



Meridian Solar Farm

EN010169

Volume 8

Post-Submission Application
Documents

8.14 Statement of Common
Ground with Historic England
(Rev 1) (Tracked)

APFP Regulation 5(2)(q)

Infrastructure Planning (Applications:
Prescribed Forms and Procedure)
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October 2026

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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 2008¹, which was accepted for examination by the Secretary of State pursuant to Section 55 of the Planning Act 2008 on 15 April 2026.

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)², 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 Historic England (HE). It has been prepared jointly by the Applicant and Historic England, and Historic England has reviewed the Applicant's position as set out. It confirms to

¹ The Planning Act 2008. Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2008/29/contents> [Accessed 11 August 2026]

² MHCLG (2026) Guidance Planning Act 2008: Guidance on the examination stage of an application. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/planning-act-2008-guidance-on-the-examination-stage-of-an-application> [Accessed 2 September 2026]

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 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.

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

2. Record of Engagement

2.1. 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: Record of Engagement

Date	Form of Engagement	Details
13/05/2024	Online Meeting	Introduction to the Scheme. Presentation of the Scheme, research undertaken to date, geophysical survey and planned work.
01/11/2024	Online Meeting	Project Catch up
08/01/2025	Online Meeting	Summary of the meeting: • Update on evaluation works – including geophysical survey, aerial photography, LiDAR survey and evaluation trial trenching; • Discussion of the significance of the historic landscape; • Overview of the development of the design within the Solar Development Area; and • Overview of the development of the design within the Grid Connection Route and Inter-Array Connections. HE emphasized the need to consider setting effects on Crowland Abbey and its relationship with Guthlac's Cross.
04/04/2025; 16/05/2025	Online Meeting	Project Catch up
20/05/2025	Online Meeting	Summary of the meeting: • Project update; • Discussion of comments received following statutory consultation; • Update on archaeological evaluation. HE agreed to provide comments on the written scheme for investigation (WSI) for the evaluation work and agreed that the approach to the works was appropriate in general.

Date	Form of Engagement	Details
23/05/2025	Email	Comments received from HE on the WSI for trial trenching on 23/05/2025. Response from Applicant provided on 28/05/2025.
23/02/2026	Online Meeting	Summary of the meeting: • Project update; • Evaluation trenching results and progress of the excavation report; • Discussion on the approach to the Outline Archaeological Mitigation and Management Strategy; • Discussion of impacts on Wykeham Chapel Scheduled Monument. The illustrative design locates the Grid Connection Route overhead line as far east as practicable from the Scheduled Monument, however, the alignment also needs to consider potential environmental effects on residential receptors along Stone Gate Road. Pylons have been sited to avoid the field immediately to the east of the Scheduled Monument. HE confirmed that this sounded reasonable and the key aim would be to avoid siting a pylon straight outside the window of the chapel; • Discussion on the flexibility to underground the Grid Connection north of the High Road.
10/06/2026	Online Meeting	Summary of the meeting: • Project Update; • Grid Connection Route discussion and the interaction with the Grimsby to Walpole scheme.
13/08/2026	Online Meeting	Summary of the meeting: • Project Update; • Discussion of the comment received in HE's relevant representation with regards to the kinetic experience whilst travelling between the boundary of the former monastic lands at Guthac's Cross and Crowland Abbey, and further work to be undertaken.
14/09/2026	Email	Comments received from HE on the Field Evaluation Report and Outline Archaeological Mitigation and

Date	Form of Engagement	Details
		Management Strategy. Considering these comments, Applicant has updated these documents which are submitted at Deadline 1.
<u>01/10/2026</u>	<u>Online Meeting</u>	<u>Summary of meeting:</u> • <u>Project Update;</u> • <u>Discussion on the Crowland Kinetic Views Assessment [REP1-096] submitted at Deadline 1. Comments received from HE on potential design alterations adjacent to Cloote Drove to reduce potential impact on kinetic experience of moving through and appreciating the landscape.</u>

3. Statement of Common Ground

3.1. Areas of discussion with Historic England

Table 3-1: Areas of discussion with Historic England

Ref	Matter	Stakeholder Position	Meridian Solar Farm Position	Status
1.1	Methodology of archaeological fieldwork	HE have provided input on the methodology for archaeological fieldwork. HE have had a positive response to this engagement and are currently awaiting the detailed reporting of deposit modelling and targeted intrusive investigations undertaken to date.	The Applicant welcomes HE's position and considers that the approach for archaeological fieldwork is agreed. The Applicant has submitted the final evaluation trenching results and deposit modelling at Deadline 1 within Final Archaeological Evaluation Report [REP1-075](Doc Ref. 8.6) and shared the document with HE prior to submission.	Agreed
1.2	Agreement of effects	HE's current assessment of setting impacts upon Crowland Abbey, Guthlac's Cross, Wykeham Chapel, Medieval boundary earthworks at Queen's Bank, and the buried archaeological scheduled monuments concur with those submitted by the applicant (moderate adverse - significant).	The Applicant's assessment of effects is presented within ES Chapter 8: Cultural Heritage [REP1-016](Doc Ref. 6.1 Rev 1) and Appendix E: Heritage Statement of Harm of the Planning Statement [REP1-053](Doc Ref. 7.1 Rev 1) . The Applicant acknowledges HE's position and considers that the assessment conclusions within these documents are agreed.	Agreed
1.3	Cumulative impacts of	Cumulative impacts of multiple overhead lines on the significance of the Chapel will be experienced from	The Applicant's cumulative assessment is set out within Section 8.12 of ES Chapter 8: Cultural Heritage ([REP1-016]Doc Ref. 6.1 Rev 1) . Although	Under Discussion Agreed

