

6 November 2024

Dear [xxx],

### One Earth Solar Farm: pre-application engagement on consultation process

I am writing regarding One Earth Solar Farm – a proposed solar farm with battery storage and associated infrastructure that would be located at the border of Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire and connect into the National Grid at High Marnham substation. One Earth Solar Farm is classified as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) under the Planning Act 2008 because it would generate more than 50 megawatts (MW) of electricity. This means we need to apply for a Development Consent Order (DCO) to construct, operate and decommission it. The Planning Act includes requirements for pre-application consultation in advance of the DCO application submission.

### Preapplication Consultation for One Earth

Our proposals for One Earth Solar Farm have been shaped by an iterative programme of pre-application consultation. We held the first round of non-statutory consultation in Autumn 2023 and received feedback on the project masterplan as well as environmental topics to include in the Environmental Impact Assessment. Just after completing this consultation, we submitted the Scoping Report, which led to another round of consultation with technical consultees, informing the Scoping Opinion published by the Planning Inspectorate in Winter 2024. In Spring 2024, we began to prepare the Statement of Community Consultation (SOCC), in consultation with local authorities. In May 2024, we commenced the statutory consultation, sharing the updated masterplan which had been updated to address feedback from the first non-statutory consultation, and the Preliminary Environmental Information Report, based on consultation feedback and the Scoping Opinion. This consultation met the requirements of the Planning Act 2008, as well as the commitments that were made in the SOCC. A full summary of pre-application consultation and engagement undertaken in support of the proposals will be provided in the Consultation Report submitted as part of our DCO application.

### Updated guidance for Adequacy of Consultation

On 30 April 2024, the Planning Inspectorate published updated guidance on the NSIP pre-application process, which included the introduction of an Adequacy of Consultation Milestone (AoCM). The AoCM is intended to reduce the burden on local authorities during the acceptance stage through pre-submission engagement on the consultation process. Specifically, it is advised that the AoCM should:

- establish the consultation undertaken to date
- confirm the approach set out in the Statement of Community Consultation
- summarise the consultation responses and the way in which they are shaping the application

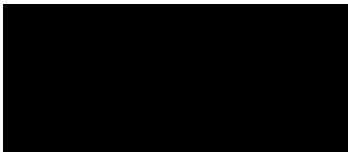
Our pre-submission engagement for the AoCM will focus on how consultation on One Earth Solar Farm has complied with the commitments set out in the Planning Act and our SOCC. The Statement of Community Consultation was informed by consultation with the local authorities (Appendix 1). The summary of consultation activities, which includes the required notices for S42, S46, S47 and S48 for the statutory consultation is included in Appendix 2, and our compliance with the SOCC is included in Appendix 3. In Appendix 4, we have included the initial summary of consultation feedback and how it is being addressed.

## Next steps

Records of this engagement will be sent to the Planning Inspectorate and published on the project page in line with the updated guidance. Please review the following appendices to confirm the project has met the statutory requirements for consultation under S42, S47 and S48 of the Planning Act 2008. Once you are satisfied, please confirm the Adequacy of Consultation Milestone. If you have any questions, please let us know.

We look forward to continuing to work with you as the project progresses.

Sincerely,



Dan Boyd  
Project Lead, One Earth Solar Farm

## Appendix 1. Feedback on Statement of Community Consultation (SOCC)

On 5 February 2024, we sent each of the local authorities a copy of the draft SOCC for their informal review, requesting feedback by 23 February. We offered meetings with each of the local authorities to review the draft SOCC and solicit their initial feedback, which occurred on 8 February (Newark and Sherwood District Council) and 9 February (Lincolnshire County Council and Nottinghamshire County Council). We updated the SOCC in several places based on this initial feedback, and then sent the updated SOCC for the formal 28-day consultation from 5 April to 3 May. We received feedback from all of the five local authorities and adjusted the approach in the SOCC whenever possible to address the concerns, which are detailed below.

