

The Drovers Solar Farm

Applicant's Response to Local Impact Reports

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Date: June 2026

PINS reference: EN0110013

Document reference: APP/8.12 (Original)

Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010





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1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1.1 This document has been prepared on behalf of The Drovers Solar Farm Limited (the Applicant) in relation to an application (the DCO Application) for a Development Consent Order (DCO) to be made to the Secretary of State (SoS) to construct, operate and maintain, and decommission The Drovers Solar Farm (the Scheme), pursuant to the Planning Act 2008 (PA 2008).
- 1.1.2 This document provides the Applicant's response to the Local Impact Reports (LIR) submitted by **Breckland Council** [[REP1-079](#)] and **Norfolk County Council** [[REP1-094](#)], who are the host authorities, and the neighbouring authority of **Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk** [[REP1-076](#)] which were submitted at Deadline 1.
- 1.1.3 The authorities have worked proactively with the Applicant during the preparation of the DCO Application (and since its submission) and the Applicant thanks all officers for their time.
- 1.1.4 **Sections 2 to 4** of this document set out the comments made by each local authority in their LIR and the Applicant's responses to them. The sections are structured as follows:
- **Section 2:** Applicant's Response to the **Breckland Council's** [[REP1-079](#)] LIR
 - **Section 3:** Applicant's Response to the **Norfolk County Council** [[REP1-094](#)] LIR; and
 - **Section 4:** Applicant's Response to the **Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk** [[REP1-076](#)] LIR.
- 1.1.5 Where paragraphs or sections of the above LIRs have not been included, this has been done where the Applicant does not have any commentary to make on the text provided. This is done only for passages where the LIRs refer to factual statements, make repetition of text from the Applicant's documents, or where there is direct quoting of local policy or guidance to which the Applicant has already responded to within the DCO Application documents.



2 Breckland Council's [\[REP1-079\]](#) LIR

Reference	Comments	Applicant's Response
Air Quality and Emissions		
BC1	<p>6.6 The Applicant proposed to scope out detailed air quality assessment, which was agreed by the Planning Inspectorate, subject to the provision of supporting information demonstrating that effects would not be significant.</p> <p>6.7 This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirmation that construction traffic flows are below relevant thresholds (EPUK/IAQM); • Identification of sensitive receptors and justification of the study area; and • Demonstration that appropriate mitigation measures are embedded. <p>6.8 The Council considers this to be a proportionate approach, consistent with the limited potential for significant effects.</p>	The Applicant welcomes this comment.
BC2	<p>6.20 Having reviewed the ES, the Council considers that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The scoping approach is appropriate, given the absence of significant emission sources; • The Applicant has provided sufficient justification to demonstrate that construction traffic and emissions fall below recognised thresholds; • The identification of impact pathways (dust and traffic emissions) is proportionate; and • The proposed mitigation, secured through the CEMP and CTMP, is standard, comprehensive and likely to be effective. <p>6.21 The Council is therefore satisfied that the Applicant has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequately assessed the likely effects, and • Provided a robust and proportionate mitigation strategy. 	The Applicant welcomes this comment.
BC3	<p>6.22 The Council concludes that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effects on air quality would be limited to the construction and decommissioning phases and would be temporary; • No significant operational effects are anticipated; and • The Applicant's assessment and mitigation proposals are adequate and consistent with best practice. <p>6.23 Air quality is therefore not considered to constrain the Proposed Development, subject to the implementation of mitigation secured through the Development Consent Order.</p>	The Applicant welcomes this comment.
Biodiversity and Geological Conservation		



Reference	Comments	Applicant's Response
BC4	<p>7.8 The Council recognises that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural England is the principal statutory consultee in respect of designated sites and protected species; and Detailed ecological matters, including survey adequacy, impact assessment and mitigation design, are appropriately considered through those expert bodies. <p>7.9 On that basis, the Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defers to the advice of Natural England and other relevant consultees on the technical adequacy of the ecological assessment; and Considers that appropriate weight should be given to any Statements of Common Ground, agreements or outstanding concerns arising during the Examination process. <p>7.11 The Council therefore relies on the following to ensure that the requirements of local policy are met:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The conclusions of the statutory consultees; and The securing of mitigation, management and enhancement measures through the Development Consent Order (including the OLEMP and related documents) 	<p>The Applicant notes this comment and acknowledges that Breckland Council is deferring to Natural England on matters of ecology, and that Breckland Council raises no additional comments on this topic. The Applicant has engaged with Natural England, including as set out within the SoCG with Natural England [REP1-022], with further responses to comments received from Natural England in relation to ecological matters including designated sites and protected species, set out in response to NE1-1, NE1-2, and NE1-5 to NE1-8 within the Applicant's Response to Written Representations and other Deadline 1 Submissions [APP/8.13].</p>
BC5	<p>7.12 The Council considers that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The scope of the ecological assessment appears proportionate to the scale and nature of the Proposed Development; and The identification of mitigation and enhancement measures is consistent with established practice for solar NSIPs. <p>7.13 The Council does not raise any specific objections in relation to biodiversity, subject to the conclusions of Natural England and the appropriate securing of mitigation measures.</p>	<p>The Applicant welcomes this comment and acknowledges that Breckland Council is deferring to the advice of Natural England on technical matters and will be relying on the mitigation and enhancement measures secured through the Order. The Applicant has engaged with Natural England, including as set out within the SoCG with Natural England [REP1-022], with further responses to comments received from Natural England in relation to ecological matters including designated sites and protected species, set out in response to NE1-1, NE1-2, and NE1-5 to NE1-8 within the Applicant's Response to Written Representations and other Deadline 1 Submissions [APP/8.13].</p>
BC6	<p>7.14 The ES considers geological receptors within the "Other Environmental Matters" chapter and concludes that no likely significant effects are anticipated.</p> <p>7.15 In its Relevant Representations, the Council confirmed that matters relating to geology and soils fall within the expertise of the Minerals Planning Authority (Norfolk County Council).</p> <p>7.16 The Council therefore:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defers to Norfolk County Council in its capacity as Minerals Planning Authority on matters of geological conservation; and Raises no additional comments on this topic. 	<p>The Applicant welcomes the comment and acknowledges that Breckland Council is deferring to NCC on matters of geological conservation, and that Breckland Council raise no additional comments on this topic. NCC's comments are responded to within the Applicant's Response to Written Representations and other Deadline 1 Submissions [APP/8.13], as well as Table 2 of this document.</p>
BC7	<p>7.17 In respect of biodiversity, the Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defers to the advice of Natural England and other relevant consultees on technical matters; and 	<p>The Applicant welcomes the comment and acknowledges that Breckland Council is deferring to the advice of Natural England and other consultees on technical matters, deferring to NCC regarding geological conservation, and will be relying on the mitigation and enhancement measures secured through the Order. Natural England's comments are being responded to within the Applicant's</p>



Reference	Comments	Applicant's Response
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relies on the implementation of mitigation and enhancement measures secured through the Order. <p>7.18 With regard to geological conservation, the Council defers to Norfolk County Council as Minerals Planning Authority.</p> <p>7.19 On this basis, no objection is raised by the Council in principle in respect of this topic.</p>	<p>Response to Written Representations and other Deadline 1 Submissions [APP/8.13], as are NCC's, who's comments are also responded to this document.</p>
Arboricultural Considerations		
BC8	<p>8.8 The Council notes:</p> <p>Trees and hedgerows form an important component of the landscape framework of the Site; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> These features are integral to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the character of the rural landscape, and the mitigation of visual effects identified elsewhere in this Report. <p>8.9 The Council considers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The retention of existing arboricultural features, where possible, is an important aspect of the Scheme; and Loss or damage to such features should be minimised through design and construction practices. 	<p>The Applicant agrees that trees and hedgerows form an important component of the landscape framework of the Site, and notes the Breckland Council's comments.</p> <p>The retention of existing arboricultural features is an embedded principle of the Scheme, secured through the Design Principles, Parameters and Commitments [APP/5.8.2] and outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (oLEMP) [REP1-060], which include minimum offsets to existing landscape features (8m to hedgerows; 10m to hedgerows with trees, individual trees and groups of trees; and 15x stem diameter to Veteran and Ancient trees).</p> <p>The outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (oCEMP) [APP/7.6.2] further commits that tree removal will be avoided wherever practicable.</p>
BC9	<p>8.10 The Council also notes the detailed comments of its Tree and Countryside Officer as set out in the Relevant Representations. In particular, these identify:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concerns regarding the proposed removal of a Category A tree (T206), which is considered to represent a significant arboricultural constraint (noted the applicant now proposes to retain this tree within the draft Statement of Common Ground); and The need to minimise and, where possible, avoid encroachment into root protection areas (RPAs) associated with high and moderate value tree groups through refinement of layout and access arrangements. <p>8.11 The Council considers that these matters are capable of resolution through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design refinement, including review of panel layout and haul road alignment; and The securing of appropriate arboricultural protection and management measures, including through an Arboricultural Method Statement and related requirements within the DCO. 	<p>The Applicant notes the Breckland Council's comments.</p> <p>In respect of T206, the Applicant confirms that this tree will be retained and provided with the minimum offsets secured through the Design Principles, Parameters and Commitments [APP/5.8.2] and oLEMP [REP1-060]. An updated Illustrative Layout and AIA is provided at Deadline 2 to illustrate the retention of T206.</p> <p>In respect of access track alignment and RPA incursion, the access track routing shown on the illustrative layout is for informative purposes only. The final access track alignment will be determined in accordance with the offsets set out in the Design Principles, Parameters and Commitments [APP/5.8.2] and oLEMP [REP1-060], with internal access tracks following the alignment of existing agricultural tracks where practicable.</p> <p>A detailed Arboricultural Method Statement, based on post-DCO detailed design, will be produced prior to construction commencing and included within the detailed Construction Environmental Management Plan, secured via a Requirement of the draft DCO [APP/3.1.2].</p>
BC10	<p>8.12 The Council expects that, if development consent is granted, appropriate measures would be secured through the DCO to ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The protection of retained trees and hedgerows during construction, including root protection and exclusion zones; 	<p>The Applicant notes the Breckland Council's comments. The matters identified are addressed and secured as follows:</p>



Reference	Comments	Applicant's Response
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The implementation of suitable construction management measures, including within a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP); The delivery of replacement planting and landscape mitigation, where removal of vegetation is necessary, to be secure via a final Landscape and Ecological Management Plan that appropriately reflects site conditions and arboricultural constraints; and Matters such as establishment, hedgerow management and lighting are addressed in accordance with relevant best practice guidance. <p>8.13 The Council considers that these measures are necessary to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain the integrity of the landscape structure; and Support the effectiveness of mitigation proposed in relation to landscape, visual and ecological effects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Protection of retained trees and hedgerows during construction, including root protection and exclusion zones:</i> secured through the oCEMP [APP/7.6.2], which includes embedded mitigation such as ground protection within RPAs, the appointment of an Arboricultural Clerk of Works and a full BS5837:2012-compliant pre-construction arboricultural survey. <i>Construction management measures within a CEMP:</i> the oCEMP [APP/7.6.2] is secured via Requirement 13 of Schedule 2 of the draft DCO [APP/3.1.2], with the detailed Construction Environmental Management Plan (incorporating the detailed Arboricultural Method Statement) to be approved prior to commencement. <i>Replacement planting and landscape mitigation via a final LEMP:</i> secured through the oLEMP [REP1-060], with the detailed Landscape and Ecological Management Plan which will provide for reinstatement and enhancement planting using suitable native species, secured via a Requirement of the draft DCO [APP/3.1.2]. <i>Establishment, hedgerow management and lighting in accordance with best practice:</i> establishment and ongoing hedgerow management will be detailed within the detailed LEMP. Lighting matters are addressed through the relevant commitments set out in the Design Principles, Parameters and Commitments [APP/5.8.2] and oCEMP [APP/7.6.2].
BC11	<p>8.14 The Council Recognises the importance of trees and hedgerows in the context of the Scheme and considers that impacts on arboricultural features can be appropriately managed, subject to the implementation of suitable mitigation and controls.</p> <p>8.15 The Council expects that the retention, protection and enhancement of arboricultural features will be given appropriate weight through the detailed design and construction of the Scheme.</p>	<p>The Applicant notes the Breckland Council's comments and welcomes its recognition that impacts on arboricultural features can be appropriately managed subject to the implementation of suitable mitigation and controls.</p> <p>The Applicant confirms that the retention, protection and enhancement of arboricultural features have been, and will continue to be, given appropriate weight through the detailed design and construction of the Scheme, as secured through the Design Principles, Parameters and Commitments [APP/5.8.2], oCEMP [APP/7.6.2], oLEMP [REP1-060] and the corresponding requirements of the draft DCO [APP/3.1.2].</p>
Civil and Military Aviation and Defence Interests		
BC12	<p>9.4 In its Relevant Representations, Breckland Council confirmed that it defers to the advice of relevant statutory consultees, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Defence (through the Defence Infrastructure Organisation); Civil Aviation Authority; and Other relevant aviation bodies such as the relevant highway authorities in regard to more general glint and glare issues. <p>9.5 These organisations are best placed to assess aviation safety, operational impacts, general glint and glare concerns, and the Council relies on their expert advice in this regard.</p>	<p>The Applicant notes the position of Breckland Council in this regard. The Applicant has prepared a Statement of Common Ground with the Defence Infrastructure Organisation [REP1-029] and National Highways [REP1-024] and is continuing to engage with all relevant stakeholders regarding aviation safety and glint and glare.</p>
BC13	<p>9.6 Notwithstanding the above, the Council notes from the Issue Specific Hearing 1 (Agenda Item 3.4) that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The MoD has identified potential impacts on precision approach radar and aviation receptors; The Applicant is undertaking further analysis and ongoing discussions with the MoD to resolve these matters; and 	<p>The Applicant agrees with this statement and can confirm that the Applicant has had further pragmatic engagement with the MoD following Deadline 1 regarding the potential mitigation solutions to resolve the potential impacts to radar and aviation receptors. The Applicant is working through potential mitigation options with the MoD which will be confirmed at a future deadline. Following this process, a review of the potential for any likely significant effects will be undertaken and, if necessary, further assessment will be undertaken. This would include, as appropriate and necessary, consideration of landscape and visual, biodiversity, land use, and interactions between topics (in-combination effects).</p>



