



# Meridian Solar Farm

EN010169

Volume 6

Environmental Statement

6.3 ES Appendix 14-1: Socio-Economics and Land Use Legislation, Policy and Guidance

APFP Regulation 5(2)(a)

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

March 2026

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Purpose of this Appendix

- 1.1.1. This Environmental Statement (ES) appendix identifies and describes the legislation, policy and guidance considered relevant to the assessment of the likely significant effects of Meridian Solar Farm (hereafter referred to as 'the Scheme') with regards to socio-economics and land use. Policy is considered at both national and local levels.
- 1.1.2. This appendix does not assess the Scheme against legislation, policy and guidance, instead the purpose of considering legislation, policy and guidance in the EIA is twofold:
  - To identify legislation, policy and guidance that could influence the sensitivity of receptors (and therefore the significance of effects) and any requirements for mitigation; and
  - To identify legislation, policy and guidance that could influence the methodology of the EIA and signposting where this is dealt with in the ES. For example, a policy may require the assessment of an impact or the use of a specific methodology.
- 1.1.3. Instead, policy compliance is assessed within the **Planning Statement** (Doc Ref. 7.1).
- 1.1.4. The following sections identify and describe the legislation, policy and guidance considered specifically relevant to the socio-economic and land use assessment, which have been taken into account in preparing **ES Chapter 14: Socio-Economics and Land Use** (Doc Ref. 6.1).

## 2. Legislation

2.1.1. There is no legislation of direct relevance to the assessment of socio-economics and land use.

## 3. National Policy Statements

3.1.1. The EIA has been undertaken with reference to the following National Policy Statements (NPSs), which are relevant to the Scheme:

- Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (NPS EN-1)<sup>1</sup>;
- National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy (NPS EN-3)<sup>2</sup>; and
- National Policy Statement for Electricity Networks Infrastructure (NPS EN-5)<sup>3</sup>.

3.1.2. The NPSs set out the Government's energy policy for the delivery of major energy infrastructure, along with the need for new infrastructure and guidance for determining applications for Development Consent Orders (DCOs). The NPSs provide specific guidance and criteria that applicants should cover when assessing the effects of their Scheme, and how the Secretary of State should consider these impacts and any mitigation measures applied.

3.1.3. The relevant NPS requirements for socio-economics and land use are provided in Table 3-1, along with an indication of where in the ES this information can be sourced.

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<sup>1</sup> DESNZ (2025). Overarching NPS for Energy (NPS EN-1). Available at: <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/695d1015f41883f4e50ed9ab/overarching-national-policy-statement-for-energy-en-1-web-accessible.pdf> [Accessed 31 January 2026]

<sup>2</sup> DESNZ (2025). NPS for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (NPS EN-3). Available at: <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/695d1368b5c46330350ed9a2/national-policy-statement-for-renewable-energy-infrastructure-en-3-web-accessible.pdf> [Accessed 31 January 2026]

<sup>3</sup> DESNZ (2025). NPS for Electricity Networks (NPS EN-5). Available at: <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/695d12e1b5c46330350ed9a1/national-policy-statement-for-electricity-networks-infrastructure-en-5-web-accessible.pdf> [Accessed 31 January 2026]

**Table 3-1: Relevant NPS Policy for Socio-Economics and Land Use**

Relevant NPS Paragraph	Requirement of the NPS	Location of information provided to address this
<b>Overarching NPS for Energy EN-1</b>		
2.1.2	To produce the energy required for the UK and ensure it can be transported to where it is needed, a significant amount of infrastructure is needed at both local and national scale. High quality infrastructure is crucial for economic growth, boosting productivity and competitiveness. Part 3 of this NPS provides further details on the need for, and importance of, energy to economic prosperity and social wellbeing.	This is considered in Section 14.8 Assessment of Potential Impacts and Likely Significant Effects of <b>ES Chapter 14: Socio-Economics and Land Use</b> (Doc Ref. 6.1).
4.1.5	<p>In considering any proposed development, in particular when weighing its adverse impacts against its benefits, the Secretary of State should take into account:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Its potential benefits including its contribution to meeting the need for the Clean Power 2030 Mission and net zero, energy infrastructure, job creation, reduction of geographical disparities,</li> </ul>	This is considered in Section 14.8 Assessment of Potential Impacts and Likely Significant Effects of <b>ES Chapter 14: Socio-Economics and Land Use</b> (Doc Ref. 6.1).

