Meridian Solar Farm

EN010169

Volume 8

Post-Submission Application Documents

8.11 Statement of Common Ground with Lincolnshire County Council

APFP Regulation 5(2)(q)

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

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1. Introduction

1.1. Overview

1.1.1. This Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) has been prepared to support the examination process for the proposed Meridian Solar Farm. A DCO application has been made by Meridian Solar Farm Limited ('the Applicant') to the Secretary of State pursuant to Section 37 of the Planning Act 2008.

1.1.2. SoCGs are an established means in the planning process of allowing all parties to identify and focus on specific issues that may need to be considered during the examination. The purpose and possible content of SoCGs is detailed in the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's guidance entitled 'Planning Act 2008: Guidance on the examination stage of an application' (2026), which states:

"*A SoCG is a written statement prepared jointly by the applicant and another interested party or parties but led and submitted by the applicant, setting out the factual matters about the application on which they agree, for example, on data or methodologies concerning the determination of any significant effects, but can just as helpfully record disagreement.*

…

SoCGs are expected to be concise and focused on the key issues, with the scope agreed between the parties from the outset of discussions on the application during the pre-application stage. SoCGs are often revised during the course of the examination as matters are agreed or disagreements clarified between the applicant and interested parties."

1.1.3. This document relates to matters between the Applicant and Lincolnshire County Council. It confirms to the Examining Authority where agreement has been reached between the parties, and where agreement has not (yet) been reached. This SoCG does not seek to replicate information that is available elsewhere, either within the DCO application and/or examination documents, referring out where appropriate.

1.1.4. The content of this SoCG has initially been based off the matters raised by Lincolnshire County Council in its relevant representation [RR-111], with cross-reference to the original issue in brackets.

1.1.5. The terminology used within the SoCG to reflect the status between the parties is either:

- "Agreed" to indicate where a matter has been resolved to the satisfaction of the parties.
- "Not Agreed" to indicate a final position where parties cannot agree.
- "Under Discussion" to indicate where matters are subject of on-going discussion with the aim to either resolve or refine the extent of disagreement between the parties.

1.1.6. Where matters would require the involvement of third parties in order to come to an agreement, these dependencies are noted.

2. Summary of Engagement Undertaken

2.1.1. Table 2-1 summarises the key meetings and correspondence between the parties subject to this SoCG

Table 2-1 Summary of key meetings and correspondence

Date	Engagement Type	Summary
16 November 2023	Online Meeting	Planning officer briefing covering introductions, an overview of surveys completed and planned, the indicative project programme and the proposed approach to consultation.
11 December 2023	Online Meeting	Members briefing covering introductions, the project and scheme overview, community benefit proposals and the proposed approach to consultation.
11 March 2024	Online Meeting	Initial discussion with LCC, Highways on the extent of required assessments and scope of the transport and access section of the ES.
17 April 2024	Online Meeting	Planning Performance Agreement kick-off meeting covering the updated project and scheme overview, environmental considerations, work undertaken to date and next steps.
13 May 2024	Online Meeting	Project update meeting covering the emerging layout and parameter plan, current status, consultation programme, DCO submission programme, heritage work undertaken to date and future engagement.
22 May 2024	Online Meeting	Monthly meeting covering site boundary updates, the scoping position, programme look-ahead and ongoing collaboration and engagement.
21 August 2024	Online Meeting	Initial Solar Development Areas viewpoints were discussed and provided for ground truthing and comment, alongside the Scoping ZTV. LCC subsequently provided feedback on the viewpoint locations on the 16 September 2024. The majority of the comments were agreed, and the approach was amended accordingly. The agreed list of Solar Development Areas viewpoints was used in the PEIR.

Date	Engagement Type	Summary
6 September 2024	Email Correspondence	Agreement with LCC, Highways on the proposed traffic survey extent for the Solar Development Areas.
9 September 2024	Online Meeting	Update meeting covering the non-statutory consultation summary, feedback received, newsletter update, project timeline, the Statement of Community Consultation and next steps.
10 October 2024	Online Meeting	Agreement with LCC, Highways on the updated traffic survey extent to cover both the Solar Development Area, Inter-array Connections and Grid Connection Route.
16 October 2024	Online Meeting	Monthly meeting covering technical engagement, programme updates and Planning Performance Agreement matters.
20 November 2024	Online Meeting	Monthly meeting covering the Statement of Community Consultation and archaeology matters.
18 December 2024	Online Meeting	Monthly meeting covering the proposed statutory consultation dates and ongoing discussions with the County Archaeologist.
15 January 2025	Online Meeting	Monthly project update meeting.
21 March 2025	Email Correspondence	The Applicant provided comments in response to LCC's review of the draft Statement of Community Consultation.
April – May 2025	Email Correspondence	Email correspondence regarding the existing weight limit restriction, including confirmation that it was not related to a weak structure and that vehicles requiring legitimate access would be exempt.
16 May 2025	Online Meeting	Joint meeting with LCC and Historic England to discuss the Written Scheme of Investigation for trial trenching, PEIR comments, archaeological fieldwork, progress updates, and grid connection and inter-array surveys.
24 May 2025	Online Meeting	Built heritage meeting covering statutory consultation PEIR comments, programme updates and PEIR review comments.
18 June 2025	Online Meeting	Meeting with LCC Public Health and the local ICB contact regarding human health matters.
17 June 2025	Email Correspondence	Email correspondence confirming the traffic survey scope and collision data study area.

Date	Engagement Type	Summary
17 July 2025	Online Meeting	Meeting covering the Phase 2 geological survey, proposed movement of evaluation trenches and aviation crash site matters.
18 July 2025	Email Correspondence	To discuss record of WW2 Crash and HER
24 July 2025	Online Meeting	LCC/ SHDC LVIA Update Meeting to discuss the statutory consultation feedback received. An update was provided on the development of Scheme design. Landscape and visual mitigation principles were presented, and the viewpoint strategy was reviewed. Initial findings from the updated glint and glare assessment were presented. LCC and SHDC requested for the landscape strategy to consider the introduction of landscape corridors through the Site to increase permeability. Following the meeting, the Applicant shared a viewpoint spreadsheet and mapping for review, including an indication on the location of the On-Site Substation Compounds and overhead lines. Comments from both LCC and SHDC were received. The landscape strategy was also reviewed and updated in line with comments received during the meeting.
14 August 2025	Email Correspondence	Email correspondence seeking feedback on the list of cumulative schemes.
3 September 2025	Online Meeting	Flood risk update meeting covering the project position, grid connection corridor surveys, Solar PV Site and Inter-Array updates, and the approach to pre- and post-survey work.
18 September 2025	Online Meeting	LCC/SHDC LVIA Update Meeting to discuss viewpoints. The Applicant had reviewed and incorporated viewpoints proposed by LCC into the baseline photography. An additional 12 viewpoints were included. The split of viewpoints to become a photomontage (Type 3) or an annotated image (Type 1) were discussed and agreed. LCC and SHDC were pleased that Applicant had incorporated their feedback and were comfortable with the viewpoint strategy. Study areas for landscape and visual effects were discussed (5km for Solar Development Areas and Inter-Array Connections, and 10km for the Grid Connection Route). LCC and SHDC were content with the principle

Date	Engagement Type	Summary
		of adding permeable corridors within the individual parcels of the Solar Development Areas.
18 September 2025	Online Meeting	Transport update meeting covering the general project update, construction traffic assumptions, access strategy, assessment parameters, trip distribution, TemPro factors and assessment methodology, PRoW matters, the Transport Assessment Note and the Outline Construction Traffic Management Plan. Questions were also discussed with the relevant highway authorities.
15 October 2025	Online Meeting	Monthly Meeting
15 October 2025	Email Correspondence	Draft Adequacy of Consultation Milestone Report provided for review and comment
21 October 2025	Email Correspondence	The Applicant provided an updated LVIA methodology document for review. No comments have been received to date.
19 November 2025	Online Meeting	Monthly Meeting
17 December 2025	Online Meeting	Monthly Meeting
16 February 2026	Online Meeting	Monthly Meeting
23 February 2026	Online Meeting	Joint meeting with Historic England to discuss cultural heritage and archaeology matters.
4 March 2026	Online Meeting	Monthly meeting to provide update on Scheme ahead of submission in late March.
1 June 2026	Online Meeting	Meeting to discuss comments on ALC/Soils chapter.
26 June 2026	Online Meeting	Meeting with LCC Archaeology
1 July 2026	Online Meeting	Monthly meeting with planning officers to provide update on the Scheme and pre-examination phase activities.
1 July 2026	Email Correspondence	Updated soil pit logs shared with grid references for each pit.
5 August 2026	Online Meeting	Monthly meeting with planning officers to provide update on the Scheme and pre-examination phase activities.
14 August 2026	Online Meeting	Joint meeting with LCC and Natural England to discuss comments on the Applicant's assessment of agricultural land.
24 August 2026	Technical Note	Draft Additional Photography Technical Note shared for comment.

Date	Engagement Type	Summary
4 September 2026	Online Meeting	Monthly meeting with planning officers to provide update on the Scheme and pre-examination phase activities.

3. Statement of Common Ground

3.1. Agricultural Land and Soils

3.1.1. Table 3-1 sets out the position of both parties in relation to Agricultural Land and Soils matters.

Table 3-1 Agricultural Land and Soils matters

Ref	Matter	Stakeholder Position	Meridian Solar Farm Position	Status
Assessment Methodology and Baseline				
3.1.1	ALC survey methodology (LCC-010)	The Council has concerns over the ALC survey methodology adopted and subsequent grading of the land, with questions in particular over the extent of mapped ALC subgrade 3b. There is a significant discrepancy between the predicted land assessment plans and the ALC survey plans with paragraph 3.4.13 stating that the amount of BMV within the Order limits lies somewhere in the range of 35.2% and 39.2%. This would appear to be a very low percentage when judged against the provisional and predicted extent of BMV as presented in Figures 3-4, 3-5 and 3- 6, with large extents of Grade 1 and 2 land and the likelihood of it being BMV at >60%.	The ALC survey reports for the Solar Development Area (**ES Appendices 5-2 and 5-3** (Doc Ref. 6.3 Rev 1)) provide field observation data and survey results at a greater granularity than the Predictive ALC mapping. The Applicant has also met with Natural England and LCC on 14 August 2026 to discuss and seek common ground on the ALC survey results.	Under discussion
3.1.2	Point by point auger survey results	The point-by-point auger survey results and interpretation should be applied in any project where the aim is to minimise the use of the best land, rather than a field average approach.	Both approaches to data presentation were included in **ES Chapter 5: Agriculture and Soils** (Doc Ref. 6.1 Rev 1) and assessment of effects determined on the basis of the worst-case outcome.	Not agreed

Ref	Matter	Stakeholder Position	Meridian Solar Farm Position	Status
		The fact that Figure 5-2 is included for information only should be made clear in the document. It should be clear that the figure does not inform the Assessment, it is potentially misleading and strictly superfluous to the document.	ALC survey data is presented for both field averaged data (**ES Figure 5-2** [APP-089]) and point by point auger data (**ES Figure 5-1** [APP-088]). The inclusion of **ES Figure 5-2** [APP-089] is for information only, whilst the assessment of effects within **ES Chapter 5: Agriculture and Soils** (Doc Ref. 6.1 Rev 1) is determined on the basis of the auger by auger point ALC classification, illustrated on **ES Figure 5-1** [APP-088].	
3.1.3	Soil pit logs	Only two soil pits have been dug (but not described in detail) across the whole proposed development area and the images of the pits do not clearly reflect the characteristics of the soil profile. Whilst this may be seen as an acceptable minimum to provide a single pit for each soil type encountered, in this case, pits should be dug and examined to confirm the characteristics of the natural poorly permeable layer recorded throughout the proposed development area on which the 3b assessment is based.	The excavation and assessment of soil inspection pits was undertaken in accordance with the Guidelines and Field Survey Handbook[1]. Soil pits characterise each identified soil type and verify the soil profile characteristics recorded during auger observations. There was consistency between soil pits and to avoid repetition the ALC Survey Reports presented generalised soil profiles for each soil type. In response to this comment, the full soil pit logs and descriptions have now been provided within **ES Appendices 5-2 and 5-3** (Doc Ref. 6.3 Rev 1) at Deadline 1.	Not agreed
Assessment				
3.1.3	Impacts on BMV land (LCC-005)	The potential impacts on Best and Most Versatile (BMV) agricultural land in respect of this scheme, and cumulatively with other projects that are emerging / known about in Lincolnshire, are of significant	Based on previous reporting as part of other NSIPs in Lincolnshire and the extrapolation of available mapping, the proportion of BMV land in the county is estimated to be in the order of 71%. It is estimated	Not agreed

[1] Hodgson, J.M. (1997) Soil Survey Field Handbook: Describing and Sampling Soil Profiles. 3rd edn. Harpenden: Soil Survey of Great Britain (England and Wales). Available at: https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6751226501791744. Accessed: 31 July 2026.