Organisation	Feedback	Response
Newark and Sherwood	We note under the heading of 'Scoping' a hyperlink is provided to a copy of the Scoping Opinion on the PINS website, which makes an assumption that an electronic version of the SOCC is being read. We would recommend that the full web address be provided in the document at this point. Whilst we note that the EIA Scoping Opinion is a document produced and published by PINS, we would further recommend the applicant consider whether a hard copy of this document should also be made available for review during the statutory consultation period, alongside other hard copies of documents, that will be provided for review in the Community Access Points (See Page 10 of the SOCC).	The full link has been updated along with a QR code. We do not think the scoping opinion is necessary to provide in hard copy as it is largely technical.
Newark and Sherwood	Paragraph 1, page 8, refers to 'We have developed the approach set out in this document taking into account what has worked well in previous rounds of consultation.' For clarity, we would recommend reference is made to the single previous round of non-statutory consultation at this point.	This was updated to clarify one round of consultation.
Newark and Sherwood	Under the heading of 'Feedback from Local Authorities' firstly, in terms of the period of consultation, we note that reference is made to the incorrect consultation period for the SOCC document. As noted above, the end of the statutory consultation period is the 4 May 2024 and not the 2 May 2024. We also have concerns with the following comments in the same paragraph which states: 'Our strategy has been updated to include their feedback (insert details here). XX confirmed that they supported this approach.' NSDC consider this to be a pre-emptive comment and it is particularly concerning that an assumed reference to support is made which prejudices the outcome of the consultation on the SOCC itself. NSDC considers it would have been more appropriate to omit this reference or simply refer to the fact that the comments of the Local Authorities would be taken into account following the conclusion of the statutory consultation period on the SOCC and prior to its publication and commencement of the statutory consultation. NSDC considers that this pre-emptive approach undermines the statutory duty of the applicant to 'have regard' to the response to the consultation, under Section 47(5) of the Planning Act 2008.	The section has been updated to show how we have updated the SOCC per feedback, with no statement that any of the LPAs confirmed they agreed.

Organisation	Feedback	Response
Newark and Sherwood	NSDC note and welcome the presentation of a Consultation Zone that includes the boundary of the scheme and the further inclusion of additional addresses in the proposed Zone 1 consultation. However, for the avoidance of doubt, it is recommended that all named settlements within Zone 1 that are to be consulted are either identified within the map or are listed for clarity. It would appear to NSDC that all of the settlements within the district boundary at this location to include North Clifton, South Clifton, Thorney, Spalford, Wigsley and Harby would be directly consulted. If that is the case, we are supportive of the proposed Consultation Zone 1.	We have updated the map to add more village labels. However, note that Harby is not within the consultation zone because it is more than 3km away from the project boundary.
Newark and Sherwood	Under the Heading of Zone 2: 'Additional members of the community, groups, and elected officials' it is stated that 'We have identified organisations and community groups that serve the broader community, including organisations that support seldom heard groups.' Firstly, we have provided specific comments on the community groups to be consulted, as provided under separate cover. However, there is no reference to how the applicant will endeavour to engage with these groups and support their ability to feed back as part of the consultation. NSDC seeks reassurance on the measures that will be deployed to positively engage with seldom heard groups, as part of the consultation process. This needs to extend beyond mere identification of the groups.	We have added a clarifying section to explain that we've identified the groups and the ways we will contact them. The contact methods are described on the following page.
Newark and Sherwood	In respect of the actions listed on page 11, we are broadly supportive of the approach, but would make the following comments, some of which we have provided previously, when undertaking an informal review of the SOCC: A copy of the consultation leaflet and poster to be displayed, should be appended to the final version of the SOCC and in the case of posters, confirmation of where they will be displayed. • A copy of the public notices should also be appended to the SOCC. • NSDC should be provided with a copy of any press notices issued and the media outlets that they have been provided to. •	The consultation materials will not be available until the start of the consultation period. In order to provide the SOCC in advance of the start of consultation, it is not possible to publish it with all of the consultation materials attached.
Newark and Sherwood	Finally, we would ask what consideration has been given to the role of social media in supporting consultation and as a supplement to the project website. This may also help with regard to the approach to engaging with hard-to-reach groups.	We will use social media through Facebook advertisements, and clarify this in the SOCC.
Newark and Sherwood	In respect of 'in person' events, we welcome the inclusion of an additional event to be held at South Clifton Coronation Hall, following the proposal of a single event only during the informal consultation stage. Whilst noting that South Clifton Hall is an appropriate venue for a consultation, NSDC would encourage consideration for whether St Helen's Church in Thorney, could also support an additional community consultation event, noting it is currently also listed as a Community Access Point, facilitating access to hard copies of the SOCC, project booklet and questionnaire. If deemed a suitable venue, it would provide more convenient access to those members of the community that reside to the eastern side of the proposed development and have a greater distance to travel to access an 'in person' consultation event.	We have considered this option, but do not believe it to be suitable for an event because it is a small, non- wheelchair accessible location.