Relevant NPS Paragraph	Requirement of the NPS	Location of information provided to address this
	environmental enhancements, and any long-term or wider benefits; and <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Its potential adverse impacts, including on the environment, and including any long-term and cumulative adverse impacts, as well as any measures to avoid, reduce, mitigate or compensate for any adverse impacts, following the mitigation hierarchy.</li> </ul>	
4.1.6	In this context, the Secretary of State should take into account environmental, social and economic benefits and adverse impacts, at national, regional and local levels. These may be identified in this NPS, the relevant technology specific NPS, in the application or elsewhere (including in local impact reports, marine plans, and other material considerations as outlined in Section 1.1).	This is considered in Section 14.8 Assessment of Potential Impacts and Likely Significant Effects and Section 14.11 Cumulative Effects of <b>ES Chapter 14: Socio-Economics and Land Use</b> (Doc Ref. 6.1).
5.11.8	The ES (see Section 4.3) should identify existing and proposed land uses near the project, any effects of replacing an existing development or use of the site with the proposed project or preventing	This is considered in Section 14.6 Baseline Conditions and Section 14.8 Assessment of Potential Impacts and Likely Significant Effects of

Relevant NPS Paragraph	Requirement of the NPS	Location of information provided to address this
	<p>a development or use on a neighbouring site from continuing. Applicants should also assess any effects of precluding a new development or use proposed in the development plan. The assessment should be proportionate to the scale of the preferred scheme and its likely impacts on such receptors. For developments on previously developed land, the applicant should ensure that they have considered the risk posed by land contamination and how it is proposed to address this.</p>	<p><b>ES Chapter 14: Socio-Economics and Land Use</b> (Doc Ref. 6.1).</p>
<p>5.13.2</p>	<p>Where the project is likely to have socio-economic impacts at local or regional levels, the applicant should undertake and include in their application an assessment of these impacts as part of the ES (see Section 4.3).</p>	<p>This is considered in Section 14.8 Assessment of Potential Impacts and Likely Significant Effects of <b>ES Chapter 14: Socio-Economics and Land Use</b> (Doc Ref. 6.1).</p>
<p>5.13.3</p>	<p>The applicant is strongly encouraged to engage with relevant local authorities during early stages of project development so that the applicant can</p>	<p>A record of engagement with stakeholders, including local planning authorities, is presented in Section 14.3 Stakeholder Engagement of <b>ES</b></p>

Relevant NPS Paragraph	Requirement of the NPS	Location of information provided to address this
	gain a better understanding of local or regional issues and opportunities.	<b>Chapter 14: Socio-Economics and Land Use</b> (Doc Ref. 6.1).
5.13.4	<p>The applicant’s assessment should consider all relevant socio-economic impacts, which may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The creation of jobs and training opportunities. Applicants may wish to provide information on the sustainability of the jobs created, including where they will help to develop the skills needed for the UK’s transition to Net Zero.</li> <li>• The contribution to the development of low-carbon industries at the local and regional level as well as nationally.</li> <li>• The provision of additional local services and improvements to local infrastructure, including the provision of educational and visitor facilities.</li> <li>• Any indirect beneficial impacts for the region hosting the infrastructure, in</li> </ul>	<p>This is considered in Section 14.8 Assessment of Potential Impacts and Likely Significant Effects and Section 14.11 Cumulative Effects of <b>ES Chapter 14: Socio-Economics and Land Use</b> (Doc Ref. 6.1).</p> <p>Further information on training and employment can be found in the <b>Outline Skills, Supply Chain and Employment Plan</b> (Doc Ref. 7.17).</p>

Relevant NPS Paragraph	Requirement of the NPS	Location of information provided to address this
	<p>particular in relation to use of local support services and supply chains.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effects (positive and negative) on tourism and other users of the area impacted.</li> <li>• The impact of a changing influx of workers during the different construction, operation and decommissioning phases of the energy infrastructure. This could change the local population dynamics and could alter the demand for services and facilities in the settlements nearest to the construction work (including community facilities and physical infrastructure such as energy, water, transport and waste). There could also be effects on social cohesion depending on how populations and service provision change as a result of the development.</li> <li>• Cumulative Effects - if development consent were to be granted to for a number of projects within a region and these were developed in a similar</li> </ul>	

