Meridian Solar Farm

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Volume 8

Post-Submission Application Documents

8.41 Review of the Scheme Against the Revised National Planning Policy Framework 2026

APFP Regulation 5(2)(q)

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

October 2026

Contents

1. Introduction **3**

1.1. Overview 3

2. National Planning Policy Framework 2026 **4**

1. Introduction

1.1. Overview

1.1.1. This document forms part of an application by Meridian Solar Farm Limited to the Secretary of State under the Planning Act 2008 (the 'Act') for a Development Consent Order (the DCO Application) for the Scheme.

1.1.2. It has been prepared in response to the Examining Authority's (ExA's) first set of written questions (ExQ1s). Q1.0.4 notes that the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) has been updated since the Applicant submitted its DCO application. It then goes onto ask whether this evolves the Applicant's case and, if so, requests the provision of an updated assessment against the most recent version of the NPPF.

1.1.3. The Applicant has reviewed the revised NPPF and confirms that it does not materially alter the conclusions within the Planning Statement [APP-260]. The Applicant has provided an assessment of the Scheme against the relevant updated policies in Table 2-1 of this document.

2. National Planning Policy Framework 2026

2.1.1. Table 2-1 set out the relevant policies from the NPPF 2026 and demonstrates how the Scheme accords.

Table 2-1 Accordance with the NPPF 2026

Policy	Policy Text	Assessment
Chapter 1: Introduction		
Paragraph 17	Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives in providing for the homes, commercial development, facilities and infrastructure which society needs. These objectives are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across all three): a. An economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure; b. A social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible community facilities, public service infrastructure and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and c. An environmental objective – to support efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy; and to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment, including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, and minimising waste and pollution.	The **Planning Statement** [APP-260] sets out how the Scheme would contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and the three overarching objectives of the NPPF. In economic terms, the Scheme would deliver new electricity generation infrastructure and contribute towards meeting the identified need for large-scale solar generation. In social terms, by contributing to secure and resilient electricity system, the Scheme would support the infrastructure required to meet the needs of present and future generations. In environmental terms, the Scheme would efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy. The Scheme will therefore help to decarbonise the electricity system and lower the market price of electricity. The **Planning Statement** [APP-260] sets out the need for large-scale ground-mounted solar, as established in national planning policy (NPS EN-1 and NPS EN-3).
Chapter 5: Meeting the challenge of climate change		
CC2: Mitigation of climate change	1. In order to contribute to climate change mitigation and the transition to net zero, development proposals should, where relevant to the proposal: a. Accord with policies TR3 and TR4 so that sustainable patterns of movement are prioritised, opportunities are taken to improve walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport, and infrastructure is provided to support the transition to zero-emission vehicles; b. Support good access to facilities in order to limit the need to travel, whether through the development's location, through development densities which improve catchment populations for local services, or by incorporating community facilities and premises to support local employment opportunities;	The **Planning Statement** [APP-260] explains how the Scheme would make a substantial contribution to meeting the need for low-carbon energy, consistent with the UK's net zero objectives and energy security priorities. Section 7.7 of **ES Chapter 7: Climate Change** [APP-058] describes various measures relevant to this policy that are incorporated into the Scheme design and the management plans that form part of the DCO Application. Measures include: • Where practicable, the use of alternative materials with lower transport GHG emissions such as locally sourced products and materials with a higher recycled content;

Policy	Policy Text	Assessment
	c. Use design approaches which conserve energy and other resources in accordance with policy DP3(2)(b); d. Take advantage of opportunities to reuse existing structures and materials, including by reusing non-contaminated excavated soil and hardcore within the site; e. Take advantage of opportunities to draw low carbon energy from decentralised networks (such as district heat networks), where these are available, and to co-locate energy and heat generators and users, especially to take advantage of suppliers of surplus heat and energy; f. Contribute to the creation or restoration of habitats which can act as carbon stores, such as through woodland planting and peatland restoration, while avoiding harm to habitats which can act as important carbon stores, including peatland and salt marsh; and g. Not involve the extraction of fossil fuels unless it is in accordance with policy M5. 2. Substantial weight should be given to the benefits of improving the energy efficiency of existing buildings and/or drawing energy from district heat networks, renewable and low carbon sources (including through the installation of heat pumps and solar panels where these do not already benefit from permitted development rights) where this would be achieved through proposals for development.	• Low carbon design specifications, such as energy-efficient lighting and durable construction materials to reduce maintenance and replacement cycles; • Adopting the Considerate Constructors Scheme (CCS) to assist in reducing pollution, including GHGs, from the Scheme by employing good industry practice measures which go beyond statutory compliance; • Use of shuttle buses to reduce the use of private vehicles by construction workforce for travelling to Site. In addition, promote the goal that all construction staff are encouraged to use lower carbon modes of transport by identifying and communicating local bus and rail connections and pedestrian and cycle access routes to/from the Scheme. This will be outlined in the Travel Plan, as part of the CTMP. • Switching vehicles and plant off when not in use and ensuring construction vehicles conform to European Union (EU) vehicle emissions standards for the types of plant vehicles to be used; • Increasing recyclability by segregating construction waste to be reused and recycled, where reasonably practicable; • Designing, constructing and implementing the Scheme in such a way as to minimise the creation of waste.
CC3: Adaptation to climate change	1. Development proposals should take into account the current and potential impacts of climate change over the lifetime of the scheme, and in order to minimise vulnerability to these impacts should, where relevant to the proposal: a. Be located where the risk of flooding is minimised, or can be managed and the development made safe without increasing risk elsewhere, in accordance with policies F4, F5, F6, F7 and F8; b. Comply with policy F9 where development would be located in an area vulnerable to coastal change, as specified in that policy; c. Incorporate sustainable drainage systems to manage surface water flow rates and reduce volumes of runoff in accordance with policy F8; d. Use design approaches which minimise risks from overheating in accordance with policy DP3(2)(b), and include green infrastructure and suitable tree planting in accordance with policies DP3(2)(c) and N3; and e. Incorporate proportionate measures to mitigate against wildfires, where opportunities to do so exist and wildfires pose a particular risk (for example as a result of the combined effect of topography, prevailing wind direction and being located within or adjacent to heavily vegetated areas). Such measures should be designed to limit fuel loads for fires, and to create defendable spaces, such as by	The Applicant has undertaken a climate change resilience assessment for the Scheme, including identifying vulnerable parts of the Scheme in **ES Chapter 7: Climate Change** [APP-058]. The chapter concludes that the Scheme demonstrates an indirect reduction in atmospheric GHG concentration and avoidance of emissions; therefore, it is considered to be overall beneficial and will have a positive, significant effect on climate. The Scheme has been delivered to ensure that the development does not exacerbate flood risk and includes measures to reduce flood risk overall. Further, the Applicant has proposed measures to ensure the development be safe for its lifetime taking account of the vulnerability of its users in **ES Appendix 11-3: Flood Risk Assessment** [AS-020]. The **Planning Statement** [APP-260] provides details on the need for the Scheme and its primary aim to generate low-carbon electricity over an operational period of approximately 40 years, helping to meet the UK's increasing demand for clean energy.

