



Meridian Solar Farm

EN010169

Volume 5

Consultation

5.1 Consultation Report

APFP Regulation 5(2)(q)

Infrastructure Planning (Applications:
Prescribed Forms and Procedure)
Regulations 2009

March 2026

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1. Executive Summary

1.1. Introduction

- 1.1.1. This Consultation Report forms part of an application by Meridian Solar Farm Limited ('the Applicant') to the Secretary of State for the Department of Energy and Net Zero ('the Secretary of State'), under the Planning Act 2008 ('the PA2008') for a Development Consent Order ('the DCO Application').
- 1.1.2. Meridian Solar ('the Scheme') comprises a generating station of more than 100 megawatts (MW) and the installation of above-ground electric lines greater than two kilometres in length. The Scheme therefore qualifies as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) above-ground under Sections 14(1)(a), 14(1)(b), 15(2) and 16 of the PA2008.
- 1.1.3. The Report provides an account of consultation and engagement activities carried out as part of the development of the Scheme, including early engagement, statutory consultation under Sections 42, 47 and 48 of the PA2008, and the subsequent targeted consultation.

1.2. Summary of Pre-Application Consultation

- 1.2.1. In accordance with Sections 42, 47 and 48 of the PA2008, the Applicant undertook a programme of pre-application consultation prior to submitting its application for development consent.
- 1.2.2. This Consultation Report provides evidence of the consultation and engagement carried out during the pre-application period and demonstrates how the Applicant has complied with the requirements of the PA2008, as well as how feedback received has influenced the final proposals for the Scheme.
- 1.2.3. A chronological summary of the pre-application consultation activities, which are described in more detail throughout this Consultation Report, is provided in the table below.

Table 1-1 - Summary of pre-application consultation activities

Consultation activity	Date	Summary of activities
Early engagement and introduction of the Scheme (see Chapter 3)	February 2024	Initial engagement undertaken to raise awareness and introduce the Scheme to local communities, parish councils, local authorities and other stakeholders.

Consultation activity	Date	Summary of activities
Stage one consultation (see Chapter 4)	30 May – 11 July 2024	Six-week non-statutory consultation, including three in-person events and one online webinar, to gather early feedback on the Scheme.
Scoping Report submitted (see Section 5)	30 May 2024	The Applicant submitted a Scoping Request on 30 May 2024. The Planning Inspectorate consulted statutory bodies and issued a Scoping Opinion on 10 July 2024, confirming the scope and methodology of the Environmental Impact Assessment to be undertaken.
Consultation on the Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) (see Section 6.5)	31 October – 29 November 2024	The Applicant consulted relevant local authorities on the draft SoCC to agree the approach to statutory (stage two) consultation. Feedback received was reviewed and incorporated where practicable into the final version.
Publication of the SoCC (see Section 6.6)	17 April 2025	The final SoCC was published in accordance with Section 47(6) of the PA2008. The document set out how the Applicant proposed to consult people living in the vicinity of the Scheme, and was advertised in local media ahead of the stage two consultation.
Section 46 notification to the Secretary of State (see Section 7.3)	23 April 2025	The Applicant formally notified the Planning Inspectorate of its intention to carry out the statutory (stage two) consultation in accordance with Section 46(2) of the PA2008.
Stage two consultation (see Chapter 7)	24 April – 8 June 2025	The Applicant conducted a 45-day statutory consultation in accordance with Sections 42, 47 and 48 of the PA2008. Engagement activities included in-person consultation events, online materials and correspondence with statutory consultees, parish councils, local authorities and land interests.

Consultation activity	Date	Summary of activities
Targeted consultation activities (see Chapter 11)	24 September – 22 October 2025 8 January – 5 February 2026	A targeted statutory consultation was undertaken on 38 localised changes to the Scheme and Order Limits, identified following ongoing design work and feedback from the stage two consultation. An additional targeted consultation was then held on the inclusion of additional land within the Scheme boundary to facilitate the Grid Connection to the proposed Weston Marsh Substation B.

1.3. Outcomes of the Pre-Application Consultation

- 1.3.1. The Applicant’s approach to pre-application consultation was designed to ensure that consultees were given meaningful opportunities to understand the proposals and provide their feedback. A range of engagement methods were employed, supported by accessible consultation materials presented in a variety of formats and at appropriate levels of detail. The Applicant also ensured that the consultation was widely publicised to reach all those with an interest in the Scheme.
- 1.3.2. Throughout the pre-application process, the Applicant has continued to refine the Scheme in response to feedback. A summary of how regard has been had to the issues raised during statutory consultation is provided in Chapters 8 and 9, with the full record of feedback and the Applicant’s response included in **Appendix H: Section 42 Applicant’s Responses** (Doc Ref. 5.1) and **Appendix I: Section 47 Applicant’s Responses** (Doc Ref. 5.1).

2. Introduction

2.1. Overview

- 2.1.1. This Consultation Report forms part of an application by Meridian Solar Farm Limited ('the Applicant') to the Secretary of State for the Department of Energy and Net Zero ('the Secretary of State'), under the Planning Act 2008 ('the PA2008') for a Development Consent Order ('the DCO Application').
- 2.1.2. The DCO Application is for Meridian Solar ('the Scheme'), a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) comprising the construction, operation (including maintenance) and decommissioning of a solar photovoltaic (PV) generating station with associated infrastructure, including co-located Battery Energy Storage System (BESS), Inter-Array Connections to link the land parcels that form the Solar Development Areas, and a predominantly overhead line Grid Connection (with one undergrounded section) which would run approximately 13 km north towards a point of connection (PoC) at the proposed Weston Marsh National Grid substation, to the north of Weston.
- 2.1.3. The BESS is associated development to ensure that energy can be stored when it is generated and not demanded. The BESS will have a direct relationship with the solar PV panels and it will support the operation of this by storing electricity produced during times of peak capacity until it is needed.
- 2.1.4. The Scheme comprises a generating station of more than 100 megawatts (MW) and the installation of above-ground electric lines greater than two kilometres in length. The Scheme therefore qualifies as an NSIP under Sections 14(1)(a), 14(1)(b), 15(2) and 16 of the PA2008.
- 2.1.5. The Report provides an account of consultation and engagement activities carried out as part of the development of the Scheme, including early engagement, statutory consultation under Sections 42, 47 and 48 of the PA2008, and the subsequent targeted statutory consultation.
- 2.1.6. It explains how the Applicant has had regard to all feedback received during these consultations and how that feedback has influenced the evolution of the Scheme and the final proposals submitted as part of the DCO Application.
- 2.1.7. This document should be read alongside information that is contained within the other application documents and plans.

2.2. Relevant guidance and advice

- 2.2.1. In undertaking the pre-application consultation and in compiling this Consultation Report, the Applicant has complied with or had regard to the relevant legislation and guidance, including the PA2008 (as amended), the Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed Forms and Procedure) Regulations 2009 ('the APFP Regulations'), the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment)

Regulations 2017 ('the EIA Regulations') (as amended), and relevant government guidance.

- 2.2.2. As well as preparing this Consultation Report, the Applicant has set out how it has complied with guidance and advice on consultation in the **Cover Letter** (Doc Ref. 1.1) and the **Section 55 Checklist** (Doc Ref. 1.5) that form part of the DCO Application.
- 2.2.3. Tables setting out how the Applicant has complied with the relevant legislation and guidance is presented in **Appendix A: Consultation Compliance Checklist** (Doc Ref. 5.1)

3. Overview of Early Engagement (February 2024)

3.1. Introduction

3.1.1. The Applicant undertook a programme of initial engagement in February 2024, to help raise awareness and introduce the Scheme to the local community and stakeholders.

3.2. Aims and activities

3.2.1. This phase of initial engagement aimed to:

- engage early with the community and statutory consultees to incorporate technical advice and local knowledge into the Scheme's development;
- brief local elected representatives and understand their position for the engagement approach;
- understand initial views and allow stakeholders to shape the Scheme through the design process; and
- provide an early indication of the Applicant's approach to consultation and the aspects of the Scheme for which feedback was sought.

3.2.2. Early engagement activities included:

- A newsletter (shown in **Appendix B: Non-Statutory Consultation Materials** (Doc Ref. 5.1)) was produced and distributed to 4,018 addresses within an identified consultation zone. The newsletter introduced the Scheme to local residents and provided information about the forthcoming stage one consultation, including how to find out more and take part.
- A dedicated Scheme website (www.meridiansolarfarm.co.uk) was launched, which provided information about the proposals and upcoming engagement activities and served as the primary location for project documents and updates throughout the pre-application process.
- Briefings were offered to key stakeholders, which provided an opportunity to present details of the Scheme, discuss the consultation process and respond to initial questions and feedback.
- Briefing meetings took place with the following stakeholders:
 - The Member of Parliament (MP) for South Holland and The Deepings;
 - Crowland Parish Council;
 - Gedney Parish Council;
 - Sutton St Edmund Parish Council;
 - South Holland District Council (SHDC) members and officers;

- Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) Leader, Deputy Leader, Ward Member; and
- Green Investment Committee, and its officers.

3.2.3. During this stage of engagement, an informal 'Approach to Consultation' document was provided to officers at SHDC. This document offered a brief description of the objectives of the programme and the phases of activity, along with more detailed information about the upcoming stage one consultation. Feedback received on this document informed the Applicant's approach to early engagement.

4. Stage One Consultation (30 May – 11 July 2024)

4.1. Introduction

4.1.1. Following the Applicant's initial stage of engagement, the Applicant undertook a six-week public stage one (non-statutory) consultation between 30 May and 11 July 2024.

4.1.2. The stage one consultation provided members of the local community and stakeholders an opportunity to learn more about the proposals and give their initial feedback at a formative stage.

4.2. Defining the Stage One Primary Consultation Zone (PCZ)

4.2.1. To help facilitate and guide engagement with the local community, the Applicant established a Primary Consultation Zone (PCZ) comprising homes and businesses located within proximity to the proposed Scheme boundary.

4.2.2. The Stage One PCZ (shown in **Appendix B: Non-Statutory Consultation Materials** (Doc Ref. 5.1)) was updated to reflect changes to the Scheme boundary since the Applicant's initial outreach activities, including the options for the connection corridors between the land parcels and National Grid's siting area for the proposed Weston Marsh substation.

4.2.3. Figure 1 shows the Stage One PCZ in red, which comprised 6,810 addresses. The Scheme boundary presented at the stage one consultation is marked in blue.

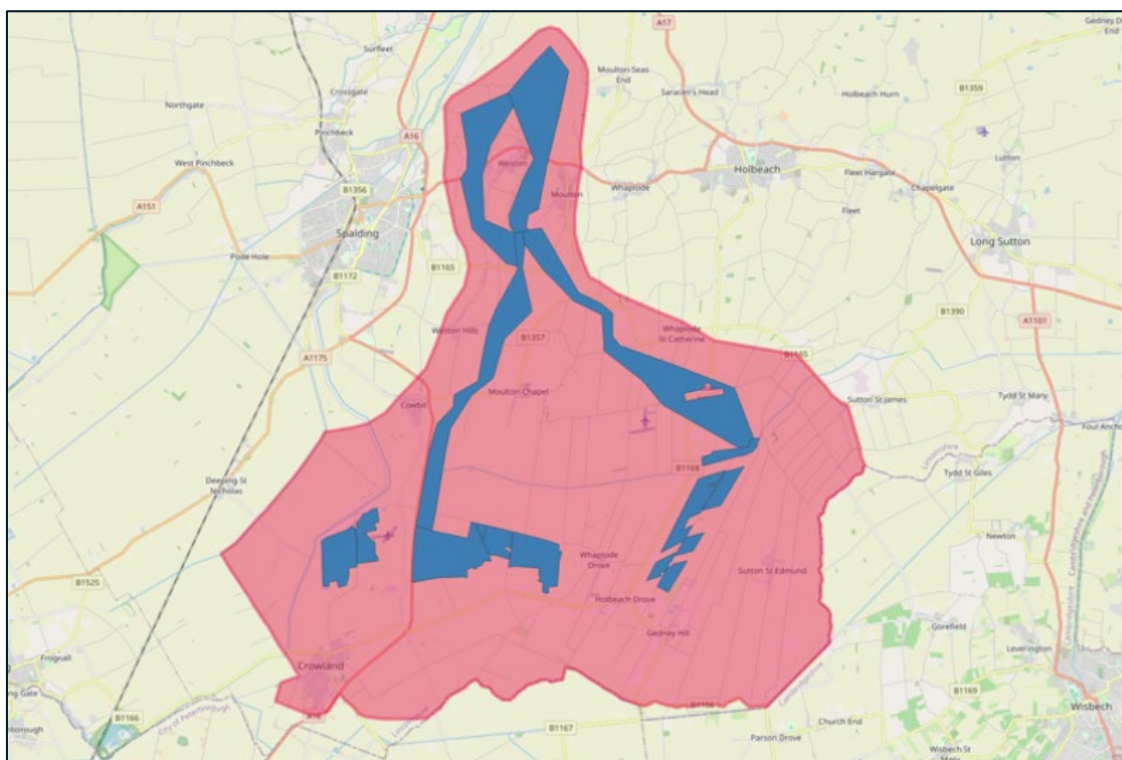


Figure 1 – Stage One PCZ

4.3. Publicising the Stage One Consultation

- 4.3.1. Ahead of the launch of the stage one consultation, the Applicant employed a range of methods to ensure that stakeholders and the local community were aware of the consultation and how they could participate. A summary of these activities is provided in Table 4-1 below.

Table 4-1 - Publicising the stage one consultation

Method of publicity	Description of method
Consultation newsletter	A newsletter (shown in Appendix B: Non-Statutory Consultation Materials (Doc Ref. 5.1)) was issued to the 6,810 addresses within the PCZ. This provided details of the consultation, including details of how to attend the events and provide feedback.
Community and stakeholder letters	Letters were sent via email to the local MP, councillors, parish councillors, the media and identified community groups, to inform them of the consultation and to provide information on how to take part and provide feedback. The consultation newsletter was attached to these emails to ensure all stakeholders received a copy. An example letter can be seen in Appendix B: Non-Statutory Consultation Materials (Doc Ref. 5.1)
Press release	A press release was shared with local newspaper publications (<i>The Spalding & South Holland Voice</i> and <i>Lincolnshire Echo</i>) to share details of the Scheme and the consultation with a wider audience beyond the Stage One PCZ. The press release included details about the proposals and the consultation (see Appendix B: Non-Statutory Consultation Materials (Doc Ref. 5.1)).
Adverts	A consultation advert (see Appendix B: Non-Statutory Consultation Materials (Doc Ref. 5.1)) was published in print and digitally in local newspapers (<i>The Spalding & South Holland Voice</i> and <i>Lincolnshire Echo</i>), which provided an overview of the Scheme, details about the consultation and contact details for how to get in touch with the project team.
Website update	The Applicant updated the Scheme website with details of the consultation events and how to participate, and also uploaded the stage one consultation materials.

4.4. Stage One Consultation Events

- 4.4.1. During the stage one consultation, the Applicant held four events which comprised three in-person events and one online webinar. These events gave consultees the opportunity to learn more about the Scheme, engage directly with the project team and ask questions. In total, 233 people attended across the four events. Further details of each event are provided in Table 4-2.
- 4.4.2. In addition to the events detailed in Table 4-2, the Applicant also held a collaboration workshop on 5 June 2024 with parish councils and stakeholders, prior to the six-week stage one consultation period. The workshop session provided an opportunity for the Applicant to introduce the Scheme boundary areas and further details about the proposals, clarify the consultation approach and create focused engagement.

