

The Drovers Solar Farm

Applicant's Response to ExQ1

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1 Introduction

1.1.1 This document responds to the Examining Authority's (ExA) first written questions, issued on 13 May 2026 [[PD-007](#)]. It responds to each of the questions posed to the Applicant.

1.1.2 **Section 2** of this report is tabulated to include the ExA's questions and a response to each question as follows:

- General and Cross-topic Questions
- Aviation
- Biodiversity and ecology (including Habitat Regulations Assessment)
- Climate Change
- Compulsory acquisition, temporary possession and other land or rights considerations
- Cultural Heritage and Archaeology
- Draft Development Consent Order (DCO)
- Flood Risk, hydrology and Water Resources
- Grid Connection
- Land and soil
- Landscape and Visual
- Need, Site selection and alternatives
- Noise and Vibration
- Population
- Transport and Access; and
- Other Planning Matters.



2 Topic Questions

Table 1.1: General and cross-topic questions

ExQ	Respondent	Question	Applicant’s Response
Q1.0.1	The applicant	<p>Environmental Statement (ES) Figure 2.1: Cumulative Schemes</p> <p>Figure 2.1 [APP-068] shows there is an overlap of the proposed development’s Order limits with the short list of cumulative schemes.</p> <p>Could the applicant update Figure 2.1 to annotate clearly each scheme from the short list (to include High Grove Solar Farm) and provide details of any interaction or overlaps.</p>	<p>The Applicant has updated and submitted ES Figure 2.1: Cumulative Schemes [APP/6.3.1] at Deadline 1 to annotate clearly each scheme from the short list (to include High Grove Solar Farm) and provide details of any interaction or overlaps. The only overlap between the Order limits for the Scheme and other developments is with High Grove Solar Farm.</p>
Q1.0.2	The applicant	<p>Community Benefits</p> <p>With reference to the Consultation Report [APP-025], Table 22 states: <i>“Throughout the pre-application process, the Applicant has consulted on community benefits and, based on feedback and ongoing discussions, will determine how best to distribute funding.”</i></p> <p>Could the applicant clarify what community benefits are proposed and how these would be secured?</p>	<p>The Applicant is committed to ensuring that communities benefit from the Scheme. The text quoted from the Consultation Report [APP-025] refers to the Community Benefit Fund, which (as set out in the Planning Statement [APP/5.5.1]) the Applicant has committed to providing. This is an optional commitment being made by the Applicant and is not required to mitigate the impacts of the Scheme – the Community Benefit Fund operates (and is to be agreed) entirely outside of the DCO process (it cannot be considered as part of the decision-making process). The Applicant will ensure that all stakeholders are made aware of the Community Benefit Fund in place and will have the opportunity to input where appropriate. The Applicant also notes that a local foundation will likely independently determine the local initiatives to provide services to the community that are chosen to benefit from the Community Benefit Fund. The Community Benefit Fund would be calculated based on the Scheme’s generating capacity (MW per year) and delivered in line with industry standards for renewable energy projects.</p> <p>Separately from the Community Benefit Fund, the Planning Statement [APP/5.5.1] confirms that community benefits would be realised at a local level, should consent be granted for the Scheme. For example, the outline Public Right of Way and Permissive Path Management Plan (oPRoWPPMP) [APP-192] establishes how permissive paths proposed as part of the Scheme will be designed and implemented to improve accessibility across the Site. Further, efforts to provide specific benefits in locally impacted communities are set out in the outline Employment, Skills and Supply Chain Strategy (oESSCS) [APP-195] (for employment and economy, including proposals to promote local apprenticeships and training schemes, with the aim of enhancing local skills and qualification rates), in the outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (oLEMP) [APP/7.11.1] (for landscape and ecological improvements).</p>
Q1.0.3	The applicant	<p>Planning History – overlap with portion of cable route</p> <p>Table 1.1, Planning Statement [APP-043], describes that a portion of the cable route from application reference Breckland District Council 3PL/2022/1215/F overlaps with the proposed development along the A1065 from the two southern land parcels to the land which lies in the field south of the junction between the A1065 and Southacre Road. With reference to paragraph 3.5.4, Planning Statement, could the applicant provide further details of its assessment that there are no significant implications arising</p>	<p>Section 3.5 of the Planning Statement [APP/5.5.1] outlines how the search of cumulative developments was carried out and resulted in a ‘long list’ being compiled with all relevant developments within a particular Zone of Influence (ZoI) of the Scheme. This ZoI is defined by each technical topic in their responsive assessment methodologies, and the full list is set out in ES Chapter 17: In-Combination Effects [APP/6.2.1]. The developments in the long list were then screened to determine their potential interaction with the Scheme, and a ‘short list’ of developments was created for further assessment. As a result, only application 3PL/2022/1215/F was found to overlap with the Scheme; however, given the scale of that development, i.e. a small overlap with the cable route which is expected to be completed prior to any commencement of construction works for the Scheme, it does not pose a significant interaction.</p>



ExQ	Respondent	Question	Applicant’s Response
Q1.0.4	The applicant	<p>from the location of the proposed development upon any of the identified planning permissions.</p> <p>Project-level design principles – post consent</p> <p>Table 1-1, Design Approach Document [APP-045], describes that where these plans and documents allow for flexibility within detailed design, project-level design principles may be secured within the outline management plans to inform future design choices (within the consented parameters) post-consent.</p> <p>(i) Could the applicant provide further detail on what specific measures would be implemented and secured to ensure that good design is achieved postconsent to include the topic of landscape and visual?</p> <p>(ii) Could the applicant confirm what post-consent arrangements are proposed for the design champion?</p>	<p>i) Section 8 of the Design Approach Document (DAD) [AS-009 to AS-011] explains how the Design Principles established by the Applicant at the outset of the design process have influenced the location and spatial extents of the various elements of the Scheme. It also describes how each of the Design Principles will be secured through the Requirements of the draft DCO [APP/3.1.1] which secures the detailed design and management plans. For example, Section 8.3 of the DAD explains how opportunities to converse and enhance the character of the landscape were identified and that these have been embedded into the Scheme and secured through measures within the management plans, which include for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retention of woodland blocks – all woodland blocks have been incorporated into the layout of the Scheme • Conservation of well treed hedgerows – all hedgerows have been retained within the Scheme and the Green Infrastructure Strategy Plans at Appendix 1 of the oLEMP [APP/7.11.1], set out which existing and proposed hedgerows are to be strengthened with additional hedgerow tree planting; and • Within the Design Principles, Parameters and Commitments [APP/5.8.1] the Applicant has committed to externally finish elements of the Scheme to be in keeping with the prevailing surrounding environment to sit as discreetly as possible within the landscape. The exact colour will be agreed with the relevant planning authorities prior to construction. <p>Further to the Design Principles set out within the DAD [AS-009 to AS-011], the oLEMP [APP/7.11.1] sets out ten strategic landscape and ecological opportunities, which set a framework for the operational landscape and ecological management of the Scheme. Requirement 7 of the draft DCO [APP/3.1.1] requires that the landscape and ecological management plan must be substantially in accordance with the oLEMP [APP/7.11.1].</p> <p>ii) Section 8 of the DAD sets out how the final design will be delivered through the Requirements of the draft DCO [APP/3.1.1] which secures the detailed design and management plans. The adherence to the Design Principles, Parameters and Commitments [APP/5.8.1] and the measures prescribed within the various management plans will ensure that good design continues to be delivered at the detailed design stage. The wording of the Requirements sets out that the detailed design must be substantially in accordance with the outline management plans and, where relevant, approved by the relevant planning authority prior to commencement of the Scheme. These control mechanisms provide sufficient fixity to ensure that good design will be considered and embedded within the detailed design of the Scheme.</p>
Q1.0.5	The applicant	<p>Castle Acre Parish Council’s representations</p> <p>Castle Acre Parish Council’s (CAPC) concerns in its Relevant Representation (RR) [RR-013] include:</p> <p><i>“In particular, the proposal fails to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Demonstrate that reasonable alternatives, including less harmful locations for key infrastructure, have been properly assessed.</i> • <i>Provide sufficient evidence that the harm to identified heritage assets, their setting, and the wider cultural landscape of the Nar Valley are clearly outweighed by public benefits, as required by NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework) Paragraphs 199–202.</i> 	<p>The Applicant notes the Examining Authority has highlighted points of concern from Castle Acre Parish Council’s (CAPC) Relevant Representation [RR-013]. The Applicant has addressed CAPC’s concern in full in the Applicant’s Response to Relevant Representations [APP/8.4], including this point at CAPC26 of that document.</p>



ExQ	Respondent	Question	Applicant’s Response
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequately assess cumulative impacts within the Nar Valley and the wider context of extensive existing and proposed energy infrastructure. • Provide sufficient certainty that archaeological and ecological assets would not be irreversibly harmed.” <p>Could the applicant comment on each of the above concerns.</p>	

Table 2.1: Aviation

ExQ	Respondent	Question	Applicant’s Response
Q2.0.1	The applicant	<p>Proposed meeting with the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) to discuss effects on aviation</p> <p>During the Issue Specific Hearing 1 [EV5-004], the applicant proposed a meeting with the DIO prior to deadline 1 to discuss the effects from the proposed development on aviation at RAF Marham. Following the above meeting, could the applicant include an update in its Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) with the DIO regarding its proposals to address the DIO’s concerns referred to in its RR [RR-051] which includes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. Interference with the Precision Approach Radar (PAR) II. Safeguarding to manage birdstrike hazard to air traffic using RAF Marham III. RAF Marham’s air traffic control staff in the air traffic control tower could be subject to the effects of glare from the proposed development and that glint or glare effects might impact on some aviation procedures 	<p>The Applicant and the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) have a meeting scheduled for Wednesday 3 June 2026. The SoCG with Ministry of Defence [APP/5.22], submitted at Deadline 1, reflects the latest position of the parties in relation to the matters noted by the ExA and will be updated at a subsequent deadline to reflect ongoing engagement.</p>
Q2.0.2	The applicant	<p>Cumulative effects for aviation receptors</p> <p>Paragraph 16.6.37, ES Chapter 16 [APP-065], states that:</p> <p><i>“For aviation receptors, cumulative effects are possible; however, modelling suggests that the glare intensity categorisation would not increase towards any of the aviation receptors when considering the schemes cumulatively (see Section 7.2.2 of ES Appendix 16.2:Solar Photovoltaic Glint and Glare Study [APP/6.4]). No significant impact is therefore predicted, though this will continue to be considered as further details emerge regarding High Grove Solar.”</i></p> <p>Could the applicant provide an update regarding possible cumulative effects for aviation receptors from High Grove Solar Farm?</p>	<p>Currently, limited information is publicly available regarding the panel configurations for High Grove Solar Farm. It is understood that the Preliminary Environmental Information Report for High Grove Solar considered options for both fixed south facing and single axis tracking panels for that project.</p> <p>The only panel areas of High Grove Solar Farm which could produce cumulative effects for aviation receptors would be the central panel areas, which are directly adjacent to the Scheme and border High Grove Solar Farm to the south and east. The south-eastern section of the Site which borders High Grove Solar Farm is not predicted to be visible to the ATC tower, and there are therefore no cumulative effects predicted upon the ATC tower. Cumulative effects could be possible towards the approach paths and visual circuits at RAF Marham, but this would require the Scheme and High Grove Solar Farm to share the same panel technology. Indicative modelling has been conducted for this scenario, which indicates that any glare would be within the same intensity classification, and therefore impacts are not considered to be of a greater severity due to cumulative effects.</p>



Table 3.1: Biodiversity and Ecology (including Habitats Regulations Assessment)

ExQ	Respondent	Question	Applicant’s Response
Q3.0.1	The applicant Natural England	<p>Bird surveys – Stone Curlew</p> <p>An IP RR [RR-058] includes concerns that:</p> <p><i>“As stone curlew nesting on arable land is dependent on crop rotation (they will usually only nest in years when there are spring-sown root crops) they may only nest one year in every 4 or 5 years so a survey in a single year may not record any of this species. It is therefore unsafe to conclude that “no significant adverse effects on Breckland SPA in relation to functionally linked land are anticipated”. Effects on stone curlew would not be limited to the construction phase; the operational phase may also deter nesting.”</i></p> <p>An IP [RR-019] also raises concerns regarding sightings of Stone Curlew in both 2024 and 2025, and refers to:</p> <p><i>“The RSPB have also previously submitted on this Drovers project & stated that a minimum of 3 years of Stone Curlew survey work should be enacted before any decisions are made about this industrial scale solar project. Please can you also confirm that this RSPB submission is being put into action?”</i></p> <p>Could the applicant and Natural England comment on the above concerns, to include commenting on whether sufficient bird surveys have been undertaken to support the conclusion quoted above?</p>	<p>For the concerns raised by IP [RR-058], the Applicant notes the Examining Authority has highlighted a point of concern from their Relevant Representation. The Applicant has addressed the IP’s concern in full in the Applicant’s Response to Relevant Representations [APP/8.4], including this point at TJ5 of that document.</p> <p>For the concerns raised by IP [RR-019], the Applicant notes the Examining Authority has highlighted a point of concern from CAPC Relevant Representation. The Applicant has addressed CAPC’s concern in full in the Applicant’s Response to Relevant Representations [APP/8.4], including this point at CAPC17 of that document.</p>
Q3.0.2	The applicant Natural England	<p>Sufficiency of Bird Surveys</p> <p>CAPC [RR-013] is concerned that the bird surveys submitted are ‘insufficiently’ comprehensive to provide confidence that all protected and red-listed species which have previously been recorded on the proposed site and in the surrounding area have been fully identified.</p> <p>Could the applicant and Natural England comment on the above concern.</p>	<p>The Applicant notes the Examining Authority has highlighted a point of concern from CAPC’s Relevant Representation. The Applicant has addressed CAPC’s concern in full in the Applicant’s Response to Relevant Representations [APP/8.4], including this point at CAPC17 of that document.</p>
Q3.0.3	The applicant	<p>Ground-Nesting Bird Mitigation Habitat Sequencing</p> <p>The outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (oLEMP) [APP-191] describes the Ground-Nesting Bird Mitigation Habitat from paragraphs 7.3.95 to 7.3.104. Could the applicant confirm the proposed phasing of these works in relation to the proposed construction sequencing and how this would be secured?</p>	<p>The Skylark mitigation in the form of Skylark plots will be provided annually in line with the submitted information, created (in line with the nature of Skylark plots within arable crops) at the time of seed drilling within the relevant crops. The plots will be in place during the first breeding season following commencement of construction works (such that no break in seasonal provision will be created for Skylark).</p> <p>The Curlew mitigation grassland will necessarily be phased to follow the adjacent infrastructure works (with creation immediately thereafter) to avoid disturbance. Nonetheless, infrastructure works will necessarily take place in advance of PV installation and the Curlew mitigation area will therefore be in place prior to loss of open areas with potential suitability for Curlew nesting elsewhere within the Order Limits, such that continuity of suitable habitats will remain in place at all times.</p>



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			The phasing would be secured within the detailed LEMP (and, indeed, the updated oLEMP [APP/7.11.1] at Deadline 1 confirms that a suitable phasing schedule will be included within the detailed LEMP once the associated timescales for the construction phase become clear).
Q3.0.4	The applicant	<p>Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment Report</p> <p>Paragraph 5.1.3, Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment Report [APP-184], notes that the Norfolk Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) has been formally published/adopted on 31 October 2025 and accordingly, the BNG assessment will be updated in order to reflect the published LNRS and also ensure that the identified trading errors are resolved appropriately.</p> <p>Could the applicant please provide an update on when the BNG assessment will be updated to take account of the above points.</p>	The Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment Report [APP/7.4.1] has been updated and provided at Deadline 1 to address these matters.
Q3.0.5	The applicant	<p>Protection of veteran trees</p> <p>With reference to National Policy Statement (NPS) EN-1 paragraph 5.4.32, could the applicant provide further details on how it would address the following concerns from the Forestry Commission’s RR [RR-131] and how these would be secured in the draft Development Consent Order (dDCO) [APP-018].</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • some construction traffic will utilize [sic] existing access tracks that are in the root protection areas of some of the veteran trees. • an increase in traffic, particularly heavy construction traffic could lead to habitat degradation. • any effect from the incursion into root protection areas of veteran trees may not become immediately apparent and will need to be extensively monitored, even after construction. 	The Applicant notes the Examining Authority has highlighted a point of concern from the Forestry Commission’s Relevant Representation. The Applicant has addressed the Forestry Commission’s concern in full in the Applicant’s Response to Relevant Representations [APP/8.4] , including this point at FOR3 of that document.
Q3.0.6	The applicant	<p>The effect of decommissioning on Biodiversity Net Gain</p> <p>ES Chapter 7 [APP-056], paragraph 7.11.21 includes that: <i>“following the implementation of the proposed mitigation and enhancement measures, ecologically valuable habitats will be entirely retained and protected with buffers maintained throughout the construction, operational and decommissioning phases.”</i></p> <p>Draft DCO [APP-018] R20 (1) states: <i>“The date of decommissioning for each part of the authorised development must be no later than 60 years following the date of final commissioning.”</i></p> <p>Given the above inconsistency, could the applicant clarify whether the above proposed mitigation and enhancement measures, ecologically valuable habitats would be entirely retained and protected with buffers during the decommissioning phase and if so</p>	<p>In relation to the selected wording from paragraph 7.11.21., this was intended to relate to <i>existing</i> ecologically valuable habitats (which therefore form the current site baseline), further qualified by the remainder of the highlighted sentence that <i>“...whilst new habitats will be provided...”</i>.</p> <p>All of the <i>existing ecologically valuable habitats</i> will indeed be maintained and protected as stated, including during and following decommissioning and the statements are therefore not considered inconsistent. In addition to the maintenance and protection of existing habitats, a number of enhancement measures will be provided. Subsequent to decommissioning, the ownership of the Site will be returned to the existing landowner and therefore any future retention or otherwise would be outside of the scope of the DCO from that point in time.</p> <p>The BNG Assessment has been undertaken using the government’s statutory metric, in line with the guidance available (which relates to measures undertaken on land for a period of 30 years, reflecting temporal gains and risks across that period). Nonetheless, the oLEMP [APP/7.11.1] commits to the suitable management of habitats for the full operational lifetime of the Scheme.</p>



ExQ	Respondent	Question	Applicant’s Response
		would remain insitu permanently; or would they be decommissioned.	
Q3.0.7	The applicant	<p>Woodland Blocks</p> <p>The Forestry Commission [RR-131] advise that it would ideally like to see woodland creation carried out in 5 hectare (ha) blocks or that connecting planting with existing woodlands, should create blocks of at least 5ha.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Confirm the areas of the proposed individual woodland blocks. ii. Can the Forestry Commission’s advice be accommodated? If not, provide justification. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) There are two separate proposed woodland block areas within Field 27, with respective areas of approximately 0.59ha and 0.48ha. These proposed woodland blocks are situated to the south of Fincham Drove, adjacent to Bartholomew’s Hill Plantation. ii) There is not a sufficient amount of available and appropriately-located land within the Order limits to accommodate a proposed woodland of 5ha or greater, when taking account of the various mitigations already proposed alongside the proposed development areas. As stated above, the Scheme proposes new woodland areas of approximately 1.07ha. When considered alongside the adjacent Bartholomew’s Hills Plantation, which measures approximately 4.254 ha, the total canopy area once new woodland is established would equate to over 5ha. It should be noted that, as well as the creation of these new woodland areas, the Scheme also proposes new lengths of hedgerow, extensive new reinforcement infill hedgerow planting and new hedgerow trees as detailed within the oLEMP [APP/7.11.1].
Q3.0.8	The applicant Natural England	<p>Effects on bat species</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. An IP [RR-058] requests a review of the research from the University of Stirling’s Article Renewable energies and biodiversity: Impact of ground-mounted solar photovoltaic sites on bat activity, which concludes that “Ground-mounted solar photovoltaic developments have a significant negative effect on bat activity”. ii. Norfolk Wildlife Trust (NWT) [RR-045] raises a significant concern that the proposed siting of substations and Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) within Fields 24 and 27 coincide with some of the highest levels of bat activity recorded on site, as identified in the Baseline Ecology Report. In particular, it states: <i>“15. The presence of barbastelle bats, a protected species, within the red line boundary is of particular concern. Paragraph 7.7.25 (Chap 7, ES) states that no new lighting is proposed within the Solar PV (Photo-Voltaic) Site areas and that new lighting will be limited to locations essential to security, namely the Customer Substation, National Grid Substation, and Battery Energy Storage System (BESS).</i> <i>16. Currently, the BESS and substation are proposed to be located within fields 24 and 27. These are the fields with some of the highest recordings if [sic] bat activity.”</i> <p>Could the applicant and Natural England comment on each of the above concerns.</p>	<p>The Applicant notes the Examining Authority has highlighted a point of concern from Terry Jermy’s (MP) Relevant Representation. The Applicant has addressed Terry’s concern in full in the Applicant’s Response to Relevant Representations [APP/8.4], including this point at TJ7 of that document.</p> <p>The Applicant notes the Examining Authority has highlighted points of concern from Norfolk Wildlife Trust’s (NWT) Relevant Representation. The Applicant has addressed NWT’s concerns in full in the Applicant’s Response to Relevant Representations [APP/8.4], including these points at NW10, NW14 and NW15 of that document.</p>
Q3.0.9	The applicant Natural England	<p>Skylark and curlew mitigation area - impact from new pylons</p> <p>NWT [RR-045] raises concerns that new pylons would be installed and that this pylon route would run straight through the new area</p>	<p>The Applicant notes the Examining Authority has highlighted a point of concerns from Norfolk Wildlife Trust’s (NWT) Relevant Representation. The Applicant has addressed NWT’s concern in full in the Applicant’s Response to Relevant Representations [APP/8.4], including this point at NW16 of that document.</p>



ExQ	Respondent	Question	Applicant’s Response
		<p>proposed for skylark and curlew mitigation. Furthermore, NWT is concerned that installing pylons in an area proposed for curlew mitigation could significantly undermine the success of the area by causing issues of collision for adult birds and by providing perches for predators; and that guidance is that new infrastructure such as pylons should not be placed in sensitive areas.</p> <p>Could the applicant and Natural England comment on the above concern regarding the impact from the proposed new pylons on the effectiveness of the skylark and curlew mitigation area.</p>	
Q3.0.10	The applicant Natural England	<p>River Nar - Biodiversity Action Plan</p> <p>CAPC concerns [RR-013] include that the River Nar (a chalk stream designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)) supports an outstanding assemblage of dragonflies as well as the Biodiversity Action Plan mollusc species, Desmoulins’ whorl snail, listed as ‘endangered’.</p> <p>Could the applicant and Natural England comment on the above concern.</p>	The Applicant notes the Examining Authority has highlighted a point of concerns from CAPC’s Relevant Representation. The Applicant has addressed CAPC’s concern in full in the Applicant’s Response to Relevant Representations [APP/8.4] , including this point at CAPC16 of that document.
Q3.0.11	The applicant Natural England	<p>Deer presence and activity</p> <p>Sporle with Palgrave Parish Council’s (PC) RR [RR-054] includes concerns that despite the PC’s request in its response to the statutory consultation, no survey of deer numbers has been undertaken, nor a deer management plan undertaken with surrounding landowners and the High Groves development.</p> <p>Could the applicant and Natural England comment on the above concern.</p>	The Applicant notes the Examining Authority has highlighted a point of concern from Sporle with Palgrave Parish Council’s Relevant Representation. The Applicant has addressed the Parish Council’s concern in full in the Applicant’s Response to Relevant Representations [APP/8.4] , including this point at PPC18 of that document.
Q3.0.12	The applicant	<p>Habitats Regulations Assessment – Consideration of decommissioning phase activities</p> <p>Could the applicant clarify how decommissioning phase activities have been assessed for the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA).</p>	The assessment methodology in relation to decommissioning activities is the same as that in respect of construction and operational activities, as set out at Section 1.3 within the Shadow Habitats Regulations Assessment [AS-057] . In terms of the nature of the decommissioning activities assessed, these remain as set out within the outline Decommissioning Strategy (oDS) [APP/7.10.1] and would therefore be similar to construction measures in terms of any potential for likely significant effects.

