

## Technical Memorandum

### Great North Road Solar and Biodiversity Park: Issue Specific Hearing 3 - Action; Clarification of Landscape Character Assessment and Cumulative Effects

#### Introduction

This Technical Memorandum (TM) has been prepared in response to the Examining Authority's request at Issue Specific Hearing (ISH3) for further clarification on how and why the approach of Newark and Sherwood District Council (NSDC) to cumulative landscape and visual assessment differs from that adopted by the Applicant, and whether applying the NSDC preferred approach would lead to a different outcome in terms of the scale and significance of cumulative effects.

While there is broad agreement between NSDC and the Applicant on other landscape matters, which is captured within the Statement of Common Ground (SoCG), the approach to the assessment of cumulative landscape and visual effects remains an area of disagreement. The Applicant's approach, based on individual landscape character areas (from local to national scale) is considered too restrictive when considering the widespread change, the region is undergoing through the development of large scale solar, BESS and energy infrastructure.

As identified in previous correspondence including Relevant Representations, the NSDC Local Impact Reports (LIR) and written submissions provided to date, by reason of its mass and scale, we judge that the proposed development would lead to Significant Adverse effects particularly upon the existing landscape baseline. When considered cumulatively, the approach utilised within the applicants LVIA of isolating landscape character areas and not fully considering sequential views of multiple schemes, underplays the progressive landscape change occurring across the region, and does not adequately capture how multiple schemes collectively influence the perceived character, openness and rural qualities of the Trent Valley landscape. Although we accept that this follows guidance in terms of assessing the cumulative impacts of the development when considered against the agreed long list, it does not address the strategic level change. Although not adopted guidance, there have been numerous reports and studies on this matter, for example IEMA Volume 7: July 2020, Demystifying Cumulative Effects, 'Thought pieces from UK practice' is a selection of articles and opinion pieces on the subject of cumulative effects assessment. Some of these articles address the point we are raising.

The position of adverse cumulative landscape and sequential visual effects of several NSIP scale solar developments was also adopted by Lincolnshire County Council on the Tillbridge Solar Project, and the *Examining Authority's Report of Findings and Conclusions and Recommendation to the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, 14 July 2025* agreed with this argument (refer section 3.7.145. of this document), establishing this principle. NSDC Raised this point during the One Earth Examination.

#### Cumulative Landscape Effects

The cumulative landscape effects of the proposed development would result in significant adverse effects when considered alongside other large-scale renewable energy projects in the region.

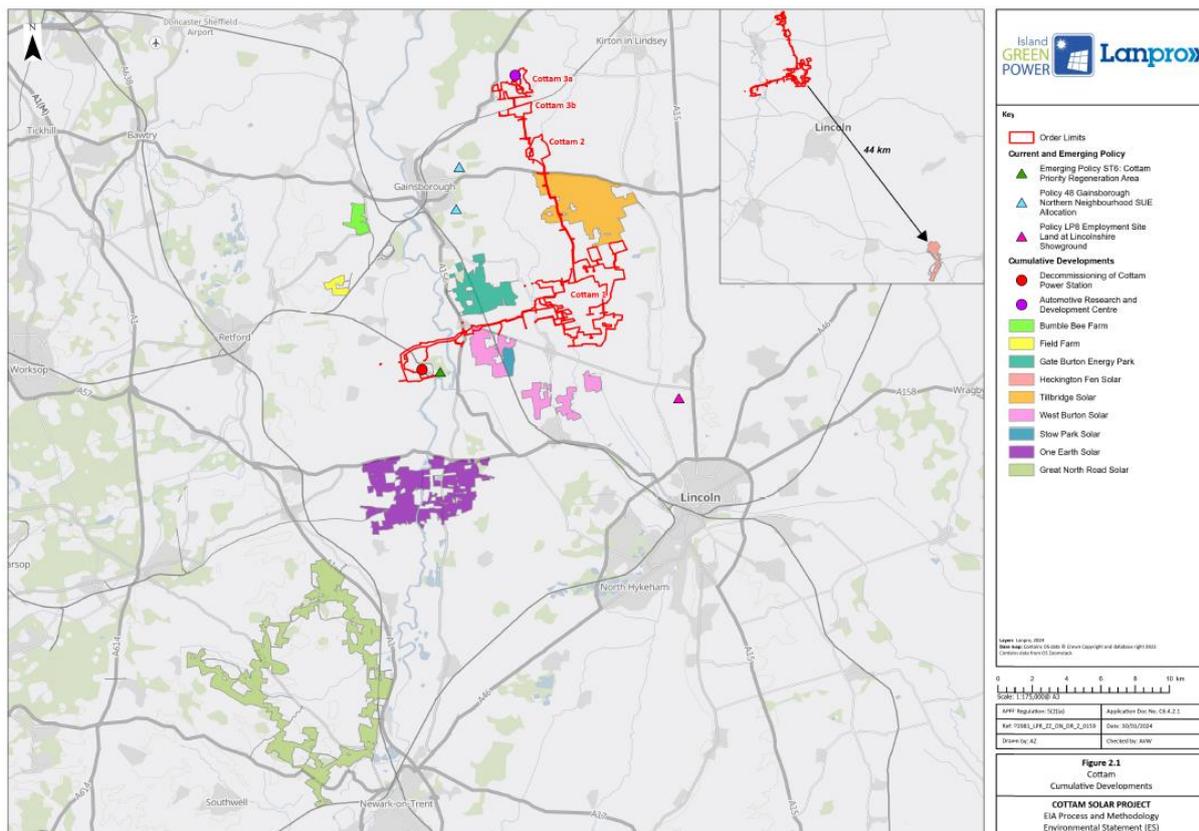
While some adjacent schemes identified in the ES may be individually smaller, the mass and collective scale of these projects across the Trent Valley and adjoining areas presents a concern. The combined extent of energy infrastructure development would:

