

**Nottinghamshire County Council**  
**One Earth Solar Farm EN010159**  
**Landscape and Visual Impact Summary from Issue Specific Hearing 2**

1. This submission has been prepared by the County Council's landscape advisors to confirm the position of the County Council following Issue Specific Hearing 2 (3 September 2025) and in response to the action points from the Examining Authority.
2. Under **Agenda Item 4 (i)**, in regards to the suitability of a 2km search area and a broader understanding of the effect on landscape character areas: We have not identified anything on Site or wider landscape that would contradict the statement made by the applicant that there would not be Significant effects of the One Earth scheme in isolation beyond 2km, and typically distance reduces the likelihood of Significant effects occurring. Therefore, we agree that a 2km study area for the One Earth scheme in isolation is appropriate.
3. In regards to landscape effects of the scheme in isolation, we agree with the applicant that there will be significant adverse residual (15+years) effects across the order limits of the site: meaning the identified adverse landscape effects upon all areas of the site are not able to be adequately mitigated. In our initial LVIA review as part of the LIR, we did query as to why at a published landscape character scale (with the order limits falling across several landscape character areas identified in published landscape character assessments) the findings of the LVIA appeared inconsistent, with some character areas not having significant effects with others judged as not-significant. Subsequent meetings with the applicant along with a site visit have clarified the findings of the LVIA, and we agree that some of the identified character areas would not have significant effects due to their being limited above ground development directly affecting these areas.
4. Regarding the effect on wider landscape character areas affected by the site cumulatively with other schemes: The future landscape baseline is covered in LVIA paras. 11.4.147 and 11.4.148 and the development of solar farm projects in the area is acknowledged to be a factor in the future baseline, although this feels underplayed within the LVIA. This is a landscape undergoing extensive change to land-use, predominantly changing from agriculture to large scale solar development. While published character assessments do identify the power stations of Cottam and West Burton in the region, as well as presence of pylons and overhead lines, there is no identification of solar and BESS development at a local, district or national scale. Solar development, particularly at an NSIP scale, will be a completely new element covering thousands of hectares, that will be introduced across the region at an unprecedented

scale and pace. This will not appear as a natural evolution of this agricultural and rural landscape, but a rapid alteration, replacing extensive areas of agriculture with energy infrastructure. Large scale solar is a completely different element to two relatively small-scale power stations and isolated pylons and overhead lines.

5. Regarding cumulative landscape effects: as identified at the statutory consultation stage, we have concerns regarding cumulative effects on the landscape at a wider district and regional scale. The mass and scale of several NSIP energy projects combined has the potential to lead to adverse effects on landscape character over an extensive area across multiple published character areas. The landscape character of the region, across the Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire County areas, will be altered over the operational period through an extensive area of land use change, and introduction of energy infrastructure in an area that is predominantly agricultural. While it is not suggested that agriculture will not remain as a defining characteristic, over a short period of time large scale solar will undoubtedly become a widespread characteristic in the region. Subsequently, we judge that solar development would be a key characteristic in any updates to published character assessments from local to national scale.
6. However, given the absence of a unified, county-wide landscape character baseline across Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire, this presents a challenge when assessing cumulative effects over a strategic regional scale to consider all these energy projects. Therefore, an approach we are promoting is to extract common landscape attributes of the area from the multiple character area assessments that cover the region, enabling a reasoned, evidence-led baseline, and subsequently assessment, of cumulative landscape effects across the wider area. For example, across Lincolnshire and east Nottinghamshire: the Land Use is strongly rural and predominantly arable farmland; Field Patterns are predominantly medium to large-scale; the Topography has a predominantly flat to gently undulating landform; Perceptual Qualities are predominantly quiet and with a rural character and high levels of tranquillity; the Settlement Pattern is generally dispersed villages and market towns; Vegetation & Tree patterns are generally open with sparse or isolated tree or woodland cover; and regarding Views & Openness, there is generally a strong sense of openness, big skies, and long expansive views. Therefore, across the region of Lincolnshire and east Nottinghamshire, based on these shared characteristics large scale solar development and new energy infrastructure would create cumulative change of the landscape character through an extensive Land Use change, directly affecting the perceived openness, and rural tranquillity. We judge large scale solar, battery and energy

infrastructure will subsequently become a distinctive key characteristic across the region as a whole.