Ref	Matter	Stakeholder Position	Meridian Solar Farm Position	Status
		concern to the Council. The Council will seek to protect high quality agricultural land in Lincolnshire (ALC Grades 1, 2 and 3a) from development in accordance with its Energy Infrastructure Position Statement adopted 5 December 2023. It is the Council's view that the county of Lincolnshire has already met its committed relative proportion of solar development through successive NSIP-scale and other applications of this nature and is therefore disproportionately contributing to this national objective.	that the cumulative impact of solar schemes will account for approximately 3% of all BMV land in Lincolnshire. Whilst there is a measure of uncertainty around this proportion, it is indicative that the solar schemes represent a small proportion of agricultural and BMV land in the county. The Cumulative Effects section within **ES Chapter 5: Agriculture and Soils** (Doc Ref. 6.1 Rev 1) considers the cumulative impact of the Scheme and other proposed solar schemes in Lincolnshire on loss of BMV land and food production which concludes there would be no impact on food security.	
Mitigation and Compensation				
3.1.4	Outline Soil Management Plan	The OSMP fails to refer to ISEP guidance on Soil Health and Environmental Assessment and the use of baselines to monitor change and inform rehabilitation where necessary. The OSMP includes no indication of management methods proposed to monitor, maintain and enhance soil and plant health across the proposed development area.	The **OSMP** (Doc Ref. 7.14 Rev 1) does not refer to the recent ISEP guidance[2] on soil health. Measuring soil health presents practical challenges due to natural variability, seasonal changes and the influence of land management on biological and chemical properties. Furthermore, the guidance notes that *'the larger a proposed development scheme, and particularly for large linear infrastructure projects, the more difficult it is to achieve a consistent pattern of sampling that considers both temporal and spatial variations in soil health indicators. In these instances, the soil health assessment will inevitably be more general.'* Recognising these	Under discussion

[2] Institute of Sustainability and Environmental Professionals (ISEP) (2025) Soil Health in Environmental Assessment. Available at: https://www.isepglobal.org/media/rfhnz2im/isep-soil-health-in-environmental-assesment-2025.pdf. Accessed: 31 July 2026.

Ref	Matter	Stakeholder Position	Meridian Solar Farm Position	Status
			difficulties, the **OSMP** (Doc Ref. 7.14 Rev 1) emphasizes compliance with good soil management practices. The **OSMP** (Doc Ref. 7.14 Rev 1) confirms that the detailed SMP will set out features to be observed as measures of poor soil health (paragraph 5.6.6). It identifies that regular inspection is required and that unsatisfactory soil and plant health will lead to specialist technical advice.	

3.2. Alternatives and Site Selection

3.2.1. Table 3-2 sets out the position of both parties in relation to Alternatives and Site Selection matters.

Table 3-2 Alternatives and Site Selection matters

Ref	Matter	Stakeholder Position	Meridian Solar Farm Position	Status
3.2.1	Point of Connection siting zone (LCC-001)	Further information is required to understand the extent and refinement of the siting zone for the Point of Connection to the National Grid. Reference to para 7.10 of LCC's LIR expands upon this query, seeking clarity on para 3.3.6 of the applicant's Site Selection Report (SSR) [APP-264], which states: '*The Applicant and NGET agreed a siting zone for further consideration however the indicative location of the substation was not known at this point in time,*' specifically what area the agreed '*siting zone*' refers to and what '*point in time*' this sentence refers to. Para 3.3.15 further states that the applicant did not adopt a rigid search area, as the exact location of the Weston Marsh Substation was not confirmed at that point in time but sought to identify available land holdings as close as practicable (approximately 15km) to the anticipated location of the PoC, which was '*understood to be between Spalding and Walpole*'. However, the text prior to this (at para 3.3.9) describes the PoC as '*…the proposed Weston Marsh Substation….*', which accords with the text at para 2.1.12 of the Grid Connection Statement [APP-270]. The Council is therefore seeking an understanding as to why paragraph 3.3.10 of the SSR refers to a '*…search area for potential PV sites on the basis of*	The grid connection offer provided by NESO to the Applicant in November 2022 confirmed a connection would be facilitated by a spare bay within the design of a new Weston Marsh 400 kV Substation. The initial siting zone assumed for the substation considered was the area between Spalding and Walpole. This was not formally defined. This was the limited information relied upon by the Applicant between November 2022 and January 2024. This is the 'point in time' referred to at paragraph 3.3.15 of the **Planning Statement: Appendix D: Site Selection Report** [APP-264]. Further details of the timescales for refinement of the Point of Connection are set out in the **Relevant Representations Report** (Doc Ref. 8.5) in response to LCC-001. The Applicant would appreciate further explanation from LCC as to what information they deem to be missing.	Under discussion

Ref	Matter	Stakeholder Position	Meridian Solar Farm Position	Status
		connection to a substation which could be located between Spalding in Lincolnshire and Walpole in Norfolk' and why the search area for PV sites was not chosen any closer to the Weston Marsh area, perhaps for example, incorporating a 15km radial search area around the Weston Marsh area (even if the precise location of the PoC was not known at that time), rather than choosing a large swathe of land running between Spalding and Walpole, which lies some distance to the south of Weston Marsh.		
3.2.2	Timeline of site selection (LCC-002)	Further information is required to understand the sequencing and decision-making process for identifying the Solar Development Area. Allied to the point at 3.2.1 above where LCC seek to understand the reason chosen for the PV search area '*between Spalding and Walpole*' (with an offered PoC at Weston Marsh), it would also be helpful to understand the timing of engagement with NESO/NGET and landowners to understand the main driver behind the eventual site selection. Whilst identification of suitable landholdings and landowner willingness is an important factor in determining site location for such developments, the Council considers that, in view of their significant scale and potential impacts of NSIP projects, there must be evidence of a robust preliminary and overarching strategic land use decision framework being employed that fully encompasses assessment of a range of environmental constraints. Site selection should, for example, demonstrate how areas of higher flood risk or areas	Further details of the sequencing and decision-making process are set out in the **Relevant Representations Report** (Doc Ref. 8.5) in response to LCC-002. The Applicant would appreciate further explanation from LCC as to what information they deem to be missing.	Under discussion

Ref	Matter	Stakeholder Position	Meridian Solar Farm Position	Status
		of higher likelihood of BMV have been avoided at the outset in order to demonstrate adherence to relevant land use policies. Understanding the sequencing and timing of discussions and decisions with landowners, particularly at the regional site selection stage, would assist in giving confidence that the process takes full account of the range of environmental constraints listed at section 3.3 of the SSR [APP-264].		
3.2.3	Consideration of smaller land parcels (LCC-003)	Further explanation as to why smaller land parcels were not considered a reasonable alternative. LCC has experience in dealing with other solar schemes within the County where conglomerations of smaller land parcels have been shown to allow PV generation at a scale similar to that proposed by Meridian, therefore an explanation as to why this approach was discounted by the Applicant would be beneficial. LCC would highlight that other solar projects in Lincolnshire have successfully combined smaller, non-contiguous sites, and these have been considered viable by their developers, for example the 600MW Cottam Solar project which consists of 4 land parcels, comprising Cottam 1 - a discontinuous ring of sub-sites (totalling 812.1ha), and Cottam 2, 3a and 3b, single sites of 168ha, 132ha and 73ha respectively linked by a number of cable route corridors and connecting to the National Grid substation at Cottam Power Station. By adopting a threshold lower size limit, the options for site suitability are immediately reduced, overriding other factors which potentially could have resulted in a more sustainable or policy compliant scheme. This point is interrelated to comments made on site selection with respect to Flood Zones (point 3.9.2 of this SoCG) and the robustness of the Sequential and Exceptions test (see paras 13.18 – 13.38 of LCC's LIR).	While it is possible to assemble a solar scheme from a number of smaller, discrete land parcels, fragmentation of the development area and the associated infrastructure required to connect separate parcels are important considerations. A more fragmented scheme would typically require a greater extent of cabling, access tracks, substations and crossing infrastructure to connect the various components of the development, which could increase environmental effects, land take and overall planning impacts. Reliance on a greater number of smaller land parcels also increases land assembly risk and would be likely to affect the deliverability of the scale of generation required to make best use of this grid connection offer. Further details of the Applicant's approach to land assembly are set out in the **Relevant Representations Report** (Doc Ref. 8.5) in response to LCC-003. The Applicant would appreciate further explanation from LCC as to what information they deem to be missing.	Under discussion

Ref	Matter	Stakeholder Position	Meridian Solar Farm Position	Status
		LCC also seeks confirmation from the Applicant that the range quoted at 3.3.13 of the SSR [APP-264] is correctly referring to acres, as opposed to hectares – given the PV area parcel sizes eventually chosen (197 – 335 ha, or 487 – 828 acres), it would appear that the range should be hectares?		
3.2.4	Site selection – BMV land (from RAC report attached to LCC's Relevant Reps [RR-111]	The site of the proposed development is classified as Grade 1 and 2 on the Provisional ALC map and the EIA fails to justify the selection of the site in terms of demonstrating that the location is either necessary or is outweighed by benefits necessitating the development of BMV land. It is unclear whether the provision of a grid connection was unsolicited by the developer and the site selected on the grounds that the availability of a grid connection clearly outweighed 5.11.12 of EN-1, which states that "*Applicants should seek to minimise impacts on the best and most versatile agricultural land (defined as land in grades 1, 2 and 3a of the Agricultural Land Classification) and preferably use land in areas of poorer quality (grades 3b, 4 and 5)*". The sequencing used in the site selection process is unclear. The whole area is mapped as BMV so it was clear from the start that the requirement was to discount BMV land as a factor in the site selection process. It is only since the second site survey has been carried out that evidence has been provided to attempt to demonstrate that non-BMV land is	The principles for site selection are set out within **Appendix D: Site Selection Report of the Planning Statement** [APP-264]. Paragraph 3.3.26 of the **Site Selection Report** [APP-264] states 'that there is no land of sufficient scale for a 750MW solar farm that is located within proximity to the PoC which does not have a high likelihood of BMV land, making complete avoidance of BMV agricultural land impossible for the Scheme'. The **Site Selection Report** [APP-264], paragraphs 3.4.5 to 3.4.14 then set out how the initial reconnaissance ALC survey, and then subsequent detailed level ALC surveys, have been used to avoid infrastructure on the highest grade agricultural land. As part of the design evolution, over 69ha of BMV land has been excluded from physical development and will be kept in arable use and managed to provide biodiversity benefits within the Order Limits. Paragraph 2.10.21 of EN-3 gives preference to the development of solar PV generation on poor quality land in order to avoid the use of BMV land where possible, but is explicit that "*land type should not be*	Not agreed