Table 4-2 – Stage one consultation events

Date of meeting	Time	Location
14 June 2025	14:00–20:00	Crowland Pavilion, Peterborough PE8 9QR
15 June 2025	10:00–16:00	Moulton Village Hall, Spalding PE12 6NP
24 June 2025	14:00–20:00	Sutton St Edmund Village Hall, Spalding PE12 OLR
1 July 2025	18:00–19:00	Online

4.5. Stage One Consultation Materials

- 4.5.1. To support the consultation events, the Applicant produced a series of information banners explaining the early proposals, which were displayed at all in-person events, and a webinar presentation providing an overview of the Scheme proposals. Digital copies of the information banners were hosted on the Scheme website. All materials available during the stage one consultation are provided in **Appendix B: Non-Statutory Consultation Materials** (Doc Ref. 5.1).

4.6. Feedback Received During the Stage One Consultation

- 4.6.1. As part of the stage one consultation, the Applicant produced a feedback form, which was available in hard copy and could also be submitted digitally via the Scheme website.
- 4.6.2. A total of 427 responses were received, which helped to inform and shape the more detailed proposals presented at the stage two consultation.

- 4.6.3. A summary of the feedback received during the stage one consultation was collated into a newsletter (see **Appendix B: Non-Statutory Consultation Materials** (Doc Ref. 5.1)) that was sent via email to stakeholders. It was also published on the Scheme website.
- 4.6.4. A more detailed summary of the key themes raised during the consultation, along with information on how the Applicant has sought to incorporate them into the more detailed design proposals, is available in the stage two consultation information booklet, which is provided in **Appendix E: Statutory Consultation Materials** (Doc Ref. 5.1).

5. Consultation under Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations

5.1. Introduction

- 5.1.1. The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process is used to evaluate the likely significant environmental effects of a scheme prior to the determination of a DCO application.
- 5.1.2. Prior to the commencing of an EIA, an Applicant may request under Regulation 10 of the EIA Regulations that the Secretary of State provide their opinion on the scope and level of detail to be provided in the EIA. In accordance with Regulation 11, the Secretary of State must consult the prescribed consultation bodies when adopting a Scoping Opinion.
- 5.1.3. Under Regulation 13, applicants undertaking consultation under Sections 42, 47 and 48 of the PA2008 must make the Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR) available to consultees and the public, ensuring that they have sufficient information to develop an informed view of the likely significant environmental effects of a scheme.

5.2. EIA Scoping Phase

- 5.2.1. On 30 May 2024, the Applicant submitted a Scoping Request for the Scheme to the Secretary of State under Regulation 10 of the EIA Regulations.
- 5.2.2. The Planning Inspectorate, on behalf of the Secretary of State, consulted the relevant prescribed consultees and issued a Scoping Opinion on 10 July 2024. The Applicant reviewed the recommendations contained within the Scoping Opinion and incorporated them into the preparation of the PEIR and, subsequently, the **Environmental Statement** (Doc Ref. 6.1). The way in which the Scoping Opinion has been addressed is set out within each technical chapter of the **Environmental Statement** (Doc Ref. 6.1).
- 5.2.3. The Scoping Opinion also included an updated list of consultees notified under Regulation 11(1)(a) and 11(1)(c) of the EIA Regulations. The Applicant reviewed this list to ensure that all relevant organisations were included in subsequent consultation.

5.3. Pre-Application Consultation Under the EIA Regulations

- 5.3.1. On 24 April 2025, and in accordance with Regulation 13 of the EIA Regulations, the Applicant issued a Section 48 notice (prepared under the PA2008) to consultation bodies and other persons notified under Regulation 11(1)(a) and 11(1)(c) of the EIA Regulations, ahead of the stage two consultation. The correspondence included:

- a covering letter (provided in **Appendix E: Statutory Consultation Materials** (Doc Ref. 5.1)) informing the consultee of the stage two consultation and inviting them to provide feedback on the proposed Scheme;
- a copy of the Section 48 notice (provided in **Appendix D: Published Section 47 and Section 48 Notices** (Doc Ref. 5.1)) setting out details of the public consultation events and the locations where the consultation documents could be inspected free of charge; and
- a map of the Scheme boundary.

5.3.2. Where an appropriate email address was available, correspondence was also issued electronically. A full list of consultees engaged as part of the EIA process is provided in **Appendix G: Section 42 Consultees** (Doc Ref. 5.1).

5.4. Non-Statutory Engagement for EIA

5.4.1. The Applicant undertook ongoing non-statutory consultation through regular discussions and meetings with technical consultees on the Scheme. These meetings covered the surveys and assessments undertaken as part of the EIA, as well as proposed design changes. The relevant chapters of the **Environmental Statement** (Doc Ref. 6.1) describe this engagement in more detail and explain how it has informed the design of the Scheme.

6. Developing the Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC)

6.1. Statutory Requirements and Guidance

- 6.1.1. Section 47(1) of the PA2008 requires the Applicant to prepare a statement setting out how it proposes to consult on the proposed application with people living in the 'vicinity' of the land to which the Scheme relates.
- 6.1.2. Section 47(2) requires that the Applicant must consult relevant local authorities under Section 43(1) on the content of this statement, known as the Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC).
- 6.1.3. The deadline given for receipt of local authority responses to consultation on the content of the SoCC should be no less than the end of a 28-day period (commencing on the day after the day on which the local authority received the request for comments).
- 6.1.4. In developing the SoCC, regard must be had to the EIA Regulations and relevant guidance relating to pre-application procedure. Regulation 12 of the EIA Regulations stipulates that the SoCC must set out whether the proposal is an EIA development and, if so, how the Applicant intends to publicise and consult on its PEIR.
- 6.1.5. Details of the requirements regarding the SoCC from the legislation and guidance and how the Scheme complied with these requirements are set out in **Appendix A: Consultation Compliance Checklist** (Doc Ref. 5.1).

6.2. Informal Consultation on the SoCC

- 6.2.1. Prior to the development of the draft SoCC, the Applicant engaged with SHDC and LCC regarding the proposed content of the SoCC, the scope of stage two consultation and the activities to be undertaken.
- 6.2.2. Once an approach was agreed, the Applicant prepared the draft SoCC to reflect the requirements of PA2008 and to incorporate the feedback and recommendations provided by the host authorities.

6.3. Defining a Stage Two PCZ

- 6.3.1. As part of the more detailed design proposals presented during the stage two consultation, the connection corridor boundary north of the A151 was extended west. Consequently, to help facilitate and guide the development of the draft SoCC, and in addition to the informal engagement with SHDC and LCC, the Applicant devised a Stage Two PCZ to account for changes to the Scheme boundary since the stage one consultation. In total, 6,828 addresses were identified in the revised Stage Two PCZ.

- 6.3.2. Overall, the Stage Two PCZ extended up to approximately 2 km from the Scheme boundary, encompassing the settlements of Crowland, Cowbit, Weston, Moulton, Moulton Chapel, Whaplode St Catherine, Whaplode Drove, Holbeach Drove, Gedney Hill and Sutton St Edmund. The PCZ followed existing landmarks and roads, avoiding the subdivision of residential streets or established communities.
- 6.3.3. The Stage Two PCZ informed the proposed approach to community consultation, including the identification of venues for in-person consultation events.
- 6.3.4. Figure 2 shows the Stage Two PCZ in red. The Scheme boundary presented at the stage two consultation is marked in purple.

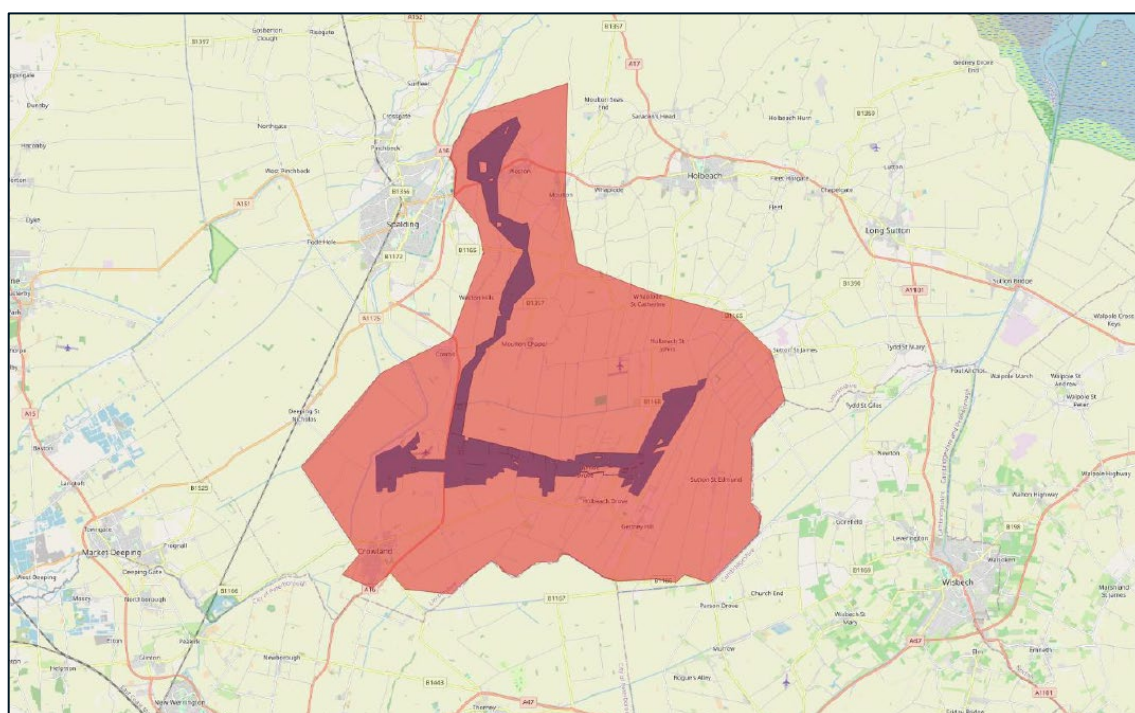


Figure 2 – Stage Two PCZ

6.4. Identification of Local Authorities under Section 43(1) of the PA2008

- 6.4.1. In accordance with Section 47(1) of the PA2008, and with reference to the informal engagement undertaken with SHDC and LCC and the Stage Two PCZ, the Applicant prepared a draft SoCC setting out how it proposed to consult people living in the vicinity of the Scheme.
- 6.4.2. In accordance with Section 47(2), the Applicant identified SHDC and LCC as the relevant local authorities under Section 43(1) of the PA2008 to be formally consulted on the draft SoCC. These host authorities were subsequently formally consulted on the draft SoCC over a 28-day period.
- 6.4.3. The Applicant also shared the draft SoCC with the following neighbouring local authorities for information purposes only: South Kesteven District Council, Boston Borough Council, King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council, Fenland District Council, Peterborough City Council, Nottinghamshire County

Council, Leicestershire County Council, Cambridgeshire County Council, Norfolk County Council.

6.5. Consultation on the Draft SoCC

- 6.5.1. The draft SoCC was issued to the relevant local authorities on 31 October 2024, with a deadline for responses set for 29 November 2024, in compliance with the 28-day period required under Section 47(3) of the PA2008.
- 6.5.2. Following the formal consultation on the SoCC, the Applicant reviewed and incorporated the feedback received as appropriate. The SoCC was subsequently published on 24 April 2025.
- 6.5.3. The responses received from SHDC and LCC are provided in **Appendix C: Statement of Community Consultation** (Doc Ref. 5.1).
- 6.5.4. The Applicant noted that SHDC responded but provided no comments on the draft SoCC, confirming they were happy with its contents, the Applicant’s approach to consultation and proposed engagement activities.
- 6.5.5. Table 6-1 outlines the feedback received from Lincolnshire County Council and the Applicant’s response.

Table 6-1 - Comments received on the draft SoCC and how the Applicant had regard

Local authority	Comment	Regard had
Lincolnshire County Council	Some confusion over the number of online events – there are references to both one and two online events.	The Applicant confirmed that it intended to hold three in-person consultation events and two online information presentations during the stage two consultation period. This was updated in the final version of the SoCC.
	Local information points – there needs to be more options, consider other libraries in the area, for example Holbeach and Spalding. Also, community centres, options include Tonic Health’s hubs in Spalding and Holbeach.	The Applicant updated the SoCC to confirm that copies of consultation materials would be available at the following additional locations: Spalding Library, Holbeach Library, Tonic Health Centre Spalding and Tonic Health Centre Holbeach. In line with this commitment, the Applicant placed hard copies of all the consultation materials

Local authority	Comment	Regard had
		<p>in Crowland Library, including copies of the stage two consultation information booklet, feedback form and newsletter to take away.</p> <p>Copies of the PEIR, Non-Technical Summary (NTS) of the PEIR (NTS of the PEIR) and SoCC were for reference only.</p> <p>In the other deposit locations, the Applicant placed copies of the stage two consultation information booklet, feedback form and newsletter to take away.</p>
	<p>Community consultation events – these seem to be spread across the area and at a range of times to allow maximum participation. However, must ensure that these venues are accessible to all.</p>	<p>The Applicant confirmed that the proposed consultation venues have suitable wheelchair accesses and are situated in locations accessible to local communities.</p>
	<p>“Hard to reach groups”: This phrase can cause offence, as groups may be seldom heard rather than hard to reach. Consider using the phrase “seldom heard groups” instead. Other potential contacts are Tonic Health in Spalding and Holbeach. Also, Spalding and District u3a.</p>	<p>The Applicant acknowledged this comment and updated the language to reflect “seldom heard groups” in the final version of the SoCC.</p> <p>The organisations mentioned by LCC were added to Appendix 4 ‘Community stakeholders’ of the SoCC and the Applicant wrote to them at stage two consultation (see Appendix C: Statement of Community Consultation (Doc Ref. 5.1)).</p>

6.6. Publicity under Section 47 of the PA2008

- 6.6.1. In compliance with the publicity requirements of Section 47(6) of the PA2008, the SoCC notice was published in a local news publication (the Spalding and South Holland Voice) in advance of the stage two consultation launch and issuing of the Section 48 notice. This notice provided information on how the Applicant intended to engage with stakeholders and local communities during the upcoming stage two consultation.
- 6.6.2. Section 47 notices were published as follows:
- Spalding and South Holland Voice: 17 April 2025; and
 - Spalding and South Holland Voice: 24 April 2025.
- 6.6.3. Hard copies of the SoCC were made available to view at the following information points for the duration of the stage two consultation period:
- Crowland Hub and Library, Hall Street, Crowland, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire, PE6 0EW;
 - Spalding Library, Victoria Street, Spalding PE11 1EA;
 - Holbeach Library, Co-op Store, 5 Fleet Street, Holbeach, Spalding PE12 7AX;
 - Tonic Health Centre Spalding, 6 Broadgate House, Westlode Street, Spalding PE11 2AF; and
 - Tonic Health Centre Holbeach, Holbeach Hub, Boston Road South, Holbeach PE12 7LR.
- 6.6.4. The SoCC was also made available in hard copy at each of the in-person consultation events held during the consultation period, and a digital version was available on the Scheme website from the day of the consultation launch.

6.7. Compliance with the SoCC

- 6.7.1. The Applicant has listed the requirements of the SoCC, and how it has carried out the consultation in accordance with each requirement in **Appendix C: Statement of Community Consultation** (Doc Ref. 5.1). Details of activity carried out as part of the stage two consultation can be found in Chapter 7 of this Consultation Report.

