Site Boundary

Viewpoints

SHEET PLAN



NOTES

Contains OS data © Crown copyright 2025

LEGISLATION

Regulation 8(1)(k) Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010.

ISSUE PURPOSE

Examination Submission

FIGURE TITLE

Landscape and Visual Amenity Viewpoint Locations

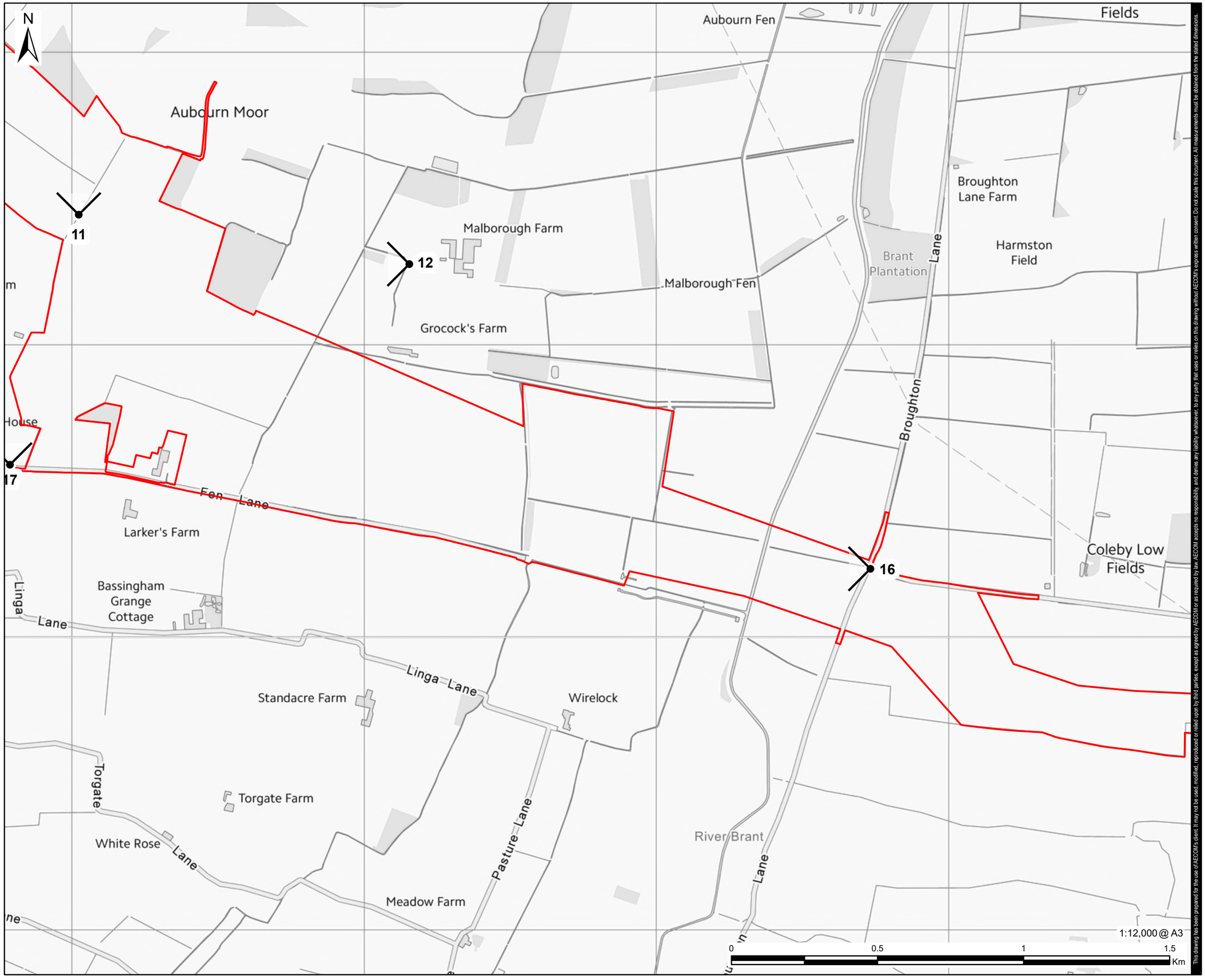
FIGURE NUMBER		REV.
WQ2-1	Sheet 3 of 6	01

DOCUMENT REFERENCE

EN010154/EXAM/9.19

Project No.: 60700987 Drawn: HW Checked: AM Approved: LB Date: 2026-03-19

Filename: \\na.aecomnet.com\fs\EMEA\London-UKLON08\Legacy\UKLON08PFPSW001\UKLON08PFPSW001-V1\DPE\Library\GIS_DATA\Projects\Fosse Green Energy Park\02_Maps\Environmental Statement\ExaminingAuthorities_Response\FGE_ExQ2_Figure\FGE_ExQ2_Figure.aprx



Fosse Green Energy

PROJECT

Fosse Green Energy

CLIENT

Fosse Green Energy Ltd

CONSULTANT

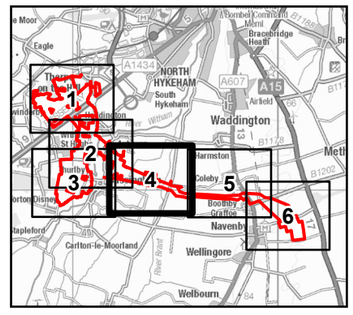
AECOM Limited
Sunley House
4 Bedford Park
Surrey, CR0 2AP, UK
[redacted]

LEGEND

DCO Site Boundary

Viewpoints

SHEET PLAN



NOTES

LEGISLATION

Regulation 8(1)(k) Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010.