Ref	Matter	Stakeholder Position	Meridian Solar Farm Position	Status
		available for the scheme. This evidence is disputed however. That "*land type should not be predominating factor in determining the suitability of the site*" is explicit that BMV need not be the predominating factor and implies that there is another, dominant, factor involved in tehe site selection process.	*predominating factor in determining the suitability of the site*". The Applicant is confident that its approach to site selection is consistent with the requirements of paragraph 5.11.12 of EN-1.	
3.2.5	Site selection – Land north of Bourne (LCC-004)	No consideration has been given to siting the solar farm on land several kilometres to the west of the PoC, where provisionally the land is mapped as Grade 3 and therefore predicted as having lower BMV grade. With the principle of applying a 15km buffer from the PoC at Weston Marsh established, then at or around this distance west of the PoC there is a higher likelihood of encountering lower grade soils, to the north of Bourne. A site selection assessment encompassing this area would be more consistent with the policy requirement to prioritise poorer quality land and would be appropriate as part of an initial 'regional-' or 'strategic-' level process. This area also coincides with land demarcated at lower flood risk compared to the proposed Order Limit area.	In early 2022, the Applicant undertook its site search assessment, as per the criteria set out in the **Planning Statement: Appendix D: Site Selection Report** [APP-264]. The willingness of landowners to voluntarily enter into an agreement with the Applicant was a key factor informing the Applicant's search, with a view to minimising the need to rely on powers of compulsory acquisition. No willing landowners were identified in this area to the west of the PoC. The land identified as Grade 3 to the west of Bourne, on Natural England's Provisional ALC Mapping, is subject to other designations that require consideration in the site selection process, such as the prevalence of areas of ancient woodland, historic parks and gardens, and SSSIs, which would make identifying an area of land of a sufficient scale and the siting of necessary electricity networks infrastructure for the purposes of the Scheme difficult.	Under discussion
3.2.6	Vertical bifacial panels (LCC-012)	One further option which does not appear to have been considered as part of the assessment is the deployment of vertical bifacial panels, which capture sunlight on both sides of the panels and allow for	While alternative configurations, including vertical bifacial panels, may offer advantages in specific circumstances such as agrivoltaic applications or altered generation profiles, the primary objective of	Not agreed

Ref	Matter	Stakeholder Position	Meridian Solar Farm Position	Status
		conventional farming practices to take place between panel rows. The consideration of agrivoltaics as an option is dismissive and the decision is unsupported by a robust argument that they are not feasible.	the Scheme is to maximise the generation of low-carbon electricity from the Site. In this context, south-facing fixed-tilt panels represent the most appropriate and effective design solution, balancing technical performance, commercial viability and efficient use of land. It is also noted that agrivoltaics are at research and development phase in the UK at the moment and the practices are not readily available for adoption at this stage.	

3.3. Battery Energy Storage System

3.3.1. Table 3-2 sets out the position of both parties in relation to BESS related matters.

Table 3-3 Battery Energy Storage System matters

Ref	Matter	Stakeholder Position	Meridian Solar Farm Position	Status
3.3.1	Outline Battery Safety Management Plan (LCC-113)	A programme of monitoring, inspection and risk assessment has been identified which will be required following the establishment of the BESS to ensure continued compliance with the Outline Battery Management Safety Plan and the Emergency Response Plan.	The Outline Battery Safety Management Plan fully accommodates the latest BESS safety requirements contained in NFPA 855 (2026) ensuring that any credible risks associated with battery storage are either prevented or fully mitigated if a BESS failure occurs. The OBSMP has been prepared for the Scheme using guidance from Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue Service (LFR) and incorporating recommendations of the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC). The OBSMP very clearly documents the fire and explosion protection requirements for the illustrative BESS design and the BESS system that is selected at the detailed design stage.	Under discussion

3.4. Cultural Heritage

3.4.1. Table 3-4 sets out the position of both parties in relation to Cultural Heritage matters.

Table 3-4 Cultural Heritage matters

Ref	Matter	Stakeholder Position	Meridian Solar Farm Position	Status
Assessment Methodology and Baseline				
3.4.1	Baseline surveys (LCC-032)	There has been an effective programme of desk-based and non-intrusive surveys completed for the site prior to submission of the Application.	The Applicant welcomes these comments and has no further comments to make on this matter.	Agreed
3.4.2	Archaeological field evaluation (LCC-026)	We welcome the syntheses of baseline survey data and field evaluation results into Consolidation of Solar Development Areas Baseline Data and Identification of Archaeological Zones report (Volume 6 Environmental Statement 6.3 ES Appendix 8-2: Cultural Heritage Desk Based Assessment - Appendix F). The document makes a valuable contribution to understanding the site as a whole and permits multiple strands of evidence to be distilled into a readily usable format.	The Applicant welcomes these comments and has no further comments to make on this matter.	Agreed
3.4.3	Outstanding cable route fieldwork (LCC-034)	There are some outstanding fieldwork requirements, primarily for the cable routes. We are content for these to be undertaken post-DCO and the results incorporated into the final archaeological mitigation and management plan.	The Applicant welcomes the response from LCC. The **OAMMS** (Doc Ref. 8.7) has been prepared and is submitted at Deadline 1. The document includes details of archaeological constraints, additional fieldwork to be undertaken and mitigation to be undertaken during pre-construction, operational maintenance and decommissioning phases. The requirement and responsibilities for an Archaeological Clerk of Works during the operational and decommissioning phases will be confirmed in the	Agreed

Ref	Matter	Stakeholder Position	Meridian Solar Farm Position	Status
			detailed Archaeological Mitigation and Management Plan (AMMP). Reference to undertaking works in accordance with the detailed AMMP and monitoring by an Archaeological Clerk of Works, if required, has been included within the **OOEMP** (Doc Ref. 7.11 Rev 1) and the **ODEMP** (Doc Ref. 7.12 Rev 1).	
3.4.4	Study area (LCC-039)	LCC welcomes the extension of the Grid Connection Route study area from 1km to 2km and the continued flexibility to consider higher significance designated heritage assets up to approximately 5km where their setting may be affected.	The Applicant welcomes these comments and has no further comments to make on this matter.	Agreed
Assessment				
3.4.5	Archaeological assessment (LCC-021)	The Council is broadly satisfied that the work undertaken to date has been completed to the required standards and has provided a solid understanding of the archaeological potential, significance and likely impact arising from the proposed Meridian Solar Farm scheme.	The Applicant welcomes these comments and has no further comments to make on this matter.	Agreed
3.4.6	Archaeological significance assessment (LCC-022)	LCC considers the methodological approach is suitable for the assessment. The Applicant has clarified how the methodology has been applied during the assessment process and LCC are now satisfied by the approach taken.	The methodology of how the significance and importance of heritage assets has been determined is presented in Section 8.4 Assessment Methodology of **ES Chapter 8: Cultural Heritage** (Doc Ref. 6.1 Rev 1) (paragraphs 8.4.17 – 8.4.22).	Agreed

Ref	Matter	Stakeholder Position	Meridian Solar Farm Position	Status
			Both NPS EN-1[3] and the NPPF[4] relate impacts affecting the cultural significance (value in EN-1) of heritage assets to harm. In line with applicable policy and guidance, following precedent set through previous Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIP) applications and for the purpose of the assessment, "substantial harm" is defined as the total or near-total permanent loss of an asset's cultural significance. As substantial harm has been defined as the permanent loss or near total loss of the significance of cultural significance, where an impact is temporary, either during construction or the operational lifetime of the Scheme, this is considered less than substantial harm. Paragraph 8.4.31 of **ES Chapter 8: Cultural Heritage** (Doc Ref. 6.1 Rev 1) has been updated at Deadline 1 to clarify this point.	
3.4.7	Heritage Harm Statement (LCC-029)	The concern stemmed from the absence of detailed information on how the assessment results had been concluded. There should be justification on how the conclusions had been determined and how assumptions had been made where intrusive archaeological data was absent. Modifications made	The area to the north of High Road (in the Grid Connection Route) has been included within the statement in recognition that the full cultural significance of the archaeological deposits has not been evaluated at this stage. The Applicant has checked and reconfirmed there are no records of	Under discussion

[3] Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (2025) Overarching National Policy Statement for energy (EN-1). Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/695d1015f41883f4e50ed9ab/overarching national-policy-statement-for-energy-en-1-web-accessible.pdf [Accessed 29/07/2026]

[4] Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (2024) National Planning Policy Framework. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2 [Accessed 29/07/2026]

Ref	Matter	Stakeholder Position	Meridian Solar Farm Position	Status
		by the Applicant has gone some distance to resolving these minor concerns and dialogue continues. LCC is confident that any remaining issues regarding the assessment will have been resolved prior to Deadline 2 at the latest. In addition, the Applicant has confirmed that whilst there are no recorded sites of Palaeolithic or Mesolithic archaeological activity, there are geological layers surviving at depth which have the potential to contain in-situ activity dating from these periods. Most of the solar scheme will not reach these depths but some actions, such as pylon bases, may extend to these depths and it has been agreed that a bespoke methodology to assess these impacts will be developed and set out in the final AMMP.	heritage assets of Palaeolithic and Mesolithic date within the Grid Connection Route and its study area, and the assessment concludes that the potential for finding archaeological deposits of this date is low. However, the aerial photography survey has recorded a grouping of features, the morphology of which may be indicative of early prehistoric activity. Should these features be proven to be of early prehistoric date their rarity in this geographic area would contribute to their cultural significance. Given the information available and studies undertaken to date, the Applicant is confident that attributing a level of medium importance ("Non-designated assets of regional or high local importance with potential to contribute significantly to regional and local research objectives") is appropriate. Further text regarding the cultural significance of early prehistoric archaeological deposits within the Grid Connection Route has been included in **ES Chapter 8: Cultural Heritage** (Doc Ref. 6.1 Rev 1 paragraph 8.7.30) and the **Appendix E: Heritage Statement of Harm** of the **Planning Statement** (Doc Ref. 7.1 Rev 1 paragraph 4.7.8) for clarity.	
3.4.8	Assessment of the potential effect of the Scheme on the group value of the historic farmsteads (LCC-042)	We ask that consideration is given to applying LCC's Historic Farmsteads Group Value Framework for NSIPs. This framework has been accepted in examination and used on other NSIP schemes in the county. Its use here would assist in providing a consistent and proportionate approach to the assessment of historic farmstead group value, particularly where dispersed farmsteads, associated	Additional assessment of the potential effect of the Scheme on the group value of the historic farmsteads is to be produced with reference to LCC's Historic Farmsteads Group Value Framework for NSIPs. The assessment is being prepared and will be presented within the Historic Farmstead Group Value Assessment to be submitted at Deadline 2.	Under discussion