Reference	Comments	Applicant's Response
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At the time of the hearing, no agreed mitigation solution had been identified. <p>9.7 The Council further notes that potential mitigation measures discussed include technical or operational solutions, but also physical mitigation measures, including the potential use of earthen bunds or shielding structures to screen solar arrays from radar line of sight. The Council notes that the form of any required mitigation remains under discussion, and that different mitigation approaches may have differing implications for environmental effects, including landscape, landform and construction related impacts.</p>	
BC14	<p>9.8 The Council considers that this raises a number of important planning considerations:</p> <p>EIA and Design Certainty</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The nature, scale and location of any such mitigation measures are currently undefined; As a result, the likely environmental effects of this mitigation are not clearly assessed within the ES; and This gives rise to a degree of uncertainty as to whether the Scheme, as assessed, represents a reasonable worst-case scenario. <p>Landscape and Visual Effects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical mitigation measures, such as bunding, could introduce substantial and irreversible changes to the landform; The potential for such measures to affect landscape character and visual amenity must be acknowledged within the Examination; and These impacts may be material in the context of the open rural character of the Site. Interaction with Other Environmental Topics Such mitigation could also have implications for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> biodiversity, land use, and the overall design of the Scheme. <p>Control through the Development Consent Order</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council considers it important that any mitigation required is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> clearly defined; appropriately assessed; and secured through the Development Consent Order in a manner that ensures its impacts are fully understood. 	<p>The Applicant has applied the Rochdale Envelope approach to set the parameters for the Scheme to retain a degree of flexibility at this stage of the Scheme. The selection of the mitigation solution will be a detailed design matter, but it will be required to fall within the parameters of the Works authorised by the draft DCO [APP/3.1.2] and not give rise to significant effects beyond those identified within the Environmental Statement, as set out in the draft DCO [APP/3.1.2]. The Applicant has also committed, via discussions with the MoD, to consult and agree the proposed mitigation solution with the MoD at the detailed design stage.</p> <p>Notwithstanding the above, the Applicant has had further pragmatic engagement with the MoD following Deadline 1 regarding the potential mitigation solutions to resolve the potential impacts to radar and aviation receptors. The Applicant is working through potential mitigation options with the MoD which will be confirmed at a future deadline. Following this process, a review of the potential for any likely significant effects will be undertaken and, if necessary, further assessment will be undertaken. This would include, as appropriate and necessary, consideration of landscape and visual, biodiversity, land use, and interactions between topics (in-combination effects).</p>
BC15	<p>9.9 The Council continues to defer to the relevant statutory consultees in respect of aviation safety and defence matters. However, the Council highlights:</p>	<p>The Applicant notes this comment and refers to its responses to BC13 and BC14 above.</p>



Reference	Comments	Applicant's Response
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The potential requirement for additional mitigation, including physical measures such as bunding, introduces uncertainty into the assessment; and • The implications of such mitigation, particularly for landscape and visual impact, should be fully considered and appropriately addressed. • The Council would be concerned if these matters were to be wholly dealt with post-decision as the issues raised are considered to potentially be significant. 	
Flood Risk		
BC16	<p>10.6 In its Relevant Representations, Breckland Council confirmed that it defers to the advice of the relevant statutory consultees, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Environment Agency; and • The Lead Local Flood Authority (Norfolk County Council). <p>10.7 These bodies are responsible for assessing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The adequacy of the Flood Risk Assessment; • Compliance with national policy and guidance; and • The acceptability of drainage proposals. <p>10.8 The Council considers that appropriate weight should be given to their technical advice and any agreed positions secured through the Examination.</p>	<p>ES Appendix 12.2: Flood Risk Assessment [APP/6.4.2] and Design Principles, Parameters Commitments [APP/5.8.2] have been updated at Deadline 2 to provide clarity on drainage to serve the Scheme. The conclusions of ES Appendix 12.2: Flood Risk Assessment [APP/6.4.2] remain unchanged.</p>
BC17	<p>10.11 The Council has not identified any site-specific flood risk concerns beyond those addressed within the Applicant's assessment and the representations of the relevant statutory consultees.</p>	<p>The Applicant welcomes this comment.</p>
BC18	<p>10.12 Based on the information available, and in the absence of any substantive concerns raised in its Relevant Representations, the Council considers that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The scope of assessment appears proportionate to the nature of the Proposed Development; and • The approach to mitigation, including drainage management and construction controls, is consistent with standard practice for large scale solar development. <p>10.13 The Council therefore relies on the conclusions of the Environment Agency and Lead Local Flood Authority as to the adequacy of the assessment and proposed mitigation.</p>	<p>The Applicant welcomes this comment.</p>
BC19	<p>10.14 The Council defers to the advice of the relevant statutory consultees in respect of flood risk and the water environment.</p> <p>10.15 The Council does not raise an objection in principle in relation to this topic subject to:</p>	<p>The Applicant welcomes this comment and has responded to the other statutory consultees accordingly.</p>



Reference	Comments	Applicant's Response
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The agreement of an appropriate drainage strategy, and The securing of mitigation measures through the DCO, in the event the application is approved. 	
Historic Environment		
BC20	<p>11.8 The Council also notes that a number of the most sensitive designated heritage assets are located within the administrative area of King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council (KLWN), including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Castle Acre Castle and Priory (Scheduled Monuments); and Elements of the historic landscape associated with Castle Acre. <p>11.9 In this respect, Breckland Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supports and aligns with the Relevant Representations made by KLWN in relation to impacts on these assets and their settings; and Considers that KLWN is the primary local authority in respect of effects on those assets, with appropriate weight to be given to its position alongside that of Historic England. <p>11.10 The Council considers that the Applicant has undertaken a comprehensive baseline assessment, including desk-based assessment, geophysical survey and trial trenching.</p>	<p>11.8 - 11.9 The Applicant welcomes the comment and acknowledges that Breckland Council defer to KLWN on matters of heritage setting in relation to assets within KLWN and raise no additional comments on this topic. The Applicant has responded to KLWN's comments on the historic environment in BKLWN1-9, 12 and 13 of this document and KLWN1-4 and KLWN2-5 of Applicant's Response to Written Representations and other Deadline 1 Submissions [APP/8.13].</p> <p>The Applicant welcomes this confirmation.</p>
BC21	<p>11.14 The Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defers to Historic England in respect of the assessment of impacts on highly designated heritage assets; Notes that further work may be required to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> clearly define the level of harm, and ensure that impacts are properly assessed in line with EN-1 paragraph 5.9.33 (weighing harm against public benefits); and Considers that these matters must be appropriately addressed through the ongoing Examination and Statements of Common Ground process. <p>11.15 The Council further emphasises that, where heritage assets fall within neighbouring administrative areas, potential impacts on their significance and setting should be considered in the context of the views of the relevant host authority. In this case, the Council fully supports the position of King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council in respect of the assessment of impacts on assets at Castle Acre and their wider setting.</p>	<p>The Applicant welcomes the comment and acknowledges that Breckland Council defers to HE on matters of heritage setting in relation to highly designated heritage assets. The Applicant has responded to HE's comments in HE1 – HE50 of Applicant's Response to Written Representations and other Deadline 1 Submissions [APP/8.13].</p> <p>The Applicant notes that, whilst in its Relevant Representation, HE alluded to further work being required. HE has accepted the baseline assessments provided and that the approach to assessment of levels of harm are adequate (albeit that there is some difference of professional opinion upon perceived levels of harm). HE has not yet specified what further work it would require.</p> <p>11.15 The Applicant notes this comment and acknowledges that Breckland Council defer to KLWN on matters of heritage setting in relation to assets within KLWN. The Applicant has responded to KLWN's comments on the historic environment in BKLWN1-9, 12 and 13 of this document and KLWN1-4 and KLWN2-5 of Applicant's Response to Written Representations and other Deadline 1 Submissions [APP/8.13].</p>
BC22	<p>11.18 The Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defers to Norfolk County Council Historic Environment Service and Historic England on archaeological matters; Notes that the proposed mitigation strategy is appropriate in principle, but full details are not yet available, due to design uncertainty; and 	<p>The Applicant notes the comment and acknowledges that Breckland Council defer to NCC and HE on archaeological matters. The Applicant has responded to NCC's comments on the historic environment in NCC23-31 of this document.</p> <p>The mitigation strategy presented in ES Appendix 8.7: outline Archaeological Mitigation Strategy [APP/6.4.1] has been specifically formulated in consultation in order to ensure that all archaeological</p>



Reference	Comments	Applicant's Response
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considers it essential that mitigation is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ proportionate to significance, and ○ secured through the DCO. <p>11.19 This is consistent with Historic England's position that further detail is required to ensure mitigation is appropriate and sufficiently defined.</p>	<p>mitigation will be proportionate to the significance of the remains and that it can be secured through the DCO.</p>
BC23	<p>11.22 The Council notes the potential for greater harm under Scenario A, particularly in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • skyline intrusion; and • setting of key heritage assets <p>11.23 The Council considers that the Examination should give appropriate weight to the selection of the least harmful option, informed by statutory consultees' advice.</p>	<p>The Applicant's preference is also Scenario B, but cannot commit (at this stage) to which scenario will be taken forward, and therefore has assessed the worst-case scenario of Scenario A. This confirmation will come at detailed design stage.</p>
BC24	<p>11.24 The Council considers that the ES provides a robust evidential baseline and proportionate assessment. However, there are areas of residual uncertainty, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the precise level of harm to designated assets; • the final form of mitigation; and • the detailed archaeological mitigation strategy <p>11.25 It is considered that these matters must be appropriately addressed through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing consultation with Historic England; • Further submissions during Examination; and • Securing sufficient mitigation through the DCO. 	<p>The Applicant welcomes the general acknowledgement that the ES is robust and proportionate.</p> <p>With regard to areas of residual uncertainty, currently that uncertainty is principally whether Scenario A or B will be the final outcome. As stated above, the Applicant's preference is also Scenario B, but cannot commit (at this stage) to which scenario will be taken forward. This confirmation will come at detailed design stage.</p> <p>With regard to 'precise levels of harm'. the Applicant is satisfied that the levels of harm identified within ES Chapter 8: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [APP-057] are robust and justifiable. Whilst other consultees have expressed that they do not agree with these identified levels of harm. these are a difference of professional opinion.</p> <p>Comments on ES Appendix 8.7: outline Archaeological Mitigation Strategy [APP/6.4.1] have now been received from Historic England and an updated version of the document has been submitted at Deadline 2.</p>
BC25	<p>11.26 The Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not raise an objection in principle to the Proposed Development in respect of the historic environment; • Defers to Historic England and Norfolk County Council on technical matters relating to designated heritage assets and archaeology. <p>11.27 However, the Council highlights that further clarification is required regarding the assessment of harm to designated assets, and the detail and securing of mitigation measure to ensure that the requirements of national policy (including EN-1) and local policy are fully satisfied.</p>	<p>The Applicant welcomes the comment that no objection in principle is raised. Discussions regarding perceived levels of harm are ongoing.</p>
Landscape and Visual Effects		
BC26	<p>12.13 The Council contends that the site and the surrounding area exhibit a strong rural character, with minimal industrial/urbanising elements and that the introduction of the scheme over such a large area would give rise to significant long term changes to the character of the landscape between Swaffham and the settlements along the River Nar to the north. Contrary to</p>	<p>The potential adverse landscape effects are detailed within ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual [AS-016]. The chapter details that there could be potentially significant landscape effects upon LCA D1 Swaffham Heath and LCA E6 North Pickenham Plateau, where they are situated within the Site. In the case of this Scheme and existing baseline considerations, the judgement of a potentially 'significant' effect within the Site when compared to not significant outside of the Site, is primarily associated with the physical change in land use. This is detailed within para 6.8.121 which states that</p>