Table 4.1: Climate Change

ExQ	Respondent	Question	Applicant’s Response
Q4.0.2	The applicant	<p>GHG Reduction Strategy</p> <p>Paragraph 5.3.7 of NPS EN-1 states that the steps taken to minimise and offset emissions should be set out in a GHG Reduction Strategy secured under the DCO; no GHG Reduction Strategy document was provided at application stage. The outline</p>	It is acknowledged that Paragraph 5.3.7 of NPS EN-1 requires a GHG Reduction Strategy to be produced. The reduction strategy measures are included within the outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (oCEMP) [APP/7.6.1] and outline Operational Environmental Management Plan (oOEMP) [APP/7.8.1] rather than as a standalone document. These measures are set out as below: Reducing waste:



ExQ	Respondent	Question	Applicant’s Response
		<p>CEMP [APP-186] includes mitigation measures for reducing GHG emissions during construction, however the outline OEMP focuses mostly on measures for climate change adaptation. These two outline plans only focus on identified mitigation and do not set out all the steps taken, through design decisions, to minimise carbon emissions.</p> <p>In the absence of a GHG Reduction Strategy document, could the applicant provide further details on how they have met the policy requirement in paragraph 5.3.7 of NPS EN-1, detailing how design and layout decisions considered carbon minimisation, as well as how operational management will minimise carbon emissions? Could the applicant also confirm how the supply chain would be managed post-consent to ensure GHG emissions are minimised and the mechanism through which this would be secured in the dDCO?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reuse of materials on-site wherever practicable (e.g. reuse of excavated soil for landscaping); • Off-Site prefabrication, where practical, including the use of prefabricated elements; • Segregation of waste at source, where practical, to facilitate a high proportion and high-quality recycling; • Designing, constructing and implementing the Scheme in such a way as to minimise the creation of waste and maximise the use of alternative materials with lower embodied carbon, such as locally sourced products and materials with a higher recycled content where feasible; • Reusing suitable infrastructure and resources already available within the Site where practicable to minimise the use of natural resources and unnecessary materials (e.g. reusing excavated soil for fill requirements); and • Off-Site reuse, recycling and recovery of materials and waste where reuse on-Site is not practical (e.g. through use of an off-site waste segregation or treatment facility or for direct reuse or reprocessing off-Site). <p>General practices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopting the Considerate Constructors Scheme (CCS) to assist in reducing pollution, including GHGs, from the Scheme by employing good industry standard practice measures (e.g. recycling and separating waste and choosing low carbon and recyclable materials where feasible); and • Retention of existing vegetation as far as practicable. <p>Good practice measures to reduce construction plant emissions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shutting down plant and equipment that is in intermittent use; • Avoiding idling; • Exploring use of alternative fuels; • Enforcing site speed limits; • Providing training to all site personnel on pollution control and methods to minimise emissions; and • Effective planning to reduce trips and waste. <p>Appropriate standard and good practice control measures will be included in the detailed CEMP, which would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraging the use of lower carbon modes of transport by identifying and communicating local bus connections and pedestrian and cycle access routes to / from the Scheme to all construction staff, and providing appropriate facilities for the safe storage of cycles; • Liaising with construction personnel for the potential to implement staff minibuses and car sharing options; Implementing a Travel Plan, as stated in the Outline Construction Traffic Management Plan (oCTMP) [APP/7.7.1]; • Switching vehicles and plant off when not in use and ensuring construction vehicles conform to current UK emissions standards, as stated in ES Chapter 13: Climate Change [APP/6.2.2]; and • Conducting regular planned maintenance of the construction plant and machinery to optimise efficiency.



ExQ	Respondent	Question	Applicant’s Response
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducting a study of the Environmental Product Declarations (EPDs) from major component suppliers wherever possible. <p>Flood Risk</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access tracks will be constructed of a permeable surface, with additional passive drainage features such as shallow ditches and filter drains that run parallel with the tracks; • The requirement for new access crossings over watercourses will be minimised through the utilisation of existing access tracks/Sub-Site vehicular entry points. Any new crossing points will be in accordance with the EA and Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) design requirements; and • Inverters will incorporate permeable surfaces with aggregate sub-base or filter drains around their perimeters with nominal outlet (piped or surface level) to the nearest access track filter drain or swale. <p>General Practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contractor will monitor weather forecasts and plan works accordingly, protecting workers and resources from any extreme weather conditions; • The Contractors will monitor weather forecasts and receive Environment Agency’s flood alerts and plan works accordingly, protecting workers and resources from any extreme weather conditions such as storms or flooding; • Health and Safety Plans and Risk Assessments developed for construction and decommissioning activities will be required to account for potential climate change impacts on workers, such as flooding and heatwaves. This will include for the provision of flood defence equipment (e.g. sandbags) on site and best practice health management measures for construction staff working in heat such as wearing loose clothing, staying hydrated and applying sun protection; • Protecting workers and resources from extreme weather conditions through appropriate PPE and working practices; Using equipment’s cooling systems where necessary/adapting working practices and equipment used based on current weather conditions; and • Fire suppression system on site to rapidly action in case of fire.
Q4.0.3	The applicant	<p>Sourcing of Solar Panels and Batteries</p> <p>Paragraph 5.3.9 of NPS EN-1 requires the Secretary of State (SoS) to be content that the applicant has taken all reasonable steps to reduce the GHG emissions of the construction and decommissioning stage of the development. The applicant states in the updated Chapter 13 of the ES [AS-020] that the manufacturer of the PV panels and BESS is assumed to be based in China with table 13-22 stating the transportation costs of these aspects from China equates to 6.76% of the total CO₂e emissions for the construction phase.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. What reasonable steps are proposed to reduce the GHG emissions of the construction and decommissioning stage of the proposed development? II. Could the applicant set out how other options to source PV panels and batteries from locations nearer to the development site were considered and why these were discounted? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> i) Please see response to Q.4.02 above. ii) For the purposes of the Climate Change Greenhouse Gas assessment, conservative assumptions have been used for the sourcing of materials, e.g. consideration has been given for all materials to be shipped from China so as to provide a conservative assessment. In reality, efforts would be made to source products and materials locally wherever possible. This would be achieved through the Applicant’s commitments through the Solar Stewardship Initiative.



ExQ	Respondent	Question	Applicant’s Response																					
Q4.0.4	The applicant	<p>Non-road mobile machinery (NRMM) mitigation</p> <p>Paragraph 13.4.15 of updated Chapter 13 of the ES [AS-020] refers to several measures for NRMM which, if assumed to be in place, the applicant considers there wouldn’t be any significant emissions from tippers or other NRMM. However, the outline CEMP [APP-186] only refers to these measures as ‘recommended’ mitigation.</p> <p>Could the applicant consider rewording of the mitigation references for NRMM in the outline CEMP making commitment to them more explicit, given the reliance upon these measures being in place as part of the assumptions for the GHG emissions presented in Chapter 13 of the ES?</p>	<p>The oCEMP [APP/7.6.1] has been updated at Deadline 1 to make the commitment to measures in relation to NRMM more explicit, as requested by the ExA. See Section 3.8 and 4.8 of that document for the relevant updates.</p>																					
Q4.0.5	The applicant	<p>Carbon Equivalent Calculations</p> <p>Updated chapter 13 of the ES [AS-020] sets out the carbon calculations used as part of the GHG impact assessment within section 13.9, however there is no appendix providing evidence of all the calculations undertaken. There are inconsistencies in some of the numbers presented within the chapter, for example paragraph 13.9.15 has inconsistencies in the weight of silicon assumed for the panels, and paragraph 13.9.25 appears to have an error in the quoted tCO_{2e} for the transformers and switchgear elements. The clarity of information available regards the Lifecycle carbon assessment is also raised by an IP [RR-002].</p> <p>In the interest of transparency for all interested parties, could the applicant check that the all the calculations and numbers presented in section 13.9 are correct and where corrections are required, provide an updated chapter as necessary?</p>	<p>All carbon calculations in ES Chapter 13: Climate Change [APP/6.2.2] have been reviewed. The review identified four minor discrepancies with negligible impact on overall conclusions.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Paragraph 13.9.15: The Silicon weight per panel was rounded from 1.58 to 1.6. It is not considered that this change is significant, however should the 1.58 value be used the total CO_{2e} emissions from construction and embodied carbon would change by <0.03%. Paragraph 13.9.25: Full stop rather than comma in total embodied carbon for Transformers and Switchgear. The value in the table remains correct. Table 13-21: Typographical error in reported value for embodied carbon emissions associated with Pylon Installation. The total value should be 2,163.1tCO_{2e}. The aggregate pylon installation/removal tCO_{2e} figure remains accurate. Table 13-27: Rounding error, as percentages added up to 100.01. The decommissioning emission percentages have been corrected (see amended table below). <p>Table 13-27 Decommissioning GHG Emissions</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Emissions Source</th> <th>Emissions (tCO_{2e})</th> <th>% Decommissioning Emissions</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Worker Transportation</td> <td>2,855</td> <td>58.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Removal of onsite products and materials</td> <td>1,620</td> <td>32.92</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Energy Usage for Decommissioning Period</td> <td>251</td> <td>5.09</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Waste</td> <td>193</td> <td>3.92</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Water Usage</td> <td>3</td> <td>0.07</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>4,922</td> <td>100.00</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>It should be noted that, while specific figures are presented with regards to total emissions of CO_{2e}, these are all based on best estimates at the time of writing the ES Chapter, so as to be able to provide a useful</p>	Emissions Source	Emissions (tCO _{2e})	% Decommissioning Emissions	Worker Transportation	2,855	58.00	Removal of onsite products and materials	1,620	32.92	Energy Usage for Decommissioning Period	251	5.09	Waste	193	3.92	Water Usage	3	0.07	Total	4,922	100.00
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ExQ	Respondent	Question	Applicant’s Response
			<p>assessment of potential emissions from the different source of products and activities which form the Scheme.</p> <p>This methodology allows for the main sources of emission from the Scheme to be identified and also those sources which are less significant. While these specific numbers may be subject to some change based on specific assumptions made or changes in emissions factors over time, the overall conclusion is not considered to change.</p> <p>ES Chapter 13: Climate Change [APP/6.2.2] has been updated at Deadline 1 to address these discrepancies.</p>

Table 5.1: Compulsory acquisition, temporary possession and other land or rights considerations

ExQ	Respondent	Question	Applicant’s Response
Q5.0.1	The applicant	<p>Option Agreements</p> <p>In the Statement of Reasons (SoR) [APP-021] the final paragraph of Section 4, includes that:</p> <p><i>“In summary, at the time of submission of the DCO Application, Option Agreements have been entered into with the relevant landowners for the elements of the Site that comprise the Solar PV Site, the BESS, the Customer Substation and the National Grid Substation and heads of terms have been issued for the remainder of the rights required.”</i></p> <p>Furthermore, paragraph 4.1.3 states:</p> <p><i>“Notwithstanding where an agreement has been reached, it is necessary for the Applicant to be granted the compulsory acquisition powers included in the draft DCO [APP/3.1] so as to protect against a scenario whereby contracts are not adhered to or are otherwise set aside, for example: (i) freeholder owners of the land within the Order land (where agreement has been reached) do not grant a lease of the land in accordance with the terms of the completed option agreements; or (ii) the contracting party dies, is subject to divorce proceedings, or is declared insolvent. In those circumstances, it would be in the public interest for the Scheme to proceed and the interests in question effectively converted into a claim for compensation. The Applicant also needs powers to suspend rights and override easements and other rights in the Order land to the extent that they would conflict with the Scheme.”</i></p> <p>I. Could the applicant confirm the durations of the lease included in the above Option Agreements for the Solar PV Site, the BESS and the Customer Substation?</p> <p>II. In the case of the National Grid Substation and the Grid Infrastructure, how does the option agreement take account of the outline Decommissioning Strategy [APP-190], paragraph 2.1.3 which states: “The National Grid Substation and the Grid Connection Infrastructure would remain in situ.”?</p>	<p>i) The Applicant is subject to contractual confidentiality obligations, including the terms of the Option Agreements, which prevent disclosure of the relevant commercial agreements without consent from the corresponding parties, which the Applicant does not have at the time of writing.</p> <p>ii) The Lease to be granted pursuant to the relevant Option Agreement does not require reinstatement of any infrastructure which has been adopted by the Network Operator i.e. National Grid Electricity Transmission Plc.</p>



ExQ	Respondent	Question	Applicant’s Response
Q5.0.2	The applicant	<p>Unknown ownership, occupation, or interests in land</p> <p>In paragraph 4.1.4 of the SoR, the applicant notes:</p> <p><i>“There are a number of plots within the Land Plan [APP/2.2] which are not registered at Land Registry. Following diligent inquiry, ownership of a number of these plots has been established, however, there are interests identified in the Book of Reference [APP/4.3] where it has not been possible to identify ownership. Three statements (“Unknown, The Occupier and The Owner”) are given in the Book of Reference [APP/4.3] when diligent inquiry has been carried out and it has still not been possible to obtain information. The Applicant has carried out searches and enquiries with the Land Registry, site visits and notices have been and will be erected on site to seek to identify unknown landowners or persons with an interest in the land.”</i></p> <p>Could the applicant set out what further steps will be undertaken up to the end of the Examination to identify unknown ownership, occupation, or interests in land?</p>	<p>The Applicant is, and will continue to, monitor and refresh HM Land Registry data throughout examination to identify any changes in unknown ownership, occupation or interest in land. This will also be accompanied by desk-based searches. The Applicant will also be erecting further unknown notices on the relevant land within the Site to help with the identification of unknown landowners or persons with an interest in that land.</p>
Q5.0.3	The applicant	<p>Updates during the Examination</p> <p>(i) Could the applicant provide updates to the matters requested in Appendix F of the Rule 6 letter [PD-006] at relevant Examination deadlines:</p> <p>a) Updates to the Book of Reference (BoR) [APP-023], SoR [APP-021] and Land Plan [APP-008];</p> <p>b) Updates to the Land and Rights Negotiation tracker [APP-024] to include identifying progress with all unknown landowners (For example, plot number 2-25) or persons with an interest in the land; and</p> <p>(ii) Can the applicant ensure that any changes to the BoR [APP-023] are, where necessary, carried through to the SoR [APP-021].</p>	<p>(i) (a) The Applicant has provided an updated Book of Reference [APP/4.3.2] at Deadline 1 to reflect a small point of correction in the introductory text. Otherwise, no updates are required to this document, nor the Statement of Reasons [APP-021] nor the Land Plans [APP-008], so those documents have not been updated further at Deadline 1.</p> <p>(b) The Applicant has provided an updated Land and Rights Negotiation Tracker [APP/4.4.1] at Deadline 1 to reflect the latest updates on negotiations with all landowners.</p> <p>(ii) The Applicant will ensure, throughout the Examination, that any changes to the Book of Reference [APP/4.3.2] are (where necessary) carried through to the Statement of Reasons [APP-021].</p>
Q5.0.4	The applicant	<p>Acquisition of freehold</p> <p>With reference to the BoR [APP-023], the applicant seeks to acquire the freehold of plot numbers 1-01, 1-06, 1-11, 2-14, 2-17, 2-18, 2-20, 2-24, 2-25, 2-26, 2-29, 2-30, 3-38, 3-39, 3-41, 4-43, 4-45.</p> <p>In each case, and in the context of the temporary nature of the proposed development, please could the applicant explain how it has minimised the powers sought?</p> <p>Why is it not sufficient to acquire rights and/ or impose restrictive covenants?</p>	<p>The Applicant cannot, via compulsory acquisition powers, acquire a leasehold interest in the relevant land. For the plots referenced, the Applicant (in order to install solar panels on the relevant land for a period of 60 years) will need to occupy the land (and the landowner will, therefore, need to be excluded from using the relevant land for this period). This cannot be achieved solely by the acquisition of rights and/or the imposition of restrictive covenants; therefore, the Applicant must permanently acquire (per the provisions of the draft DCO [APP/3.1.1]) the freehold of the plots referenced. Temporary powers over these plots, for that 60-year period, are not appropriate for the use sought.</p> <p>The Applicant further notes that it is currently engaged with the Affected Person(s) to seek to acquire an interest in the land via negotiation and voluntary agreement, where still required. The priority for the Applicant is to secure an option agreement and minimise the use of the powers sought.</p> <p>The Applicant undertook a site selection process and, through the diligent inquiry of this process, the Applicant refined the Order limits (as submitted) and is now only seeking powers relating to land within the design envelope identified for the Scheme.</p> <p>m. The current powers sought are a last resort, should voluntary agreement not be reached, which will ensure that the Scheme can (in any scenario) be built and operated as required. Furthermore, the Applicant is</p>



ExQ	Respondent	Question	Applicant’s Response
			seeking a long lease term and is actively engaged with Affected Person(s) within the Order limits to secure the necessary rights for the Scheme.
Q5.0.6	The applicant Statutory Undertakers	<p>Statutory Undertakers interests</p> <p>With reference to the BoR [APP-023] is any of the land that is proposed to be acquired Statutory Undertakers’ land for the purposes of s127(3) of the Planning Act 2008 (PA2008)?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. Provide an indication of whether any impediments to securing agreements are envisaged? II. Do the Statutory Undertakers have any concerns about whether the tests set out in s127(3)(a) or (b), s127(6)(a) or (b), and s138(4) of the PA2008 have been met? 	<p>In relation to the query regarding section 127(3) of the PA2008, the Applicant can confirm no land that is proposed to be acquired (either freehold acquisition or acquisition of rights) is owned by a Statutory Undertaker.</p> <p>The Applicant can confirm that land owned by National Highways forms part of the Scheme; however, this land is only proposed to be used on a temporary basis. The Applicant is currently engaged with National Highways regarding the form of protective provisions included in the draft DCO [APP/3.1.1].</p> <p>As set out in the Land and Rights Negotiation Tracker [APP/4.4.1], there are a number of Statutory Undertakers with interests and apparatus within the Order limits. The Applicant has included protective provisions in the draft DCO [APP/3.1.1] which provide adequate protection and ensure no serious detriment is caused to the Statutory Undertakers’ apparatus and undertaking as a result of the compulsory acquisition powers being sought. The Applicant therefore considers that the tests set out in s127(6)(a) and s138(4) of the Planning Act 2008 have been satisfied. The Applicant is continuing to negotiate the form of protective provisions with the relevant statutory undertakers and does not envisage any impediments to securing agreements with the Statutory Undertakers.</p>
Q5.0.7	The applicant	<p>Category 3 persons</p> <p>Part 2 of the BoR [APP-023] lists ‘Category 3’ persons. The applicant is asked to please:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Provide further detail/justification of how you have identified Category 3 persons for the purposes of the BoR; ii. Clarify if there are any persons who might be entitled to make a relevant claim if the DCO were to be made and fully implemented, and who therefore should be added to the BoR as a Category 3 person. This could include, but is not limited to, those who have provided representations on, or have interests in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noise, vibration, smell, fumes, smoke or artificial lighting; • The effect of the construction or operation of the proposed development on property values or rental incomes; • Concerns about subsidence or settlement; • Claims that someone may need to be temporarily or permanently relocated; • Impacts on a business; • Loss of rights eg. to a parking place or access to a private property; • Concerns about project financing; • Claims there may be viable alternatives; or • Blight 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> i) Part 2 of the Book of Reference [APP/4.3.2] includes persons that the Applicant considers may be eligible to make a “relevant claim” as defined in s44 of the Planning Act 2008. This includes persons who have interests within the Order limits that may be entitled to make a claim under s10 of the Compulsory Purchase Act 1965. Based on the conclusions of the Environmental Impact Assessment, the Applicant does not consider that there is anyone with an interest outside of the Order limits that is eligible to make a claim under Part 1 of the Land Compensation Act 1973 or under section 152(3) of the Planning Act 2008. the position. ii) The Applicant has updated the Introduction in the Book of Reference [APP/4.3.2] at Deadline 1 to confirm that there are no significant effects as a result of the Scheme and therefore the Applicant does not consider that there is anyone with an interest outside of the Order limits that is eligible to make a claim under Part 1 of the Land Compensation Act 1973 or under section 152(3) of the Planning Act 2008.
Q5.0.8	The applicant Breckland District Council	<p>Possible impediments</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. Is the applicant aware of any land or rights being required in addition to those sought through the dDCO [APP-018] 	<p>Outside of the land and rights being sought through the draft DCO [APP/3.1.1], the Applicant has agreed Heads of Terms with the landowner for a variation to the existing Option Agreement to secure additional rights as may be required for the skylark mitigation land.</p>



ExQ	Respondent	Question	Applicant’s Response
	Norfolk County Council	<p>before the proposed development can become operational?</p> <p>II. Do BDC or NCC have any concerns about whether potential impediments to the development been properly identified and addressed? Are they aware of any matters within or outside the scope of the dDCO that may have a bearing on whether the development could become operational, or may not be satisfactorily resolved, including in relation to acquisitions, consents, resources, or other agreements?</p>	
Q5.0.10	The applicant	<p>Book of Reference</p> <p>Any person entitled to enjoy easements or other private rights over land which the applicant proposes to extinguish, suspend or interfere with identified in Part 3 of the BoR [APP-023] should also be recorded in Part 1 as a person within categories 1 or 2 as set out in section 57 of the Planning Act 2008. The applicant is asked to please confirm the BoR has been drafted accordingly?</p>	<p>The Applicant can confirm that those persons listed in Part 3 are also listed in Part 1 as persons within Categories 1 or 2, as set out in section 57 of the PA2008.</p>
Q5.0.11	The applicant	<p>Reasonable alternatives to CA</p> <p>In the light of the relevant guidance “Planning Act 2008: procedures for the compulsory acquisition of land” (September 2013) and in particular paragraph 8, the applicant is asked to please explain how the Examining Authority (ExA) can be assured that all reasonable alternatives to CA (including modifications to the scheme) have been explored?</p> <p>Please set out in summary form, with document references where appropriate, what assessment/comparison has been made of the alternatives to the proposed acquisition of land or interest in each case.</p>	<p>As set out in Section 6.8 of the Statement of Reasons [APP-021], the Applicant has been seeking to acquire the relevant land, new rights and temporary use of land by voluntary agreement, in order to ensure implementation of the Scheme. Whilst seeking compulsory acquisition powers, the Applicant will continue to seek to acquire the land, the rights and other interests in, on and over the land, the temporary use of land, as well as secure the removal of matters affecting the Order land that may impede the Scheme, by agreement wherever possible. This approach of seeking powers of compulsory acquisition in the draft DCO and, in parallel, conducting negotiations to acquire land and rights by agreement, accords with the Department for Communities and Local Government Planning Act 2008: Guidance related to procedures for the compulsory acquisition of land (2013) (the CA Guidance).</p> <p>The CA Guidance states that the Applicant must have explored all reasonable alternatives to compulsory acquisition. As set out in Sections 6.5 to 6.7 of the Statement of Reasons [APP-021], the Applicant has considered all reasonable alternatives to compulsory acquisition. This includes consideration of alternative sites and modifications to the Scheme. The Site was chosen following extensive assessment work as detailed in the Site Evaluation Report at Appendix 1 to the Planning Statement [APP/5.5.1]. The Applicant also undertook detailed discussions with landowners regarding areas of their land holdings that they were prepared to allow solar development on. The land required for the Scheme has limited land use conflicts with respect to local development plan allocations and displacement of existing businesses.</p> <p>Option Agreements have been entered into with the relevant landowners for the elements of the Site that comprise the Solar PV Site, the BESS, the Customer Substation and the National Grid Substation. Negotiations for the lease of other land, rights and interests are ongoing in respect of the land and new rights required for the Scheme. Nevertheless, it is necessary for the Applicant to seek compulsory acquisition powers to secure such land, rights and interests and to ensure that any third-party interests or encumbrances affecting such land, rights and interests may be acquired, overridden or extinguished pursuant to the draft DCO, thereby ensuring that the Scheme can be constructed, operated and maintained.</p> <p>The Land and Rights Negotiation Tracker [APP/4.4.1] includes a summary of the negotiations undertaken to date and the current status where the Applicant is seeking the necessary land rights by voluntary agreement.</p>
Q5.0.12	The applicant	<p>Grid Connection location</p> <p>Paragraph 4.4.2 of the SoR [APP-021] states that:</p>	<p>As set out in the Planning Statement [APP/5.5.1], the Applicant has adopted the Rochdale Envelope in the design of the Scheme, which permits a well-precedented level of flexibility in relation to the detailed design</p>