Organisation	Feedback	Response
Newark and Sherwood	In addition to the above and irrespective of whether the applicant chooses to add any additional events, NSDC consider that the current planned timings of the events are not sufficiently flexible to support maximum attendance. The event planned for Wednesday the 12th of June is proposed as 2-6pm. This is considered too small a time window in general terms. It excludes the ability for people in employment to attend over lunchtime and is considered to finish too early, to allow those people who wish to attend after work, particularly if they do not work in the locality and have to travel home and/or to the venue. To address this point, we would suggest the event run for a minimum of 12 noon – 8pm. Similarly, whilst being on a weekend, which in itself offers more flexibility, NSDC consider that the hours of opening for the 29th of June event should be increased and operate for a minimum of 8 hours.	We do not expect any single event to be universally accommodating for everyone who may want to attend, which is why we have proposed a series of events, across different times of day and days of the week, including two Saturday events to accommodate those who work traditional 9-5 hours. In our experience, 4 hours is a sufficient amount of time for an event, and adding additional hours does not increase attendance. However, we are shifting the hours of the 7 June event further into the evening (4pm-8pm) outside of traditional working hours.
Newark and Sherwood	Finally, given the level of organisation required is more limited and it is convenient for all parties (that have access to the internet) we would recommend a minimum of at least one further webinar event. In our view one webinar at the beginning of the consultation period, one at the midway point and one further and final one at the end of the consultation period would complement the planned in-person events.	We have added a second consultation webinar.
Newark and Sherwood	Turning to the 'Information Materials' we note that reference is made to (amongst other things) maps to be produced and made available on the project website. We would encourage use of an interactive mapping tool that enables interested parties to search on a micro scale of their area of interest, that provides information on both the proposals and constraints. Given the scale of development, we consider that tools such as this are important in understanding the impacts of the project and therefore support meaningful engagement.	We are providing a 3d model which will be available at the events with a video flyover on the website. We believe this is more helpful than a searchable map, which would not provide context.
Newark and Sherwood	Finally, in respect of Communication Channels, we would encourage the applicant to consider the use of social media. In accordance with the Council's SCI, we actively deploy social media channels, with regard to consultation on the local plan and other strategic proposals. We consider it useful in engaging with different parts of the community, including 'hard to reach groups.'	We have updated to include advertisements on Facebook.
Newark and Sherwood	In respect of Receiving Feedback, NSDC considers that it would be useful in this section to link back into the Communication Channels with greater explanation on: How feedback will be recorded via the freephone number. How feedback will be recorded verbally in person and via the planned webinars and in respect of the latter, whether those webinars will be recorded and made available to all parties, including (as relevant) the period of time for which they will be made available.	We are not able to use verbal feedback because we cannot adequately record it, however, we will offer transcription services if needed, upon request. The SOCC has been updated to confirm this. We are happy to post the recorded webinars.
Newark and Sherwood	Finally, in respect of 'After the Statutory Consultation' we consider it appropriate to make clear that the applicant has a Statutory Duty under Section 49 of the Planning Act 2008 to have regard to the response to the consultation, as a point of clarity and consider this could sensibly be added where reference is made to the Consultation Report.	We have updated to clarify that it is a statutory requirement.