Reference	Comments	Applicant's Response
	<p>the applicant's assessment the Council does not accept these significant effects stop at the site boundary.</p>	<p><i>"mitigation measures would not reduce the overall adverse effects upon the LCA within the Site given that the Scheme is a renewable energy development on a greenfield site with predicted large-scale effects on its character; given that it is changing from predominantly undeveloped landscape to containing built form"</i>.</p> <p>Beyond the Site, it is judged that potential effects would be Moderate adverse during construction, decommissioning and operation phases, and not significant. Beyond the Site, impacts upon landscape character are primarily perceptual and associated with potential views towards the Scheme from wider landscape character areas. The judgement of significance upon LCA outside of the Site are tempered by existing detractors within the landscape as stated in para 6.8.121 where it states LCA effects are <i>"tempered by the perceptual sense of enclosure and industrial influence from adjacent LCAs due to intervisibility with energy infrastructure such as pylons and wind turbines."</i></p> <p>The potentially adverse effects identified within ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual [AS-016] take account of various mitigation measures embedded within the Scheme, which were designed to limit potentially adverse effects upon the landscape. These mitigation measures are secured by the Design Principles, Parameters and Commitments [APP/5.8.2], the spatial extents shown on the Works Plan [APP-009], the outline Operational Environmental Management Plan (oOEMP) [APP/7.8.2] and the oLEMP [REP1-060]. This design approach is embedded within the Applicant's Global Design Principle 2 and more specifically Project Principles 2.5 <i>"respect setting of heritage assets along the Nar Valley"</i>, 2.8 <i>"consider experience of people travelling along adjacent roads, including the A1065, South Acre Road, River Road and Narford Lane"</i> and 2.9 <i>"consider experience of people using the PRow"</i>.</p> <p>Mitigation measures have included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retention of the majority of existing landscape features within and around the boundaries of the Site, namely mature hedgerows and tree cover which contribute to the landscape character of the local context. These landscape features serve to restrict, filter and enclose visibility within the Site and study area south of Bartholomew's Hills Plantation. There is some loss of vegetation proposed as part of the Scheme to allow for the Grid Connection Infrastructure, Site and internal field access • Offset and buffering of the Scheme with new, woodland, hedgerow and tree planting to mitigate potential views from the nearby PRow, roads and residential dwellings both within and in close proximity to the Site • In addition to the establishment of new hedgerow and hedgerow trees, the embedded mitigation also includes the retention, gapping up and enhancement of existing hedgerow within the Site. New planting species would be native, locally prevalent and include a mixture of deciduous and evergreen species to provide year-round screening. Alongside the existing hedgerow and trees within the Site's context, the gapping up of hedgerow with native trees and whips would provide visual screening of the Scheme from visual receptors within the wider study area, and from PRow and droves within the Site itself • The long-term management and maintenance of existing and new vegetation is an embedded mitigation measure which ensures vegetation would be actively managed in the long term, as secured and detailed within the oLEMP [REP1-060]. The prescribed maintenance height of hedgerow at 3m is an embedded mitigation measure which aims to screen views towards taller elements of the Scheme from nearby PRow. The active management and maintenance of trees and woodland within the Order limits, both newly planted and existing, aims to ensure they not only survive but reach maturity and establishment in the medium and long term durations. In turn, these landscape features are primary mechanisms for filtering and screening views towards the Scheme from nearby PRow, roads and residential dwellings



Reference	Comments	Applicant's Response
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Setting back the Scheme from key landscape features within and adjacent to the Site, such as droves, trees, hedgerow and woodland. The minimum offsets/buffers from existing landscape features, are outlined fully in ES Chapter 5: The Scheme [REP1-032]. The Scheme would be offset from existing PRow by a minimum of 15m, to respect the amenity and experience for PRow users along existing routes and allow for the sowing of extensive areas of new grassland along the margins of the Scheme. New grassland/wildflower areas are also proposed to be sown underneath the Solar PV Arrays which would enhance biodiversity within the Site; and As referred to within the oLEMP [REP1-060], 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 network. In addition to this, a number of new permissive routes are proposed, of approximately 3.5km in total, which would link to the existing PRow network within the study area to provide recreational benefits.
BC27	<p>12.14 In its Relevant Representations, the Council highlighted the increasing concentration of large-scale solar and energy infrastructure within Norfolk and Breckland. The introduction of numerous such schemes has the potential to give rise to significant landscape and visual effects and notably change the characteristics of the landscape of Norfolk from that of a rural landscape to one that is increasingly industrialised.</p> <p>12.15 In particular, the Council highlighted the potential for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A progressive and cumulative change in landscape character and sequential impacts, arising from multiple large scale solar developments and energy infrastructure; and The perception of a gradual industrialisation of the countryside, where individually acceptable schemes may cumulatively result in a materially different landscape context. <p>12.16 The Council maintains this position and considers that the Proposed Development should be assessed in the context of this wider pattern of change, rather than in isolation.</p>	<p>ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual [AS-016] outlines the approach and details that cumulative effects may arise as a result of effects associated with the Scheme combining with effects associated with other developments. The list of cumulative developments was narrowed down to focus on those developments which are most likely to give rise to significant cumulative effects. A long-list was generated which was then refined into a short-list, which formed the basis of this assessment, as per the PINS Guidance on Cumulative Effects Assessment. These can be found in Table 2-3 Long and Short List of Cumulative Schemes, within ES Appendix 2.4: Cumulative Schemes [APP-136].</p> <p>Only one development, High Grove Solar, has the potential to result in significant cumulative effects on Landscape and Visual within the associated LVIA Study Area. Section 6.11 undertook a Cumulative Effects Assessment which included High Grove Solar Farm which concluded that there would be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> significant adverse visual effects during construction for receptors within Visual Receptor Group 4: Great Palgrave and Little Palgrave; and significant adverse landscape effects during construction and operation on the E6 North Pickenham Plateau LCA. <p>Further collaboration with High Grove Solar Farm will be undertaken with regard to the planting approach for mitigation measures. The oLEMP [REP1-060] states in paragraph 7.2.32 that <i>“planting mixes shown indicatively in the following section below will be reviewed further post consent and in collaboration with planting proposals for High Grove Solar Farm to ensure that there is a smooth transition of the “look and feel” between one solar farm and another.”</i> The smooth transition between High Grove Solar Farm and the Scheme would limit further cumulative effects upon landscape character by ensuring new planting is well considered, connected and characteristic of the local landscape.</p>
BC28	<p>12.17 The Council considers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Proposed Development must be assessed strategically in the context of existing and proposed solar and energy infrastructure schemes, including NSIP scale projects Norfolk wide. There is potential for a cumulative transformation of landscape character, particularly where multiple schemes are located within the same broad landscape; 	<p>ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual [AS-016] outlines the approach and details that cumulative effects may arise as a result of effects associated with the Scheme combining with effects associated with other developments. The Scheme has been assessed strategically in the context of existing (as part of the baseline context) and proposed solar and energy infrastructure schemes, including NSIP scale projects Norfolk wide. Only one development, High Grove Solar, has the potential to result in significant cumulative effects on Landscape and Visual within the associated LVIA Study Area.</p> <p>Section 6.11 undertook a Cumulative Effects Assessment which included High Grove Solar Farm which concluded that there would be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> significant adverse visual effects during construction for receptors within Visual Receptor Group 4: Great Palgrave and Little Palgrave; and



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is the potential for sequential impacts to be experienced by those travelling through the landscape as they are afforded views of multiple schemes; and • This raises concerns regarding the capacity of the local landscape to accommodate further large-scale solar development. <p>12.18 The Council considers that this is a matter of significant material importance, particularly in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landscape character; • Visual amenity; and • The overall perception of the rural environment. <p>12.19 The Council considers that this issue goes to the capacity of the local landscape to accommodate further large-scale solar development and is therefore a matter of particular relevance and significance to the overall planning balance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • significant adverse landscape effects during construction and operation on the E6 North Pickenham Plateau LCA. <p>Paragraph 9.4.17 of the Planning Balance in the Planning Statement [REP1-012] sets out that neutral weight has been afforded to these cumulative effects.</p>
BC29	<p>12.21 The Council asks that the inspector considers a full range of renewable energy projects both committed and coming forward to assist in a fuller understanding of these cumulative effects.</p>	<p>ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual [AS-016] outlines the approach and details that cumulative effects may arise as a result of effects associated with the Scheme combining with effects associated with other developments.</p>
BC30	<p>12.23 The Council notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Site covers a large area (circa 608 Ha) and forms part of a coherent and intrinsically rural landscape, which contributes to the wider character of the area; • The introduction of extensive solar arrays, associated infrastructure and grid connection works represents a substantial change in land use and character at a local level, while also contributing to cumulative effects on the character of the wider area; and • Whilst such effects may be spatially contained, they nevertheless represent a notable alteration to the character of the Site and its immediate surroundings. <p>12.24 The Council considers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Applicant's assessment, while acknowledging significant effects on the site itself, has not undertaken a sufficiently detailed study of the character of the site itself and the likely effects of the proposal on the site. Particular concern is raised concerning the assessment of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ the droveways, ○ ground modelling, ○ the introduction of the supporting infrastructure, sub station and the associated ground modelling, power line connections and associated mitigation etc. ○ The wider cumulative landscape effects, particularly at a strategic scale across Breckland and Norfolk, require careful consideration. 	<p>ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual [AS-016] outlines the baseline landscape context within Section 6.6. The relevant existing landscape assessments are outlined within para 6.6.29 and further detailed within this section, identifying where published characteristics are still applicable to the Site's baseline. Section 6.6 details the various landscape characteristics, strategies and considerations identified within published landscape assessments where relevant, and also provides commentary on key site observations. An example of site observations include those detailed within para's 6.6.45 – 6.6.48 of Section 6.6.</p> <p>Potential visual impacts as a result of the Scheme, upon public rights of way (PRoW) including the various droves, are detailed within ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual [AS-016] and ES Appendix 6.8: Amenity and Recreation Assessment [APP-146].</p> <p>With reference to ground modelling, it is assumed this refers to potential impacts upon landform through regrading etc. The details of proposed levels, and subsequent changes to existing topography, are not yet known and will be resolved and finalised during the detailed design stage should DCO consent be granted.</p> <p>The potential adverse landscape effects associated with the Scheme, including the proposed Customer and National Grid Substations, Grid Connection Infrastructure and proposed mitigation, are detailed within ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual [AS-016].</p> <p>ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual [AS-016] outlines the approach and details that cumulative effects may arise as a result of effects associated with the Scheme combining with effects associated with other developments. Only one development, High Grove Solar, has the potential to result in significant cumulative effects on Landscape and Visual within the associated LVIA Study Area</p>