7. Stage Two Consultation (24 April – 8 June 2025)

7.1. Overview of the Stage Two Consultation

- 7.1.1. The Applicant conducted a stage two (statutory) consultation on the Scheme between 24 April and 8 June 2025.
- 7.1.2. This included issuing notifications to prescribed consultees and local residents within the Stage Two PCZ, publishing statutory notices in accordance with Section 48 of the PA2008, and making consultation documents available online.
- 7.1.3. The Applicant also held three in-person consultation events and two online information presentations, supported by exhibition materials and feedback forms (available both online and in hard copy), as well as a Freephone information line and a dedicated email address.
- 7.1.4. Full details of the consultation activities, methods of publicity, materials made available and opportunities for consultees to provide feedback are set out throughout this section.

7.2. Stage Two Consultation under Section 42 of the PA2008

- 7.2.1. Section 42 of the PA2008 requires the Applicant to consult prescribed consultees, relevant local authorities and certain categories of land interests. The following sections set out how the Applicant identified and consulted each category of consultee.
- 7.2.2. A full list of Section 42(1)(a) prescribed consultees and Section 42(1)(b) local authorities (hereafter referred to as statutory consultees) consulted in relation to the Scheme is provided in **Appendix G: Section 42 Consultees** (Doc Ref. 5.1). A full list of persons falling within Section 44 of the PA2008 (consulted under Section 42(1)(d)) is included in the **Book of Reference** (Doc Ref. 4.3) submitted with the DCO Application.

Identification of Consultees under Section 42(1)(a)

- 7.2.3. In accordance with Section 42(1)(a), the Applicant consulted all prescribed consultees identified and notified by the Planning Inspectorate on behalf of the Secretary of State, in line with Regulation 11(1)(a) and 11(1)(c) of the EIA Regulations. The full list of prescribed consultees is provided at **Appendix G: Section 42 Consultees** (Doc Ref. 5.1).

Identification of consultees under Section 42(1)(b)

- 7.2.4. Section 42(1)(b) of the PA2008 requires the Applicant to consult with the local authorities identified in Section 43 of the PA2008, which sets out four categories of authority:

- A is a neighbouring local authority (Section 43(2)) that shares a boundary with a unitary council or lower-tier district ‘B’ council within whose area development is situated;
- B is either a unitary council or a lower-tier district council in which the development is situated – a host local authority;
- C is an upper-tier county council in which the development is situated – a host local authority; and
- D is either a unitary council or an upper-tier county council which shares a boundary with a host ‘C’ authority – a neighbouring local authority (Section 43(2)(a)).

7.2.5. The identifications of relevant local authorities, including whether they are an A, B, C or D authority, are included in Table 7-1.

Table 7-1 – Identification of consultees under Section 42(1)(b)

Name	A, B, C, or D authority
North Kesteven District Council	A
South Kesteven District Council	A
Boston Borough Council	A
King’s Lynn and West Norfolk District Council	A
Fenland District Council	A
South Holland District Council	B
Lincolnshire County Council	C
North East Lincolnshire Council	D
North Lincolnshire Council	D
Norfolk County Council	D
Peterborough City Council	D
Nottinghamshire County Council	D
Leicestershire County Council	D
Cambridgeshire County Council	D

7.2.6. The Applicant notes that, owing to an administrative oversight, Category D authorities Rutland County Council and North Northamptonshire Council were not notified of the stage two consultation under Section 42 of the Act at the time it commenced. This omission was identified and rectified on 2 December 2025, at which point the Applicant issued both authorities with the same consultation materials that had been provided to other authorities identified under Section

42(1)(b), together with a separate covering letter explaining the error and the consultation undertaken since the stage two consultation.

- 7.2.7. Both authorities were afforded a 28-day period in which to provide comments; however, no responses were received. Following identification of the omission, Rutland County Council and North Northamptonshire Council were also added to the list of consultees to be notified under Section 42(1)(b).

Identification of Consultees under Section 42(1)(d)

- 7.2.8. Section 42(1)(d) of the PA2008 requires the Applicant to consult each person who is within one or more of the categories set out in Section 44 of the PA2008 with respect to the Scheme boundary.

- 7.2.9. This requires the Applicant to consult with:

- landowners, lessees, tenants or occupiers (Category 1 persons, as per Section 44(1));
- those with an interest in the land or certain powers with respect to the land (Category 2 persons, Section 44(2)); and
- those who the Applicant thinks would or might be entitled to make a relevant claim under Section 44(4) (Category 3 persons).

- 7.2.10. The Applicant sought to identify the Section 44(1)(d) consultees by undertaking a diligent enquiry before the stage two consultation commenced. This included reviewing the public data (e.g. the Land Registry), sending out a Land Interest Questionnaire, undertaking site visits and erecting site notices.

- 7.2.11. A list of land interests consulted (noting their interest in the land) during the stage two consultation phase is provided within the **Book of Reference** (Doc Ref. 6.1).

Undertaking Consultation under Section 42 of the PA2008

- 7.2.12. The Applicant wrote to all consultees identified under Section 42(1)(a) and Section 42(1)(b) of the PA2008 to notify them of the stage two consultation on 24 April 2025. The correspondence included:

- a covering letter informing the consultee of the stage two consultation and inviting them to provide feedback on the proposed Scheme;
- a copy of the Section 48 notice, setting out details of the public consultation events and the locations where the consultation documents could be inspected free of charge; and
- a map of the Scheme boundary.

- 7.2.13. Where an appropriate email address could be identified, correspondence was also issued electronically.

- 7.2.14. Example copies of the letters issued to statutory consultees, together with the supporting materials, are provided in **Appendix E: Statutory Consultation Materials** (Doc Ref. 5.1).
- 7.2.15. Consultees identified under Section 42(1)(d) were contacted on 24 April 2025 and issued with a version of the letter sent to consultees identified under Section 42(1)(a) and Section 42(1)(b).
- 7.2.16. In addition to issuing the consultation letters, the Applicant met with statutory consultees throughout the stage two consultation period to discuss the Scheme. A summary of this engagement is provided in Section 7.5, and further details are provided within the relevant topic chapters of the **Environmental Statement** (Doc Ref. 6.1 – 6.3).

Statement of Compliance with Consultation under Section 42 of the PA2008

- 7.2.17. The Applicant considers that it fully complied with Section 42 of the PA2008. The Applicant:
- consulted with all prescribed persons under Sections 42(1)(a)–(d) relevant to the Scheme, including landowners under Section 44; and
 - provided a total consultation period of 45 days, exceeding the statutory minimum of 28 days.

7.3. Section 46 (Notifying the Secretary of State)

- 7.3.1. In accordance with Section 46(2) of the PA2008, the Applicant notified the Secretary of State of the proposed application on 23 April 2025, via the Planning Inspectorate, prior to commencing the stage two consultation on 24 April 2025.
- 7.3.2. In accordance with Section 46(1) of the PA2008, which requires that the same information be provided as if the Secretary of State were being consulted under Section 42, the correspondence included:
- a letter informing the Planning Inspectorate of the stage two consultation;
 - a copy of the Section 48 notice, setting out details of the public consultation events and the locations where the consultation documents could be inspected free of charge; and
 - a map of the Scheme boundary.
- 7.3.3. Owing to a clerical error, the Planning Inspectorate's email address for the Scheme was incorrect on the *Find a National Infrastructure Project* website, causing the notification to initially go undelivered.
- 7.3.4. Through dialogue with the Planning Inspectorate, the Planning Inspectorate's email address was updated, and the Applicant resubmitted the Section 46 notice to the correct email address on 8 May 2025.

- 7.3.5. The Applicant received an acknowledgement of the receipt of its notification under Section 46 of the PA2008 from the Planning Inspectorate on 9 May 2025.
- 7.3.6. A copy of the initial letter sent to the Planning Inspectorate and the acknowledgement of receipt is provided in **Appendix F: Section 46 Notification** (Doc Ref. 5.1).

7.4. Stage Two Consultation under Section 47 of the PA2008

Introduction

- 7.4.1. The Applicant consulted the local community in accordance with the SoCC, as prescribed by Section 47(7) of the PA2008.
- 7.4.2. The stage two consultation commenced on 24 April 2025 and ran for 45 days until 8 June 2025, undertaken in parallel with consultation under Section 42 and publicity under Section 48 of the PA2008.
- 7.4.3. The Applicant also sought feedback on the key design changes that were informed by the stage one consultation and EIA Scoping Opinion.

Consultees to be Engaged

- 7.4.4. To help facilitate and guide engagement with the local community, the Applicant undertook consultation under Section 47 of the PA2008, with reference to the Stage Two PCZ, which was devised during the development of the SoCC (see Chapter 6) to encompass those most likely to be affected by the Scheme.
- 7.4.5. As part of the development of the SoCC, the Applicant identified consultees to be engaged in addition to those within the Stage Two PCZ. This included a range of non-statutory consultees, such as:
- local interest groups, including community groups, voluntary organisations and faith communities;
 - environmental organisations in the vicinity of the Scheme;
 - seldom-heard groups and organisations representing specific age groups, such as Age UK; and
 - the Member of Parliament for South Holland.
- 7.4.6. The Applicant also sought to engage seldom-heard groups, defined as those who may be less accessible or less likely to participate through conventional consultation methods.
- 7.4.7. The Applicant further notes that individuals and organisations who had registered to receive updates on the Scheme were formally notified ahead of the start of the stage two consultation.
- 7.4.8. The consultees listed in this section are hereafter referred to as 'Section 47 consultees'.

Promoting the Stage Two Consultation

7.4.9. To maximise awareness and ensure accessibility, the Applicant employed a range of methods to promote engagement during the stage two consultation. A full list of these activities is provided in Table 7-2.

Table 7-2 – Methods to promote engagement during the stage two consultation

Method	Description
Consultation newsletter	<p>A consultation newsletter (shown in Appendix E: Statutory Consultation Materials (Doc Ref. 5.1)) was distributed via Royal Mail to all properties within the PCZ to notify residents and businesses of the launch of the stage two consultation. In addition to the PCZ, it was also emailed to Section 47 consultees, including community groups and interested parties who had registered for updates through the Scheme’s mailing list.</p> <p>The newsletter was also made available on the Scheme website and provided an overview of the proposals, a map of the Scheme and details of the consultation, including the dates and locations of the in-person events and how to provide feedback.</p>
Press release	<p>A press release (shown in Appendix E: Statutory Consultation Materials (Doc Ref. 5.1)) was sent to five local media outlets covering the Scheme site and surrounding areas, with instructions to publish on the day of the stage two consultation launch. It provided wider notification of the consultation events to local stakeholders and helped reach audiences beyond the PCZ.</p>
Emails and stakeholder letters	<p>Emails containing letters inviting participation in the stage two consultation were sent to Section 47 stakeholders, where email addresses were available, to inform them of the launch of the stage two consultation, advertise the upcoming events and explain how to provide feedback.</p> <p>An example copy of this correspondence is provided in Appendix E: Statutory Consultation Materials (Doc Ref. 5.1).</p>
Consultation website	<p>The Scheme website (evidenced in Appendix E: Statutory Consultation Materials (Doc Ref. 5.1)) was updated at the launch of the stage two consultation to include all consultation materials on the Documents page.</p> <p>An interactive map of the Scheme was also available which enabled users to zoom in and out of areas of interest and read more about specific design aspects.</p>

Method	Description
	Details of the proposals, consultation events and information on how to provide feedback were also published on a dedicated Consultation page.
Virtual consultation room	A virtual consultation room (evidenced in Appendix E: Statutory Consultation Materials (Doc Ref. 5.1)) was also added to the website ahead of the first in-person consultation event. This replicated the information displayed at the in-person events in a digital format. Users could navigate information banners, maps and consultation materials online, providing an additional interactive method for engaging with the consultation.
Statutory notices and adverts	Statutory notices (evidenced in Appendix D: Published Section 47 and Section 48 Notices (Doc Ref. 5.1)) publicising the consultation and the SoCC were published in local and national newspapers ahead of the consultation launch. The Applicant also placed advertisements in local media at the start of the consultation period (see Appendix E: Statutory Consultation Materials (Doc Ref. 5.1)).
Information points	Hard copies of the consultation information booklet, consultation newsletter and feedback form were available to take home from five local information points agreed during the development of the SoCC. Copies of all materials hosted at the information points are provided in Appendix E: Statutory Consultation Materials (Doc Ref. 5.1).
Online information presentations	<p>The Applicant published two online information presentations (evidenced in Appendix E: Statutory Consultation Materials (Doc Ref. 5.1)) during the stage two consultation period. The first provided an overview of the proposals and where to find out more information.</p> <p>The second included project team members responding to some of the common questions asked during the consultation period in video format. This was aimed to further support people in understanding the proposals ahead of submitting their consultation feedback.</p>

Stage Two Consultation In-Person Events

7.4.10. The Applicant hosted three in-person consultation events for members of the public to engage with, the locations of which were chosen with reference to the Stage Two PCZ. Details of these in-person events are provided in Table 7-3.

Table 7-3 – In-person consultation events

Date	Time	Location
10 May 2025	10:30–16:30	Sutton St Edmund Village Hall, Spalding PE12 0LR
21 May 2025	14:00–20:00	Crowland Snowden Pavilion, Peterborough PE8 9QR
22 May 2025	14:00–20:00	Weston Village Hall, Spalding PE12 6HU

Stage Two Consultation Materials

- 7.4.11. To support the stage two consultation, the Applicant prepared a range of materials designed to provide clear, accessible information about the Scheme, explain how to participate, and encourage informed feedback.
- 7.4.12. These materials were made available online, in hard copy and at the consultation events. All materials were available to view and download free of charge from the Scheme website throughout the stage two consultation. The full set of materials (apart from the PEIR and NTS) are provided in **Appendix E: Statutory Consultation Materials** (Doc Ref. 5.1) and all are summarised in Table 7-4.

Table 7-4 – Stage two consultation materials

Material	Description
Consultation information booklet	The stage two consultation information booklet provided a summary of the Scheme and outlined how the design had evolved since the stage one consultation. It included maps illustrating the Scheme layout, details of the in-person consultation events, and information on how to access additional materials.
Feedback form	The feedback form enabled consultees to provide feedback on the Scheme, either digitally via the Scheme website or in hard copy.
Consultation banners and exhibition materials	The consultation banners and exhibition materials were displayed at the in-person events and presented key information about the Scheme. A range of maps and plans were also available for attendees to view.
PEIR and NTS of the PEIR	The PEIR described the Scheme and included a preliminary assessment of its likely environmental effects, along with proposed

Material	Description
	mitigation measures. As a more accessible format, an NTS of the PEIR was also made available as part of the stage two consultation materials.

7.4.13. The Applicant notes that, upon request, documents were available in hard copy and alternative accessible formats, such as braille and large print. Requests for translated summary documents were to be considered on a case-by-case basis, although no such requests were received.

Local Information Points

7.4.14. In addition to being available on the Scheme website, at consultation events and upon request, the Applicant also ensured that materials could be collected in person from local information points. These locations were agreed with the local planning authorities during the SoCC consultation process.

7.4.15. The Applicant maintained regular contact with each location and replenished materials as required, ensuring that consultation documents remained available throughout the consultation period.

7.4.16. Details of the local information points, including their locations and the materials available at each, are provided in Table 7-5.

