



One Earth Solar Farm

EN010159/APP/9.51

Response to Request for Information Letter from Secretary of State

May 2026

One Earth Solar Farm Ltd

1. Introduction

1.1 Context

1.1.1 The Applicant has received the 'Secretary of State's Request for Information' ("RFI") letter dated 1 May 2026 and has provided a response below for each separate matter raised, as follows:

- > Biodiversity and ecology;
- > Hydrology and hydrogeology;
- > Protective provisions;
- > Land rights;
- > Crown land.

1.1.2 Following a review of the Secretary of State's ("SoS") decision on Springwell Solar Farm [EN010149] (paragraph 4.51) the Applicant also considers that it would be of assistance to the SoS to provide specific references where the effects of the Proposed Development on agricultural land has been considered in the Application and to provide further evidence in relation to the existing land use of land within the Order Limits, to support consideration of food security matters.

1.1.3 The following documents and Appendices have been included to provide additional information that should be read in conjunction with this letter, as necessary:

- > Covering Letter prepared by the Applicant
- > Appendix 1 – Updated Outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (oLEMP) [EN010159/APP/7.7.7] (clean and tracked)
- > Appendix 2 – Updated Outline Battery Safety Management Plan (oBSMP) [EN01059/APP.7.11.7] (clean and tracked)
- > Appendix 3 – Agreed protective provisions for Northern Powergrid (Yorkshire) Plc
- > Appendix 4 – Agreed protective provisions for National Grid Electricity Transmission Plc
- > Appendix 5 – Agricultural Land Use in the United Kingdom (Defra)

2. Biodiversity and Ecology

2.1.1 Clarifications are being sought with regards to biodiversity and ecology across a series of five questions that are focused on ornithology. These questions (numbered from paragraphs 3 to 7 of the RFI) are answered below, together with corresponding updates to the outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (oLEMP) [EN010159/APP/7.7.7] included at **Appendix 1**.

2.2 Paragraph 3 of RFI

3. The Secretary of State notes that as part of the 234 hectares (“ha”) of new species rich grassland to be created, 81 ha will be managed specifically to benefit skylark with the provision of 243 skylark plots [REP6-009]. However, the Secretary of State notes that skylark plots are designed to be used within arable fields. The Applicant is requested to provide more detailed justification for their utility within species-rich grassland and comment on whether the use of skylark plots in this habitat may conflict with foraging opportunities for other species.

2.2.1 The Environmental Statement (“ES”) for the Proposed Development assessed the potential effects on skylark within Chapter 6 Biodiversity (paragraphs 6.10.105 to 6.10.113) [**REP6-008**]. Taking into account the proposed environmental measures (C17, 29, 30, 34) described in Table 6.6 of Chapter 6 Biodiversity [**REP6-008**], the ES concluded that the effects on skylark would be not significant.

2.2.2 Skylark use grasslands for foraging and nesting frequently, with densities of breeding pairs per hectare recorded being greater than in intensive cereal crops (Fox, 2022) (references in this response are listed at Section 8 below). Natural grasslands also provide more opportunities for skylark to successfully raise multiple broods (Donald, 2004). Arable crops become too tall and dense rapidly thereby preventing further breeding attempts (skylark tend to have one brood with intensive cereal fields) whereas grasslands allow for multiple broods per year as they are not usually as dense as arable crops (typically three broods per year in grassland).

2.2.3 Skylark plots in arable fields provide the opportunity for skylark to land easily, forage on invertebrates and nest (although nests may also be within the crop) even as the crop matures (CFE, 2026). This helps to increase skylark productivity within intensively managed cereal fields and hence why they are promoted as an option within agri-environment schemes.

2.2.4 Grasslands proposed within the One Earth Solar Farm would be managed with spring and autumn cuts leading to hay meadow style management (see paragraphs 5.4.49 to 5.4.65 in the Outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan at **Appendix 1**). This means that each field supporting a hay meadow style grassland will become relatively tall and dense as the season progresses. Although there will be more variability in these grasslands than within an intensively managed cereal crop, skylark plots within the grassland will ensure that a range of different opportunities exist at all times, within the breeding bird season. Skylark plots are

therefore being provided to ensure that both density of skylark and the number of potential brooding attempts can be maximised.

2.2.5 It is notable that heterogeneity within the grassland sward is considered generally beneficial for biodiversity. For example, the habitat condition criteria underpinning the Biodiversity Net Gain system (Defra, 2023) includes, for grassland habitats, a criterion that reads ‘sward height is varied (at least 20% of the sward is less than 7 cm and at least 20% is more than 7 cm) creating microclimates which provide opportunities for insects, birds and small mammals to live and breed.’ Therefore, it can be confirmed that the provision of skylark plots within the grassland habitats will not conflict with foraging opportunities for other species.

2.3 Paragraph 4 of RFI

4. The Secretary of State welcomes the use of skylark plots within the ‘sacrificial crop areas’ as noted in [REP6-009]. The Applicant is requested to add further detail on their use in this context in the outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (“oLEMP”) [REP7-018]. The Applicant is also requested to ensure that the oLEMP aligns with the Environmental Statement, including the assumed distance from boundary features, providing any updates as required.

2.3.1 The Applicant confirms the Outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan aligns with the Environment Statement, including the assumed distance from boundary features (see paragraph 6.10.108 of Chapter 6 Biodiversity [REP6-009]). The Outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan has been updated to reflect the use of skylark plots within sacrificial crop areas as requested and is included at **Appendix 1** to this response.

2.3.2 In summary, the additions to the oLEMP are:

- Paragraph 5.4.50 outlines the proposed use of sacrificial crops (dependent on results of soil testing) as a way to manage nutrient levels in soil, prior to sowing of species-rich meadow seed mixes.
- Paragraph 5.4.51 has been amended to allow for the use of sacrificial crops (dependent on results of soil testing) prior to the establishment of species-rich grasslands.