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BC31	<p>12.26 The Council notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visibility of the entire Scheme from the wider area is, to varying degrees, broken by topography and vegetation, with only elements being visible from any, one, location. Nonetheless, there are localised views, including from elevated locations, which would endure into the long term; • There are extended viewing opportunities from some of the roads and PRow within and in close proximity to the site; <p>12.27 The Council accepts effects are unlikely to be widespread; however, for affected receptors, the introduction of solar infrastructure represents a notable change in visual amenity, particularly in views which are currently rural in character.</p> <p>12.28 The Council considers that some of the effects have been underplayed. While the introduction of new planting may help to screen the development, it does not negate the permanent loss of the open views which characterise this landscape.</p>	<p>The potential adverse landscape effects are detailed within ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual [AS-016]. The assessment includes visual receptors such as PRow users and road users, within the Site and wider LVIA study area. The assessment concludes that there would be no potential long term significant adverse visual effects upon visual receptors within the Site and wider LVIA study area. With regard to landscape character, the assessment concludes that there would be potential long term significant adverse landscape effects upon LCA D1 Swaffham Heath and LCA E6 North Pickenham Plateau. However, these effects upon the LCAs are only judged to be significant where they fall within the Site. There are no potential long term significant adverse landscape effects beyond the Order limits.</p> <p>With regard to judgement of effects, the assessment has utilised best practice methodology and followed the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 3rd Edition (GLVIA) 2013. GLVIA3 and all of its constituent paragraphs, where relevant, form a key guidance tool which underpins the methodology and assessment approach detailed within ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual [AS-016]. Potential adverse effects during construction, operation and decommissioning upon visual amenity and landscape character are detailed in full within Section 6.8 and Table 6-11 of ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual [AS-016].</p>
BC32	<p>12.29 The Council notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landscape and visual effects are closely linked to the setting of heritage assets, particularly at Castle Acre; • Whilst the ES concludes that effects are limited, Historic England has raised concerns regarding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ the assessment of setting, and ○ the extent to which harm has been clearly identified <p>12.30 The Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports and aligns with the position of King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council, as the host authority for key heritage assets; and • Considers that landscape effects should be assessed in the context of their contribution to heritage setting and significance. 	<p>ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual [AS-016] considered landscape character in the context of Castle Acre. Notable elements of value within the surrounding landscape are detailed within ES Appendix 6.5: Evaluation of Landscape Value [APP-143]. With regard to heritage, the LVIA includes an assessment of various landscape elements including Natural Heritage and Cultural Heritage. As outlined above, the assessment concludes that there would be potential long term significant adverse landscape effects upon LCA D1 Swaffham Heath and LCA E6 North Pickenham Plateau. However, these effects upon the LCA's are only judged to be significant where they fall within the Site. The location of landscape character areas within the study area are shown on ES Figure 6.4: Landscape Character [APP-081]. There are no potential long term significant adverse landscape effects beyond the Order limits, such as around Castle Acre. There are no potential long term significant effects upon LCA F1 River Nar Valley. There are no potential long term significant visual effects upon visual receptors within Castle Acre.</p> <p>ES Chapter 8: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [APP-057] presents a robust and proportionate assessment of the setting of heritage assets in their landscape context and clearly identifies levels of harm. The Applicant has responded to KLWN's comments on the historic environment in BKLWN1-9, 12 and 13 of this document, KLWN1-4 and KLWN2-5 of Applicant's Response to Written Representations and other Deadline 1 Submissions [APP/8.13] and has responded to HE's comments on the historic environment in HE1 – HE50 of Applicant's Response to Written Representations and other Deadline 1 Submissions [APP/8.13].</p>
BC33	<p>12.32 The Council further draws attention to the issues identified in Section 9 (Civil and Military Aviation and Defence Interests) regarding the potential requirement for additional mitigation measures, including bunding or other physical screening to ensure there is no interference with the radar systems at RAF Markham.</p> <p>12.33 The Council considers that the need, scale, design and location of such mitigation is currently uncertain. These mitigation solutions have the potential to generate adverse impacts. The introduction of bunding, in particular, has the potential to create notable landscape and visual impacts (both construction and long term), which would not be reversible. These effects are not assessed within the ES at this stage.</p>	<p>The Applicant notes this comment and refers to its response to BC13 above. If landscape mitigation is required following engagement with the MoD, it will be ensured that this is assessed for all relevant topics and information on this will be presented at the earliest available opportunity.</p>



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	<p>Chapter 6 of the ES notes that a number of embedded mitigation elements would be decided at the detailed design stage (para 6.7.2), including proposed buildings and infrastructure, fencing, gates, façade structures and colour. Further clarity is sought in order to fully understand the likely effects and adequacy of the mitigation measure.</p> <p>12.34 The Council therefore considers that there is a significant degree of uncertainty regarding the final landscape impacts of the Scheme, pending the resolution of these matters.</p>	
BC34	<p>12.35 The Council considers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The LVIA is broadly comprehensive and proportionate, queries have been raised in relation to the methodology in the Statement of Common Ground which are currently under discussion; • The identification of localised effects is broadly robust, however the Council judges that some of the effects have been underestimated, particularly in relation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Local Landscape, as per GLVIA3 Paras 5.12 to 5.16 (Guidance to landscape professionals) the assessment has not identified and considered effects on Local Landscape Character Areas (a significant omission that runs contrary to early work submitted by the High Grove applicant); ○ the sequential experience of those travelling through this landscape; and; ○ the permanent loss of open views which characterise this area (the introduction of planting to help contain views of the development, would not mitigate these losses). 	<p>ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual [AS-016] has focussed on district-level landscape character assessments because they are a material consideration and have been subject to public scrutiny.</p> <p>For the ES, the assessors outlined that the district landscape character assessments were still relevant, again noting that GLVIA para 5.13 states that <i>"justification should be provided for any departure from the findings of an existing established LCA."</i> GLVIA para 5.15 continues adding that <i>"existing assessments may need to be reviewed and interpreted to adapt them for use in LVIA - for example by drawing out more clearly the key characteristics that are most relevant to the proposal. Completely new supplementary Landscape Character Assessment work covering the whole Study Area would only be required when there are no existing assessments or when they are available but either have serious limitations that restrict their value or do not provide information at an appropriate level of detail"</i>.</p> <p>For the purposes of the Scheme and assessment within ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual [AS-016], the Applicant does not consider that there are serious limitations with the Breckland Landscape Character Assessment 2007 or that further detail is required. Further detail is provided in ES Chapter 6, explaining further site observations and that such observations were consistent with the relevant LCA in the published assessment.</p> <p>The Breckland Landscape Character Assessment 2007 is at a suitable scale for the LVIA and, as per paragraph 5.15, supplemented with site observations from fieldwork to <i>"draw out more clearly the key characteristics that are more relevant to the proposal."</i></p> <p>ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual [AS-016] outlines potential landscape and visual impacts as a result of the Scheme. ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual [AS-016] assesses the potential sequential visual effects upon visual receptors within the Site and study area. Adverse effects upon visual amenity, such as visual receptor groups (VRG's) that have baseline views of rural landscape and may have potential views of the Scheme during construction, operation and decommissioning are detailed in full within Section 6.8 and Table 6-11 of ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual [AS-016].</p> <p>The potentially adverse effects identified within ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual [AS-016] take account of various mitigation measures embedded within the Scheme, which were designed to limit potentially adverse effects upon the landscape. These mitigation measures are secured by the Design Principles, Parameters and Commitments [APP/5.8.2], the spatial extents shown on the Works Plan [APP-009], the oOEMP [APP/7.8.2] and the oLEMP [REP1-060]. This design approach is embedded within the Applicant's Global Design Principle 2 and more specifically Project Principles 2.5 <i>"respect setting of heritage assets along the Nar Valley"</i>, 2.8 <i>"consider experience of people travelling along adjacent roads, including the A1065, South Acre Road, River Road and Narford Lane"</i> and 2.9 <i>"consider experience of people using the PRoW"</i>.</p> <p>Mitigation measures have included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retention of the majority of existing landscape features within and around the boundaries of the Site, namely mature hedgerows and tree cover which contribute to the landscape character of the local context. These landscape features serve to restrict, filter and enclose



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		<p>visibility within the Site and study area south of Bartholomew's Hills Plantation. There is some loss of vegetation proposed as part of the Scheme to allow for the Grid Connection Infrastructure, Site and internal field access</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offset and buffering of the Scheme with new, woodland, hedgerow and tree planting to mitigate potential views from the nearby PRow, roads and residential dwellings both within and in close proximity to the Site • In addition to the establishment of new hedgerow and hedgerow trees, the embedded mitigation also includes the retention, gapping up and enhancement of existing hedgerow within the Site. New planting species would be native, locally prevalent and include a mixture of deciduous and evergreen species to provide year-round screening. Alongside the existing hedgerow and trees within the Site's context, the gapping up of hedgerow with native trees and whips would provide visual screening of the Scheme from visual receptors within the wider study area, and from PRow and droves within the Site itself • The long-term management and maintenance of existing and new vegetation is an embedded mitigation measure which ensures vegetation would be actively managed in the long term, as secured and detailed within the oLEMP [REP1-060]. The prescribed maintenance height of hedgerow at 3m is an embedded mitigation measure which aims to screen views towards taller elements of the Scheme from nearby PRow. The active management and maintenance of trees and woodland within the Order limits, both newly planted and existing, aims to ensure they not only survive but reach maturity and establishment in the medium and long term durations. In turn, these landscape features are primary mechanisms for filtering and screening views towards the Scheme from nearby PRow, roads and residential dwellings • Setting back the Scheme from key landscape features within and adjacent to the Site, such as droves, trees, hedgerow and woodland. The minimum offsets/buffers from existing landscape features, are outlined fully in ES Chapter 5: The Scheme [REP1-032]. The Scheme would be offset from existing PRow by a minimum of 15m, to respect the amenity and experience for PRow users along existing routes and allow for the sowing of extensive areas of new grassland along the margins of the Scheme. New grassland/wildflower areas are also proposed to be sown underneath the Solar PV Arrays which would enhance biodiversity within the Site; and • As referred to within the oLEMP [REP1-060], 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 network. In addition to this, a number of new permissive routes are proposed, of approximately 3.5km in total, which would link to the existing PRow network within the study area to provide recreational benefits.
BC35	<p>12.36 The Council identifies the following areas where further consideration is considered to be required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The cumulative and sequential effects of large-scale solar and energy infrastructure development within the Norfolk wide area; • The identification and assessment of Local Landscape Character Areas • Additional views to help illustrate the sequential effects of the Scheme; • The interaction between landscape impacts and heritage setting; and • The potential for additional, currently undefined mitigation measures to alter landscape effects. 	<p>ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual [AS-016] outlines the approach and details that cumulative effects may arise as a result of effects associated with the Scheme combining with effects associated with other developments. The Scheme has been assessed strategically in the context of existing (as part of the baseline context) and proposed solar and energy infrastructure schemes, including NSIP scale projects Norfolk wide. Only one development, High Grove Solar, has the potential to result in significant cumulative effects on Landscape and Visual within the associated LVIA Study Area.</p> <p>Section 6.11 undertook a Cumulative Effects Assessment which included High Grove Solar Farm which concluded that there would be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • significant adverse visual effects during construction for receptors within Visual Receptor Group 4: Great Palgrave and Little Palgrave; and



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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> significant adverse landscape effects during construction and operation on the E6 North Pickenham Plateau LCA. <p>With regard to Local Landscape Character Areas, the Applicant notes this comment. The Applicant refers to its response to BC33 above on this matter.</p> <p>With regard to the request for additional views, the Applicant has been in frequent dialogue with Kings Lynn and West Norfolk (KLWN) Council, Breckland Council and Sporle with Palgrave Parish Council to better understand concerns with regard to the assessment of additional viewpoint locations. As a result, a series of additional representative and illustrative viewpoint locations will be photographed, presented and assessed within ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual [AS-016] at a future deadline. The locations of these have been agreed in a virtual meeting with KLWN on 3 June 2026.</p> <p>ES Chapter 8: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [APP-057] presents a robust and proportionate assessment of the setting of heritage assets in their landscape context.</p> <p>The Applicant refers to its response to BC13 above regarding undefined mitigation measures.</p>
BC36	12.37 The Council has concerns about the use of 'future baseline' with regard to the recently undertaken planting within and around the Site.	<p>As outlined in ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual [AS-016], the LVIA takes account for new hedgerow planting within the Site. This is a reasonable and justified approach, with growth rates detailed in Para 6.4.14 <i>"the assumed vegetation growth rate is 300mm/year for the first five years and 400mm of growth per year thereafter"</i>.</p> <p>Para 6.6.111 states <i>"new hedgerow planting within the Site has been identified during fieldwork. Baseline viewpoint photography illustrates newly planted hedgerow within winter viewpoint photographs 2 and 5, along River Road and Fincham Drove PRow. This new hedgerow planting forms part of the future baseline and would have grown and established by operation phase year 1, at the growth rates detailed within the Assumptions and Limitations section of this LVIA. Short and medium term visual effects reflect this assumption within the assessment section of this LVIA."</i></p>
BC37	12.38 The ES states (LVIA para 6.4.111) that the recently planted hedgerows and areas of gapping up around the site's field boundary, are considered as 'future baseline' and their anticipated growth is taken into account when considering predicted effects.	<p>The Applicant notes this comment. The advance planting, as detailed within the oLEMP [REP1-060], has been implemented along the western edge of the A1065, where it abuts the Site, and around the majority of Field 27.</p>
BC38	12.40 [in reference to GLVIA3 (para 5.33) set out in 12.39] Given the above, the recently introduced planting is judged to form part of the mitigation proposals, albeit coming forward in advance, and should not be included as 'future baseline', as it would not come forward in isolation of the proposals.	<p>The advance planting, as detailed within the oLEMP [REP1-060], has been implemented along the western edge of the A1065, where it abuts the Site, and around the majority of Field 27. This is referred to as advance planting and is considered as part of the future baseline. Para 5.33 of GLVIA3 states <i>"The aim should be to describe the landscape as it is at the time but also to consider what it may be like in the future in the absence of the proposal. This means projecting forward any trends in change and considering how they may affect the landscape over time, accepting that this involves a degree of speculation and uncertainty."</i> Such planting took place after submission of the DCO Application.</p>
BC39	<p>12.41 The Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognises that landscape and visual effects are largely localised in spatial extent; and considers that the Scheme represents a material change to the character of the Site and its immediate surroundings and would not be in accordance with Policy ENV05 Protection and Enhancement of the Landscape. 	<p>The assessment concludes that there would be no potential long term significant adverse visual effects upon visual receptors within the Site and wider LVIA study area. With regard to landscape character, the assessment concludes that there would be potential long term significant adverse landscape effects upon LCA D1 Swaffham Heath and LCA E6 North Pickenham Plateau. However, these effects upon the LCAs are only judged to be significant where they fall within the Site. There are no potential long term significant adverse landscape effects beyond the Order limits.</p> <p>The potentially adverse effects identified within ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual [AS-016] take account of various mitigation measures embedded within the Scheme, which were designed to limit potentially adverse effects upon the landscape. These mitigation measures are secured by the Design Principles, Parameters and Commitments [APP/5.8.2], the spatial extents shown on</p>