ExQ	Respondent	Question	Applicant’s Response
		<p><i>“It cannot yet be confirmed exactly where within the Grid Connection Infrastructure the new pylons for the new overhead transmission electric line will be located, as the exact location will be determined following the detailed design of the Scheme. Compulsory acquisition powers are therefore being sought over the Grid Connection Infrastructure to enable the Applicant to carry out the relevant works with the minimum of inconvenience to affected landowners, and to allow for minor variances to the location of the new pylons to avoid potential engineering difficulties, or otherwise, to enable the construction of the Scheme within programme and with the minimum of disruption to landowners and the wider community.”</i></p> <p>The applicant is asked to please explain how this approach accords with the need for the SoS to be satisfied that the applicant is seeking no more land than is reasonably required for the purposes of the development.</p>	<p>stage of the Scheme, including in relation to the exact location of the new pylons within the Grid Connection Infrastructure.</p> <p>The Applicant also notes, in relation to compulsory acquisition powers being sought, that any such powers can only be exercised for the purpose for which they are originally sought. Therefore, for any such powers sought by the Applicant in relation to the Grid Connection Infrastructure (including the new pylons), the Applicant can only exercise these powers over the land actually required for that purpose (i.e. the installation of those pylons once a final design decision is made on their precise location). A similar approach is taken on other solar DCOs with underground grid connection cables where compulsory acquisition powers are sought over a wider corridor than will be required for construction to allow for micro-siting at the detailed design stage.</p>
Q5.0.13	The applicant	<p>Funding Statement</p> <p>The Funding Statement [APP-022] identifies the current cost estimate for the scheme is approximately £900 million to £950 million, which includes construction costs, preparation costs, supervision costs, land acquisition costs (including compensation payable in respect of any compulsory acquisition), equipment purchase, installation, commissioning, and power export.</p> <p>Paragraph 17 of the guidance “Planning Act 2008: procedures for the compulsory acquisition of land” (September 2013) states the Funding Statement should provide as much information as possible about the resource implications of both acquiring the land and implementing the project for which the land is required. The applicant is therefore asked to please provide the following additional information:</p> <p>Identification of the CA costs separately from the project costs with an explanation of how a figure for CA costs was arrived at.</p> <p>Paragraph 2.3.3 of the Funding Statement, states that assuming the SoS grants development consent for the Scheme, IGP would seek further funding with the support of its legal and financial advisors, as is common in privately funded infrastructure projects. What further information/evidence can be provided to demonstrate that adequate funding is likely to be available?</p> <p>What financial arrangements would be put in place to secure the decommissioning of the proposed development at the end of its operational lifetime and what allowance has been made for this in the current cost estimate?</p>	<p>The Applicant is seeking to acquire the relevant land interests and other rights over land required by agreement, with Option Agreements entered into with the owners of the landholdings that make up the Site.</p> <p>Compulsory acquisition powers are required to protect the Applicant against a scenario whereby contracts are not adhered to or otherwise set aside (as detailed in Paragraph 4.1.3 of the Statement of Reasons [APP-021]). The total estimated costs of the Scheme stated in the Funding Statement [AS-005] included approximately £26.7m associated with land acquisition costs (including compensation payable in respect of any compulsory acquisition).</p> <p>The funding and delivery of the Scheme will be financed through private investment, as is common for all large-scale energy projects in Great Britain. This model enables the development of essential low-carbon infrastructure without reliance on public funds.</p> <p>The Applicant is ultimately owned by three investment funds, which are managed by Macquarie Asset Management on behalf of a range of investors, including a number of UK pension funds. These investors would receive returns through the funds, while Macquarie would receive management fees, as is standard. Further funding may come from commercial lenders, who would receive interest payments. The funding structure is common in the energy sector and ensures that the Scheme is financially robust and deliverable.</p> <p>The Applicant notes that Article 48 of the draft DCO [APP/3.1.1] requires a parent company guarantee or other form of security to be approved by the Secretary of State prior to exercising the compulsory acquisition and temporary use powers. This provision ensures that any compensation liability arising from the use of such powers will be paid.</p> <p>In terms of decommissioning, a requirement to decommission the Scheme is set out in Requirement 20 of the draft DCO [APP/3.1.1]; failing to comply with that requirement would be a criminal offence. The requirement to decommission the Scheme would sit with the owner at the time of decommissioning. Decommissioning is also covered in the agreements with landowners, which include decommissioning securities to cover the cost of decommissioning in the event of any breach by the Applicant or in the event of the insolvency of the Applicant. The amount of such decommissioning security will be regularly re-valued throughout the lifecycle of the Scheme and topped up if necessary. The Applicant has also submitted the oDS [APP/7.10.1], and a final Decommissioning Strategy will be prepared and agreed with the relevant planning authority at that time of decommissioning and will include detailed measures and timescales (in accordance with Requirement 20 of the draft DCO [APP/3.1.1]).</p>
Q5.0.14	The applicant	<p>Land Plans</p>	<p>The phrase ‘temporary use of land’ on the land plans is included to cover the powers under article 31 of the draft DCO [APP/3.1.1] to ensure the Affected Person(s) have a complete understanding of how their land</p>



ExQ	Respondent	Question	Applicant’s Response
		The applicant is asked to please explain meanings of the references to ‘temporary use of land’ in relation to both pink and blue land shown in the key to the Land Plans [APP-008].	may be used, whilst the Applicant also minimises the impact from the exercise of permanent compulsory acquisition powers. This is standard practice across made solar DCOs.
Q5.0.15	The applicant	<p>Protective Provisions</p> <p>Provide an update on negotiations for protective provisions with each party set out in Schedule 15 of the dDCO [APP-018] to include the concerns raised by Anglian Water in its RR [RR-003]</p>	<p>The Applicant has addressed the parties for whom protective provisions are included in Schedule 15 of the draft DCO [APP/3.1.1] in turn:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Grid Electricity Transmission Plc (NGET), Part 3 of Schedule 15 – the Applicant and NGET’s lawyers have had an initial meeting in which protective provisions (and a corresponding side agreement) were discussed. The Applicant is currently waiting for NGET’s lawyers to provide their comments on the draft protective provisions included in the draft DCO [APP/3.1.1]. The Applicant is confident that these protective provisions will be agreed with NGET during the Examination; • National Highways Limited (NH), Part 4 of Schedule 15 – the Applicant and NH’s lawyers have arranged a meeting (which is taking place shortly after Deadline 1) to discuss the draft protective provisions included in the draft DCO [APP/3.1.1]. The Applicant is confident that these protective provisions will be agreed with NH during the Examination; • Environment Agency (EA), Part 5 of Schedule 15 – the Applicant has updated the protective provisions for the benefit of the EA in Part 5 of Schedule 15 of the draft DCO [APP/3.1.1] at Deadline 1 to mirror the EA’s preferred/standard wording; • Exolum Pipeline System Limited (Exolum), Part 6 of Schedule 15 – the Applicant has engaged with Exolum regarding the assets it thought were owned by Exolum that related to the Scheme, but now (following information received from Exolum) it appears that Exolum does not own nor operate any assets relevant to the Scheme. The Applicant is undertaking final checks to confirm that this is the case and, if so, will remove the protective provisions for the benefit of Exolum in Part 6 of Schedule 15 of the draft DCO [APP/3.1.1] at the appropriate deadline; • Anglian Water (AW), Part 8 of Schedule 15 – the Applicant and AW have now agreed the form of protective provisions (the wording of which is currently included in Part 8 of Schedule 15 of the draft DCO [APP/3.1.1]) for the benefit of AW. The Applicant understands that AW is withdrawing its objection to the Scheme (with regard to protective provisions) at Deadline 1; and • Eastern Power Networks (EPN), Part 9 of Schedule 15 – the Applicant notes that EPN has not objected to the Scheme and therefore does not expect to alter the protective provisions for the benefit of EPN in Part 9 of Schedule 15 of the draft DCO [APP/3.1.1].

Table 6.1: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology

ExQ	Respondent	Question	Applicant’s Response
Q6.0.1	The applicant	<p>Potential overgrounding of cable runs in areas known to contain significant archaeological remains</p> <p>Paragraph 8.7.8, ES Chapter 8: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [APP-057], states: “<i>Embedded mitigation might also comprise the overgrounding of cable runs in areas known to contain significant archaeological remains.</i>”</p>	<p>The identification of areas where the overgrounding of cables to preserve archaeological remains in situ would be devised in consultation with Norfolk Historic Environment Service following the production of detailed designs for the locations of any such cable runs and post-determination archaeological trial trenching. This process is outlined in section 3 of ES Appendix 8.7: outline Archaeological Mitigation Strategy [APP-161].</p> <p>This overgrounding of cables would only relate to cables transmitting electricity along PV Arrays where cables would be suspended beneath PV Panels, secured to the Mounting Structure, rather than placed below ground. The potential overgrounding of such cables will, therefore, not result in any additional visual intrusion</p>



ExQ	Respondent	Question	Applicant’s Response
		Could the applicant provide further details on how they would propose to manage the decision process for considering the use of overground cables in the above circumstances, what has been assumed as a worst-case in ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual [APP-055] and what would be the implications for any other topic areas within the ES?	that would alter the findings ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual [AS-016] or any other topic area within the ES.
Q6.0.2	The applicant	<p>Significant In-combination Effects for Visual and Heritage</p> <p>Table 17-3, Chapter 17: In-Combination Effects [APP-066], shows a significant adverse effect for visual and heritage for the decommissioning phase only for the Change to the heritage setting of Castle Acre Castle and Castle Acre Priory.</p> <p>Could the applicant provide further information to support the above finding and in particular provide the reasoning as to why the effect is only in the decommissioning phase.</p>	Table 17-3 of ES Chapter 17: In-Combination Effects [APP/6.2.1] is incorrect and should not present a ‘Significant’ in-combination effect for the change to the heritage setting of Castle Acre Castle and Castle Acre Priory in the decommissioning phase. The text at paragraph 17.3.14 of this document concludes the effect correctly. This typographical error has been updated for Deadline 1.

Table 7.1: Draft Development Consent Order (DCO), Part 1 - (Preliminary), Article 2 Interpretation

ExQ	Respondent	Question	Applicant’s Response
Q7.0.1	The applicant	<p>“authorised development” – this definition in the dDCO [APP-018] includes ‘any other development within the meaning of Section 32 (meaning of “development”) of the 2008 Act authorised by this Order’.</p> <p>Paragraph 4.2.2, EM [APP-019], describes that the approach to defining “Authorised Development” is consistent with other made Orders such as the Longfield Solar Park Order 2023, the Cottam Solar Project Order 2024, the West Burton Solar Project Order 2025 and the Tillbridge Solar Order 2025.</p> <p>The applicant is asked to please provide justification as to why this wording is required in addition to the development described in Schedule 1. Specifically, the applicant is asked to provide justification as to why this does not align with the approach adopted in the West Burton Solar Project Order 2025 made 24 January 2025 which included the wording below:</p> <p><i>“authorised development” means the development and associated development, which is development within the meaning of section 32 (meaning of “development”) of the 2008 Act, authorised by this Order and as described in Schedule 1 (authorised development);”</i></p>	<p>The Applicant notes that the drafting of this definition is substantially the same as that contained in the Tillbridge Solar Order 2025. Therefore, it is drafting that has been approved by the Secretary of State more recently than the West Burton Solar Project Order 2025. The Applicant has therefore reflected this approved approach in the draft DCO [APP/3.1.1] for the Scheme and does not consider that an update to this definition is necessary, save for the fact that the Applicant has updated the draft DCO [APP/3.1.1] at Deadline 1 to reflect the necessary inclusion of ‘associated development’ in this definition.</p> <p>The Applicant also notes that this approach was taken in the recently consented North Falls Offshore Wind Farm Order 2026.</p>
Q7.0.2	The applicant	<p>“Maintain” - Paragraph 4.2.2, EM [APP-019], provides examples of the activities anticipated to be covered by maintain.</p>	The definition of “maintain” provided in article 2 of the draft DCO [APP/3.1.1] (and as explained in paragraph 4.2.2 of the Explanatory Memorandum [APP/3.1.2]) is largely consistent with the corresponding definition



ExQ	Respondent	Question	Applicant’s Response
		Is this approach to defining “maintain” consistent with other made Orders? If so, please provide the names of the Orders.	in the Longfield Solar Park Order 2023, the Cottam Solar Project Order 2024, the West Burton Solar Project Order 2025, the Tillbridge Solar Order 2025 and the Fenwick Solar Farm Order 2026.

Table 7.2: Draft Development Consent Order (DCO), Part 2 - Principal Powers

ExQ	Respondent	Question	Applicant’s Response
Q7.1.1	The applicant	<p>Article 3(2) (Development Consent etc. granted by this Order) The EM [APP-019] sets out that the purpose of Article 3(2) of the dDCO [APP-018] is to provide the undertaker with a necessary, but proportionate, degree of flexibility when constructing the authorised development with particular reference being made to allow for variances in ground conditions and choice of appropriate equipment and technology.</p> <p>I. Can the applicant please explain why it considers the degree of flexibility sought is necessary and proportionate for this proposed development?</p> <p>II. To improve clarity, could the applicant consider amending the dDCO to include the following in bold:</p> <p><i>3.—(1) Subject to the provisions of this Order and the requirements in Schedule 2 (requirements), the undertaker is granted development consent for the authorised development to be carried out within the Order limits.</i></p>	<p>i. The degree of flexibility sought by the Scheme is necessary and proportionate because it reduces the risk that the Scheme (as consented) cannot later be implemented for reasons which, at the time of seeking consent, could not reasonably have been foreseen. This includes considerations in relation to the detailed design stage of the Scheme, particularly regarding the use of new technologies to increase the efficiency of the Scheme, given the fast-moving pace of solar technology. The Applicant notes that this flexibility remains subject to the parameters in the draft DCO [APP/3.1.1], given that article 3(2) states that “<i>each numbered work must be situated within the corresponding numbered area shown on the works plan</i>” – thus, the infrastructure can only be built within these areas. Given these overarching constraints, there is certainty as to where each element identified in Schedule 1 can be built, and that has been factored into the Environmental Statement. Further, the design of the Scheme is also controlled via Requirement 5 (Detailed design approval) of Schedule 2 of the draft DCO [APP/3.1.1] which requires approval of details of the Scheme’s design. The details submitted must accord with the Design Principles, Parameters and Commitments [APP/5.8.1]. This flexibility (i.e. the principle of using a design envelope) is recognised as appropriate for a wide range of NSIPs and is described in PINS’ Advice Note 9: Rochdale Envelope (July 2018).</p> <p>ii. The Applicant has updated the draft DCO [APP/3.1.1] at Deadline 1 to include the text proposed in article 3(2) by the Examining Authority.</p>
Q7.1.2	The applicant	<p>Article 4 – Operation of generating station</p> <p>Regarding Article 4, could the applicant clarify the inconsistency between EM [APP-019] paragraph 1.4.1, which states “<i>It comprises a generating station of more than 50MW, being the NSIP (Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project), and which is described in Work No. 1 in Schedule 1 to the draft DCO [APP/3.1].</i>” and paragraph 4.2.10 which refers to “<i>“Generating station” in this Article would include the energy storage facility</i>”.</p>	<p>The Applicant does not consider that there is an inconsistency between the highlighted paragraphs of the Explanatory Memorandum. Paragraph 1.4.1 correctly states that the NSIP element of the Scheme is the generating station described in Work No. 1 in Schedule 1 of the draft DCO [APP/3.1.1]. The reference in paragraph 4.2.10 to the generating station including the energy storage facility does not mean that the energy storage facility is part of the NSIP element, but rather that the powers in article 4 of the draft DCO [APP/3.1.1] also apply to that element of the Scheme (i.e. the BESS). This is because it is essential for the Scheme to store the electricity generated by the station in that storage facility, and the operational powers in article 4 facilitate this. This approach is in keeping with made solar DCOs such as the Little Crow Solar Park Order 2022, the Longfield Solar Park Order 2023, the Cottam Solar Project Order 2024, the West Burton Solar Project Order 2025 and the Tillbridge Solar Order 2025.</p>
Q7.1.3	The applicant	<p>Article 5 (Power to maintain the authorised development)</p> <p>Article 5(3) of the dDCO [APP-018] does not authorise maintenance activities if they will give rise to any materially new or different environmental effects to those identified in the ES. Noting the wide-ranging nature of the definition of ‘maintain’, the applicant is asked to please explain how maintenance activities would be managed so as to ensure that they would not give rise to materially new or different environmental effects. References should be made to specific requirements, management plans and procedures.</p>	<p>The outline management plans submitted as part of the DCO Application have been prepared as a means of capturing and committing to the mitigation and management measures required to ensure that the effects concluded in the ES remain as assessed. For the operational phase of the Scheme, the relevant management plans are: oOEMP [APP/7.8.1], oOTMP [APP/7.9.1], oLEMP [APP/7.11.1], oPRoWPPMP [APP-192], oSMP [APP/7.13.1], outline Battery Safety Management Plan (oBSMP) [APP-194] and oESSCS [APP-195]. Detailed management plans will be prepared, which must be substantially in accordance with the outline management plans, for implementation during the operational phase of the Scheme. By ensuring that the detailed management plans are prepared ‘substantially in accordance with the outline’ management plans, the controls within the detailed management plans will ensure that the</p>



ExQ	Respondent	Question	Applicant’s Response
			<p>maintenance activities would not give rise to materially new or different environmental effects. The monitoring requirements and party responsible for the monitoring and management of measures is detailed within each of the outline management plans. The Applicant considers that this is sufficient control and responsibility assigned to control the maintenance activities during the operational phase.</p>
Q7.1.4	The applicant	<p>Article 6 (Application and modification of statutory provisions)</p> <p>The EM [APP-019] sets out that Article 6 of the dDCO [APP-018] seeks to disapply a number of statutory provisions listed at 6(1) on the basis that they address matters whose merits and acceptability can, and will, already have been sufficiently considered and resolved if the draft DCO [APP-018] is made.</p> <p>Noting the guidance set out in Advice Note 15, section 25, the applicant is requested to please redraft EM paragraphs 4.2.13 to 4.2.18 to provide clear justification for the inclusion of each of these provisions, including reference to the outcomes of engagement with any relevant authority or government department which would have responsibility for the provisions that would be modified.</p> <p>With reference to Articles 6(2) and 6(3), the applicant is asked to please justify these provisions by explaining why it is necessary for this proposed development.</p>	<p>The Applicant does not consider that the highlighted paragraphs of the Explanatory Memorandum require updating in respect of the disapplications sought in article 6(1) of the draft DCO [APP/3.1.1]. The justification for each of these provisions is clearly set out in those paragraphs, particularly that these disapplications are sought on the basis that they address matters whose merits and acceptability can, and will, already have been sufficiently considered and resolved if the draft DCO [APP/3.1.1] is made, notably in relation to the provisions under the Land Drainage Act 1991, the Water Resources Act 1991, and the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016 through protective provisions for the protection of the relevant drainage authorities. The only Interested Party who has made a representation relating to these provisions is the Environment Agency, and the Applicant is close to agreeing the form of protective provisions for the benefit of the Environment Agency to be included in Part 5 of Schedule 15 of the draft DCO [APP/3.1.1], following which the Applicant expects the Environment Agency to withdraw its representations in respect of article 6(1). The Applicant notes that this drafting and approach (including the level of detail provided in the Explanatory Memorandum) is consistent with made solar DCOs, including the Longfield Solar Park Order 2023, the Cottam Solar Project Order 2024, the West Burton Solar Project Order 2025, the Tillbridge Solar Order 2025 and the Fenwick Solar Farm Order 2026.</p> <p>In relation to article 6(2) of the draft DCO [APP/3.1.1], this article applies section 9 of the Forestry Act 1967 to any felling required as a result of the Scheme. Section 9(1) of the 1967 Act provides that a Forestry Commission licence is required for felling growing trees. Section 9(4)(d) disapplies the requirement from felling required to implement development authorised by a planning permission – but not to development authorised by a DCO. Article 6(2) extends the exception to any trees felled as a result of the Scheme. If this provision was not included in the draft DCO [APP/3.1.1], the Applicant would be required to submit a Forestry Commission licence under the Forestry Act 1967 every time that any tree in the Order limits needed to be felled, which is an onerous and complex process that restricts the flexibility of the detailed design of the Scheme. This drafting is well-precedented across made solar DCOs, including the Longfield Solar Park Order 2023, the Cottam Solar Project Order 2024, the West Burton Solar Project Order 2025, the Tillbridge Solar Order 2025 and the Fenwick Solar Farm Order 2026.</p> <p>In relation to article 6(3) of the draft DCO [APP/3.1.1], this article provides for the modification of Regulation 6(1) of the Hedgerows Regulations 1997 to provide that removal of any hedgerow to which the Hedgerow Regulations 1997 relates is permitted for the carrying out of any development or the exercise of any functions which have been authorised by the draft DCO [APP/3.1.1]. Regulation 6 provides that the removal of any hedgerow to which the Regulations apply is permitted if it is required for, at paragraph (1)(e), development for which planning permission has been granted – but not to development authorised by a DCO. Article 6(3) extends the permission to any hedgerows removed as a result of the Scheme. This has precedent in other solar DCOs including the Tillbridge Solar Order 2025, the Oaklands Farm Solar Park Order 2025 and the Stonestreet Green Solar Order 2025, and notably a recent non-material change application to the Longfield Solar Park Order 2023 was successful in adding this provision into that solar DCO. Similarly to the analysis of article 6(2) above, if this provision was not included in the draft DCO [APP/3.1.1], the Applicant would be required to submit a Hedgerow Removal Notice under the Hedgerows Regulations 1997 every time that any hedgerow needs to be removed, including those already identified and assessed in Schedule 12 of the draft DCO [APP/3.1.1]. This is an onerous and complex process that restricts the flexibility of the detailed design of the Scheme. Further, this drafting does not result in uncontrolled hedgerow removal, as this continues to be controlled by the corresponding and relevant parts of the draft DCO [APP/3.1.1] and the oLEMP [APP/7.11.1].</p>



ExQ	Respondent	Question	Applicant’s Response
			<p>As a general summary in relation to articles 6(2) and (3), the provisions simply seek to deal with the lacunae in these statutes where works can be undertaken to trees and hedgerows pursuant to a planning permission or a ‘deemed’ planning permission. However, due to the operation of section 33 of the Planning Act 2008 not ‘deeming’ planning permission, but instead saying it is not required, DCO development does not benefit from these provisions, meaning that NSIP development is left in a worse position than ‘normal’ planning development, which is considered not appropriate. With the controls set out in the requirements in Schedule 2 of the draft DCO [APP/3.1.1], the local planning authorities will still be able to consider the impacts of such works; the provisions of article 6 simply mean that separate consents are not required to be obtained.</p>
Q7.1.5	The applicant	<p>Article 7 (Defence to proceedings in respect of statutory nuisance)</p> <p>With reference to Article 7 of the dDCO [APP-018], the applicant is asked to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Expand on the explanation set out in paragraph 4.2.21 of the EM [APP-019] by setting out why the broad defence in Section 158 of the Planning Act 2008 is not sufficient, such that this additional provision is required. ii. Confirm that the controls elsewhere in the dDCO are sufficient to justify the defence being provided by this article to statutory nuisance claims relating to noise. iii. Review the wording at the start of 7(1)(c) as there is repetition of ‘the nuisance’ following on from the end of 7(1). 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> i) Section 158 of the Planning Act 2008 confers statutory authority for the purposes of a defence in civil or criminal proceedings for nuisance. This article provides a defence to proceedings brought in a magistrates’ court under Section 82(1) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 in relation to certain nuisances set out in Section 79(1)(g) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990. A broad defence to civil and criminal proceedings for nuisance is provided by Section 158 of the Planning Act 2008. However, the view taken under the NSIP regime is that Section 158 may not extend to the relatively rare situation by which if somebody considers that the local authority ought to be tackling a nuisance using its statutory nuisance powers, but it is not, that person may apply to the magistrates’ court under Section 82 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990. Accordingly, this article is seeking remove any uncertainty as to the effect of Section 158 of the Planning Act 2008. As Section 158 does not distinguish between different types of nuisance, the logical position is that this article should apply to all categories of nuisance. However, as a matter of practice, other projects have been asked whether there is any possibility of a statutory nuisance occurring, leading to specific types of nuisance being referred to. The undertaker has followed this approach by seeking to restrict the application of this article so that the defence only applies if the defendant shows that the nuisance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • relates to premises used by the undertaker for the purposes of or in connection with the construction or maintenance of the authorised development and that the nuisance is attributable to the construction or maintenance of the authorised development in accordance with a notice served under section 60 (control of noise on construction site) of the Control of Pollution Act 1974, or a consent given under section 61 (prior consent for work on construction site) of that Act; or • is a consequence of the construction or maintenance or decommissioning of the authorised development and that it cannot reasonably be avoided; or • the nuisance is a consequence of the use of the authorised development and that it cannot be reasonably avoided. <p>This ensures that this article is focused only on those nuisances that may be of relevance to the Scheme, whilst also reflecting the logic and correct interpretation of Section 158.</p> ii) The Applicant refers to the analysis provided above regarding the restrictions on the defence being provided by this article as set out in article 7(1) and also refers to its Statutory Nuisance Statement [APP-041] in this regard. iii) The Applicant agrees with the ExA’s suggestion and has updated the drafting of article 7(1)(c) accordingly at Deadline 1 to remove the repetition.