ISSUE PURPOSE

Examination Submission

FIGURE TITLE

Landscape and Visual Amenity Viewpoint Locations

FIGURE NUMBER		REV.
WQ2-1	Sheet 4 of 6	01

DOCUMENT REFERENCE

EN010154/EXAM/9.19

Project No.: 60700987 Drawn: HW Checked: AM Approved: LB Date: 2026-03-19

Filename: \\na.aecomnet.com\ifs\EMEALondon-UKLON06Legacy\UKLON06PPSW001\UKLON06PPSW001-V1\DPELLibrary\GIS_DATA\Projects\Fosse Green Energy Park\02_Maps\Environmental Statement\ExaminingAuthorities_Response\FGE_ExQ2_Figure\FGE_ExQ2_Figure.aprx

N

13

14

15

Tower Lane

tham Road

Ryedale

Heath House

Road

Coleby Heath

Heath

Rose Gardens

Manor Farm

Low Fields Farm

Rectory Road

Rose Cottage

Coleby

Hill Rise

Dovecote La

The Old Cowshed

Mill House

Boothby Graffoe Heath

B1202

Heath Lane

Boothby Graffoe

Main Street

Grantha

Ermine House Farm

Boothby Graffoe Low Fields

Castle Lane

Lowfields

1:12,000 @ A3

0 0.5 1 1.5 Km

Fosse Green Energy

PROJECT

Fosse Green Energy

CLIENT

Fosse Green Energy Ltd

CONSULTANT

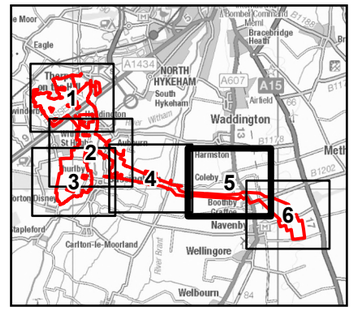
AECOM Limited
Sunley House
4 Bedford Park
Surrey, CR0 2AP, UK

LEGEND

DCO Site Boundary

Viewpoints

SHEET PLAN



NOTES

Contains OS data © Crown copyright 2025

LEGISLATION

Regulation 8(1)(k) Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010.

ISSUE PURPOSE

Examination Submission

FIGURE TITLE

Landscape and Visual Amenity Viewpoint Locations

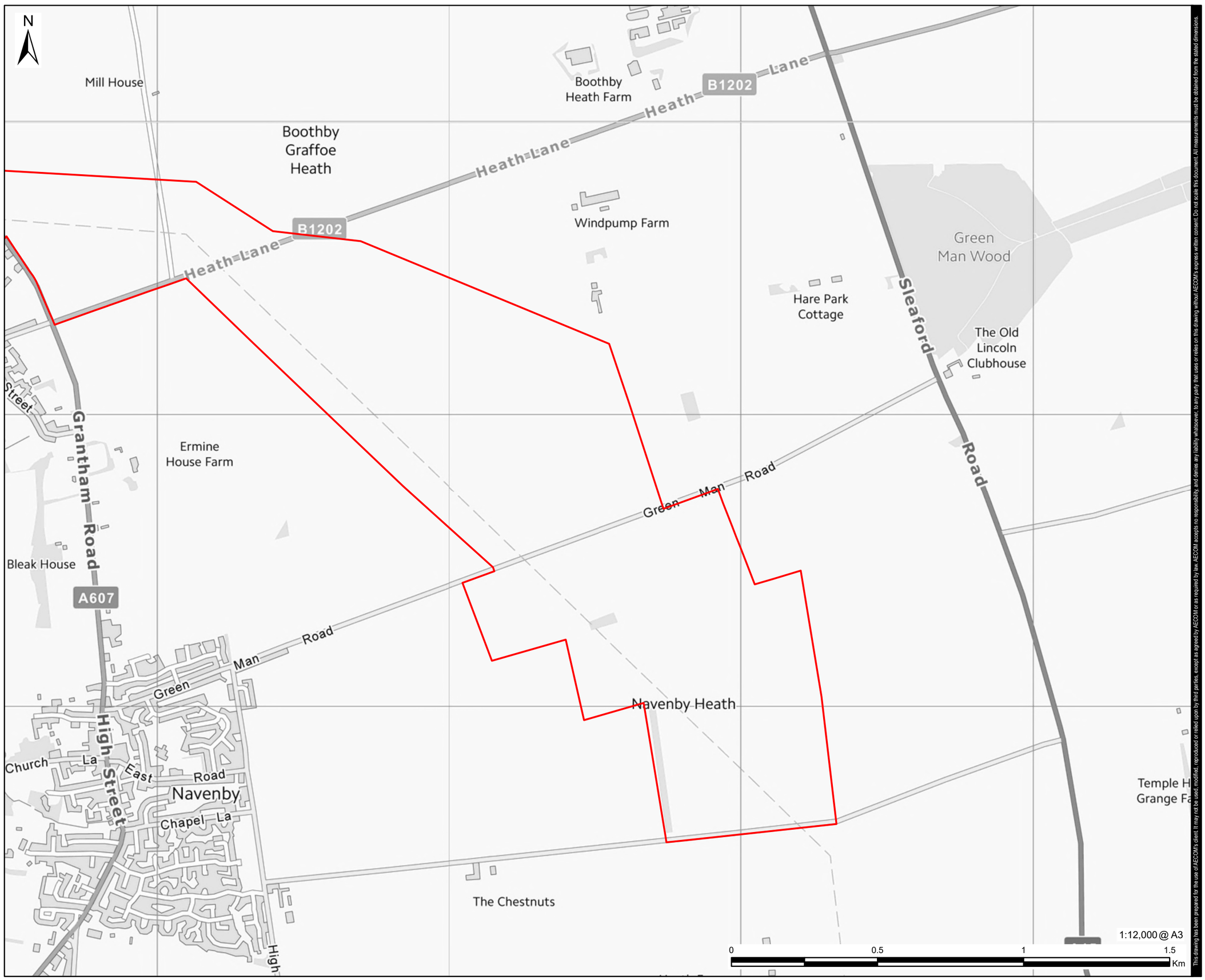
FIGURE NUMBER		REV.
WQ2-1	Sheet 5 of 6	01