2.3.3 Paragraph 5.4.56 ensures that skylark plots are added to sacrificial crops in line with Government guidance for agri-environment schemes (which includes advice on siting skylark plots at least 50m from field boundaries).

2.4 Paragraph 5 of RFI

5. The Secretary of State notes that for natural grasslands, skylark territories typically occur at a density of 0.27 per ha. The Applicant is requested to further

justify and clarify that appropriate breeding opportunities can be provided to maintain the skylark population in the area (as reported in [REP6-009]), and comment on the breeding density used to design the mitigation areas. The Applicant is also requested to identify any opportunity to provide additional onsite habitat and, if none are available, comment on whether additional farmland bird compensation areas could be provided offsite.

- 2.4.1 A total of 234 hectares (ha) of new species rich grassland will be created as part of the Proposed Development that does not include any above ground infrastructure. There will also be considerable gains of suitable foraging habitat for skylark within fields that will support solar arrays (approximately 918 ha of grassland and 7.2 ha of arable field margins). These habitats provide the opportunity to ensure that the 144 breeding pairs of skylarks assumed to be displaced can be accommodated.
- 2.4.2 The areas without above ground infrastructure provide the habitat within which nesting attempts can be made, whilst this grassland and the wider solar array provide large-scale opportunities for foraging. The use of solar farms, where management is delivered to benefit biodiversity, by skylark is well documented in the UK and Europe (Copping et al. 2026, Solar Energy UK, 2025, Peschel & Peschel, 2025). Taken together the opportunities for skylark at One Earth Solar Farm are in excess of that needed to accommodate 144 breeding pairs of skylark, as a home range for a breeding pair would be expected to include both areas within open grassland and others within the solar array (noting that within the array field corners, margins and areas along tracks etc. would also be free of infrastructure). Given that the densities of skylark per hectare can be considerably greater than 0.27 per ha (for example organic set-aside has an average density of 0.56 ha (Fox, 2022)), it is highly unlikely for there to be a limiting effect associated with the scale of nesting habitat (234 ha) due to the opportunity for the solar arrays to make up large proportions of each home-range.
- 2.4.3 The assessment presented within Chapter 6 Biodiversity (see paragraph 6.10.113 of Chapter 6 - Biodiversity [REP6-008]) predicts a negative effect during construction, with a positive longer-term effect as habitats become established (in line with Peschel & Peschel, 2025). However, as there is uncertainty to the extent of the positive effect the overall outcome has been assumed to be not significant. This outcome is considered appropriately precautionary. Accordingly, it is not considered necessary for additional onsite habitat to be provided or for compensation areas to be provided offsite.

2.5 Paragraph 6 of RFI

6. The Applicant is requested to further justify the conclusions in the Environmental Statement that there would be a significant beneficial effect to other breeding birds across all phases of the Proposed Development [REP6-009], including consideration of the density of nesting expected within each habitat type and the predicted habitat loss.

- 2.5.1 The One Earth Solar Farm results in the loss of approximately 1,111 ha of intensively managed arable fields, 7 ha of arable field margin, 102 ha of modified grassland, 1 ha of other neutral grassland, 0.34 kilometres (km) of hedgerow and 0.07 km of permanently wet ditch / watercourse.
- 2.5.2 The Proposed Development would create 918 ha of modified grassland (species-rich in good condition), 205 ha of other neutral grassland, 29 ha of coastal and floodplain grazing marsh, 1 ha of mixed scrub, 8.5 ha of woodland, 7 ha of arable field margins, 0.4 ha of ponds and approximately 14 km of hedgerow. There would also be enhancements to approximately 4 ha of coastal and floodplain grazing marsh, 6 ha of mixed scrub, 4 ha of woodland and 54 km of hedgerow. It is apparent that there will be considerably more and better managed habitats that are typically considered to have significantly greater biodiversity interest than intensively managed arable farmland following development than currently.
- 2.5.3 When considered across the Proposed Development the provision of more botanically and structurally diverse habitats across intensively managed arable fields will undoubtedly provide a large range of opportunities for a range of biodiversity including invertebrates, herptiles, mammals and birds. The regular use of solar farms, where management is delivered to benefit biodiversity, by a wide range of birds is well documented in the UK and Europe (Copping et al. 2026, Solar Energy UK, 2025, Peschel & Peschel, 2025). This usage is in excess of that which is expected within intensively managed farmland habitats.
- 2.5.4 Out of 44 species reported on by Copping et al. (2026) a total of 34 were recorded at greater abundance (see Figure 1 of Copping et al. 2026) compared with their occurrence within arable habitat and solar farms where measures for biodiversity had not been implemented. Those species that were recorded in lower abundances than associated arable fields were typically those associated with more open habitats such as mute swan, skylark and lapwing. Although solar farms managed for biodiversity do not provide positive benefits to all bird species, the majority of the farmland bird community is expected to benefit. When this is considered at the scale of the One Earth Solar Farm (i.e. landscape scale), the overall benefit to breeding birds is expected to be significant during the operational phases of development. These benefits would be expected to persist to some degree following decommissioning as habitats such as hedgerows, scrub and woodland are likely to be retained by the landowner.
- 2.5.5 It is noted that this is not across all phases and there would be some adverse effects over the construction phase, see paragraph 6.10.121 of Chapter 6 - Biodiversity [REP6-008] states that '*The effects of construction would be negative, low in magnitude and short term. The delivery and management of large areas of semi-natural habitat during the operational phase will be positive, long-term, and of high magnitude.*'

2.6 Paragraph 7 of RFI

7. The Applicant is requested to confirm how mitigation has been proposed specifically to support wintering birds such as lapwing and golden plover to justify the Environmental Statement conclusions.

