

ONE EARTH SOLAR FARM
EN010159

WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

WLDC RESPONSES TO ExA's FIRST WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Question Number	Question	WLDC Response
Q1.0.19	<p>Fire Safety</p> <p>(1) Can the EA, the Councils Environmental Health Teams, Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue Services, and UK Health Security Agency advise from your different areas of responsibility whether you are satisfied with the proposed approach to fire safety?</p>	<p>WLDC defer on the detail of this matter to Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue Service, and UK Health Security Agency.</p> <p>However, WLDC would also note from the submissions on behalf of Exolum Pipeline System Limited [REP1-108, 109 and 110], that there is a major fuel pipeline passing under much of the eastern half of the project, including directly under the substation/BESS location in West Lindsey.</p> <p>WLDC also note that the layouts shown on the site layout plans (titled height parameter plans) [APP-016] do not appear to make allowance for this pipeline.</p> <p>WLDC's is therefore unclear whether the interaction between the high pressure fuel pipeline and the substation/BESS increases fire management and risk control.</p>

Q1.0.20	<p>Community Fund</p> <p>(1) Reference to this fund is made in the ES Chapter on Human Health (paragraphs, 16.5.11, 16.6.17, 16.6.55), and it was referenced during the hearings of the week of 7 July 2025 please explain further what this fund is, if it is secured by way of the DCO how this is secured, and what mitigation it offers.</p> <p>(2) If it does not offer mitigation what is its purpose?</p>	<p>WLDC note the recent consultation by the UK Government in respect of commitments made in the Planning and Infrastructure Bill. The UK Government is currently consulting on a scheme for those living near new overhead transmission lines across Great Britain to receive up to £2,500 off their electricity bills over 10 years.</p> <p>The proposals make households within 500 metres of new or upgraded electricity transmission infrastructure (including substations, convertors, switching stations and sealing-end compounds) eligible for a discount of up to £250 via their electricity bill every year for 10 years. The discounts, which would be assigned to the home and apply to the occupant, could be provided every 6 months and continue for up to 10 years, adding up to £2500.</p> <p>Whilst the UK Government does not currently propose to apply this to generating stations, WLDC consider that the provision of £250 (index linked) annually to households within 500m of the solar generating station is a suitable benchmark for a community fund for the OESF.</p>
Q1.0.21	<p>Consultation on National Policy Statements</p> <p>The Government published on 24 April further consultation on each of the National Policy Statements, NPS – EN1, EN-3 and EN-5. The consultation period closed on 29 May 2025. Please advise if there are any areas of these documents that you consider the ExA should regard as important or relevant to the consideration of the Proposed Development.</p>	<p>WLDC have reviewed the consultation drafts of National Policy Statements, NPS – EN1, EN-3 and EN-5 and do not have any points to raise.</p>
Q1.0.24	<p>Waste</p> <p>Can each party provide commentary on their views in respect to compliance with the Regulations: Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) 2013</p>	<p>WLDC defer on this matter to Lincolnshire County Council as Minerals and Waste Planning Authority.</p>

Q2.0.4

Design Principles

(1) To clearly understand the design parameters relied on for the assessment, would it not be beneficial for all parties for these to be set out in a single document to be certified?

(2) Do the Councils agree that sufficient information has been provided in respect of design matters to meet the tests set out in NPS EN-1 para 5.10.29 and this is suitably secured to ensure that future consenting would meet landscape, visual and good design objectives?

WLDC have reviewed the Design Approach Document [AS-013], the Illustrative Masterplan [APP-018] and the Outline Design Parameters [REP1-021]. However, there are several aspects that are unclear.

As set out in WLDC LIR, the height parameter plans [APP-016] show a maximum height of 13.5m across the “Substation/BESS location” which extends to an area of approximately 20 hectares. For scale, immediately northwest of the eastern BESS area is the existing 10m high Anglian Water building at the Hall Water Treatment Works. Without any information to the contrary, WLDC have to assume that the 13.5m maximum height indicated on the plans will extend across all of the BESS area and therefore that the BESS area would introduce a major new element in the countryside, akin to distribution warehousing.

Additionally, it is not clear from the application documentation whether or not there will be a substation in the area within WLDC defined on the height parameter plans [APP-016] as the “Substation/BESS location”, and, if there will be a substation, there is no information on its intended location.