Policy	Policy Text	Assessment
	avoiding timber panel fences and incorporating firebreaks into development layouts and planting schemes. 2. Substantial weight should be given to the benefits of improving the resilience of existing buildings and public spaces to anticipated climate change impacts where this would be achieved through proposals for development.	
Chapter 7: Building a strong, effective economy		
E2: Meeting the need for business land and premises	1. To support business growth, substantial weight should be given to: a. The economic benefits of proposals for commercial development which allow businesses to invest, expand and/or adapt; especially where this would support the economic vision and strategy for the area, the implementation of the Industrial Strategy, support improvements in freight and logistics and/or reflect proposals for Industrial Strategy Zones and AI Growth Zones; and b. Benefits for domestic food production, animal welfare and/or the environment which can be demonstrated through proposals for development for farm and agricultural modernisation. 2. Where a development proposal is required to demonstrate whether an unmet need exists (including under policy S5) consideration should be given to whether: a. Market signals indicate an undersupply of specific types of business land or premises, taking into account the anticipated catchment area for the type of development proposed, the changing needs of different sectors and the availability of suitable existing land and buildings; or b. The specific locational requirements of the proposal are met by existing allocations in the development plan. This includes, but is not limited to, situations where: i. Existing businesses plan to expand or improve their premises, or clusters or networks of businesses need to grow (such as clusters of knowledge and data-driven, creative or high technology industries and associated facilities and infrastructure); or ii. The availability of infrastructure (such as electricity network infrastructure to provide adequate grid connections, or water and wastewater capacity) makes certain locations particularly important, including opportunities to co-locate large-scale generators and users of power (such as data centres); or iii. Proposals would meet a local, regional or national need for the provision of new, expanded or upgraded facilities that would result in more efficient, reliable or sustainable handling of goods (whether for their receipt, storage, processing, interchange or distribution).	**ES Chapter 14: Socio-Economics and Land Use** [APP-065] assesses the impacts on the economics of the Scheme. The chapter demonstrates that: • The construction phase will support, on average, 207 total net jobs per year, with 74 of these jobs expected to be taken by residents. • It is estimated that construction would contribute approximately £22.3 million per year to the national economy, of which £8.9 million per year would likely be within the study area. • It is anticipated that the decommissioning phase would require a similar level of employment and generate a similar scale and character of workforce. • The operational phase is estimated to generate a net gain of 11 jobs. The job creation and GVA figures listed above support the policy objective of economic growth and productivity.
E4: Rural business development	1. In applying policy E2, the sustainable growth of businesses in rural areas should be supported, including through: a. The conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings;	**ES Chapter 14: Socio-Economics and Land Use** [APP-065] demonstrates that the Scheme would have a minor beneficial (not significant) impact on the diversification of income for agricultural land holdings.

Policy	Policy Text	Assessment
	b. The development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based businesses; c. Facilities to support rural leisure and tourism and measures to retain and expand accessible local shops and services; and d. Development to maintain and enhance farm viability and sustainability and support domestic food production, such as improved accommodation for livestock, on-farm reservoirs, greenhouses, polytunnels, farm shops and temporary accommodation for seasonal workers (where this accommodation is ancillary to the agricultural use and not for permanent occupation). 2. Development proposals to meet business needs in rural areas may need to be located outside settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport. In these circumstances: a. Development proposals should take opportunities, where they exist, to use previously developed land, and sites that are physically well-related to existing development; and b. The siting and design of development should be appropriate having regard to the character of its surroundings.	The assessment does not report any adverse effects on the tourism sector associated with a shortage of hotel, bed and breakfast and inns accommodation. There would also be no direct impacts anticipated on residential properties, local businesses, open spaces, community facilities or tourist attracts. Any indirect effects on land use via severance would be temporary and reversible, and not significant. As assessed within **ES Chapter 5: Agriculture and Soils** [APP1-015], agricultural land take would generally be temporary and returned back to agricultural use following the decommissioning of the Scheme. This and the diversification of income for land owners does not undermine the rural economy objectives within Policy E8.
Chapter 10: Securing clean energy and water		
W3: Renewable and low carbon energy development and electricity network infrastructure	1. In considering proposals for renewable and low-carbon energy development and electricity network infrastructure, substantial weight should be given to: a. The benefits for improving energy security, supporting economic development and/or the transition to a net zero future; b. In the case of applications for the re-powering and life-extension of existing sites, the additional benefit of utilising an established site for this purpose; and c. The contribution that small-scale and community-led renewable and low carbon energy projects can make to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, along with their associated economic and social benefits. 2. Applicants should not be required to demonstrate the need for renewable or low carbon energy development and electricity network infrastructure. Where proposals for this form of development come forward outside areas which have been identified as suitable for them in the development plan, their acceptability should be assessed against the national decision-making policies in this Framework, taken as a whole. 3. Where development is expected to be time-limited, applications should be accompanied by proposals for decommissioning and site restoration, including details of how these measures are expected to be implemented.	The **Planning Statement** [APP-260] sets out how the Scheme would contribute substantially to the need for low carbon energy in line with UK net zero and energy security ambitions.
Chapter 11: Facilitating the sustainable use of minerals		

Policy	Policy Text	Assessment
M6: Safeguarding mineral resources and infrastructure through decision-making	1. Proposals for non-mineral development should not: a. Constrain potential future use for mineral working in a Mineral Safeguarding Area; or b. Prevent or constrain the use of existing, planned and potential sites for: i. The bulk transport, handling and processing of minerals; ii. The manufacture of concrete and concrete products; or iii. The handling, processing and distribution of substitute, recycled and secondary aggregate material. 2. Where proposals for non-mineral development are located within a Minerals Consultation Area, the decision-making authority should consult the mineral planning authority and take account of the local minerals plan before determining the planning application. 3. The prior extraction of minerals, where practical and environmentally feasible, should be supported where it would prevent the sterilisation of minerals deposits as a consequence of other forms of development proposals or allocations.	A small part of Land Parcel A (approximately 18 ha) is located within a Mineral Safeguarding Area for sand and gravel. The Applicant has submitted **Appendix F: Mineral Safeguarding Assessment** [APP-266] to support the DCO Application. It confirms the Scheme would not constrain potential future use for mineral working in a Mineral Safeguarding Area. Prior extraction of the mineral would not be practical due to the shallow and temporary nature of the Scheme. Given the area within the Order Limits identified as safeguarded represents a very small area of land, it would not be economically viable to extract the mineral in advance of the Scheme. Nor would the Scheme sterilise these mineral deposits, as outlined above.
Chapter 14. Achieving well-designed places		
DP3: Key principles for well-designed places	1. Development proposals should respond to their context (the history, character and features of their site and its setting), so that they integrate with and enhance their surroundings; such as through the arrangement of development plots and buildings, the use of materials and architectural features, and the restoration, reuse and integration of heritage assets. This should not preclude innovation or change where appropriate, especially where an increased scale or density of development is justified in accordance with policies L2 and L3. 2. To create well-designed places, development proposals should also reflect relevant aspects of the following principles, as appropriate to the nature of the development and its location: a. Liveability: support healthy, mixed, vibrant and integrated communities, which will function well over the lifetime of the development, by incorporating a range of uses and tenures, employing features which promote social interaction, and which are robust, durable and easy to look after; b. Climate: contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation and the transition to net zero by using building layouts, building orientation, massing, landscaping and materials which conserve energy and other resources, and which minimise risks from the impacts of climate change including overheating; c. Nature: incorporate and/or connect to a network of high quality, accessible, multi-functional green infrastructure to provide opportunities for recreation and healthy living, strengthen habitats, improve climate change resilience and improve air and	As detailed in Section 5 of the **Planning Statement** [APP-260], good design has been a fundamental consideration from the outset of the Scheme. The **Design Approach Document** [APP-268] demonstrates how the design of the Scheme has been developed in accordance with a clear design framework, based on the criteria for good design set out in NPS EN-1. This has included the adoption of project level Design Principles, to guide decision making and embed good design outcomes to the Scheme. It has been informed by relevant design guidance applicable to solar PV and electricity networks NSIPs. The Applicant has subsequently submitted a **Review of the Scheme Against the Electricity Transmission Design Principles** (Doc Ref. 8.41) which confirms alignment with the relevant design guidance for electricity transmission lines. Design Principles have evolved throughout the design process, being informed and refined by stakeholder engagement, consultation feedback, technical studies and environmental assessments. They have been used to steer and influence the design of the Scheme to avoid and reduce adverse impacts wherever possible, make the most of the opportunities for enhancement and balance the need for flexibility and certainty within the DCO Application. Throughout the design process, the Applicant maintained an interdisciplinary approach to design and considered both the opportunities and constraints of the Scheme. This included analysis of existing physical, environmental, social and cultural context of the Site by a broad range of technical disciplines (including landscape and visual, noise,