Table 7.3: Draft Development Consent Order (DCO), Part 3 - Streets

ExQ	Respondent	Question	Applicant’s Response
Q7.2.2	The applicant	<p>Article 10 (Power to alter layout, etc., of streets)</p> <p>Regarding Article 10, could the applicant clarify the inconsistency between EM [APP-019] paragraph 4.3.4 which refers to this provision being necessary for, among other things, decommissioning, and article 10(2) which makes no mention of decommissioning as a purpose for which it can be used.</p>	<p>The Applicant agrees with the ExA’s suggestion and has updated the drafting of article 10(2) accordingly at Deadline 1 to include reference to decommissioning.</p>
Q7.2.3	The applicant Norfolk County Council	<p>Article 10 (Power to alter layout, etc., of streets)</p> <p>With reference to Article 10 of the dDCO [APP-018], paragraph (2) confers a general power enabling the undertaker to alter the layout of any street, subject to the consent of the street authority. The ExA notes National Highways comments in its RR [RR-037].</p> <p>The applicant is asked to justify why this power is necessary and has consideration been given to whether or not it should be limited to identified streets.</p> <p>NCC is asked to comment on the breadth of the power and whether it raises any issues for it.</p>	<p>In order to construct, operate, maintain and decommission the Scheme, the undertaker will need to alter street layouts and establish suitable accesses to ensure that the Scheme can be accessed effectively while ensuring there is minimal disruption to the local highway network. The Applicant does not consider that this power should be limited to identified streets, as this would result in a disproportionate restriction on the Applicant to deliver the Scheme if, for example, those identified streets were altered or damaged or otherwise unavailable before/during the lifetime of the Scheme. The power conferred by article 10(2) requires the consent of the street authority before it can be exercised by the Applicant, which provides sufficient comfort that the power is regulated.</p> <p>The Applicant also notes the general power in article 10(2) is preceded across made solar DCOs, including the Longfield Solar Park Order 2023, the Cottam Solar Project Order 2024, the West Burton Solar Project Order 2025, the Tillbridge Solar Order 2025 and the Fenwick Solar Farm Order 2026.</p>
Q7.2.4	The applicant	<p>Article 12 (Temporary closure, restriction or prohibition of use of streets and public rights of way)</p> <p>Could the applicant provide justification as to why the power is appropriate and proportionate having regard to the impacts on pedestrians and others of authorising temporary working sites in these streets.</p>	<p>The Applicant considers that this question is answered by reference to paragraphs 4.3.7 – 4.3.9 of the Explanatory Memorandum [APP/3.1.2]. Specifically in relation to pedestrians, Article 12(2) ensures that reasonable access for pedestrians going to or from premises abutting a street or public right of way affected by the temporary closure, prohibition, restriction, alteration or diversion is provided if there would otherwise be no such access.</p> <p>The public right of way and permissive path management plan, secured by Requirement 16 of Schedule 2 of the draft DCO [APP/3.1.1], will manage how any temporary closures or restrictions of public rights of way take effect.</p> <p>Article 12(5) also provides that compensation is payable in respect of loss suffered by the suspension of any private rights of way. This provision is included so that persons who experience a loss because of the suspension of a street or public right of way can be appropriately compensated.</p> <p>The Applicant notes that the drafting in this article broadly follows the approach in the model provisions and is well-precedented across made solar DCOs, including the Longfield Solar Park Order 2023, the Cottam Solar Project Order 2024, the West Burton Solar Project Order 2025, the Tillbridge Solar Order 2025 and the Fenwick Solar Farm Order 2026.</p>
Q7.2.5	The applicant	<p>Article 14 (Access to works)</p> <p>With reference to Article 14 of the dDCO [APP-018], whilst 13(b) refers the power to form and layout temporary means of access, the applicant is asked to please consider whether it should include provision to restore any access that has temporarily been created.</p>	<p>The Applicant assumes that the reference to article 13(b) in the question should be to article 14(b).</p> <p>The Applicant does not consider that it is necessary to depart from the model provisions and the precedent for this drafting across made solar DCOs, including the Cottam Solar Project Order 2024, the West Burton Solar Project Order 2025, the Tillbridge Solar Order 2025 and the Fenwick Solar Farm Order 2026, and therefore does not propose to alter the drafting of this article. Further, the Applicant notes that paragraph 5.3.1 of the oCTMP [APP/7.7.1] requires temporary means of access to be restored, so there is no need to duplicate this obligation in the draft DCO [APP/3.1.1].</p>



Table 7.4: Draft Development Consent Order (DCO), Part 4 – Supplemental Powers

ExQ	Respondent	Question	Applicant’s Response
Q7.3.1	The applicant	<p>Article 17 (Discharge of water)</p> <p>With reference to Article 17 of the dDCO [APP-018], the EM [APP-019] refers that this article has precedent in the West Burton Solar Project Order 2025.</p> <p>For the Discharge of Water, Article 16 for the West Burton Solar Project Order 2025 includes 8 paragraphs whereas the Article 17 of the dDCO includes only 7 paragraphs. Article 17 of the dDCO excludes the wording in paragraph 5 of Article 16 of the West Burton Solar Project Order 2025.</p> <p>Could the applicant review all of the differences between the above articles and provide justification for any proposed changes from the West Burton Solar Project Order 2025.</p>	<p>The Applicant agrees with the ExA’s suggestion and has updated the drafting of article 17 accordingly at Deadline 1 to include this paragraph and the new associated definition.</p>
Q7.3.2	The applicant	<p>Article 18 (Removal of Human Remains)</p> <p>Could the applicant provide more specific detail, with references to supporting documents, to include the location of any burial features within the site, to support the justification included in paragraph 4.4.2 of the EM [APP-019] that there is a risk of human remains associated within the Order limits.</p>	<p>Whilst no human remains have been positively identified within the Order limits by archaeological works to date, a Saxon inhumation cemetery (likely sited on an earlier Bronze Age burial ground) is recorded just to the north of the Order limits on the northern side of Big Wood Lane, west of South Acre and there are records of human remains likely associated with a medieval leper hospital just beyond the Order limits to the east of Bartholomews Plantation. Whilst it is unlikely that these cemeteries extend into the Order limits, their proximity does highlight the potential for previously unidentified burials within the Order limits. There is also known prehistoric and Roman period activity within the Order limits and it is reasonably common to find isolated burials or small cemeteries in association with such remains. It is, therefore, prudent to include the provision as detailed in the Explanatory Memorandum [APP/3.1.2].</p>
Q7.3.3	The applicant	<p>Article 19 (Protective works to buildings)</p> <p>With reference to Article 19 of the dDCO [APP-018], paragraph 4.4.5 of the EM [APP-019] explains that this Article is required because there are buildings within, and in close proximity to, the Order Land that might feasibly require surveys and protective works as a result of the authorised development. The applicant is asked to please identify these buildings and explain the nature of protective works likely to be required. An update to the EM is also requested in this regard.</p>	<p>The Applicant notes that Keeper’s Cottage is the only residential building to which this provision relates, alongside some small farm buildings. The Applicant is committed to buffers and planting within the Order limits to mitigate the effects on Keeper’s Cottage.</p> <p>The Applicant does not consider that an update to the Explanatory Memorandum [APP/3.1.2] is required in this regard, as the EM already explains that this provision is included in most made DCOs (solar and non-solar) to date. Its purpose is to provide necessary powers to the undertaker to enter any building and land within its curtilage to survey to determine whether protective works are needed and to carry out protective works to buildings within the Order limits, subject to a number of conditions that provide reassurance to affected parties, including the service of not less than 14 days’ notice (except in cases of emergency) and the payment of compensation in the event that any loss or damage arises.</p>

Table 7.5: Draft Development Consent Order (DCO), Part 5 – Powers of Acquisition

ExQ	Respondent	Question	Applicant’s Response
Q7.4.1	The applicant	<p>Article 21 (Compulsory acquisition of land)</p>	<p>The Applicant notes that the drafting of article 21(1)(b) is preceded in the Cottam Solar Project Order 2024 and the Fenwick Solar Farm Order 2026 (the latter being a more recent precedent for a solar DCO than the West Burton Solar Project Order 2025). It is the Applicant’s preference for this drafting to remain in the draft DCO [APP/3.1.1], noting that whilst the Secretary of State chose to remove the drafting for the</p>



ExQ	Respondent	Question	Applicant’s Response
		<p>With reference to Article 21 of the dDCO [APP-018], the EM [APP-019] refers that this article has precedent in the West Burton Solar Project Order 2025.</p> <p>For the Compulsory acquisition of land, Article 19 for the West Burton Solar Project Order 2025 excludes paragraph 1(b) included in the Article 21 of the dDCO.</p> <p>Could the applicant review all of the differences between the above articles and provide justification for any proposed changes from the West Burton Solar Project Order 2025 to include confirmation that the articles referenced in 21(2) of the dDCO are correct and complete.</p>	<p>West Burton DCO (against that applicant’s preference in that case), the Secretary of State recently agreed to this wording when consenting the Fenwick DCO.</p> <p>The Applicant also confirms that the articles referenced in 21(2) of the draft DCO [APP/3.1.1] are correct and complete.</p>
Q7.4.2	The applicant	<p>Article 24 (Compulsory acquisition of rights)</p> <p>Article 24 is drafted to enable compulsory acquisition of new rights over all of the Order land, with a schedule which limits the compulsory acquisition power in defined plots to the defined rights listed in that schedule (Schedule 9).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Could the applicant clearly identify its approach (allowing undefined rights in land not listed in that Schedule), explain the need for it and justify it in the Explanatory Memorandum (EM) and SoR. ii. Could the applicant provide evidence to show that persons with an interest in the Order land were aware that undefined new rights were being sought over all of the Order land and were consulted on that basis. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) The justification for the Applicant’s approach is set out in paragraphs 4.5.6 to 4.5.9 of the Explanatory Memorandum [APP/3.1.2]. This form of drafting originates from Article 19 of the model provisions, which grants broad powers of acquisition which are then subject to subsequent articles to limit that broad power. <p>Article 24(1) enables the compulsory acquisition of rights over land shown coloured pink on the Land Plan [APP-008]. Whilst the pink land is land over which compulsory acquisition of the freehold may be sought, Article 24(1) also permits the use of a lesser power, namely the compulsory acquisition of rights, where that is sufficient. The land shown coloured blue is subject only to the compulsory acquisition of rights (as identified in Article 24(2)), and the land shown coloured yellow is subject only to temporary possession powers.</p> <p>Article 24(1) provides flexibility where, for example, voluntary agreements are no longer in place and the detailed design of infrastructure such as a substation or BESS has been micro-sited. In such circumstances, it may be necessary to acquire land for the substation or BESS itself, but not the wider area originally identified, such that only rights are required for elements such as cabling to connect to the substation or BESS. Article 24(1) does not oblige the Applicant to compulsorily acquire the freehold of land where that is not necessary and instead allows the acquisition of rights over any part of the pink land. This provision reflects the Applicant’s obligation to act proportionately and to acquire only the land and rights that are required for the purposes of the Scheme. Article 24(1) therefore enables the Applicant, where appropriate, to acquire a lesser right rather than the freehold, but that any such right must be sought for the purposes of the authorised development.</p> <p>In spatial terms, the only landowners who could potentially be subject to the acquisition of rights under Article 24(1) are those whose land is already identified as being subject to compulsory acquisition of the freehold.</p> <p>It is standard and well precedented drafting including in the Cleve Hill Solar Farm Order 2020, the Longfield Solar Farm Order 2023, the Gate Burton Energy Park Order 2024, the Cottam Solar Project Order 2024, the West Burton Solar Project Order 2025 and the Tillbridge Solar Order 2025.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ii) Prior to submitting the DCO Application, the Applicant had regular engagement via meetings and email correspondence with persons with an interest in the Order land including, most crucially, the landowner. The compulsory acquisition powers and Scheme design were discussed at length including during the scoping, PEIR, statutory consultation and ES assessment stages. Copies of the key proposed submission documents were issued to the landowner, including the draft Application Form, Works Plans, draft DCO, Explanatory Memorandum, Statement of Reasons and ES Non-



ExQ	Respondent	Question	Applicant’s Response
			Technical Summary. An opportunity was provided for the landowner to comment on these documents.
Q7.4.3	The applicant	<p>Article 24 (Compulsory acquisition of rights)</p> <p>With reference to Article 24 of the dDCO [APP-018], the EM [APP-019] refers that this article is well precedented drafting including the West Burton Solar Project Order 2025.</p> <p>For the Compulsory acquisition of rights, Article 22 for the West Burton Solar Project Order 2025 excludes paragraph 7 included in the Article 24 of the dDCO.</p> <p>Could the applicant review all of the differences between the above articles and provide justification for any proposed changes from the West Burton Solar Project Order 2025.</p>	The Applicant notes that article 24(7) of the draft DCO [APP/3.1.1] has recently been included in the Springwell Solar Farm Order 2026, which reflects the fact that the position in relation to this drafting has moved on since the West Burton Solar Project Order 2025 was consented. The Applicant has therefore included this latest drafting in the draft DCO [APP/3.1.1] and considers this approach to be precedented and proportionate.
Q7.4.4	The applicant	<p>Article 25 (Private rights)</p> <p>With reference to Article 25 of the dDCO [APP-018], the EM [APP-019] refers that this article is well precedented drafting including the West Burton Solar Project Order 2025.</p> <p>For Private rights, Article 23 for the West Burton Solar Project Order 2025 excludes the wording drafted in paragraph 8 of Article 24 of the dDCO.</p> <p>Could the applicant review all of the differences between the above articles and provide justification for any proposed changes from the West Burton Solar Project Order 2025.</p>	The Applicant notes that the drafting in article 23(1)(a) of the West Burton Solar Project Order 2025 includes the wording “ <i>or through the grant of a lease of the land by agreement</i> ”. Rather than repeat that phrase throughout this article in the draft DCO [APP/3.1.1] , as is the case in the West Burton DCO and other recently-made solar DCOs, the Applicant has added article 25(8) to avoid the need for this repetition, by summarising the position and application of the language in one place. The Applicant considers that this new drafting is a simpler approach and should therefore remain in the draft DCO [APP/3.1.1] as currently drafted.
Q7.4.5	The applicant	<p>Article 31 (Temporary use of land for constructing the authorised development) and Article 32</p> <p>(Temporary use of land for maintaining the authorised development)</p> <p>Whilst Schedule 11 of the dDCO [APP-018] indicates land for which temporary possession may be taken, Article 31(1)(a)(ii) has the effect of extending this power to allow temporary possession of any Order land. Article 32 gives such powers over any land within the Order limits (which extends beyond the Order land).</p> <p>i. Whilst the EM [APP-019] refers to this allowing a more proportionate approach to the extent of land and rights acquisition, the applicant is asked to please further justify the inclusion of these broad powers and to explain the steps that have been taken to alert all landowners/occupiers of land within the Order limits of this possibility.</p>	<p>i) For the reasons set out in section 4.5 of the Statement of Reasons [APP-021], it is that necessary proportionality that is the basis for the drafting in articles 31 and 32 of the draft DCO [APP/3.1.1]. The powers are broad to allow the Applicant sufficient ability to construct and maintain the Scheme without unreasonable and unnecessary delay, whilst remaining subject to numerous control and approval mechanisms (as set out across paragraphs 4.5.18 – 4.5.26 of the Explanatory Memorandum [APP/3.1.2]) that provide comfort to affected parties. These powers enable the Applicant to construct the Scheme and acquire the minimum amount of land permanently. These powers are well-precedented across made solar DCOs, including the Longfield Solar Park Order 2023, the Cottam Solar Project Order 2024, the West Burton Solar Project Order 2025, the Tillbridge Solar Order 2025 and the Fenwick Solar Farm Order 2026, and therefore their inclusion is demonstrably necessary for the effective construction and operation of the Scheme, in practice.</p> <p>ii) The Site is comprised of two landowners who own land within Order limits, as per the Land and Rights Negotiation Tracker [APP/4.4.1]. The Applicant remains engaged with these landowners to secure voluntary agreements over the land. Within these negotiations, the Applicant is engaged with the land agents and the Affected Person(s) around all matters relating to the Scheme, including the use of compulsory acquisition and the powers sought in the draft DCO [APP/3.1.1]. This has also been communicated, by the Applicant, to any occupiers of the land (and, where possible, the Applicant has also sought to do this directly).</p>



ExQ	Respondent	Question	Applicant’s Response
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ii. The applicant is asked to please justify the inclusion of ‘buildings’ in Article 31(1)(b). iii. With reference to the 14 day notice of intended entry referred to in Article 31(3), the applicant is asked to please justify the reason for this short length of time. iv. Regarding Article 31, whilst the EM [APP-019] paragraph 4.5.18 refers to land in Schedule 11, due to article 31(1)(a)(ii) temporary possession powers are not limited to land listed in Schedule 11. Could the applicant comment on this inconsistency. v. The applicant is also asked to please explain why it considers that only 28 days’ notice should be required before entering on and taking possession of land under Article 32(3). vi. Under the Neighbourhood Planning Act (NPA) 2017 (which, by virtue of article 6(1)(g), the applicant is seeking to disapply), the notice would also have to state the period for which the acquiring authority is to take possession. Should such a requirement be included in this case? vii. The NPA 2017 Act provisions include the ability to serve a counter-notice objecting to the proposed temporary possession so that the landowner would have the option to choose whether temporary possession or permanent acquisition was desirable. Should this article make some such provision – whether or not in the form in the NPA 2017? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> iii) The inclusion of ‘buildings’ in article 31(1)(b) of the draft DCO [APP/3.1.1] is included to ensure that the Applicant may, if necessary, remove buildings (such as an agricultural building or structure) that are obstacles to the construction of the Scheme on land that the Applicant is empowered to take temporary possession of. This power is restricted by article 31(2), which clarifies that the Applicant is not authorised to take temporary possession of any house, or garden belong to a house, nor any other occupied building. It also remains subject to the control and approval mechanisms referenced above. Again, the inclusion of ‘buildings’ is preceded in the Cottam Solar Project Order 2024, the West Burton Solar Project Order 2025 and the Tillbridge Solar Order 2025. iv) This timeframe mirrors the corresponding drafting in the model provisions and is well-precedented across made solar DCOs, including the Cottam Solar Project Order 2024, the West Burton Solar Project Order 2025 and the Tillbridge Solar Order 2025. The Applicant considers the time period to be appropriate and reasonable given the agricultural use of the land. v) The Applicant does not consider there to be an inconsistency. Paragraph 4.5.18 of the Explanatory Memorandum [APP/3.1.2] does indeed refer to land in Schedule 11 of the draft DCO [APP/3.1.1] (i.e. the land shown coloured yellow on the Land Plans) as that which can be temporarily used for the carrying out of the Scheme. However, per paragraph 4.5.19 of the Explanatory Memorandum [APP/3.1.2], article 31(1)(a)(ii) separately allows article 31 to apply to land which may later be the subject of compulsory acquisition (i.e. the land shown coloured pink and plus on the Land Plans). This reflects a common approach to designing and building infrastructure projects, whereby possession is taken of a wider area required for the purposes of construction, and once the location of new apparatus is known definitively (after it has been built), then the final area of land or area of land over which rights are required permanently is defined and acquired. Further justification can be found in section 4.5 of the Statement of Reasons [APP-021]. vi) The Applicant considers that a longer timeframe is appropriate for maintenance activities, such as hedgerow maintenance, as these activities are typically known and can be programmed in advance. This timeframe mirrors the corresponding drafting in the model provisions and is well-precedented across made solar DCOs, including the Longfield Solar Park Order 2023, the Cottam Solar Project Order 2024, the West Burton Solar Project Order 2025, the Tillbridge Solar Order 2025 and the Fenwick Solar Farm Order 2026. vii) The Applicant notes that the provisions relating to temporary possession in the Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017 are not in force and Article 6(1)(g) has been included to ensure there is no inconsistency should the provisions come into force at a later date. The Applicant does not consider such a requirement to be necessary in the draft DCO [APP/3.1.1]. Article 32(4) already requires the Applicant to only remain in possession of land for so long as may be reasonably necessary to carry out the maintenance of the part of the Scheme for which possession of the land was taken. The ExA’s suggested requirement is also unprecedented in made solar DCOs. viii) As stated above, the provisions relating to temporary possession in the Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017 are not in force and Article 6(1)(g) has been included to ensure there is no inconsistency should the provisions come into force at a later date. The Applicant does not consider that this provision should be included in the draft DCO [APP/3.1.1], as this would contradict article 32(9) which states that where the Applicant takes possession of land, it is not required to acquire the land or any interest in it. It would not be practical or appropriate for the Applicant to be compelled to permanently acquire land it only temporarily requires during construction. Compensation is payable to landowners affected by the temporary use powers. The ExA’s suggestion is also unprecedented across made solar DCOs.
Q7.4.6	The applicant	Article 39 (Planning Permission)	The Applicant considers these provisions to be necessary in the draft DCO [APP/3.1.1] to address the potential scenario that, if the National Grid Substation (as associated development to the Scheme) is built



ExQ	Respondent	Question	Applicant’s Response
		Could the applicant provide further justification as to why these provisions are necessary in this particular dDCO in the circumstances of the proposed development.	by NGET pursuant to a separate planning permission rather than pursuant to the DCO, any separate consent would not invalidate the terms of the draft DCO [APP/3.1.1] for the Scheme. The Applicant refers to its response to section 89(3) letter dated 17 March 2026 [AS-063] for an explanation of this possibility (albeit noting that the Applicant considers this to be unlikely) and the justification for this approach.
Q7.4.7	The applicant	<p>Article 40 (Felling or lopping of trees and removal of hedgerows)</p> <p>Could the applicant provide further justification as to why it is necessary for the extent in 40(1) to refer to “near any part of the authorised development”.</p>	<p>The Applicant is following the approach to the drafting of this article taken in the Cottam Solar Project Order 2024 and the West Burton Solar Project Order 2025, and indeed the model provisions. This is necessary to ensure that any such nearby trees or shrubs do not:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • obstruct or interfere with the construction, maintenance or operation of the Scheme or any apparatus used in connection with the authorised development; • constitute a danger to persons using the Scheme; or • obstruct or interfere with the passage of construction vehicles to the extent necessary for the purposes of constructing the Scheme. <p>These provisions are subject to the control mechanisms in the same article, namely that such activities must be necessary, avoid unnecessary damage and are subject to compensation.</p>
Q7.4.8	The applicant	<p>Article 49 (Maintenance of drainage works)</p> <p>Could the applicant provide further justification as to why these provisions are necessary in this particular dDCO in the circumstances of the proposed development.</p>	<p>Article 49 is necessary to ensure that the wide powers granted by the DCO do not unintentionally alter or displace existing responsibilities for the maintenance of drainage systems.</p> <p>The Scheme could intersect with a range of existing drainage assets (field drains, and infrastructure maintained by landowners). Without this provision, there would be uncertainty as to whether the undertaker’s powers could override or transfer established maintenance obligations.</p>

Table 7.6: Draft Development Consent Order (DCO), Schedule 2 - Requirements

ExQ	Respondent	Question	Applicant’s Response
Q7.5.1	The applicant	<p>Requirements requiring submission of details for approval by the relevant planning authority</p> <p>EM [APP-019] paragraph 5.2.3 in so far as it refers to the Relevant Planning Authority (rather than the applicant) needing to consult third parties in relation to the document submitted to them. Could the applicant confirm whether this approach has been accepted in any previously made DCOs.</p>	<p>The approach of certain requirements requiring the relevant planning authority to consult with third parties when a document is submitted to them for approval is extremely well-precedented across numerous DCOs, both solar and non-solar, and is now standard practice. For example, the Longfield Solar Park Order 2023, the Cottam Solar Project Order 2024, the West Burton Solar Project Order 2025, the Tillbridge Solar Order 2025 and the Fenwick Solar Farm Order 2026 all contain several examples of such requirements.</p>
Q7.5.2	The applicant	<p>Requirement (R) 5 (Detailed design approval)</p> <p>With reference to Schedule 2 R5 of the dDCO [APP-018], the requirement states that no parts of Works Nos.1, 2 or 3A may commence until details relating to the part have been submitted and approved by the relevant planning authority.</p>	<p>i) It is common practice that only the most significant works require details to be submitted and approved by the relevant planning authority – the Applicant refers to the corresponding requirement in the Longfield Solar Park Order 2023, the Cottam Solar Project Order 2024, the West Burton Solar Project Order 2025 and the Tillbridge Solar Order 2025 for examples of this approach being accepted. Further, the Applicant notes that some of the works, including in relation to landscaping, fencing and drainage, are already addressed by corresponding Requirements in Schedule 2 of the draft DCO [APP/3.1.1] (see Requirements 7, 10 and 11 respectively), meaning there is no need to duplicate the provisions by referring to Requirement 5 in this regard. The Applicant also notes that the Design</p>



