



Great North Road Solar and Biodiversity Park

Environmental Statement

Volume 4 – Technical Appendices

Technical Appendix A4.1 – Public Rights of Way Strategy

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A4.1.1 INTRODUCTION

A4.1.1.1 PURPOSE AND CONTEXT

- 1 This document sets out the approach undertaken to manage changes to public rights of way (PRoW), including the diversion of existing footpaths and bridleways, as well as the creation of new permissive footpaths and bridleways. The aim is to ensure continuity of access, enhance connectivity, and mitigate impacts arising from the development.

A4.1.2 BASELINE ASSESSMENT

- 2 An initial assessment of the PRoW network within and adjacent to the Order Limits was carried out between the non-statutory consultation and PEIR. This included:
 - Identification of all designated footpaths, bridleways, and byways open to all traffic (BOATs); and
 - Identification of PRoW likely to be directly or indirectly affected by the proposed development.

A4.1.3 CONSULTATION AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

- 3 Extensive consultation has been a central part of the development of this strategy. Engagement activities included:
 - Public Consultation: During the non-statutory and statutory consultation phases, the Applicant held a series of in-person engagement events with local residents and stakeholders. Members of the public were invited to comment on proposed PRoW diversions, closures, and new permissive routes. The feedback has been carefully reviewed and used to refine the proposals;
 - Engagement with Nottinghamshire County Council (NCC) PRoW Team: The Applicant has consulted the NCC PRoW team throughout the process to ensure that the proposals aligned with the technical standards and guidance. This included:
 - Discussions on the design and alignment of proposed diversions;
 - Specific consultation in relation to the drafting and structure of the relevant DCO schedules and associated requirements concerning PRoW matters;
 - Discussion on the role and responsibilities of the Applicant and NCC Rights of Way Team during construction and operation; and
 - Discussion on the principles of long-term maintenance and responsibilities for implementation; and
 - Other Stakeholders: Engagement took place with landowners, local user groups including the Ramblers Association, British Horse Society, Parish Councils, and Clarion cycling club, a walking group based in North Muskham to ensure the proposals reflect a broad range of views.
- 4 This collaborative and iterative process has strengthened the proposals and helped ensure their deliverability within the DCO framework.

A4.1.4 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

- 5 The strategic objectives were established throughout a continuous programme of engagement as set out in section A4.1.3. Key themes which emerged from consultation and informed the needs of the rights of way users included:
 - The need to improve the connectivity for walkers and cyclists and horse riders through the creation of links between existing public roads, bridleways and footpaths. This was particularly pertinent at areas to the east of the Development around South Muskham, Bathley, North Muskham and Cromwell. The lack of linkages, recreational routes and access to open green spaces between North Muskham and Cromwell was one of the key issue, which the Applicant sought to address;
 - To the west of Kelham, near Averham Park and west of Caunton it was identified that bridleway loops for horse riders would bring significant benefit to local users. The Applicant sought to create bridleway loops linking existing bridleways to provide routes of suitable distance for shorter and longer rides;
 - Around Maplebeck the users were primarily expressing feedback in relation to the need for more walking routes. The applicant has created an extensive network of new permissive walking routes linking existing footpaths, leading to points of interest around Maplebeck, such as the viewpoint southwest of Maplebeck on the Winkburn road, as well as to the proposed wildlife site to the northeast of Maplebeck; and
 - Around Moorhouse and Weston the Applicant introduced new permissive footpaths and bridleways connecting into the existing network and offering access to the proposed mitigation and enhancement areas.
- 6 The feedback received from the statutory consultees and the rights of way users led to the formulation of the strategic objectives:
 - To retain and enhance the safety and amenity of the PRoW network in the vicinity, as well as within the boundaries of the Development;
 - To ensure that any diversions or new routes are in line with the relevant guidelines set out by Nottinghamshire County Council through consultation;
 - To minimise disruption to users during construction, operation, and decommissioning phases; and
 - To secure lasting improvements to the PRoW network that reflect the needs of local residents, tourists and various walking, cycling and horse-riding groups.

A4.1.5 APPROACH TO PERMANENT PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY DIVERSIONS

- 7 Where PRoWs are unavoidably affected by the development, diversions have been proposed that:
 - Are safe and convenient for users;
 - Are of equal or greater quality surface and character;
 - Are of similar length as much as practically possible; and
 - Follow logical alignments with consideration to topography, land use, and destinations.

- 8 Permanent PRow diversions have been kept to a minimum and only introduced where absolutely necessary to facilitate the delivery of the development. Where diversions are required, suitable alternative routes have been provided, with continuity of connection to the wider PRow network carefully maintained.
- 9 Diversions are clearly set out in the Draft DCO and are accompanied by detailed plans and schedules prepared in accordance with the Planning Act 2008 (see the Public Rights of Way Diversions and Permissive Routes Plan [EN010162/APP/2.4]).

A4.1.6 CREATION OF NEW PERMISSIVE ROUTES

- 10 Public Rights of Way and Access to the Countryside has been one of the key topics which emerged during consultation. To enhance the connectivity of the local PRow network, improve access to the countryside and open green space, new permissive routes have been proposed. The new permissive routes are also intended to create socioeconomic benefits such as improving health and wellbeing:
 - Connecting existing public rights of way to each other (where they have been separated by roads) and key local destinations, with permissive routes;
 - Creating a GNR Long Distance Circular Route and also providing a connection to Newark on Trent;
 - Creating bridleway loops of appropriate length for horse riders;
 - Creating footpath links and loops for walkers including long and short distance routes;
 - Creating additional public benefit through improved recreational access to green space in the countryside which otherwise would not be available; and
 - Designed to appropriate standards for expected use (footpath/bridleway), with consideration given to surfacing and landscaping.
- 11 The new permissive routes are shown on Figure A5.2, Masterplan [EN010162/APP/6.3.5.2]. There are 21 permissive footpaths and 6 permissive bridleways, with a total length of 32.2 km.
- 12 An outline Recreational Routes Management Plan (RRMP; TA A18.1 [EN010162/APP/6.4.18.1]) has been produced which shows how the routes will be implemented and maintained. This management plan is secured by DCO Requirement. It will be updated prior to construction and submitted for approval to Newark and Sherwood District Council in consultation with NCC.

A4.1.7 TEMPORARY CLOSURES AND MANAGEMENT DURING CONSTRUCTION

- 13 The approach to temporary closures, including alternative routes and management measures during construction to ensure continuity of access is set out in the oRRMP [EN010162/APP/6.4.18.1].
- 14 There is only one temporary closure, as set out in ES Chapter 18, Recreation [EN010162/APP/6.2.18].

- 15 Prior to any closures, appropriate advertising and site notices will take place.
- 16 Communication with the public will be maintained throughout the construction period, including the provision of advance notice, site notices and contact information, as set out in the oRRMP.

A4.1.8 LONG-TERM MAINTENANCE

- 17 The Applicant will be responsible for maintenance of the new permissive routes for the lifetime of the Development.
- 18 Measures are in place to ensure that the integrity and condition of the network are preserved post-construction, through the RRMP.
- 19 Waymarking and signage will be installed in line with NCC specifications.

A4.1.9 CONCLUSION

- 20 This strategy demonstrates a thorough and consultative approach to managing changes to the PRow network and permissive paths in the context of the Development. Permanent diversions have been limited to the minimum necessary and supported by appropriate alternatives. Through proactive engagement with the public and ongoing collaboration with Nottinghamshire County Council's PRow team — including discussions specific to the DCO's schedules and legal provisions — the strategy ensures both compliance with statutory requirements and the delivery of meaningful improvements to the local rights of way network.