(1) WLDC consider that it would be beneficial for all parties for these to be set out in a single document to be certified. The document should include locationally based parameters which set out the proposed location of key infrastructure such as substations and BESS infrastructure.

(2) Given the potential for significant landscape and visual effects associated with a substantial 13.5m high structure potentially across 20 hectares in the “Substation/BESS location” the lack of clarity set out above does not provide WLDC with comfort that future consenting would meet landscape, visual and good design objectives.

Q3.0.1	<p>Environmental Statement</p> <p>(1) The ES has assessed effects on the basis that the proposed development is temporary, all be it having a 60 year lifespan. Please provide a justification for this approach.</p> <p>(2) If the DCO were to be granted as currently drafted, in legal terms is it correct to say that the DCO is in effect permanent, but it is the requirement to decommission that provides the limitation in time?</p> <p>(3) In these circumstances, what would you regard the planning status of the land to be after the 60 year period</p>	<p>(1) WLDC would note that 60 years or less is the general timespan of the coal powered power stations along the River Trent valley which have been decommissioned in recent years. These power stations have never been treated as or seen as temporary structures. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High Marnham – commissioned 1959, decommissioned 2003 – lifespan 43 years • Cottam – commissioned 1968, decommissioned 2019 – lifespan 50 years • Ratcliffe on Soar – commissioned 1968, decommissioned 2024 – lifespan 56 years • West Burton A – commissioned 1966, decommissioned 2023 – lifespan 57 years
Q3.0.2	<p>Environmental Statement</p> <p>(1) With a 60 year lifespan please explain the frequency with which you would expect to have to replace components, for example BESS, Inverters, Panels.</p> <p>(2) It would appear that there is no specific assessment of replacements as it has been assumed it would be no worse than the initial construction period, is this a correct interpretation.</p> <p>(3) Assuming this is correct, the controls in place during construction to mitigate any consequential effects, would appear to need to be in place during operation, unless there is a control mechanism in place that would prevent a large-scale replacement of components. What would be a reasonable threshold that would ensure adverse environmental effects do not occur?</p>	<p>(3) WLDC consider that the Outline Operational Management Plan [REP1-049] does not reflect the potentially significant effects associated with major replacement of equipment such as transformers and switchgear, or large scale replacement of solar panels or cabling. WLDC suggests anything involving the replacement of transformers or switch gear, or more than 10% of the panels in one event should be subject to additional controls.</p>

Q7.0.2	<p>Bat Research</p> <p>It is the ExA's understanding that there is the intention to monitor bat activity in advance and then post construction to assist in developing an understanding of the effect on bats from solar array sites?</p> <p>(C33 in commitments register)</p> <p>(1) How is this information to be collated and shared and over what time frame is this intended to take place?</p> <p>(2) Do NE agree that this would give robust data which would assist in developing understanding?</p> <p>(3) Do NE or the Councils regard this as a benefit that could weigh in favour of the scheme?</p>	<p>(3) Whilst of general interest in relation to solar generation schemes, WLDC do not consider this research to be a benefit that should be considered as part of the planning balance for this scheme specifically.</p>
Q10.1.1	<p>Work No. 4</p> <p>By including (b) 'the laying down of construction areas' this would appear to allow the whole of the area defined for Work No.4 on the Work Plans to be used as construction areas?</p> <p>(1) If the ExA's understanding is correct that the construction areas can be over a significant proportion of the site, are the Councils content that the construction activities would be controlled to an acceptable degree by the proposed mitigation and management plans?</p>	<p>WLDC have reviewed the area of Work Number 4 identified within its administrative area, in the context of receptors, within and adjacent to its administrative area. WLDC consider that the construction activities would be controlled to an acceptable degree by the proposed mitigation and management plans.</p>
WQ10.2.1	<p>Requirements</p> <p>Noting the Applicant response to ISH1 (page 16 of post ISH1 written submission) and the current explanation given by the Applicant that it is not only preferable to retain the phrase 'substantially in accordance with' but this allows for the management plans to be evolved as more detail comes forward.</p> <p>(1) Do the Councils have any concerns with the retention of this phrase in each of the Requirements.</p> <p>(2) Do the Councils agree that the Management Plans as drafted give the certainty and clarity required at this stage of the process, noting that they have been revised at D1</p>	<p>(1) WLDC understand that this is commonplace.</p> <p>(2) WLDC consider that the outline management plans give the certainty and clarity that would be expected at this stage, albeit at a very low level of detail.</p>
Q10.2.2	<p>Requirement 6</p> <p>Please explain how this requirement meets each of the tests to satisfy the legal criterion for a requirement.</p>	<p>WLDC are content with the retention of the Community Liaison Group until decommissioning.</p>