- 2.6.1 Mitigation for wintering golden plover and lapwing has been provided for through the creation (29 ha) and enhancement (4 ha) of coastal and floodplain grazing marsh, and the provision of 205 ha of other neutral grassland. This habitat will be devoid of above ground infrastructure and will be managed for biodiversity. This will provide habitat types favoured by these species that have not been subject to widespread pesticide use thereby providing the opportunity for good levels of invertebrate prey to become established (such as ground beetles and earthworms). Appendix 6.8 Wintering Bird Baseline [REP1-038] shows that lapwing and golden plover use is restricted to a small number of fields within the Order Limits. These fields are associated with wetter areas. The coastal and floodplain grassland to be created and managed will provide greater areas of wetter habitat than currently present, as agricultural drainage will no longer be necessary. The area that will be available to these species during operation will be greater than that lost (based on their recorded distribution) and will provide habitats that are known to be favoured by these species.

3. Hydrology and Hydrogeology

3.1 Paragraph 8 of RFI

8. *The Applicant, Environment Agency, Lincolnshire County Council, Nottinghamshire County Council, Bassetlaw District Council, Newark and Sherwood District Council and West Lindsey District Council are requested to provide comments on the suitability of the following proposed amended wording for Requirement 7 of the DCO:*

Battery safety management

7.— (1) Work Nos. 2 and 5(g) must not commence until a battery safety management plan has been submitted to and approved by the relevant planning authority for that part, and such approval is to be in consultation with the relevant district authority for that part.

(2) The battery safety management plan must be in accordance with the outline battery safety management plan and demonstrate that all required access to the BESS and substation compounds is achievable and safe during the design flood event (as defined in the flood risk assessment and outline drainage strategy).

(3) The relevant planning authority must consult with the Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue Service, the Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service and the Environment Agency before determining an application for approval of the battery safety management plan.

(4) The battery safety management plan must be implemented as approved and maintained throughout the operation of the relevant part of the authorised development to which the plan relates.

3.1.1 The Applicant has considered the proposed updated drafting for Requirement 7 and proposes further amendments as set out below:

Battery safety management

7.—(1) Work Nos. 2 and the applicable parts of Work No. 5(g) for access to the BESS and substation compounds must not commence until a battery safety management plan has been submitted to and approved by the relevant planning authority for that part, and such approval is to be in consultation with the relevant district authority for that part.

(2) The battery safety management plan must be in substantial accordance with the outline battery safety management plan ~~and demonstrate that all required access to the BESS and substation compounds is achievable and~~

~~safe during the design flood event (as defined in the flood risk assessment and outline drainage strategy).~~

(3) The relevant planning authority must consult with the Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue Service, the Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service and the Environment Agency before determining an application for approval of the battery safety management plan.

(4) The battery safety management plan must be implemented as approved and maintained throughout the operation of the relevant part of the authorised development to which the plan relates.

3.1.2 The reasoning for the proposed amendments is set out below:

3.1.3 The Applicant is not opposed to inclusion of reference to Work No. 5(g) in Requirement 7(1). However, given Work No. 5(g) relates to the laying down and creation of internal access tracks, ramps, means of access and footpaths and improvement of access tracks for the whole of the Proposed Development (not just the BESS and substation compounds), this has been clarified so as to limit the restriction to those elements of Work No. 5(g) that relate to the BESS and substation compounds.

3.1.4 The Applicant's preference is that the detailed Battery Safety Management Plan be in "substantial" accordance with the Outline Battery Safety Management Plan ("oBSMP"). This is the widely accepted approach to the discharge of requirements where there is an outline management plan including for example, the recently made Springwell Solar Farm Order 2026. The wording is necessary because it allows appropriate flexibility to respond to issues arising from detailed design or any other new relevant circumstances whilst still preserving the ability of the relevant planning authority to refuse to approve any scheme it considers inappropriate or inadequate (whether or not it is substantially in accordance with the outline scheme). The wording strikes the necessary balance between securing the measures in the outline management plans (which provides sufficient comfort to all stakeholders on their delivery/implementation) while also preserving the necessary flexibility should circumstances change come detailed design, and (for example) where the measures are no longer considered appropriate or most effective. The Applicant considers if the wording 'substantially in accordance' was to be removed, the outline plans would need to be much lighter on detail to ensure that the developer was not in breach of the requirement – which would constitute a criminal offence. Schedule 16 (Procedure for Discharge of Requirements) provides further checks and balances. The Secretary of State should have comfort that the procedures for discharge prevent the undertaker from departing too far from what is in the outline plans in any material sense, because the undertaker will need to confirm when submitting the final detailed plan for approval, that it doesn't result in materially new or materially different environment effects compared to those assessed in the ES (and if it does, the undertaker must provide information in a statement setting out what those effects are). Ultimately it would be within the control of the relevant planning authority, having consulted with the EA and

Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue Service, the Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (and any other party it thinks fit) not to approve any of the final detailed plans/strategies if they do not consider the necessary measures are appropriately secured, especially where the failure to do so could result in worse effects.

- 3.1.5 The Applicant does not oppose the inclusion of a measure that demonstrates access to the BESS and substation compounds is achievable during a design flood event, but considers the most appropriate place to incorporate this measure is within the oBSMP. The proposed amendment to the oBSMP (see paragraph 4.3.1) has been included at **Appendix 2**. How this measure will be appropriately achieved will then be a matter for the undertaker to demonstrate at the detailed design stage in conjunction with the other commitments set out in the oBSMP, to be approved by the relevant planning authority in consultation with the Environment Agency, Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue Service, the Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (and anyone else it thinks fit) as part of the discharge of Requirement 7, in the same manner as any other measure contained within the oBSMP.