Table 7-5 - Local information points

Venue	Opening hours	Materials available
Crowland Library , Hall Street, Crowland PE6 OEW	Tuesday and Thursday: 9:30–12:30 and 14:00–17:00 Saturday: 10:00–13:00	To take away Consultation information booklet Consultation feedback form Consultation newsletter For reference only PEIR; NTS; SoCC
Spalding Library , Victoria Street, Spalding PE11 1EA	Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday: 9:00–17:00 Thursday: 9:00–18:00 Saturday: 9:00–13:00	To take away Consultation information booklet Consultation feedback form Consultation newsletter

Venue	Opening hours	Materials available
Holbeach Library, Co-op Store, 5 Fleet Street, Holbeach, Spalding PE12 7AX	Monday to Friday: 9:00–17:00 Saturday: 9:00–12:00	To take away Consultation information booklet Consultation feedback form Consultation newsletter
Tonic Health Centre Spalding, 6 Broadgate House, Westlode Street, Spalding PE11 2AF	Monday and Thursday: 10:00–19:00 Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday: 10:00–15:00	To take away Consultation information booklet Consultation feedback form Consultation newsletter
Tonic Health Centre Holbeach, Holbeach Hub, Boston Road South, Holbeach PE12 7LR	Monday and Thursday: 10:00–19:00 Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday: 10:00–15:00	To take away Consultation information booklet Consultation feedback form Consultation newsletter

Enquiry Channels and Consultation Response

7.4.17. The enquiry channels listed in Table 7-6 were available throughout the stage two consultation for members of the community and other stakeholders to contact the project team, ask questions, request further information or request hard copies of consultation materials and documents. These communication channels remained active throughout the pre-application period.

Table 7-6 - Enquiry channels

Method	Contact details	Hours of operation
Telephone	0800 652 6120	9:00–17:30 on weekdays (with an answerphone facility to take messages outside these hours).
Email	enquiries@meridiansolar.co.uk	Members of the public were able to email 24 hours a day, with emails

Method	Contact details	Hours of operation
		being monitored between 9:00 and 17:30 on weekdays.
Post	FREEPOST DOWNING MERIDIAN	Respondents were able to provide their responses in written format.

7.4.18. Respondents were able to provide their responses by:

- completing the feedback form online, which could be accessed via the Scheme website: www.meridiansolarfarm.co.uk;
- completing a printed feedback form, which could be collected from a consultation event or local information point, or provided on request; completed forms could be handed to the project team at events, scanned and emailed back to enquiries@meridiansolar.co.uk or sent to FREEPOST DOWNING MERIDIAN (no stamp or further details required);
- emailing comments to enquiries@meridiansolar.co.uk; or
- writing to FREEPOST DOWNING MERIDIAN (no stamp or further details required).

7.4.19. A total of 324 responses were received to the stage two consultation held under Section 42-47 of the PA2008.

Section 48 (Newspaper Notices)

7.4.20. Section 48 of the PA2008 requires the Applicant to publicise the proposed Application in the prescribed manner. A deadline for receipt of comments to the publication must also be provided.

7.4.21. Regulation 49(2) of the APFP Regulations requires an applicant to publish the notice for two successive weeks in one or more local newspapers, once in a national newspaper and once in the London Gazette.

Publication of Notices

7.4.22. In accordance with Regulation 4(2) of the APFP Regulations, the Applicant published a notice as required by Section 48 of the PA2008 for the stage two consultation. This was published once in the national publications listed in Table 7-7 and twice in at least two successive weeks in one or more local newspapers circulating in the vicinity of the Scheme, as shown in Table 7-8. Copies of the Section 48 notices as printed are provided in **Appendix D: Published Section 47 and Section 48 Notices** (Doc Ref. 5.1).

Table 7-7 – National publications

Publication	Date of notice
The Guardian	24 April 2025
London Gazette	24 April 2025

Table 7-8 – Local newspapers

Publication	Date of notice one	Date of notice two
Spalding and South Holland Voice	17 April 2025	24 April 2025

7.4.23. All statutory consultees were provided with a copy of the Section 48 notice as required by Regulation 11 of the EIA Regulations.

7.5. Meetings Held During the Stage Two Consultation Period

7.5.1. Throughout the stage two consultation, the Applicant continued to meet with relevant stakeholders.

7.5.2. The Applicant offered briefing meetings to host parish councils, and met regularly with officers and members from SHDC and LCC throughout the consultation period to discuss the Scheme and address queries. These sessions formed part of the Applicant’s ongoing programme of engagement with host local planning authorities.

7.5.3. The Applicant also continued to engage with relevant technical consultees, with details of that engagement set out within the **Environmental Statement** (Doc Ref. 6.1–6.3).

7.5.4. During the stage two consultation a briefing was also provided to the MP for South Holland and The Deepings.

8. Section 47 Stage Two Consultation: Responses Received and Issues Raised

8.1. Introduction

- 8.1.1. The Applicant has had regard to all responses received to the stage two consultation held in compliance with Section 47 of the PA2008.
- 8.1.2. During the stage two consultation, the Applicant received a total of 324 pieces of feedback. This included 184 online feedback forms, 17 hard-copy feedback forms and 123 email responses.
- 8.1.3. This chapter provides a summary of the responses received and the issues raised. The feedback summaries are presented in full in **Appendix I: Section 47 Applicant's Responses** (Doc Ref. 5.1) along with the Applicant's response to the feedback.
- 8.1.4. The quantitative data from the closed questions are presented in Section 8.3 and the key themes from the open questions and email responses received are highlighted in Section 8.4.

8.2. Approach to Feedback

- 8.2.1. The Applicant invited feedback in writing or online. Guidance on how to submit responses was provided through the Scheme website, stage two consultation materials and correspondence with the Community Relations Team.
- 8.2.2. The stage two consultation feedback form included open and closed questions to encourage responses on areas of the Scheme most relevant to the respondent. Accordingly, the feedback received comprised both quantitative (closed question) and qualitative (open-ended question) responses.
- 8.2.3. All responses were reviewed, transcribed and processed to identify key issues and requests for design changes. Key themes arising from the Section 47 qualitative questions are summarised in Section 8.4 of this Consultation Report. A record of the qualitative responses received via feedback forms and emails are provided in **Appendix I: Section 47 Applicant's Responses** (Doc Ref. 5.1) along with the Applicant's response to the feedback.

8.3. Quantitative Analysis of Responses Received

8.3.1. This section presents the responses to the closed questions included in feedback forms under Section 47 of the PA2008. It was not mandatory for respondents to answer every question, and in some instances multiple answers could be selected.

Responses to Questions Relating to Respondent Interest

8.3.2. Figure 3 shows how respondents described their interest in the Scheme. The Applicant received 240 responses to this question. Of those who responded, 183 (76%) identified as local residents, 3 (1%) as local elected representatives (1%), 20 (8%) as landowners, 13 (6%) as local business owners, 18 (8%) as working locally or 3 (1%) as being from a statutory organisation.

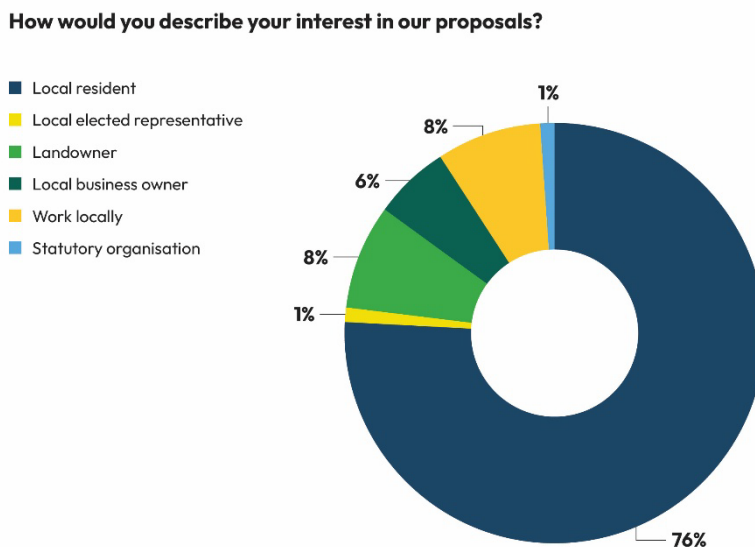


Figure 3 – Responses to the question: “How would you describe your interest in our proposals?”

Responses to Questions on Sentiment and Attitudes

8.3.3. The Applicant received 188 responses to the statement: “Climate change is an important issue”. Of those who responded, 34 (18%) strongly agreed, 67 (36%) agreed, 18 (10%) disagreed, 21 (11%) strongly disagreed and 48 (25%) were neutral. The results are presented in Figure 4.

Climate change is an important issue

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

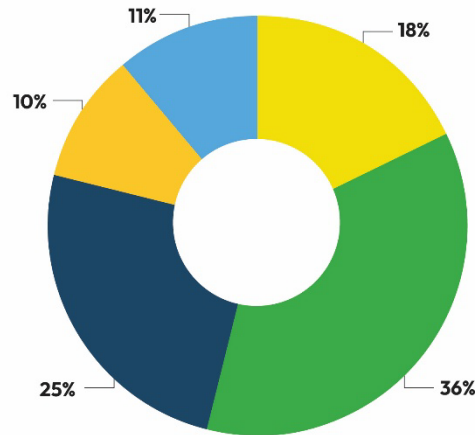


Figure 4 – Responses to the statement: “Climate change is an important issue”

8.3.4. The Applicant received 184 responses to the statement: “Energy security is an important issue”. Of those who responded, 31 (17%) strongly agreed, 103 (56%) agreed, 10 (5%) disagreed, 5 strongly disagreed (3%) and 35 (19%) were neutral. The results are presented in Figure 5.

Energy security is an important issue

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

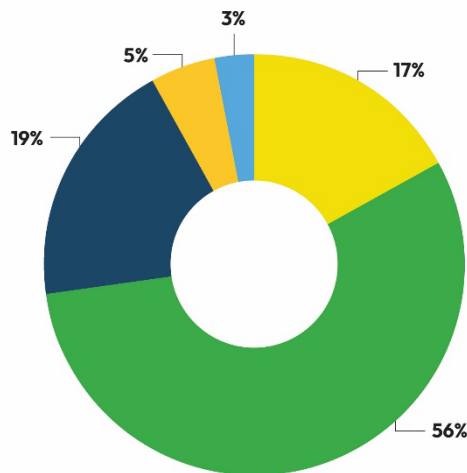


Figure 5 – Responses to the statement: “Energy security is an important issue”

8.3.5. The Applicant received 182 responses to the statement: “Moving away from fossil fuels is important”. Of those who responded, 17 (9%) strongly agreed, 49 (27%) agreed, 35 (19%) disagreed, 21 (12%) strongly disagreed and 60 (33%) were neutral. The results are presented in Figure 6.

Moving away from fossil fuels is important

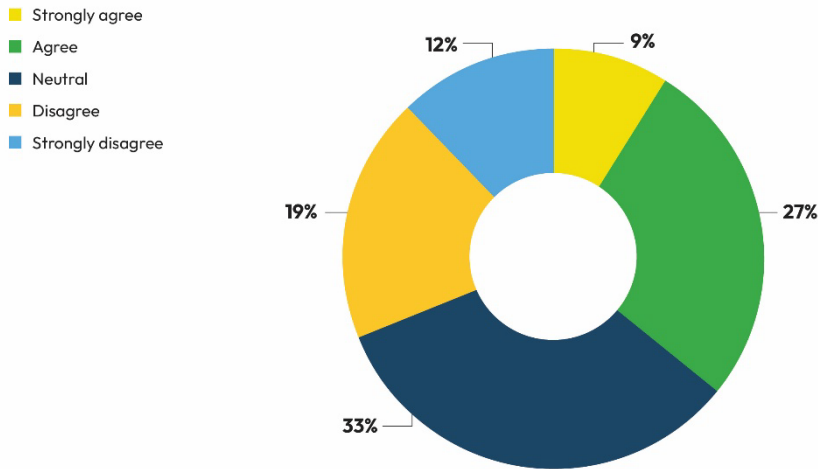


Figure 6 – Responses to the statement: “Moving away from fossil fuels is important”

8.3.6. The Applicant received 184 responses to the statement: “The UK needs more renewable energy”. Of those who responded, 23 (12%) strongly agreed, 72 (39%) agreed, 27 (15%) disagreed, 18 (10%) strongly disagreed and 44 (24%) were neutral. The results are presented in Figure 7.

The UK needs more renewable energy

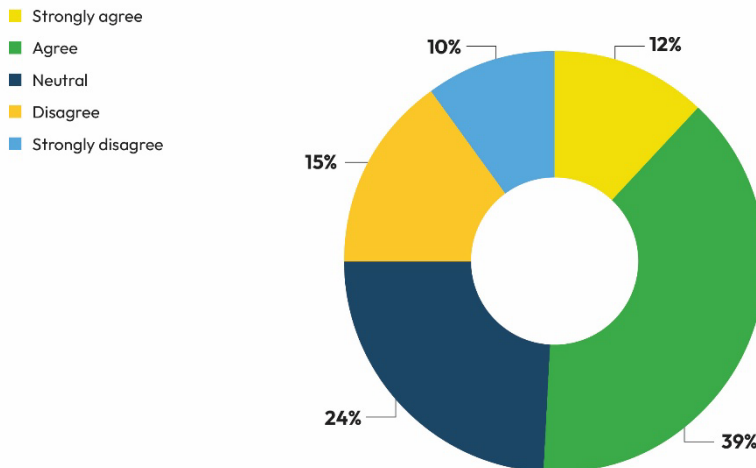


Figure 7 – Responses to the statement: “The UK needs more renewable energy”

8.3.7. The Applicant received 181 responses to the statement “The UK needs more energy storage”. Of those who responded, 21 (12%) strongly agreed, 54 (30%) agreed, 30 (16%) disagreed, 15 (8%) strongly disagreed and 61 (34%) were neutral. The results are presented in Figure 8.

The UK needs more energy storage

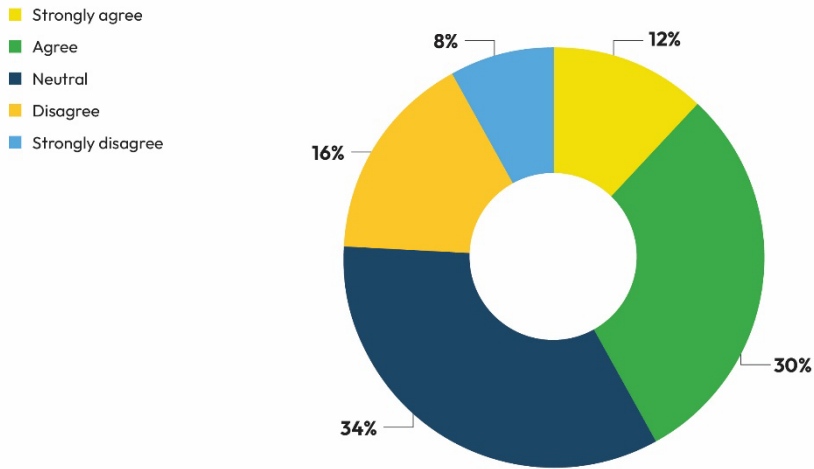


Figure 8 – Responses to the statement: “The UK needs more energy storage”

8.3.8. The Applicant received 186 responses to the question: “Please tell us your views on solar energy”. Of those who responded, 19 (10%) stated they strongly supported it, 65 (35%) supported it, 22 (12%) were opposed to it, 33 (18%) strongly opposed it and 47 (25%) were neutral. The results are presented in Figure 9.