ExQ	Respondent	Question	Applicant’s Response
		<p>i. The applicant is requested to please explain how details of design approval are proposed in relation to the Works Nos. 4 to 11 inclusive.</p> <p>ii. To improve clarity and for consistency with the EM [APP-019], paragraph 5.2.11, for the last sentence in 5(1) could the applicant consider adding the text in bold below:</p> <p><i>“relating to that part have been submitted to and approved by the relevant planning authority for that part.”</i></p>	<p>Principles, Parameters and Commitments [APP/5.8.1] contains details for all Work Nos., and the outline Construction Environmental Management Plan [APP/7.6.1], the oOEMP [APP/7.8.1] and the oDS [APP7.10.1] all reference these parameters which must be met by the Applicant and its contractors.</p> <p>ii) The Applicant agrees with the ExA’s suggestion and has updated the drafting of paragraph 5(1) of Schedule 2 accordingly at Deadline 1 to insert the word ‘to’.</p>
Q7.5.3	The applicant	<p>R11 – Surface and foul water drainage</p> <p>Could the applicant clarify if R11 regarding the approval of the surface and foul water drainage systems would include for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> two emergency water tanks referred to in Table 6.1, outline Battery Safety Management Plan [APP-194]; and requirements for fire suppressant volume, paragraphs 12.4.38 to 12.4.44 from ES Appendix 12.2: Flood Risk Assessment [APP-170] which includes a penstock, linked to an automated system, and Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS) structures serving the BESS compound would be sized to accommodate the 1% Annual Exceedance Probability (AEP) +40% Climate Change (CC) and an additional 228m³, and this would be sufficient for storing the full fire suppressant volume during an extreme rainfall event. 	<p>The Applicant can confirm that penstocks, linked to an automated system, and Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS) structures serving the BESS compound would be sized to accommodate the 1% Annual Exceedance Probability (AEP) +40% Climate Change (CC) and an appropriate volume in accordance with guidance at the time of construction is included within Requirement 11 of the draft DCO [APP/3.1.1] as they form an integral part of the drainage system to serve the Scheme.</p> <p>The two water tanks for the supply of firefighting water do not form part of the drainage system (as set out in the oBSMP [APP-194]) and are therefore not covered by Requirement 11 of the draft DCO [APP/3.1.1].</p>
Q7.5.4	The applicant	<p>R11 – Surface and foul water drainage</p> <p>As requested by BDC in its relevant representation [RR-011], could the applicant update the requirement wording to include for the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) to be consulted on the surface and foul water drainage plan in addition to the EA and Anglian Water Services Ltd?</p>	<p>The Applicant notes that Requirement 11 of Schedule 2 of the draft DCO [APP/3.1.1] requires the Applicant to submit “to the relevant planning authority” (i.e. Breckland Council) the written details of the surface water drainage scheme and (if any) foul water drainage system. As part of this approval, the Council must consult with the Environment Agency and Anglian Water Services Limited or its successor in function as the relevant water undertaker. However, the Council is also entitled to consult with any other organisation if they deem it necessary to do so, which can include Norfolk County Council in its role as the Lead Local Flood Authority. In addition, the protective provisions in Part 7 of Schedule 15 of the draft DCO [APP/3.1.1] require the Applicant to submit plans relating to any works proximate to any drainage work or ordinary watercourse to the Lead Local Flood Authority. It is therefore unnecessary for the potential for this consultation to be spelt out on the face of the draft DCO [APP/3.1.1]. The Applicant has, therefore, not amended the wording of Requirement 11 of Schedule 2 of the draft DCO [APP/3.1.1] in this regard.</p>
Q7.5.5	The applicant	<p>R16 - Public rights of way and permissive paths</p> <p>16(3) states “Before approving the public right of way and permissive path management plan the relevant planning authority shall consult with the relevant highway authority.”</p> <p>For consistency with R15, could the applicant review if the use of ‘shall’ could be replaced with ‘must’.</p>	<p>The Applicant agrees with the ExA’s suggestion and has updated the drafting of paragraph 16(3) of Schedule 2 accordingly at Deadline 1 to replace ‘shall’ with ‘must’.</p>



ExQ	Respondent	Question	Applicant’s Response
Q7.5.7	The applicant	<p>R20 - Decommissioning and restoration</p> <p>The dDCO [APP-018], R20 states: “20.—(1) The date of decommissioning for each part of the authorised development must be no later than 60 years following the date of final commissioning.”</p> <p>The outline Decommissioning Strategy (oDS) [APP-190], paragraph 2.1.3 states: “<i>The National Grid Substation and the Grid Connection Infrastructure would remain in situ.</i>”</p> <p>Regarding decommissioning, the dDCO refers to each part of the authorised development, while the oDS excludes the National Grid Substation and the Grid Connection. Could the applicant review this inconsistency and update the relevant document accordingly?</p>	<p>The Applicant agrees with the ExA’s suggestion and has updated the drafting of Requirement 20 in Schedule 2 accordingly at Deadline 1 to address this matter.</p>

Table 7.7: Draft Development Consent Order (DCO), Explanatory Note

ExQ	Respondent	Question	Applicant’s Response
Q7.6.1	The applicant	<p>Explanatory Note</p> <p>Could the applicant confirm the location referred to as “[TBC]”</p>	<p>The Applicant is in discussions with Norfolk County Council regarding this location and will update the draft DCO [APP/3.1.1] when this is confirmed.</p>

Table 8.1: Flood Risk, hydrology and water resources

ExQ	Respondent	Question	Applicant’s Response
Q8.0.1	The applicant	<p>Effects on groundwater during construction</p> <p>ES Chapter 12: Water Resources [APP-061], Table 12-20 identifies that for groundwater additional mitigation of a piling foundation risk assessment is proposed to mitigate the effects of chemical pollution and erosion sedimentation. The outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (oCEMP) [APP-186] does not provide any further detail of a piling foundation risk assessment.</p> <p>Could the applicant provide further detail on how this risk assessment would mitigate the risk and how this would be secured in the dDCO?</p>	<p>A piling foundation risk assessment (FWRA) will identify, evaluate, and control pathways through which piling activities could impact groundwater, once the design of foundations has been chosen.</p> <p>All piling and foundation methods will be determined via a FWRA, following groundwater monitoring, and this has been updated within the oCEMP [APP/7.6.1] submitted at Deadline 1. Groundwater monitoring will be undertaken over a sufficient period to be representative of seasonal variation including worst-case groundwater levels and thus should include monitoring for at least six months, including the winter period, and the commitment in the oCEMP requires approval from the Environment Agency before the monitoring commences.</p>
Q8.0.2	The applicant	<p>Water Framework Directive (WFD) assessment figures</p> <p>The WFD assessment [APP-171] presents two figures for Plate 12-3 which are both described as showing minimum groundwater depth; however, the two figures show different depth information; it</p>	<p>The two figures shown in Plate 12-3 of ES Appendix 12.3: Water Framework Directive Assessment [APP-171] are derived from triangulation analysis. The PV mounting structures are proposed to be piled at a maximum depth of 4m as secured by the Design Principles, Parameters and Commitments [APP/5.8.1]; therefore, the blue depth banding shows the maximum potential interaction with Work No.1 and groundwater.</p>



ExQ	Respondent	Question	Applicant’s Response
		<p>is therefore not clear which figure represents the minimum depth to groundwater below ground level.</p> <p>Could the applicant clarify what the two figures are attempting to demonstrate and how they relate to statements made in row 1 of table 12-4 of the WFD assessment relating to interaction of the piling for Works Nos. 2 to 4 and groundwater body quantitative status?</p>	<p>As piling extents are proposed to a maximum of 12m and 15m for Work Nos. 2-4, the green depth banding shows the maximum interaction potential with Work Nos. 2 and 4 at 12m and 15m, in relation to piling extents. The two figures will be updated / separated at a future deadline to provide clarity as to what they relate to.</p>
Q8.0.5	The applicant	<p>Norfolk County Council Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) Comments</p> <p>During the Issue Specific Hearing 1, the applicant proposed a meeting with the LLFA prior to deadline 1 to discuss the LLFA’s concerns with several aspects of the FRA submitted with the application [APP-170]. These concerns are set out at length in Appendix 1 to NCC’s RR [RR-043].</p> <p>Following the above meeting, could the applicant confirm whether they intend to submit an updated FRA to address the concerns?</p>	<p>ES Appendix 12.2: Flood Risk Assessment [AS-053] will be updated at a future deadline to address comments made by both the LLFA and the Environment Agency, after further discussions take place between the Applicant and these parties.</p>
Q8.0.6	The applicant	<p>Sequential approach to site layout</p> <p>Bullet 3 of paragraph 5.8.36 of NPS EN-1 requires the SoS to be satisfied that a sequential approach has been applied at the site level to minimise flood risk by directing the most vulnerable uses to areas of lowest flood risk. The FRA [AS-053] identifies that the full extent of more vulnerable elements of Works Nos. 2 to 4 are partly located in surface water flow paths modelled by the applicant. At the Issue Specific Hearing 1, the applicant advised that the detailed design of the proposed development is likely to avoid the surface water flow paths.</p> <p>Given that the detailed design is yet to be developed, could the applicant explain the approach that would be taken in the event that the detailed design process cannot avoid the modelled surface water flow paths, by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. providing clarity on why Work Nos 2 to 4 need to be located here to ensure policy in NPS EN-1 is satisfied ii. identify how the identified surface water flow paths would be mitigated if they cannot be avoided 	<p>Only a small section of Work Nos. 2 to 4 are located within a pluvial flow pathway with a maximum flood depth of 0.19 for the 1%-AEP +40% climate change allowance event during the pre-development scenario.</p> <p>Given the marginal encroachment of the pluvial pathway onto the work area, it is expected that above-ground infrastructure can be placed outside the flood extents and therefore demonstrate a sequential approach to the design of the Scheme.</p> <p>As the Scheme does not have a detailed design at this stage, there is a commitment in ES Appendix 12.2: Flood Risk Assessment [AS-053] to have a formal drainage system for the BESS and Customer Substation designed to the 1% AEP + 40% climate change allowance, with no flooding of the drainage system built into the design, as per National Standards. –As such, the current pluvial ponding would enter the drainage system, rather than flow across or pond on the surface of Work Nos. 2 to 4.</p> <p>As such, the post-development scenario will change the pluvial pathway by intercepting rainfall into a formal SuDS network.</p> <p>The Environment Agency have agreed that this principle is acceptable in their Statement of Common Ground on the Great North Road Solar and Biodiversity Park, where the BESS area was modelled to have pluvial depths greater than for the Scheme (see EA025 of the EA’s SoCG for Great North Road).</p> <p>Should the infrastructure in Work Nos. 2 to 4 not be able to be located outside the pluvial pathway during the detailed design, ES Appendix 12.2: Flood Risk Assessment [AS-053] commits to place BESS units outside of pluvial flood depths of 0.4m. There is also a commitment to raise finished floor levels by 150mm.</p>
Q8.0.7	The applicant	<p>BESS unit flood risk</p> <p>The FRA [AS-053] states two different minimum heights above ground level for the BESS units. For pluvial flood risk at paragraph 12.2.20, a minimum clearance of 0.1m between ground level and the BESS units is stated, whereas for groundwater flood risk, paragraph 12.2.42 states BESS units will be elevated by at least</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> i) If localised flood depths cannot be managed via the drainage strategy, ES Appendix 12.2: Flood Risk Assessment [AS-053] will be updated at a future deadline to confirm that BESS units will be appropriately raised to 300mm above the modelled flood level. ii) The clearance / freeboard commitment to be updated in ES Appendix 12.2: Flood Risk Assessment [AS-053] at Deadline 2 will take the more conservative clearance requested by the Environment Agency and, as such, exceeds the LLFA guidance requirements.



ExQ	Respondent	Question	Applicant’s Response
		<p>0.3m above ground level. In its RR [RR-043], the LLFA state that their developer guidance requires a clearance of 0.15m.</p> <p>In reference to compliance with bullet 12 of paragraph 5.8.15 of NPS EN-1, could the applicant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. confirm the proposed minimum clearance above ground level of the BESS units ii. comment on how the minimum clearance has been aligned to the LLFA’s guidance iii. confirm how commitment to this minimum clearance will be secured and comment on whether it could be included in the Design Principles, Parameters and Commitments document [APP-048] which is currently referenced in Schedule 13 of the dDCO [APP-018] as a document to be certified? 	<p>iii) The Design Principles, Parameters and Commitments [APP/5.8.1] has been updated at Deadline 1 to commit to raising BESS units 300mm above the modelled flood level, should the final design of the Scheme place infrastructure within post-development modelled pluvial pathways.</p>
Q8.0.8	The applicant	<p>Maintenance of surface water drainage system</p> <p>Paragraph 5.8.39 of NPS EN-1 states that the SoS should be satisfied that the most appropriate body is given responsibility for maintaining sustainable drainage systems (SuDS). The FRA [AS-053] describes that the proposed storage tank and infiltration basin for Work No.s 2 to 4 would capture runoff from both temporary aspects of the proposed development (the BESS) and permanent aspects (the NGET substation); these aspects would have different operators during the project lifetime. However, paragraph 12.4.31 of the FRA [AS-053] only states that the “Scheme operator” will be given SuDS maintenance responsibility.</p> <p>Could the applicant please clarify who will have the long term maintenance responsibility for the proposed storage tank and infiltration basins which jointly serve Work Nos. 2 to 4 and how this would be secured within the dDCO?</p>	<p>ES Appendix 12.2: Flood Risk Assessment [AS-053] will be updated at a future deadline to confirm that it will be the responsibility of whomever operates the various aspects of the Scheme to maintain the drainage system serving that aspect of the Scheme. Should the National Grid Substation remain in operation beyond the other aspects of the Scheme, then NGET will be responsible for the maintenance of the SuDS system which will serve Work No. 4.</p>
Q8.0.9	The applicant	<p>Flood Risk Activity Permit (FRAP)</p> <p>Part 1 of dDCO, Article 6 (1) (e) provides for the disapplication of the requirement for the applicant to obtain a flood risk activity permit (FRAP) from the EA; however, the updated Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) [AS-053] does not indicate whether a FRAP may be required from the EA. In its relevant representation [AS-062] the EA state no discussions have taken place between the EA and the applicant regarding FRAPs or disapplication.</p> <p>To justify why the relevant part of the Environmental Permitting Regulations need to be disapplied and protective provisions agreed, could the applicant clearly explain where a FRAP is likely</p>	<p>Whilst the majority of the Order limits is located within Flood Zone 1, there is a minor section of Work No. 11: Mitigation and Enhancement Area, associated with Skylark plots, which is located in Flood Zones 2 and 3. As such, in accordance with <i>Flood risk activities: environmental permits</i> Guidance, the ability to undertake activities carried out on the floodplain of a main river and more than 8m from the river, such as stockpiling, could require a FRAP. The Applicant has informed the Environment Agency of its proposed approach in this regard, which explains the inclusion of protective provisions for the benefit of the Environment Agency in the Applicant’s draft DCO [APP/3.1.1].</p>



ExQ	Respondent	Question	Applicant’s Response
		to be required particularly given the distance to the nearest main river?	
Q8.0.10	The applicant	<p>Ordinary Watercourse land drainage consent disapplication</p> <p>The OEMP [APP-188] states that works would ordinarily require Land Drainage Consents from the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA), and that it is intended that these requirements would be disapplied through the DCO.</p> <p>Could the applicant:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. provide an update on progress with the LLFA in relation to legislative requirements proposed to be disapplied and included in the dDCO, as set out in Appendix 1 of the Consents and Agreements Position Statement [APP-185]? ii. provide confirmation on whether land drainage consent may be required with the Norfolk Rivers Internal Drainage Board (IDB) or the East of the Ouse Polver and Nar IDB and whether discussions have been held with either IDB regards this requirement? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> i) As outlined in section 12.8.58 of ES Chapter 12: Water Resources [APP-061], in-stream engineering works will not require Ordinary Watercourse consent from the LLFA. ii) There are no watercourses within the Order limits for which Norfolk Rivers Internal Drainage Board (IDB) or the East of the Ouse Polver and Nar IDB have responsibility for. As such, land drainage consent is not required from either IDB.
Q8.0.11	The applicant	<p>Hydrogeological Model and Assessment of Impacts</p> <p>In appendix C of its RR [AS-062], the EA has provided comments on the outline Battery Safety Management Plan (oBSMP) [APP-194] which shows that for groundwater protection, the method and assumptions, results of assessment and mitigation / enhancements have not been agreed.</p> <p>Could the applicant comment on these concerns and provide an update on progress.</p>	<p>The final design of the cable trenches, including whether they will be fully sealed, will be determined during the detailed design phase. This will be informed by the results of ground investigations (as committed to within the oCEMP [APP/7.6.1]), together with any relevant evidence, guidance, or emerging best practice. It is anticipated that the cables will be sealed (i.e. the cables will not be exposed, as they will incorporate an insulating layer protecting the conductor). Accordingly, thermal discharge from the cables is expected to be low, and the electrical cables are therefore not considered to present a risk of contaminating surface water or groundwater.</p>
Q8.0.12	The applicant	<p>Water Resource Assessment</p> <p>Paragraph 12.8.99 of ES Chapter 12: Water Resources [APP-061] states that the proposed development is likely to be supplied, at least in part, by Anglian Water mains supply.</p> <p>To demonstrate compliance with paragraph 5.16.10 in NPS EN-1 and as requested in Anglian Water’s RR [RR-003], could the applicant provide a Water Resource Assessment?</p>	<p>As outlined on Section 12.8.99 of ES Chapter 12: Water Resources [APP-061], the Scheme is likely to be supplied by a combination of Anglian Water Mains, the landowners’ existing agricultural supply and a water tankered option. As such, the final required volume required to be supplied by Anglian Water will be determined and applied for following the grant of the DCO (if consented). The oCEMP [APP/7.6.1] has been updated at Deadline 1 to confirm that the Applicant will not seek to apply for a daily supply to the Scheme of more than 20m³ per day. As such, a Water Resources Assessment is not required for the Scheme.</p>
Q8.0.13	The applicant	<p>Options for all watercourse crossings and trenchless excavation activity</p> <p>Could the Applicant clarify whether they have assessed the other options for all watercourse crossings and trenchless excavation activity apart from the use of Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD) including the impacts from these options and any necessary mitigation or whether they have assessed and set out mitigation</p>	<p>Section 12.8.54 of ES Chapter 12: Water Resources [APP-061] states that, as part of the construction phase of the Scheme, cables may also cross areas of the Site, in particular drains between Fields 29 and 30 on Site. The type of crossings will be determined during the detailed design phase, prior to the construction phase, and with watercourse crossing strategies/techniques (such as HDD, open cut method and covered with a temporary diversion, damming or pumping) explored.</p>



ExQ	Respondent	Question	Applicant’s Response
		measures only for the potential use of HDD as set out in the oCEMP [APP-186].	

Table 9.1: Grid Connection

ExQ	Respondent	Question	Applicant’s Response
Q9.0.1	The applicant	<p>Scenario B (double turn in option)</p> <p>ES Chapter 8 [APP-057] Paragraph 8.8.30 describes that:</p> <p><i>“For completeness, an assessment has been presented in this chapter which covers the removal of the decommissioned pylons and overhead line (Scenario B). The ultimate conclusions, though, are as assessed from Scenario A, as the worst-case assessment.”</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Could the applicant advise if discussions have been held with National Grid Electricity Transmission (NGET) plc to explore whether it agrees with the applicant’s preferred solution of Scenario B (double turn in option) as stated in paragraph 8.8.30, ES Chapter 8? ii. Can this topic be included in the Statement of Common Ground with NGET? iii. Can the applicant comment on whether Scenario B has also been considered in other ES Chapters, in particular ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual [APP-055] and if so what changes in effects resulted? iv. Could a drawing, showing plan views and elevations for Scenarios A and B be provided? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> i) As described in the Applicant’s Procedural Decision Response Letter [AS-063], the Applicant has had, and continues to have, regular monthly meetings with representatives from NGET; these meetings commenced before the grid connection application was submitted. As part of this engagement process, the Applicant shared the proposed location of the National Grid Substation with NGET. NGET are tasked with delivering works to support delivery of the Government’s Clean Power Mission and connecting NESO’s re-prioritised connection queue. <p>While the Applicant has shared its proposals for the location of the National Grid Substation and other high-level details associated with its design with NGET, NGET have confirmed in their Relevant Representation [RR-036] that they are not currently developing proposals to build a new substation for the Scheme. The Applicant confirmed at Issue Specific Hearing 1 on 7 May 2026 that it understands this to be the case and that is consistent with its understanding of NGET’s priorities in relation to the Clean Power Mission, and the Scheme’s status as a Gate 1 project.</p> <p>The Applicant expects that, if consented, the Applicant would re-submit the Scheme to a future NESO re-prioritisation round to seek a Gate 2 connection offer (with a firm connection date and location). The Applicant does not expect NGET to progress with a design for the Substation prior to a Gate 2 status being granted.</p> ii) Subject to the response in Part i), the Applicant continues to engage with NGET and will progress its Statement of Common Ground with NGET to the fullest extent possible. iii) The Applicant considered both options in the design evolution of the Scheme and has set out its preferred solution; however, the Applicant is seeking to retain flexibility to allow NGET to construct either option should the Scheme be consented. The final design decision will be influenced by a number of technical considerations at a future point in time. In light of this, the Applicant has undertaken an assessment of the worst-case scenario (Scenario A) which is in accordance with the Rochdale Envelope approach. The Applicant included an assessment of both scenarios within ES Chapter 8: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [APP-057] recognising the sensitivity of the heritage assets located along the Nar Valley. The Applicant does not consider it necessary, nor proportionate, to present the assessment finding of Scenario B for all the other environmental disciplines. iv) Updated technical information figure demonstrates decommissioning of the existing line and extent. Photomontages show existing line retained along with the new pylon infrastructure to divert the OHL into the new substation.
Q9.0.2	The applicant	<p>Potential new connections to the proposed substation</p> <p>Table 7.1, Statement of Need [APP-042], presents National Energy System Operator’s (NESO) Transmission Entry Capacity (TEC) Register entries for connection within 25km of New Swaffham.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Could the applicant confirm details of any other schemes that are proposed to connect to the proposed 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> i) The Applicant is unaware of any other schemes that are proposed to connect to the Scheme’s new Swaffham substation (National Grid Substation). The Transmission Entry Capacity (TEC) register is published by NESO and updated twice weekly to incorporate updates arising from NESO’s Connections Reform Process. The TEC Register provides a list of projects with signed connection agreements, and their associated connection sites. The Scheme is the only project listed to connect into the Swaffham 400KV Substation on the TEC Register.



ExQ	Respondent	Question	Applicant’s Response
		<p>development’s new Swaffham substation and confirm whether these have been included in the cumulative effects assessment in the ES?</p> <p>ii. In relation to the proposed development, where is it envisaged that any such connections would take place and in particular is there any interaction with the proposed connection for High Grove Solar Farm?</p>	<p>ii) The Applicant is not aware of any other schemes connecting into the National Grid Substation that forms part of the Scheme. The Applicant is not involved in the contractual discussions between NESO/NGET and High Grove Solar Farm regarding the proposed connection point for that project.</p>

Table 10.1: Land and Soil

ExQ	Respondent	Question	Applicant’s Response
Q10.0.1	The applicant	<p>NPS EN-1, Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land</p> <p>The use of best and most versatile (BMV) agricultural land (defined as land in grades 1, 2 and 3a of the Agricultural Land Classification (ALC)) has been raised as a concern by CAPC [RR-013], NCC [RR-043], NE [RR-038] and Terry Jermy MP [RR-058], and numerous other IPs [too many to list]. The ExA notes that the applicant has set out its assessment of compliance with NPS EN-1 in its Policy Compliance Document [APP-044] and that R20, dDCO [APP-018] refers to a 60 year operational life for the proposed development.</p> <p>Both before and after the applicant’s Agricultural Land Classification, with reference to NPS EN-1 paragraph 5.11.12, could the applicant explain how it has aimed to minimise impacts on the BMV agricultural land (defined as land in grades 1, 2 and 3a of the Agricultural Land Classification ALC) and preferably use land in areas of poorer quality (grades 3b, 4 and 5). Can the applicant also comment in relation to the proposed NGET substation which would result in the permanent loss of Grade 2 land.</p>	<p>The site evaluation process has been informed by a number of baseline and technical studies, as detailed in Appendix 1: Site Evaluation Report of the Planning Statement [APP/5.5.1]. Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) and land type were an important factor for the Applicant when evaluating the Site. Paragraph 4.4.20 of Appendix 1: Site Evaluation Report states that “<i>consistent with national policy, the Applicant considered the best and most versatile land based on the available data at the time of the initial site evaluation, which was the Natural England Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) maps</i>”. The Applicant further states, in paragraph 4.4.22, that “<i>this approach to considering ALC values, in terms of the use of provisional and predictive mapping, has been considered as both satisfactory and proportionate by the Examining Authorities and Secretary of State in relation to, for example, the made Heckington Fen Solar Farm, Gate Burton Energy Park and Mallard Pass Solar Farm DCOs</i>”.</p> <p>Additionally, ES Appendix 11.2: Agricultural Land Classification [APP-168], informed by soil samples, was prepared and used to inform the siting of infrastructure within the Site, as well as the impact of the Scheme on soils and agricultural land, as assessed in ES Chapter 11: Soils and Agriculture [AS-018]. This was completed at an early stage in the design process in order to be available for informing the design and micro-siting of the infrastructure. The outline Soil Management Plan (oSMP) [APP/7.13.1] contains the management measures related to the use and handling of soils and sets the framework for what will become the detailed soil management plan. The Applicant is required, under Requirement 17 of Schedule 2 of the draft DCO [APP/3.1.1], to produce a detailed soil management plan that is substantially in accordance with the oSMP. Soil information was obtained across the Site and was also available to assist in the micro-siting of fixed equipment.</p> <p>In respect of short-term temporary works, especially the construction compounds, land quality was considered in terms of site selection, but additionally access to the highway and location with respect to operational necessity, was important. However, as set out in ES Chapter 11: Soils and Agriculture [AS-018] at 11.8.8 to 11.8.14, these works are temporary and reversible and are not expected to result in any diminution on Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) grade or adverse effects on soil quality. Accordingly, whilst BMV use avoidance was considered important, no long-term adverse effect is anticipated and BMV considerations are less important as a consequence.</p> <p>In respect of access tracks, as set out in Chapter 11 at 11.8.15 to 11.8.20, these are all capable of restoration to comparable grade. The assessment assumes a worst-case impact that some landowners might wish to retain tracks on decommissioning as tracks can provide a significant agricultural benefit for operating farms. The location of the tracks is driven by functional considerations, and avoidance of BMV, which is distributed in a patchy distribution pattern not generally aligning with field boundaries, was not feasible. These areas can all be restored fully, so avoidance of BMV is less important as a consequence.</p> <p>The Customer Substation, National Grid Substation and BESS are proposed to be sited on land including land of BMV quality. This is assessed in Chapter 11 at 11.8.35 to 11.8.42. Information about the siting of this equipment was presented at the Issue Specific Hearing 1 under agenda item 3. The BMV status of</p>