7. Reference has also previously been made to the Joint Interrelationships Report from other, previous, NSIP DCOs, with the Joint Interrelationships Report from the Tillbridge examination provided at Appendix D of the Written Summary of Applicant's Oral Submissions at the Issue Specific Hearing 1 (ISH1) (REP1-077 & REP1-078) at DL1. We disagree with the findings of this report as visual effects relate only to "in combination views" where two schemes may be seen in the same view. The report does not consider sequential views of multiple schemes, and also the report does not consider landscape effects through extensive land use change, or perceptual changes through the introduction of above ground built elements.
8. In respect of Action Point 1 from ISH2, we were asked to '*provide national policy requirements for concerns on cumulative landscape impacts of solar schemes.*' In this regard we would refer to National Policy Statement for Energy (EN3), which states under the title 'Secretary of State decision making' at para 2.10.157 in the Solar chapter '*the Secretary of State will consider the landscape and visual impact of any proposed solar PV farm, taking account of any sensitive visual receptors, and the effect of the development on landscape character, together with the possible cumulative effect with any existing or proposed development*'. We would also refer the ExA to the Summary of Verbal Representations from NSDC and the LCC ISH 2 Action point submission made at DL3, which provide additional information on the applicable national policy extracts.
9. Under **Agenda Item 4 (ii)**, regarding the landscape and visual assessment being based on a temporary period: We wish to clarify that comments made are in relation to the time period given for the ES, and subsequently used for the assessments made within the LVIA chapter. Given the stated operational time of 60 years, a concern was raised regarding the assumptions of reversibility and duration. Having reviewed the sections relating to this from GLVIA3 and other related technical guidance, it is clear that this project is long term. Given that 60 years is comparable to at least two generations, there is some considerable strength to the consideration that this would amount to a permanent project, as opposed to a temporary one, especially considering the average lifespan of building design is circa 50 years. If deemed a permanent Development, which it is our position, this may have a bearing on the judgements of effects, as typically a temporary scheme may reduce the assessed magnitude of change. However, the applicant clarified at ISH2 that the LVIA assessment has not

reduced the assessment of effects due to being either temporary or permanent, and therefore the judgement of effects is unlikely to change based on this.

10. Under **Agenda Item 4 (iii)**, regarding the assessment of the visual effects relative to static positions and sequential views, including an explanation of the routes where cumulative effects are considered to occur, and an understanding of how this may change any assessed effect: We maintain the position that the visual assessment does not fully align with guidance provided within LI *Technical Guidance Note LITGN-2024-01*, which has been appended to this summary for reference as requested at the ISH.
11. This clarification by the Landscape Institute clearly states that the focus of a visual assessment should be on visual receptors, with viewpoints being utilised to illustrate potential views. Section 6(7): “Assessing viewpoints or visual receptors?” clarifies:  
  
*“The focus of the visual assessment should be the visual receptors (i.e. the people as set out within paragraph 6.31. of GLVIA3). The purpose of viewpoints is covered at paragraph 6.19 (i.e. for illustration of the visual effects).”*
12. By only focussing on a static viewpoint for the assessment, this does not fully consider the experience of a receptor, such as a walker along a PROW, or driver along a road. The experience and effects will be different depending on the experience, such as traveling along a linear route. The visual assessment does not fully account for this, and if only relying on a static viewpoint and describing the existing view and change to that view, may underplay visual effects. Subsequently, it was agreed at the ISH the AAH identify any visual receptors where the assessed effect within the LVIA may be altered by considering this sequential visual effect. This will be further discussed with the applicant and subsequently included within the statement of common ground issued at DL4 to ensure the position is clear.
13. As an example, users of public bridleway NT/North Clifton/BW10 will have a varying experience along the route, as well as varying views of the Development. This receptor will have closer range, and likely clearer views of the Development while passing through the south eastern section of the Site, however their visual experience is only captured and described in one static view at Viewpoint 9, which is much further from the built elements than at other locations, and subsequently may have been assessed as having a lesser effect.
14. Frequent sequential views would create a change to the experience of visual receptors as well as change the perception of character of an entire area – these don't necessarily need to be clear open views. Repeated views and presence of large scale

solar would undoubtedly increase the susceptibility of receptors to changes in view through visual fatigue in which viewers experience a diminishing capacity to absorb or tolerate repeated or similar visual stimuli (solar development) along routes, eroding landscape character and increasing a broader perception of landscape industrialisation.

15. Cumulatively, with other solar schemes, as identified at the statutory consultation stage and within our ISH1 representation, we have concerns regarding cumulative visual effects which we judge will be an issue when experienced sequentially for visual receptors travelling through the wider landscape and experiencing several schemes across potentially several kilometres, albeit with gaps between the schemes.
16. GLVIA3 defines types of cumulative visual effect as either: Combined (in same view, and not identified for OESF) or Sequential (which is our concern, and we judge these have not been fully considered). Table 7.1 of GLVIA3, regarding Sequential Cumulative visual effects states: *“Sequential: Occurs when the observer has to move to another viewpoint to see the same or different developments. Sequential effects may be assessed for travel along regularly used routes such as major roads or popular paths”*
17. We judge that the sequential effects would be felt throughout the area, with PROW users that are more visually susceptible to changes in their view, moving slowly and often engaging with the landscape attentively; Travel along these PROW presents successive experience with solar infrastructure, creating a sequential visual effect.
18. PROW users traveling along several rights of way have been identified within the applicants LVIA as having significant adverse visual effects at year 15 including National Cycle Network Route 647, Public bridleways NT/Ragnall/BW3, NT/Darlington/BW1, NT/Thorney/BW19, and NT/North Clifton/BW10 and public footpath NT/Ragnall/FP2. If users of these routes had previously, or would subsequently, travel on rights of way with views of other schemes (as identified in the LVIAs associated with these projects) the implication is that users would likely experience sequential cumulative adverse visual effects across two or more schemes, even at Year 15 when mitigation should have matured. Combined with road corridors like the north to south A1133 and A156 route, along with nearby lanes, this can form a coherent visual narrative of a rural area increasingly defined by clustered energy-infrastructure development. The A1133 and A156 north to south route passes close to the One Earth Solar Farm where visibility of the scheme and significant visual effects are identified. Further north along this route (along the A156), users also have Significant adverse