Please tell us your views on solar energy

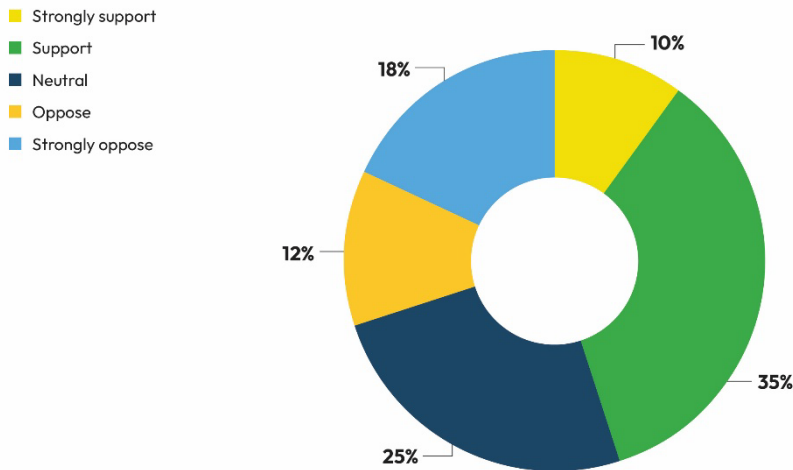


Figure 9 – Responses to the question: “Please tell us your views on solar energy”

8.3.9. The Applicant received 194 responses to the question: “Based on the information presented as part of our stage two consultation, how supportive are you of our proposals for Meridian Solar?” Of those who responded, 7 (3%) stated they supported the proposals for the Scheme, 9 (5%) stated they were neither

supportive nor unsupportive and 178 (92%) of respondents said they did not support the proposals for the Scheme. The results are presented in Figure 10.

Based on the information presented as part of our stage two consultation, how supportive are you of our proposals for Meridian Solar?

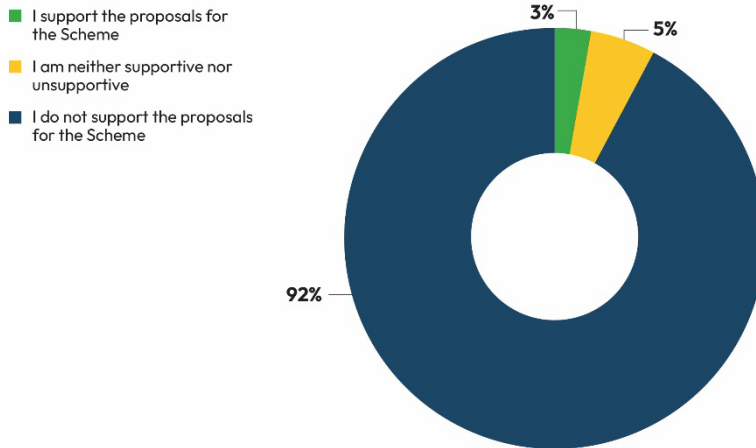


Figure 10 – Responses to the question: “Based on the information presented as part of our stage two consultation, how supportive are you of our proposals for Meridian Solar?”

Responses to Questions Related to Community Benefits

8.3.10. The Applicant received 276 responses to the question: “What types of projects/sectors should community benefit funds be targeted to?” Of those who responded, 32 (11%) said community benefit funds should be targeted to education, 29 (10%) said recreation, 24 (9%) said capital, 21 (8%) said sustainability, 71 (26%) said environmental enhancements, 42 (15%) said community initiatives and 57 (21%) said “other”. The results are presented in Figure 11.

What types of projects/sectors should community benefit funds be targeted to?

- Education (schools support, programmes)
- Recreation (playgrounds, skate parks)
- Capital (new village halls)
- Sustainability (allotments)
- Environmental enhancements (tree planting, nature areas)
- Community initiatives (solar panels on community buildings)
- Other

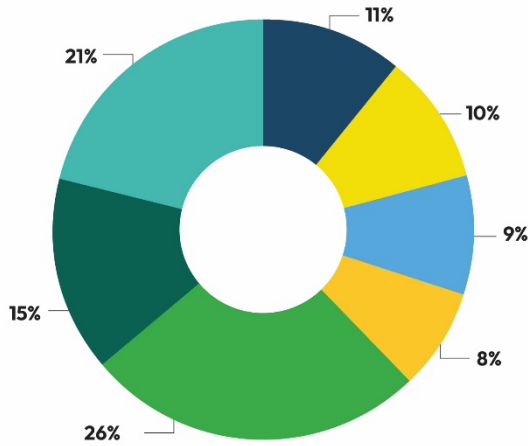


Figure 11 – Responses to the question: “What types of projects/sectors should community benefit funds be targeted to?”

8.3.11. The Applicant received 150 responses to the question: “How would you like community benefit funds to be managed/administered?” Of those who responded, 55 (36%) would like community benefit funds to be managed/administered through relevant parish councils, 39 (26%) through bespoke community foundations/organisations, 15 (10%) through the local authority, 16 (11%) through other local groups/organisations and 25 (17%) responded “other”. The results are presented in Figure 12.

How would you like community benefit funds to be managed/administered?

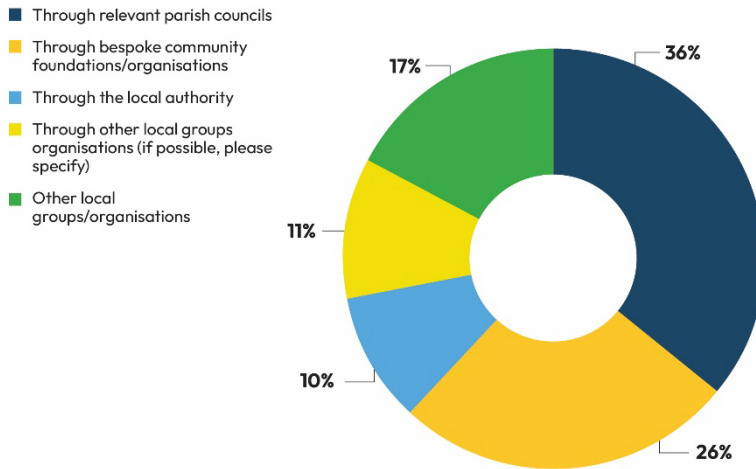


Figure 12 – Responses to the question: “How would you like community benefit funds to be managed/administered?”

Responses to Questions on Views of the Consultation

8.3.12. The Applicant received 271 responses to the question: “Please let us know how you heard about the consultation by ticking one or more of the following boxes”. Of those who responded, 77 (29%) received a community newsletter in the post, 11 (4%) received an email from Meridian Solar, 35 (13%) saw the consultation advertised in a local newspaper/online newspaper, 82 (30%) saw social media coverage, 17 (6%) saw it on the project webpages and 49 (18%) heard through word of mouth. The results are presented in Figure 13.

Please let us know how you heard about the consultation by ticking one or more of the following boxes

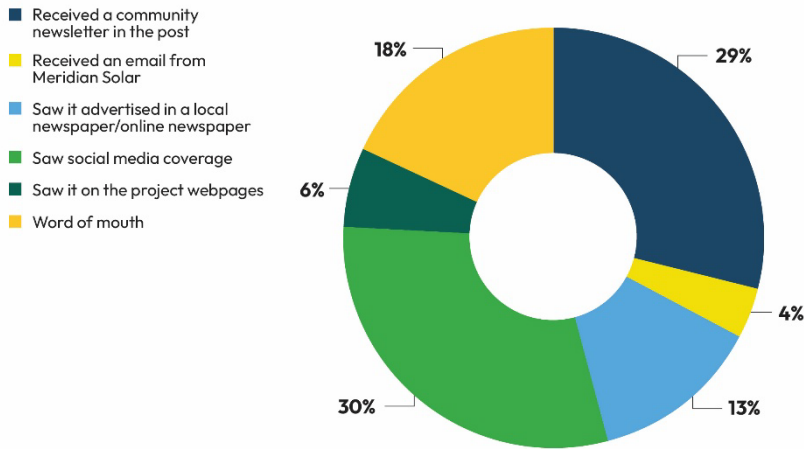


Figure 13 – Responses to the question: “Please let us know how you heard about the consultation by ticking one or more of the following boxes”

8.3.13. The Applicant received 186 responses to the question: “Did you attend our in-person consultation events or watch an online information presentation?” Of those who responded, 33 (18%) attended an in-person event and watched an online information presentation, 75 (40%) attended an in-person event only, 26 (14%) watched an online information presentation only and 52 (28%) did neither. The results are presented in Figure 14.

Did you attend our in-person consultation events or watch an online information presentation?

- Yes, both in person and online
- Yes, only in person
- Yes, only online
- No

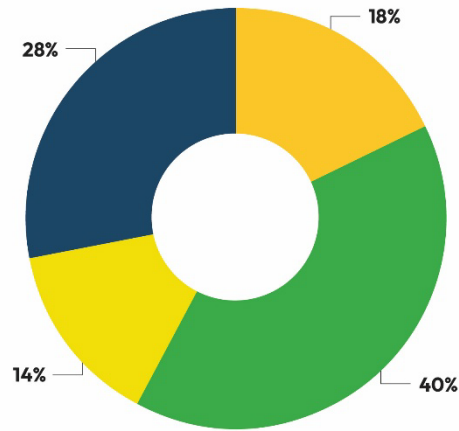


Figure 14 – Responses to the question: “Did you attend our in-person consultation events or watch an online information presentation?”

8.3.14. The Applicant received 178 responses to the question: “How informative did you find our consultation events and/or our consultation materials?” Of those who responded, 10 (6%) found the consultation events and/or our consultation materials very informative, 34 (19%) found them quite informative, 77 (43%) found them not informative, 21 (12%) had no opinion and 36 (20%) said this question was not applicable. The results are presented in Figure 15.

How informative did you find our consultation events and/or our consultation materials?

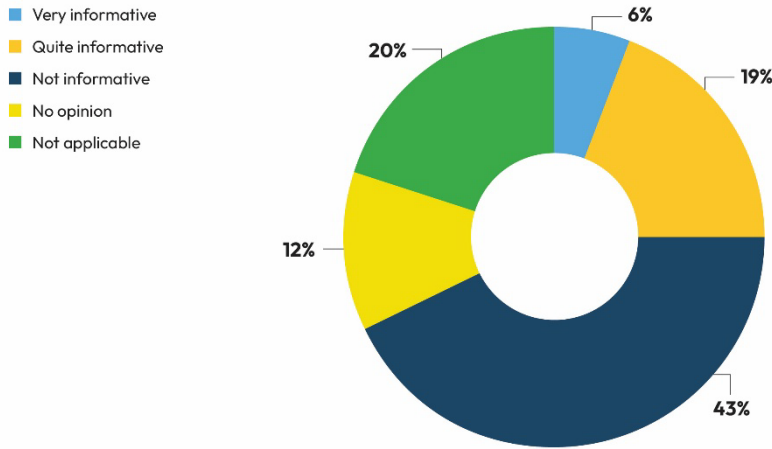


Figure 15 – Responses to the question: “How informative did you find our consultation events and/or our consultation materials?”

8.3.15. The Applicant received 173 responses to the question: “Please rate the information included as part of this consultation in terms of how clearly it was presented and how easy it was to understand”. Of those who responded, 4 (2%) said the information presented was very good, 25 (14%) said it was good, 63 (36%) said it was average, 41 (24%) said it was poor, 27 (16%) said it was very poor and 13 (8%) said they didn’t know. The results are presented in Figure 16.

Please rate the information included as part of this consultation in terms of how clearly it was presented and how easy it was to understand

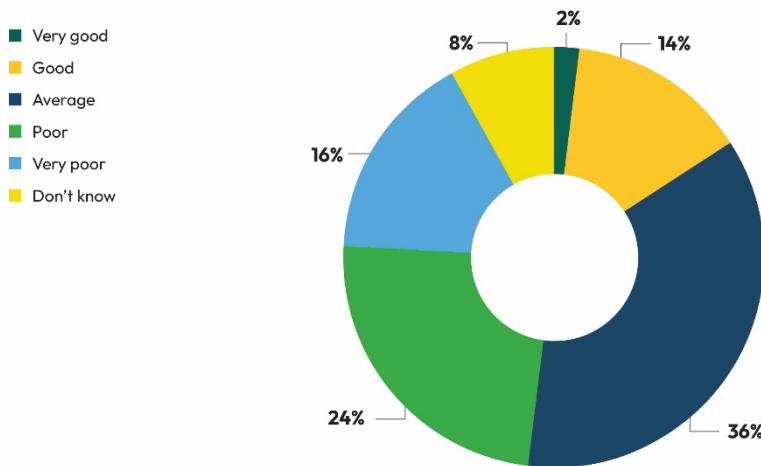


Figure 16 – Responses to the question: “Please rate the information included as part of this consultation in terms of how clearly it was presented and how easy it was to understand”

8.4. Qualitative Analysis of Responses Received

- 8.4.1. The key themes identified from qualitative responses received during the stage two consultation with consultees engaged under Section 47 of the PA2008 are summarised in Table 8-1 below. This includes responses to open questions in the feedback form as well as non-conforming responses received via email.
- 8.4.2. The table also sets out how the Applicant has had regard to this feedback in developing the Scheme, in accordance with Section 49 of the PA2008.
- 8.4.3. The feedback summaries are presented in full, together with the Applicant's response, in **Appendix I: Section 47 Applicant's Responses** (Doc Ref. 5.1).

Table 8-1 – Summary of key themes from community feedback to the stage two consultation

Feedback	Applicant response
Community benefits	
<p>Sentiments were mixed regarding community benefits.</p> <p>A number of respondents shared ideas for distributing funding to support new community infrastructure and initiatives, including domestic renewable energy installations, new green spaces and educational programmes.</p> <p>Others felt that the Community Benefit Fund served to 'bribe' local communities into supporting the Scheme. Some respondents also rejected the idea that their communities could benefit from the Scheme, with the perceived loss outweighing the possible positive impacts.</p>	<p>The Applicant is currently investigating how a community benefit fund could be managed and delivered independently.</p> <p>Once the Scheme is operational and the Community Benefit Fund is established, funds will be available for recommendations on where money could be used.</p> <p>The Applicant believes that communities living closest to the Scheme should benefit from it.</p> <p>Setting up and delivering a community benefit fund is considered an appropriate mechanism to broaden the Scheme's benefits for existing and future generations.</p>
Connectivity	
<p>Concerns were raised about the Scheme's impact on the existing road network. Some felt that the Scheme would worsen the quality of local roads and exacerbate congestion and safety risks, particularly during the construction phase.</p>	<p>ES Chapter 15: Traffic and Access (Doc Ref. 6.1), ES Appendix 15-5: Transport Assessment Note (Doc Ref. 6.3) and the Outline Construction Traffic Management Plan (OCTMP) (Doc Ref. 7.13) provide details of mitigation measures proposed to prevent or reduce potential adverse effects</p>

Feedback	Applicant response
<p>Respondents also emphasised the importance of being able to access and enjoy existing Public Rights of Way (PRoW). Others raised concerns about the potential for PRoW closures and diversions, which could impact recreational and business activities.</p>	<p>associated with construction traffic on local roads.</p> <p>The Outline PRoW-MP (Doc Ref. 7.15) confirms that there are two temporary PRoW closures likely to be required during construction. The original PRoW route would be fully reinstated upon completion of the relevant works. No permanent closures or diversions to PRoW are proposed as part of the Scheme.</p>
<p>Construction phase</p>	
<p>Many respondents expect the construction phase of the Scheme to be highly disruptive to the environment and the work, leisure and business activities of local communities.</p> <p>A large number of respondents raised concerns about the use of heavy goods vehicles (HGV) – in particular, that their presence would increase local noise and air pollution and generate new health and safety risks for road users.</p> <p>Respondents also raised concerns that construction of the Scheme would generate noise, vibration and dust and increase flood risk and visual harm, ultimately reducing residents’ quality of life. Further assessments and a detailed management and mitigation plan were requested.</p>	<p>The Applicant acknowledges concerns regarding potential disruption to the local community during the construction phase of the Scheme. Measures to manage disturbance are set out within the Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (OCEMP) (Doc Ref. 7.1) and the OCTMP (Doc Ref. 7.13).</p> <p>The likely effects of construction activities relating to noise, including construction traffic, are assessed in ES Chapter 11: Noise and Vibration (Doc Ref. 6.1), and potential impacts on air quality arising from construction dust are assessed in ES Chapter 5: Air Quality (Doc Ref. 6.1). All works will be undertaken in accordance with relevant health and safety legislation and guidance, with appropriate mitigation measures implemented through the OCEMP (Doc Ref. 7.1).</p>
<p>Cumulative impacts</p>	
<p>Respondents frequently identified Lincolnshire as a ‘hotspot’ for new renewable energy projects, and raised concerns about the cumulative impact on the regional economy and national</p>	<p>The potential cumulative effects arising from the interaction of the Scheme with other existing, consented and reasonably foreseeable developments have been assessed within the</p>

