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Subject: Re Great North Road Solar and Biodiversity Park, Application for a Development Consent Order (Application Reference: EN010162)

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The Planning Inspectorate
Temple Quay House
Bristol
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The Chair
Robin Hood Way Association.

14th April 2026

Registration identification number: [REDACTED]

Sir/Madam
Great North Road Solar and Biodiversity Park
Application for a Development Consent Order (Application Reference: EN010162)

With reference to the above Robin Hood Way Association wish to make a submission in relation to:

- Revised Public Rights of Way Diversions and Permissive Routes Plan
- Applicants Response to our Footpath Diversions submissions
- Restoring PROW to current alignment on Decommissioning

Revised Public Rights of Way Diversions and Permissive Routes Plan

We note that this revision includes “removal of long-distance footpaths for clarity”. Long Distance footpaths are a key component of the Rights of Way network. It seems ironic that this revision should take place when the UK Government in March announced the opening of a of a sixteenth route (The Coast to Coast) to the list of National Trails.

The two long distance waymarked footpaths whose designation was removed by the applicant in the latest update are the Robin Hood Way, and the Trent Valley Way.

The Robin Hood Way is a 105-mile route that features the many important landmarks in our county. Created forty years ago, and maintained and promoted by the Robin Hood Way Association, this waymarked route is supported by a guidebook and has a team of volunteers who

monitor the route to ensure that any access issues are resolved promptly.

The Trent Valley Way was initially devised by Nottinghamshire County Council, who created a waymarked route, mainly along the banks of the River Trent, from the Derbyshire border to West Stockwith. More recently the Trent Rivers Trust has worked to extend the route from the source of the river Trent on Biddulph Moor, to the Humber estuary. It is a leading candidate to be added to the list of National Trails as part of the current government's commitment to designate a further nine long distance river footpaths to the National Trails list.

It is therefore imperative that these the designation of these long-distance footpaths is restored to the plans in order that the impact of what is being proposed is fully considered.

Applicants Response to our Footpath Diversions submissions

In its document EN010162/APP/8.29 Responses to Deadline 3 Submission Report the Applicant has drawn attention to the NCC response that the diversions are "Acceptable". "Acceptable" means that NCC, as the Highways Authority, has evaluated the diversion in terms of surface conditions, path width, and safety. It is not assessing the diversion in terms of its impact on convenience or amenity to the user.

Restoring PROW to current alignment on Decommissioning

In its document EN010162/APP/8.29 Responses to Deadline 3 Submission Report the Applicant states

"The PROWs, where diverted, have been routed around the edges of fields. After 40 years of this routing, it is unlikely to make sense to reroute them back across the middle of a field that is in use for agriculture. Notwithstanding this, the Applicant has proposed to review this as part of the DRP, ES Volume 4, Appendix A5.6: Outline Decommissioning and Restoration Plan (DRP) [EN010162/APP/6.4.5.6C], prior to decommissioning, and apply (to NCC or the appropriate body at that time) to re-route them back where this is deemed best. This is secured in the ES Volume 4, Appendix A5.6: Outline Decommissioning and Restoration Plan"

Whilst we welcome the commitment to review the temporary PROW diversions as part of the Decommissioning Plan, we do not agree with the statement that it is unlikely to make sense to restore the alignment of PROW that cross arable fields.

As we have pointed out in previous submissions, these cross-field PROW have been in existence for over a hundred years. Their historic alignments arise from when they were the routes that linked rural communities.

We would also point out that we are not aware of any applications by the landowners to divert these PROW prior to this NSIP application.

We therefore re-iterate our request that the Examining Authority takes the necessary steps to ensure that, if the application is approved, these footpaths are restored to their rightful position in our landscapes, and that future generations can enjoy these footpaths as we can enjoy them today.

Chair

Robin Hood Way Association

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