Reference	Comments	Applicant's Response
		<p>the Works Plan [APP-009], the oOEMP [APP/7.8.2] and the oLEMP [REP1-060]. This design approach is embedded within the Applicant's Global Design Principle 2 and more specifically Project Principles 2.5 "<i>respect setting of heritage assets along the Nar Valley</i>", 2.8 "<i>consider experience of people travelling along adjacent roads, including the A1065, South Acre Road, River Road and Narford Lane</i>" and 2.9 "<i>consider experience of people using the PRow</i>".</p> <p>Mitigation measures have included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retention of the majority of existing landscape features within and around the boundaries of the Site, namely mature hedgerows and tree cover which contribute to the landscape character of the local context. These landscape features serve to restrict, filter and enclose visibility within the Site and study area south of Bartholomew's Hills Plantation. There is some loss of vegetation proposed as part of the Scheme to allow for the Grid Connection Infrastructure, Site and internal field access Offset and buffering of the Scheme with new, woodland, hedgerow and tree planting to mitigate potential views from the nearby PRow, roads and residential dwellings both within and in close proximity to the Site In addition to the establishment of new hedgerow and hedgerow trees, the embedded mitigation also includes the retention, gapping up and enhancement of existing hedgerow within the Site. New planting species would be native, locally prevalent and include a mixture of deciduous and evergreen species to provide year-round screening. Alongside the existing hedgerow and trees within the Site's context, the gapping up of hedgerow with native trees and whips would provide visual screening of the Scheme from visual receptors within the wider study area, and from PRow and droves within the Site itself The long-term management and maintenance of existing and new vegetation is an embedded mitigation measure which ensures vegetation would be actively managed in the long term, as secured and detailed within the oLEMP [REP1-060]. The prescribed maintenance height of hedgerow at 3m is an embedded mitigation measure which aims to screen views towards taller elements of the Scheme from nearby PRow. The active management and maintenance of trees and woodland within the Order limits, both newly planted and existing, aims to ensure they not only survive but reach maturity and establishment in the medium and long term durations. In turn, these landscape features are primary mechanisms for filtering and screening views towards the Scheme from nearby PRow, roads and residential dwellings Setting back the Scheme from key landscape features within and adjacent to the Site, such as droves, trees, hedgerow and woodland. The minimum offsets/buffers from existing landscape features, are outlined fully in ES Chapter 5: The Scheme [REP1-032]. The Scheme would be offset from existing PRow by a minimum of 15m, to respect the amenity and experience for PRow users along existing routes and allow for the sowing of extensive areas of new grassland along the margins of the Scheme. New grassland/wildflower areas are also proposed to be sown underneath the Solar PV Arrays which would enhance biodiversity within the Site; and As referred to within the oLEMP [REP1-060], 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 network. In addition to this, a number of new permissive routes are proposed, of approximately 3.5km in total, which would link to the existing PRow network within the study area to provide recreational benefits. <p>The Applicant has demonstrated accordance with Policy ENV05 Protection and Enhancement of the Landscape on pages 178 and 179 of the Policy Compliance Document [REP1-014]. The Applicant sets out that significant residual adverse impacts identified have been minimised as far as practicable</p>



Reference	Comments	Applicant's Response
		following the application of the mitigation hierarchy. Where significant residual adverse cumulative impacts remain with High Grove, the Applicant concludes that these are outweighed the critical and urgent need for the Scheme and the benefits of the Scheme in accordance with NPS EN-1.
BC40	<p>12.42 The Council further highlights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cumulative landscape effects arising from multiple solar/energy infrastructure developments within Breckland and the wider Norfolk area are an important consideration, including whether the landscape has the capacity to accommodate further large-scale solar development without material change in character; A number of elements, particularly in relation to the details of the substations and the mitigation measures in relation of RAF Marham, are yet to be fully resolved and assessed; and The potential requirement for additional mitigation, including bunding, introduces a degree of uncertainty into the assessment of landscape effects. 	<p>ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual [AS-016] outlines the approach and details that cumulative effects may arise as a result of effects associated with the Scheme combining with effects associated with other developments. The Scheme has been assessed strategically in the context of existing (as part of the baseline context) and proposed solar and energy infrastructure schemes, including NSIP scale projects Norfolk wide. Only one development, High Grove Solar, has the potential to result in significant cumulative effects on Landscape and Visual within the associated LVIA Study Area.</p> <p>Section 6.11 undertook a Cumulative Effects Assessment which included High Grove Solar Farm which concluded that there would be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> significant adverse visual effects during construction for receptors within Visual Receptor Group 4: Great Palgrave and Little Palgrave; and significant adverse landscape effects during construction and operation on the E6 North Pickenham Plateau LCA. <p>The Applicant refers to its response to BC13 above on the matter of mitigation measures in relation to RAF Marham and uncertainty.</p>
BC41	12.43 The Council therefore considers that these matters should be given appropriate weight during the Examination, alongside the advice of relevant consultees and neighbouring authorities.	The Applicant notes this comment and has responded accordingly above.
Land Use, Including Open Space, Green Infrastructure and Green Belt		
BC42	<p>13.6 In its Relevant Representations, Breckland Council identified that the Site comprises valuable agricultural land forming part of the rural resource of the district.</p> <p>13.7 The Council notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Proposed Development would result in a substantial area of agricultural land being taken out of conventional agricultural production; Whilst some level of dual use may be possible, the character and function of the Site would change from productive agricultural land to energy generation infrastructure; and This represents a material change in land use, even where elements of agricultural use may continue in a limited capacity. <p>13.8 The Council also notes that the operational life of the Scheme represents a long-term use of 60 years, rather than a short term or transitional change.</p>	<p>The agricultural land quality of the Site is set out in the ES Chapter 11: Soils and Agriculture [AS-018] based on the ES Appendix 11.2 Agricultural Land Classification [APP-168]. This includes 455 ha of land of BMV quality, which is 54% of the Site (Table 11-4). Only a small proportion of this will be adversely affected, most temporarily (Table 11-7).</p> <p>There is potential for continued agricultural use in conjunction with energy production. There is no planning policy or initiative requiring agricultural land to be used for arable production, nor should arable production be defined as “conventional agricultural production”.</p> <p>The effects are noted in the local and regional context in the ES.</p>
BC43	<p>13.9 The Council recognises that national and local policy (ENV10) seeks to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect the best and most versatile agricultural land (Grades 1, 2 and 3a); and Direct development where possible to areas of lower agricultural value. 	<p>The Applicant has considered Policy ENV10 on pages 182 and 183 of the Policy Compliance Document [REP1-014] and the impact on agricultural land and soil has been considered as part of the site selection assessment (included in Appendix 1 of the Planning Statement [REP1-012]) and the design of the Scheme (as set out in ES Chapter 5: The Scheme [REP1-032]). Appendix 1: Site Evaluation Report of the Planning Statement [REP1-012] concludes by setting out why the land identified is the most suitable location for the Scheme and meets the key criteria of Policy ENV10 by mitigating against adverse impacts on the local landscape, residential amenity, and wildlife sites. On the point of protecting the highest quality agricultural land, the Applicant has sought to minimise the</p>



Reference	Comments	Applicant's Response
	<p>13.10 The Council considers that the presence and extent of BMV land within the Site is an important consideration and should be given appropriate weight in the overall planning balance.</p>	<p>amount of BMV land by adopting a sequential approach in its site selection and can justify its inclusion given the lack of a suitable alternative on brownfield land as set out in ES Chapter 4: Reasonable Alternatives and Design Evolution [APP-053] and the temporary nature of the Scheme as set out in ES Chapter 11: Soils and Agriculture [AS-018]. The Applicant has demonstrated in Section 9.4 of the Planning Statement [REP1-012] that the adverse impacts identified are clearly outweighed by the substantial public benefits that would arise from providing low-carbon energy to meet the needs identified in NPS EN-1. ES Chapter 5: The Scheme [REP1-032] also highlights the temporary nature of the Scheme, which would not result in the irreversible loss of agricultural land, and the benefits to agricultural land as a result of the established habitats introduced during the lifetime of the Scheme.</p> <p>With regard to national policy, paragraph 2.10.29 NPS EN-3 states that land type should not be a predominating factor in determining the suitability of the site location. National policy and the planning balance has been considered within the Applicant's assessment as per Section 11.8 of ES Chapter 11: Soils and Agriculture [AS-018] and paragraph 8.3.218 of the Planning Statement [REP1-012].</p>
BC44	<p>13.11 The Council's Relevant Representations raised concerns regarding the increasing demand for land for large scale solar and energy infrastructure within Breckland and the wider Norfolk area.</p> <p>13.12 The Council considers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Proposed Development should be assessed in the context of multiple existing and proposed solar schemes across the area; • Individually acceptable schemes may cumulatively result in a notable reduction in land available for agricultural production; and • There is potential for a gradual and cumulative shift in land use across the district, particularly within areas of concentrated solar development. <p>13.13 The Council maintains that this cumulative change is a material consideration, particularly in a district characterised by its productive agricultural landscape and rural economy.</p>	<p>The Applicant has responded to these points at reference BC9 of the Applicant's Response to Relevant Representations [REP1-067].</p>
BC45	<p>13.15 The Council considers that proposals should demonstrate that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The use of agricultural land is justified, particularly where higher quality land may be affected; and • Opportunities to minimise impacts on higher grade agricultural land have been considered. 	<p>The Applicant considers that it has demonstrated both of these points through the design process. Paragraph 8.3.205 of the Planning Statement [REP1-012] confirms that at a site design level, the Applicant has sought to reduce the use of BMV land, but given the nature of the land quality within the Order limits and the general classification both locally and on a wider scale in Norfolk, it has not been possible to avoid entirely. Section 8.3 of the Planning Statement [REP1-012] also sets out how the Applicant identified one Field (Field 32) after the ALC surveys, which contained entirely Grade 1 and 2. During Stage 2 design, Field 32 was identified as an area requiring mitigation and enhancement. At Stage 3, it was removed from the Order limits to enable its continued agricultural use by the landowner. The temporary nature of the Scheme is set out in ES Chapter 11: Soils and Agriculture [AS-018], and the Planning Statement [REP1-012] also sets out in paragraph 8.3.208 how the land will be returned to its original use and condition as far as practicable and returned to the landowner when the operational phase ends.</p> <p>The Applicant has sought to minimise the amount of BMV land by adopting a sequential approach in its site selection and can justify its inclusion given the lack of a suitable alternative on brownfield land as set out in ES Chapter 4: Reasonable Alternatives and Design Evolution [APP-053] and the temporary nature of the Scheme as set out in ES Chapter 11: Soils and Agriculture [AS-018]. The Scheme falls under the CNP criteria, as set out by NPS EN-1 paragraphs 4.2.5 and 3.3.63, and would contribute to the UK's urgent requirement for the delivery of new renewable energy generation capacity and infrastructure.</p>