Feedback	Applicant response
<p>food security. Some respondents criticised the Applicant for proposing the Scheme, while others expressed dissatisfaction with recent government consenting decisions more generally.</p> <p>Others felt that the Scheme would contribute to the ‘industrialisation’ of the rural Fenland landscape.</p>	<p>technical chapters of the Environmental Statement (Doc Ref. 6.1)</p> <p>Where practicable, opportunities for co-ordination with other developers have been identified, particularly in relation to construction and decommissioning activities, to minimise cumulative effects.</p>
Decommissioning	
<p>Respondents emphasised the importance of returning the land to its original condition and agricultural use upon decommissioning.</p> <p>Some respondents, however, raised concerns about how the decommissioning of the Scheme would be funded, and whether the Applicant would be responsible for adhering to the commitments outlined in the DCO Application.</p>	<p>An assessment of the impacts of the Scheme on agriculture and soil is presented in ES Chapter 5: Agriculture and Soils (Doc Ref. 6.1). An Outline Soil Management Plan (OSMP) (Doc Ref. 7.14) has also been prepared as part of the DCO Application. This provides details of measures that would be implemented as part of the Scheme to ensure soils within the Order limits are protected from degradation and agricultural use can recommence.</p> <p>In the highly unlikely scenario the Applicant ceased business during operation, funds will be set aside specifically to cover the cost of decommissioning. These dedicated reserves are in place to ensure that the Scheme can still be safely and responsibly decommissioned.</p>
Ecology	
<p>Respondents raised concerns about the long-term impact the Scheme may have on the habitats, movements and breeding patterns of local wildlife.</p> <p>Respondents did not feel confident that wildlife would be able to safely move through the land parcels, citing</p>	<p>The impact of the Scheme on wildlife is assessed within ES Chapter 9: Ecology and Biodiversity (Doc Ref. 6.1). The chapter concludes no significant adverse effects are expected.</p> <p>As confirmed in ES Chapter 2: The Scheme (Doc Ref. 6.1), security fencing is likely to be a deer wire mesh fence</p>

Feedback	Applicant response
<p>concerns about fencing, artificial lighting and the use of chemicals.</p> <p>Some respondents also suggested that installing overhead lines and pylons would increase the risk of bird collisions and interfere with migratory patterns.</p> <p>Further ecological assessments and surveys were requested.</p>	<p>up to approximately 2m in height. Mammal gates would be provided, where required, to ensure ecological connectivity is maintained.</p> <p>In relation to overhead lines, specific mitigation such as the installation of bird diverters has been identified where there is an elevated risk of bird collision, as set out in the Outline Operation Environmental Management Plan (OOEMP) (Doc Ref. 7.11).</p>
Biodiversity	
<p>Respondents emphasised the importance of protecting and enhancing biodiversity.</p> <p>However, many rejected the possibility that the Scheme could achieve a biodiversity net gain (BNG). Respondents suggested that installing and operating the proposed infrastructure would drastically alter the landscape and drive local wildlife away.</p>	<p>As part of the landscape design for the Scheme, new habitats would be provided to increase biodiversity compared to the existing baseline.</p> <p>The creation and subsequent management of habitats is detailed within the Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (OLEMP) (Doc Ref. 7.16), included as part of the DCO Application.</p>
Hydrology and flood risk	
<p>Respondents frequently associated the Scheme with increased flood risk, particularly around the land parcels, suggesting that land parcel infrastructure, such as solar PV panels, would increase localised surface run-off and soil compaction.</p> <p>The risk of contamination of local rivers, tributaries and the drinking water supply was also raised.</p> <p>Respondents suggested that the risk of water contamination would increase due to chemical leaching and fire incidents.</p>	<p>The impact of the Scheme on drainage and flood risk has been assessed within ES Chapter 11: Hydrology and Flood Risk (Doc Ref. 6.1) which concludes no significant effects are expected with the implementation of measures included within ES Appendix 11-4: Outline Drainage Strategy (Doc Ref. 6.3), which has been developed to minimise flood risk through the proposed drainage measures, which have been detailed in the strategy report.</p>

Feedback	Applicant response
Indicative alignment of the overhead line	
<p>Many respondents objected to the use of overhead lines and pylons, citing landscape and visual, environmental, electromagnetic fields (EMF) and health and safety concerns.</p> <p>Respondents frequently suggested that the Applicant should underground the connection corridor to mitigate long-term impacts for local communities.</p> <p>Respondents also criticised the length of the grid connection corridor, suggesting that moving the land parcels closer to the proposed Weston Marsh substation would provide an appropriate solution and reduce the overall impact of the Scheme.</p>	<p>The Applicant confirms that EMFs are assessed in ES Chapter 16: Other Environmental Topics (Doc Ref. 6.1) and within the EMF Compliance Assessment (Doc Ref. 7.8). The EMF Compliance Assessment includes an assessment of the potential EMFs from the Scheme against the exposure limits developed by ICNIRP and includes evidence on potential impacts from exposure to radiation.</p> <p>The Applicant confirms that the selection of an overhead line as the preferred technology for the Grid Connection is guided by national policy contained in the NPS for Electricity Networks EN-5 which states that it is the Government’s position that overhead lines should be the starting presumption for electricity networks. Further justification is provided in ES Chapter 3: Alternatives and Design Evolution (Doc Ref. 6.1).</p>
Inter-array areas	
<p>Respondents raised concerns about the proximity between the proposed inter-array areas and residential properties. Some suggested that the inter-array area between land parcels C and D should be moved further north, to mitigate the impacts on Whaplode Drove and Dog Drove.</p> <p>Some respondents also suggested that the Inter-Array Connections should be placed underground to mitigate impacts on visual, environmental and community receptors.</p>	<p>The Applicant considers that the proposed overhead line alignment at is the most suitable option based on the results of environmental and technical surveys and the iterative design process undertaken. The Applicant considered a range of options when designing the Inter-Array Connections, using an iterative process informed by environmental, engineering and land considerations. Further information is provided within ES Chapter 3: Alternatives and Design Evolution (Doc Ref. 6.1).</p>

Feedback	Applicant response
Land parcels	
<p>Respondents suggested that the use of multiple land parcels fragmented the Scheme, widening the negative impact on the landscape, environmental receptors and those living and working in proximity to the Scheme.</p> <p>Concerns were raised about the potential for increased flood risk in and around the land parcels owing to new infrastructure. It was noted that land parcels A is sited on a floodplain.</p> <p>Respondents also objected to the use of agricultural land and the proximity of all the land parcels to residential properties. However, the avoidance of development close to the two Scheduled Monuments in Land Parcel C was welcomed.</p>	<p>Flood risk has been assessed in ES Appendix 11-3: Flood Risk Assessment (Doc Ref. 6.3), which confirms that parts of the Site are located within Flood Zone 3, but in an area benefiting from existing coastal defences and protected by those defences against a 1 in 1,000-year flood event.</p> <p>The Applicant also confirms that the Scheme would not increase flood risk on site or to surrounding areas owing to existing defences.</p> <p>The use of agricultural land has been assessed through Agricultural Land Classification surveys reported in ES Chapter 6: Agriculture and Soils (Doc Ref. 6.1).</p> <p>Throughout the pre-application stage the Applicant has sought to assess potential effects to neighbouring properties and consult with local residents. Furthermore, the Scheme has specified buffers around residential properties for the siting of infrastructure, as set out within the Design Parameters (Doc Ref. 7.4) and Works Plans (Doc Ref. 2.3), and would provide landscape screening, as set out within the OLEMP (Doc Ref. 7.16).</p> <p>The Applicant further notes comments regarding Scheduled Monuments, and confirms that the Scheme layout has been designed to avoid impacts on designated heritage assets wherever practicable.</p>
Land use and agriculture	
<p>Respondents objected to the use of Best and Most Versatile (BMV) land</p>	<p>The Applicant notes that the independent National Food Strategy</p>

Feedback	Applicant response
<p>and felt that the location of the Scheme would undermine both the regional agricultural economy and national food security.</p> <p>It was noted that an increase in national reliance on food imports could increase the UK’s carbon footprint, which would undermine the sustainable goals of the Scheme.</p> <p>Many respondents did not feel confident that the Applicant had adequately considered lower-grade land alternatives.</p>	<p>Review concludes that solar farms do not present a risk to the UK’s food security. Solar developments represent a reversible, time-limited use of land and can support the long-term resilience of farm businesses by enabling diversification.</p> <p>Details about the site selection process, including the consideration of reasonable alternatives, can be found in ES Chapter 3: Alternatives and Design Evolution (Doc Ref 6.1) and Appendix D: Site Selection Report of the Planning Statement (Doc Ref. 7.1).</p>
<p>Landscape and visual</p>	
<p>A large number of respondents suggested that the Scheme would contribute to the ‘industrialisation’ of the Lincolnshire countryside, and permanently alter the visual character of the landscape.</p> <p>The risk of glint and glare from solar PV panels was also a leading concern for respondents. Respondents expressed particular concerns towards the impact of glint and glare on local residents, aviation and air activities, road users and pedestrians.</p> <p>For other respondents, the use of an overhead line and a series of pylons was deemed incompatible with the open skies of the Fenlands. Some respondents suggested using smaller pylons or placing the route underground to mitigate the visual impacts of the grid connection corridor and inter-array areas.</p>	<p>The Scheme design has evolved to take into account the proximity of receptors and to reduce the perceived industrialisation of the area.</p> <p>The LVIA and landscape design presented within the OLEMP (Doc Ref. 7.16) have considered the character and distinctiveness of the local area.</p> <p>The Applicant notes that a Glint and Glare assessment is presented in ES Chapter 16: Other Environmental Topics (Doc Ref. 6.1), which considers the impact of the Scheme on receptors, including residential, road, bridleway and aviation. The assessment concludes no significant effects.</p> <p>The Applicant also notes that 50 m is the standard for a suspension pylon. The height of a pylon varies based on many factors such as topography, span length, crossings and constraints beneath the span, ensuring statutory clearances are met as per ENA/43-8.</p>

Feedback	Applicant response
	Some pylons will be shorter in height and some pylons taller in height.
National Grid connection	
<p>Respondents suggested that the site selection process for the Scheme was driven by the opportunity to connect to the national grid via the proposed Weston Marsh substation while others questioned the certainty of the connection and felt that further information about the Weston Marsh substation was required.</p> <p>A smaller number of respondents noted that National Grid is proposing a new overhead line (Grimsby to Walpole), to be connected to the national grid via the proposed Weston Marsh substation.</p> <p>Respondents suggested that a joined-up approach was essential to mitigate the cumulative impacts on local communities.</p>	<p>The availability of a connection at Weston Marsh substation and the network's capacity to connect the Scheme are key drivers for its location.</p> <p>Further details are contained within Appendix D: Site Selection Report of the Planning Statement (Doc Ref. 7.1).</p> <p>The Applicant continues to engage with National Grid regarding the matter.</p>
Needs case and site selection	
<p>Sentiments towards the use of solar as a form of renewable energy were mixed, but generally supported by respondents.</p> <p>The majority of respondents, however, objected to the utility-scale solar, suggesting that solar development should instead be focused toward domestic installations or small-scale community-led projects. This objection extended to a direct objection towards the Scheme.</p> <p>Respondents also viewed overhead lines and pylons as an outdated transmission technology, suggesting</p>	<p>The Applicant is supportive of rooftop solar installations as part of the nation's generation mix. However, a mix of technologies will be required to meet our Net Zero targets and large-scale solar plays an important role in enabling renewable energy to be delivered at speed and at the required scale. The Planning Statement (Doc Ref. 7.1) further sets out the national new renewable energy infrastructure required to help achieve the UK Government's net-zero and energy security objectives.</p> <p>The selection of an overhead line is an appropriate technology for the grid</p>

Feedback	Applicant response
<p>that underground connections should be prioritised.</p> <p>Respondents frequently objected to the Scheme owing to its size and the perceived levels of community and environmental disruption.</p> <p>Many respondents also raised concerns about the robustness of the site selection process, for both the grid connection corridor and land parcels. Some felt that the Applicant had not adequately explored the use of alternative sites, including those closer to the proposed Weston Marsh substation, or on brownfield land.</p>	<p>connection. The narrative relating to the technology selection is contained within ES Chapter 3: Alternatives and Design Evolution (Doc Ref 6.1).</p> <p>ES Chapter 3: Alternatives and Design Evolution (Doc Ref. 6.1) and the Site Selection Report (Appendix D, Doc Ref 7.1) provide a description of the detailed site selection and assessment of the alternatives process undertaken by the Applicant.</p> <p>The assessment considers the locational criteria (being environmental, social and economic, electrical and engineering constraints) which geographically influenced the area of search.</p>
Consultation	
<p>Many respondents suggested that the Applicant’s motivation for bringing the Scheme forward was driven by the opportunity to make a profit, thus rendering the consultation process a ‘tick-box’ exercise.</p> <p>Others raised concerns about the accessibility and robustness of the stage two consultation materials, the number of events and the consistency of responses given by members of the project team.</p>	<p>The Applicant acknowledges these comments but remains confident that information issued for the consultation provided adequate time for community involvement and invited participation.</p>
Operational phase	
<p>Respondents raised concerns about potential disruption during the operational phase, particularly towards farming and recreational activities for local communities.</p> <p>Some respondents noted that both the overhead line and the land parcels would require ongoing maintenance,</p>	<p>The Applicant notes that future operational and maintenance accesses have been carefully considered to utilise existing access points from the highway via gates, gaps in vegetation and existing agricultural access points.</p> <p>Measures are included within the OOEMP (Doc Ref. 7.11) to limit</p>

Feedback	Applicant response
<p>including infrastructure replacement and cleaning activities. Concern was raised about the use of internal and external access routes and the resulting visual, auditory, air and soil contamination.</p> <p>A smaller number of respondents expressed concern towards the financial security of the Scheme and what would happen if the Applicant went bankrupt.</p>	<p>impacts which includes a complaints procedure in the unlikely event an issue arises.</p>
<p>Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) and on-site substations</p>	
<p>Respondents raised concerns about the impact of the BESS and on-site substations on a variety of receptors, including on human health and safety, noise and soils.</p> <p>Respondents suggested that BESS are unsafe and pose a substantial fire and contamination risk. Some did not feel confident that the Applicant had adequately considered emergency vehicle access and the impact an incident would have on the environment, human health and the local water supply.</p> <p>Respondents also shared a number of mitigation suggestions to shape the design of the BESS and on-site substations, including reducing the size of the compounds, moving them away from residential clusters and increasing ecological screening.</p>	<p>The Scheme layout has been optimised to locate the BESS and On-Site Substations as far as practicable from sensitive receptors. The BESS and On-Site Substation Compound locations are fixed via the Works Plans (Doc Ref. 2.3) and are all proposed over 350m from residential properties.</p> <p>Fire risk is considered within Section 16.5 of ES Chapter 16: Other Environmental Topics (Doc Ref. 6.1). Though considered unlikely, the BESS and substations associated with the Scheme present a risk of fire or explosions. Mitigation measures are discussed in the chapter and summarised below.</p> <p>An Outline Battery Safety Management Plan (OBSMP) (Doc Ref. 7.18) has been prepared to support the DCO Application. The OBSMP (Doc Ref. 7.18) ensures that the final BESS compound will be designed in accordance with prevailing industry standards and good practice at the time of detailed design and implementation.</p>