Policy	Policy Text	Assessment
	water quality. This should include maintaining and enhancing tree cover and incorporating sustainable drainage systems in accordance with policies N3 and F8; d. Movement: provide transport infrastructure and choices which support the design vision for the site, provide good connections to the wider settlement (or those nearby), and prioritise walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport; e. Built Form: use the pattern of buildings to define the arrangement of streets, squares and other spaces, promote compact forms of development to optimise the site's potential, distinguish between public and private areas, create focal points and, where appropriate, enhance views into and out of the scheme; f. Public Space: include spaces that are safe, secure, inclusive, and accessible for all ages and abilities, including for groups such as women and girls; and which facilitate and encourage social interaction, play and healthy lifestyles (for example by providing high quality, clear and legible pedestrian and cycle routes, a variety of recreational spaces and places to meet, integrating lighting and making building entrances and windows face onto streets and other public spaces to provide natural surveillance); and g. Identity: create visually attractive, distinctive and characterful development to establish or maintain a strong sense of place and pride, including through the use of a coherent palette of materials, design features and planting. 3. Development proposals should be refused if, without clear justification, they conflict with paragraph 1 of this policy or relevant aspects of the principles in paragraph 2, or with any explicit design standards set out in the development plan (including those in locally-specific policies, guides, codes or masterplans). Substantial weight should be given to compliance with relevant development plan policies when assessing the design quality of proposals. 4. The principles set out in the Design and Placemaking planning practice guidance should be used to inform how this policy is applied in the absence of locally-produced design policies, guides, codes or masterplans. 5. Substantial weight should also be given to outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability, or which help raise the standard of design more generally in an area, so long as they are consistent with the overall form and layout of their surroundings.	ecology and heritage) as set out and assessed by the topic-specific ES Chapters. This approach has enabled the Applicant to understand the complexities of the Site and identify where multiple opportunities and constraints have the potential to stack up with one another to provide a good design response and allow for co-existence and co-location with other terrestrial uses. For example, creation of green infrastructure corridors mitigates the visual impact of the Scheme, and also provides biodiversity and recreational benefits to the local environment (in line with paragraph 2(c) and 2(d) of Policy DP3). As a result of the design approach adopted by the Applicant, the Scheme is expected to deliver a number of environmental, social and economic benefits in addition to the generation of secure, low cost, decarbonised, clean, renewable energy. These include significant areas of new habitats that respect and enhance features within the landscape, delivering a Biodiversity Net Gain and improvements in ecological connectivity. The Scheme would also provide benefits for the local community via an enhanced green infrastructure network including a better-connected footpath and cycle network and access to open spaces and recreational spaces. The Scheme incorporates a permissive path proposed across the Order Limits, as secured in the **OLEMP** (Doc Ref. 7.16 Rev 2). The permissive path will be open for the operational phase of the Scheme and be open to equestrians, cyclists and pedestrians. A summary of the Scheme's benefits is provided within Section 4 of the **Planning Statement** [APP-260]. The **Design Approach Document** [APP-268] is supported by the **Design Parameters** [APP-269] which secures the design-related commitments to be adhered to post-consent in accordance with paragraph 4.7.5 of EN-1. If consent is given, these design outcomes will be secured and implemented post-consent, in accordance with the various management plans and design parameters secured by requirements of the **Draft DCO** (Doc Ref. 3.1 Rev 3). This approach also ensures the conclusions of the ES are upheld, and the appropriate flexibility is provided. There are no conflicts with either paragraph 1 or 2 of this policy, and therefore paragraph 3 which recommends refusal in the event of conflicts should not be engaged.
DP4: The design process	1. Design quality should be considered throughout the evolution, assessment and delivery of development proposals, including through any pre-application engagement; as outlined in Part 2 of the Design and Placemaking planning practice guidance.	The **Design Parameters** (Doc Ref. 7.4 Rev 3) apply to the Scheme for specific Work numbers. It provides the key maximum and minimum parameters with which the detailed design of the Scheme must comply. In discharging the requirement 5 (detailed design), the local planning authority will review the Scheme against these maximum and minimum parameters.

Policy	Policy Text	Assessment
	2. The local planning authority should: a. Ensure that they have access to, and encourage the appropriate use of design review and other design tools and processes (especially for strategic sites and other significant projects), and take into account their outcomes, including any design recommendations made by design review panels; b. Ensure that relevant planning conditions refer to clear and accurate plans and drawings which provide visual clarity about the design of the development, including the approved use of materials where appropriate; and c. Not allow the quality of approved development to be materially diminished between permission and completion, as a result of changes proposed following its initial approval (for example through changes to approved details).	
Chapter 15: Promoting sustainable transport		
TR4: Street design, access and parking	1. To contribute to creating well-designed places, transport considerations should be integral to the design of development, proposals for which should: a. Give priority first to walking, wheeling and cycle movements, both within the scheme and with neighbouring areas; and second – so far as possible – to facilitating easy access to high quality public transport, with layouts and densities which maximise the catchments for bus or other public transport services; b. Incorporate or contribute towards appropriate features to support this prioritisation, such as permeable street networks, continuous footways and segregated cycle facilities which are adequately lit, sufficient secure and accessible cycle parking, regularly spaced public seating and good quality waiting facilities for public transport; c. Ensure that the arrangement of streets and other routes help to create places that are safe, inclusive and attractive for all users (particularly for women and girls, for other groups who may be vulnerable to crime or the fear of crime, and for those with limited mobility). This includes reflecting relevant aspects of policy DP3(2), as well as employing measures to: i. Minimise the scope for conflict between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles; ii. Meet the needs of disabled people, older people and children in relation to all modes of transport, and iii. Avoid unnecessary street clutter. d. Allow for the efficient delivery of goods, and ease of access by service and emergency vehicles, in ways which do not compromise key place-making principles (set out in policy DP3(2)); and e. Provide a suitable number of parking spaces for a range of transport modes where appropriate, reflecting the location and nature of the development (including its	The consideration of traffic impacts has been a key consideration and theme as part of early engagement with local communities. The potential for construction traffic to disrupt local communities and villages was a key concern raised. The Applicant has committed to use of particular routes for HGVs and AILs as set out within **ES Chapter 15: Traffic and Access** [APP-066] to minimise disruption to local communities. The **Consultation Report** [APP-037] details the feedback received relating to traffic and access concerns and the Applicant's response. Section 15.8 of **ES Chapter 15: Traffic and Access** [APP-066] concludes that no significant residual effects are expected as part of the scheme, including on highway safety. The cumulative effects assessment reports the potential for moderate significant adverse effect in relation to road safety. This represents a worst case hypothetical scenario, and in practice this is unlikely to occur as it would require the peaks of the construction phases to coincide. Furthermore, the provisions of the **Outline CTMP** [APP-278 and REP1-067] and the Requirements of the **Draft DCO** (Doc Ref. 3.1 Rev 3) enable additional management to be applied if necessary. The **Outline Public Rights of Way Management Plan (PRoW-MP)** (Doc. Ref. 7.15 Rev 2) outlines how local PRoW and Common Land will be impacted by the Scheme and how these impacts will be managed and mitigated. **ES Chapter 15: Traffic and Access** [APP-066] also identifies that there would not be any unacceptable impacts on highway safety or the operation of the local road network.