DOCUMENT REFERENCE

EN010154/EXAM/9.19

Project No.: 60700987 Drawn: HW Checked: AM Approved: LB Date: 2026-03-19

Filename: \\na.aecomnet.com\ifs\EMEA\London-UKLON06\Legacy\UKLON06PPPSW001\UKLON06PPPSW001-V1\DPEL\Library\GIS_DATA\Projects\Fosse Green Energy Park\02_Maps\Environmental Statement\ExaminingAuthorities_Response\FGE_ExQ2_Figures\FGE_ExQ2_Figure.aprx



Fosse Green Energy

PROJECT

Fosse Green Energy

CLIENT

Fosse Green Energy Ltd

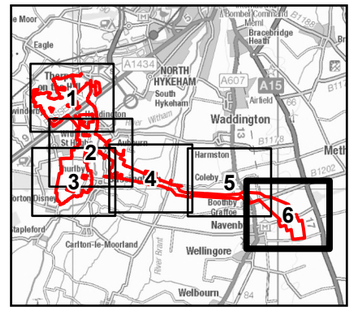
CONSULTANT

AECOM Limited
Sunley House
4 Bedford Park
Surrey, CR0 2AP, UK
[redacted]

LEGEND

DCO Site Boundary

SHEET PLAN



NOTES

Contains OS data © Crown copyright 2025

LEGISLATION

Regulation 8(1)(k) Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010.

ISSUE PURPOSE

Examination Submission

FIGURE TITLE

Landscape and Visual Amenity Viewpoint Locations

FIGURE NUMBER		REV.
WQ2-1	Sheet 6 of 6	01

DOCUMENT REFERENCE

EN010154/EXAM/9.19

Revision: 01 Drawn: HW Checked: AM Approved: MP Date: 2026-03-19

Filename: \\na.aecomnet.com\fs\EMEA\London-UKLON\600\Legacy\UKLON\60\PFPSW001\UKLON60PFPSW001-V1\DPEL\Library\GIS_DATA\Projects\Fosse Green Energy Park\02_Maps\Environmental Statement\Examining Authorities_Response\FGE_Ex\02_Figures\FGE_Ex\02_Figure.aprx

Fosse Green Energy

PROJECT

Fosse Green Energy

CLIENT

Fosse Green Energy Ltd

CONSULTANT

AECOM Limited
Sunley House
4 Bedford Park
Surrey, CR0 2AP, UK
www.aecom.com

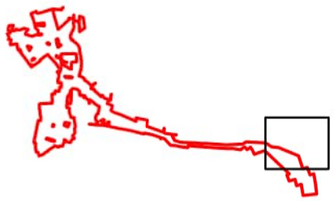
LEGEND

DCO Site Boundary

Designation

Local Wildlife Site (LWS) - Boothby Graffoe Road Verge

Local Wildlife Site (LWS) Boothby Graffoe Road Verge - 100m Buffer



NOTES

Microsoft, Vantor, Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community
© Natural England copyright. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown Copyright and database right 2024, NB This national dataset is "indicative" not "definitive". Definitive information can only be provided by individual local authorities and you should refer directly to their information for all purposes that require the most up to date and complete dataset.

LEGISLATION

Regulation 8(1)(k) Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010.

ISSUE PURPOSE

Examination Submission

FIGURE TITLE

Proximity of Local Wildlife Sites to the Proposed Development - Boothby Graffoe Road Verges

FIGURE NUMBER		REV.
WQ2-2	Sheet 1 of 4	01

DOCUMENT REFERENCE

EN010154/EXAM/9.19

Revision: 01 Drawn: HW Checked: AM Approved: MP Date: 2026-03-19

Filename: \\na.aecomnet.com\fs\EMEA\London-UKLON06\Legacy\UKLON06PFPSW001\UKLON06PFPSW001-V1\DPEL\Library\GIS_DATA\Projects\Fosse Green Energy Park\02_Maps\Environmental Statement\Examining Authorities_Response\FGE_ExQ2_Figures\FGE_ExQ2_Figure.aprx

Fosse Green Energy

PROJECT

Fosse Green Energy

CLIENT

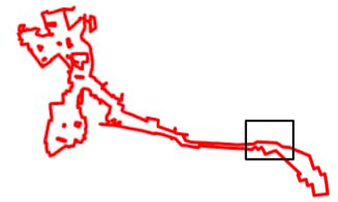
Fosse Green Energy Ltd

CONSULTANT

AECOM Limited
Sunley House
4 Bedford Park
Surrey, CR0 2AP, UK
www.aecom.com

LEGEND

- DCO Site Boundary
- Local Wildlife Site (LWS) - High Dike, Coleby Mill to Harmston Verges
- Local Wildlife Site (LWS) High Dike, Coleby Mill to Harmston Verges - 100m Buffer



NOTES

Microsoft, Vantor, Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community
© Natural England copyright. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown Copyright and database right 2024, NB This national dataset is "indicative" not "definitive". Definitive information can only be provided by individual local authorities and you should refer directly to their information for all purposes that require the most up to date and complete dataset.