Ref	Matter	Stakeholder Position	Meridian Solar Farm Position	Status
		field patterns, routeways and open rural setting contribute collectively to historic landscape character.		
Mitigation and Compensation				
3.4.9	Outline Archaeological Mitigation and Management Plan	The draft outline Archaeological Mitigation and Management Plan (oAMMP) has been submitted for comment to LCC for comment. LCC is broadly satisfied with much of the content of the oAMMP although a handful of relatively minor components have yet to be resolved. LCC is confident that these will be resolved in due course.	To produce an informed and robust Outline Archaeological Mitigation and Management Strategy (OAMMS), the Applicant required the full archaeological evaluation report, including specialist analysis of artefacts and environmental deposits to be complete. The **OAMMS** (Doc Ref. 8.7) has now been prepared in consultation with LCC and Historic England and submitted for Deadline 1. This approach was discussed and agreed with LCC and Historic England in the pre-application stage. The **draft DCO** (Doc Ref 3.1 Rev 2) secures the submission, approval and implementation of archaeological mitigation through Requirement 11 (Archaeology). Requirement 11 provides that no part of the authorised development may commence until a final Archaeological Mitigation and Management Strategy and site-specific Written Scheme of Investigation have been submitted to and approved by the relevant planning authority. Requirement 11 further requires that those documents must be substantially in accordance with the OAMMS and implemented as approved.	Under discussion
3.4.10	Archaeological Mitigation and Management Plan (LCC-028)	Despite the lack of consistency by the Applicant over terminology, there has been some positive advances within the draft oAMMP, in particular the provision of archaeological input during the operational and decommissioning stages of the project and the	The Applicant considers that Requirement 11 (Archaeology) appropriately secures archaeological mitigation and management throughout the lifecycle of the Scheme. In particular, Requirement 11 requires the submission and approval of a final Archaeological	Under discussion

Ref	Matter	Stakeholder Position	Meridian Solar Farm Position	Status
		inclusion of an Archaeological Clerk of Works for the lifespan of the project. We welcome the addition of these within the oAMMP and view these as essential components of the management plan.	Mitigation and Management Strategy and site-specific Written Scheme of Investigation prior to commencement of the relevant part of the authorised development, with those documents to be implemented as approved. The Applicant notes LCC's preference for the title "Archaeological Mitigation and Management Plan" to reflect the long-term management of the historic environment. However, the Applicant does not consider that the title of the requirement affects its operation or the scope of the controls secured by the **draft DCO** (Doc Ref. 3.1 Rev 2). The Applicant has adopted this approach to maintain consistency across DCO Application documents and to minimise potential confusion and incorrect cross-referencing across documents due to updates to terminology. The Applicant will continue to engage with Historic England and LCC regarding the content of the **OAMMS** (Doc Ref. 8.7) and any detailed drafting comments on Requirement 11 as the examination progresses.	
3.4.11	Operational and decommissioning archaeology mitigation (LCC-024)	LCC welcomes the update of the **ES Chapter 8: Cultural Heritage** (Doc Ref. 6.1 Rev 1) Section 8.9, the **OOEMP** (Doc Ref. 7.11 Rev 1) and the **ODEMP** (Doc Ref. 7.12 Rev 1) to reflect our earlier concerns regarding the inclusion of archaeological requirements within the operational and decommissioning phases of the project.	**ES Chapter 8: Cultural Heritage** (Doc Ref. 6.1 Rev 1) Section 8.9, the **OOEMP** (Doc Ref. 7.11 Rev 1) and the **ODEMP** (Doc Ref. 7.12 Rev 1) have been updated at Deadline 1 to reflect this comment.	Agreed
3.4.12	Archaeological Clerk of Works	The Archaeological Clerk of Works will be involved in all aspects of the preliminary works, construction,	The Archaeological Clerk of Works has been added to the monitoring column of Cultural Heritage section of	Under discussion

Ref	Matter	Stakeholder Position	Meridian Solar Farm Position	Status
	(LCC-030)	operation and decommissioning phases as needed, not simply monitoring. The full scope, authority and responsibilities of the ACoW role will be set out within the final AMMP.	the **Environmental Mitigation and Commitments Register** (Doc Ref. 7.7 Rev 1).	
3.4.13	Public Archaeology and Engagement Strategy (LCC-031)	LCC is pleased to see the inclusion of the Public Archaeology and Community Engagement Strategy (PACES) within the **Environmental Mitigation and Commitments Register** (Doc Ref. 7.7 Rev 1) and the oAMMP. We looks forward to working alongside the Applicant and using the historic environment to design an exciting and innovative programme of public benefit, enhancement and engagement.	Commitment to a Public Archaeology and Engagement Strategy has been added to the **Environmental Mitigation and Commitments Register** (Doc Ref. 7.7 Rev 1) (refer to Table 2-1, section CH4) and the **OAMMS** (Doc Ref. 8.7) submitted at Deadline 1.	Agreed
3.4.14	Historic environment information boards (LCC-032)	The Council welcomes its inclusion involvement in the historic environment content creation of the information boards adjacent to the new permissive path which would follow the boundary of the Scheduled Monument at Cate's Cove Corner (Commitments Register Table 2.1 Section HH-1).	The commitment to Lincolnshire County Council's involvement in the historic environment content creation of the information boards has been added to the **Environmental Mitigation and Commitments Register** (Doc Ref. 7.7 Rev 1). (refer to Table 2-1, section CH4) and the **OAMMS** (Doc Ref. 8.7) submitted at Deadline 1.	Agreed
3.4.15	Soil Management Plan and archaeology (LCC-036)	LCC welcomes the commitment by the Applicant for the ACoW and oAMMP to be included within the oSMP.	Cross reference to the **OAMMS** (Doc Ref. 8.7) and works to be supervised by an Archaeological Clerk of Works, where required, has been added to the **OSMP** (Doc Ref. 7.14 Rev 1).	Agreed.

3.5. Draft DCO

3.5.1. Table 3-5 sets out the position of both parties in relation to Draft DCO matters.

Table 3-5 Draft DCO matters

Ref	Matter	Stakeholder Position	Meridian Solar Farm Position	Status
3.5.1	Article 13 - PRoW closure powers	There are concern regarding the extent of powers being sought in the draft DCO. Article 13 (1) as currently drafted appears to permit the closure of any PRoW for 'any reasonable time' which is considered to be vague and potentially excessive.	The Applicant considers the drafting of Article 13 to be appropriate and consistent with established precedent. In particular, the wording permitting temporary closures for "any reasonable time" is consistent with recently made DCOs, including the One Earth Solar Farm Order 2026, Peartree Hill Solar Farm Order 2026 and Tillbridge Solar Farm Order 2025. The Applicant also notes that Article 13(4) requires consultation with the street authority before exercising the power in relation to streets and public rights of way identified in Schedule 6 and, for other streets and public rights of way, requires the consent of the street authority. In addition, Requirement 17 secures a Public Rights of Way Management Plan, to be approved in consultation with the relevant highway authority. That Public Rights of Way Management Plan will provide further controls in respect of works which impact public rights of way, and appropriately constrains the broader power within Article 13. The Applicant therefore does not consider that any amendment to Article 13 is required in response to these comments.	Under discussion

Ref	Matter	Stakeholder Position	Meridian Solar Farm Position	Status
3.5.2	Financial contribution via Protective Provisions – Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue	To enable LFR to undertake this necessary monitoring and assurance role, and to ensure adequate resources are available, a financial contribution is proposed via the Protective Provisions within the Development Consent Order, in accordance with Requirement 6(2). This contribution will support LFR in discharging its responsibilities in relation to the BESS associated with the Meridian Solar Farm.	The Applicant is currently reviewing LCC's requested protective provisions.	Under discussion

3.6. Ecology and Biodiversity

3.6.1. Table 3-6 sets out the position of both parties in relation to Ecology and Biodiversity matters.

Table 3-6 Ecology and Biodiversity matters

Ref	Matter	Stakeholder Position	Meridian Solar Farm Position	Status
Mitigation and Compensation				
3.6.1	Habitats Regulations Assessment Report (LCC-085)	The Council has no reason to disagree with the conclusions of the Habitats Regulations Assessment Report [APP-217] but considers that the proposed mitigation measures will need to be secured in the DCO	The conclusions of ES Appendix 9-14: Habitats Regulations Assessment Report (Doc Ref. 6.3 Rev 1) are reflected in the environmental management and mitigation measures secured through the draft DCO (Doc Ref. 3.1 Rev 2), including Requirements 7 (Landscape and Ecology Management Plan), 12 (Construction Environmental Management Plan), 13 (Operational Environmental Management Plan) and 21 (Decommissioning and Restoration). The **Environmental Mitigation and Commitments Register** (Doc Ref. 7.7 Rev 1) also identifies the relevant mitigation measures and the mechanism by which they are secured. The Applicant therefore considers that the proposed mitigation measures are appropriately secured through the D**raft DCO** (Doc Ref. 3.1 Rev 2).	Agreed
3.6.2	Biodiversity net gain	Given the scale and nature of the proposed development the Council will expect the project to deliver significantly more than 10% BNG. The Council welcomes the Applicant's commitment to delivering BNG and considers that these commitments will need to be secured in the DCO.	The delivery of biodiversity net gain is secured through Requirement 8 of the **Draft DCO** (Doc Ref. 3.1 Rev 2), which requires the submission, approval, implementation and maintenance of a Biodiversity Net Gain Strategy and secures a minimum of 10% biodiversity net gain for habitat units, a minimum of 400% biodiversity net gain for hedgerow units and a minimum of 10% biodiversity net gain for	Under discussion

Ref	Matter	Stakeholder Position	Meridian Solar Farm Position	Status
		The Applicant will also need to demonstrate that the commitments made to delivering BNG are achievable.	watercourse units. Requirement 7 further secures the implementation and maintenance of the Landscape and Ecology Management Plan. The **BNG Report** (Doc Ref. 7.9 Rev 1) demonstrates that the BNG commitments (i.e. a minimum of 10% biodiversity net gain for habitat units, a minimum of 400% biodiversity net gain for hedgerow units and a minimum of 10% biodiversity net gain for watercourse units) are achievable on the basis of the illustrative design.	
3.6.3	Botanical surveys	LCC questions the Applicant's justification for scoping out impacts on scarce arable flora without undertaking detailed botanical surveys.	Response to be provided at Deadline 2.	Under discussion
3.6.4	Schedule 1 Breeding bird surveys	LCC considers that additional surveys are required for Schedule 1 species such as barn owl and quail whose main breeding activity occurs around or after dusk. These species' breeding activity may not be detected in normal breeding bird surveys undertaken in the early morning or during daylight hours.	Response to be provided at Deadline 2.	Under discussion
3.6.5	Ground nesting farmland birds	LCC welcomes the Applicant's general approach to providing mitigation for ground nest farmland bird species but considers that additional information is required to confirm that the proposed Farmland bird mitigation strategy is adequate to effectively mitigate impacts on ground nesting bird populations.	Response to be provided at Deadline 2.	Under discussion
3.6.6	Bats	LCC recommends that a programme of monitoring of post-construction bat activity is undertaken to compare activity levels prior to construction and to assess mitigation efficacy in order to increase understanding of the impacts of solar developments	Response to be provided at Deadline 2.	Under discussion

Ref	Matter	Stakeholder Position	Meridian Solar Farm Position	Status
		on local bat populations. Particularly important given the detection of a nationally important assemblage of bats as described in APP-214.		
3.6.7	Biodiversity Net Gain – strategic significance	The Applicant should review the assignment of strategic significance of post development habitats in line with the Greater Lincolnshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy and update the metric calculations where appropriate.	Response to be provided at Deadline 2.	Under discussion
3.6.8	Biodiversity Net Gain – assumed habitat condition	The Applicant should clarify which parcels have not been surveyed and existing condition assumed. Where condition has been assumed, the Applicant should adhere to the precautionary principle by assuming the highest possible condition where uncertainty exists.	Response to be provided at Deadline 2.	Under discussion
3.6.9	Cumulative effects on ecology – ground nesting farmland birds	See 3.6.5. Given the number of large-scale solar developments in the county, LCC considers that there is a real potential for a significantly negative impact on ground nesting farmland bird populations if each development does not provide adequate mitigation for its own impacts.	Response to be provided at Deadline 2.	Under discussion
3.6.10	Ecological Steering Group / BNG monitoring	LCC recommends that an Ecological Steering Group is established to facilitate post-consent communication and reporting on matters relating to ecological mitigation and enhancement measures and the delivery of BNG. Discussion and agreement also required over the long-term resource implications for LPAs monitoring BNG/ecological mitigation and enhancement measures. LCC will be happy to discuss this in more detail with the Applicant and provide a	Response to be provided at Deadline 2.	Under discussion

Ref	Matter	Stakeholder Position	Meridian Solar Farm Position	Status
		draft Terms of Reference for the ESG if it would be helpful.		