3.2 Paragraph 9 of RFI

9. The Applicant, Environment Agency, Lincolnshire County Council, Nottinghamshire County Council, Bassetlaw District Council, Newark and Sherwood District Council and West Lindsey District Council are requested to provide comments on the suitability of the following proposed amended wording for Requirement 22 of the DCO:

Flood risk mitigation

22.— (1) No part of the authorised development shall commence until, for that part, the flood risk mitigation detailed design has been submitted to and approved by the relevant planning authority, in consultation with the Environment Agency.

(2) The flood risk mitigation detailed design pursuant to sub-paragraph (1) to include:

(a) the layout of the proposed development and any proposed flood risk mitigation.

(b) the layout of solar panel and power converter stations to be sited within areas at risk of flooding and associated updated volumetric loss calculations based on the flood mitigation detailed design; and

(c) details of the lowest point of all solar panels and power converter stations (excluding any mounting structure) and confirmation that these are above the design flood event (as defined in the flood risk assessment and outline drainage strategy).

(3) The flood risk mitigation detailed design must accord with the flood risk assessment and outline drainage strategy.

3.2.1 The Applicant has considered the updated drafting for Requirement 22 and agrees with the amendments, subject to one further amendment to 22(2)(b) and 22(3) below:

(b) the layout of solar panel and power converter stations to be sited within areas at risk of flooding the design flood event (as defined in the flood risk assessment and outline drainage strategy) and associated updated volumetric loss calculations based on the flood mitigation detailed design; and

[...]

(3) The flood risk mitigation detailed design must substantially accord with the flood risk assessment and outline drainage strategy.

3.2.2 For the proposed amendment to 22(2)(b), fluvial flood risk from the River Trent is the primary source of flooding within the Order Limits. The volumetric calculations and Hydraulic Assessment presented within Section 3.1.5 of the Flood Risk Assessment and Outline Drainage Strategy [REP7-010] were based upon flood conditions during the design fluvial flood event. Changing this wording to specifically refer to the design flood extent will ensure the area identified is consistent with the rest of Requirement 22 (and indeed, the updated drafting of Requirement 7), and the mitigation provided is managing flood risk during the appropriate event.

3.2.3 For the proposed amendment to 22(3), the same reasoning provided at paragraph 3.1.4 above applies, and would need to be approved by the relevant planning authority in consultation with the Environment Agency (and any other part it thinks fit), which should provide sufficient comfort that the detailed design will be appropriate.

4. Protective Provisions

4.1 Network Rail

10. The Applicant is requested to comment on Network Rail's final submission [AS 072] regarding its outstanding objection to the Applicant's proposed protective provisions [REP9-006]. The Applicant and Network Rail are requested to provide updates regarding whether protective provisions have been agreed, and whether Network Rail have any outstanding objections. If agreement has not been reached, provide the reasons why, and when agreement is expected to be reached.

- 4.1.1 Discussions between the Applicant and Network Rail regarding protective provisions are well progressed and are now largely agreed, except on the matter of indemnity. The Applicant and Network Rail expect to reach agreement on protective provisions shortly, and will be in a position to provide a further update to the Secretary of State by the end of this month (May 2026).

4.2 Northern Powergrid (Yorkshire) Plc

11. The Applicant is requested to comment on the final submission from Northern Powergrid (Yorkshire) Plc [AS-071] regarding its outstanding objection to the Applicant's proposed protective provisions [REP9-006]. The Applicant and Northern Powergrid (Yorkshire) Plc are requested to provide updates regarding whether protective provisions have been agreed, and whether Northern Powergrid (Yorkshire) Plc have any outstanding objections. If agreement has not been reached, provide the reasons why, and when agreement is expected to be reached.

- 4.2.1 Protective provisions for the benefit of Northern Powergrid (Yorkshire) Plc have now been agreed and are included at **Appendix 3**. The Applicant respectfully requests that these replace the version of the protective provisions for the benefit of Northern Powergrid (Yorkshire) Plc included in the draft DCO at Deadline 9 **[REP9-006]**.

4.3 Trent Valley Internal Drainage Board

12. The Applicant and Trent Valley Internal Drainage Board are requested to provide updates regarding whether protective provisions have been agreed and if any further progress has been made with regards to obtaining consent under section 150 of the Planning Act 2008 to disapply section 23 of the Land Drainage Act 1991. If agreement has not been reached, provide the reasons why, and when agreement is expected to be reached.

- 4.3.1 At the close of Examination, protective provisions were included in the draft DCO for the benefit of the Trent Valley Internal Drainage Board. The Applicant has finally received a response from the Trent Valley Internal Drainage Board on 14 May 2026 to progress negotiations of protective provisions. The Applicant will endeavour to

agree protective provisions with the Trent Valley Internal Drainage Board as soon as possible.

- 4.3.2 As set out in the Applicant's Closing Statement **[REP9-028]**, the Applicant has provided the relevant drafting implications for Article 6 of the Draft DCO at Appendix A of its Written Summary of Issue Specific Hearing 3 **[REP5-071]**.
- 4.3.3 If consent is not obtained prior to the Secretary of State's determination of the DCO application, then the relevant disapplication provision(s) and the proposed form of protective provisions relating to Trent Valley Internal Drainage Board must be removed from the final made DCO (as set out in the Applicant's Closing Statement **[REP9-028]**), and the Applicant would seek the relevant permits post consent as would be done on a Town and Country Planning Act 1990 scheme.