LEGISLATION

Regulation 8(1)(k) Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010.

ISSUE PURPOSE

Examination Submission

FIGURE TITLE

Proximity of Local Wildlife Sites to the Proposed Development - High Dike, Coleby Mill to Harmston Verges

FIGURE NUMBER		REV.
WQ2-2	Sheet 2 of 4	01

DOCUMENT REFERENCE

EN010154/EXAM/9.19

Revision: 01 Drawn: HW Checked: AM Approved: MP Date: 2026-03-19

Fosse Green Energy

PROJECT

Fosse Green Energy

CLIENT

Fosse Green Energy Ltd

CONSULTANT

AECOM Limited
Sunley House
4 Bedford Park
Surrey, CR0 2AP, UK
www.aecom.com

LEGEND

- DCO Site Boundary
- Local Wildlife Site (LWS) - Gorse Lane
- Local Wildlife Site (LWS) Gorse Lane - 100m Buffer

NOTES

Microsoft, Vantor, Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

LEGISLATION

Regulation 8(1)(k) Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010.

ISSUE PURPOSE

Examination Submission

FIGURE TITLE

Proximity of Local Wildlife Sites to the Proposed Development - Gorse Lane

FIGURE NUMBER		REV.
WQ2-2	Sheet 3 of 4	01

DOCUMENT REFERENCE

EN010154/EXAM/9.19

Filename: \\na.aecomnet.com\fs\EMEA\London-UKLON1806\Legacy\UKLON306PFPSW001\UKLON306PFPSW001-V1\DPE\Library\GIS_DATA\Projects\Fosse Green Energy Park\02_Maps\Environmental Statement\Examining\Authorities_Response\FGE_Ex02_Figures\FGE_EX02_Figure.aprx

Revision: 01 Drawn: HW Checked: AM Approved: MP Date: 2026-03-19

Filename: \\na.aecomnet.com\Files\EMEA\London-UKLON06\Legacy\UKLON306PFPSW001\UKLON306PFPSW001-V1\DPEL\Library\GIS_DATA\Projects\Fosse Green Energy Park\02_Maps\Environmental Statement\Examining Authorities_Response\FGE_ExQ2_Figures\FGE_ExQ2_Figure.aprx

Fosse Green Energy

PROJECT

Fosse Green Energy

CLIENT

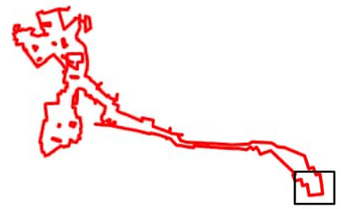
Fosse Green Energy Ltd

CONSULTANT

AECOM Limited
Sunley House
4 Bedford Park
Surrey, CR0 2AP, UK
www.aecom.com

LEGEND

- DCO Site Boundary
- Local Wildlife Site (LWS) - Navenby Heath Road Verges
- Local Wildlife Site (LWS) Navenby Heath Road Verges - 100m Buffer



NOTES

Microsoft, Vantor, Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

LEGISLATION

Regulation 8(1)(k) Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedura) Rules 2010.

ISSUE PURPOSE

Examination Submission

FIGURE TITLE

Proximity of Local Wildlife Sites to the Proposed Development - Navenby Heath Road Verges

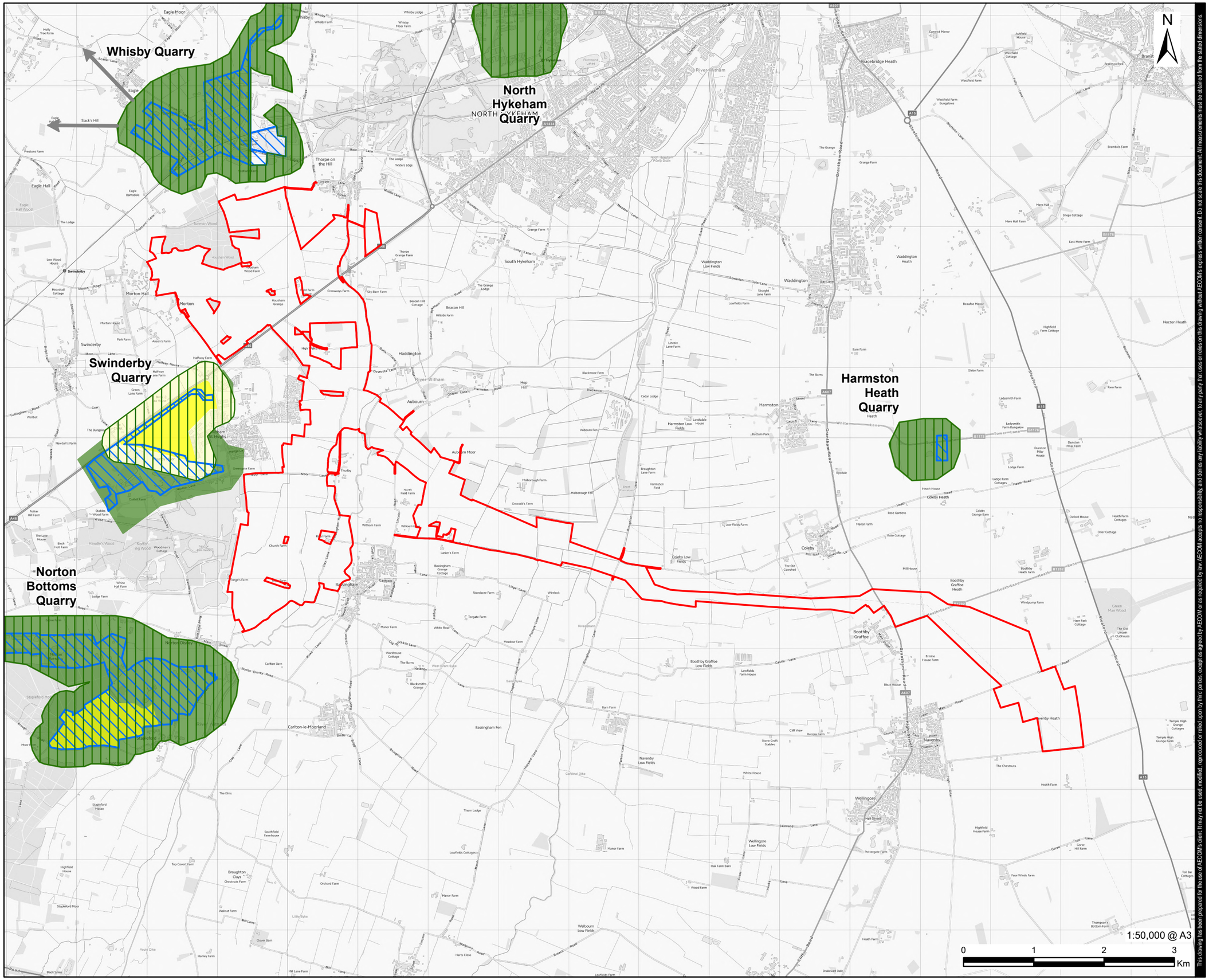
FIGURE NUMBER		REV.
WQ2-2	Sheet 4 of 4	01