3.7. Grid Connection

3.7.1. Table 3-7 sets out the position of both parties in relation to Grid Connection matters.

Table 3-7 Grid Connection matters

Ref	Matter	Stakeholder Position	Meridian Solar Farm Position	Status
3.7.1	Weston Marsh B deliverability (LCC-016)	The Meridian Solar Farm project is contingent upon the Weston Marsh B substation being granted DCO consent and being delivered within the timeframe indicated by National Grid. The certainty of a grid connection being available and therefore the overall deliverability of the project is a concern for the Council. LCC are mindful of the objections raised by NGET to the proposal, notably their comments in the consultation report Appendix H: Section 42 Applicant's Response, March 20226 [APP-045] where they cite 'significant conflict' with the Grimsby to Walpole emerging preferred corridor; and then latterly in NGETs Relevant Reps response [RR-138], in which they raise issues in respect of required standoff distances between infrastructure, their comments on the status of Gate 1 projects (not reserving capacity, or a place in the queue or guaranteeing a connection) and stating that the design for Weston Marsh B takes no account of a connection by Meridian. These comments are pertinent with respect to Para 4.11.6 of the NPS EN-1. LCC seek contingency, in the event that consent is granted, through the provision of a requirement to restrict commencement of development, including	For the avoidance of doubt, the Applicant intends to submit a Gate 2 application at the earliest possibility. The exact dates for future application rounds will be confirmed by NESO once there is greater clarity on the available connection capacity of the relevant grid infrastructure beyond 2030. Paragraph 4.11.6 of EN-1 recognises that "*applicants may wish to take a commercial risk where they have not received or accepted a formal offer of a grid connection from the relevant network operator at the time of the application. In this situation applicants should provide information as part of their application confirming that there is no obvious reason why a network connection would not be possible*". Paragraph 5.2.71 of the **Planning Statement** [APP-260] explains why the Scheme would be a good candidate for a Gate 2 offer and demonstrates that there is no clear reason why a network connection (Gate 2 offer) would not be granted by NESO as part of the next available application round or for the period beyond 2035. The position of the Applicant is not unusual in the context of the Connection Reforms process, and several renewable energy DCOs have been granted over the past year subject to similar uncertainty as to the outcomes of that process. It is ultimately the	Under discussion

Ref	Matter	Stakeholder Position	Meridian Solar Farm Position	Status
		any preparatory works, until such time as consent has been secured for a connection into the Weston Marsh B substation.	commercial risk of the Applicant to proceed subject to a final formal offer, and in the very unlikely circumstance that such an offer is not received (for the reasons outlined above) the DCO would not be implemented.	

3.8. Human Health

3.8.1. Table 3-8 sets out the position of both parties in relation to Human Health matters.

Table 3-8 Human Health matters

Ref	Matter	Stakeholder Position	Meridian Solar Farm Position	Status
Assessment Methodology and Baseline				
3.8.1	Request for a Health Impact Assessment (LCC-107)	Public Health welcomes the inclusion of a dedicated human health chapter within the Environmental Statement. However, we maintain that a more comprehensive Health Impact Assessment (HIA) would provide a more robust and transparent evaluation, including greater emphasis on mental health impacts, long-term and cumulative effects, and health inequalities.	The potential effects of the Scheme on health and wellbeing during the construction, operation, and decommissioning phases are comprehensively assessed within **ES Chapter 10: Human Health** [APP-061]. This provides a proportionate and transparent assessment of the likely health effects associated with the Scheme. The assessment has been undertaken in accordance with the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) (now Institute of Sustainability and Environmental Professionals (ISEP)) guidance[5] and considers a comprehensive range of health determinants relevant to the Scheme, including air quality, dust; electric and magnetic fields (EMFs); employment and training opportunities; landscape and visual effects; noise and vibration; access to Public Rights of Way (PRoW) and opportunities for active travel; traffic and access; social infrastructure; and mental health and wellbeing. The significance of	Under discussion

[5] Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (2015) Environmental Impact Assessment Guide to: Climate Change Resilience and Adaptation. Lincoln: IEMA. Available at: https://www.isepglobal.org/content/isep-eia-guide-to-climate-change-resilience-and-adaptation-2020/. Accessed: 31 July 2026.

Ref	Matter	Stakeholder Position	Meridian Solar Farm Position	Status
			health effects is determined in line with the ISEP guidance, and residual effects are clearly set out. **ES Chapter 10: Human Health** [APP-061] has been informed by consultation responses received throughout the EIA process, including at Scoping and during statutory consultation. As set out in Table 10-3 of the chapter, a meeting was held with key stakeholders including Lincolnshire County Council, South Holland District Council, the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) and the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) to obtain their inputs into the assessment. Engagement was also pro-actively sought with a number of community groups to follow-up on the issues they raised at statutory consultation. A wider consultation programme bespoke to the health assessment, as would be undertaken for a more comprehensive Health Impact Assessment, would not be a proportionate or effective approach to assessing the health effects of the Scheme.	
3.8.2	Impacts on vulnerable populations (LCC-108)	We would expect explicit assessment of impacts on vulnerable populations, with targeted mitigation where required, to ensure that existing inequalities are not exacerbated. Changes to the environment and landscape may disproportionately affect certain groups.	The assessment presented within **ES Chapter 10: Human Health** [APP-061] considers both the general population and vulnerable populations through the application of different sensitivity levels, recognising that certain groups may experience greater susceptibility to health effects, including those associated with changes to the landscape and visual environment. **ES Chapter 10: Human Health** [APP-061] identifies the vulnerable groups considered within the assessment, including older people, people	Under discussion

Ref	Matter	Stakeholder Position	Meridian Solar Farm Position	Status
			with existing illnesses or disabilities, people with mental health conditions, children and young people, those living in areas of higher deprivation, people experiencing poor or very poor health, agricultural workers, and armed forces personnel and veterans. The baseline provides data on existing and future conditions within the study area, including population and demographics, economic factors, general health, mental health, disability, and wider health determinants, including life expectancy, childhood obesity, smoking prevalence, and mortality associated with respiratory diseases. Drawing on the residual effect findings from the ES technical chapters relevant to the health determinants, the assessment did not identify any significant adverse effects for either the general population or vulnerable groups. Therefore, no additional mitigation measures were considered necessary. Embedded mitigation measures were set out in Section 10.7 of **ES Chapter 10: Human Health** [APP-061].	
3.8.3	Assessment of electromagnetic field impacts (LCC-111)	Public Health does not agree that impacts relating to Electromagnetic fields (EMF) can be dismissed through assumption alone. A full assessment of EMF should be provided, including emissions from grid connection infrastructure and potential cumulative or overlapping exposures. This should demonstrate compliance with the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) guidelines.	A full assessment of EMFs, including calculations of electric and magnetic fields from the infrastructure introduced by the Scheme and potential cumulative and overlapping exposures is provided in **Electric and Magnetic Fields Compliance Report** [APP-273], with a summary provided within Section 16.3 of **ES Chapter 16: Other Environmental Topics** [APP-067]. The assessment concludes that the levels of EMFs from the Scheme (including overhead lines, underground cables, solar stations, On-Site	Under discussion

Ref	Matter	Stakeholder Position	Meridian Solar Farm Position	Status
			Substation and BESS Compounds) are predicted to be well below the public exposure reference levels set out in by ICNIRP guidelines[6] at all surrounding locations where public exposure levels are relevant. This remains true when considering the cumulative scenario of the Grimsby to Walpole scheme or the Weston Marsh to East Leicestershire scheme being located in close parallel alignment with the Grid Connection Route of the Scheme.	

[6] International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) (2010) Guidelines for Limiting Exposure to Time-Varying Electric and Magnetic Fields (1 Hz–100 kHz). Health Physics, 99(6), pp. 818–836. Available at: https://www.icnirp.org/en/publications/article/lf-gdl-2010.html. Accessed: 31 July 2026

3.9. Hydrology and Flood Risk

3.9.1. Table 3-9 sets out the position of both parties in relation to Hydrology and Flood Risk matters.

Table 3-9 Hydrology and Flood Risk matters

Ref	Matter	Stakeholder Position	Meridian Solar Farm Position	Status
Assessment				
3.9.1	Surface water flood risk (LCC-062)	The assessment of surface water flood risk and the approach to the drainage strategy for dealing with surface water flood risk and associated proposed measures are agreed as appropriate and suitable. Larger impermeable areas will be created by the formation of the 400kV Substation, the BESS Compound, the three 132kV Substations and the solar stations – these will need SUDs drainage as proposed and the detail design will need to be conditioned and approved, ensuring that greenfield runoff is not exceeded.	The Applicant welcomes LCC's agreement on the proposed drainage strategy.	Agreed
3.9.2	Sequential Test (LCC-006)	With reference to paras 027a and 28 of the PPG on Flood Risk and Coastal Change, LCC note that for infrastructure proposals of regional or national importance the area of search may reasonably extend beyond an LPA boundary, and that it may be relevant to consider whether large scale development can be split across a number of alternative sites at lower risk of flooding. With respect to development split across a number of alternative sites, LCC's position is covered in part at section 3.2.3 of this SoCG, with reference to LCC experience in dealing with other similar scaled solar	The Applicant awaits further comments from LCC in relation to application of the Sequential and Exception Tests.	Under discussion

Ref	Matter	Stakeholder Position	Meridian Solar Farm Position	Status
		NSIPs that have taken this approach. In the LIR (paras 13.18 – 13.38), LCC question approach to discounting areas of Flood Zones 1 and 2 lying between Whaplode Drove and Whaplode that are also closer to the PoC and may offer more sustainable solution in terms of flood risk. LCC consider the reasons put forward for not considering these areas in the site assessment (landowner willingness; crown land; land already developed; built up areas) need further exploration and explanation. With respect to regional area of search, and similar to the position with BMV, LCC would also seek further clarification to help understand the rationale for discounting the area of land approx. 15km west of the PoC, to the north of Bourne, where there is a clear reduction in flood risk.		