4.4 National Grid Electricity Transmission Plc

13. 'The Applicant and National Grid Electricity Transmission Plc are requested to provide updates regarding whether protective provisions have been agreed. If agreement has not been reached, provide the reasons why, and when agreement is expected to be reached.'

- 4.4.1 Protective provisions for the benefit of National Grid Electricity Transmission Plc have now been agreed and are included at **Appendix 4**. The Applicant respectfully requests that these replace the version of the protective provisions for the benefit of National Grid Electricity Transmission Plc included in the draft DCO at Deadline 9 **[REP9-006]**.

5. Land Rights

- 5.1.1 The Applicant has provided updates on the parties specifically requested by the SoS as well as in relation to any other outstanding agreements, which are set out below.

5.2 David Nicholas Young (Affected Person Ref. 250550)

14. 'The Applicant is requested to provide an update on its position in respect of the rights sought over land plot number 11-008 [REP9-014 Affected Party Reference No. 250550] and if further progress has been made to engage with Lincolnshire County Council to determine if it is the relevant Affected Party.'

- 5.2.1 Plot 11-008 forms part of the adopted highway within the jurisdiction of Lincolnshire County Council and has been identified in the Book of Reference [REP9-012] as being owned by Mr David Young. It is understood that David Young's ownership of the land is as a result of a HM Land Registry error and as a result, Mr Young believes that, in respect of plot 11-008 specifically, he is not an Affected Party and as such is unable to progress a voluntary agreement in respect of the permanent rights sought. Lincolnshire County Council is the responsible highways authority, but because it is not the legal owner of the land, it would not be appropriate for the Applicant to progress a voluntary agreement with Lincolnshire County Council in respect of this plot. The Applicant will continue to undertake property diligence as required in relation to this plot with a view to rectifying this error with HM Land Registry, but must retain record of Mr Young's interest in the plot in the Book of Reference until such time that the HM Land Registry confirms that this is an error.

5.3 J G Pears Property Limited (Affected Person Ref. 250326)

15. The Applicant and J G Pears Property Limited are requested to provide an update on their positions in respect of the rights sought by the Applicant over land plot numbers 05-011, 05-011a, 06-003, 06-003a, 07-011, 07-015, 08-001, 08-002, 08-003, 08-004, 08-005, 08-006, 08-007, 08-008, 08-009, 08-010 and 08-011 [REP9-014 Affected Party Reference No. 250326]. If agreement has not been reached, provide the reasons why, and when agreement is expected to be reached.

- 5.3.1 On 16 January 2026, the Applicant followed up with J G Pears Property Limited ("J G Pears") seeking a response to the updated Heads of Terms and commercial offer. As part of this correspondence the Applicant reaffirmed its request to facilitate a meeting between the respective party's appointed advisors. The Applicant received a response on 28 January 2026 which provided reasons as to why the commercial aspects of the updated Heads of Terms were not agreeable to J G Pears. The Applicant has considered the comments received by J G Pears on 28 January and maintains that the commercial offer made to J G Pears is reasonable. At this stage the Applicant has been unable to confirm a timeframe for agreement to be reached, but continues to engage with J G Pears Limited and has, on 6 May 2026, issued further email correspondence to requesting an all-party meeting. A

meeting has subsequently been arranged for 20 May 2026 during which it is hoped that material progress will be made towards reaching an agreement in the coming weeks.

5.4 P & L Farming Partnership Ltd (Affected Person Ref.250339)

16. The Applicant and P & L Farming Partnership Ltd are requested to provide an update on their positions in respect of the rights sought by the Applicant over land plot numbers 03-005 and 04-002 [REP9-014 Affected Party Reference No. 250339]. If agreement has not been reached, provide the reasons why, and when agreement is expected to be reached.

- 5.4.1 The option agreement is in an agreed form but is yet to be completed due to ongoing negotiations with Harworth Estates (Agricultural Land) Limited (“Harworth Estates”) in relation to an overage provision on the land. The Applicant is proactively seeking to resolve this matter and last engaged with P& L Farming Partnership Ltd’s (“P&L Farming”) appointed agent on 4 March 2026. On 5 March the Applicant sought to follow up on those most recent discussions during which P&L Farming’s appointed agent committed to providing feedback from the overage holder. The Applicant understands that P&L Farming’s appointed agent has been on leave since 5 March and as such no feedback has yet been provided. Without this feedback from P&L Farming’s appointed agent, the Applicant has been unable to provide an indicative timeframe for completion of the option but will endeavour to resolve this in the coming weeks. The Applicant will continue to engage with P&L Farming’s appointed agent and Harworth Estates as required in order to resolve the overage matter.

5.5 Railway Paths Limited (Affected Person Ref. 250342)

17. The Applicant and Railway Paths Limited are requested to provide an update on their positions in respect of the rights sought by the Applicant over land plot numbers 14-017, 14-018, 14-019, 15-012, 15-013, 15-015, 15-016 and 15-017 [REP9-014 Affected Party Reference No. 250342]. If agreement has not been reached, provide the reasons why, and when agreement is expected to be reached.

- 5.5.1 Following receipt of the Section 135 consent from the Department for Transport, who hold a restrictive covenant over Railway Paths Limited’s land, Heads of Terms were issued to Railway Paths Limited on 26 February 2026. Upon issue, the agent instructed by Railway Paths Limited raised a number of initial queries, which were addressed on 16 March 2026. On 21 April 2026, their initial feedback on the Heads of Terms was received. Amendments were subsequently made, and further responses to these points were provided on 30 April 2026. The agent has confirmed that they are currently reviewing the revised Heads of Terms and will respond shortly. The Applicant is hopeful that an agreement will be reached shortly in the coming weeks.