Q10.2.3	<p>Requirement 8</p> <p>(1) Noting the Applicant response to ISH1 (page 16 of post ISH1 written submission) Do the Councils have any concerns in respect of the wording of the Requirement, or that the certainty for maintenance would be delivered through the LEMP?</p>	<p>WLDC suggest the following textual amendment to paragraph (3) of Requirement 8 (see underlined text):</p> <p><i>“(3) The landscape and ecology management plan must be implemented as approved and <u>the measures contained within the plan</u> maintained throughout the operation of the relevant part of the authorised development to which the plan relates”.</i></p>
Q11.0.4	<p>Non Designated Heritage Assets</p> <p>(1) Can the Councils confirm they are content all non designated heritage assets have been properly identified and considered as part of the heritage assessment?</p> <p>(2) The WR at D1 from The Station makes reference to North Clifton Station and the Station Masters House, indicating both properties form a group, the ES Chapter 10 in section 10.6 appears to only reference the Station, is further assessment required?</p>	<p>(1) WLDC do not have a local list of building of historic interest, therefore WLDC consider that all non-designated heritage assets have been included appropriately.</p>
Q12.0.4	<p>Ongoing Maintenance</p> <p>Are IPs satisfied that the details within the OEMP are satisfactory to ensure that the drainage infrastructure will be maintained to a suitable level for the duration of the Proposed Development.</p>	<p>WLDC defer on this matter to Lincolnshire County Council as lead local flood authority, and the Trent Valley Internal Drainage Board.</p>
Q12.0.5	<p>Compliance with the Water Framework Directive</p> <p>A number of IPs [including RR-007, RR-095] have expressed concern of the potential adverse effect on soil health, the environment and drinking water.</p> <p>(1) Please advise if there are any concerns that arise from the proposed development in respect of any effects that may arise on drinking water, either during construction, operation or subsequent decommissioning.</p> <p>(2) Please advise on whether you consider the Water Framework Directive would be complied with, and if you are content that mitigation offered through the DCO would meet with any concerns identified</p>	<p>WLDC defer on this matter to the Environment Agency and Anglian Water.</p>

Q12.0.6

Water Framework Directive

NPS EN-1 states at paragraph 5.16.14 “The Secretary of State should be satisfied that a proposal has regard to current River Basin Management Plans and meets the requirements of the Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations 2017 (including regulation 19). The specific objectives for particular river basins are set out in River Basin Management Plans. The Secretary of State must refuse development consent where a project is likely to cause deterioration of a water body or its failure to achieve good status or good potential, unless the requirements set out in Regulation 19 are met. A project may be approved in the absence of a qualifying Overriding Public Interest test only if there is sufficient certainty that it will not cause deterioration or compromise the achievement of good status or good potential.” (our highlighting)

- (1) Can each party advise on its position in respect of the Proposed Development, its relationship to any relevant River Basin Management Plan and the requirements of the WFD.
- (2) Can each party confirm their position in respect of whether there is likely to be any deterioration of a water body, or that any water body would not achieve a ‘good status’ or ‘good potential’ as a consequence of the Proposed Development, and
- (3) The relevant position in respect of whether Regulation 19 is /would be met?
- (4) In light of the current position of the Stage 1 WFD screening assessment recently submitted to the EA, whether it is likely the outcome of the screening assessment will be known prior to the end of the examination.

WLDC defer on this matter to Lincolnshire County Council as lead local flood authority, the Environment Agency and the Trent Valley Internal Drainage Board.