Organisation	Feedback	Response
Nottinghamshire	I would however like to draw your attention to “Zone 2: Additional members of the community, groups, and elected officials” on p.10. The figure identifies the relevant district wards but it should be noted that the district ward is distinct from the county electoral division, which is a separate geographical boundary usually with a separate elected official. We would obviously recommend that the elected official for the county division is contacted in addition to the district ward member.	We have updated the table to show the list of county electoral divisions.
Bassetlaw	The map included here (and also the one on page 10) is of a scale that makes it difficult to see the details of which communities are impacted / involved, not helped by the lack of labels on specific communities, and the use of a solid green wash. A clearer map would help all parties to better understand the proposals and engagement strategy in context.	We have updated the maps to show more labels of local villages.
Bassetlaw	It is not clear if / how responses from people and organisations based outside of the core consultation zones will be addressed (for instance, people who have land interests in the area but are not physically based there). The assumption is that the identified zones are for publicity purposes, not for limiting where responses will be received from. This could be made clearer in the description.	We have updated the SOCC to state clearly than anyone may submit feedback.
Bassetlaw	Alongside the above, the list of parishes in the Host Regions table do not include all of those within Consultation Zone 1 shown on the map. In Bassetlaw, the additions to complete the list would be East Drayton, Laneham, and Normanton on Trent (all of which are in the Tuxford and Trent Ward). These parishes should be included in any other elements of the engagement strategy that involves Consultation Zone 1.	We have clarified that we will contact all the parishes in Zone 1
Bassetlaw	It would be advisable to host some of the in-person events into the evening, beyond the current limit of 6 pm, so as to accommodate people who may not be at home during the daytime.	We have shifted the hours of the first event (7 June) back to 4-8pm
Bassetlaw	An additional Community Access Point in Bassetlaw may be useful, given that Worksop is some distance from the Consultation Zone. Cobbs Country Store in Darlton could be a possible (subject to agreement), as might the District Council’s offices in Retford, Retford Library, or Nottinghamshire County Council’s Mobile Library when based in Tuxford (Mondays, 10:15 AM to 1:15 PM).	We have added the district council in Retford.
Bassetlaw	It would be helpful to detail if / how you will notify respondents (i.e. acknowledge receipt of their comments, provide a means to opt-in for further updates, notify them of how their comments have been used).	We have clarified in this SOCC that people can opt in for project updates. However, it is not feasible to confirm receipt of online questionnaires.
Bassetlaw	<p>Amongst the obvious community groups, there are a number of other organisations listed in the table, and the following may be useful additions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bassetlaw Action Centre</li> <li>• Bassetlaw CVS</li> <li>• Historic England</li> <li>• Lincolnshire County Council Archaeology</li> <li>• Natural England</li> </ul>	We have added the three new groups, but note that Historic England and Natural England are already stat consultees.

Organisation	Feedback	Response
Lincolnshire	1. Community access points for documents - look for more local points that have longer opening hours	We have added an additional option in Retford.
Lincolnshire	2. Communications channels – consider offering an answer phone and a callback option	We have updated the SOCC to clarify that there is a voicemail option to leave a message.



## Appendix 2. Summary of Consultation Activities

The statutory consultation period was initially scheduled to occur from 29 May to 9 July 2024; however, after the initial notices were sent on 15 May, the government announced plans for a national election to occur on 4 July. After consulting with the local authorities, the applicant chose to extend the consultation for an additional two weeks to 23 July 2024. This required some of the statutory notices to be re-published in the week commencing 17 June to announce the new end of the consultation period. All of the required notices, as well as the other consultation activities are detailed below.

Date	Event
13 May 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SOCC delivered to community access locations</li> </ul>
15 May 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>S42 notices sent to prescribed consultees, local authorities and persons with a land interest</li> <li>S47 notice published in Nottinghamshire Post</li> <li>SOCC published to website</li> <li>Letter sent to addresses in Zone 1</li> <li>Letters sent to community groups</li> <li>Emails sent to elected officials</li> <li>Press release sent to media</li> </ul>
16 May 2024	S47 Notice published in Lincolnshire Echo
21 May 2024	S46 notice sent to PINS
29 May 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>S48 notice in Nottinghamshire Post (1<sup>st</sup> week), London Gazette and Guardian</li> <li>Website updated with consultation materials</li> <li>Leaflet sent to community in Zone 1</li> <li>Email sent to parish councils</li> </ul>
30 May 2024	S48 Notice published in Lincolnshire Echo (1 <sup>st</sup> week)
4 June 2024	6 site visits to local properties
5 June 2024	S48 notice in Nottinghamshire Post (2 <sup>nd</sup> week)
6 June 2024	S48 Notice published in Lincolnshire Echo (2 <sup>nd</sup> week)
7 June 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public Consultation event in Dunham on Trent</li> <li>5 site visits to local properties</li> </ul>
8 June 2024	Public Consultation event in Newton on Trent
12 June 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public Consultation event in South Clifton</li> <li>3 site visits to local properties</li> </ul>
13 June 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public Consultation event in Normanton on Trent</li> <li>2 site visits to local properties</li> </ul>