3.10. Landscape and Visual

3.10.1. Table 3-10 sets out the position of both parties in relation to Landscape and Visual matters.

Table 3-10 Landscape and Visual matters

Ref	Matter	Stakeholder Position	Meridian Solar Farm Position	Status
Assessment Methodology and Baseline				
3.10.1	LVIA Methodology (LCC-081)	The LVIA presented is robust with good methodology, clear explanations of assessment values and reasonable conclusions.	The Applicant welcomes the Council's acknowledgement that the LVIA is robust and transparent, and the Scheme has been designed with sensitivity.	Agreed
3.10.2	Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (LCC-076)	The LVIA concludes that an RVAA is not required for this project. However, looking at the number of VPs assessed as having significant effects, the Council would request further explanation to clarify this conclusion.	It is important to distinguish between significant visual effects, which are routinely assessed through a LVIA, and the circumstances that justify a RVAA. The former does not automatically imply the latter, and the Landscape Institute's '*Technical Guidance Note 2/19: Residential Visual Amenity Assessment'* (TGN 2/19)[7] expressly recognises this distinction. It states that "*LVIA findings of significant (adverse) effects on outlook and /or on visual amenity at a residential property do not automatically imply the need for a RVAA*". TGN 2/19 notes that there is a misconception that a significant effect identified in the LVIA adjacent	Under discussion

[7] Landscape Institute (2019). Residential Visual Amenity Assessment. Technical Guidance Note 2/19.

Ref	Matter	Stakeholder Position	Meridian Solar Farm Position	Status
			to a property will also potentially lead to reaching the Residential Visual Amenity Threshold. TGN 2-19 suggests that a RVAA may be recommended in circumstances where, for example, a development would be "'*blocking the only available view from a property', or 'overwhelming views in all directions'; and 'unpleasantly encroaching' or being 'inescapably dominant from the property'*". TGN 2-19 specifically notes that, for overhead transmission lines, "*generally only those properties within 100 – 150 metres of the finalised route*" are potentially candidates for an RVAA. The Scheme was iteratively designed to avoid overbearing and intrusive design in particular for residential receptors through off-set distances from residences adjacent to the Solar Development Area, refinement of solar development parcels and pylon locations, and the incorporation of landscape mitigation. Proposed landscape mitigation is to soften the boundaries of the Solar Development Area, particularly in locations where views from residential properties may occur. Consequently, no residential property was identified where impact of the Scheme had the potential to reach the Residential Visual Amenity Threshold. The decision not to prepare a standalone RVAA was therefore a reasoned professional judgement, based on applicable guidance, the design evolution of the Scheme, and the findings of the LVIA.	
Assessment				

Ref	Matter	Stakeholder Position	Meridian Solar Farm Position	Status
3.10.3	LVIA Assessment (LCC-081)	The LVIA is transparent about the significant effects of the development on landscape character and the visual setting and acknowledges the limitations of mitigation to reduce these effects due to the nature of the existing open landscape. The project has been designed with sensitivity to reduce effects on receptors, with setbacks and mitigation planting used sparingly to remain in keeping with the existing landscape.	The Applicant welcomes the Council's acknowledgement that the LVIA is robust and transparent, and the Scheme has been designed with sensitivity.	Agreed
Mitigation and Compensation				
3.10.4	Outline LEMP (LCC-080)	The applicant commits to a 5-year establishment period with long term management including only the replacement of planting providing a screening function. The Council would request an establishment period of 15 years to align with the assessed residual landscape and visual effects. This will ensure that the proposed planting scheme meets the aims and objectives laid out in the submission.	The **OLEMP** (Doc Ref. 7.16 Rev 1) includes criteria for a 5-Year Establishment Period which is to be followed by a Long-Term Maintenance Period for each proposed landscape type for the lifespan of the Scheme. The Applicant considers that the proposed management regime appropriately distinguishes between the establishment and long-term management phases of the landscape mitigation. The five-year establishment period is intended to secure the successful establishment of new planting through intensive maintenance measures, including weed control, watering, inspection, adjustment of guards (where relevant) and replacement of failures, where necessary. Following successful establishment, the management regime transitions to long-term management, reflecting that the planting should no longer require the same level of intensive intervention. However, this does not represent the end of maintenance	Under discussion

Ref	Matter	Stakeholder Position	Meridian Solar Farm Position	Status
			responsibilities. The **OLEMP** (Doc Ref. 7.16 Rev 1) includes ongoing monitoring of the health and condition of the planting and, importantly, requires the replacement of failed or defective plants during the next planting season where those plants provide a landscape screening function, which applies to the proposed bands of shrubs and scattered trees. In light of these commitments, the Applicant considers that retaining a five-year establishment period followed by enhanced long-term management provides a more tailored approach for each landscape type and a proportionate and robust method that will ensure the landscape mitigation fulfils its intended function by Year 15 and over the lifetime of the Scheme.	
3.10.5	Landscape masterplan	There does not seem to be a complete Landscape Masterplan of the whole project within the application documents. Parts are shown in the 7.16 Outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan, but an overview of the whole scheme's landscape design and mitigation proposals does not seem to be provided.	The Outline Landscape Masterplan included within the Annex A of the **OLEMP** (Doc Ref. 7.16 Rev 1) shows the areas of the Solar Development Area and CSECs within the Grid Connection Route only. This is because the proposed landscaping is exclusive to this area. There is no proposed landscaping within the remaining of the Grid Connection Route for the reasons explained within **ES Chapter 12: Landscape and Visual** [APP-063].	Under discussion

3.11. Minerals and Waste

3.11.1. Table 3-11 sets out the position of both parties in relation to Minerals and Waste matters.

Table 3-11 Minerals and Waste matters

Ref	Matter	Stakeholder Position	Meridian Solar Farm Position	Status
Assessment				
3.11.1	Minerals Safeguarding Assessment (LCC-017)	The Minerals Safeguarding Assessment is considered satisfactory, and the proposals would comply with the safeguarding policies LMWLP Policy 11 (Safeguarding of Mineral Resources) and SELLP Policy 2 (Development Management). Therefore, the Council does not object to the proposals on minerals or waste safeguarding grounds.	The Applicant notes and welcomes the Council's position in relation to the Scheme's impact on safeguarded minerals.	Agreed
Mitigation and Compensation				
3.11.2	Environmental Management Plans (LCC-019)	The Council will wish to review and be consulted on the final CEMP, OEMP and DEMP when they are produced. These documents must include waste arisings forecasts and details of how waste will be managed in accordance with the waste hierarchy. The Council agrees that the draft DCO secures that LCC will be consulted on these documents, and that the Outline versions secure the inclusion of the information specified above.	The Applicant notes the Council's request to be consulted on the final management plans. Under Schedule 2 to the **draft DCO** (Doc Ref. 3.1 Rev 2), Lincolnshire County Council is the relevant planning authority for the approval of the Waste Management Plan required pursuant to Requirement 14. In addition, Lincolnshire County Council must be consulted on the approval of the Construction Environmental Management Plan pursuant to Requirement 12 and the Operational Environmental Management Plan pursuant to Requirement 13. The Applicant therefore considers that the **draft DCO** (Doc Ref. 3.1 Rev 2) contains appropriate mechanisms for Lincolnshire County Council's involvement in the	Agreed

Ref	Matter	Stakeholder Position	Meridian Solar Farm Position	Status
			approval of the relevant management plans and waste management measures.	
3.11.3	Site Waste Management Plan (LCC-019)	The Council also awaits the Site Waste Management Plan (SWMP), which should be updated and followed for each phase of the project, including waste arisings forecasts and proposed fate (e.g. recycling) so that feasibility can be assessed. The Council agrees that the draft DCO secures that LCC will be consulted on the SWMP, and that the Outline version (e.g. paragraphs 7.7.1 & 7.7.2) secures the inclusion of the information specified above.	Requirement 12 further requires the Construction Environmental Management Plan to include a Site Waste Management Plan that must be substantially in accordance with the Outline Site Waste Management Plan and implemented as approved. Requirement 14 requires a Site Waste Management Plan to be submitted to and approved by Lincolnshire County Council prior to operation of the authorised development.	Agreed
3.11.4	Solar panel recycling capacity (LCC-020)	Lack of current capacity for recycling solar panels, particularly at decommissioning, but also with operational failures and cumulative impacts alongside other proposed NSIP-scale solar farms, particularly in terms of waste management capacity. The Council remains concerned about this issue, particularly in light of the number of NSIP-scale solar farms proposed for our area and the lack of recycling capacity for PV panels.	As outlined in paragraph 16.6.76 of **ES Chapter 16 Other Environmental Topics** [APP-067] recycling routes are generally available for component replacement waste at present, and it is likely that there will be even greater opportunities for recycling in the future for the operational and decommissioning phases of the Scheme, not least because the recycling market will have expanded to meet demand as the number of solar PV installations in the UK increases.	Not agreed

3.12. Socio-Economics and Land Use

3.12.1. Table 3-12 sets out the position of both parties in relation to Socio-Economics and Land Use matters.

Table 3-12 Socio-Economics and Land Use

Ref	Matter	Stakeholder Position	Meridian Solar Farm Position	Status
Assessment Methodology and Baseline				
3.12.1	60-minute drive time (LCC-099)	While it is appreciated that the 60-minute drive time that is used to identify the travel to work area (paragraph 14.4.3) will have been established using a standard method, this should be used with caution. As raised in respect of other NSIPs, within Lincolnshire a 60- minute travel time covers a smaller area than would perhaps normally be expected. This then impacts upon other assumptions around workforce movements.	There are a number of urban settlements within the 60-minute travel area that contain large (50+ room) establishments, including (but not limited to) Peterborough, Grantham, Boston, Wellingborough, Huntingdon, and St Neots. As outlined within **OCTMP** [APP-278], a shuttle service will be operated to transport up to 470 construction workers from 'staff clusters' which will be located within some of the aforementioned settlements. As such, it is unlikely that construction staff will need to use public transport to travel to site.	Not agreed
3.12.2	Scope of cumulative effects assessment (LCC-103, LCC-104)	Lincolnshire is experiencing a significant number of NSIP proposals, with in excess of 20 schemes at various stages of the DCO process. The impact on the county's perception by visitors and tourists, as well as residents and businesses, is material to the Government's decision and must be considered. The list of schemes at Appendix 4-1 is noted, however, it is recommended that for the purposes of impacts on temporary worker accommodation all NSIPS are considered, not just solar and electrical infrastructure schemes. Any NSIP where their identified 60-minute travel to work area overlaps with the travel to work area for this scheme should be	The cumulative effects assessment methodology set out in **ES Chapter 14: Socio-Economics and Land Use** [APP-065] has been developed in line with established best practice, using defined Zones of Influence (ZoI) that reflect the nature and extent of the effects being assessed, informed by professional judgement and precedent from comparable schemes. For visitor accommodation, the assessment has focused on solar and electrical infrastructure NSIPs within 30km, reflecting that these project types require a technically skilled workforce with specialist skills specific to solar and electrical infrastructure. Other forms of NSIP development are more likely to	Not agreed