Reference	Comments	Applicant's Response
BC46	<p>13.16 The Council considers that the Applicant has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified and described the existing land use baseline; and Set out the broad implications of the proposed use of the Site for solar generation. <p>13.17 However, the Council considers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The assessment of land use change should be considered in the context of the long-term temporary nature of the development, and Greater weight should be given to the cumulative effects of multiple solar developments on agricultural land across the district and wider Norfolk area. 	<p>With regard to 13.16, the Applicant welcomes this confirmation.</p> <p>With regard to 13.17, the Applicant has considered land use in the context of the long-term temporary nature of the development in Section 8.3 of the Planning Statement [REP1-012] and ES Chapter 11: Soils and Agriculture [AS-018]. The Scheme is mostly temporary and reversible in nature and therefore will have a low magnitude effect on the long-term agricultural resource. The oSMP [REP1-062] sets out procedures for soil stripping, stockpiling, reinstatement, and land restoration. With this mitigation in place, the Planning Statement [REP1-012] sets out that only temporary moderate adverse effects on soil resources are anticipated. Furthermore, by leaving the land undisturbed under long-term grassland, soil health, quality and structure within the Solar PV Sites are likely to improve during the lifetime of the Scheme.</p> <p>Sufficient weight has been given to the cumulative effects of multiple solar developments on agricultural land across the district and wider Norfolk area. The assessment of likely cumulative effects is provided in each of the ES Topic Chapter [APP/6.2] and is summarised in ES Chapter 18: Summary of Effects [APP-067]. While there are some significant residual adverse impacts anticipated for Landscape and Visual, Noise and Vibration, and Soil and Agriculture, it is considered that the wider benefits of the Scheme as CNP infrastructure, delivery of a significant level of low carbon energy generation and biodiversity net gain, and the provision of permissive paths outweigh the adverse residual effects of the Scheme.</p>
BC47	<p>13.18 The Council recognises that the Proposed Development would result in a reversible change in land use. However, it is considered that the Scheme would nonetheless represent a substantial and long-term change in the use of agricultural land at the Site.</p>	<p>The Applicant notes this and has included consideration of the change to agricultural land within the planning balance in Section 9.4 of the Planning Statement [REP1-012], concluding that the adverse impacts identified are clearly outweighed by the substantial public benefits that would arise from providing low-carbon energy to meet the needs identified in NPS EN-1.</p>
BC48	<p>13.19 The Council further highlights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The potential presence and extent of best and most versatile agricultural land is an important consideration; and The cumulative effect of solar development on agricultural land availability within Breckland and the wider Norfolk area should be taken into account. <p>13.20 Breckland Council defers to the advice of Natural England in regard to the technical details of the potential impacts upon agricultural land and soils.</p> <p>13.21 These matters should be given appropriate weight in the overall planning balance.</p>	<p>As set out in Section 4.4 of the Planning Statement [REP1-012] the Applicant has considered best and most versatile (BMV) land, consistent with national policy, based on the available data at the time of the initial site evaluation, which was the Natural England Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) maps. This approach has been considered as both satisfactory and proportionate by Examining Authorities and the Secretary of State in relation to numerous made solar DCOs.</p> <p>With regard to the cumulative effect of solar development on agricultural land within Breckland and the wider Norfolk area, the assessment of likely cumulative effects is provided in Section 11.11 of ES Chapter 11: Soils and Agriculture [AS-018]. While there are some significant residual adverse impacts anticipated for Soil and Agriculture, it is considered that the wider benefits of the Scheme as CNP infrastructure, delivery of a significant level of low carbon energy generation and biodiversity net gain, and the provision of permissive paths outweigh the adverse residual effects of the Scheme.</p> <p>BMV land has been given a minor negative weight in the planning balance, while cumulative effects have been afforded neutral weight. Both of these matters have been given sufficient weight in the overall planning balance, and the Applicant's conclusion remains that the adverse impacts are clearly outweighed by the substantial public benefits that would arise from the Scheme.</p>
Noise and Vibration		
BC49	<p>14.6 In its Relevant Representations, the Council noted that noise and vibration effects are primarily associated with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construction activity, which has the potential to affect nearby receptors in the short term; and Operational plant and equipment, which may give rise to ongoing noise emissions. 	<p>The noise assessment is presented in ES Chapter 10: Noise and Vibration [APP-059], which takes into consideration the rural acoustic character of the area and the existing background levels. Details of the background noise survey are presented in ES Appendix 10.2: Noise Survey [APP-165], including the range of measured levels at multiple locations and representative background levels for the assessment.</p> <p>Construction and operational effects have been assessed and mitigation measures, such as acoustic barriers, separation distances, restricted construction hours, temporary noise barriers, etc. have been</p>



Reference	Comments	Applicant's Response
	<p>14.7 The Council recognises that the Site is located within a predominantly rural area, where existing background noise levels are likely to be relatively low and the environment generally tranquil in character.</p>	<p>outlined where applicable. Residual noise effects for construction and operation of the Scheme have been concluded as not significant. The mitigation measures have been set out in the oCEMP [APP/7.6.2] and oOEMP [APP/7.8.2], which will be implemented as part of the detailed Construction Environmental Management Plan and Operational Environmental Management Plan respectively (as secured via DCO requirements).</p>
BC50	<p>14.8 The Council notes that construction activities associated with the Proposed Development have the potential to result in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporary increases in noise levels, particularly from plant, machinery and vehicle movements; and • Disturbance to nearby receptors, including residential properties and users of the local area. <p>14.9 The Council considers that such impacts are typically short term and reversible, however, require appropriate management and control measures.</p>	<p>ES Chapter 10: Noise and Vibration [APP-059] include assessment of effects from construction activity on residential receptors and Public Rights of Way (PRoW). The chapter outlines good practice measures and additional mitigation such as, temporary localised screening during piling works, minimum separation buffers, restricted working hours, and notification procedures where necessary. Embedded and additional mitigation including best practice measures to be implemented have been set out in the oCEMP [APP/7.6.2], which will be implemented as part of the detailed CEMP (as secured via a DCO requirement).</p>
BC51	<p>14.10 The Council notes that the operational phase of the Proposed Development would introduce fixed sources of noise, including plant associated with substations and energy storage infrastructure.</p> <p>14.11 The Council considers that the acceptability of operational noise will depend on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • achieving appropriate site-specific noise limits at sensitive receptors; and • ensuring that the development does not give rise to unacceptable impacts in a rural context, where background noise levels are low. 	<p>The noise assessment presented in ES Chapter 10: Noise and Vibration [APP-059] adopts site-specific noise limits relevant to the existing background and rural context. Assessment of operational noise has been undertaken against these limits to avoid significant adverse impacts, the design of the Scheme evolved (through strategic placement of BESS and substations compound) to minimise impacts as much as reasonably practicable and mitigation measures such as equipment placement and acoustic barriers have been detailed where required to achieve the relevant noise limits at receptors and PRoW. The assessment shows residual effects from operational noise to be not significant at all receptors and PRoW.</p> <p>The embedded and additional mitigation measures have been set out in the oOEMP [APP/7.8.2], which be implemented as part of the detailed Operational Environmental Management Plan (as secured via a DCO requirement).</p>
BC52	<p>14.13 The Council notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Health has considered the methodology, predicted impacts and proposed mitigation measures; and • No substantive concerns have been raised, subject to the implementation of appropriate controls. 	<p>The Applicant welcomes this comment.</p>
BC53	<p>14.14 The Council expects that, if development consent is granted, appropriate mitigation and controls would be secured through the DCO, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP), to control and manage construction noise and vibration; and • The imposition of appropriate operational noise limits and any necessary monitoring requirements, to ensure that noise levels at sensitive receptors remain acceptable. <p>14.15 The Council considers that these measures are necessary to ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction impacts remain temporary and appropriately managed; and 	<p>The Applicant agrees with this comment and notes that appropriate mitigation has been put in place and will be secured through the draft DCO [APP/3.1.2].</p> <p>ES Chapter 10: Noise and Vibration [APP-059] outlines the mitigation measures required to achieve the relevant noise control for construction and operational noise. These have also been set out in the oCEMP [APP/7.6.2] and oOEMP [APP/7.8.2] and will be implemented as part of the detailed Construction Environmental Management Plan and Operational Environmental Management Plan respectively (as secured via DCO requirements).</p> <p>Section 4.6 of the oOEMP [APP/7.8.2] outlines noise monitoring requirements as part of the complaint procedure which will be managed in consultation with Breckland Council. A detailed monitoring procedure will be provided in the detailed Operational Environmental Management Plan, which in turn is secured as a DCO requirement.</p>



Reference	Comments	Applicant's Response
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operational noise does not give rise to unacceptable impacts, particularly having regard to the rural character and sensitivity of the surrounding area. 	
BC54	<p>14.16 Based on the information available, and in the absence of any substantive concerns raised in its Relevant Representations, the Council considers that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The scope of the Applicant's assessment is appropriate to the scale and nature of the Proposed Development; The distinction between construction and operational impacts is clearly set out; and The reliance on standard mitigation and control measures is consistent with similar forms of development. 	<p>The Applicant welcomes this comment.</p>
BC55	<p>14.17 However, the Council emphasises:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The effectiveness of mitigation will depend on the detailed design and implementation of control measures; and Particular regard should be had to the rural character of the area, where receptors may be more sensitive to changes in noise environment. 	<p>The oCEMP [APP/7.6.2] and oOEMP [APP/7.8.2] detail the mitigation measures to be implemented and secured in the detailed Construction Environmental Management Plan and Operational Environmental Management Plan (as secured via DCO requirements). The oOEMP [APP/7.8.2] also notes that there can be variations in noise emissions or the final design and states that noise emitting plant will be selected with consideration of noise emissions. Furthermore, the Applicant commits that noise at sensitive receptors will be no higher than the levels presented in the ES Chapter 10: Noise and Vibration [APP-059].</p> <p>The noise assessment presented in ES Chapter 10: Noise and Vibration [APP-059] and ES Appendix 10.3: Construction and Noise Modelling [APP-166] take into consideration the tranquil character of the area and accounts for it by adopting appropriate background and low absolute level criteria for the assessment, which is also based on worst-case predictions (all equipment operating at 100% capacity), conservative assumptions (no shielding by machine body modelled), and takes in to account the potential character of the noise.</p>
BC56	<p>14.18 The Council also notes that the assessment identifies the potential for cumulative operational noise effects at certain receptors, which requires further consideration through the Examination and appropriate controls.</p>	<p>ES Chapter 10: Noise and Vibration [APP-059] identifies potential cumulative operational effects at 'The Off Barn' in combination with High Grove Solar Farm. Indicative effects have been presented; however, the High Grove Solar Farm final development details are not known at this time and, as such, the Applicant cannot assess exact cumulative effects without High Grove Solar Farm's final design and layout. Given the respective stages of applications, the onus lies with High Grove Solar Farm (currently in pre-application stage) to include a cumulative noise assessment and outline additional mitigation, where necessary, to achieve non-significant effects cumulatively including the Scheme. It is also 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 outlined in Paragraph 2.5.4 in oCEMP [APP/7.6.2]).</p>
BC57	<p>14.19 The Council Recognises that noise and vibration effects are likely to be localised and manageable, subject to appropriate controls, and does not raise an objection in principle in respect of this topic.</p> <p>14.20 The Council takes into account the advice of its internal Environmental Health Officers in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The adequacy of the assessment; and 	<p>The Applicant welcomes this comment.</p>



Reference	Comments	Applicant's Response
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The acceptability of predicted impacts. <p>14.21 Subject to the agreement and implementation of appropriate construction and operational controls, the Council considers that the Proposed Development would not give rise to unacceptable noise and vibration impacts, including having regard to the rural character and sensitivity of the surrounding area.</p>	
Socio-Economic Effects		
BC58	<p>15.5 In its Relevant Representations, the Council recognised that the Proposed Development has the potential to deliver:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Short-term employment opportunities during the construction phase; and Some level of ongoing economic activity associated with the operation and maintenance of the Scheme. <p>15.6 The Council acknowledges that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Such benefits are typical of large-scale infrastructure projects; and They may contribute to the local and regional economy, including through supply chains and expenditure. 	The Applicant welcomes this comment.
BC59	<p>15.7 The Council notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construction employment is temporary in nature; and Operational employment associated with solar development is typically limited in scale <p>15.8 The Council therefore considers that whilst the Scheme would deliver economic benefits, these are likely to be modest at a local level, particularly over the longer term.</p>	The Applicant welcomes this comment.
BC60	<p>15.9 The Council further notes that the Site is located within a predominantly rural area, where land is currently uses for agricultural purposes and the rural economy is shaped by agriculture and the character of the wider landscape.</p> <p>15.10 The Council considers that the Proposed Development represents a change in land use, and that the implications of this change should be considered alongside the wider planning issues identified elsewhere in this Report.</p>	The Applicant notes this comment and has responded to the points raised in the corresponding rows within this document.
BC61	<p>15.11 Consistent with the Council's Relevant Representations, the Council highlights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Proposed Development forms part of a wider pattern of large scale solar and energy infrastructure development across Breckland and the wider Norfolk area; and The cumulative effects of such development may give rise to broader changes in the rural environment and economy. 	The assessment of cumulative effects with respect to socio-economic impacts has been assessed in Section 14.11 of ES Chapter 14: Socio-Economics [APP-063] . The Applicant has responded to this point previously at NCC1 and NCC2 of the Applicant's Response to Relevant Representations [REP1-067] .