Relevant NPS Paragraph	Requirement of the NPS	Location of information provided to address this
	<p>timeframe, there could be some short-term negative effects, for example a potential shortage of construction workers to meet the needs of other industries and major projects within the region.</p>	
5.13.6	<p>Socio-economic impacts may be linked to other impacts, for example visual impacts considered in Section 5.10 but may also have an impact on tourism and local businesses. Applicants are encouraged, where possible, to demonstrate that local suppliers have been considered in any supply chain.</p>	<p>Other relevant environmental topics have been taken into account in the assessment presented in Section 14.8 Assessment of Potential Impacts and Likely Significant Effects of <b>ES Chapter 14: Socio-Economics and Land Use</b> (Doc Ref. 6.1). The Applicant will consider local suppliers in the supply chain, as set out within the <b>Outline Skills, Supply Chain and Employment Strategy</b> (Doc Ref. 7.17).</p>
5.13.7	<p>Applicants should consider developing accommodation strategies where appropriate, especially during construction and decommissioning phases, that would include the need to provide temporary accommodation for construction workers if required.</p>	<p>This is considered in Section 14.7 Embedded Mitigation of <b>ES Chapter 14: Socio-Economics and Land Use</b> (Doc Ref. 6.1).</p>

Relevant NPS Paragraph	Requirement of the NPS	Location of information provided to address this
5.13.8	The Secretary of State should consider whether mitigation measures are necessary to mitigate any adverse socio-economic impacts of the development. For example, high quality design can improve the visual and environmental experience for visitors and the local community alike.	This is considered in Section 14.7 Embedded Mitigation and Section 14.8 Assessment of Potential Impacts and Likely Significant Effects of <b>ES Chapter 14: Socio-Economics and Land Use</b> (Doc Ref. 6.1).
5.13.9	The Secretary of State should have regard to the potential socio-economic impacts of new energy infrastructure identified by the applicant and from any other sources that the Secretary of State considers to be both relevant and important to its decision.	Section 14.8 Assessment of Potential Impacts and Likely Significant Effects of <b>ES Chapter 14: Socio-Economics and Land Use</b> (Doc Ref. 6.1) presents a comprehensive assessment of the socio-economic impacts of the Scheme.
5.13.10	The Secretary of State may conclude that limited weight is to be given to assertions of socio-economic impacts that are not supported by evidence (particularly in view of the need for energy infrastructure as set out in this NPS).	
5.13.11	The Secretary of State should consider any relevant positive provisions the applicant has made or is proposing to make to mitigate impacts (for	This is considered in Section 14.7 Embedded Mitigation and Section 14.9 Additional Monitoring, Mitigation and Enhancement

Relevant NPS Paragraph	Requirement of the NPS	Location of information provided to address this
	example through planning obligations) and any legacy benefits that may arise as well as any options for phasing development in relation to the socio-economic impacts.	Measures of <b>ES Chapter 14: Socio-Economics and Land Use</b> (Doc Ref. 6.1).
5.13.12	The Secretary of State may wish to include a requirement that specifies the approval by the local authority of an employment and skills plan detailing arrangements to promote local employment and skills development opportunities, including apprenticeships, education, engagement with local schools and colleges and training programmes to be enacted.	An <b>Outline Skills, Supply Chain and Employment Plan</b> (Doc Ref. 7.17) has been prepared to support the DCO Application. A detailed Skills, Supply Chain and Employment Plan would be developed post-consent and require approval by the relevant planning authority before its implementation, as secured by the <b>Draft DCO</b> (Doc Ref. 3.1).
<b>NPS for Renewable Energy EN-3</b>		
2.10.32	Proposed developments may affect the provision of public rights of way networks.	This is considered in Section 14.8 Assessment of Potential Impacts and Likely Significant Effects and Section 14.11 Cumulative Effects of <b>ES Chapter 14: Socio-Economics and Land Use</b> (Doc Ref. 6.1).
2.10.33	Public rights of way may need to be temporarily closed or diverted to enable construction, however, applicants should keep, as far as is practicable and safe, all public rights of way that cross the proposed development site open during	

Relevant NPS Paragraph	Requirement of the NPS	Location of information provided to address this
	construction and protect users where a public right of way borders or crosses the site.	
2.10.34	Applicants are encouraged to design the layout and appearance of the site to ensure continued recreational use of public rights of way where possible during construction, and in particular during operation of the site.	
2.10.61	Applicants should set out what would be decommissioned and removed from the site at the end of the operational life of the generating station, considering instances where it may be less harmful for the ecology of the site to keep or retain certain types of infrastructure, for example underground cabling, and where there may be socio-economic benefits in retaining site infrastructure after the operational life, such as retaining pathways through the site or a site substation.	This is considered in Section 14.8 Assessment of Potential Impacts and Likely Significant Effects and Section 14.11 Cumulative Effects of <b>ES Chapter 14: Socio-Economics and Land Use</b> (Doc Ref. 6.1).
<b>NPS for Electricity Networks Infrastructure EN-5</b>		