DOCUMENT REFERENCE

EN010154/EXAM/9.19

Project No.: 60700987 Drawn: HW Checked: AM Approved: NK Date: 2026-03-19

Filename: \\na.aecomnet.com\lfs\EMEA\London-UKLON06\Legacy\UKLON06\PPSWS01\UKLON06PPSWS001-V1\DPEI\Library\GIS_DATA\Projects\Fosse Green Energy Park\02_Maps\Environmental Statement\ExaminingAuthorities_Response\FGE_QuarryExpansion.aprx



Fosse Green Energy

PROJECT

Fosse Green Energy

CLIENT

Fosse Green Energy Ltd

CONSULTANT

AECOM Limited
Sunley House
4 Bedford Park
Surrey, CR0 2AP, UK
[redacted]

LEGEND

- DCO Site Boundary
- Indicative Potential Site Expansion Direction

Minerals Safeguarding Area

- Allocated Minerals Site
- Existing Minerals Site
- Site Specific Minerals Safeguarding Site
- Site Specific Safeguarding Area
- Site Specific Minerals Safeguarding Area; Site Specific Minerals Safeguarding Area

NOTES

Contains OS data © Crown copyright 2025

Mineral Constraint data digitised from Lincolnshire County Council

LEGISLATION

Regulation 8(1)(k) Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010.

ISSUE PURPOSE

Applicant's Response to the Examining Authority's Second Written Questions

FIGURE TITLE

Indicative Potential Quarry Expansion

FIGURE NUMBER	REV.
WQ2-3	01

DOCUMENT REFERENCE

EN010154/EXAM/9.19

Appendix B NGET Website

nationalgrid

Navenby Substation

National Grid Electricity Transmission is preparing to submit a planning application for a substation approximately 1.4km from the village of Navenby.

What we need to do

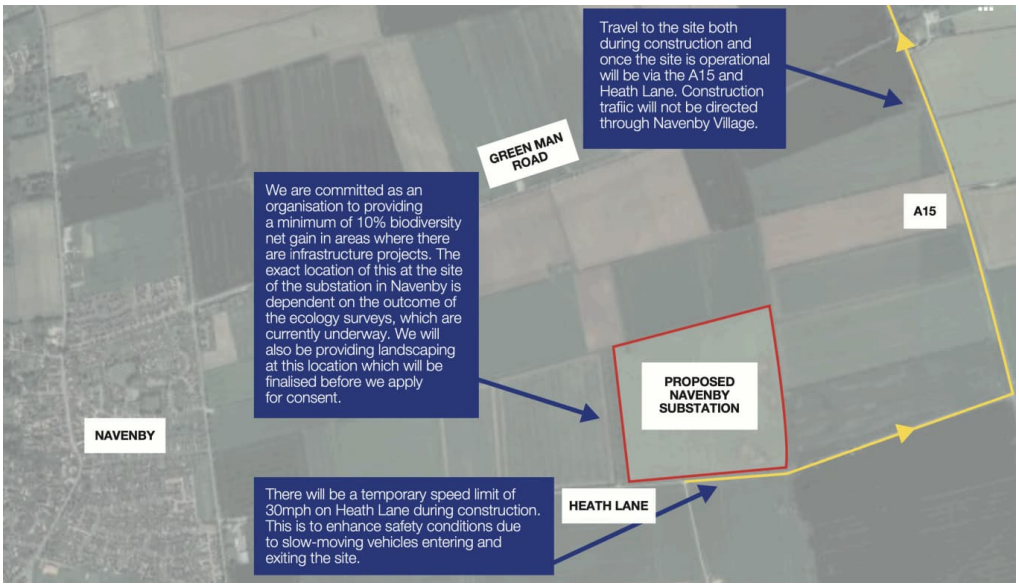
The way we generate electricity has changed and is continuing to change. This project is being developed alongside The Great Grid Upgrade to connect more homes, businesses and public services to sources of home-grown renewable energy which can lower our electricity bills and make our country more energy secure.