5.6 Updates Regarding any Other Land Rights Agreements

18. The Applicant is requested to provide any further updates regarding any other land rights agreements.

5.6.1 The Applicant has also provided updates in relation to any other outstanding agreements, which are set out below.

Richard Henry Strawson (Affected Person Ref. 250509)

5.6.2 The Applicant's appointed agents re-approached the landowner's agent on 11 May 2026 to confirm that the landowner remains of the view that they wish to wait until the cable route within their land has been confirmed before progressing further discussions. Richard Strawson's appointed agent has subsequently confirmed that the position remains unchanged and as such the Applicant shall engage as required when further detailed information is available with regards to cable routing.

Network Rail Infrastructure Limited (Affected Person Ref. 7310)

5.6.3 The Applicant's appointed agents have been progressing negotiations with Network Rail Ltd in relation to the permanent rights being sought. Email correspondence has been ongoing since January 2026, and meetings have been held on 2 March 2026 and 28 April 2026 respectively. In the most recent meeting on 28 April 2026, Network Rail Ltd provided detail on the commercial aspects of the draft agreement. The Applicant is currently reviewing this information and will provide a response to Network Rail Limited shortly.

6. Crown Land

19. The Applicant and The Crown Estate are requested to provide an update on their positions in respect of the rights sought by the Applicant over land plot number 04 009 [REP9-014 Affected Party Reference No. 250347] with regards to Heads of Terms and consent under section 135 of the Planning Act 2008. If agreement has not been reached, provide the reasons why, and when agreement is expected to be reached.

Heads of Terms

6.1.1 Since the close of Examination, the Applicant's appointed agents have proactively looked to progress the Heads of Terms with The Crown Estate's (TCE) appointed agent. On 4 March 2026, the Applicant received a response from TCE to comments on the Heads of Terms issued by the Applicant on 15 December 2025. The Applicant's appointed agents reviewed the comments and provided a further substantive response on 27 March 2026. TCE's appointed agent provided a further response on 24 April 2026 to which the Applicant's appointed agent responded on 30 April 2026. As part of the most recent correspondence, the Applicant's appointed agents have requested a meeting to discuss a small number of outstanding commercial points on the Heads of Terms. It is anticipated that the meeting between the parties' representatives will take place within the next month and that agreement with regards to the outstanding points will be reached shortly after the meeting.

Section 135 Consent

6.1.2 The Crown Estate and the Applicant are in active discussions in relation to the provision of the section 135 consent and agreement is expected to be reached by the end of this month.

7. Supplementary evidence on food security matters

7.1 Background

- 7.1.1 The Applicant has provided significant information in the Application documents and with respect to further written questions and at the Issue Specific Hearings with regard to the use of best and most versatile (BMV) agricultural land and how it has minimised its use in accordance with relevant planning policy.
- 7.1.2 The Applicant has noted however the Secretary of State's decision on Springwell Solar Farm (paragraph 4.51) where it is stated that:

“On the impact to food production and food security arising from siting the Proposed Development on BMV land, the Secretary of State agrees with the ExA's application of paragraph 5.11.34 of NPS EN-1 [ER 8.4.14]. This states that, where schemes are to be sited on BMV land, the Secretary of State should take into account the economic and other benefits of that land. The Secretary of State agrees that the Applicant should have included the impacts on food production within its ES, and he notes that LCC raised this in its response to the Applicant's Scoping Opinion Request [APP-076] in 2023: “The ES should quantify whether and how there are socio-economic benefits or negative impacts stemming from a change from the predominantly arable agricultural use of the site to that of the solar development proposed and also any possible pastoral use post-development”. Given the 98ha of BMV land permanently lost, along with the temporary loss of food production land amounting to some 443ha over the 40 year lifetime of the Proposed Development, the Secretary of State agrees with the ExA that there will be an adverse impact on food production and that this carries little negative weight [ER 8.4.20 and ER 8.5.1]. The Secretary of State agrees with the ExA that the loss of the temporary and permanent land and its subsequent impact on not just food production but the contribution that land, due to being agricultural land and its contribution to food security carries little negative weight against the Order.”

- 7.1.3 The Applicant's position is that impacts on food security have been appropriately considered within the ES and where matters relating to food security have been raised throughout Examination, these matters have been responded to. However, for completeness and in order to assist the Secretary of State (SoS), specific references are provided below where the effects of the Proposed Development on agricultural land have been considered in the Application and to provide further evidence in relation to the use of the Order Limits, to support consideration of food security matters.

7.2 Policy Context

- 7.2.1 As noted above, the principal policy relevant to food security is at paragraph 5.11.34 of NPS EN-1 which 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. Where development of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary, areas of poorer quality land should be preferred to those of a higher quality.”

7.2.2 This is reiterated at paragraph 2.10.137 of NPS EN-3. The Applicant agrees that food security matters can be a relevant consideration with regard to the economic benefits of the agricultural land, however, this should be considered alongside other Government policy and statements including:

- > The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, December 2024) where the footnote which required local plans to consider the impact on food production was specifically deleted in the latest published version – see paragraph 11.1.6 of Planning Statement **[APP-168]**.
- > The Secretary of State’s statement in the House of Commons on 18 July 2024 called “Clean Energy Superpower Mission” which stated that: “The biggest threat to nature and food security and to our rural communities is not solar panels or onshore wind; it is the climate crisis, which threatens our best farmland, food production and the livelihoods of farmers”. - see paragraph 11.1.6 of Planning Statement **[APP-168]**.
- > Government environmental land management schemes such as the Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI), Local Nature Recovery and Landscape Recovery which provide financial incentives for farmers to keep their land out of arable use. As a result of such schemes, latest information published by Defra¹ for 1 June 2025 shows that some 544,610 hectares of arable land in England was uncropped (including bare fallow and arable land used for environmental benefit but not in production). An extract from this dataset is provided at **Appendix 5** to this document.