Policy	Policy Text	Assessment
	connectivity), any locally-set standards in the development plan, and including adequate provision of spaces and infrastructure that allow for the charging of electric vehicles in safe, accessible and convenient locations. A flexible approach to applying parking standards should be taken where the reconfiguration of retail or other sites which attract large numbers of customers would make better use of previously developed land, and there is evidence that a certain number of spaces needs to be retained to meet specific operational and commercial requirements. 2. The principles set out in national design guidance should be used to inform how this policy is applied.	
TR6: Assessing transport impacts	1. Development proposals that are likely to generate significant amounts of movement should be supported by: a. A transport statement or transport assessment (depending on the extent and significance of the transport issues involved), which is proportionate to the nature and scale of the development, so that the likely impacts of the proposal for transport can be assessed and monitored; and b. A travel plan, which indicates how sustainable transport objectives will be delivered, monitored and managed over time. 2. Transport assessments and statements, and travel plans, should reflect the transport vision for the development and the transport strategy for the area in which it is located, and how these are intended to be achieved (including, in the case of travel plans, identifying fallback options if initial measures do not deliver the expected outcomes). 3. In assessing movement patterns and potential impacts, including whether they are considered to be severe, reasonable future scenarios should be considered, taking into account impacts at relevant times of the day, potential cumulative impacts, multimodal trip generation and the promotion of sustainable modes of travel, and realising the transport vision for the development itself. Development proposals should be considered having regard to these potential impacts and the other policies in this Framework which are relevant (including TR3, TR4 and DP3(2)(d)). 4. Development proposals should be refused if they would have a severe adverse impact on the transport network (in terms of capacity and congestion, including cumulative impacts), or an unacceptable impact on highway safety; taking into account any mitigation measures proposed as well as any wider network improvements, including measures to support sustainable patterns of movement. This applies both during the construction phase and following completion.	
TR8: Public rights of way	1. Development proposals should: a. Protect and enhance the network of public rights of way, including through suitable diversions agreed with the highway authority; and	The Applicant has considered opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use. The Scheme includes the provision of enhancements and improvements to green infrastructure, including the creation of a new permissive path providing a connection between PRoW at Queens Bank and Shepeau Stow, following the

Policy	Policy Text	Assessment
	b. Take opportunities to extend, link or improve the quality of existing routes where this enables one or more of the following: i. Improved access to green spaces and the countryside; ii. New direct and circular routes and connections between local and long-distance footpaths, bridleways and cycle routes; iii. The provision of accessible, safe and convenient links to services and facilities; and iv. Improved connections with public transport stops and interchanges.	boundary of the Settlement W of Cate's Cove Corner Schedule Monument. The permissive path will be suitable for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders and provide information boards on the historic and natural environment.
Chapter 16: Promoting healthy communities		
HC7: Development affecting existing recreational land and facilities	1. Development proposals should not result in the loss of existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, other formal and informal play space and allotments, unless: a. An assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or b. The loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality, in a location which offers comparable or improved accessibility for the community it serves; or c. The development is for public service infrastructure, and the resulting loss would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and/or quality; or d. The development is for alternative open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, the benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use.	The Scheme would not result in the loss of open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, other formal and informal play space or allotments. The Applicant has considered opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use. The Scheme includes the provision of enhancements and improvements to green infrastructure, including the creation of a new permissive path providing a connection between PRoW at Queens Bank and Shepeau Stow, following the boundary of the Settlement W of Cate's Cove Corner Schedule Monument. The permissive path will be suitable for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders and provide information boards on the historic and natural environment.
Chapter 17: Pollution, public protection and security		
P2: Ground conditions	1. Sites proposed for development should be suitable for their proposed use taking into account: a. Ground conditions, including any risks arising from land instability or contamination (whether due to natural hazards or current and former activities such as mining or fuel storage); and b. The extent to which any such risks can be mitigated, and the potential impacts on the natural environment arising from remediation. 2. Where land is remediated it should, as a minimum, not be capable of being determined as contaminated land under Part IIA of the Environmental Protection Act 1990. 3. Adequate site assessment information, prepared by a competent person, should be available to inform these considerations.	The Site is considered suitable for its proposed use pursuant to the Scheme. Contamination risk has been considered within **ES Appendix 5-4: Contaminated Land Assessment** [APP-174] and **ES Appendix 5-5: Contaminated Land Assessment for Grid Connection Extension** [APP-175]. Mitigation measures regarding the effects of each phase are outlined and secured via the outline management plans (**Outline CEMP** (Doc Ref. 7.10 Rev 3), **Outline OEMP** (Doc Ref. 7.11 Rev 2) and **Outline DEMP** (Doc Ref. 7.12 Rev 2)). These include measure to minimise the risk of contamination of soils as a result of the Scheme, and measures for the protection of existing land drainage. Furthermore, the **Outline Soil Management Plan** (Doc Ref. 7.14 Rev 2) provides a comprehensive set of measures across the lifetime of the Scheme for the prevention of the soil resource within the Site. No risks have been identified in respect of land instability.