- Adversely affect multiple published character areas across Nottinghamshire.
- Lead to the progressive alteration of the regional landscape character from predominantly agricultural to one that contains energy-infrastructure which we judge would become a key feature; and
- Result in an extensive area of land-use change, from agriculture to solar, and loss of perceived rural openness and tranquility.

Over time, the cumulative impact would alter the character of the region, creating an emergent landscape type with energy infrastructure being a key feature, rather than its historic agricultural character.

While we must consider the effect the Great North Road scheme will have in addition to these other schemes, rather than all the schemes together, when considering cumulative landscape character effects, we judge these will result as adverse effects, predominantly through an extensive change in land-use.

This is particularly a concern when considered cumulatively alongside schemes in close proximity, as illustrated on the *Cottam Cumulative Developments* (Fig. 2.1) which was included within *Appendix E Cottam Solar Technical Note on Cumulative Effects of the One Earth Solar Farm Written Summary of Applicant's Oral Submission at the Issue Specific Hearing 1 (ISH1)* [REP1-077] which was displayed and discussed at the One Earth Solar ISH2. Excerpt below demonstrating not only the number of developments in this landscape, but also the scale and extent of land use change:



Therefore, considering the Great North Road Solar scheme cumulatively alongside those presented on *Figure 2.1 Cottam Cumulative Developments* and the One Earth Solar project, the strategic level effects are considered to be significant. The scheme will add significant additional above ground development, extending the area of land use change, and also acting as a bridge between the Great

North Road Solar scheme, One Earth Solar scheme and those to the north (West Burton, Cottam, etc.) creating an extensive and vast swathe of solar development along the river valley.

## Cumulative Visual Effects

The scale and extent of development would also lead to adverse effects on views from visual receptors when considered alongside other large-scale renewable energy projects in the region, changing from views experienced within an agricultural or rural landscape to that of a landscape containing large scale solar development.

We maintain a concern regarding sequential cumulative visual effects, as identified and raised in previous correspondence. Although individual schemes may be separated by some distance, the repeated presence of large-scale solar arrays along routes travelled by the public would:

- Increase the susceptibility of receptors to change due to visual fatigue.
- Create a progressive perception of landscape Industrialisation; and
- Erode the sense of rural character and tranquility across the wider area.

GLVIA3 (Table 7.1) defines sequential cumulative visual effects as those *that 'occur 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'*.

Sequential effects would be experienced along multiple public routes in the wider landscape, for some receptors they will inevitably move through multiple solar arrays on local PRow, local road routes where they engage attentively with their surroundings, encountering successive views of solar infrastructure across several kilometers, even after mitigation has matured. When combined with road corridors such as the A1133 and A156, and associated lanes, these routes create a coherent visual narrative of a rural landscape increasingly defined by energy infrastructure.

These sequential cumulative visual effects are more likely to be experienced in conjunction with the One Earth Solar which is located north of the Great North Road.

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