ExQ	Respondent	Question	Applicant’s Response
			<p>much of the site selected was identified as a specific consideration. However, the Site’s location with close connectivity to the grid, good access close to the A1065, and the landscape and ecological impacts, were also important considerations. An on-balance decision to locate in this position was taken by the Applicant’s design team.</p> <p>These areas will mostly be restored to comparable ALC grade. The National Grid Substation is assumed (worst case) to be permanently affected. As shown on the ALC plan (see, for example, Plate 11-33 of Chapter 11 of the ES), there is only a small area of Subgrade 3b in Field 27, and micro-siting the National Grid Substation to include that modest area of non-BMV land would result in design and functional impacts, and would also result in a more awkward field shape following decommissioning.</p> <p>Therefore, the avoidance and minimisation of land of BMV quality was a key consideration in the design but could not always be achieved.</p>
Q10.0.2	The applicant	<p>ALC survey extent</p> <p>The ALC survey [APP-168] does not include all of the Grid Connection Infrastructure area within the Order limits on the east side of the A1065. It is not made clear in the ES why these areas have not been included in the ALC survey. Can the Applicant explain in more detail why the Grid Connection Infrastructure has not been included in the ALC survey?</p>	<p>The area to the east of the A1065 has not been included in the ALC survey. This area is included within the Order limits in connection with the Grid Connection Infrastructure. The works in this area will relate only to the re-stringing of overhead power lines. No works involving disturbance to the soils are intended.</p> <p>The restringing works will involve the use of machinery. To avoid causing short-term damage to soils, these machinery activities should be undertaken when ground conditions are suitably dry, as set out in the oSMP [APP/7.13.1]. Alternatively, if ground conditions are not suitable, the use of temporary trackways (such as is shown below) can be deployed.</p>  <p>These works will be specified in the detailed SMP.</p>
Q10.0.3	The applicant	<p>Contaminated Land desk study</p> <p>Can the Applicant clarify whether a Phase 1 Contaminated Land desk study has been undertaken for the proposed development to establish baseline conditions. If not, explain why and provide more detail on what assumptions have been made regarding the baseline with respect to contaminated land for the assessment.</p>	<p>An Envirocheck report was commissioned and included as Annex G of ES Appendix 12.2: Flood Risk Assessment [AS-053]. The Envirocheck report identified no historic waste sites or infilled land, hazardous substances, or industrial land use within the search area, which focussed on the areas of the Site where major excavation are proposed (i.e. the substation and BESS compounds). In addition, a sitewide search of historic maps (1883-1952) was undertaken which identified no potential sources of historic contamination within the Site, confirming that the land within the Site has predominantly been used for agricultural purposes. The historic map search did identify features associated with former mining activity on Site; however, these have been accounted for from an early stage in the design process with appropriate development buffers maintained, as detailed in Design Principles, Parameters and Commitments [APP/5.8.1]. Notwithstanding this, the oCEMP [APP/7.6.1], oOEMP [APP/7.8.1], and oDS [APP/7.10.1] all contain measures to monitor and control any unexpected contamination that may be encountered in all phases of the Scheme.</p>



ExQ	Respondent	Question	Applicant’s Response
Q10.0.4	The applicant	<p>Natural England’s RR [RR-038]</p> <p>Table 11.4 of ES Chapter 11 indicates that BMV agricultural land represents approximately 54% of the total Order limits area, with 38 hectares (ha) potentially being disturbed, and potentially 8.8 ha being permanently lost. Natural England (NE) in their RR [RR-038] advise that the ES should identify the sensitivity of affected soils using ALC and soil-function criteria, ensure that the full spatial extent of BESS-related land disturbance is accounted for, and commit to fully specified mitigation and monitoring measures within the final Soil Management Plan (SMP) to support a defensible evaluation of significance. Can the Applicant respond to NE’s RR on this matter and explain whether the ES assessment of BMV land and soils handling is robust enough to reach the conclusions in the ES or if further assessment is required as advised by NE.</p>	<p>Natural England’s Relevant Representation [RR-038] notes variously that ALC and soil function criteria should be used to assess the effects, and the ExA’s question seeks confirmation that this has been completed.</p> <p>In respect of ALC results, the ALC covers 829.4 ha of mostly agricultural land (ES Appendix 11.2: Agricultural Land Classification [APP-168], paragraph 1.5). The survey has included 830 auger sample points. Some were recorded as non-agricultural, and a small number could not be surveyed due to livestock or soil conditions, but the ALC has been completed at a sampling density of one per hectare.</p> <p>This is a detailed ALC, carried out under the ALC Guidelines. The ALC results are therefore detailed and reliable. The assessment of impacts and effects has followed the evaluation of significance set out in the ES. Losses of more than 20 ha are defined as significant. The assessment is robust.</p> <p>In respect of soils, the ALC survey recorded soil type and depth of each auger location. These are set out in the tables at Appendix 3 of ES Appendix 11.2: Agricultural Land Classification [APP-168]. For example, auger location 174 has loamy medium sand (LmS) to 30cm, with an upper subsoil from 30 – 50cm of medium sand (mS) and a differently coloured (10 YR 7/4) subsoil of medium sand (mS) from 50cm down to the maximum auger depth of 120cm. Soils are therefore recorded in detail. The assessment of effects on soils is set out in Chapter 11 at 11.8.55 to 11.8.60. This identifies where soils are of low or medium sensitivity and this is mapped in 11.8.55 and Plate 11-39. The sensitivity references back to Table 11-1, column 3.</p> <p>Consequently, the assessment has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • obtained detailed information on soils, on a regular 100m grid; • fully assessed soils type and suitability; • provided a robust assessment. <p>No further assessment is required.</p>
Q10.0.5	The applicant	<p>Indicative BESS footprint - distribution of BMV land</p> <p>The distribution of BMV land (Grades 2, 3a and 3b) within the indicative BESS footprint has not been specifically assessed as the exact location has not yet been decided for the proposed development. The assessment in the ES assumes that adverse effects would be temporary and reversible through restoration, although unsuccessful reinstatement could result in permanent downgrading of land quality. Can the Applicant clarify whether soil handling and works would permanently affect the ALC of any BMV land that is required for the proposed development’s BESS and the Substations respectively.</p>	<p>The BESS footprint has not been determined, but the size and shape should it be included in Field 27 is shown in ES Chapter 11: Soils and Agriculture, plate 11-34 [AS-018]. The area has been quantified and assessed, assuming that the BESS is temporary and restorable to comparable ALC grade, in paragraph 11.8.41 (ii).</p> <p>In the alternative, the BESS might be placed in Field 24. This alternative is assessed in paragraphs 11.8.39 and 11.8.41 (i), and would involve land of ALC Subgrade 3b non-BMV land.</p> <p>Paragraph 11.8.42 sets out a worst-case assessment that the BESS might not be restored to comparable ALC grade. These measurements are then considered in Table 11-7 and the alternative described in 11.8.51 to 11.8.54. A BESS area can normally be fully restored. A BESS in Field 24 would be located on level land of Subgrade 3b, as shown in Plate 11-35, and full restoration is likely.</p> <p>If the BESS is located in Field 27, this is sloping, as shown in Plate 11-36. These works would therefore require a greater degree of earthworks to level the Site. This similarly applies to the Customer and National Grid Substations. The Design Principles, Parameters and Commitments [APP/5.8.1] allows for a piled solution for some foundations to 12m depth, and accordingly the works if built on a slope could potentially be extensive such that retention of soils and subsequent restoration to comparable ALC grade may be difficult. Restoration to agricultural use is not anticipated to be difficult, it is restoration to the existing ALC grade and distribution that would be challenging. For this reason, the worst-case assessment is included.</p> <p>In summary, therefore, the National Grid Substation is assumed to be a permanent loss of 4.5 ha of BMV.</p>



ExQ	Respondent	Question	Applicant’s Response
			<p>The Customer Substation is assumed to be a temporary works, but a worst-case assessment is that restoration back to comparable BMV grade may not be achieved. The likely scenario is that restoration back to BMV quality will be achieved.</p> <p>The BESS, if located in Field 24, will not affect BMV land.</p> <p>The BESS, if located in Field 27, is likely to be restored back to BMV but given the degree of levelling works required a worst-case allowance for restoration back to agriculture but not the same ALC grade is included.</p>
Q10.0.6	The applicant	<p>BMV Land Percentage of the Site</p> <p>With reference to Policy Compliance Document [APP-044], in its assessment of compliance with NPS EN-3 paragraph 2.10.29, the applicant concludes that 48.3% of the Site is non-BMV and 51.7% of the Site is BMV.</p> <p>Could the applicant explain the reasons why the above percentages are inconsistent with the percentages presented in Table 11-4 ALC Survey Results of the Site [APP-060] which correspond with 54% of the Site is BMV with the remainder Non-BMV, Non-agricultural and woodland, and not surveyed and roads.</p>	<p>The assessment of paragraph 2.10.29 of NPS EN-3 within Policy Compliance Document [APP/5.6.1] refers to the provisional ALC mapping (provided by DEFRA and Natural England) with regards to the Site being 48.3% non-BMV and 51.7% of the Site as BMV. These figures are an early best-estimate from the provisional ALC. However, as detailed within ES Chapter 11: Soils and Agriculture [AS-018], Natural England’s Technical Information Note TIN049 (2012) outlines that these maps are not suitable for use in site specific circumstances, but they provide information for use in wider landscape planning. As a result, an ALC survey of this specific Site was conducted (ES Appendix 11.2: Agricultural Land Classification [APP-168]) with the results summarised within Table 11-4 ALC Survey Results of the Site within ES Chapter 11: Soils and Agriculture [AS-018]. This confirmed 54% of the Site is BMV.</p>
Q10.0.7	The applicant	<p>Alternative agricultural use during the operational phase</p> <p>ES Chapter 14: Socio Economics [APP-063] paragraph 14.8.40 concludes that alternative agricultural use, such as sheep grazing and fodder production, could continue under and around the solar panels. Section 2.15 of the outline Operational Environmental Management Plan (oOEMP) [APP-188] assumes as a reasonable worst case there would be no grazing but that sheep grazing would be explored should consent be granted.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Could the applicant provide examples of solar farms where alternative uses such as sheep grazing and fodder production, have been implemented during the operational phase? ii. Also, could the applicant indicate whether any additional measures would be required for the proposed development as a result and how these would be secured? 	<p>Sheep grazing under and around solar PV arrays is common practice. It is often difficult to identify, however, and so is not easily seen when passing solar farms.</p> <p>Photographs of three operational sites are shown below. These include, as shown, solar panels with low edges which make access for sheep difficult.</p>  <p><i>Manor Farm, Llanvapley</i></p>



ExQ	Respondent	Question	Applicant’s Response
			 <p data-bbox="1418 716 1709 751"><i>Manor Farm, Eggington</i></p>  <p data-bbox="1418 1283 1709 1318"><i>Little London, Berkshire</i></p> <p data-bbox="1418 1333 2715 1528">The Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs dataset “Agricultural Land Use in the UK at 1 June 2025”, published 17 December 2025, identifies that at 1 June 2025 land used for solar farms also used for grazing or agricultural production covered 4,937 ha, and land used for solar panels not used for agricultural production covered 4,563 ha. This excludes larger-scale solar farms as they are not collected within the Defra survey of farms. Statistically, over half of solar farm areas (52%) on working farms were being grazed at 1 June 2025.</p> <p data-bbox="1418 1549 2715 1717">For sheep to be grazed, there will be a requirement for water to be provided, for animal welfare reasons, but this can be provided by the use of alkathene pipes or by bowser. Water supplies are already in existence across the Site, which is used for grazing sheep and rearing pigs in places. Temporary collecting pens will also be needed, but these are moveable facilities. Both are part of normal farming activity and would not need to be secured specifically within the DCO.</p>
Q10.0.8	The applicant	<p data-bbox="596 1749 1397 1812">Land use after decommissioning of the proposed development</p> <p data-bbox="596 1829 1397 1944">The final version of the oDS [APP-190] is secured via R20 of the dDCO [APP-018]. Paragraph 2.1.2 of the oDS includes that when the operation phase ends, the Solar PV Site would be decommissioned and the land returned to the landowner.</p>	<p data-bbox="1418 1749 2715 1875">Should land be subject to compulsory acquisition, the undertaker would become the owner of that land (with the existing landowner compensated appropriately under the guidance and regulations for the exercise of such compulsory acquisition powers). Therefore, there would be no requirement for the undertaker to return that land to the existing landowner after decommissioning.</p>



ExQ	Respondent	Question	Applicant’s Response
		Following decommissioning, should the oDS also set out what happens to the land in the event that Compulsory Acquisition powers would be used?	
Q10.0.10	The applicant	<p>Cumulative effects during decommissioning phase</p> <p>Table 18-3 [APP-067] presents that there is a residual moderate adverse significant cumulative effect during the decommissioning phase due to the permanent land loss of BMV quality from all the developments to exceed 20 ha. Table 11-7, ES Chapter 11 [APP-060] provides a breakdown of the areas disturbed by ALC Grade for the proposed development.</p> <p>Could a breakdown of the areas disturbed by ALC Grade and a total area be provided for all the developments assessed in the cumulative effects assessment?</p>	<p>At the time of the production of the ES Chapter 11: Soils and Agriculture [AS-018] in January 2026, the assessment of cumulative effects on agricultural land quality was hindered by a lack of information about land quality. The available data was set out in Table 11-10.</p> <p>Since the publication of the ES, details of ALC for EN0110010 High Grove Solar and EN0110014 East Pye Solar have been published and can now be assessed.</p> <p>In addition, a new Predictive Agricultural Land Classification Map for England has been published, including predictive breakdowns by Subgrade of Grades 3a and 3b. Across Norfolk a significant proportion of land has been upgraded from the provisional ALC maps from the 1970s.</p> <p>The Applicant’s Update Note on Published Information and Cumulative Assessment on Agricultural Land Quality [APP/8.9] has been prepared and submitted by the Applicant at Deadline 1. This provides known ALC data, or the new predictive ALC grade, for the long and short list of sites in the cumulative assessment, and concludes that the conclusions of the ES are unchanged</p>

Table 11.1: Landscape and Visual

ExQ	Respondent	Question	Applicant’s Response
Q11.0.1	The applicant	<p>Vegetation Removal Plan</p> <p>Appendix 2 – Vegetation Removal Plan, oLEMP [APP-191], shows both the Order limits and hedgerow removal as red lines.</p> <p>Could the applicant review if the hedgerow removal demarcation shown is sufficiently clear to avoid potential confusion with hedgerows situated on the Order limits?</p>	<p>Appendix 2 – Vegetation Removal Plan, oLEMP [APP/7.11.1] has been revised at Deadline 1, as requested, with updates to the graphical presentation to better differentiate between the locations marked for potential hedgerow removal and also the Order limits.</p>
Q11.0.2	The applicant	<p>Advance planting and associated temporary hoarding</p> <p>Consultation Report [APP-025], Table 23 states: “Indicative area for solar PV panels (including glint and glare) – ‘Justification for the scale of the development is set out in the Statement of Need [APP/5.4]. Provided that solar PV panels are not installed until advance planting has become established, no significant glint and glare impacts are anticipated.”</p> <p>oCEMP [APP-186], Table 11, states for Glint and Glare effects that “Temporary hoarding is to be erected on the A1065 in the areas shown on ES Figure 5.2: Construction Masterplan [APP/6.3], until the advanced planting (detailed in the oLEMP [APP/7.11] reaches 3m in height in these areas).”</p> <p>i. Since the DCO application was submitted, has the advance planting progressed and if so what further planting remains?</p>	<p>The following responses are given directly towards each section of the Written Question, as outlined below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Yes, the advance planting has been completed and was planted during the winter of 2025/26. The advance planting plan is included within the oLEMP [APP/7.11.1]. ii) The temporary hoarding would need to be in place until the vegetation along the A1065 has reached a height of 3m. It is estimated that new advance planting would have reached this height by year 1 of the Operation Phase, Q4 2033. iii) The appearance of the temporary hoarding would be determined and agreed with the LPA during the detailed design stage, such as through a detailed CEMP, should the DCO gain consent. iv) Figure 5.2: Construction Masterplan [APP/6.3.1] shows the extent of the temporary hoarding, so no update is required.



ExQ	Respondent	Question	Applicant’s Response
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ii. How long is it envisaged that the temporary hoarding would need to be in place? iii. What would be the appearance of the hoarding and how would the details be submitted for approval be secured in the dDCO? iv. Could ES Figure 5.2: Construction Masterplan [APP-077] be updated to show the extent of the temporary hoarding as referred to above in Table 11? 	
Q11.0.3	The applicant	<p>Permanent area for Green Infrastructure and National Grid substation left after decommissioning</p> <p>ES Figure 5.1: Concept Masterplan [APP-076] shows the indicative siting zone for National Grid substation in the northern part of field 27. The oLEMP [APP-191], Appendix 1, Key Plan, Green Infrastructure Strategy Plans, shows a permanent area for Green Infrastructure and National Grid substation left after decommissioning, in yellow outline.</p> <p>Could the applicant clarify if the extent of the yellow outline is shown correctly as it is shown on 3 sides of the southern part of field 27.</p>	<p>The oLEMP [APP/7.11.1], Appendix 1, Key Plan, Green Infrastructure Strategy Plans have been revised, at Deadline 1, with updates to the graphical presentation to better illustrate the area noted as “Green Infrastructure and National Grid substation left after decommissioning”.</p>
Q11.0.4	The applicant	<p>Impact on dark skies policies</p> <p>CAPC’s RR [RR-013] includes concerns that: <i>“Castle Acre Parish Council has adopted a Dark Skies Policy in line with national and county guidance. NPPF Section 15 Paragraph 198 and Norfolk County Councils Environmental Lighting Zones Policy. The impact of operational and security lighting from the proposed solar farm, regardless of mitigation, is an additional concern, adversely affecting the quality of our night skies and their value to nocturnal wildlife.”</i></p> <p>Could the applicant comment on this concern.</p>	<p>The Applicant notes the Examining Authority has highlighted a point of concern from Castle Acre Parish Council’s (CAPC) Relevant Representation. The Applicant has addressed CAPC’s concern in full in the Applicant’s Response to Relevant Representations [APP/8.4], including this point at CAPC21 of that document.</p>
Q11.0.5	The applicant	<p>Glint and Glare Assessment</p> <p>BDC’s RR [RR-011] raises concerns regarding Glint and Glare in particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. paragraph 4.2, notes that BDC considers a site survey is necessary to ensure that the reported findings are sufficiently robust to withstand the scrutiny of examination; ii. paragraph 4.4 notes that it is not considered that the concern in paragraph 4.3 (regarding cumulative impacts) has been addressed by the applicant within the DCO submission; and iii. paragraph 4.6 notes that the applicant does not consider a complaints procedure to be necessary, however, the Council disagrees in this regard and requests such a procedure is secured via the DCO in the event consent is granted. 	<p>Site surveys are not a typical requirement for Glint and Glare Assessments, as the approach of using desk-based assessment is considered to be robust. In addition to using satellite and StreetView imagery, views can also be determined through review of site photography, lending confidence that vegetation is still present and provides sufficient screening. This same desk-based methodology has been utilised for the assessment of Glint and Glare on other solar DCO projects, and can withstand the scrutiny of examination.</p> <p>Cumulative impacts have been assessed in Section 7 of the Solar Photovoltaic Glint and Glare Assessment [APP-176]. Dwelling receptor 20 is the only receptor within the cumulative assessment area for High Grove Solar Farm which is expected to experience any residual impacts and has therefore been identified as having the potential for cumulative effects. These potential cumulative effects are expected to be minor, as reflections will not occur from both sites at the same time and will not be visible from the same windows. Further information would be required on the panel configurations for High Grove Solar Farm in order to complete geometric modelling of the impacts.</p> <p>The Applicant does not consider a complaints procedure to be necessary as there are no significant residual Glint and Glare impacts predicted. Other solar DCO projects have proceeded without a requirement for complaints procedures to be implemented and none of the Glint and Glare impacts identified for the Scheme suggest that this requirement is necessary.</p>



ExQ	Respondent	Question	Applicant’s Response
		Could the applicant comment on each of the above points.	The Applicant also refers to its Response to Relevant Representations [APP/8.4] for further detail on the matters discussed above.
Q11.0.6	The applicant	<p>Photovoltaic Panel Mounting Structures</p> <p>Regarding the photovoltaic panel mounting structures, paragraph 5.3.8 of the ES Chapter 5 [APP-054], confirms that the option A - Single Axis trackers (which are 4.5m high) has been used in the environmental impact assessment as a worst case scenario. What change in landscape and visual effects would be result if Option B - 3.5m high fixed south facing arrays were used instead?</p>	<p>ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual [AS-016] and accompanying visualisations consider the worst case scenario for the Solar PV Arrays. The Solar PV Array development has been modelled at 4.5m high, which assumes all Solar PV Array development as being Single Axis Trackers to demonstrate the worst-case scenario.</p> <p>In reality, the Single Axis Tracker Solar PV Arrays would vary in height throughout the day as the sun moves across the Site and the inclination of Single Axis Tracker Solar PV Arrays reduces, therefore being less than 4.5m in height during the middle of the day. If 3.5m high fixed south facing arrays were only assessed instead, whilst the assessment could assume a 1m reduction in height for this parameter across the Solar PV Array area, potential adverse effects upon landscape character would largely remain unchanged. With regard to visual amenity, there may be some reduction in adverse effects primarily due to the reduction in scale of the Solar PV Arrays, however the difference would unlikely be material in the long term once the mitigation planting has matured and fully established.</p>

Table 12.1: Need, site selection and alternatives

ExQ	Respondent	Question	Applicant’s Response
Q12.0.1	The applicant	<p>Generating capacity</p> <p>Table 13-29, ES Chapter 13 [APP-062] states the predicted energy capacity (MWh) is 37,220,144.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Please clarify how this relates to paragraph 3.10.41 of NPS EN-3, which states that total capacity of a solar farm can be measured either in terms of the combined capacity of installed solar panels (measured in direct current) or in terms of combined capacity of installed inverters (measured in alternating current)? ii. Is this the quantity of electricity generation that the ExA should consider for the planning balance? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) The Applicant confirms that the value included in the table is an estimate of the lifetime generation (measured in megawatt hours (MWh)) of an indicative layout for the Scheme. As explained at paragraph 13.9.13 of ES Chapter 13: Climate Change [APP/6.2.2], a conservative approach assuming the Single Axis Trackers has been included for the purpose of the GHG assessment. The Applicant confirms that it aims to deliver a scheme which seeks to maximise the current 500MWAC grid connection offer. The Applicant also refers to its response to Q12.0.2 below. ii) As above. The Applicant, however, notes that paragraphs 3.2.6 to 3.2.8 of NPS EN-1 (2023) (replicated at paragraphs 3.2.8 to 3.2.10 of the 2025 version) confirms that the Secretary of State should assess this application (and all relevant applications) on the basis that there is an urgent need for the Scheme, that substantial weight should be given to this need, and that the specific contribution of any individual project to satisfying the need does not require separate consideration.
Q12.0.2	The applicant	<p>Statement of Need, Overplanting</p> <p>Paragraph 6.6.1, Statement of Need [APP-042] states: “The ratio of overplanting considered at this scheme lies within the ranges described in this section and the impacts of the Scheme have been assessed including the overplanted capacity.”</p> <p>Could the applicant confirm the ratio of overplanting used for assessing the impacts on the proposed development?</p>	<p>The Applicant can confirm that for the purposes of assessing the impacts of the Scheme it has assumed an overplanting ratio of approximately 1.25 (i.e. a c.650MWp (DC) scheme). As per the Applicant’s response to Q12.0.1(i) above, and as explained at paragraph 13.9.13 of ES Chapter 13: Climate Change [APP/6.2.2], a conservative approach assuming the Single Axis Trackers has been included for the purpose of the GHG assessment.</p> <p>Together these assumptions ensure that the overall assessment of the planning balance has been carried out on a worst-case basis.</p>
Q12.0.3	The applicant	<p>Underground alternative for the proposed diversion of the existing dual circuit 400kV overhead line (OHL) into the new National Grid Substation</p> <p>NCC’s RR [RR-043] expresses its disappointment that the application does not include an underground alternative for the proposed diversion of the existing dual circuit 400kV overhead line</p>	<p>The Applicant notes the Examining Authority has highlighted a point of concern from NCC’s Relevant Representation. The Applicant has addressed NCC’s concern in full in the Applicant’s Response to Relevant Representations [APP/8.4], including this point at NCC9 of that document. This topic was also responded to within the Issue Specific Hearing 1 on 7 May 2026 as outlined at point 3.1 Site Selection and Alternatives of Written Summary of the Applicant’s Oral Submissions and Responses to Action</p>