Policy	Policy Text	Assessment
	4. Where a site is affected by contamination or land stability issues, responsibility for securing a safe development rests with the developer and/or landowner.	
P3: Living conditions and pollution	1. Development proposals should be appropriate for their location, taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment, whether these effects are on or off-site; and whether this is as a result of the development itself or the product of preexisting conditions in its vicinity. In assessing the potential effects of pollution, consideration should be given to the potential sensitivity of the site, and its intended occupiers and users, as well as that of the environment and population in the surrounding area (including where certain groups could be particularly vulnerable to its effects, such as children and older people). 2. Within this context development proposals should: a. Provide healthy living conditions for occupiers and users in terms of adequate access to light and avoiding exposure to levels of air, noise, artificial light or other sources of pollution which could have an unacceptable adverse effect on health and the quality of life. Where necessary suitable mitigation measures should be incorporated to secure acceptable living conditions; b. Not give rise to, or contribute to, an unacceptable level of access to daylight and sunlight for neighbouring residents and occupiers, or unacceptable levels of air, noise, artificial light, water, soil or other forms of pollution on or beyond the site. Adverse impacts of this nature should be avoided where possible, or else mitigated to an acceptable degree. Where possible, opportunities should be taken to reduce pollution affecting the wider area (such as through traffic and travel management or improved external lighting); c. Sustain and contribute to compliance with relevant limit values or national objectives and targets for air pollutants including PM2.5. Development proposals should take account of Air Quality Management Areas and be consistent with the objectives of relevant Air Quality Action Plans, Clean Air Plans and Local Air Quality Strategies; d. Mitigate and reduce to a minimum potential adverse impacts resulting from noise, not result in levels of noise exposure which would have a significant observed adverse effect, and maintain the character of tranquil areas (those areas that have remained relatively undisturbed by noise from human sources and are prized for their recreational and amenity value for this reason); e. Limit any adverse impact from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes (those areas entirely, or largely, uninterrupted by artificial light) and nature; and	**ES Chapter 10: Human Health** [APP-061] provides a comprehensive assessment of all factors which may have an effect on the health of the surrounding populations, taking into account the likely effects of pollution, living conditions and natural environment. It is predicted that there will be no significant residual effects on Human Health during the construction, operation and decommissioning phase of the Scheme. **ES Chapter 13: Noise and Vibration** [APP-064] provides a full assessment of the impacts of noise during all phases of the Scheme, including a consideration of how these effects are related to human health. It is anticipated that temporary lighting will be used during the construction and decommissioning stages, as described within **ES Chapter 2: The Scheme** [AS-017]. During the operational phase, not permanently turned on lighting is proposed, but security lighting would be sensor triggered, located only around critical electrical infrastructure for security. The assessment presented within Section 12.8 of **ES Chapter 12: Landscape and Visual** [APP-063] considers effects from lighting. Good practice measures to minimise the effects of light pollution are included within the **Outline CEMP** (Doc Ref. 7.10 Rev 3), **Outline LEMP** [REP1-071] and **Outline DEMP** (Doc Ref. 7.12 Rev 2). Compliance with these measures is secured through the requirements of the **Draft DCO** (Doc Ref. 3.1 Rev 3). The effects of light pollution on heritage and ecological receptors are considered within **ES Chapter 8: Cultural Heritage** [REP1-016] and **ES Chapter 9: Ecology and Biodiversity** [REP1-018] respectively. **ES Chapter 6: Air Quality** [APP-057 considers the likely significant effects on local air quality. The chapter provides an overview of the existing environment for the Scheme. The management plans also provide standard good practice measures to manage the impacts from dust generation which may have impacts on air quality. South Holland District Council has not declared any Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs). Therefore, the Scheme is not located within an AQMA. The Applicant has assessed the cumulative impacts of the Scheme with other projects in each topic chapter of the Environmental Statement. Intra-cumulative effects, which comprise the combined effects of individual impacts from the Scheme, are reported in **ES Chapter 17: Effect Interactions** [APP-068]. The proposed surface water drainage design set out in **ES Appendix 11-4: Outline Drainage Strategy** [APP-227] demonstrates that sustainable drainage techniques have been designed into the Scheme. For all topics, appropriate mitigation measures have been applied, as described within each ES Chapter and the **Environmental Mitigation Commitments Register** [REP1-057].

Policy	Policy Text	Assessment
	f. Assess and mitigate impacts where the development could have an unacceptable adverse effect on water quality, especially in relation to sensitive water bodies such as chalk streams. 3. In applying this policy, it should be assumed, unless there is clear evidence to the contrary, that separate regulatory regimes for the control of pollution will operate effectively, as set out in policy DM7. This means that it will be appropriate to take into account emissions limits set through those other regimes.	
Chapter 18: Managing flood risk and costal change		
F4: Assessing flood risk for decision-making	1. To inform the assessment of flood risk and, where relevant, appropriate mitigation, a site-specific flood risk assessment should accompany all development proposals in Flood Zones 2, 3a, and 3b as defined in Annex F, table 1. 2. In Flood Zone 1, a site-specific flood risk assessment should inform and accompany all development proposals involving: a. Sites of one hectare or more; b. Land which has been identified by the Environment Agency as having critical drainage problems; and c. Land identified in a strategic flood risk assessment or the Flood Map for Planning as being at risk of flooding from any source, whether now or in the future. 3. Site-specific flood risk assessments should be appropriate to the scale, nature, and location of development and should, where relevant, support an assessment of whether a development proposal satisfies the sequential and exception tests set out in policies F5 and F6.	**ES Appendix 11-3: Flood Risk Assessment (FRA)** [AS-020] provides an assessment of flood risk to and from the Scheme from all sources of flooding. The FRA demonstrates how residual flood risk will be managed during the construction, operation and decommissioning of the Scheme. The FRA meets all requirements set out within Policy F4 by demonstrating the consideration of climate change. The findings of the FRA are summarised in **ES Chapter 11: Hydrology and Flood Risk** [REP1-020]. The **FRA** [AS-020] concludes that the development will be safe for its lifetime taking account of the vulnerability of its users, without increasing flood risk elsewhere.
F5: The sequential test	1. The aim of the sequential test is to steer new development to areas with the lowest risk of flooding from any source. Where the test applies, development proposals should not be located in areas at risk of flooding where alternative sites, appropriate for the development, are reasonably available in areas with a lower risk of flooding. The area to which the test is applied should not be greater than the anticipated catchment of the development in terms of its likely occupiers or users. 2. The sequential test should be used in areas known to be at risk now or in the future from any form of flooding, other than for: a. Sites allocated in the development plan which were subject to the sequential test during plan preparation; b. Sites where a site-specific flood risk assessment demonstrates clearly that: i. No built development within the site boundary, including access or escape routes, land raising or other potentially vulnerable elements, would be located on an area that would be at risk of flooding from any source, now and in the future (having regard to potential changes in flood risk); or	Application of the Sequential and Exception Tests are demonstrated in the **FRA** [AS-020] and **Planning Statement** [APP-260]. This demonstrates that the most vulnerable components of the Scheme (i.e. substations, BESS and solar stations) are located in areas of lowest flood risk. The Applicant has provided further explanation as to how the Sequential and Exception Tests have been applied within **Post ISH1 Note: Sequential and Exception Tests** [REP2-018].