7.3 Consideration of the use of agricultural land in the Application documents

7.3.1 The Application documents, and supplementary information provided by the Applicant in response to written questions and in hearings, provides relevant information on the consideration of agricultural land and BMV agricultural land in particular. Whilst this was not equated directly with food security, the ExA and Secretary of State can draw conclusions on the impact of the Proposed Development on food security on the basis of the information presented. To assist, information is provided in the following documents:

¹ Agricultural Land Use in the United Kingdom at 1 June 2025, updated December 2025 (Accredited official statistics dataset, Defra)

Application Document	Document Reference	Paragraph Reference	Consideration
Planning Statement	APP-168	11.1.5	Policy on food security and use of BMV agricultural land.
Planning Statement	APP-168	11.1.6	Policy on food security and use of BMV agricultural land.
Planning Statement	APP-168	11.1.12-11.1.18	How BMV land was considered as part of site selection to make sure that lower quality land was considered before high quality.
Planning Statement	APP-168	11.1.19-11.1.30	How BMV land was considered as part of design development.
Planning Statement	APP-168	11.1.31-11.1.37	Impacts on BMV land, including agri-environmental schemes and recognition that there is no guarantee that the land would be used for productive arable use if the Proposed Development was not granted consent. Confirmation that 660.9ha of the Order Limits is classified as BMV land.
Applicant's response to ExA's First Written Questions	REP2-084	Q13.0.1, page 75-78	Response to question from ExA on Written Ministerial Statement and how use of BMV land has been minimised. Includes a breakdown of use of BMV by grade and confirmed that individually the Proposed Development would result in the use of 0.03% of the BMV land in Lincolnshire and 0.5% of the BMV land in Nottinghamshire and that with cumulative projects this rises to 0.29% and 0.64% respectively, which is stated as still very small when considered against the total agricultural land available for food production in Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire.
Applicant's response to ExA's First Written Questions	REP2-084	Q13.0.2, page 78	Response to question from ExA on how the Applicant has considered the economic and other benefits of BMV agricultural land.

Applicant's response to ExA's First Written Questions	REP2-084	Q13.0.3, page 78	Response to question from ExA on the extent of land in the Order Limits which are subject to an Environmental or Countryside Stewardship Scheme. This is 353.99ha in total.
Written Summary of Applicant's Oral Submissions at ISH1	REP1-077, REP1-078	Pages 72-75	Information on economic impact of proposals on farm employment and diversification.

7.3.2 It is clear from the above that there was substantial information in front of the ExA, and now in front of the Secretary of State, which would enable both the ExA and the SoS to draw a conclusion on the use of the land for food production. Nevertheless, further evidence is also provided below in relation to current cropping and yield to further assist the Secretary of State.

7.4 Further evidence on current use of the land within the Order Limits

7.4.1 Information has been provided by the current landowners within the Order Limits on current cropping and yield data (up to 2023), noting this is a point in time and is subject to crop rotation. This should also be viewed in the context of the above, that there is no policy or requirement for farmers to farm their land in a particular way.

Crop	Approximate Area (ha)	Average Yield (2023)	Approximate crop production based on average yield²
Wheat	217.7	9.2 tonnes/hect	2,003 tonnes
Winter Wheat	249.11	4 - 11 tonnes/hect ³	1,868 tonnes
Winter Beans	38.79	2.83 tonnes/hect	110 tonnes
Permanent Grass	6.95	N/A	N/A
Oilseed Rape	221.28	1.2 – 4 tonnes/hect	575 tonnes
Fallow	58.29	N/A	N/A

² Rounded to nearest ton

³ Where there is a range, have used midpoint for productivity calculation

Grass	25.06	N/A	N/A
Maise	128.06 for which data is available for 94.73	38 tonnes/hect	4,866 tonnes
Potatoes	12.67	40 tonnes/hect	507 tonnes
Barley	6.88	5 tonnes/hect	34 tonnes
Sugar beet	135.71	68 tonnes/hect	9,228 tonnes
Turf	73.82	N/A	N/A
Honey and Nectar Mix	13.17	7 tonnes/hect	92 tonnes
Millet	19.63	2.14 tonnes/hect	42 tonnes
Spring Barley	34.36	3 – 5.4 tonnes/hect	144 tonnes
Sustainable Farming Initiative	12.99	N/A	N/A
Winter Barley	42.02	2.8 tonnes/hect	118 tonnes

7.4.2 Of the approximately 1,297 ha of agricultural land within the Order Limits, approximately 190 ha are currently used for non-arable crops including grass, turf, honey and nectar mix or for the sustainable farming initiative.

7.4.3 Based on the current cropping, the land is also producing approximately 9,075 tonnes of cereal, 617 tonnes of vegetables (beans and potatoes), 575 tonnes of oilseed rape and 9,228 tonnes of sugar beet.

7.4.4 In the context of national food production, the wheat production represents 0.03% of the 2025 UK wheat harvest of 12 million tonnes, 0.0005% of the UK barley harvest of 6.4 million tonnes and 0.06% of the UK oilseed rape harvest⁴.

7.4.5 These are very small figures in the context of overall UK food production and are considered to have a negligible effect in terms of UK food security.

7.5 Conclusions

7.5.1 The Applicant has provided evidence through the Application documents, responses to written questions and in the Issue Specific Hearings on the way in which it has met policy in NPS EN-1 and EN-3 to minimise the use of BMV

⁴ Figures from cereal and oilseed production in the United Kingdom 2025 (Accredited official statistics dataset, Defra)

agricultural land and how it has considered the economic and other benefits of that land.