Feedback	Applicant response
Impact on local employment, business and tourism	
<p>Respondents consistently emphasised the national importance of Lincolnshire as a leading food-producing region in the UK. Many respondents felt that the Scheme would directly reduce the security of employment and future opportunities for local farmers and businesses working across the agricultural sector.</p> <p>A few respondents requested that specific pylons be moved to reduce the impact on their farming and business activities.</p> <p>Others noted that tourism and local business are closely tied to heritage sites, the natural landscape and outdoor sports and recreational activities. Some respondents raised concerns that the Scheme infrastructure would reduce the aesthetic value of the area, thus harming footfall and the security of tourist industries.</p>	<p>The likely economic effects to agricultural land holdings are assessed in ES Chapter 14: Socio-Economics and Land Use (Doc Ref. 6.1). No significant effects are anticipated during any phase of the Scheme.</p> <p>The Applicant notes that, as set out in ES Chapter 14: Socio-Economics and Land Use (Doc Ref. 6.1), the employment effects of the Scheme during the construction phase are expected to represent a positive economic effect.</p> <p>The Applicant confirms that ES Chapter 14: Socio-Economics and Land Use (Doc Ref. 6.1) has assessed tourism and recreation receptors most likely to be impacted by the Scheme.</p> <p>Throughout the design process, the Applicant has sought to reduce the potential for effects on views experienced by tourists, and visual amenity has been considered, where possible, on balance with other environmental constraints.</p>
Archaeology and heritage	
<p>Respondents did not feel that the Scheme integrated well with the historical rural character of the local landscape, despite being named after the local Meridian Stone.</p> <p>Respondents emphasised the importance of protecting local heritage assets and both known and unknown archaeological sites, particularly during the construction phase.</p>	<p>The impact of the Scheme on the Meridian Stone has been considered within ES Chapter 8: Cultural Heritage (Doc Ref. 6.1), which concludes that no significant effects are expected.</p> <p>The effects of the Scheme on cultural heritage have been assessed in ES Chapter 8: Cultural Heritage (Doc Ref. 6.1), which identifies significant effects during construction and operation associated with below-ground archaeology and changes to the setting</p>

Feedback	Applicant response
<p>Land parcels B, C and D were identified as parts of the Scheme located within areas of local historical importance. While the removal of land in Land Parcel C to avoid direct impacts on two Scheduled Monuments was acknowledged, respondents felt more could be done to mitigate and protect the local historical landscape.</p>	<p>of certain heritage assets and historic landscapes. These effects are temporary in nature and would cease following decommissioning, with mitigation measures set out in the OCEMP (Doc Ref. 7.10) to reduce impacts where practicable.</p> <p>The Applicant welcomes the comments regarding the removal of Land Parcel C.</p>
<p>Human mental health and wellbeing</p>	
<p>Respondents frequently stated that the existing landscape supported their mental health and sense of wellbeing.</p> <p>Respondents suggested that the construction and operation of the grid connection corridor and land parcels could cause significant mental harm to those living in proximity to these areas.</p> <p>Respondents referred to potential effects on their wellbeing arising from changes to visual amenity, the quality of outdoor recreational activities and perceived changes in temperature, noise, radiation and air quality.</p> <p>Some noted that engaging with the consultation process and finding out more about the Scheme had been the source of stress and anxiety.</p>	<p>The Applicant confirms that the impact of the Scheme on mental wellbeing of local residents has been considered in ES Chapter 10: Human Health (Doc Ref. 6.1) and concludes that there are no significant effects, with the implementation of mitigation measures committed to in the management plans submitted with the DCO Application.</p> <p>The Applicant does; however, appreciate that the potential for the Scheme to have adverse effects creates uncertainty and anxiety for local residents. The Applicant is committed to ongoing consultation with the community so that anxieties can be communicated and, as far as possible, addressed throughout all stages of the Scheme.</p>
<p>National and local policy</p>	
<p>Respondents did not feel that solar farm developments, including the Scheme, represent an appropriate strategy to meet the Government’s clean energy ambitions.</p> <p>Many felt that utility-scale solar developments undermine national policies on farming and food security,</p>	<p>The UK Government has identified through its energy policy, most recently in the National Policy Statement (NPS) EN-1 and NPS EN-3, that there is a critical national priority (CNP) for the provision of nationally significant low carbon infrastructure in the UK, including solar technology. Developing</p>

Feedback	Applicant response
<p>and pull government resources from other societal needs.</p> <p>Some respondents suggested that the DCO process undermines the authority of local authorities, further deepening the sense of disconnect between local, regional and national government.</p> <p>The importance of working in congruence with local planning policies to design the Scheme was highlighted.</p>	<p>the Scheme at its proposed size will be an important contribution to meeting this need.</p> <p>On impacts to food production the Applicant points to energy security as being another priority of this government. The balance of the two issues needs to be appropriately weighed, and we believe that, in the context of this site representing less than 0.01% of the utilised agricultural area (UAA), it will not have a significant impact on national food production and security.</p> <p>The Applicant further notes that local authorities have been consulted throughout the application process, Although the nature of the Scheme means it meets the requirements for an NSIP and therefore will be determined by the Planning Inspectorate, local authorities still have a critical role in the planning process.</p>
Property	
<p>Respondents frequently objected to the distance between the Scheme and residential properties, with many feeling that living close to the Scheme would decrease their quality of life and devalue their properties.</p> <p>Others raised specific concerns about the human health and safety impacts of working and residing close to the Scheme.</p> <p>A smaller number of respondents expressed uncertainty and apprehension towards the Applicant’s potential use of Compulsory Purchase Orders.</p>	<p>The Applicant does not consider that the Scheme will result in any loss of value to neighbouring properties.</p> <p>All works associated with the Scheme will be undertaken in accordance with relevant Health and Safety legislation and guidance.</p> <p>The Applicant confirms that the DCO does not seek powers to compulsorily acquire any residential properties, nor to subject any homes to compulsory acquisition powers, within the Solar Development Area, Inter-Array Connections or Grid Connection Route.</p>

Feedback	Applicant response
Public recreation and access	
<p>Respondents emphasised the need to protect the rural landscape to safeguard access to and enjoyment of outdoor recreational activities, including walking, riding and cycling. Some felt that the Scheme would considerably reduce the experience of outdoor leisure activities.</p> <p>Respondents highlighted the importance of maintaining and, where possible, enhancing access to local PRowWs throughout the lifespan of the Scheme.</p> <p>Concerns were also raised regarding the potential impact of the overhead lines, pylons and solar PV panels on aviation safety.</p>	<p>The Applicant notes that ES Chapter 15: Traffic and Access (Doc Ref. 6.1) includes pedestrian and cyclist amenity within the assessment of potential impacts of the Scheme and ES Chapter 10: Human Health (Doc Ref. 6.1) also assesses the safety of the Scheme on pedestrians, cyclists, and equestrian receptors.</p> <p>Effects are concluded to be not significant with the implementation of mitigation measures set out within the OCMTP (Doc Ref. 7.13) and the Outline PRow-MP (Doc Ref. 7.15).</p> <p>The Applicant confirms that Crowland Airfield and Fenland Airfield have been considered in ES Chapter 16: Other Environmental Topics (Doc Ref. 6.1) within both the Glint and Glare and Major Accidents and Disasters sections.</p>

9. Section 42 Stage Two Consultation: Responses Received and Issues Raised

9.1. Introduction

9.1.1. The Applicant has had regard to all responses received to the stage two consultation under Section 42 of the PA2008.

9.1.2. The Applicant received 31 responses to the stage two consultation undertaken in accordance with Section 42(1)(a) and Section 42(1)(b) of the PA2008, and 26 responses under Section 42(1)(d).

9.1.3. The most common themes arising from feedback provided by consultees under Sections 42(1)(a) and 42(1)(b) are illustrated in Figure 17 below.

Number of comments relating to specific topic areas

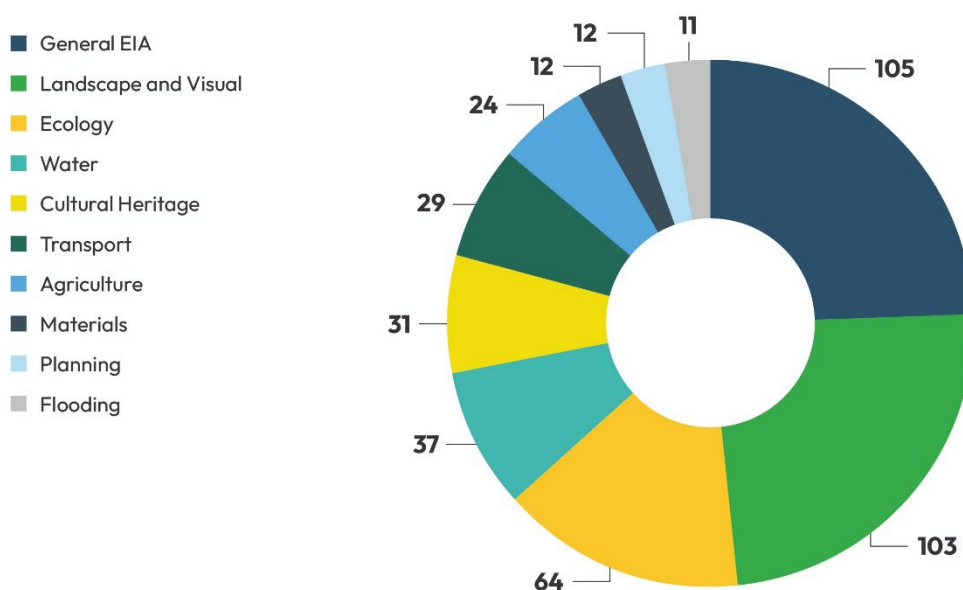


Figure 17 - Number of comments relating to specific topic areas from consultation undertaken in accordance with Section 42(1)(a) and Section 42(1)(b)

9.1.4. Responses received from consultees under Section 42(1)(d), together with the Applicant’s responses, have been reported alongside the Section 47 community feedback in Appendix I: Section 47 Applicant’s Responses (Doc Ref. 5.1).

9.1.5. A detailed record of all comments received from statutory consultees, together with the Applicant’s responses, is provided in **Appendix H: Section 42 Applicant’s Responses** (Doc Ref. 5.1).

9.1.6. A summary of feedback received under Sections 42(1)(a) and 42(1)(b) during the stage two consultation that has informed changes to the Scheme is provided in Table 9-1 below.

Table 9-1 – Summary of Scheme changes resulting from Section 42 feedback during the stage two consultation

Feedback	Applicant response
Agricultural Land Classification (ALC)	
<p>Concerns were raised regarding the potential for soil damage and degradation of BMV agricultural land arising from soil handling and reinstatement works, including within the grid connection corridor.</p> <p>It was noted that ALC should be a key consideration in the siting and routing of infrastructure, in accordance with relevant national policy.</p>	<p>Siting of infrastructure within the Scheme layout has considered a full suite of environmental constraints, including ALC grades. The mitigation hierarchy has been applied by considering opportunities to avoid higher grade soils for activities which may have permanent impacts on soils, where practicable.</p> <p>However, as the potential for the Scheme to result in permanent impacts on soils is limited (refer to Section 5.8 of ES Chapter 5: Agriculture and Soils (Doc Ref. 6.1)) and large areas of the Site comprise BMV agricultural land, it has not been possible to avoid the use of BMV land for works involving soil handling in all instances. Where BMV land could not be avoided, impacts will be mitigated through the soil management measures set out within the OSMP (Doc Ref. 7.14).</p>
<p>It was noted that ecological enhancement and mitigation areas can have differing implications for BMV agricultural land, with reversible measures such as grassland creation differing from woodland planting or other irreversible land use changes, which may result in permanent impacts on the soil resource. It was therefore noted that the siting of ecological</p>	<p>Section 5.8 of ES Chapter 5: Agriculture and Soils (Doc Ref. 6.1) presents the assessment of impacts from all Scheme’s land uses, including habitat management areas. No woodland blocks have been proposed as part of the outline landscape masterplan, as set out within the OLEMP (Doc Ref. 7.16) to minimise permanent impacts on BMV land. However, permanent impacts from the</p>

Feedback	Applicant response
<p>enhancements should be carefully considered during detailed design.</p>	<p>establishment of scattered trees along field boundaries have been considered.</p>
<p>It was noted that there is a need for a clear and updated assessment of impacts on BMV agricultural land, including a breakdown of land take by development element and consideration of both permanent and temporary effects, informed by completed ALC survey data and in accordance with the mitigation hierarchy.</p> <p>It was further noted that the implications of each element of the proposal on agricultural land quality and soil health may differ and should be accounted for within a soil management plan.</p>	<p>The Applicant confirms that the assessment has been updated using the detailed ALC survey results and is presented in Section 5.8 of ES Chapter 5: Agriculture and Soils (Doc Ref. 6.1).</p> <p>The updated assessment sets out the extent of temporary and permanent effects on BMV land by land use and informs the mitigation measures included within the OSMP (Doc Ref. 7.14).</p> <p>The mitigation hierarchy has been applied by seeking to avoid higher-grade soils where practicable, and by proposing mitigation measures where avoidance has not been possible.</p>
<p>Ecology</p>	
<p>Concerns were raised around the potential ecological impacts associated with the Scheme’s proximity to The Wash, including risks of bird collisions with overhead cables and solar arrays, potential effects on migratory flight paths, and the need for mitigation measures such as cable markers to reduce impacts on wildfowl.</p>	<p>Detailed collision risk modelling has been undertaken and mitigation measures, including the use of bird diverters on overhead lines, are included within the operational phase assessment in ES Appendix 9-14: Habitats Regulations Assessment (Doc Ref. 6.3). These measures are designed to reduce collision risk and avoid significant adverse effects on bird populations associated with The Wash SPA / Ramsar that may use the surrounding area.</p> <p>In addition, there is an absence of data to suggest that birds will mistake solar panels as being a body of water.</p>

Feedback	Applicant response
Noise	
<p>Concerns were raised regarding potential operational noise effects at nearby residential properties, particularly in areas with low baseline noise levels. It was noted that, although operational noise is technically reversible, the duration of the Scheme could result in long-term effects for residents, and that good acoustic design and appropriate noise assessment should be applied.</p>	<p>In response to statutory consultation feedback, the locations of substation compounds, BESS and other noise generating plant have been moved to minimise the operational noise effects identified in the PEIR.</p> <p>Operational noise has been assessed using external noise levels, with noise mapping undertaken at 1.5 m height to reflect ground-floor living spaces, including bungalows. The assessment of operational noise effects and associated mitigation is presented in ES Chapter 11: Noise and Vibration (Doc Ref. 6.1).</p>
<p>Concerns were raised regarding the purpose and sufficiency of additional noise monitoring, including the selection and location of monitoring points, and whether these were representative of baseline conditions at nearby receptors in proximity to proposed noise sources.</p>	<p>In response, the Applicant confirms that the Scheme layout has been revised since submission of the PEIR to increase separation between noise-generating infrastructure and nearby receptors, thereby reducing potential operational noise effects.</p> <p>The Applicant also confirms that the baseline monitoring locations were considered representative of local noise conditions and were selected using a conservative approach, informed by the dominant local noise sources. In light of the updated layout and the conservative baseline assumptions applied, additional noise monitoring was not considered necessary. Further detail is provided in ES Chapter 11: Noise and Vibration (Doc Ref. 6.1).</p>
Glint and glare	
<p>Concerns were raised regarding potential impacts on flight paths associated with Crowland Airfield</p>	<p>In response, the Applicant confirmed that further engagement was undertaken with Peterborough and</p>

Feedback	Applicant response
<p>during the operational phase, and it was recommended that further specialist advice be sought in relation to aviation safeguarding and glint and glare effects.</p>	<p>Spalding Gliding Club at Crowland Airfield, and the Scheme design was amended to remove solar PV panels from areas near runway thresholds.</p> <p>The updated glint and glare assessment concludes that operational impacts are acceptable and not significant, as set out in ES Chapter 16: Other Environmental Topics (Doc Ref. 6.1) and ES Appendix 16-2: Glint and Glare Assessment (Doc Ref. 6.3).</p>

10. Ongoing Engagement

- 10.1.1. The Applicant has undertaken ongoing engagement with various technical stakeholders throughout the pre-application period and development of the Scheme.
- 10.1.2. This has included direct discussions with a number of stakeholders to provide updates on the DCO process, address key issues raised and review their responses to the stage two consultation.
- 10.1.3. Technical consultees include organisations such as Natural England, the Environment Agency, Historic England, and specialist topic leads from each of the host local authorities.
- 10.1.4. The records of engagement with technical stakeholders are detailed within the relevant topic chapters of the **Environmental Statement** (Doc Ref. 6.1).