Policy	Policy Text	Assessment
	ii. Where the site would be at risk of surface water flooding only, the proposed layout, design, and mitigation measures would ensure that occupiers and users would remain safe from current and future surface water flood risk for the lifetime of the development without increasing flood risk elsewhere in accordance with policy F7. c. For the following types of development: i. Householder development; ii. Small non-residential extensions (with a footprint of less than 250m2); and iii. Changes of use, other than changes of use to a caravan, camping or chalet site, or to a mobile home or park home site. 3. The strategic flood risk assessment covering the area of the proposed development and the Flood Map for Planning should provide the evidential basis for applying the sequential test.	
F6: Development in areas at risk of flooding from rivers or the sea	1. In areas falling within flood zones 2, 3a, or 3b (as defined in Annex F, table 1): a. Development proposals should be refused if the use is incompatible with the risk from river or sea flooding, as set out in Annex F, table 3; and b. In certain other circumstances set out in Annex F, table 3, in addition to satisfying the sequential test in policy F5 where applicable, development will only be appropriate where an 'exception test' is satisfied. The exception test involves demonstrating that the development would meet all the following criteria: i. Provide wider sustainability benefits to the community that outweigh the flood risk; ii. Be safe for its anticipated lifetime in accordance with policy F7; and iii. Not increase flood risk elsewhere and, where possible, reduce flood risk overall. 2. The application of the exception test should be informed by a site-specific flood risk assessment. The exception test does not need to be applied: a. To those forms of development, or in those circumstances, where the sequential test is not required, as set out in policy F5; or b. Where development is proposed on a site allocated in the development plan to which the exception test was applied at the plan-making stage, unless there has been a significant increase in the risk of flooding to the site subsequently, or the nature of the development itself has changed significantly from that which was allocated so as to introduce a more vulnerable use (having regard to Annex F, table 2).	
F7: Ensuring development is safe from flooding	1. Development proposals should not present a risk from flooding to potential occupiers, users, or visitors, and should not increase flood risk elsewhere. 2. Where development is proposed in a location known to be at risk from any form of flooding, now or in the future, it should be refused unless:	As set out above, the Applicant has provided evidence that the Scheme would not present a risk of flooding or increase flood risk elsewhere. Further, **Post ISH1 Note: Sequential and Exception Tests** [REP2-018] demonstrates that the most vulnerable infrastructure has been sited in the areas of lowest flood risk, and the Scheme will be safe throughout its lifetime.

Policy	Policy Text	Assessment
	a. Within the site, the most vulnerable development is located in areas of lowest flood risk, unless there are overriding reasons which justify a different arrangement; b. The development will be safe throughout its lifetime taking account of the vulnerability of its users; c. Any residual risk can be safely managed, and safe access and escape routes are included where appropriate, as part of an agreed emergency plan; d. The development is appropriately flood resistant and resilient such that, in the event of a flood, it could be quickly brought back into use without significant refurbishment; and e. It can be demonstrated that flood risk will not be increased elsewhere.	The Applicant has submitted **Appendix A - Outline Flood Emergency Response Plan** [REP2-005] which further describes how the residual risk can be safely managed, and safe access and escape routes.
F8: Sustainable drainage systems and watercourses	1. Development proposals which could affect drainage on or around the development site should incorporate sustainable drainage systems to control flow rates and reduce volumes of runoff, in ways which are proportionate to the nature and scale of the proposal. The systems employed should provide multifunctional benefits where possible, facilitating improvements in water quality, biodiversity and amenity. 2. Sustainable Drainage Systems should: a. Be designed in accordance with the National Standards for Sustainable Drainage Systems; b. Have maintenance arrangements in place to ensure an acceptable standard of operation for the anticipated lifetime of the development; and c. In the case of proposals for major development, take account of advice from the Lead Local Flood Authority. 3. Development proposals should not enclose existing watercourses where this is not already the case, unless there are compelling reasons to do so; and should where possible remove existing culverts and renaturalise existing river channels, unless to do so would increase flood risk, result in other environmental harm or cause harm to heritage assets.	The proposed surface water drainage design set out in **ES Appendix 11-4: Outline Drainage Strategy** [APP-277] demonstrates that sustainable drainage techniques have been designed into the Scheme and will be maintained by the Applicant, or another private operator to be confirmed and secured through the DCO, for the lifetime of the Scheme. This includes minimum operational standards. The Applicant has engaged with the Environment Agency, the South Holland Internal Drainage Board and the North Level District Internal Drainage Board through the pre-application stage. The Scheme would not enclose any existing watercourse.
Chapter 19: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment		
NE2: Improving the natural environment	1. To contribute positively to the natural environment, and support nature's recovery, development proposals should: a. Consider the environmental qualities of land proposed for development, including habitats, landscape character and the natural beauty of the countryside, and identify opportunities for those qualities to be conserved or enhanced (including through requirements for biodiversity net gain where these apply);	The specific characteristics of the Order Limits and the surrounding area have been carefully considered to ensure that the design of the Scheme can respond appropriately. An appraisal of the baseline conditions in the context of design issues in **ES Chapter 3: Alternatives and Design Evolution** [APP-054]. Furthermore, the **Design Approach Document** [APP-268] sets out the existing character analysis which informed the design principles of the Scheme. The Scheme avoids land subject to the highest landscape and ecological value.

Policy	Policy Text	Assessment
	b. Take into account the quality of agricultural land (including that classified as best and most versatile agricultural land, and its grade), and if significant development of agricultural land is necessary, use areas of poorer quality land where possible; c. Take suitable opportunities to connect to and strengthen ecological networks that extend beyond the site, drawing on the measures proposed by Local Nature Recovery Strategies, National Forest Strategies and Community Forest Plans, where present, and other relevant assessments; d. Conserve and enhance existing natural features of visual, historic or nature conservation value (such as established trees and hedgerows) where possible; and use appropriate landscaping to help create a well-designed place and integrate the development into its surroundings; e. Use green infrastructure provided as part of the scheme and nature-based solutions to secure multiple benefits: such as for biodiversity; surface water and pollution management (including maintaining flow rates and water quality); climate change mitigation and adaptation, and recreation; f. Minimise any adverse impacts on biodiversity and include features which support priority or threatened species such as swifts, bats and hedgehogs. Development proposals should incorporate integrated nest boxes (commonly known as swift bricks) into their construction unless there are compelling technical reasons which prevent their use, or would make them ineffective; and g. Ensure that green infrastructure and other features to support nature are located and designed to minimise risk of future failure, and that appropriate measures are in place for any necessary long-term management. 2. If significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated or, as a last resort, compensated for, then the development should be refused. 3. Development proposals may incorporate biodiversity enhancements which exceed the statutory objective for biodiversity net gain, but this should only be a requirement where it is set out in up-to-date development plan policies for specific site allocations. Decisionmakers should not give weight to other development plan policies which require biodiversity gains which go beyond the statutory framework, including where a policy requires gains for development proposals which are exempt.	**Post ISH1 Note: Strategic Site Selection** [REP2-017] explains how agricultural land was considered as part of site selection, which demonstrates that it is not possible to completely avoid land that is classed as 'best and most versatile'. Within the Order Limits, the Applicant has sought to site infrastructure on lower graded land, however, it has not been possible to exclude all Grade 1 and 2 soils without reducing the scale of the Scheme. The Applicant has assessed the impact on agricultural land within **ES Chapter 5: Agriculture and Soils** [REP1-014] and proposes mitigation measures within the **Outline Soil Management Plan** [REP1-068], this includes the approach for restoration. **ES Chapter 9: Ecology and Biodiversity** [REP1-018] outlines the studies and surveys undertaken to inform the DCO Application, and includes consideration of protected and priority species. These enabled the design to respond positively to sites of biodiversity and geological interest. The Chapter concluded that with the proposed mitigation, no significant effects are considered likely during the construction and decommissioning phases. During the operational phase, it is considered that with planting and habitat enhancement measures proposed, the Scheme would result in a beneficial effect on habitats. The **Outline LEMP** (Doc Ref. 7.16 Rev 2) sets out measures proposed to: • mitigate the effects of the Scheme on landscape and biodiversity features; • enhance the biodiversity, landscape, and green infrastructure value of the Order Limits, including with reference to Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG); and • Secure compliance with relevant national and local planning policies. The **Outline LEMP** (Doc Ref. 7.16 Rev 2) takes into account the objectives of the Greater Lincolnshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy. The proposed grassland landscaping measures seek to provide enhanced buffer and habitat corridor to the Local Wildlife Sites within the Order Limits in line with the Strategy. A BNG Assessment using Defra's Statutory Biodiversity Metric has been completed and is available for review as part of the DCO Application within the **Biodiversity Net Gain Report** [REP-059]. The Applicant has secured a commitment within Schedule 2 of the **Draft DCO** (Doc Ref. 3.1 Rev 3) to deliver BNG in excess of 10% for area-based habitats and watercourses, and in excess of 400% for hedgerows.
N3: Trees in new development	1. In recognition of the benefits which trees can provide for biodiversity, climate change mitigation and adaptation, and the character and quality of the built environment, development proposals should:	The Applicant has prepared an **Arboricultural Impact Assessment** [APP-241 and APP-242] which assesses the direct and indirect impact of the Scheme on trees within the Order Limits. It would not result in the loss or deterioration of any irreplaceable habits, including veteran and ancient trees. Where practicable the detailed design will be developed to avoid or minimise impacts to trees and in practice this is likely to substantially reduce the level of arboricultural