Reference	Comments	Applicant's Response
	<p>15.12 The Council considers that socio-economic effects should therefore be understood in the context of this wider pattern of development, rather than assessed solely on a scheme-by-scheme basis.</p>	
BC62	<p>15.13 The Council considers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Applicant has appropriately identified the main economic effects of the Proposed Development, including employment and investment; and The distinction between construction and operational effects is clearly set out. <p>15.14 However, the Council notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The local economic benefits are likely to be limited in scale and duration, particularly during the operational phase; and The assessment should be considered alongside the wider land use and cumulative issues identified elsewhere in this Report. 	<p>15.13 – the Applicant welcomes this comment.</p> <p>15.14 – As identified within ES Chapter 14: Socio-Economics [APP-063], the Scheme will support limited number of operational employment opportunities. However, measures to promote employment and skill development during the operational phase are set out in the outline Employment, Skills and Supply Chain Strategy (oESSCS) [APP-195]. The Applicant refers to its response to BC60 above with respect to wider land use and cumulative assessment.</p>
BC63	<p>15.15 In its Relevant Representations, the Council made requests in relation to a community benefit fund and the inclusion of such measures within a Commitments Register.</p> <p>15.16 Community benefit funds and similar measures may provide local benefits to communities affected by the Proposed Development; however, the Council recognises that such measures are not material planning considerations and must not influence the determination of the application.</p> <p>15.17 Notwithstanding this, the Council considers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community benefit provisions are of local interest and importance, reflecting the scale of the Proposed Development and its relationship with nearby communities; and The inclusion of such measures within a Commitments Register would provide transparency as to the Applicant's intentions, albeit outside the planning balance. 	<p>The Applicant is committed to ensuring that communities benefit from the Scheme. As set out in the Planning Statement [REP1-012], the Applicant has committed to providing a Community Benefit Fund. 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. The Community Benefit Fund 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). Therefore, it is not appropriate to include the Community Benefit Fund in the Commitments Register – though, to reiterate, the Applicant is committed to providing it.</p>
BC64	<p>15.18 The Council acknowledges that the Proposed Development would deliver economic benefits, particularly during construction, however, considers that these benefits are likely to be temporary and relatively limited at the local level, particularly in the longer term.</p> <p>15.19 The Council further considers that socio-economic effects should be considered in the context of the change in land use and the cumulative pattern of solar development across Breckland and the wider Norfolk area.</p> <p>15.20 These matters should be taken into account in the overall planning balance.</p>	<p>15.18 – the Applicant refers to its response to BC61 above.</p> <p>15.19 – the assessment of cumulative effects with respect to socio-economic impacts has been assessed in Section 14.11 of ES Chapter 14: Socio-Economics [APP-063].</p> <p>15.20 – The Applicant has applied the planning balance in the Planning Statement [REP1-012] and considers that the identified substantial benefits of the Scheme outweigh the residual harms that would arise.</p>
Traffic and Transport		
BC65	<p>16.7 In its Relevant Representations, the Council confirmed that it defers to the advice of the relevant highway authorities, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Norfolk County Council (Local Highway Authority); 	<p>The Applicant welcomes the comment and acknowledges that Breckland Council defer to NCC and National Highways on matters of transport and access. The responses to NCC are considered within this document, the Applicant's Response to Written Representations and other Deadline 1</p>



Reference	Comments	Applicant's Response
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Highways, in respect of the Strategic Road Network; and Norfolk County Council Public Rights of Way (PRoW) team, in respect of impacts on the Public Rights of Way network. <p>16.8 These bodies are responsible for assessing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The adequacy of the Transport Assessment; The suitability of the proposed access arrangements; Impacts on the local and strategic highway network; and Effects on the Public Rights of Way network, including any required diversions, closures or mitigation. 	<p>Submissions [APP/8.13] and the responses to National Highways are within Applicant's Response to Relevant Representations [REP1-067].</p>
BC66	<p>16.9 The Council notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Traffic impacts are primarily associated with the construction phase; inclusive of increases in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Heavy Goods Vehicle (HGV) movements; and staff and contractor traffic. <p>16.10 The Council recognises that such impacts are temporary in nature but may give rise to localised effects particularly on rural road, nearby settlements and the wider highway network.</p>	<p>The Applicant agrees with this comment.</p>
BC67	<p>16.11 The Council notes that the Applicant has identified proposed access routes and measures to manage construction traffic.</p> <p>16.12 The Council considers that the acceptability of these arrangements is a matter for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Local Highway Authority, and National Highways, where the Strategic Road Network is affected. 	<p>The routing and mitigation measures for construction traffic are included within the outline Construction Traffic Management Plan (oCTMP) [REP1-052].</p> <p>The Applicant is in discussion with both NCC and NH to reach agreement on the transport aspects of the Scheme. A Statement of Common Ground has been prepared with both NCC (SoCG with Norfolk County Council [REP1-019]) and NH (SoCG with National Highways [REP1-024]) to reach agreement on all transport matters.</p>
BC68	<p>16.13 The Council notes that the Site is crossed by, or located in proximity to, elements of the Public Rights of Way network, which are important for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recreational use; and Appreciation of the rural landscape. <p>16.14 The Council considers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construction activities may give rise to temporary disruption, including closures or diversions; and The acceptability of such impacts, and the need for any mitigation, is a matter for the NCC Public Rights of Way team. 	<p>The Applicant agrees with this comment and has responded accordingly above.</p>
BC69	<p>16.15 The Council confirms that it defers to the advice of Norfolk County Council, including both the Local Highway Authority and Public Rights of Way teams, and National Highways in respect of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The adequacy of the Transport Assessment; The acceptability of traffic impacts; 	<p>The Applicant makes note of this comment and confirms that discussions are underway with NCC in reaching agreement on the transport aspects of the Scheme via the SoCG with Norfolk County Council [REP1-019]. It is anticipated that all transport matters will be resolved during examination.</p>



Reference	Comments	Applicant's Response
BC70	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impacts on the Public Rights of Way network; and The need for any mitigation measures. <p>16.16 The Council expects that, if development consent is granted, appropriate controls would be secured through the DCO, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP), to manage: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> routing of traffic timing of deliveries traffic impacts on local roads Measures to manage impacts on Public Rights of Way, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> temporary closures or diversions; maintenance of safe access where possible; and restoration of routes following construction. Measures to ensure the safe and efficient operation of the highway network during construction. <p>16.17 The Council considers that these measures are necessary to ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The safe and efficient operation of the highway network; and The protection of the amenity and usability of the Public Rights of Way network. 	<p>The oCTMP [REP1-052] details mitigation in respect of the construction traffic impacts and includes details on the routing, timing and any required mitigation on the local highway network.</p> <p>The outline Public Right of Way and Permissive Path Management Plan (oPRoWPPMP) [APP-192] also details mitigation in respect of the impacts on the PRow network and includes details on the need for temporary closures, maintenance of safe access and need for restoration post construction.</p>
BC71	<p>16.18 Based on the information available, and in the absence of any unresolved concerns raised in its Relevant Representations, the Council considers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The scope of the Applicant's traffic and transport assessment is proportionate to the nature and scale of the Proposed Development; and The assessment appropriately focuses on the construction phase, where impacts are most likely to arise. <p>16.19 The Council considers that the adequacy and acceptability of the assessment are matters that should be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determined having regard to the technical advice of the relevant highway authorities; and Confirmed through the Examination process. 	<p>The Applicant welcomes this comment.</p>
BC72	<p>16.20 The Council recognises that traffic and transport impacts are likely to be temporary and primarily associated with the construction phase and does not raise an objection in principle in respect of this topic.</p> <p>16.21 The Council defers to the advice of the following highway authorities in respect of the assessment of impacts and the identification of any necessary mitigation measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Norfolk County Council (Local Highway Authority and Public Rights of Way Team); and 	<p>The Applicant makes note of this comment and will continue to collaborate via the respective Statements of Common Ground with both NCC (SoCG with Norfolk County Council [REP1-019]) and NH (SoCG with National Highways [REP1-024]) during examination to reach agreement on all transport matters.</p> <p>The oCTMP [REP1-052] details mitigation in respect of the construction traffic impacts and ensures that the Scheme does not give rise to unacceptable transport impacts.</p>



Reference	Comments	Applicant's Response
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Highways, <p>16.22 Subject to the agreement and implementation of appropriate traffic management measures, including a Construction Traffic Management Plan, the Council considers that the Proposed Development would not give rise to unacceptable traffic and transport impacts.</p>	
Resource and Waste Management		
BC73	<p>17.6 The Council notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effects are largely confined to the construction phase; and Such effects are typically temporary and capable of being effectively managed through established construction practices. 	The Applicant agrees with this comment.
BC74	<p>17.7 The Council notes that resource use and waste management are matters on which advice is provided by relevant bodies, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Environment Agency, in respect of waste management and environmental protection; and Norfolk County Council, in its role as the Waste Planning Authority. <p>17.8 The Council expects that appropriate controls would be secured through the DCO, if granted, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP); and Measures to ensure the appropriate handling, storage, reuse and disposal of materials and waste. <p>17.9 The Council considers that, subject to such controls, impacts relating to resource use and waste can be adequately mitigated.</p>	<p>The Applicant makes note of this comment and acknowledges that all matters relating to waste management have been now agreed with NCC under the relevant Statement of Common Ground (SoCG with Norfolk County Council [REP1-019]) and is in discussion with the Environment Agency (SoCG with Environment Agency [REP1-020]) to reach agreement on waste related matters.</p> <p>Measures to ensure the appropriate handling, storage, reuse and disposal of materials and waste will be secured through the detailed Construction Environment Management Plan which is secured under Requirement 13 of Schedule 2 of the draft DCO [APP/3.1.2] and the Site Waste Management Plan which is secured under Requirement 19 of Schedule 2 of the draft DCO [APP/3.1.2].</p>
BC75	<p>17.10 The Council has no objection in principle in respect of resource use and waste management; and considers that effects are localised, temporary and manageable, subject to appropriate controls secured through the DCO.</p> <p>17.11 Appropriate weight should be given to the advice of the Environment Agency, Norfolk County Council and any other relevant consultees in determining this matter.</p>	The Applicant welcomes this comment and has responded above in relation to other organisations.
Water Quality and Water Resources		
BC76	<p>18.5 The Council notes that potential effects arise primarily during the construction phase, including risks associated with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Surface water runoff; and Accidental pollution incidents. <p>18.6 The Council further notes that these matters are closely related to those addressed within the Flood Risk section (Section 10) of this Report.</p>	The Applicant agrees with this comment.
BC77	<p>18.7 The Council confirms that it relies on the advice of the Environment Agency and other relevant consultees in respect of:</p>	The Applicant notes this comment.