We're responsible for making sure electricity is transported safely and efficiently from where it is produced to where it is needed and as a regulated business, we have a legal obligation to connect customers to our network when a connection request is made.

Based on current demand around Navenby, it's not possible to connect everything proposed in the area to existing regional substations such as Bicker Fen. To connect new developments to our network, we've identified that a new 400 kilovolt (kV) substation is needed.

Our proposals

The proposed substation would be located to the north of Heath Lane and set back from the road, covering approximately 32 acres.



It will be an 'open air' substation with a maximum height of 15 metres. While four new pylons will need to be constructed as part of the plans, the project will see two pylons near to the site dismantled.

We've identified this site as the most suitable option through a formal substation siting study, where five possible sites were shortlisted.

From these five evaluated sites in the local area, a rigorous optioneering process was carried out, taking into consideration the impact on the local community, proximity to the existing overhead line to reduce the need for new pylons and overhead lines, environmental factors, land availability and much more.

Consultation

Our consultation for Navenby substation closed on 17 October 2024. Thank you to everyone who provided feedback and attended either our online or in-person event.

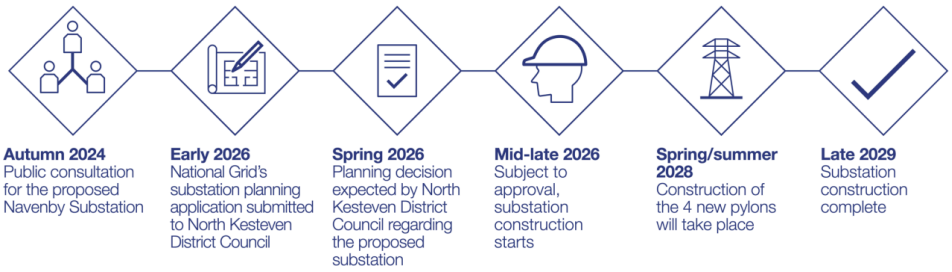
Copies of the banners and other materials issued throughout our consultation can be found in the document section below.

Next steps

As we review the feedback submitted and finalise our planning application, you may notice members of our team including contractors acting on our behalf around our proposed location for the substation. We expect to complete all the necessary surveys to support our application by late 2025, and are therefore aiming to submit our planning application to North Kesteven District Council in early 2026.

We have been granted consent by the relevant landowners for this activity where required, and National Grid will continue to work to ensure all necessary permissions are obtained. Together with our contractors, we aim to complete the work with the least disruption to local residents and visitors to the area as possible.

Please note that this activity does not represent the start of construction activity on the project, our anticipated timeline for the project, if approved is as below:



Get in touch

If you have any questions about our proposals, contact our community relations team on 0800 3196 183 or email us by clicking the button below.

You can also write to our team using our freepost address: Navenby Substation, Freepost GIVEYOURVIEW (no stamp or further address required).

Email us

Get in touch

Please check back here for further updates or contact us by emailing us below or calling **0800 3196 183**.

You can also write to us using our freepost address:
Navenby Substation
Freepost GIVEYOURVIEW (no stamp or further address required

Email us

Documents

Documents

You can view all of our published consultation documents and materials below.

- Consultation newsletter
- Printable feedback form
- Consultation banners
- FAQ booklet

Why has the submission of the planning application been pushed back to early 2026?

How are you proposing to minimise the impact of construction traffic on the local community?

What is The Great Grid Upgrade?

Who is National Grid?

What is NGET?

What is the Navenby Substation project?

What is the size of the substation?

How will you minimise the impact of construction traffic

on the local road network during construction?

How is your project linked to the proposed solar farms?

How noisy will it be during construction?

Will there be any noise once the substation is operational?

Can you explain how the noise assessments will be undertaken, including the different standards and criteria used to assess the noise and how far the noise will travel?

Will there be any light pollution?

What are the results of the archaeological surveys?

What impact will the project have on the local environment?

nationalgrid

Connect with Us

Work for us

About us

Our policies

Stories

More from National Grid

Appendix C Maintenance Schedules

C.1.1 Table C-1 below shows the typical maintenance test and sampling rate required to maintain a solar farm. These tests would be carried out at the frequency stated depending on the exact warranty maintenance requirements of the manufacturers of the equipment. Some items may not be required depending on the exact equipment used for the construction at detailed design, for example the SF6 tests would not be required if SF6 free switchgear was used.

Table C-1: Solar PV Site Indicative Scheduled Maintenance Checklist

Work	Frequency
General site maintenance	
Verify status of vegetation in the site and planting around the site	Quarterly or as agreed in the Landscape and Ecological Management Plan
Check status of internal tracks and paths	Monthly
Check general drainage status of the site and monitor water puddles and muddy areas	Monthly
Check status of gates, hinges and padlocks	Monthly
Lubricate gates	Quarterly
Check status of fence and perimeter security	Monthly
Check status of spare parts container and storage facilities	Quarterly
Carry out stock take of spare parts on site and update records	Semi-annually
Grass cutting and weed maintenance	Quarterly or as agreed in the Landscape and Ecological Management Plan
Maintain the fire extinguishers according to local regulations	According to BSMP
PV modules	
Visual check browning, yellowing effect, hot spots, delamination, surface damages etc. (random 10% across site)	Annually
Visual check of stability, rigidity and fixing of the PV modules (10% per annum)	Annually