Date	Event
17 June 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• S42 notices sent to prescribed consultees, local authorities and persons with a land interest</li> <li>• S48 notice published in the Guardian</li> <li>• Letters sent to community groups</li> <li>• Emails sent to elected officials</li> <li>• Website updated</li> </ul>
18 June 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public Consultation event webinar</li> <li>• S48 Notice in Nottinghamshire Post (1<sup>st</sup> week)</li> <li>• S46 notice sent to PINS</li> </ul>
19 June 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Letter sent to addresses in Zone 1</li> <li>• Press release to media</li> <li>• Email parish councils</li> <li>• S48 notice published in London Gazette</li> </ul>
20 June 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• S48 notice published in Lincolnshire Echo (1<sup>st</sup> week)</li> </ul>
25 June 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting with Dunham Parish Council</li> <li>• Publication of S48 Notice in Nottinghamshire Post (2<sup>nd</sup> week)</li> <li>• 2 site visits to local properties</li> </ul>
27 June 2024	Publication of S48 Notice in Lincolnshire Echo (2 <sup>nd</sup> week)
29 June 2024	Public Consultation event in South Clifton
3 July 2024	Public Consultation event webinar
10 July 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting with South Clifton Parish Council</li> <li>• 1 site visit to a local property</li> </ul>
23 July 2024	End of consultation period
1 August 2024	Meeting with North Clifton Parish Meeting
11 September 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 site visit to a local property</li> <li>• Meeting with Dunham Parish Council</li> <li>• Meeting with South Clifton Parish Council</li> </ul>

### Appendix 3. Compliance with the Statement of Community Consultation (SOCC)

In addition to the legal notice requirements that are detailed in Appendix 3, the following table details the commitments that were included in the SOCC and how we have met them.

#### Publicising the Consultation

Actions	Evidence
Send a leaflet to the core consultation zone (Zone 1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A letter was sent to the addresses in Zone 1 on 15 May</li> <li>• A leaflet was sent on 29 May</li> <li>• An additional letter was sent on 19 June to announce the extended consultation period</li> </ul>
Place posters in local information points including village halls, churches, and other public information boards	A poster was sent to parish council clerks on 18 June with a request to post in local notice boards.
Advertise in Lincolnshire and Nottingham Live online, in paper and on Facebook	Advertisements were placed in the newspapers online and in paper on 15, 16, 29, 30 May, and 5, 6, 18 and 20 June. Advertisements were posted on Facebook from 1 July- 5 July.
Email the parish councils in Zone 1	The parish councils were emailed 15 May, 29 May and 19 June to announce the upcoming consultation and offer a meeting.
Email the community groups and elected officials from host regions in Zone 2	Emails were sent to the community groups on 15 May and 17 June.
Send a press release to local and national media outlets	A press release was sent on 15 May and 19 June.
Update the dedicated project website	The project website was updated on 15 May with the SOCC and again on 29 May with the consultation materials. The website was updated on 17 June with the revised consultation dates.