ExQ	Respondent	Question	Applicant’s Response
		<p>(OHL) into the new National Grid Substation, as it had requested in response to the PIER statutory consultation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Could the applicant provide more detail than is included in ES Chapter 4 [APP-053], paragraph 4.3.8, on why this underground alternative hasn’t been explored as an option in the application. ii. Regarding this underground alternative, could the applicant provide further evidence to demonstrate how it considers it has complied with the requirements of: NPS EN-1 in relation to the mitigation hierarchy; and NPS EN-5, paragraph 2.9.14, regarding due consideration to the costs and benefits of feasible alternatives to the overhead line. 	<p>Points at Issue Specific Hearing 1 [APP/8.8]. This includes an explanation of why it is necessary to have an overhead instead of an underground line into the new National Grid Substation.</p>
Q12.0.4	The applicant	<p>Details of the BESS</p> <p>The Grid Connection Statement [APP-181] states that:</p> <p>“The Grid Connection Agreement allows the Applicant to export the electricity produced at the Scheme up to 500 MW (AC) through the new National Grid Substation known as the New Swaffham 400kV Substation. It also allows for the import of up to 500 MW (AC) of electrical energy to be stored in an Energy Storage Facility (for the purposes of the DCO Application, this is assumed to employ battery technology and is therefore referred to as a ‘Battery Energy Storage System’ or ‘BESS’ throughout this DCO Application) located on the Site to be exported at a different time, back to the NETS.”</p> <p>Explain the justification for the proposed BESS having a capacity that would be the same as the grid connection limit. In answering this question, the applicant should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Confirm the BESS storage capacity and duration of storage (rated in megawatt hours). ii. Identify typically how long it would take to fully charge and fully discharge the proposed BESS. iii. Comment on whether the generating station (solar arrays) element of the proposed development would or would not be financially viable without a BESS. iv. If the answer to part (iii) of this question is no, identify the minimum capacity for a BESS that would be needed to render the generating station element of the proposed development viable. v. In the case of the minimum capacity for a BESS, what would be the impact on the ES in terms of the significant effects. vi. Comment on whether the BESS of the scale proposed within the submitted application would or would not accord with the principles for associated development set out in paragraph 5 of the ‘Guidance on associated development 	<p>Section 6.9 of the Statement of Need [APP-042] explains that the BESS will support the operation of the solar panels by storing energy generated by the panels when it is needed less (e.g. during periods of abundant generation) and releasing it when it is needed more (e.g. when generation is lower and/or when consumption is higher). The Statement of Need [APP-042] also explains that when the BESS is not needed to support the solar, it may also support the national supply and demand balance by importing directly from the grid.</p> <p>Paragraph 5.11.25 of the Statement of Need [APP-042] explains that “<i>alongside the export capacity secured through a scheme’s grid connection agreement, the size of the import connection secured by connection agreement with NESO at the point of connection is also an important input into the maximum power capacity of the BESS proposed at a facility. Other physical parameters may limit specific elements of the scheme, including parameters which will have the effect of capping the energy capacity of the proposed BESS.</i>”</p> <p>In answer to the specific questions raised by the ExA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) The power capacity of the BESS is proposed to be 500MW to match the grid connection of the Scheme. This enables the Scheme to export stored solar power at the same maximum rate as the solar panels themselves could export and makes greatest use of the Scheme’s grid connection (500MW). Paragraph 13.9.35 of ES Chapter 13: Climate Change [APP/6.2.2] provides that the assessed energy storage capacity of the BESS is 2,640MWh. This is an indicative view of the storage capacity of the Scheme given current technology deliverable within the control parameters established in the draft DCO [APP/3.1.1]. ii) By dividing the indicative energy storage capacity of the BESS (2,640MWh) by the proposed export capacity (500MW), the Applicant notes that the duration of the assessed storage is c. 5 hours. This is how long it would take for the BESS to be fully charged from empty, or to fully discharge from full, at the maximum rate of import / export (500MW) iii) Investing in solar is economically rational on a stand-alone basis and requires no cross-subsidisation from a co-located BESS or other facility to justify the cost of the principal development. For example, NPS EN-3 states that “<i>Solar farms are one of the most established renewable energy technologies in the UK and the cheapest form of electricity generation</i>” (EN-3(2025) Paragraph 2.10.5, EN-3(2023) Paragraph 2.10.13). iv) There is no minimum capacity for a BESS required because investment in solar is economically rational on a stand-alone basis. v) There is no minimum capacity for a BESS required because investment in solar is economically rational on a stand-alone basis.



ExQ	Respondent	Question	Applicant’s Response
		<p>applications for major infrastructure projects’ (Department for Communities and Local Government, April 2013).</p> <p>vii. In terms of the operational revenue expected to be earned by the proposed development identify the proportion (percentage) arising from: the generation of electricity on-site, inclusive of any of that electricity that would be stored in the BESS prior to it being exported to the national transmission system; and the importation and exportation of electricity generated by a generating station other than that forming part of the proposed development.</p>	<p>vi) Paragraph 5 of the Guidance on associated development applications for major infrastructure projects describes four tests for associated development. The tests are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct Relationship: The definition of associated development requires a direct relationship between associated development and the principal development. Associated development should therefore either support the construction or operation of the principal development, or help address its impacts. • Subordinate: Associated development should not be an aim in itself but should be subordinate to the principal development. • Not only additional revenue: Development should not be treated as associated development if it is only necessary as a source of additional revenue for the applicant, in order to cross-subsidise the cost of the principal development. This does not mean that the applicant cannot cross-subsidise, but if part of a proposal is only necessary as a means of cross-subsidising the principal development then that part should not be treated as associated development. • Proportionate in nature and scale: Associated development should be proportionate to the nature and scale of the principal development. <p>In the context of the Scheme, the following points are noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct Relationship: There is a direct relationship between the proposed BESS and the main solar site. When energy is generated by the main solar site but is not immediately needed, the BESS will store that energy and will export it to the grid when needs are greater. This supports the operation of the Scheme by increasing its effectiveness, reducing the potential for wasted energy, and maximising a key benefit of the Scheme, being the level of carbon free energy sent to the grid. <p>The BESS will also be capable of delivering support to the grid which will increasingly be needed to operate a low-carbon electricity system. This also supports the operation of the Scheme by increasing the security, reliability and flexibility of the system to which it connects and therefore is also demonstrative of a direct relationship between the BESS and the main solar site.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subordinate: The BESS is subordinate to the main solar site in that the principal benefit of the Scheme, being the generation of carbon free energy, derives from the main solar site (c.f. NPS EN-1 (2025) paragraph 3.3.6 and NPS EN-1 (2023) paragraph 3.3.6). The Scheme aims to meet the need for new energy generation on the grid by developing the main solar site with a co-located BESS. A standalone BESS development would provide benefits to the energy system but on its own would not generate low-carbon electricity. However, the BESS will store predominantly low-carbon energy and therefore, the BESS is clearly functionally subordinate to the main solar site. <p>Further, the BESS would operate in a subordinate fashion to the main solar site, in that the output from the main solar site would influence how the BESS could operate at any moment in time but the reverse would not be true. However, in practice, how the BESS would operate at any time would also depend on a large number of other factors including national demand, the weather, and the evolving composition of the future GB</p>



ExQ	Respondent	Question	Applicant’s Response
			<p>generation fleet.</p> <p>To illustrate this point, if at a time when the grid needed energy, the sun was shining and the BESS had available charge, the main solar site would generate and discharge to the grid. The BESS, however, would not discharge unless spare export capacity to the grid was available, or at a later time became available, for the BESS to export (i.e. when the generation from the main solar site reduced to below the connection capacity level).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not only additional revenue: Investing in unsubsidised solar is economically rational on a stand-alone basis and requires no cross-subsidisation financially to justify the cost of the principal development. For example, NPS EN-3 states: “Solar farms are one of the most established renewable electricity technologies in the UK and the cheapest form of electricity generation” (NPS EN-3 (2025) Para 2.10.5, NPS EN-3 (2023) Para 2.10.13). As such, the BESS is not only necessary as a source of additional revenue for the Applicant to cross-subsidise the cost of the main solar site, because no cross-subsidisation is necessary for the main solar site. The BESS supports the operation of the Scheme by increasing its effectiveness, reducing the potential for wasted energy, and maximising a key benefit of the Scheme, being the level of carbon free energy sent to the grid. • Proportionate in nature and scale: The BESS is proportionate to the Scheme in nature and scale. This is because: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The power capacity of the BESS matches the grid export capacity available to it; ○ Based on the indicative layout of the solar array and the BESS design parameters, the energy generated by the main solar site over the course of a day can regularly exceed the energy storage capacity of the BESS; and ○ The footprint of the BESS is much smaller than the footprint of the main solar site <p>vii) Section 6.9 of the Statement of Need [APP-042] states that the BESS will support operation of solar panels by storing energy generated by the solar when it is needed less (e.g. during periods of abundant generation), and releasing it when it is needed more (e.g. when generation is lower and/or when consumption is higher). Further, when not supporting solar operation, the BESS may support the national supply and demand balance by importing directly from the grid, as shown in Figures 6-8 to 6-11 of the Statement of Need [APP-042]. The BESS would have year-round application.</p> <p>However, whether and when the BESS would import from grid or the solar panels and what the source of revenue of the BESS would be would depend on many factors including: national demand, the weather, and the evolving composition of the future GB generation fleet. It is therefore not possible to accurately predict the proportion of energy stored in the BESS sourced from the co-located solar or from the grid. The Applicant notes that energy price is the market construct through which the electricity system is balanced. Therefore ‘responding to price signals’ is the commercial construct which keeps the electricity system balanced and keeps the lights on.</p>
Q12.0.5	The applicant	Alternatives including brownfield land, lower-grade agricultural land, rooftop solar, or dispersed schemes	The Applicant notes the Examining Authority has highlighted a point of concern from Castle Acre Parish Council’s Relevant Representation [RR-013] instead of the Environment Agency’s [RR-062]. The Applicant has addressed CAPC’s concern in full in the Applicant’s Response to Relevant Representations



ExQ	Respondent	Question	Applicant’s Response
		<p>An IP [RR-062] raises concerns that “No evidence is provided that equivalent or greater generating capacity could not be delivered through less harmful alternatives, including brownfield land, lower-grade agricultural land, rooftop solar, or dispersed schemes”. NPS EN-3 paragraph 3.10.14 refers to, where possible, utilise suitable previously developed land, brownfield land, contaminated land and industrial land.</p> <p>Could the applicant comment on the above concern and explain why it is necessary to site the proposed development on agricultural land?</p>	<p>[APP/8.4], including this point at CAPC25 of that document. This includes an explanation of why it is necessary to site the Scheme on agricultural land. The Applicant has also responded to the Environment Agency’s comments in full; however they do not cover this topic specifically.</p>

Table 13.1: Noise and Vibration

ExQ	Respondent	Question	Applicant’s Response
Q13.0.2	The applicant	<p>High Grove Solar Farm additional mitigation</p> <p>Section 10.11, ES Chapter 10 [APP-059] identifies that the cumulative effects would not be significant for all phases, providing that the proposed High Grove Solar Farm reduces noise effects at ‘The Off Barn’ (a high-sensitive receptor) during the operational phase by additional mitigation.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Could the applicant provide an update on what additional mitigation is proposed by High Grove Solar Farm and how this would be secured? ii. Could the applicant comment on BDC’s RR [RR-011] which states in paragraph 4.12 regarding ‘The Off Barn’ during the daytime that “As such, it is considered that the onus should be on Drove Solar to achieve 35dBA”. 	<p>High Grove Solar Farm development is currently in ‘pre-application stage’ as such, limited information regarding noise and mitigation is available. The cumulative effects were therefore presented based on the preliminary information available for High Grove Solar Farm from their Chapter 11: Noise and Vibration of their Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR).</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i) Additional mitigation has not been detailed in High Grove Solar Farm’s noise and vibration assessment; however, their PEIR Chapter 11 states in Section 11.9 ‘<i>The Applicant has committed to revise the design of the Proposed Development to relocate electrical infrastructure away from the ESRs predicted to experience significant effects and maintain the offsets from the non-significant ESRs, This would therefore result in a Not Significant effect. The revised layout will be assessed at ES stage.</i>’ The design of their development is expected to be revised, including additional mitigation where necessary to achieve non-significant effects, which should also include cumulative effects with the Scheme. As the additional mitigation relates to High Grove Solar Farm, it cannot be secured as part of this Scheme. ii) As per the response above, the High Grove Solar Farm development layout and details are to be revised and as such, without the High Grove Solar Farm’s final design or layout the Applicant can only provide indicative cumulative effects based on their PEIR. Given the respective stages of applications, the onus lies with High Grove Solar Farm (currently in pre-application stage) to undertake an updated cumulative noise assessment and outline additional mitigation where necessary to achieve non-significant effects cumulatively including the Scheme. It is, however, noted that the Applicant is committing to collaboration with the undertakers of the High Grove Solar Farm during the detailed design stage of the Scheme, to seek to achieve cumulative noise levels that do not exceed 35dB(A) at ‘The Off Barn’ receptor during the operational phase (as secured in paragraph 2.5.4 of the oCEMP [APP/7.6.1]).
Q13.0.3	The applicant Norfolk County Council National Highways Breckland District Council	<p>Equality Impact Assessment – Noise and Vibration effects at The Splashes Campsite (Traveller Site)</p> <p>Paragraph 7.4.10 of the Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) [APP-182] determines that in relation to the noise and vibration effects at The Splashes Campsite (Traveller Site), no additional equality specific measure is appropriate or required.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. Could the applicant provide more detail on the assumption regarding the “very short duration of works” quoted in paragraph 7.4.8, EqIA? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> i) The description of a “very short duration of works” relates to the nature of the proposed road upgrade works. These are described as ‘Temporary alteration of layout...’ in the draft DCO [APP/3.1.1] Schedule 5: Alteration of Streets table for the A47 slip roads. Whilst all construction work is temporary to some extent, these proposed works are of particular short duration and extent, being similar in nature to road maintenance works, which would normally not require a detailed noise assessment or be associated with significant adverse impacts. The assessment of noise effects, based on professional judgement, accounted for the nature and expected time span of such road upgrade works: these would be relatively quick and highly unlikely to remain in closest proximity to any receptor for more than 1 week, with the activity then moving away from the receptor. The



ExQ	Respondent	Question	Applicant’s Response
		<p>II. How would the applicant secure the specific restrictions in the dDCO, as identified in paragraph 7.4.7, EqIA, ie these activities would be temporary, of short duration, and confined to normal working hours, with no evening or night-time activity expected?</p> <p>III. Could the Highway Authorities and BDC confirm if they are in agreement with the applicant’s view that a detailed noise assessment is not required for the reasons given in paragraph 7.4.8, EqIA?</p>	<p>assessment also took into account the context including the presence of existing elevated baseline noise levels associated with traffic noise from the A47.</p> <p>ii) The construction working hours as well as best practice measures to minimise construction noise and vibration are outlined in the oCEMP [APP/7.6.1], which will form the basis of the detailed CEMP, which is secured as Requirement 13 of Schedule 2 of the draft DCO [APP/3.1.1]. The road upgrade work will be limited to the normal working hours stated in the oCEMP and therefore will not include any evening or night-time activity, unless specifically agreed with the local planning authority. The specific restrictions in terms of working hours are therefore secured by Requirement 13 of the DCO (which secures a detailed CEMP based on the oCEMP) and the short duration of the works is implicit in the nature of the proposed works described in Schedule 5 (description of alterations column) in the DCO.</p>
Q13.0.4	The applicant	<p>Improvements to Health and Quality of life</p> <p>Paragraph 5.12.17 of NPS EN-1 requires that proposals, where possible, contribute to improvements to health and quality of the life through the effective management and control of noise.</p> <p>The applicant is asked to please explain:</p> <p>i. How the proposed development does this, cross referencing where necessary to existing documents.</p> <p>ii. If it has not been possible for the proposed development to achieve this, then please explain why not.</p>	<p>The assessment of health and wellbeing impacts is presented in ES Chapter 15: Human Health [APP-064]. This chapter sets out the methodology, baseline conditions, and assessment of likely significant effects over the construction, operation, and decommissioning phases of the Scheme.</p> <p>ES Chapter 10: Noise and Vibration [APP-059] outlines the embedded mitigation incorporated into the Scheme’s design for the construction, operation and decommissioning phases. This includes a suite of good practice measures, which will be implemented through a site-specific detailed CEMP, secured via a DCO requirement. These measures will be applied by all contractors to ensure the effective management and control of noise and vibration during the construction phase.</p> <p>In the interests of avoiding duplication, the Applicant does not repeat nor summarise that material here, and instead refers to ES Chapter 15: Human Health [APP-064] and ES Chapter 10: Noise and Vibration [APP-059] for full details of the resulting assessment of health and wellbeing effects.</p>
Q13.0.5	The applicant	<p>Noise Pollution – impact on quality of life</p> <p>CAPC [RR-013] raise concerns about operational noise, particularly the substation and the battery storage inverters and fans, and construction noise from piling, infrastructure installation and construction traffic on local roads. CAPC is concerned that construction noise in this rural and tranquil landscape will all be intrusive, constantly affecting the quality of life for residents and all those using the Public Rights of Way and Footpaths on or near the solar installations as well as being damaging to local wildlife.</p> <p>Could the applicant comment on this concern.</p>	<p>The Applicant notes the concerns raised in relation to construction and operational noise and the potential effects on quality of life. The Applicant notes the Examining Authority has highlighted a point of concern from Castle Acre Parish Council’s Relevant Representation [RR-013]. The Applicant has addressed CAPC’s concern in full in the Applicant’s Response to Relevant Representations [APP/8.4], including this point at CAPC22 of that document.</p> <p>It is of note that noise impacts, including those arising from construction activities (such as piling, plant, and traffic) and operational sources (including substations and battery storage infrastructure), have been assessed within ES Chapter 15: Human Health [APP-064], with technical noise assessments provided in ES Chapter 10: Noise and Vibration [APP-059]. These assessments consider potential effects on residential receptors, users of Public Rights of Way, and the wider community, including in a rural context.</p> <p>The Human Health assessment takes account of how noise may influence health and wellbeing, including quality of life, and considers both direct and indirect pathways. Where appropriate, mitigation measures are identified and embedded within the Scheme to reduce noise effects.</p> <p>In order to avoid duplication, the detailed assessment of noise effects and their implications for health and quality of life is not repeated here. The Applicant refers to ES Chapter 15: Human Health [APP-064] and to ES Chapter 10: Noise and Vibration [APP-059] for full details of the assessment, which concludes that effects on human health related to noise in the construction, decommissioning, and operational stages would not be significant.</p>



Table 14.1: Population

ExQ	Respondent	Question	Applicant’s Response
Q14.0.2	The applicant	<p>Effects on land uses</p> <p>ES Chapter 14: Socio-Economics [APP-063], Table 14.16 concludes that the residual effects for effects on land uses are not significant for the construction, operational and decommissioning phases. The description of the impact states:</p> <p><i>“The Scheme will result in the loss of some agricultural activity. However, it is anticipated that alternative income and some of the agriculture practices, would help to offset some of the losses experienced by affected farmers.”</i></p> <p>Could the applicant clarify, in assessing the effects on land uses, what assumptions have been made above for offsetting some of the losses and whether its assessment complies with EN-1 NPS 4.2.12 in assessing the likely worst case for economic effects.</p>	<p>The Applicant has assumed, based on the wording of the remainder of the question, that the reference to 4.2.12 is a typographical error and that the question intended to refer to paragraph 4.3.12 of NPS EN-1, the response below is on this assumption.</p> <p>The conclusions presented in Table 14.16 of ES Chapter 14: Socio-Economics [APP-063] are a summary of the detailed assessment set out in paragraphs 14.8.25–14.8.28 (Construction Phase), 14.8.37–14.8.40 (Operational Phase) and 14.8.59–14.8.60 (Decommissioning Phase), where the assumptions underpinning the assessment are explained.</p> <p>The reference to offsetting losses reflects the realistic and evidence-based assessment of how agricultural land within the Site could continue to be used. As set out in ES Chapter 11: Soils and Agriculture [AS-018], land would remain in agricultural use during operation (e.g. sheep grazing and fodder production), and farm businesses typically operate across wider landholdings. Leasing arrangements also provide a stable alternative income stream. These factors are embedded within the assessment of impact magnitude.</p> <p>In accordance with NPS EN-1 paragraph 4.3.12, the assessment considers the likely worst-case scenario, including disruption to existing agricultural practices and the need for some businesses to adapt or source alternative land. The conclusion of a Minor Adverse (not significant) effect reflects that no businesses are expected to be rendered unviable, agricultural use can continue in an altered form, and overall labour demand is not expected to materially change.</p>
Q14.0.3	The applicant	<p>Recreational enhancements</p> <p>ES Chapter 14: Socio-Economics [APP-063], paragraph 14.7.4 lists the following embedded mitigation measure:</p> <p><i>“Recreational enhancements such as interpretation boards and the potential for new publicly accessible amenity space within the north-western site area, that is connected to the existing PRow (Public Right of Way) network”.</i></p> <p>Appendix 1– Green Infrastructure Strategy Plans, oLEMP [APP-191] shows the potential locations for interpretation boards and a publicly accessible amenity space and interpretation boards (to be provided by others).</p> <p>Could the applicant confirm what further steps are proposed to confirm the provision and locations of the proposed boards and the amenity space?</p>	<p>The Applicant is required to submit a Landscape Environmental Management Plan for approval by the relevant local authorities in accordance with Requirement 7 of the draft DCO [APP/3.1.1]. The LEMP must be substantially in accordance with the oLEMP [APP/7.11.1], which includes the indicative locations of the proposed boards and the amenity space. The green infrastructure plans prepared to support the LEMP required to discharge Requirement 7, will include details on the location of the boards and amenity space. The LEMP will be submitted to the relevant authority and consulted upon as part of the process to discharge the requirement. The Applicant will consider and respond to any comments received from the relevant local planning authority and relevant statutory nature conservation body received during the procedure for discharge of requirements, as set out in Schedule 16 of the draft DCO [APP/3.1.1].</p>
Q14.0.4	The applicant Norfolk County Council Breckland District Council	<p>Proposed new permissive routes</p> <p>ES Chapter 14: Socio-Economics [APP-063], paragraph 14.7.4 includes that <i>“In addition to this, a number of new permissive routes are proposed, of approximately 4.7km in total, which would link to the existing PRow network within the study area to provide recreational benefits. This total number can be broken down to approximately 1.2km new offsite permissive route provision and approximately 3.5km new onsite permissive route provision (as will be secured within the outline Operational Environmental Management Plan (oOEMP) [APP/7.8] submitted as a requirement of the DCO Application.”</i></p>	<p>i) The Applicant is collaborating with High Grove Solar Farm to facilitate the delivery of improved recreation connectivity between Swaffham and the Nar Valley, as described within paragraphs 8.312 – 8.3.13 of the Design Approach Document [AS-009 to AS-011]. The 1.2km of offsite paths would be delivered through collaboration with the High Grove Solar Farm, if it were to be consented, and are not secured within the Scheme. If High Grove Solar Farm is not consented, the Applicant has included approximately 3.5km of permissive paths within the Order limits, which connect through to West Acre Road which improve recreation connectivity between Swaffham and the Nar Valley.</p> <p>ii) N/A</p>



ExQ	Respondent	Question	Applicant’s Response
		<p>i. Could the applicant provide further details of the 1.2km of offsite permissive route provision to include how this would be secured?</p> <p>ii. Could the Councils confirm if they are content with the proposed new permissive routes?</p>	
Q14.0.5	The applicant	<p>Cumulative effects</p> <p>Regarding cumulative effects, ES Chapter 14: Socio-Economics [APP-063], paragraph 14.11.14 states:</p> <p><i>“Given High Grove Solar Farm and East Pye are not likely to coincide with construction of the Scheme as their construction phases are expected to be completed before the Scheme commences, the cumulative impact is considered to be low in magnitude. Given the medium sensitivity of the receptor, the cumulative effect is therefore assessed as direct, temporary, Minor Beneficial effect that is considered not significant.”</i></p> <p>Could the applicant clarify what assumptions have been used regarding the construction phases for High Grove Solar Farm, East Pye and the proposed development?</p>	<p>The Applicant can confirm that the following assumptions have been made regarding the construction phases for East Pye Solar and High Grove Solar Farm:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Each project is anticipated to have a 24-month construction period. - Each project has been assumed to energise in line with their grid connection dates, in 2031. By this point, all construction activities would have finished. - The earliest the Construction Phase for the Scheme would commence would be Q3 2031. - There would not be a substantial overlap in peak construction activities across the schemes.
Q14.0.6	The applicant	<p>Effects on The Peddars Way and the Nar Valley Way</p> <p>CAPC [RR-013] includes concerns that The Peddars Way (a National Trail) and the Nar Valley Way would be significantly affected by the proposed development impacting the experience of users and that the proposed development would conflict with national planning objectives to promote access to high-quality landscapes and protect valued recreational assets (Refer, NPPF Section 6 “Supporting a prosperous rural economy” of tourist importance).</p> <p>Could the applicant comment on this concern.</p>	<p>The Applicant notes the Examining Authority has highlighted a point of concern from CAPC’s Relevant Representation. The Applicant has addressed CAPC’s concern in full in the Applicant’s Response to Relevant Representations [APP/8.4], including this point at CAPC20 of that document.</p>
Q14.0.7	The applicant	<p>Health concerns</p> <p>An IP [RR-053] also raised concern that: “World health authority suggests no one should live within 2 km of a solar factory. This is not the case at The Drovers or High Grove sites with parts of Swaffham, Castle Acre, South Acre etc etc being within this guidelines. Why doesn’t anyone care?”</p> <p>Could the applicant comment on the above concern with reference to the above guidelines?</p>	<p>The World Health Organization (WHO) has reviewed the available scientific evidence on health concerns and acknowledges that a range of symptoms have been reported.¹ However, it concludes that <i>“to date, scientific evidence does not support a link between these symptoms [headaches, anxiety, suicide and depression, nausea, fatigue and loss of libido] and exposure to electromagnetic fields. At least some of these health problems may be caused by noise or other environmental factors, or by anxiety related to the presence of new technologies”</i>. The evidence reviewed by the WHO does not identify any specific distance at which health effects occur, with conclusions based instead on measured exposure levels.</p> <p>ES Chapter 16: Other Environmental Matters [APP-065] details that Electromagnetic Field (EMF) radiation is scoped out of the EIA, as the EMF levels are predicted to be below International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection reference levels for magnetic fields. It is therefore unlikely that EMF radiation would lead to significant effects on human health, and is therefore scoped out of further assessment as agreed with the Planning Inspectorate.</p> <p>While the evidence indicates that no adverse human health effects are expected with respect to EMF, it is recognised that perceived risks associated with EMF exposure can influence mental wellbeing, primarily</p>