Relevant NPS Paragraph	Requirement of the NPS	Location of information provided to address this
2.9.19	<p>In brief, the Horlock Rules state that applicants should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• [...];</li> <li>• Consider the land use effects of the proposal when planning the siting of substations or extensions;</li> <li>• [...]; and</li> <li>• Use space effectively to limit the area required for development consistent with appropriate mitigation measures and to minimise the adverse effects on existing land use and rights of way, whilst also having regard to future extension of the substation;</li> <li>• [...].</li> </ul>	<p>This is considered in Section 14.8 Assessment of Potential Impacts and Likely Significant Effects and Section 14.11 Cumulative Assessment of <b>ES Chapter 14: Socio-Economics and Land Use</b> (Doc Ref. 6.1).</p>

## 4. National Planning Policy Framework<sup>4</sup>

- 4.1.1. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) outlines the Government's planning policies for England and provides guidance on their implementation. Paragraph 5 outlines that while the NPPF does not contain specific policies for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs), the NPPF is still relevant when considering the determination of DCOs. As a result, the EIA is taking the NPPF into account.
- 4.1.2. Relevant NPPF requirements relating to socio-economics and land use, along with an indication of where the information is located within the ES to address these requirements, are provided in Table 4-1.

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<sup>4</sup> Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (2024) *National Planning Policy Framework*. Available at: <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/675abd214cbda57cacd3476e/NPPF-December-2024.pdf>. [Accessed 31 January 2026]

**Table 4-1: Relevant NPPF Requirements for Socio-Economics and Land Use**

Relevant NPPF Paragraph	Requirement of the NPPF	Location of information provided to address this
85	<p>Planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development. The approach taken should allow each area to build on its strengths, counter any weaknesses and address the challenges of the future. This is particularly important where Britain can be a global leader in driving innovation, and in areas with high levels of productivity, which should be able to capitalise on their performance and potential.</p>	<p>This is considered in Section 14.8 Assessment of Potential Impacts and Likely Significant Effects and Section 14.11 Cumulative Effects of <b>ES Chapter 14: Socio-Economics and Land Use</b> (Doc Ref. 6.1).</p>
105	<p>Planning policies and decisions should protect and enhance public rights of way and access, including taking opportunities to provide better facilities for users, for example by adding links to existing rights of way networks including National Trails.</p>	<p>This is considered in Section 14.8 Assessment of Potential Impacts and Likely Significant Effects of <b>ES Chapter 14: Socio-Economics and Land Use</b> (Doc Ref. 6.1).</p>

Relevant NPPF Paragraph	Requirement of the NPPF	Location of information provided to address this
187	<p>Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;...</li> </ul>	<p>This is considered in Section 14.8 Assessment of Potential Impacts and Likely Significant Effects of <b>ES Chapter 14: Socio-Economics and Land Use</b> (Doc Ref. 6.1).</p>

## 5. Other National Policies and Guidance

### 5.1. National Planning Practice Guidance<sup>5</sup>

5.1.1. National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) provides more in-depth guidance to the NPPF. The NPPG on 'Renewable and Low Carbon energy', last updated in August 2023, outlines particular factors that need considering when planning for large scale ground-mounted solar photovoltaic farms.

5.1.2. These factors include:

- *a. encouraging the effective use of land by focussing large scale solar farms on previously developed and non agricultural land, provided that it is not of high environmental value;*
- *b. where a proposal involves greenfield land, whether (i) the proposed use of any agricultural land has been shown to be necessary and poorer quality land has been used in preference to higher quality land; and (ii) the proposal allows for continued agricultural use where applicable and/or encourages biodiversity improvements around arrays"*

5.1.3. This guidance also emphasises the need for local planning authorities to incorporate the existing and potential future needs of the population into their planning and economic strategy, in terms of economic development, jobs and employment opportunities.

### 5.2. National Highways (2020) Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB), LA 112, Population and Human Health<sup>6</sup>

5.2.1. National Highways 'Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB), LA 112, Population and Human Health' (2020) provides guidance in relation to the assessment of land use impacts. While this guidance is provided in the context of linear road infrastructure projects, it is still considered relevant to the Scheme given its scale and nature.