Ref	Matter	Stakeholder Position	Meridian Solar Farm Position	Status
		considered, as there is the potential for overlapping accommodation requirements. In particular, the Springwell Solar project should be included within the listed schemes. This now has a decision, and there will be an overlap in the travel to work areas. As discussed with other schemes, there is likely to be significant demand for, and pressure on, overnight accommodation to the point that there is a serious potential for demand to exceed capacity at times. The cumulative impacts of schemes on the Weston Marsh area also needs to be fully considered. The number of schemes that are to feed into and out of the proposed substation will result in a high number of overhead cables in the area that will be highly visible from the A16 and A151. These are main routes to attractions in the area, that include Springfields and Baytree Garden Centre and Owl Centre.	draw on the less-specialised skills available within the local labour market, and are therefore less likely to place material pressure on the same accommodation stock. The 30km ZoI applied to solar and electrical infrastructure NSIPs for the purposes of the accommodation assessment reflects the approximate 60-minute drive-time catchment used elsewhere in the socio-economic assessment for this part of Lincolnshire, given typical road speeds and network characteristics in this rural area. Where NSIPs are located further afield and have an overlapping 60-minute drive time, it is acknowledged that there is some potential for them to place pressure on the same pool of temporary accommodation as the Scheme. However, there would be other accommodation available within the catchments of these NSIPs which the Scheme would not draw on. The potential for meaningful overlap in accommodation demand reduces with distance beyond the 30km ZoI. As noted in **ES Chapter 14: Socio-Economics and Land Use** [APP-065], the sum of the total peak staff for each NSIP included within the assessment has been used, but in reality is unlikely that all projects will have the same construction schedule, and it is probable that the peak workforces of all projects will not perfectly overlap. In addition, in terms of accommodation supply and number of available rooms, the same establishments (major hotels within 60-minutes' drive of the Scheme) have been included,	

Ref	Matter	Stakeholder Position	Meridian Solar Farm Position	Status
			even though there are likely to be other major hotels within the catchment of the other cumulative solar electrical infrastructure NSIPs which are not included within the supply. Therefore, the approach taken is considered to represent a reasonable worst-case scenario, and to be proportionate. With specific regard to Springwell Solar, this scheme is located approximately 34km from the Scheme, outside the 30km ZoI applied within the accommodation assessment. **ES Chapter 12: Landscape and Visual** [APP-063] concludes that there would be no further significant cumulative visual effect on Springfields Gardens and Baytree Garden Centre and Owl Centre, considering the change in the landscape that would occur with cumulative schemes.	
Assessment				
3.12.3	Tourist accommodation impacts (LCC-099)	While the impact on tourist accommodation is considered (and it is noted that the intention is to direct overnight accommodation to large establishments), the impact of getting workers from accommodation to site needs further consideration. It is likely that, given the intention to focus accommodation in large establishments with 50+ rooms, it will result in the majority of workers being accommodated in Spalding or Peterborough and having to travel to site, which is in a location where public transport is very limited.	The number of workers expected to come from outside the area and require accommodation is derived from the leakage assumption in **ES Chapter 14: Socio-Economics and Land Use** [APP-065], which assumes that 60% of the workforce will be sourced from outside the 60-minute travel area.	Not agreed

Ref	Matter	Stakeholder Position	Meridian Solar Farm Position	Status
3.12.4	Visitor Attractions and Recreational Facilities (LCC-100)	We do have concerns regarding the impact (both real and perceived) of, and the increase in, overhead cables to and from Weston Marsh. In particular, our concerns relate to impacts on Springfields Gardens and the Baytree Garden Centre and Owl Centre.	Within **ES Chapter 14: Socio-Economics and Land Use** [APP-065], direct effects through land take and indirect effects through severance on both Springfield Gardens and the Baytree Garden Centre and Owl Centre are assessed, and found to be not significant. Further amenity effects on these receptors related to the increased presence of overhead cables are assessed within **ES Chapter 12: Landscape and Visual** [APP-063] and **ES Chapter 13: Noise and Vibration** [APP-064]. Baytree Garden Centre and Owl Centre is likely to experience a significant visual effect during construction, operation and decommissioning works due to the visibility of the Grid Connection Route, but is not likely to experience any significant noise and vibration effects. Springfields Gardens is not likely to experience significant visual or noise effects.	Not agreed
3.12.5	Visitor Economy and Economic Impact (LCC-101)	The Council is extremely concerned with the visual degradation of the countryside and the consequent impact on the visitor economy, which is worth £2.9bn to Lincolnshire. Visitors come to Lincolnshire for its rurality and unspoilt countryside, our landscape, visitor economy attractions and places of interest. Overall, the proposals are an industrialisation of that countryside and will negatively affect our visitor offer and economic vibrancy and will change the visual impact/beauty of the area. The Council has significant concerns regarding the impacts of solar developments and their associated infrastructure on the public perception of Lincolnshire. In particular, the Fens offer long, uninterrupted views which will be	**ES Chapter 14: Socio-Economics and Land Use** [APP-065] includes an assessment of potential effects on tourism arising from the Scheme comprising consideration of impacts on local accommodation facilities, recreational receptors and visitor attractions. The Socio-Economic assessment also acknowledges that tourism makes a notable contribution to the region's economy and that there are a number of facilities and businesses which attract tourists in the local area. However, taking into account direct land take impacts as well as indirect severance effects, the assessment in Section 14.8 concludes that the overall the impact of the Scheme on tourism is not significant during the construction, operation, and decommissioning phases. Potential visual impacts of the countryside arising from the	Not agreed

Ref	Matter	Stakeholder Position	Meridian Solar Farm Position	Status
		disrupted by developments such as the one proposed here.	Scheme are assessed within **ES Chapter 12: Landscape and Visual** [APP-063], which concludes that whilst the Scheme would result in significant adverse landscape and visual effects, particularly through changes to the characteristic openness and long, uninterrupted views that define the Lincolnshire Fens, these effects would be localised to the areas surrounding the Scheme and diminish with distance. The wider perception and identity of the Fens as an extensive open landscape would remain, with mitigation planting reducing visual effects over time whilst retaining long-distance views through designed gaps in planting.	
3.12.6	Impacts associated with the loss of land on agricultural employment, food production, and businesses	The Socio-Economics chapter of the ES fails to take into account ISEP guidance that "*Displacement of tenant farmers and agricultural workers is a socio-economic impact and where there is a cluster of large solar arrays there may be a cumulative downstream socio-economic impact on the local agricultural supply industry such as seed, fertiliser and feed merchants, and agricultural contractors*". Whilst the EIA identifies individual landowners (there are no tenants) affected by the proposed development, it fails to identify the impacts associated with the loss of land on employment, food production, and businesses up and down the agricultural supply chain. The assessment also fails to take adequately into account the cumulative impacts of ongoing solar and	**ES Chapter 14: Socio-Economics and Land Use** [APP-065] assesses the likely impacts on agricultural employment and concludes that there would be no loss of agricultural employment arising from the construction and operation of the Scheme. The agricultural land within the proposed Solar Development Area would continue to generate income for the landowners, and as the land is not farmed by tenants, would not result in any loss of jobs. There may be some contractors who undertake some farming activities on the land, but it is very likely that such contractors would not be entirely reliant on these farms for employment. Areas of agricultural land within the Grid Connection Route and Inter-Array Connections would experience minimal permanent land take which would be limited to the bases of overhead pylons and would consequently not have their current agricultural	Not agreed

Ref	Matter	Stakeholder Position	Meridian Solar Farm Position	Status
		renewable developments on available agricultural land and specifically BMV land in Lincolnshire. Whilst income from the Scheme will replace income from agriculture, the value of turnover from agricultural land is significantly greater and extends beyond the individual businesses directly affected. The loss of this turnover contributes to relatively small impacts on many businesses in the context of the County but the associated effects have potential to be significant where affected businesses are operating in a closely defined and competitive market, such as the agricultural supply chain.	activities altered enough to result in the loss of agricultural employment. It is acknowledged that the ES does not include a specific assessment of effects on businesses along the wider agricultural supply chain, or on regional food production. However, given the conclusion that no material loss of agricultural employment is anticipated, and that the majority of affected landowners within the Grid Connection Route and Inter-Array Connections would not experience any substantial change to their farming activities, it is considered reasonable to conclude that the Scheme would not have a significant effect on regional food production or the wider agricultural supply chain. As outlined within **ES Chapter 5: Agriculture and Soils** (Doc Ref. 6.1 Rev 1), approximately 1.1% of all BMV land in Lincolnshire is expected to be temporarily used cumulatively for the solar schemes identified within Table 5-17. Given the relatively small amount of BMV land lost as a result of these solar developments, there are not expected to be any further significant cumulative effects on agricultural employment, food production, or the agricultural supply chain.	
Mitigation and Compensation				
3.12.7	Employment and Skills (LCC-102)	As the scheme progresses and should it be successful in its DCO application, efforts to maximise local employment should be taken. The reference in paragraph 14.9.2 to the Outline Skills, Supply Chain and Employment Plan [APP-283] is acknowledged.	This comment is noted. **Outline Skills, Supply Chain and Employment Plan** [APP-283] provides a framework for maximising local employment and upskilling local residents. Further details of the approaches and commitments to securing these local	Under discussion

Ref	Matter	Stakeholder Position	Meridian Solar Farm Position	Status
		Ongoing dialogue with local skills providers, both public and voluntary sector is recommended. These may include: Lincoln College, Boston College and LCC Employment and Skills team. The upskilling of local residents, either through retraining, or apprenticeships, will help ensure that the right skills are available for the proposed development, while also providing long term benefits to the area through a higher skilled workforce.	benefits will be laid out within a full Skills, Supply Chain, and Employment Plan, which will be developed prior to construction if the Scheme is granted development consent.	

3.13. Traffic and Transport

3.13.1. Table 3-13 sets out the position of both parties in relation to Traffic and Transport matters.

Table 3-13 Traffic and Transport matters

Ref	Matter	Stakeholder Position	Meridian Solar Farm Position	Status
Assessment Methodology and Baseline				
3.13.1	ES Chapter 15: Traffic and Access	There are no flow or turning calculations at the proposed key site access junctions and these need to be provided. Unable to find turning flows for site accesses in ES Chapter 15 (a word search for "turning" returns 0 finds). However, some further information on site access flows has been provided in LCC-050 which states daily movements in Site Accesses HR01 and HR02.	The assessment methodology adopted for the Scheme is based on the ISEP Environmental Assessment of Traffic and Movement guidance[8] and focuses on the environmental effects of traffic and transport movements arising from the Scheme. A dedicated transport update/scoping meeting was held on 18 September 2025 with LCC, NH, PCC and South Holland District Council to review the proposed assessment methodology, assumptions, trip generation, trip distribution and study area for the ES assessment. As part of these discussions, it was agreed that a Transport Assessment Note (TAN) (provided within **ES Appendix 15-4** [APP-251]) would be prepared in place of a standalone Transport Assessment. The purpose of this approach was to avoid unnecessary duplication of information across the Environmental Statement and associated application documents. The TAN explains the agreed approach and signposts where information typically	Under discussion

[8] Institute of Sustainability and Environmental Professionals (ISEP), 2023. Environmental Assessment of Traffic and Movement. Lincoln: ISEP. Available at: https://www.isepglobal.org/resources/blogs/2023/07/12/isep-guidance-ea-of-traffic-and-movement/. Accessed 30 July 2026.