Q13.0.1	<p>BMV The Written Ministerial Statement (WMS) dated 15 May 2024 entitled 'Solar and Protecting our Food Security and Best and Most Versatile Land' on the use of the Best and Most Versatile Agricultural land (BMV).</p> <p>(1) Could the Applicant provide an explanation as to how the WMS has been used to guide and minimise the use of BMV in line with National Policy.</p> <p>(2) In light of the WMS can the Applicant provide a table showing a breakdown of the quantity and type of BMV within the Order Limits</p>	<p>WLDC note that the WMS emphasises consideration for solar development of the cumulative impacts on BMV agricultural land where several proposals come forward in the same locality, with the WMS specifically referencing these issues in Lincolnshire "we are increasingly seeing geographical clustering of proposed solar developments in some rural areas, such as in Lincolnshire".</p> <p>The potential impacts on BMV agricultural land of both the One Earth proposal and cumulatively with other NSIP projects in WLDC are of significant concern to the Council.</p>
Q13.0.2	<p>BMV NPS EN-1 at paragraph 5.11.34 states that "The Secretary of State should ensure that applicants do not site their scheme on the best and most versatile agricultural land without justification. Where schemes are to be sited on best and most versatile agricultural land the Secretary of State should take into account the economic and other benefits of that land."</p> <p>(1) Please explain how the economic and other benefits of the BMV has been assessed.</p> <p>(2) Do the Councils agree that there is sufficient justification provided?</p>	<p>Gate Burton, West Burton (as approved) and Cottam have between them taken 745ha of BMV land in West Lindsey. Tillbridge, if granted its DCO, will take another 60ha of BMV land, a total of 805ha of BMV in WLDC. These figures are for main works and do not include cable routes.</p> <p>As set out in Environmental Statement Volume 2: Chapter 8: Land and Soils, paragraph 8.4.34, OESF would take another 661ha overall across Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire, including some 245ha of Grade 2 land.</p> <p>The precise area of BMV does not appear to be broken down by host authority area in Chapter 8. However, a review of Figure 8.6 ALC Survey Results [APP-053] would indicate that around 25% of the Grade 2 and Grade 3a land is within WLDC which would equate to approximately 165ha of BMV land and approximately 60ha of Grade 2 land will sit within WLDC.</p> <p>WLDC therefore consider the use of further BMV land for OESF is not justified in the context of the already consented loss of BMV within the WLDC administrative area, and the WMS referred to at ExAWQ1 Q13.0.1, which specifically mentions Lincolnshire as an area of friction.</p>

Q13.0.4	<p>Soil Health</p> <p>The depth of cables was discussed during the Hearings of the week commencing 7 July 2025, and there appeared to be some disagreement as to what a suitable depth should be to ensure ploughing could take place post development in the event cables were left in situ.</p> <p>(1) Please provide evidence of the depth of ploughing that has occurred across the land within the Order Limits.</p> <p>(2) In order to ensure ploughing would be possible post development in the event cables were to remain – what would the minimum depth require to be to facilitate this, (Is there a recognised best standard or advice note for the soil type across the Order Limits?)</p> <p>(3) How Is this secured?</p>	<p>WLDC defer on this matter to Natural England.</p>
Q14.0.5	<p>Human Health</p> <p>Can the UKHSA advise if there are any concerns with regard to human health from the proposed development, considering both the development itself, and the harms that might arise in the event of either a flood, fire or other accident.</p>	<p>WLDC note from the submissions on behalf of Exolum Pipeline System Limited [REP1-108, 109 and 110], that there is a major fuel pipeline passing under much of the eastern half of the project, including directly under the substation/BESS location in West Lindsey.</p> <p>WLDC also note that the layouts shown on the site layout plans (titled height parameter plans) [APP-016] do not appear to make allowance for this pipeline.</p> <p>In Chapter 2 of the EIA relating to Methodology [APP-031], Table 2.1 Technical Aspects Scoped Out of the ES indicates that ‘Risk of Major Accidents and Disasters’ as a topic has been scoped out of the ES. However, the explanatory text does not appear to make reference to this fuel pipeline.</p> <p>WLDC consider that a robust justification is required for scoping out Risk of Major Accidents and Disasters given the presence of this major fuel pipeline.</p>
Q15.0.2	<p>National Landscapes</p> <p>Do the Councils and NE agree there is no effect on the setting of national landscapes and that the duty under s245 of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 (LURA) do not apply</p>	<p>The nearest National Landscape (Lincolnshire Wolds) is approximately 30km to the east. WLDC agree that there is no effect on the setting of national landscapes and that the duty under s245 of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 (LURA) does not apply.</p>

Q15.0.3

Veteran Trees

At ISH1 the Applicant indicated that there were no veteran trees within the Order Limits. This has now been confirmed not to be correct in the D1 submissions.