Policy	Policy Text	Assessment
	a. Make new streets tree-lined (unless there are strong reasons why this would be inappropriate in specific streets), and incorporate trees in other suitable locations, such as in parks and through the provision of community orchards; b. Ensure that the selection of species and their placement is compatible with highways and other infrastructure requirements and the needs of different users of public spaces; and will be effective in helping to adapt to the effects of climate change and delivering other environmental benefits. Suitable arboricultural advice should be sought, and proposals discussed with highways and trees officers where necessary, so that the right trees are planted in the right places; and c. Make provision for the long-term maintenance of both existing and newly-planted trees which form part of the development.	impacts reported. The final level of arboricultural impacts will be confirmed as part of an Arboricultural Method Statement and secured by the **Outline CEMP** (Doc Ref. 7.10 Rev 3). The **Outline LEMP** (Doc Ref. 7.16 Rev 2) sets out measures for the long term management of trees and vegetation planted as part of the Scheme.
N6: Areas of particular importance for biodiversity and geodiversity	1. To support the conservation of important habitats, species and sites of geodiversity value, development proposals affecting: a. A site of international importance, which for the purpose of this policy is a habitats site, should be refused unless: i. An appropriate assessment has concluded that the proposal will not adversely affect the integrity of the site (either individually or in combination with other developments), or the proposal can satisfy the derogation tests; and/or ii. The impact of development on the relevant protected features of the protected site is being addressed through an Environmental Delivery Plan which has been made and the developer has committed to paying the nature restoration levy. b. A site of national importance, which for the purpose of this policy is one designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest, should only be supported if: i. There would be no adverse effect (either individually or in combination with other developments) on the site's features of special scientific interest; or ii. The benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both the likely impact on the features of special scientific interest, and any broader impact on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest; or iii. The impact of development on the relevant protected feature of the protected site is being addressed through an Environmental Delivery Plan which has been made and the developer has committed to paying the nature restoration levy. c. A site of local importance, which for the purpose of this policy is one designated as a Local Nature Reserve or identified as a local wildlife site, local geological site or equivalent in the development plan, should only be supported if: i. There would not be a significant adverse effect on the integrity of the site; or ii. The benefits of development in the location proposed clearly outweigh the likely impact on the features which make the site valuable for nature conservation.	**ES Appendix 9-14: Habitat Regulations Assessment Report** (Doc Ref. 6.3 Rev 2) provides information to allow the SoS to determine whether there will be an adverse effect on the integrity of any European Site(s) in view of their Conservation Objectives (COs) as a result of the Scheme. This has been produced in consultation with Natural England. It concludes that there would be no significant adverse effects on the integrity of any European sites (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects). There are no nationally designated ecological sites within the Order Limits, however, there is an unattributed Impact Risk Zone (IRZ) associated with a SSSI which has been scoped in and considered within the assessment in **ES Chapter 9: Ecology and Biodiversity** [REP1-018]. The assessment confirms that stand off measures and controls contained within the Outline CEMP (Doc Ref. 7.10 Rev 3) and Outline OEMP (Doc Ref. 7.11 Rev 2) along with the proposed line markers for transmission lines within the Grid Connection Route would result in a negligible impact on the IRZ. These plans are secured within the Schedule 2 Requirements of the Draft DCO (Doc Ref. 3.1 Rev 3). The Applicant has considered the impact on habitats and those of local importance within **ES Chapter 9: Ecology and Biodiversity** [REP1-018]. Habitats assessed include aquatic marginal vegetation, hedgerows (including species rich), lines of trees (local), and lowland mixed deciduous woodland (local). Where enhancement to these habitats is delivered, there would be a minor beneficial (not significant) effect. Section 9.7 of **ES Chapter 9: Ecology and Biodiversity** [REP1-018] sets out embedded mitigation measures to avoid and protect any ancient/veteran trees and priority habitats during the construction, operational and decommissioning phases of the Scheme (where required). There is no ancient woodland within or adjacent to the Order Limits.

Policy	Policy Text	Assessment
	2. Irrespective of a site's status in nature conservation terms, development proposals which would entail the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists. 3. This policy applies to development on land inside or outside a designated area, if it would have an impact on the identified biodiversity or geodiversity value of the area concerned.	
Chapter 20: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment		
HE4: Securing the conservation of heritage assets	1. Heritage assets, as an irreplaceable resource, should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance. To achieve this, development proposals which would affect the significance of heritage assets, including any contribution made by their setting should: a. Maintain or secure a use consistent with their conservation, taking into account the importance of maintaining the assets, the positive contribution they can make to sustainable communities including local economies, and the positive contribution they can make to local character and distinctiveness; and b. Avoid (or if that is not possible, minimise) harm to the significance of heritage assets, and instead conserve this significance. 2. Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (including from development within its setting) should have a clear and convincing justification in accordance with the policies in this chapter. 3. Where there is evidence of deliberate neglect of, or damage to, a heritage asset, the deteriorated state of the asset should not be taken into account in any decision relating to the asset. 4. Proposals for enabling development, which would otherwise conflict with other policies in this Framework and/or those in the development plan, but which would secure the future conservation of a heritage asset, should be considered on the basis of whether the conservation benefits outweigh the disbenefits of departing from the policies concerned.	**ES Chapter 8: Cultural Heritage** [REP1-016] provides an assessment of the effects of the Scheme on the historic environment, including above, at, and below ground assets. An assessment of the value (heritage significance) of heritage assets, including the contribution made by setting, is included in within Section 8.9 of **ES Chapter 8: Cultural Heritage** [REP1-016], as well as in **ES Appendix 8.2: Cultural Heritage Desk Based Assessment** [APP-182]. Data sources are stated in **ES Appendix 8.2: Cultural Heritage Desk Based Assessment** [APP-182] and include the relevant local authority Historic Environmental Record. A summary of all heritage features and settings is set out within **ES Appendix 8-3: Summary of Solar Development Heritage** [APP-202] and **ES Appendix 8-4: Summary of Heritage Setting Assessment** [APP-203]. The Applicant has provided as assessment of harm to heritage assets within **Appendix E: Heritage Statement of Harm** [REP1-053]. It concludes that the Scheme would not result in substantial harm or total loss to any designated heritages assets (or equivalent).
HE5: Assessing effects on heritage assets	1. Development proposals affecting heritage assets should be accompanied by an assessment of the significance of the assets affected (including any contribution made by their setting) and of the potential effect of the proposal on their significance. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is necessary to understand the potential effect of the proposal on their significance. The relevant historic environment record should be referred to in making this assessment, and appropriate expertise employed where necessary.	