Ref	Matter	Stakeholder Position	Meridian Solar Farm Position	Status
	multiple overhead lines	the small graveyard and open ground to its east (noting the seasonal screening effects of trees). Cumulative impacts between present, existing and forthcoming schemes should be considered in particular at Wykeham Chapel. All schemes should endeavour to minimise the cumulative setting impacts insofar as possible within their individual constraints.	the Applicant has endeavoured to minimise this as far as reasonably practicable, a moderate adverse (significant) cumulative effect is identified on the Wykeham Chapel Scheduled Monument and Grade I listed chapel. <u>This position is agreed on the basis of the interaction with the National Grid Grimsby to Walpole scheme as currently understood, with scope to revisit discussion on this point should the G2W scheme be refined / altered in a manner which creates additional options to meaningfully reduce the impacts of the Scheme in relation to Wykeham Chapel.</u>	
1.4	Kinetic experience of travelling between the boundary of the former monastic lands at Guthlac's Cross and Crowland Abbey	Further refinement of the array design to the sides of Cloot Drove should be informed by analysis of the kinetic experience of travelling between the boundary of the former monastic lands at Guthlac's Cross and Crowland Abbey in the same way the experience of movement between the medieval boundary at Queens Bank and Guthlac's cross should be further explored, setting	The Applicant has discussed the approach to considering the kinetic experience with HE and has prepared Crowland Kinetic Views Assessment [REP1-096](Doc Ref. 8.26) for submission at Deadline 1. <u>The Applicant subsequently discussed the outcomes of the report Crowland Kinetic Views Assessment [REP1-096] with HE and will consider HE's further comments for Deadline 3.</u>	Under Discussion

Ref	Matter	Stakeholder Position	Meridian Solar Farm Position	Status
		work today has engaged with views from points but is experience of moving through landscape with features dropping in and out of view that requires further work. <u>There remains a need for further refinement to the Scheme layout to address the setting of the Abbey. Further to the approach set out in our GPA 3 Setting of Heritage Assets, the experience of the Abbey in its estate is of particular importance to its significance because of the ability to trace these bounds in the modern landscape and the ability to perceive Crowland in the present as something of what it was framed as in the medieval period, a place carved out of the 'desert' of the fen, whose boundaries were marked not least because they were contested by neighbouring secular communities.</u> <u>Specifically, on the Clout Drove as illustrated in the kinetic view</u>		

Ref	Matter	Stakeholder Position	Meridian Solar Farm Position	Status
		<u>assessment the experience of the Abbey church on the horizon will be interrupted by the array as indicated in Views 1 and 2. Whilst this effect would commence (heading south) a little north of point 1 it is at point 1 where the road turns a little to the south-west that once anticipation of a view to the Abbey church tower will be thwarted.</u> <u>This effect undermines the ability to appreciate historic landscape and setting as a space into which the NSIP has been introduced, but which itself remains legible, rather than a new landscape of solar generation into which one's experience is immersed.</u> <u>Whilst this alteration may not shift the overall EIA assessment of impact from moderate, and hence reportable it will in our view produce a considerable reduction in impact</u>		

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		<u>because of effect in supporting the wider kinetic experience of moving through sand appreciating the landscape as the structured historic setting to designated heritage assets of national importance. The recommended alteration should be considered in the context of the relevant National Policy Statements (NPS) EN-1³ paragraphs 4.7.2 & 5.9.15 & 5.9.17 and EN-3⁴ paragraphs 2.10.109 and 2.10.110.</u>		
1.5	Outline Archaeological Mitigation and Management Strategy (OAMMS)	HE is in the process of review <u>ing</u> the OAMMS prepared by the Applicant.	The Applicant has prepared the Outline Archaeological Mitigation and Management Strategy (OAMMS) [REP1-078] (Doc Ref. 8.7) for submission at Deadline 1 and also issued it to HE for review and comment. Comments were received on the 14 September and the document has been updated to reflect these.	Under Discussion <u>Agreed</u>

³ DESNZ (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 05/10/2026]

⁴ DESNZ (2025) National Policy Statement for Renewable Infrastructure (EN-3) (E03028327). London: HMSO Available at: <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/695d1368b5c46330350ed9a2/national-policy-statement-for-renewable-energy-infrastructure-en-3-web-accessible.pdf> [Accessed 05/10/2026]

Ref	Matter	Stakeholder Position	Meridian Solar Farm Position	Status
1.6	Draft DCO Requirement 11	HE is in the process of reviewing the <u>has reviewed the</u> wording of Requirement 11 of the Draft DCO. <u>HE has no objection to wording of Requirement 11 of the draft DCO but defers to advice of the relevant local planning authority since it will be for them to determine discharge of the requirement, hence they should be satisfied they can operate the requirement as drafted.</u>	The Applicant is seeking agreement with HE on the wording of Requirement 11 of the Draft DCO [REP1-006] (Doc Ref. 3.1 Rev 2): <i>“Archaeology 11.—(1) No part of the authorised development may commence, and no part of the permitted preliminary works for that part may commence, until the final archaeological mitigation and management strategy and site-specific written scheme of investigation for that part have been submitted to and approved by the relevant planning authority.</i> <i>(2) For the purposes of sub-paragraph (1), “commence” includes any permitted preliminary works excluding part (a) (environmental surveys, geotechnical surveys, intrusive archaeological surveys and other investigations for the purposes of assessing ground conditions).</i> <i>(3) The final archaeological mitigation and management strategy and site-specific written scheme of investigation must be substantially in accordance with the outline archaeological mitigation and management strategy and must be implemented as approved.”</i>	Under Discussion <u>Agreed</u>

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 Historic England	Name Job Title Date Signature