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<sup>5</sup> DLUHC (2023) National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG). Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/renewable-and-low-carbon-energy> [Accessed 15 October 2025]

<sup>6</sup> Highways England; Transport Scotland; Welsh Government; Department for Infrastructure (Northern Ireland) (2020) Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB): LA 112 Population and Human Health. Available at: <https://www.standardsforhighways.co.uk/tses/attachments/1e13d6ac-755e-4d60-9735-f976bf64580a?inline=true>. [Accessed 15 October 2025]

## 6. Local Policies and Guidance

- 6.1.1. Local policy relevant to the socio-economics and land use assessment comprise:
- South East Lincolnshire Local Plan (SELLP) 2011-2036<sup>7</sup>; and
  - South-East Lincolnshire Sub-Regional Strategy 2024/5-2028/29<sup>8</sup>.
- 6.1.2. There is no local guidance relevant or applicable to the socio-economics and land use
- 6.1.3. The relevant considerations are summarised within Table 6-1.

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<sup>7</sup> South East Lincolnshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee (2019) *Local Plan 2011-2036*. Available at: <https://southeastlincolnlocalplan.org/article/20102/Adopted-Plan>. [Accessed 15 October 2025]

<sup>8</sup> South East Lincolnshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee (2024) *South-East Lincolnshire Sub-Regional Strategy 2024/5-2028/29*. Available at: [Sub-Regional Strategy Oct23.pdf](#) [Accessed 15 October 2025]

**Table 6-1: Relevant Local Policy with respect to Socio-Economics and Land Use**

Relevant Document	Relevant Policies	Location of information provided to address this
SELLP 2011-2036	<p>The SELLP 2011-2036 (2019) is centred on sustainable socio-economic growth, strategic development, and environmental stewardship. Socio-economic goals focus on meeting housing demand, enhancing employment opportunities, and addressing infrastructure needs. The plan supports economic diversification, particularly in agri-food, and logistics, while aiming to reduce deprivation and improve living standards. The plan also identifies tourism as a key part of the area’s economy, highlighting the unique assets of South East Lincolnshire as a potential driver of growth in the tourism sector.</p> <p>The SELLP integrates economic growth with sustainability, focusing on housing, employment, infrastructure, and environmental resilience. Policies provide a framework for managed development, ensuring south east Lincolnshire remains a thriving, well-connected, and resilient region by 2036.</p> <p>The adopted policies most relevant to the socio-economics and land use assessment are:</p>	<p>This is considered throughout <b>ES Chapter 14: Socio-Economics and Land Use</b> (Doc Ref. 6.1).</p>

Relevant Document	Relevant Policies	Location of information provided to address this
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy 1: Spatial Strategy - Notes that in the countryside, development will be permitted that is necessary to such a location and/or where it can be demonstrated that it meets the sustainable development needs of the area in terms of economic, community or environmental benefits;</li> <li>• Policy 2: Development Management - Outlines that proposals requiring planning permission will be permitted provided that sustainable development considerations are met such as impact on land use, amenity, and sand and gravel resources;</li> <li>• Policy 3: Design of New Development – Requires proposals to demonstrate how issues will be secured such as residential amenity and accessibility of public spaces.</li> <li>• Policy 9: Promoting a Stronger Visitor Economy – Identifies tourism as an important part of South East Lincolnshire’s economy; and</li> <li>• Policy 31: Climate Change and Renewable and Low Carbon Energy; - Notes that renewable</li> </ul>	

Relevant Document	Relevant Policies	Location of information provided to address this
	<p>energy facility proposals will be permitted provided there would be no significant harm to a number of factors, including residential amenity and agricultural land take.</p>	
<p>South-East Lincolnshire Sub-regional Strategy 2024/5-2028/29</p>	<p>The South-East Lincolnshire Sub-regional Strategy 2024/25-2028/29 (2024) is focused on driving sustainable economic growth and enhancing regional resilience through strategic investments in infrastructure, innovation, and community well-being. Broader objectives include improving employment opportunities, reducing inequality, and strengthening local supply chains to support long-term prosperity.</p> <p>More specifically, the strategy’s key priorities relevant to the socio-economics and land use assessment include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encouraging diversification of the rural economy, including through renewable energy projects; and</li> <li>• Enhancing infrastructure to support economic growth and community resilience.</li> </ul>	<p>This is considered throughout <b>ES Chapter 14: Socio-Economics and Land Use</b> (Doc Ref. 6.1).</p>