Work	Frequency
Visual check of connectors, junction boxes and cables (10% per annum)	Annually
Check shading on modules from vegetation or other elements	Quarterly
Check labelling of modules	Annually
Clean modules according to manufacturer's guidance	Biennially (every 2 years)
Aerial thermography of 100% of the modules	Annually
Mounting structure	
Visually inspect the structure for signs of corrosion, deformation, fatigue, chips, rust, etc.	25% of the site quarterly
Check condition of bolts and fixings	25% of the site quarterly
Check ground conditions for signs of erosion or subsidence	Quarterly
Visually check secure fixing of modules, for misalignment or evidence of slip	Quarterly
Verify adequate fixing of mounting clamps (10%)	Annually
Verify row labelling is present and clear	Annually
Check status of earthing terminations and apply corrosion protection	Annually
String inverters	
Carry out maintenance according to manufacturer's guidelines	As recommended
Visual check of all inverter components, switchgear and fuses	Quarterly
Check integrity of wiring and terminals	Annually
Check for any unusual noises and smells	Quarterly
Check controls and LCD screen operation	Quarterly
Thermographic inspection of electrical components under load	Annually
Check operation and maintain all cooling fans, filters, glycol levels if applicable, pressure and fault logs	Quarterly
Measure efficiency of DC/AC	Annually
Check settings and Maximum Power Point Trackers (MPPT)	Annually
MV switchgear (up to 33kV)	
General inspection and cleaning of the equipment	Monthly

Work	Frequency
Visual inspection of SF6 gas levels if applicable	Monthly
Check status of connections and verify cable terminations (discolouration, heat damages)	Annually
Cleaning and greasing of mechanical parts	Annually
Verify operation of the equipment	Annually
Carry out maintenance according to manufacturer's guidelines	As recommended
MV transformers (up to 33kV)	
Visual inspection of equipment	Monthly, if the transformer is not enclosed
Check status of visual and acoustic indicators	Monthly, if the transformer is not in the enclosure
Check transformer for oil leaks	Annually
Functional checks of protection devices	Annually
Carry out Dissolved Gas Analysis (DGA), dielectric stiffness and humidity oil tests	Every 2 years or as per manufacturer's recommendations
Clean all surfaces and treat any corrosion	Annually
Check earthing connections and test earthing continuity	Annually
High Voltage Transformer (132-400kV)	
Visual inspection for oil leaks, corrosion, abnormal vibration or noise	Monthly
Check oil levels in main tank, conservator and OLTC compartments	Monthly
Check silica gel breather condition and replace if saturated	Monthly
Check oil and winding temperature indicators	Monthly
Check operation of cooling fans and oil pumps	Quarterly
Inspect radiators and cooling system for blockage or damage	Quarterly
Check Buchholz relay alarm/trip operation	Annually
Functional test of transformer protection schemes	Annually
Oil sampling for DGA	Annually
Oil dielectric strength, moisture and acidity tests	Annually

Work	Frequency
Thermographic inspection of bushings, connections and cooling equipment	Annually
Check condition of HV and LV bushings	Annually
Test On Load Tap Changer (OLTC) operation and inspect OLTC oil	Annually
Full transformer oil analysis	Every 2 years
Transformer winding resistance measurement	Every 3–5 years
Transformer turns ratio test (TTR)	Every 3–5 years
Insulation resistance and polarization index test	Every 3–5 years
Sweep Frequency Response Analysis (SFRA) if required	After faults or major events
High Voltage Switchgear	
Visual inspection of switchgear yard and structures	Monthly
Check condition of insulators for contamination or damage	Monthly
Check SF_6 gas pressure / density indicators (for GIS or breakers)	Monthly
Inspect earthing connections	Quarterly
Mechanical operation check of circuit breakers and disconnectors	Quarterly
Inspect drive mechanisms and lubrication	Annually
Functional testing of protection relays and trip circuits	Annually
Timing test of circuit breakers	Annually
Contact resistance measurement	Annually
SF_6 gas quality analysis (moisture, purity)	Annually
Thermographic inspection of busbars and connectors	Annually
Insulation resistance testing of switchgear	Every 3 years
Major breaker overhaul according to Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) guidance	Every 5–10 years
Protection, Control & Auxiliary Systems	
Check protection relay health and alarms	Monthly
Test Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) communication with protection relays	Quarterly
Battery bank inspection and voltage check	Monthly
Battery discharge test	Annually
Functional test of interlocking systems	Annually

Work	Frequency
Test trip circuits and breaker failure protection	Annually
SCADA and monitoring equipment	
Check status of site hardware equipment	Annually
Check status of Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS)	Quarterly
Check electrical connections and power supply	Quarterly
External cleaning of the SCADA server	Quarterly
Check data integrity	Quarterly
Check SCADA for alarms (e.g. CPU usage, consistent with monitoring portal)	Quarterly
Check data plausibility (weather station, pyranometers)	Quarterly
Check inclination of pyranometers	Quarterly
Clean pyranometers, albedometers and reference cells with a soft damp cloth	Monthly
Check status and cleanliness of weather stations	Monthly
Check mounting and anchoring of sensors	Monthly
Calibrate sensors and pyranometers according to manufacturer's recommendations	As recommended
Verify status of data transmission and backup status	Quarterly
Onsite substation	
Check status of building for cracks, damages, deformations or paint flakes	Quarterly
Check for signs of rodents	Quarterly
Check status of gates and access	Monthly
Check the state of safety equipment and firefighting equipment	Quarterly
Check the correct operation of lighting and emergency lighting	Quarterly
Check internal temperature of the rooms	Monthly
Check status of HVAC units and correct functioning	Monthly
Carry out annual maintenance of HVAC units	Annually
Check status of operational meters and confirm readings (if accessible)	Quarterly
Carry out Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR) tests according to BS7671 standards	Every 3 years