(1) In light of the fact 13 veteran trees are present within the Order Limits, should the DCO and or supporting mitigation document be worded to afford additional protection for such trees, by way for example of requiring no construction activity within root protection zones and/or for consultation to be undertaken with the LPAs prior to undertaking any work when this might be deemed necessary.

From a review of the information provided, it appears that there are five veteran trees within the WLDC administrative area:

- T246 (sheet 4) – appears outside Order limits
- T267 (Sheet 6) – appears to be part of excluded woodland with operational development set back
- T320 (sheet 6) – appears to be part of excluded oil well area with operational development set back
- T370 (sheet 6) – appears to be on edge of excluded area but within Order limits, although in area of operational development set back
- T426 (sheet 6) - appears to be on edge of small woodland area, although in area of operational development set back – possibly in Newark and Sherwood administrative area

Whilst it does not appear that the veteran trees within WLDC will be directly affected by the works, WLDC considers that, for veteran trees, the Applicant should explicitly confirm the protection around each veteran tree, and whether this will be to BS5837: Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction (2012) or whether enhanced protection is proposed during construction, during operation (including any large scale equipment replacement activity) and during decommissioning.

Root protection areas (RPAs) for an average tree are calculated as 12 x stem diameter measured at 1.5m above ground level. For veteran trees the area for protection is increased, and is often calculated to be at least 15 x its stem diameter (at 1.5m agl), or 5 metres beyond the outer reaches of its crown spread, whichever is the greatest distance from its stem.

Ideally greater distances should be allowed between any veteran trees and their protective fencing where there is any risk of wind-blown materials, or chemical spills (including fuel and mortar/cement) near the trees.

		Therefore, WLDC request that an RPA of 15x stem diameter (at 1.5m agl) or 5 metres beyond the outer reaches of its crown spread, whichever is the greatest distance from its stem is included as a <u>minimum requirement</u> .
Q16.0.2	<p>Noise and vibration effects</p> <p>Paragraphs 15.6.5 (noise) and 15.6.6 (vibration) of Chapter 15: Noise and Vibration both state that there will not be any significant effects of noise and vibration during construction due to construction activities taking place near receptors only lasting a short time.</p> <p>(1) oCEMP relies on BPM – are the LPAs satisfied this would be appropriate – and also whether they agree with the refence to stakeholders or should the Councils be specified as bodies required to be worked with? <i>“agreed with appropriate stakeholders following appointment of a principal contractor and prior to commencement of construction work”</i></p> <p>(2) are councils content that the oCEMP provides adequate mitigation and management measures to enable construction to take place whilst keeping noise and vibration levels to a satisfactory level?</p>	<p>WLDC disagree with the construction noise thresholds for significance that have been set in this ES. These are however matters that WLDC is seeking to progress with the applicant through the Statement of Common Ground.</p> <p>(1) The list of BPM shown in Table 3.7 of the Outline CEMP appears to be comprehensive, although it may not completely reflect the mitigation described in para A.15.3.26 in Appendix 15.3 or potential restrictions on piling methods.</p> <p>(2) Where impacts are shown to be minor, the measures outlined should be adequate to control noise and vibration. However, if the assessment were more in line with BS5228 there is potential for significant noise impacts, requiring specific mitigation for some works near to some receptors.</p>
Q17.0.3	<p>Employment and skills</p> <p>Within their LIR, BDC refer to their expectations on employment during the construction and operation of the Proposed Development. Can the Applicant please provide a response to the issues raised, including whether the measures outlined by BDC should be incorporated into the application documentation.</p> <p>(2) Can the Councils please confirm whether they are satisfied with the measures proposed, or are there more requirements needed?</p>	<p>WLDC agree with Bassetlaw District Council that there should be more structured measures related to employment and skills. WLDC would like to see a target percentage of employees on site being from the host districts, with a further target percentage of employees being from within 50km of the Order boundary.</p> <p>WLDC would also like to see a target set for apprenticeships as a proportion of the workforce.</p> <p>WLDC would like to see monitoring and reporting mechanisms to ensure transparent delivery against key performance indicators (KPIs).</p>