11. Targeted Consultation (24 September – 22 October 2025)

11.1. Overview of the Targeted Consultation

11.1.1. Following the stage two consultation, informed by ongoing surveys, design development and the feedback received, the Applicant identified a number of localised changes to the Scheme.

11.1.2. These changes comprise design refinements aimed at reducing or balancing the environmental effects of the Scheme, together with extensions to the Order Limits shown during the stage two consultation, included where necessary to enable the construction and operation of the Scheme.

11.1.3. A total of 38 changes were identified and consulted on.

11.2. Approach to Consultation

11.2.1. In determining how to consult on the proposed changes, the Applicant had regard to paragraph 20 of the PA2008: Pre-application stage for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects, April 2024, which states:

- “For any material change to a part of the proposed application where the project as a whole is not fundamentally changed, for example in the case of linear aspects where new information leads to a new alignment for a particular section of the proposal, a bespoke and targeted approach to further consultation can be adopted, which can address the specific consultation obligations arising proportionately.”

11.2.2. The Applicant also had regard to Section 7 of the SoCC, which states:

- “If, following the statutory consultation, we consider it is necessary to undertake further localised, targeted or supplementary consultation, this would be undertaken, so far as relevant and proportionate, in accordance with the principles and methods set out in this SoCC.”

11.2.3. The Applicant considers that the proposed changes do not constitute fundamental alterations to the Scheme. Furthermore, the changes do not affect the conclusions of the assessments set out in the PEIR, nor do they alter the likely significant environmental effects reported at that stage.

11.2.4. Accordingly, the Applicant determined that a targeted 28-day statutory consultation, directed towards those considered most likely to be affected by or to have a direct interest in the proposed changes, was appropriate.

11.3. Identifying Consultees

11.3.1. The Applicant undertook a diligent enquiry process to identify land interests potentially affected by the proposed changes and adopted a strategy to carry out a targeted statutory consultation with both the Section 44 consultees identified during the stage two consultation and any newly identified land interests associated with the changes.

11.3.2. In addition to those consulted in accordance with Section 44 of the PA2008, the Applicant also consulted:

- Properties within mailing zones identified by the Applicant around individual changes, proportionate to the likely environmental effects.
- Statutory consultees previously identified and consulted under Section 42 of the PA2008, as part of the stage two consultation, including host local authorities, host parish councils and technical stakeholders such as Natural England.
- Non-statutory consultees identified as those most likely to have a direct interest in the proposals due to local environmental, heritage, community and recreational considerations.

11.4. Targeted Consultation Materials

11.4.1. The Applicant prepared a targeted consultation information booklet (see **Appendix J: Targeted Consultation Materials** (Doc Ref. 5.1) to accompany the consultation.

11.4.2. The booklet set out in detail the design refinements and changes to the Order Limits being consulted on, together with supporting plans for each change and explanatory text.

11.4.3. It provided guidance on how consultees could provide their feedback, including via email and Freepost, and explained how to contact the project team directly for further information or assistance, including via Freephone and email.

11.5. Publicising the Targeted Consultation

11.5.1. The Applicant publicised the consultation by issuing letters ahead of the launch date of 24 September 2025. Each stakeholder group received tailored correspondence and supporting materials to assist them in providing a response. A summary of this is provided in Table 11-1.

Table 11-1 Summary of letters issued to consultees

Consultee group	Materials issued
Land interests (identified under Section 44 of the PA2008)	Land interest received: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a letter explaining why they were being consulted and the nature of their interest in land affected by the Scheme; • a tailored plan showing their land and the proposed change; and • a copy of the targeted consultation information booklet.
Properties within identified mailing zones	Properties within the mailing zones received: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a letter informing them of the start of the targeted consultation and explaining how to participate; and • a copy of the targeted consultation information booklet.
Statutory consultees	Statutory consultees received: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a letter informing them of the start of the targeted consultation and explaining how to participate; and • a copy of the targeted consultation information booklet.
Non-statutory consultees	Non-statutory consultees received: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a letter informing them of the start of the targeted consultation and explaining how to participate; and • a copy of the targeted consultation information booklet.

11.5.2. In addition to the letters, the Applicant updated the Scheme website on 22 September 2025 to confirm that a targeted consultation would be taking place and that further details would be provided once it had commenced.

11.5.3. The targeted consultation formally launched on 24 September 2025 and ran until 22 October 2025. The Scheme website was updated with the targeted consultation information booklet on the day the consultation launched (see **Appendix J: Targeted Consultation Materials** (Doc Ref. 5.1)).

11.6. Engagement as Part of the Targeted Consultation

- 11.6.1. Throughout the targeted consultation period, the Applicant continued to engage with stakeholders and respond to enquiries via official channels, including the managed inbox.
- 11.6.2. In addition to this engagement, the Applicant also met with stakeholders to discuss the proposed changes. Details of this engagement is provided in Table 11-2 below.

Table 11-2 - Meetings held with stakeholders as part of the targeted consultation

Date of meeting	Stakeholder attendees (name/organisation)	Meeting summary
6 October 2025	Weston Parish Council	In-person meeting with Parish Councillors to discuss the Scheme design and respond to questions.

11.7. Targeted Consultation Feedback

- 11.7.1. During the 28-day targeted consultation, the Applicant received 90 responses from consultees.
- 11.7.2. Of the 38 changes included as part of the targeted consultation, change-specific comments were received under Section 47 in relation to nine of them, as illustrated by Figure 18 below. The full list of changes is provided within the targeted consultation information booklet provided in **Appendix J: Targeted Consultation Materials** (Doc Ref. 5.1)

Comments relating to specific changes consulted on as part of the targeted consultation

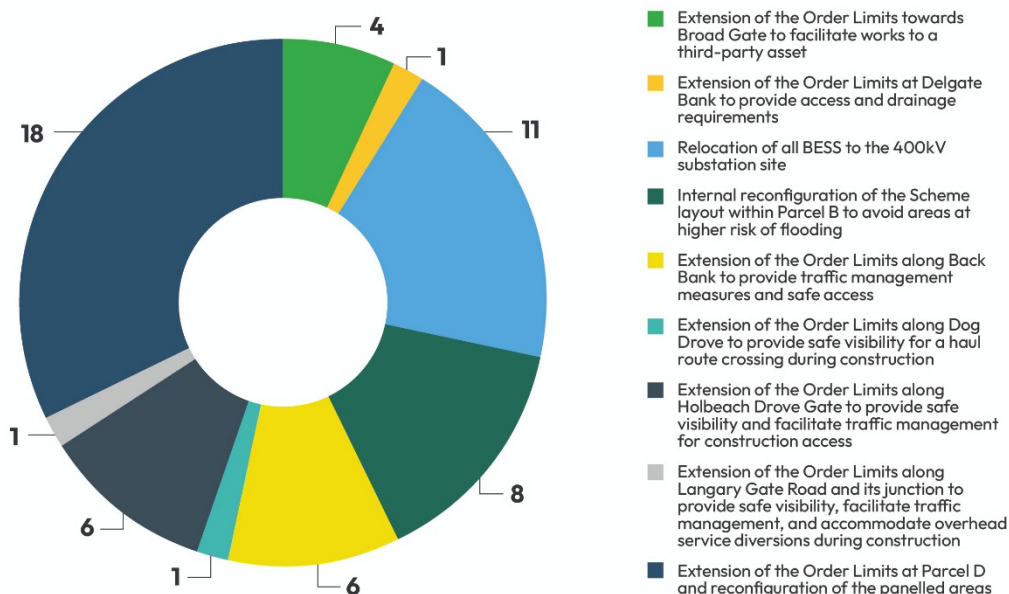


Figure 18 – Comments received under Section 47 relating to specific changes consulted on as part of the targeted consultation

11.7.3. Key themes arising from the targeted consultation include:

- Concerns regarding changes to construction access routes, including their suitability, safety and potential to increase traffic levels.
- Concerns about the co-location of the BESS, including potential increases in noise and visual impacts on nearby residents.
- Questions regarding the reclassification of land within Parcel B as ALC Grade 3a, including areas previously identified as Grade 2.
- Concerns that the overall size of the Scheme had increased, including changes to panel configuration and the extent of solar development, particularly within Parcel D.
- Questions relating to the scope of the consultation and the justification for it being undertaken on a targeted basis.
- General concerns regarding potential increases in construction and operational traffic, as well as wider visual impacts, including those associated with the BESS and overhead line infrastructure.

11.7.4. The Applicant notes that change-specific feedback received under Section 47 has been reported separately from more general comments received during the

targeted consultation period, responses from statutory consultees and long-form submissions.

- 11.7.5. This approach has been adopted to ensure clarity in the consideration of responses and to demonstrate how feedback relating to each change has been reviewed and addressed.
- 11.7.6. All feedback received has been reviewed and responded to by the Applicant, and a full schedule of responses is provided in **Appendix K: Targeted Consultation Applicant's Responses** (Doc Ref. 5.1).

12. Additional Targeted Consultation (8 January – 5 February 2026)

12.1. Overview of the Additional Targeted Consultation

- 12.1.1. As a result of ongoing engagement with National Grid Electricity Transmission (NGET) and updated information relating to the proposed Weston Marsh substation, which forms part of NGET’s Grimsby to Walpole project, the Applicant reviewed its assumptions regarding the location and configuration of its grid connection. This review identified the need to include additional land within the Scheme boundary to facilitate the proposed connection to Weston Marsh Substation B.
- 12.1.2. Given that these changes were localised and related specifically to the grid connection arrangements, the Applicant undertook an additional targeted consultation to seek feedback from those with an interest in the affected land and from relevant stakeholders.

12.2. Approach to the Additional Targeted Consultation

- 12.2.1. The Applicant engaged relevant stakeholder groups using a number of targeted methods, which are summarised in Table 12-1 below.

Table 12-1 – Summary of additional targeted consultation methods

Stakeholder group	Consultation methods
Land interests (identified under Section 44 of the PA2008)	Land interests received: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a letter explaining why the stakeholder group was being consulted and explaining the nature of the proposed change affecting their land; • a tailored plan showing their land and the proposed change; and • a plan showing the additional land to be included in the Scheme boundary.
Statutory consultees (identified under Section 42(1)(a) and Section 42(1)(b))	Statutory consultees received: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a letter explaining why they were being consulted and setting out the nature of the proposed change; and • a plan showing the additional land to be included in the Scheme boundary.
Properties within 1 km of the additional land	Properties within 1 km received:

Stakeholder group	Consultation methods
included within the Scheme boundary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a letter explaining why residents were being consulted and setting out the nature of the proposed change; and • a plan showing the additional land to be included in the Scheme boundary.
Non-statutory consultees	<p>Non-statutory consultees received:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a letter informing them of the start of the targeted consultation and explaining how to participate; and • a plan showing the additional land to be included in the Scheme boundary.

12.2.2. In addition to the methods outlined in Table 12-1, the Applicant updated the Scheme website to provide details of the additional targeted consultation and explain how feedback could be submitted. An overview plan showing the additional land proposed for inclusion within the Scheme boundary was also published on the website.

12.2.3. The Applicant notes that, owing to postal delays, a number of letters were reissued following the commencement of the additional targeted consultation. Additional wording was included to advise consultees that, if they received the correspondence after the start of the consultation and this affected their ability to respond by the stated deadline, they could contact the project team to discuss appropriate arrangements. No such requests were received; however, a minimum consultation period of 28 days would have been provided if requested.

12.2.4. Copies of the consultation letters and plan materials issued as part of the additional targeted consultation are provided in **Appendix L: Additional Targeted Consultation – Materials and Applicant’s Responses** (Doc Ref. 5.1).

12.3. Additional Targeted Consultation Feedback

12.3.1. During the 28-day targeted consultation, the Applicant received 77 responses from consultees.

12.3.2. Key themes arising from the additional targeted consultation include:

- Concerns were raised regarding the inclusion of additional ALC land and the potential for increased loss of BMV land.
- Questions were raised about the scope of the additional targeted consultation, including why certain consultees were included and others were not, and the justification for adopting a targeted approach.
- Questions were raised about the additional infrastructure required and whether its potential environmental effects had been fully considered.
- Concerns were raised regarding potential additional construction impacts, including effects on traffic and access.

12.3.3. The Applicant notes that for consistency with the previous targeted consultation (see Chapter 11), feedback relating to the proposed inclusion of land has been reported separately from more general comments received and responses from statutory consultees.

12.3.4. All feedback received has been reviewed and responded to by the Applicant, and a schedule of responses is provided in **Appendix L: Additional Targeted Consultation – Materials and Applicant’s Responses** (Doc Ref. 5.1).

13. Conclusion

13.1. Concluding Remarks

- 13.1.1. The Applicant has undertaken a comprehensive programme of pre-application consultation on the Scheme. This consultation has been carried out in accordance with the requirements of the PA2008, and associated guidance and legislation.
- 13.1.2. As part of this programme, the Applicant delivered an initial period of early engagement to introduce the Scheme. Following this, the Applicant undertook a stage one consultation, providing members of the local community and key stakeholders with an opportunity to learn more about the proposals and provide initial feedback at a formative stage.
- 13.1.3. The outcomes of stage one engagement were reported during the stage two statutory consultation, with materials setting out how early feedback had informed the Scheme design.
- 13.1.4. Between the stage one and stage two consultations, the Applicant undertook consultation on the SoCC agreeing the approach to carrying out the statutory consultation with local planning authorities. During this period, the Applicant also maintained ongoing dialogue with stakeholders, ensuring that feedback was considered and incorporated into the design process as the Scheme developed.
- 13.1.5. Following the stage two consultation, the Applicant undertook a targeted consultation to seek further feedback on a number of localised changes to the Scheme boundary. The scope of this consultation was informed by relevant guidance, including paragraph 20 of the PA2008: Pre-application stage for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (April 2024), as well as the commitments set out in the SoCC.
- 13.1.6. The Applicant has had regard to the feedback received throughout each stage of consultation. Feedback from the stage two consultation and the targeted consultation has been summarised within the Consultation Report Appendices, together with the Applicant's responses to the issues raised.
- 13.1.7. In addition to preparing this Report, the Applicant has also set out how it has complied with guidance and advice on consultation in the **Section 55 Checklist** (Doc Ref. 1.5), which forms part of the DCO application documents.
- 13.1.8. The Applicant is grateful to all consultees and members of the community who have engaged in the pre-application consultation.