¹ WHO, 2016. Radiation Electromagnetic fields



ExQ	Respondent	Question	Applicant’s Response
			<p>through anxiety or stress (as discussed in Paragraph 15.5.7 of ES Chapter 15: Human Health [APP-064]). Such perceived effects are generally linked to uncertainty or lack of information rather than exposure itself.</p> <p>The Applicant will provide clear information to the public on EMF levels and compliance through the Community Liaison Group (see the oCEMP [APP/7.6.1], the oOEMP [APP/7.8.1] and the oDS [APP/7.10.1]).</p>
Q14.0.8	The applicant	<p>Electromagnetic Field well-being concerns</p> <p>ES Chapter 15 [APP-064], paragraph 15.5.9 includes that: “<i>The applicant will provide clear information to the public on EMF levels and compliance through the Community Liaison Group (see the outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (oCEMP) [APP7.6], outline Operational Environmental Management Plan (oOEMP) [APP/7.8], and outline Decommissioning Strategy (oDS) [APP/7.10].</i>”</p> <p>Could the applicant provide specific references for the above commitment in the three plans described above?</p>	<p>The oCEMP [APP/7.6.1], the oOEMP [APP/7.8.1], and the oDS [APP/7.10.1] have been updated at Deadline 1 to explicitly state the commitment to providing clear information to the public on EMF levels and compliance through the Community Liaison Group. Please refer to Sections 3.12 and 4.12 of each document.</p>
Q14.0.9	The applicant	<p>Pre-existing Health Conditions</p> <p>Can the Applicant explain how the approach in ES Chapter 15: Human Health [APP-064] addresses the potential for effects on pre-existing health conditions and if this has a bearing on the EqIA [APP-182].</p>	<p>The assessment presented in ES Chapter 15: Human Health [APP-064] takes into account baseline health conditions within the study area, including the prevalence of pre-existing health conditions and the characteristics of potentially vulnerable population groups. This explicitly includes people with disabilities and long-term illnesses as a defined vulnerable group. This baseline understanding is used to inform the assessment of how different population groups may experience or respond to potential health effects arising from the Scheme, including consideration of how such effects may be differentially experienced by vulnerable groups, including disabled people with pre-existing health conditions.</p> <p>With regard to the Equality Impact Assessment [APP-182], the findings of the Human Health assessment have been taken into account where relevant. The Equality Impact Assessment [APP-182] also considers population characteristics and vulnerabilities more broadly, explicitly including disabled people and those with long-term health conditions. It assesses the potential for differential effects arising from the Scheme, ensuring that any such effects on these groups are appropriately assessed.</p>
Q14.0.10	The applicant	<p>Engagement with NCC Public Health, NHS – Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care System and UK Health Security Agency</p> <p>The ExA notes the comments on Health and Wellbeing in NCC’s RR [RR-043]. Could the Applicant please summarise engagement with NCC Public Health, NHS – Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care System and UK Health Security Agency to understand the Health and Wellbeing impacts the proposed development will have on the surrounding areas over its lifetime.</p>	<p>Engagement with Norfolk County Council (NCC) Public Health was undertaken at the PEIR stage in relation to the proposed combined Socio-Economic and Health chapter. This included a one-to-one meeting with an Advanced Public Health Officer, which provided an opportunity to discuss in detail the approach to the assessment of human health. Matters discussed included the proposed scope and methodology of the health assessment, consideration of vulnerable and sensitive population groups, and the potential pathways through which the Scheme could give rise to both physical and mental health effects.</p> <p>As set out in ES Appendix 15.1: Consultation and Legislation, Planning Policy and Guidance [APP-174], NCC Public Health confirmed at that stage that a combined Socio-Economic and Health chapter was acceptable, provided that health considerations were clearly and robustly embedded throughout. NCC Public Health also provided comments on the PEIR during the statutory consultation process, including feedback on the presentation and coverage of health within the assessment, as documented in ES Appendix 15.1.</p> <p>Following consultation responses received during the statutory consultation (as documented in ES Appendix 15.1: Consultation and Legislation, Planning Policy and Guidance [APP-174]), the Applicant reviewed the structure of the assessment and subsequently separated health into a standalone chapter. Notwithstanding this change in structure, the assessment presented in ES Chapter 15: Human Health [APP-064] continues to be informed by the engagement undertaken with NCC Public Health, including in relation to the health baseline, identification of vulnerable groups, and the consideration of both physical and mental health effects and associated pathways.</p>



ExQ	Respondent	Question	Applicant’s Response
			NHS Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care System and the UK Health Security Agency did not provide any specific comments on the Scheme, although both organisations had the opportunity to do so as part of the PEIR and statutory consultation processes.
Q14.0.11	The applicant	<p>Design considerations resulting from the location of existing utilities</p> <p>The dDCO [APP-018] includes protective provisions for Exolum pipeline systems. No details are shown for the Exolum pipeline system on ES Figure 16.1 Utilities Plan [APP-131]. Anglian Water raises concern in its RR [RR-003] that this figure does not show the two Anglian Water water mains along the A1065 corridor which are within the proposed Order Limits for the Off-Site Highway Works to A1065/A47 Fakenham Road interchange.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. Could the applicant provide further details of the location of the Exolum pipeline system? II. Could the applicant advise whether there are any specific safety considerations for the design or layout of the proposed development that have been made as a result of the location of existing utilities, including pipelines? III. Could the applicant confirm whether the oBSMP [APP-194] takes account of the location and associated potential risks from existing utilities, including pipelines? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> i) The Applicant has engaged with Exolum regarding the pipeline in question and has now received two responses from Exolum confirming that it does not own nor operate the pipeline. Exolum advised the Applicant that this pipeline belongs to the MOD – the Applicant queried this with the MOD and received a response confirming that the MOD believes this to be an abandoned pipeline, pre-1980, which now belongs to the landowner. The Applicant is currently engaging with the MOD and the landowner, as well as undertaking further desktop analysis, to identify further details of the location of the pipeline and obtain absolute certainty that this abandoned pipeline once belonged to the MOD. Once this clarification has been obtained, the Applicant will update of the necessary documents at the earliest possible deadline to reflect the latest position. ii) The draft DCO [APP/3.1.1] includes protective provisions for the utilities that cross the Site. The oCEMP [APP/7.6.1] includes measures, set out in Tables 11 and 22, to identify and manage utilities interactions which will inform the detailed design to be submitted and approved in accordance with Requirement 7 of the draft DCO. iii) There are no live utilities (overhead or underground pipelines) which require protective provisions that cross Works Area 2a – 2e and 2g – 2i, as described in Schedule 1 of the draft DCO [APP/3.1.1] and shown on the Works Plans [APP-009]. It is therefore not considered necessary for the oBSMP [APP-194] to take account of the location and associated potential risks from existing utilities, including pipelines.
Q14.0.12	The applicant	<p>Potential chemical leaks from batteries or a fire</p> <p>An IP [RR-008] cites concern that a chalkstream could be polluted if there is a chemical leak from Batteries or a fire.</p> <p>Could the applicant explain how this risk has been assessed, what mitigation measures are proposed and how they would be secured in the dDCO?</p>	In the event of a fire, all firefighting water runoff will be contained in an attenuation basin. After any such incident, the runoff will be evaluated for contamination and treated accordingly prior to release or removal from the Site.
Q14.0.13	The applicant	<p>Outline Battery Safety Management Plan</p> <p>Could the applicant set out:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. How is the applicant proposing to engage with Norfolk Fire and Rescue services during construction, operation and decommissioning phases in relation to the detailed Battery Safety Management Plan? ii. How would the detailed Battery Safety Management Plan be secured in the DCO? iii. Can the applicant provide a draft of the Emergency Response Plan referred to in the oBSMP [APP-194] during the examination? iv. Can the applicant consider whether the requirement for an Emergency Response Plan should be set out in Requirement (R) 6 of the dDCO? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> i) Consultation with the NFRS will be sought and meetings will be arranged as necessary to discuss the site design and services available to the NFRS at the Site. ii) The detailed BSMP is secured by Requirement 6 of the draft DCO [APP/3.1.1]. iii) The Applicant will consider providing this document during the examination. iv) The Emergency Response Plan is secured via the detailed BSMP, which in turn is secured by Requirement 6 of the draft DCO [APP/3.1.1]. The Applicant does not consider it necessary to update Requirement 6 to specifically refer to matters that are already referenced in the oBSMP [APP-194].
Q14.0.14	Breckland District Council	Outline Battery Safety Management Plan	i) N/A for the Applicant



ExQ	Respondent	Question	Applicant’s Response
	The applicant	<p>The ExA notes that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NCC has provided Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service’s comments in item (x) and Appendix 2 of its RR [RR-043]. The EA has provided comments on the oBSMP [APP-194] in its RR [RR-021] which includes that the oBSMP is not agreed for surface water quality or ground water protection. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Could BDC confirm if they are content with the oBSMP [APP-194] or if they have any outstanding concerns? Could the applicant provide an update on progress with the agreement of the oBSMP with NCC (including Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service) and the EA. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Applicant has had early pre-submission engagement with Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service and ongoing general engagement with the EA. The Applicant will seek to engage further with both parties on the oBSMP [APP-194] during the examination phase and provide updates to the ExA as necessary.
Q14.0.15	The applicant	<p>Major Accidents & Disasters</p> <p>Regarding Major Accidents and Disasters (MA&D), with reference to Section 3.14, ES Appendix 2.2 Scoping Opinion Response [APP-134], could the applicant provide a summary of which ES Chapters it has considered are relevant for the potential impacts from MA&D on sensitive receptors and has therefore assessed.</p>	<p>In line with ES Appendix 2.2: Scoping Opinion Response [APP-134], potential impacts from MA&D have been considered in relation to each of the below impacts; where this is covered in the DCO Application has been signposted.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flooding – ES Chapter 12: Water Resources [APP-061], ES Appendix 12.2: Flood Risk Assessment [AS-053]. Fires and explosion – Appendix 1: Battery Plume Assessment of oBSMP [APP-194]. Road Accidents – ES Chapter 9: Transport and Access [APP/6.2.1], ES Appendix 9.2: Traffic Assessment [APP-163]. Aviation Incidents – ES Chapter 16: Other Environmental Matters [APP-065] (Glint and Glare) and ES Appendix 16.2: Solar Photovoltaic Glint and Glare Study [APP-176]. Damage or cut-off of utilities – ES Chapter 16: Other Environmental Matters [APP-065] (Telecommunications, Utilities and Television Receptors), oSMP [APP/7.13.1]. Unstable ground conditions – oCEMP [APP/7.6.1]. Vegetation pests and diseases – oLEMP [APP/7.11.1].

Table 15.1: Transport and access

ExQ	Respondent	Question	Applicant’s Response
Q15.0.1	The applicant	<p>Transport Assessment Methodology and Mitigation</p> <p>The ExA notes that NCC and National Highways (NH) have provided their comments relating to Traffic and Transport in RR [RR-043] and RR [RR-037] respectively. As requested by NH, could the applicant provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> an additional explanation concerning the expected impact on the A47 Junctions, including the A47/A1065 and A47/Narborough Road during the peak hours to confirm if further assessment (modelling) is required. further detail concerning the monitoring regime in the oCEMP [APP-186], consistent with other consented DCOs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As detailed within section 4 of ES Appendix 9.2: Traffic Assessment [APP-163], the majority of the non-HGV trips comprising staff would take place prior to 07:00 and after 18:00, so would be outside the typical network peak hours. As a worst-case assumption, this could be 266 trips in the morning and 266 in the evening, though these trips likely represent the peak over a period of months, rather than for the full length of construction, so outside of this the impact is likely to be lower. <p>It is confirmed that there will be no additional vehicle trips on the SRN during the peak hours, as all staff will have arrived or departed outside of these hours and any deliveries from HGVs or LGVs will be restricted to avoid the AM peak (08:00-09:00) and PM peak (17:00-18:00) hours. As the threshold of 30 additional vehicle trips during the network peak periods (typically 08:00-09:00 and 17:00-18:00) set by National Highways is therefore not exceeded, no junction impact assessments have been undertaken. The impact is also only temporary when construction is taking place, so once operational the additional vehicle demand from the Scheme on the SRN will be negligible. The</p>



ExQ	Respondent	Question	Applicant’s Response
		<p>III. more detail in the oCEMP and the outline Construction Traffic Management Plan (oCTMP)[APP-187] in respect of control measures and enforcement, particularly regarding timescales for corrective measures to be implemented.</p>	<p>restrictions on vehicle timings will be secured through the detailed Construction Traffic Management Plan that is secured by way of requirement in the draft DCO [APP/3.1.1] and in the oCTMP [APP/7.7.1] that is submitted as part of the DCO submission.</p> <p>ii) At National Highways’ request, details of the monitoring strategy for HGV and other vehicle movements has been provided within the updated oCTMP [APP/7.7.1] at Deadline 1. Whilst the comment relates to the oCEMP [APP/7.6.1], it is considered more appropriate for the monitoring protocol for construction vehicles to be set out within the oCTMP [APP/7.7.1], as it relates to construction vehicle traffic and the expected numbers of construction vehicles, as well as the protocol for enforcement and action in the event that the monitoring requirements are not adhered to.</p> <p>iii) The detail National Highways has requested (in regard to enforcement and control measures and timescales for corrective measures) is provided (alongside an updated monitoring protocol) within the updated oCTMP [APP/7.7.1] at Deadline 1, and remains secured via a requirement in the draft DCO [APP/3.1.1].</p>
Q15.0.2	The applicant	<p>Abnormal Indivisible Loads</p> <p>The ExA notes that NH’s concern in its RR [RR-037] that the applicant has yet to undertake a Road Safety Audit for the minor works required on the junction of the A47/A1065 to accommodate the Abnormal Indivisible Load (AIL) movements.</p> <p>Regarding the above concern, could the applicant provide an update on whether a Road Safety Audit has now been completed for these proposed works and if so whether any highway safety issues were identified.</p>	<p>A Road Safety Audit (RSA) would be undertaken in the future in the event the DCO is granted consent, as part of the future AIL application for any temporary works required on the SRN, once the scope of these works is known and confirmed by the contractor. The scope of the RSA would be agreed with National Highways representatives in advance.</p> <p>The RSA and Abnormal Indivisible Load deliveries are secured through the oCTMP [APP/7.7.1] that is secured by way of requirement in the draft DCO [APP/3.1.1]. This approach has been agreed with National Highways officers during examination.</p>
Q15.0.3	The applicant	<p>Construction vehicle routing</p> <p>Section 4 of the oCTMP [APP-187] describes the construction vehicle routing.</p> <p>i. Given that the routing also forms an important assumption for the assessment of noise and air quality from construction traffic, could the applicant provide more detail on how the vehicle tracking and identification proposed in Section 5.7 [APP-187] would be implemented to ensure compliance with the proposed routing?</p> <p>ii. NCC in paragraph 4.39 of its RR [RR-043] notes that LGVs should not be using Route C. Could the applicant comment on this request.</p>	<p>i) The precise routing for vehicles on the local road network is set out within the oCTMP [APP/7.7.1] and is secured by way of a requirement in the draft DCO [APP/3.1.1]. The oCTMP [APP/7.7.1] confirms that vehicles will be fitted with tracking software that is monitored by the contractor, who will monitor this software to confirm that vehicles have followed the identified routes. Vehicles will have a means of vehicle identification specific to the project (such as a logo or branding) and the drivers will be notified of the routing protocol in advance, to ensure that the identified routes are followed. The routing and associated monitoring protocol will form a key part of the contractor’s contract that they will need to comply with. This approach ensures that the assumptions around routing are secured via the oCTMP [APP/7.7.1] and that any assessments of effects on noise and air quality remain appropriate.</p> <p>ii) In agreement with NCC, the Applicant confirms that vehicles associated with the Scheme will not utilise Route C, as secured within the updated versions of the oCTMP [APP/7.7.1] and outline Operational Traffic Management Plan (oOTMP) [APP/7.9.1] submitted at Deadline 1.</p>
Q15.0.4	The applicant	<p>Stage 1 Road Safety Audit</p> <p>The oCTMP [APP-187], paragraph 2.3.4, states that:</p> <p>“A Stage 1 Road Safety Audit (RSA) has also been undertaken of the access proposals that is included within the supporting ES Appendix 9.2: Traffic Assessment [APP-163], which identified no residual highway safety concerns.”</p> <p>ES Appendix 9.2: Traffic Assessment [APP-163], paragraph 3.4.3 which provides a summary of the key points raised within the Road Safety Audit and Designer’s Response includes that:</p>	<p>In response to the need to maintain and secure the visibility splays at the access points and the internal haul roads, these are secured through the detailed design of the Scheme set out within Requirement 5 in the draft DCO [APP/3.1.1], which requires details of the vehicular and pedestrian access, parking and circulation areas to be submitted prior to commencement of Work Nos. 1, 2 and 3A.</p>



ExQ	Respondent	Question	Applicant’s Response
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the need to maintain the visibility splays will be secured through the DCO; and the Applicant confirms that the internal haul roads will be suitable to accommodate the expected vehicles, details of which would be secured through the detailed design of the Scheme. <p>Could the applicant provide more detail on how the two points above would be secured in the dDCO with reference to the relevant requirements and plans?</p>	
Q15.0.5	The applicant	<p>Potential increase in deer vehicle collisions</p> <p>The Forestry Commission’s RR [RR-022] states “Large scale fencing will change how deer move through the landscape, which may also increase the numbers of deer crossing local roads, including the A1065 and therefore may increase the numbers of deer vehicle collisions in the area. If culls occur prior to development, the risks should reduce.”</p> <p>In light of the above concern regarding deer vehicle collision risks, could the applicant review the Road Safety Audit and provide an update on how this risk would be addressed.</p>	<p>The probability of a deer vehicle collision is not something that sits within the scope of a Stage 1 Road Safety Audit (RSA), as an RSA primarily focusses on highway design features and geometry.</p> <p>It is considered that any concerns about deer collisions would be mitigated appropriately through the alignment of any deer fencing, which is to be strategically placed to secure routes that avoid directing deer towards roads and the A1065.</p>

Table 16.1: Other Planning Matters

ExQ	Respondent	Question	Applicant’s Response
Q16.0.1	The applicant	<p>Strategic mitigation for air pollution</p> <p>ES Chapter 16 [APP-065], paragraph 16.4.1 refers to: “ In Section 3.5 of ES Appendix 2.2: Scoping Opinion [APP/6.4], PINS confirmed that air quality effects are not likely to be significant, on the basis that the following information is provided in the ES.” This included: “<i>Ensure strategic mitigation for air pollution is taken into account throughout the design</i>”.</p> <p>Could the applicant confirm how it has ensured strategic mitigation for air pollution is taken into account throughout the design (to include reference to specific documents)?</p>	<p>Construction dust mitigation measures have been included for both the construction phase as indicated within Table 16-1 as specified within the ES Chapter 16: Other Environmental Matters [APP-065].</p> <p>Furthermore, measures to mitigate dust from construction vehicles entering and leaving the site have been specified within the oCTMP [APP/7.7.1] and Table 16-2 and within the ES Chapter 16: Other Environmental Matters [APP-065]. In addition, the proposed traffic routing specified in the oCTMP [APP/7.7.1] minimises the exposure of construction vehicles to sensitive locations.</p> <p>The BESS compound location has been considered to be setback from sensitive locations to reduce the risk of adverse air quality impacts in the unlikely event of a BESS fire. This has been considered within the Air Quality Battery Fire Plume Assessment appended to the oBSMP [APP-194]. In addition, safety controls and good practice measures to reduce risk of adverse air quality impacts in the unlikely event of a BESS fire have been detailed within the oBSMP [APP-194].</p>
Q16.0.2	The applicant	<p>Use of sulphur hexafluoride (SF6) in electrical equipment</p> <p>As the applicant intends to use sulphur hexafluoride (SF6) in electrical equipment such as switchgear and transformers for the proposed development, can the applicant explain whether alternative technology types have been considered or provide reasoning why SF6-type equipment cannot be avoided, in line with the requirements of the NPS EN-5. If SF6-type equipment is to be used in the electrical equipment, in line with the requirements of NPS EN-5, explain in detail any plans for monitoring and control of</p>	<p>Consideration of alternative technologies:</p> <p>The Applicant confirms that non-SF₆ technologies (e.g. vacuum and air-insulated or alternative gas-insulated switchgear) have been actively considered as part of the design development. These technologies are recognised as emerging and developing solutions within the electricity transmission sector and are expected to become increasingly viable over time.</p> <p>Where non-SF₆ equipment is technically available, proven, and suitable for the required voltage and power ratings, the Applicant fully intends to adopt such technologies within the Scheme.</p> <p>However, at the time of writing, non-SF₆ alternatives are not yet fully mature or commercially available across all voltage levels and equipment ratings required for the Scheme. In particular, for certain higher</p>



ExQ	Respondent	Question	Applicant’s Response
		<p>fugitive SF6 emissions and the mechanism by which these are secured through the dDCO and/or relevant control documents.</p>	<p>voltage applications and specific operational requirements, SF₆-based equipment remains the only technically proven and reliable option that meets current performance, safety, and specification standards. Accordingly, the use of SF₆ cannot be entirely avoided at this stage.</p> <p>Design approach and minimisation of SF₆ use:</p> <p>The Scheme adopts an Air Insulated Substation (AIS) design rather than a Gas Insulated Substation (GIS). This approach significantly reduces the overall volume of SF₆ required, as SF₆ is only used in discrete components of switchgear rather than enclosing the entire substation system. Consequently, the total inventory of SF₆ will be comparatively low.</p> <p>SF₆ will therefore be limited to only those items of equipment where its use is technically necessary and where no viable alternative currently exists.</p> <p>Monitoring and control of emissions</p> <p>SF₆-containing equipment will incorporate standard gas density monitoring and alarm systems, enabling prompt identification of any pressure loss and timely maintenance intervention to prevent fugitive emissions.</p> <p>Securing measures through control documents</p> <p>The management, monitoring, and maintenance of SF₆ will be secured through detailed design specifications with reference to any leakage being ‘de minimis’ specified in the oOEMP [APP/7.8.1] under Tables 3-8 and 4-8. This is also linked to ES Chapter 13: Climate Change [APP/6.2.2] which states “Sulphur hexafluoride (SF₆) is a potent GHG that will be used in electrical equipment associated with the Scheme: Switchgear and Transformers. [...] the Scheme will adhere to good practice and guidance. Switchgear equipment is now supplied to minimise leakages. Additionally, through regular checks of the equipment for gas leaks, it can be expected the leaks to be de minimis.”</p> <p>Conclusion</p> <p>In summary, the Applicant will utilise non-SF₆ technologies wherever they are technically viable. However, given current technological constraints at certain voltage levels, limited use of SF₆ remains necessary. The adoption of an AIS design minimises the overall volume required, and robust monitoring and operational controls will ensure that any fugitive emissions are effectively managed in accordance with NPS EN-5 (2023).</p>
Q16.0.3	The applicant	<p>Redundant fuel pipeline</p> <p>Consultation Report [APP-025], Table 22, refers to: “10 Feb ’25 Meeting with MoD - ‘Meeting to discuss a now redundant fuel pipeline and confirm current ownership. It was agreed that the pipeline has been decommissioned, with MOD rights relinquished, and responsibility now lies with affected landowners.”</p> <p>Could the applicant clarify the location of the pipeline and whether it would be affected by the proposed development?</p>	<p>The exact location and alignment of the pipeline is unknown; however, it is understood from discussions with the landowner to run along the western extents of Fields 22, 24, 27, 35 and through Field 18. The precise location of the decommissioned pipe will be confirmed prior to construction commencing on-site in accordance with the measures set out in Table 11 and Table 22 of the oCEMP [APP/7.6.1]. The detailed design, such as piling layout for the mounting structures, will seek to avoid the decommissioned underground pipeline as far as practicably possible. If removal of the decommissioned pipe is required, this will be undertaken in accordance with the measures set out within the updated oCEMP [APP/7.6.1] submitted at Deadline 1.</p>



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