Ref	Matter	Stakeholder Position	Meridian Solar Farm Position	Status
			contained within a Transport Assessment is addressed across **ES Chapter 15: Traffic and Access** [APP-066], the **OCTMP** [APP-278] and other supporting documents (as per the list of referenced documents within the first paragraph of this response). The Applicant therefore does not agree that the assessment information submitted is materially different in scope from that which would typically be provided, or what was considered during the scoping process. The submitted Transport and Access documents include construction trip generation, trip distribution, traffic flow assessments, routing strategies, baseline traffic conditions, traffic impact assessments, access arrangements, visibility information and swept path assessments. Traffic flows (including turning flows at site accesses), trip generation, trip distribution and a highway impact assessment are provided within **ES Chapter 15: Traffic and Access** [APP-066].	
Assessment				
3.13.2	Accesses HR-01 and HR-02 (LCC-050)	Further information on traffic turning flows at this junction is required, it is considered that a ghost island right turn lane will be necessary for these main site accesses. The applicant should clarify whether there be straight over movements, and whether a staggered arrangement been considered.	HR 01 and HR 02 serve separate sections of the Grid Connection Route and are located within different construction work zones. The two accesses would not operate as a traditional crossroads junction, as there would be no demand for movements directly between the accesses across the A151. Rather, each access would independently serve the relevant section of the Grid Connection Route for which it is intended.	Not agreed.

Ref	Matter	Stakeholder Position	Meridian Solar Farm Position	Status
		The A151 has 2 way daily flows of over 17000 vehicles (Table 15-18 ES Chapter 15). Standard CD123 (DMRB) requires that where mainline flow exceed 13,000 (Fig 2.3.1) that ghost island right turn junction is provided. Also, if HR01 and HR02 serve separate sections and different work zones with no demand for vehicle movements between the two areas, then it is advised that the junctions are staggered. This will prohibit the chance movement of vehicles crossing directly between 2 sites. With a straight over movement possible there is an inherent safety risk that vehicles will seek to cross directly over the A151.	Furthermore, the combined level of traffic associated with HR 01 and HR 02 is relatively modest and temporary in nature, being limited to the construction phase of the Scheme. Further justification is set out in response to issue LCC-050 in the **Relevant Representations Report** (Doc Ref. 8.5).	
3.13.3	Stage 1 Road Safety Audit for A16-01 access (LCC-051)	Further information on traffic turning flows at this junction is required. It will require a ghost island right turn lane and Stage 1 Road Safety Audit. The AADT on the A16 Cowbit Road is 23000 (Table 15-18 ES Chapter 15). Standard CD123 (DMRB) requires that where mainline flow exceeds 13,000 (Fig 2.3.1) that ghost island right turn junction is provided.	During the peak construction year of 2031, Access A16-01 is anticipated to experience a peak daily total of 400 two-way movements (arrivals and departures), as shown in the 24hr Dev column of the Total Vehicle Traffic Flows - Future Baseline vs. Development table in **ES Appendix 15-3: Receptor Traffic Flow Tables** [APP-250] for receptor L18 A16 Crowland Bypass (Near Crowland Airfield). This level of traffic should be viewed in the context of the temporary nature of the construction works associated with the Grid Connection Route (associated with the works within this specific area) and BESS infrastructure. As set out above in relation to Access HR-01 and HR-02, the	Not agreed.

Ref	Matter	Stakeholder Position	Meridian Solar Farm Position	Status
		Left in /Left out arrangement would be difficult to control or enforce. The nearest safe u-turning point is approx. 4km to the north at Cowbit Roundabout. Expecting drivers to go on a 8km detour to avoid a right turn into site access is unlikely. With 400 daily turning movements, LCC consider a ghost island right turn lane in accordance with DMRB standards to be the appropriate form of access.	Applicant notes LCC's request for a Stage 1 Road Safety Audit and the Applicant is undertaking further engagement with LCC with regards to both, the timing and scope of any commissioned Road Safety Audit. With regard to the right turn ghost island proposed by LCC in its comments, the Applicant considers that the principles outlined in its response to accesses HR-01 an HR-02 also apply here. However, the Applicant acknowledges that the volume and speeds experienced on the A16 are higher than on the A151. The Applicant is therefore willing to work collaboratively with LCC to agree any additional mitigation considered necessary. The mitigation measures at this location could extend to consider a left in/left out controlled arrangement which would negate the need to implement a disruptive ghost island arrangement that would only be practically required for the construction phase.	
3.13.4	Cumulative traffic effects (LCC-054)	At this stage further information is considered to be required to fully understand and assess the impact of the Meridian scheme cumulatively with other developments. Notably to justify the applicant's assertion that the cumulative effect with the other identified developments would be primarily attributed to the other schemes and the screening out of the National Grid Weston Marsh to East Leicestershire development	The Applicant would like to clarify that the Weston Marsh to East Leicestershire development was not screened out of the cumulative schemes assessment. The scheme is included as ID13 in Table 15-35: Screened in Cumulative Schemes in **ES Chapter 15: Traffic and Access** [APP-066]. Accordingly, the Applicant remains satisfied that the cumulative assessment presented within **ES Chapter 15: Traffic and Access** [APP-066] is robust and appropriate in assessing the potential impact of overlap between the two schemes and that there is no evidential basis to support the need for a	Under discussion

Ref	Matter	Stakeholder Position	Meridian Solar Farm Position	Status
			reassessment of the cumulative effects associated with traffic and transport. The Applicant would appreciate further information from LCC in regard to what information is required.	
Mitigation and Compensation				
3.13.5	Modal split (LCC-046)	The 55% modal split by shuttle bus seems quite high and needs further justification especially how shuttle buses will be enforced through construction. None of the examples quoted have 55% by shuttle bus. Cottam at 50% and Tillbridge at 47% both seem to reinforce LCC's observation that the 55% used is quite high. The justification for nearby population centres for this site isn't evidenced- Tillbridge and Cottam are both close to Lincoln which is a much larger	This assumption has been informed by experience from comparable large-scale solar NSIP projects, including two consented schemes in Lincolnshire. These include the Cottam Solar Project, which adopted a construction worker modal split of 50% shuttle bus and 50% private car for a peak construction workforce of approximately 650 workers, and the Tillbridge Solar Project, which adopted a modal split of 47% shuttle bus and 53% private vehicle for a peak construction workforce of approximately 1,225 workers. The Applicant's assumption of 55% shuttle bus usage for a peak construction workforce of approximately 855 workers is therefore considered reasonable and proportionate, particularly noting that the resulting private vehicle demand would remain significantly lower than that associated with the consented Tillbridge Solar Project. The approach is consistent with workforce travel management strategies accepted on comparable nationally significant solar projects and reflects lessons learned from the implementation of those schemes. The Applicant considers that a slightly higher proportion of shuttle bus usage than that assumed in the above schemes is achievable for the Scheme due	Under discussion

Ref	Matter	Stakeholder Position	Meridian Solar Farm Position	Status
		population than Spalding. Peterborough would seem relatively remote from most of this scheme. Overall, a small (5%-10%) increase in cars over what has been assessed is not likely to be unacceptable – provided the main site accesses from the A road network are provided in accordance with DMRB standards	to the existence of nearby population centres for local workforce and the anticipated requirement for a significant proportion of the workforce to be accommodated within local accommodation hubs in such centres during peak construction periods. The proposed modal split would be facilitated through the provision of dedicated shuttle bus services, coordinated pick-up and drop-off arrangements at Site compounds, and implementation of the workforce travel measures outlined within the **OCTMP** [APP-278]. The Applicant therefore considers that the combination of dedicated shuttle bus provision, parking controls, contractor obligations and ongoing monitoring provides a reliable and enforceable mechanism for achieving the forecast modal split and limiting private vehicle trips associated with the construction phase workforce. The approach is consistent with that adopted on comparable solar NSIP projects and forms a key component of the Scheme's construction traffic management strategy.	
3.13.6	Passing places (LCC—053)	Passing places will need to be to Council HA Specification which is for permanent works. The number and location of these passing spaces should be identified at this planning stage, with indicative location drawings to ensure that these mitigations can be delivered on site and are not constrained by ditches or land ownership. Passing places will need to be constructed to permanent standard.	The Applicant is currently developing a Temporary Passing Place Strategy document to support the construction traffic trips to and from the Site along the surrounding network, which is to be submitted during examination following further engagement with the Local Highway Authority. The strategy will look to identify the location and extent of any passing places required (temporary in nature). Through the development of this document, due regard will be given to any existing constraints such as highway	Under discussion

Ref	Matter	Stakeholder Position	Meridian Solar Farm Position	Status
		Once they have been constructed and installed to a permanent standard there would need to be strong reasons as to why they should then be removed after the construction period. They provide some benefit to existing users of the highway. The removal of them would then create further additional inconvenience for users for reduced benefit. Furthermore, if the passing places are removed after construction they would need to be again be installed (and removed ?) for the decommissioning of the project after 40 years. For the above reasons, passing places should be permanent	geometry and boundaries, drainage/ditches, vegetation, utilities and third-party land interests. Moreover, the document will seek to take due accord of any adjacent constraints and will seek to minimise any vegetation loss whilst ensuring intervisibility of successive passing places and facilitate the safe movement of construction traffic. Once this has been developed the Applicant will share these details with Lincolnshire County Council for review prior to submission into the Examination. It should be noted that the final design, specification and implementation arrangements for the Temporary Passing Place Strategy will be agreed with Lincolnshire County Council through the detailed design process and secured through the appropriate mechanisms.	
3.13.7	PRoW closure duration (LCC-058)	Clarity is considered to be required on the duration of any closures. Currently there does not appear to be any defined duration. Closures must be time limited (a suggested maximum of 6 months), clearly defined and consistent with the approach under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.	Table 3-1 of the **Outline PRoW Management Plan** [AS-026] provides the durations for temporary closures, where these may be required to facilitate the construction of the Scheme. Other than access to two PRoWs (Crow/12/1 and Wstn/3/1) which are proposed to be closed temporarily for 4-6 weeks (as indicated in Table 3-1 of the **Outline PRoW Management Plan** [AS-026]), access to all other existing PRoW will be maintained during the construction phase. No permanent diversions or closures are proposed.	Agreed

Ref	Matter	Stakeholder Position	Meridian Solar Farm Position	Status
3.13.8	PRoW engagement and notification (LCC-059)	Prior to any closure engagement/ consultation with the Council's PRoW team should be undertaken and advance notification provided.	Article 13 of the **draft DCO** (Doc Ref. 3.1 Rev 2) requires the undertaker to either consult or obtain the consent of LCC prior to the temporary closure of PRoWs, dependent on the specific PRoW affected.	Agreed
3.13.9	PRoW vehicle use	The proposed use of PRoW by construction or operational vehicles raises a number of concerns regarding the need for surfacing upgrades, on-going maintenance, legal status of this use, and displacement of public access Concerns remain about surfacing and maintenance of the actual physical path (what happens if the surface of the path is damaged by vehicle use for example). There is nothing in the outline PROW management plan that seems to cover this.	PRoW closures have been proposed to safely separate construction works activities from PRoW Users during the installation of the overhead lines within the Inter-Array Corridor and Grid Connection Route. The closure extents defined in the **Streets, Rights of Way and Access Plans** [APP-014 and AS-009] offer a degree of flexibility to the Contractor to determine the appropriate crossing point of the PRoW, however it is anticipated that the interaction would be limited to designated crossing points which will limit disruption and to the PRoW. Use of PRoW associated with the Scheme would be authorised by the **draft DCO** (Doc Ref. 3.1 Rev 2).	Not agreed

4. Signatures

4.1.1. This SoCG is agreed between the following:

Duly authorised for and on behalf of Meridian Solar Farm, the Applicant	Name Job Title Date Signature
Duly authorised for and on behalf of Lincolnshire County Council	Name Job Title Date Signature