Work	Frequency
CCTV system	
Visual inspection of the security system: cameras, columns, sensors	Monthly
Check correct time and camera visualization in CCTV servers	Monthly
Confirm with Alarm Receiving Centre (ARC) data reception	Monthly
Check camera cleanliness and clean if required	Quarterly
Check earthing connections and earthing continuity	Annually
Carry out site walk test with ARC	Annually
Health and Safety	
Verify presence of health and safety signage in the buildings and replace as necessary	Semi-Annually
Verify "Danger of Death" and "CCTV in operation" signage on the fence, if needed	Quarterly

C.1.2 Table C-2 below shows the anticipated replacement rates of the components of the solar farm; these are based on the design lifetimes assessed during the Environmental Impact Assessment process and highlights typical replacement rates both for the operation periods of years 0-29 and years 33-60 (typical operational periods).

C.1.3 There is also a separate estimate for the "repowering period" of years 29-33 where replacement activities are increased to account for the phased replacement of modules over an indicative five-year repowering period. The total HGV trips generated below in the table is 200 HGV deliveries of modules and 10-20 HGV deliveries of solar station equipment (MV inverters and MV transformers). This figure is well below the assessed level of 20 HGV deliveries a day as assessed within **Chapter 13 Traffic and Transport [APP-038]** of the ES as the time and work required to install ~20% of modules would occur over a number of months.

Table C-2: Solar PV Repowering Plan

Equipment	Typical Design Lifetime	Action	Notes including HGV trips required	Anticipated Replacement Rate Years 0-29	Anticipated Replacement Rate Years 29-33	Anticipated Replacement Rate Years 33-60
PV Modules	25–40 years	Replace around Year 30	Warranted Efficiency degradation (~0.4% per year) and new technology provides higher output. 1 HGV trip for 0.1% replacement for current modules, efficiency increase will reduce this.	Replacement only due to equipment failures typically ~0.05% per year. 1 HGV trip every two years	Repowering phase. ~20% replaced per year depending on exact quantities per area of replacement. ~200 HGV trips per year	Replacement only due to equipment failures typically ~0.05% per year. 1 HGV trip every two years
MV Inverters / Central Inverters	15–20 years	Replace from Year 20 if required	New units typically improve conversion efficiency and grid compliance. Single HGV trip per replacement	Estimate 1 per year – more likely partial replacement of components	Estimate 10 - 20 per year at end of life within areas being repowered	Estimate 1 per year – more likely partial replacement of components
DC Cables	25–30 years	Inspect / Partial replacement	Replace damaged or cables with degraded insulation, confirmed via IR testing. Not delivered by HGV	Replace only if required	Replace only if required	Replace only if required
AC Cables	30–40 years	Inspect	Replace if LV/HV AC cable testing	Replace only if required	Replace only if required	Replace only if required

Equipment	Typical Design Lifetime	Action	Notes including HGV trips required	Anticipated Replacement Rate Years 0-29	Anticipated Replacement Rate Years 29-33	Anticipated Replacement Rate Years 33-60
			fails. Not delivered by HGV			
Combiner Boxes	20–25 years	Replace	Modern units often include improved monitoring and protection. Not delivered by HGV	Replace only if required	Replace only if required	Replace only if required
Monitoring & SCADA System	10–15 years	Replace / Upgrade	Software obsolescence and cybersecurity improvements. Not delivered by HGV	Replace only if required	Replace only if required	Replace only if required
Weather Stations (pyranometers, sensors)	10–15 years	Replace	Sensor accuracy deteriorates. Not delivered by HGV	Replace only if required	Replace only if required	Replace only if required
Mounting Structure	35–40 years	Inspect / Reinforce	Usually retained unless corrosion or structural fatigue occurs. Not delivered by HGV	Minimal replacement of corroded components	Minimal replacement of corroded components	Minimal replacement of corroded components
Earthing System	30+ years	Inspect and upgrade	Ensure compliance with updated electrical standards. Not delivered by HGV	Upgrade only if required	Upgrade only if required	Upgrade only if required

Equipment	Typical Design Lifetime	Action	Notes including HGV trips required	Anticipated Replacement Rate Years 0-29	Anticipated Replacement Rate Years 29-33	Anticipated Replacement Rate Years 33-60
MV Transformers (e.g., 33 kV)	30–40 years	Condition-based replacement	Oil analysis and insulation testing determine replacement. Combined with central inverter replacement.	Upgrade only if required	Upgrade only if required	Upgrade only if required
400 kV Power Transformer	40–60 years	Refurbish / Life extension	Replace bushings, oil regeneration, OLTC overhaul.	None anticipated	None anticipated	None anticipated
HV Circuit Breakers	30–40 years	Major overhaul or replace	Especially for SF_6 breakers depending on operating cycles.	None anticipated	None anticipated	None anticipated
Disconnectors & Busbars	40+ years	Inspect and refurbish	Replace insulators and mechanical components.	None anticipated	None anticipated	None anticipated
Protection Relays	15–20 years	Replace	Digital relays become obsolete. Not delivered by HGV	Upgrade only if required	Upgrade only if required	Upgrade only if required
Fire Detection / Security / CCTV	10–15 years	Replace	Technology upgrade. Not delivered by HGV	Replace only if required	Replace only if required	Replace only if required