- 7.5.2 Individually the Proposed Development would result in the use of 0.03% of the BMV land in Lincolnshire and 0.5% of the BMV land in Nottinghamshire and with cumulative projects this rises to 0.29% and 0.64% respectively, which is still very small when considered against the total agricultural land available for food production in Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire.
- 7.5.3 The Applicant has provided further evidence as part of this submission that the agricultural land within the Order Limits (all land, not just BMV) is producing a very small percentage of the UK's food stock, including 0.03% of the 2025 UK wheat harvest, 0.0005% of the UK barley harvest and 0.06% of the UK oilseed rape harvest, recognising that this is only a point in time and that there are no policies that require farmers to farm their land in a particular way.
- 7.5.4 The Proposed Development will therefore have a negligible impact in terms of UK food production.
- 7.5.5 There is approximately 1,297 ha of arable land within the Order Limits, which in context is 0.24% of the uncropped bare fallow and arable land used for environmental benefit but not in production according to the most up to date Defra statistics.

8. References

- 8.1.1 CFE, 2026 Skylark Plots. Available at [Skylark plots – CFE Online](#) (accessed 11/05/2026)
- 8.1.2 Copping, J.P., Waite, C.E., Balmford, A., Bradbury, R.B. & Field, R.H. (2025) Solar farm management influences bird responses in an arable-dominated landscape. Bird Study 72: 217-222. Available at [Full article: Solar farm management influences breeding bird responses in an arable-dominated landscape](#) (accessed 11/05/2026)
- 8.1.3 Donald, P., 2004. The Skylark. Bloomsbury Publishing.
- 8.1.4 Fox, H. (2022) Blithe spirit: are skylarks being overlooked in impact assessment?. CIEEM In Practice 117. Available at [HF from InPractice117_Sep2022-9.pdf](#) (accessed 11/05/2026)
- 8.1.5 Peschel, R. & Peschel, T. (2025) Biodiversity in solar farms: A nationwide field survey. BNE. Available at [20251105 BNE Studie eng-FINAL.pdf](#) (accessed 11/05/2026)

A.1 Appendix 1 - Updated Outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (oLEMP) [EN010159/APP/7.7.7] (clean and tracked)

A.2 Appendix 2 - Updated Outline Battery Safety Management Plan (oBSMP) [EN01059/APP.7.11.7] (clean and tracked)

A.3 Appendix 3 - Agreed protective provisions for Northern Powergrid (Yorkshire) Plc



A.4 Appendix 4 - Agreed protective provisions for National Grid Electricity Transmission Plc

A.5 Appendix 5 - Agricultural Land Use in the United Kingdom

Land use on agricultural holdings on 1 June ⁽¹⁾

hectares

	2024					2025				
	England	Scotland	Wales	Northern Ireland	United Kingdom	England	Scotland	Wales	Northern Ireland	United Kingdom
Utilised agricultural area ⁽¹⁾	8,746,900	5,169,877	1,793,713	1,049,591	16,760,080	8,820,972	5,162,804	1,796,124	1,041,338	16,821,238
Total agricultural land (incl. common rough grazing)	9,276,421	5,734,443	1,955,510	1,079,423	18,045,797	9,345,378	5,603,023	1,950,426	1,071,282	17,970,109
Common rough grazing	398,947	579,047	180,305	39,030	1,197,329	398,947	578,721	180,305	38,987	1,196,959
Total area on agricultural holdings	8,877,474	5,155,396	1,775,205	1,040,393	16,848,468	8,946,431	5,024,302	1,770,121	1,032,296	16,773,150
Total croppable area	4,968,220	744,645	265,181	189,421	6,167,467	4,921,923	746,875	269,475	186,269	6,124,542
Total crops	3,567,221	554,154	107,756	46,801	4,275,931	3,517,412	561,672	110,246	46,585	4,235,915
Arable crops	3,454,391	528,632	106,157	44,507	4,133,687	3,400,227	535,331	108,725	44,359	4,088,642
Of which cereals	2,449,715	433,082	52,750	30,613	2,966,159	2,483,569	440,919	57,978	30,410	3,012,876
- of which wheat	1,401,946	98,055	22,741	8,029	1,530,771	1,525,137	108,256	27,980	8,761	1,670,134
- of which barley	849,088	300,380	24,013	20,438	1,193,919	741,528	295,323	23,567	19,481	1,079,899
- of which oats	148,477	27,590	4,190	1,788	182,046	162,476	29,444	4,327	1,814	198,060
Of which potatoes	83,350	29,085	2,876	3,096	118,407	89,780	30,364	3,637	3,187	126,968
Horticultural crops	112,830	25,522	1,599	2,293	142,244	117,185	26,342	1,521	2,226	147,274
Uncropped arable land ⁽²⁾	580,662	33,360	1,634	399	616,054	544,610	29,488	1,415	423	575,936
Temporary grass under 5 years old	820,337	157,132	155,791	142,222	1,275,482	859,901	155,715	157,814	139,261	1,312,691
Total permanent grassland ⁽³⁾	3,364,091	3,846,185	1,348,227	821,140	9,379,643	3,484,223	3,837,208	1,346,344	816,083	9,483,857

Data notes:

(1) Includes cropped area, uncropped arable land, common rough grazing, temporary and permanent grassland and land used for outdoor pigs (excludes woodland and other land).

(2) All arable land not in production, including bare fallow and arable land used for environmental benefit but not in production. Arable land used for environmental benefit but not in production includes pollen and

(3) Includes sole right rough grazing.

Source: Agricultural Land Use in the United Kingdom at 1 June 2025, updated December 2025 (Accredited official statistics dataset, Defra)



one earth
solar farm