## Providing information about One Earth

Actions	Evidence
We will host in-person events where members of the community can learn about our proposals from members of the project team including technical experts across a variety of relevant topics.	As detailed in the SOCC, we held five in-person events where the public could attend to view materials about the project and meet the project team, including experts from a range of topics.
The in-person events will be located across Zone 1, to ensure no individual need to travel far to attend an event.	The events were located in four locations across the project to minimise travel time for the public to attend. These venues were selected not just for their location, but also based on accessibility and size to accommodate the events.
For those who cannot attend an in-person event, we will also host two webinars and publish their recordings on the project website	We held two webinars, and the recordings were uploaded to the project website.
We will also offer to host briefing sessions for elected representatives.	<p>On 15 May, we contacted all of the elected officials, as detailed in the SOCC, who represent geographies that would host the project. While not all officials responded, for those that did, we arranged briefings. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 18 June (All LPA councillors)</li> <li>• 25 June (Dunham Parish Council)</li> <li>• 25 June (All LPA councillors)</li> <li>• 10 July (South Clifton Parish Council)</li> <li>• 1 August (North Clifton Parish Meeting)</li> </ul>
We will produce a range of documents and materials to provide more information about One Earth which will be available through our dedicated project website: <a href="http://oneearthssolarfarm.co.uk">oneearthssolarfarm.co.uk</a>	The leaflet, booklet, PEIR, questionnaire, webinar presentation, information boards and virtual exhibition, maps and 3d visualisation were available on the project website during the consultation period.
We will also make hard copies of this SoCC, the project booklet, and questionnaire available in convenient locations across consultation Zones 1 and 2 during the consultation period.	As detailed in the SOCC, we identified 8 locations across both Zone 1 and 2 that would serve as community access locations. We provided copies of the SOCC, booklet, and questionnaire during the consultation period.
Alternative format hard copies of these materials (i.e. large print, braille) will be available upon request at the communications channels below.	We did not receive any requests for alternative formats.
Throughout the consultation, we will operate the following communications channels for individuals to contact us with any questions	These communications channels have been open throughout the project development.

## After the Consultation

Actions	Evidence
<p>If there are any changes needed to the arrangements described above including any changes to guidance due to COVID-19, we will notify the community by writing to addresses within Zone 1, elected from host regions, and community groups and updating our website.</p>	<p>During the consultation, there was an announcement of the national election. After consulting with local authorities, we decided to extend the consultation by an additional two weeks. This was notified by writing elected officials and community groups on 17 June and addresses in Zone 1 on 19 June as well as updating the website.</p>
<p>Our communications channels will remain open throughout the pre-application process to answer any questions from the community. Individuals can opt-in through the project website or consultation questionnaire if they would like to receive project updates.</p>	<p>The communications lines continue to remain open, and individuals can register to receive updates through the project webpage.</p>
<p>We will provide a community update newsletter after the consultation has ended to describe the project's next steps.</p>	<p>This is currently in development and scheduled to occur in November.</p>

## Appendix 5. Summary of Consultation Responses and How they are being addressed

As we work to finalise the DCO application, including the Environmental Statement, we are continuing to review feedback. However, a summary of the high-level feedback that we have received and how it is being regarded is included below.

Feedback	Response
Protect the views of the local villages	We have removed panels around the villages and removed panels that were perceived to 'cut off' the villages, including panels between North and South Clifton, and panels between homes in Fledborough. We have also removed panels along the road from Fledborough to Ragnall, which was explained to be a core route taken by members of the community.
Protect the views of local homes near the project boundary	We have developed bespoke solutions for each of the homes identified as being located near the project boundary in order to reduce the potential visual impact.
Provide more information and details of the proposed design	We developed a 3d model which was available throughout the consultation, as well as markups of how the project would appear at key viewpoints.
Assess the impacts of the project on equestrians	We are aware of concerns about safety to horses and horse riders in the area. We have reviewed guidance on what best practices for solar farms near bridleways should include, and have revised the design to include at least the minimum required distance from bridleways to panels, and between fences.
Assess the impact on mental health	We are aware that a number of residents in the area are feeling mental health issues related to the stress and uncertainty around the project. We will continue to assess this issue with the Environmental Impact Assessment, as well as doing what we can in advance to help reduce uncertainty by providing more regular community updates.
Provide more details and final results of the EIA	We appreciate that the Preliminary Environmental Impact Report includes preliminary results, not the full and final assessments, which will be included in the Environmental Statement in the DCO application.

## Contact

Name

Email

Number