Policy	Policy Text	Assessment
	2. Assessments of the potential effects of development proposals on the significance of heritage assets (including through effects on their setting) should identify whether proposals would be likely to: a. Have a positive effect, which is where the significance of a heritage asset would be enhanced, or better revealed; or b. Have no effect on the significance of a heritage asset; or c. Result in harm to the significance of a heritage asset, either from work affecting the asset itself or from development within its setting. The degree of harm should be identified: substantial harm would occur where the development proposal would seriously affect a key element of the asset's significance; or d. Cause the total loss of the significance of a heritage asset. 3. In making this assessment it is the effect on a heritage asset's significance rather than the scale of the development which should be considered. 4. Decision-makers should be satisfied that assessments accurately reflect the effects on heritage assets caused by development proposals. 5. Where a development proposal involves, or has the potential to involve, a heritage asset with archaeological interest, an appropriate desk-based assessment should be undertaken and, where necessary, a field evaluation. These should be used to help understand the asset's significance and the potential effect of the proposal on this, which should inform the design, mitigation and implementation of the development.	
HE6: Proposals affecting designated heritage assets	1. When considering the potential effect of a development proposal on the significance of a designated heritage asset, substantial weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential effect amounts to a positive effect, harm, substantial harm, or total loss of its significance. 2. Development proposals which would have a positive effect on a designated heritage asset should be supported. 3. Any harm to a designated heritage asset will be a matter of considerable importance and weight, which should be dealt with in accordance with paragraphs 4 to 6 of this policy. 4. Where a development proposal would harm the significance of a designated heritage asset the effect on the asset and its significance should be weighed against any public benefits resulting from the proposal. Important public benefits can include securing the long-term reuse of a vacant or underused listed building, and enabling energy efficiency and low carbon heating measures to be employed. 5. Where a development proposal would cause substantial harm to, or the total loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset, consent should be refused unless it	**ES Chapter 8: Cultural Heritage** (Doc Ref. 6.1 Rev 2) demonstrates that impacts/harm is generally avoided or minimised, with no direct impacts to the buried archaeological deposits of Scheduled Monuments within the Solar Development Area and no direct harm to the fabric of Listed Buildings or Conservation Areas. Remaining harm is principally related to setting, to non-designated archaeology or is temporary in nature. The Applicant has provided as assessment of harm to heritage assets within **Appendix E: Heritage Statement of Harm** [REP1-053]. It concludes that the Scheme would not result in substantial harm or total loss to any designated heritages assets (or equivalent). Please see the commentary against HE7 regarding less than substantial harm to non-designated heritage assets which are demonstrably of equivalent significance to Scheduled Monuments..

Policy	Policy Text	Assessment
	can be demonstrated that the harm is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh the harm or loss, or if all of the following apply: a. The nature of the heritage asset would otherwise prevent all reasonable uses of the site; b. No suitable use for the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; c. Conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is not possible; and d. The harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the asset back into use. 6. Within this context, development which would cause substantial harm to, or the total loss of, the significance of grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks or gardens, should be exceptional; while development which would cause substantial harm to, or the total loss of, assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered battlefields, grade I and II* listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.	
HE7: Decisions on non-designated heritage assets	1. Development proposals which would have a positive effect on a non-designated heritage asset should be supported. 2. Where a development proposal would harm the significance of a non-designated heritage asset, this should be weighed against the benefits of the proposal and a balanced judgement made, having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the non-designated heritage asset. 3. Where a development proposal would cause substantial harm to, or the total loss of, the significance of a non-designated heritage asset, it should only be supported where the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefits of the proposal, having regard to the scale of the harm or loss and the significance of the non-designated heritage asset.	The Applicant has provided as assessment of harm to heritage assets within **Appendix E: Heritage Statement of Harm** [REP1-053]. It considers non-designated heritage assts which are demonstrably of equivalent significance to Scheduled Monuments. The following non-designated heritage assets are considered to be demonstrably of equivalent significance to the Scheduled Monuments: • Potential Iron Age or Roman settlement in the northern end of Field B-5; aerial photograph and geophysical surveys identified features likely to be of equivalent cultural significance to the archaeological deposits identified across the Solar Development Area. • Archaeological Zone 1: Considered to be of equal importance to the Scheduled Monuments 'Settlement NE of Whitebread Farm' (1004978) and 'Settlement W of Cate's Cove Corner' (1004979), due to its features being contiguous with those identified for these Scheduled Monuments despite being beyond the scheduled areas. • Archaeological deposits north of High Road: The area is likely to have archaeological deposits of Palaeolithic, Mesolithic, Iron Age, Roman, medieval or post-medieval date. Based on a worst-case assessment, it is considered that archaeological deposits within this area would be of medium importance **Appendix E: Heritage Statement of Harm** [REP1-053] concludes that the Scheme would not result in substantial harm or total loss to any non-designated heritages assets. It reports less than substantial harm to the Potential Iron Age or Roman settlement in the northern end of Field B-5, Archaeological Zone 1 and the archaeological deposits to the north of High Road This harm would be outweighed by

Policy	Policy Text	Assessment
		the substantial public benefits of the Scheme as detailed with Section 4 of the **Planning Statement** [APP-260].
HE10: Loss or removal of heritage assets	1. Where a development proposal would result in the loss of the whole or part of a heritage asset (whether designated or not): a. The development should not be approved without all reasonable steps being taken to ensure that the new development will proceed after the loss has occurred, including through the use of planning conditions and planning obligations to secure the development against the loss of the asset; and b. The applicant should record and advance understanding of the significance of the asset to be lost in a manner proportionate to its importance and the potential impact upon it; and should make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible by depositing it in the relevant Historic Environment Record, and any archives with a local museum or other public depository. The ability to record evidence of our past should not be a decisive factor in deciding whether such loss should be approved. 2. Heritage assets with archaeological interest should be preserved in situ where feasible. Where an asset cannot be preserved or managed on-site, appropriate provision should be made for the investigation, understanding, recording, dissemination and archiving of that asset, which should be undertaken by suitably-qualified individuals or organisations. 3. Development proposals to remove or alter a historic statue, plaque, memorial or monument (whether listed or not), should retain the feature in situ where possible (and, where appropriate, be supported by an explanation of their historic and social context).	Development adjacent to heritage assets and development which may impact the significance of a heritage asset is assessed within **ES Chapter 8: Cultural Heritage** [REP1-016] and **Appendix E: Heritage Statement of Harm** [REP1-053]. There would be physical works that would cause harm to the cultural significance of the buried archaeological deposits directly within the footprint of the Scheme infrastructure but would not result in the total or near loss of the physical remains. The Applicant has engaged with Historic England and Lincolnshire County Council throughout the pre-application phase. Further evaluation work would be undertaken post-consent, including within the Grid Connection Route, once the detail of the design is better known. An **Archaeological Mitigation and Management Strategy** [REP1-078] has been prepared to ensure the preservation of archaeological remains in-situ where practicable. Where this is either not possible or not desirable, provision would be made for preservation by record according to an agreed written scheme of investigation submitted by the Applicant and approved by the Local Planning Authority.