residual views of Gate Burton, and potentially some views of Cottam, and West Burton solar projects.

19. Under **Agenda Item 4 (iv)** regarding the assessment of effects on residential receptors, the applicants process of assessing the effects on residential receptors is becoming clearer and the applicants have provided additional information at previous deadlines and through additional meetings and discussions which has assisted in answering some of our concerns, however we still feel information on specific assessment of residents is missing.

As was identified within the AAH LVIA review, included within the LIR's as an appendix, at chapter 6.8: *"we would anticipate that some residents may experience Significant adverse visual effects from several properties, and while it is generally unlikely that properties will reach the RVAT through the Development of a solar farm, it is not possible to understand this process or any findings as they have not been presented. It would be beneficial for the applicant to clarify their position in regards to RVAA and why the initial residential visual amenity surveys have not been presented to aid transparency."* This was also discussed at ISH 1.

20. Subsequently the applicant has provided additional information within Appendix F Residential Assessment and Design within the Written Summary of Applicant's Oral Submissions at ISH1 (REP1-077 & REP1-078) at DL1 to clarify this process and provide additional information. This includes 16 drawing sheets identifying the properties surveyed along with a summary assessment, including whether any properties were not visited. This is a useful update and the plans and information clarify that surveys and consideration has been undertaken, as well as providing evidence of an iterative design process and how residential amenity is considered.

Finally Paragraphs have been added to the LVIA at DL2: 11.3.35 to 11.3.38, clarifying that the author judges that no properties would reach the Residential Visual Amenity Threshold. While we agree with this statement in principle, we cannot locate the individual assessment of each of these properties for us to review and check the applicants' findings – i.e. which properties have significant effects and at what phases.

21. Also, the additional information provided in Appendix F of ISH1 summary text is not linked to, or referenced to the LVIA revisions. It is somewhat hidden away and not particularly accessible unless signposted to this information. We will work with the applicant through the SoCG to enable us to identify and clarify the individual residential assessments.

22. Under **Agenda Item 4 (v)** regarding the extent of mitigation offered, and how this is secured within the dDCO, and whether IPs agree this provides a sustainable solution: The Indicative layouts and associated landscape proposals provide the opportunity to establish areas of mitigation planting that will provide screening and integration of the scheme into the landscape, but also provide for the creation of landscape assets and new habitats. However, the landscape mitigation strategy outlined in the OLEMP and Design Approach Document is high-level at this stage, to allow for flexibility in the detailed design stages, and we would expect at the detailed design stage the applicant develop detailed planting plans clearly showing the location and types of planting (species), as well as number, density and specification, along with planting details and specifications. The scheme must also be managed appropriately for the duration of the project.
23. Subsequently, we have reviewed the updated OLEMP [Rev 2 REP1-054] submitted at DL 1 and (Rev 3 REP2-056) submitted at DL 2 to review if our concerns identified previously had been appropriately addressed. In previous comments and review, we stated that the OLEMP must be explicit in regards to the landscape mitigation scheme and maintenance post any approval, and include: Provision of detailed planting proposals that must be approved by the relevant authority; Subsequently, a sentence has been added at 1.3.5 of the OLEM (Rev 3) that *“The LEMP will detail the location and extent of proposed planting by inclusion of planting plans and species lists.”*
24. We wanted to ensure that maintenance of all planting and ecological features be for the life of the project; Subsequently, the updated OLEMP includes the addition of paragraph 5.4.3, which clarifies that all existing and proposed habitats will be managed and maintained for the operational duration of the scheme. This is a key clarification: we expect that the planting and associated habitat be appropriately managed for the full duration of the scheme.
25. Finally, regarding plant replacements due to failure to thrive or establish, or due to plants dying, the OLEMP has provision within the initial establishment period, however we still request a statement be added for unforeseen circumstances such as extensive plant dieback, or failure to establish. We suggest the following, to be reviewed and included within the OLEMP:

*“In the unlikely event of external factors causing significant losses to the mitigation planting during the lifetime of the Project such that the purpose of screening the development is no longer achieved as a result of gaps in the planting, replacement planting will be undertaken to infill gaps that may arise. This approach will ensure*

*commitments are fulfilled in respect of providing screening of the scheme and enhancing biodiversity”*