Reference	Comments	Applicant's Response
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The adequacy of the assessment; and The acceptability of impacts on water quality and resources. <p>18.8 The Council expects that appropriate mitigation would be secured through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP); and Measures to prevent pollution and protect surface water and groundwater. 	<p>ES Chapter 12: Water Recourses [APP/6.2.1] has been updated at Deadline 2 to validate the groundwater levels following receipt of data from the Environment Agency, and the conclusions of the chapter remain valid.</p> <p>Measures to limit the potential for effects on the water environment are outlined in the oCEMP [APP/7.6.2].</p>
BC78	<p>18.9 The Council does not raise an objection in principle in respect of water quality and water resources; and considers that effects can be appropriately managed, subject to the implementation of suitable mitigation and controls.</p> <p>18.10 Appropriate weight should be given to the advice of the Environment Agency and any other relevant consultees in determining this matter.</p>	<p>The Applicant welcomes this comment and has responded above in relation to the Environment Agency.</p>
Cumulative Effects		
BC79	<p>19.5 In its Relevant Representations, the Council highlighted that the Proposed Development forms part of a wider pattern of large scale solar and energy infrastructure development across Breckland and the wider Norfolk area.</p> <p>19.6 The Council considers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cumulative effects should be understood not only in terms of individual receptor impacts, but also in relation to broader spatial and strategic change; and The combined effect of multiple large-scale schemes has the potential to result in a progressive change in the character of the rural environment across Breckland and the wider Norfolk area. 	<p>The Applicant has responded to matters regarding the cumulative assessment methodology within Section 2.2 of Applicant's Response to Relevant Representations [REP1-067], which sets out that the assessment of cumulative effects has been undertaken in line with the requirements of the EIA Regulations and the Planning Inspectorate's Advice Note on Cumulative Effects Assessment.</p> <p>However, with specific reference to landscape and visual, the Applicant notes that ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual [AS-016] outlines the approach and details that cumulative effects may arise as a result of effects associated with the Scheme combining with effects associated with other developments. The Scheme has been assessed strategically in the context of existing (as part of the baseline context) and proposed solar and energy infrastructure schemes, including NSIP scale projects Norfolk wide. Only one development, High Grove Solar, has the potential to result in significant cumulative effects on Landscape and Visual within the associated LVIA Study Area.</p> <p>Section 6.11 undertook a Cumulative Effects Assessment which included High Grove Solar Farm which concluded that there would be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> significant adverse visual effects during construction for receptors within Visual Receptor Group 4: Great Palgrave and Little Palgrave; and significant adverse landscape effects during construction and operation on the E6 North Pickenham Plateau LCA.
BC80	<p>19.7 The Council further notes that one of the developments contributing to the cumulative context, High Grove Solar Farm, is at an early stage in the development process and not yet subject to detailed or fixed design.</p> <p>19.8 The Council considers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This creates a significant degree of uncertainty in the assessment of cumulative effects, as the precise layout, scale and configuration of such schemes is not yet known; and As a result, the ability to fully understand the combined effects of multiple large-scale solar developments across the area is inherently constrained at this stage. 	<p>The Applicant has responded to matters regarding the cumulative assessment methodology within Section 2.2 of Applicant's Response to Relevant Representations [REP1-067], which sets out that the assessment of cumulative effects has been undertaken in line with the requirements of the EIA Regulations and the Planning Inspectorate's Advice Note on Cumulative Effects Assessment.</p> <p>The Planning Inspectorate's Advice Note on Cumulative Effects Assessment recognises that there will be varying levels detail available depending on the stage of any cumulative development and that the cumulative assessment should be undertaken at a level of detail proportionate to the information available.</p> <p>The Applicant would also note that the High Grove Solar Farm will be required to undertake a comprehensive cumulative impact assessment as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment to support their DCO Application. The Environmental Statement accompanying the High Grove DCO application will present the cumulative assessment based upon the detail set out in the Scheme's</p>



Reference	Comments	Applicant's Response
		DCO Application and the detail of the High Grove Solar Farm, along with any further mitigation measures if required.
BC81	<p>19.9 Drawing together the matters addressed in the preceding sections of this Report, the Council identifies the following key areas of cumulative consideration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landscape and visual character: The potential for the incremental introduction of solar development to give rise to a cumulative change in landscape character, particularly within a predominantly rural and agricultural context and the sequential impact on those travelling through the landscape • Land use and agricultural land: The potential for a combined reduction in land available for agricultural production, and a longer-term shift in land use across the district and the wider Norfolk area. • Heritage setting: The extent to which cumulative development may affect the wider setting of heritage assets, including those located within neighbouring authority areas. • Overall rural character: The potential for a perception of increasing industrialisation of the countryside, arising from the concentration of large-scale infrastructure. <p>19.10 The Council considers that, whilst each scheme may be acceptable in isolation, the combined effect of multiple developments may give rise to a materially different environmental context.</p>	<p>The Applicant has responded to matters regarding the cumulative assessment methodology within Section 2.2 of Applicant's Response to Relevant Representations [REP1-067], which sets out that the assessment of cumulative effects has been undertaken in line with the requirements of the EIA Regulations and the Planning Inspectorate's Advice Note on Cumulative Effects Assessment, which assesses the cumulative impacts on Landscape and Visual Character (including rural character), land use and agricultural land and heritage setting.</p>
BC82	<p>19.11 The Council recognises that the applicant has undertaken a cumulative effects assessment. However, it is considered that the wider pattern and concentration of solar development within Breckland and the wider Norfolk area is a matter of particular importance.</p>	<p>The Applicant has responded to matters regarding the cumulative assessment methodology within Section 2.2 of Applicant's Response to Relevant Representations [REP1-067], which sets out that the assessment of cumulative effects has been undertaken in line with the requirements of the EIA Regulations and the Planning Inspectorate's Advice Note on Cumulative Effects Assessment.</p>
BC83	<p>19.12 The Council also considers that the evolving and uncertain nature of other major solar proposals within the area, including High Grove Solar Farm, means that cumulative effects are not fully fixed at this stage, and this uncertainty should be taken into account in the overall planning balance.</p>	<p>The Applicant notes that the Planning Inspectorate's Advice Note on Cumulative Effects Assessment recognises that there will be varying levels of detail available depending on the stage of any cumulative development and that the cumulative assessment should be undertaken at a level of detail proportionate to the information available.</p> <p>The Applicant notes that at this stage the cumulative effects are not fully fixed, and has therefore addressed them as 'likely' or 'anticipated' throughout the documents associated with the Scheme. This is accounted for in the planning balance, which includes a section on the 'likely cumulative effects' in Section 9.4 of the Planning Statement [REP1-012].</p> <p>High Grove Solar Farm will be required to undertake a comprehensive cumulative impact assessment as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment to support their DCO Application. The Environmental Statement accompanying the High Grove DCO application will present the cumulative assessment based upon the detail set out in the Scheme's DCO Application and the detail of the High Grove Solar Farm, along with any further mitigation measures if required.</p>
BC84	<p>19.13 The Council therefore considers that cumulative effects represent a significant material consideration, particularly in relation to:</p>	<p>ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual [AS-016] outlines the approach and details that cumulative effects may arise as a result of effects associated with the Scheme combining with effects associated with other developments. The Scheme has been assessed strategically in the context of existing (as</p>



Reference	Comments	Applicant's Response
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> landscape character; land use; and the overall rural environment. <p>19.14 These effects should be given appropriate weight in the overall planning balance, having regard to the scale and distribution of solar development across the area.</p>	<p>part of the baseline context) and proposed solar and energy infrastructure schemes, including NSIP scale projects Norfolk wide. Only one development, High Grove Solar, has the potential to result in significant cumulative effects on Landscape and Visual within the associated LVIA Study Area.</p> <p>Section 6.11 undertook a Cumulative Effects Assessment, which considered landscape character, land use and the rural environment. This assessment included High Grove Solar Farm which concluded that there would be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> significant adverse visual effects during construction for receptors within Visual Receptor Group 4: Great Palgrave and Little Palgrave; and significant adverse landscape effects during construction and operation on the E6 North Pickenham Plateau LCA. <p>Section 8.3 of the Planning Statement [REP1-012] sets out that landscape and visual impacts should be afforded moderate negative weight in the planning balance, which the Applicant has deemed appropriate and therefore the conclusion remains that the adverse impacts are clearly outweighed by the substantial public benefits that would arise from the Scheme.</p>
Design		
BC85	<p>20.8 The Applicant identifies that the design has evolved through the pre-application process in response to consultee feedback, including amendments to the layout and reduction of potential impacts in sensitive areas. However, whilst mitigation planting may screen the solar panels, the Council maintains strong concerns that the scheme would still result in the loss of the long and open views from some locations.</p>	<p>The Applicant welcomes the acknowledgement that the design has evolved through the pre-application process in response to consultee feedback, including amendments to the layout and reduction of potential impacts in sensitive areas.</p> <p>The potentially adverse effects identified within ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual [AS-016] take account of various mitigation measures embedded within the Scheme, which were designed to limit potentially adverse effects upon the landscape and visual amenity. These mitigation measures are secured by the Design Principles, Parameters and Commitments [APP/5.8.2], the spatial extents shown on the Works Plan [APP-009], the oOEMP [APP/7.8.2] and the oLEMP [REP1-060]. This design approach is embedded within the Applicant's Global Design Principle 2 and more specifically Project Principles 2.5 "respect setting of heritage assets along the Nar Valley", 2.8 "consider experience of people travelling along adjacent roads, including the A1065, South Acre Road, River Road and Narford Lane" and 2.9 "consider experience of people using the PRow".</p> <p>The new planting proposed as part of the mitigation measures soften views of the Scheme for visual receptors but also aims towards reinstatement of the enclosed character of the droves, through new hedgerow and tree planting and strict management regimes following the construction phase. Inevitably, the introduction of the Scheme within an undeveloped greenfield landscape would lead to the partial loss of some mid to longer distance views across the Site. However, the nature of such is limited to PRow users within the Site only.</p> <p>The Applicant notes that as part of the design evolution, Solar PV Arrays were removed from Field 35 to avoid the loss of long and open views from some locations such as those from PRow South Acre RB7, looking across the Nar Valley northwards, which are retained as part of the Scheme.</p> <p>Mitigation measures have included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retention of the majority of existing landscape features within and around the boundaries of the Site, namely mature hedgerows and tree cover which contribute to the landscape character of the local context. These landscape features serve to restrict, filter and enclose visibility within the Site and study area south of Bartholomew's Hills Plantation. There is some loss of vegetation proposed as part of the Scheme to allow for the Grid Connection Infrastructure, Site and internal field access



Reference	Comments	Applicant's Response
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offset and buffering of the Scheme with new, woodland, hedgerow and tree planting to mitigate potential views from the nearby PRow, roads and residential dwellings both within and in close proximity to the Site • In addition to the establishment of new hedgerow and hedgerow trees, the embedded mitigation also includes the retention, gapping up and enhancement of existing hedgerow within the Site. New planting species would be native, locally prevalent and include a mixture of deciduous and evergreen species to provide year-round screening. Alongside the existing hedgerow and trees within the Site's context, the gapping up of hedgerow with native trees and whips would provide visual screening of the Scheme from visual receptors within the wider study area, and from PRow and droves within the Site itself • The long-term management and maintenance of existing and new vegetation is an embedded mitigation measure which ensures vegetation would be actively managed in the long term, as secured and detailed within the oLEMP [REP1-060]. The prescribed maintenance height of hedgerow at 3m is an embedded mitigation measure which aims to screen views towards taller elements of the Scheme from nearby PRow. The active management and maintenance of trees and woodland within the Order limits, both newly planted and existing, aims to ensure they not only survive but reach maturity and establishment in the medium and long term durations. In turn, these landscape features are primary mechanisms for filtering and screening views towards the Scheme from nearby PRow, roads and residential dwellings • Setting back the Scheme from key landscape features within and adjacent to the Site, such as droves, trees, hedgerow and woodland. The minimum offsets/buffers from existing landscape features, are outlined fully in ES Chapter 5: The Scheme [REP1-032]. The Scheme would be offset from existing PRow by a minimum of 15m, to respect the amenity and experience for PRow users along existing routes and allow for the sowing of extensive areas of new grassland along the margins of the Scheme. New grassland/wildflower areas are also proposed to be sown underneath the Solar PV Arrays which would enhance biodiversity within the Site; and • As referred to within the oLEMP [REP1-060], 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 network. In addition to this, a number of new permissive routes are proposed, of approximately 3.5km in total, which would link to the existing PRow network within the study area to provide recreational benefits.
BC86	<p>20.9 The Council recognises:</p> <p>The design of the Proposed Development is influenced by its functional and technical requirements, including the need to accommodate solar infrastructure and grid connection;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The use of a parameter-based (Rochdale Envelope) approach is common for NSIPs; and • Design has an important role in mitigating environmental effects. 	<p>The Applicant welcomes and agrees with these confirmations.</p>
BC87	<p>20.10 The Council considers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The overall layout and design approach represent an appropriate starting point; however 	<p>The Applicant agrees with these comments and has included appropriate controls for further refinement at the detailed design stage within the management plans, which are secured within the draft DCO [APP/3.1.2].</p>



Reference	Comments	Applicant's Response
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There remains scope for further clarifications and refinement through detailed design, particularly in relation to the matters identified within this Report. 	
BC88	<p>20.11 The Council notes that key elements of the Proposed Development, including the Customer Substation, National Grid Substation and associated infrastructure, are not yet defined in detailed design terms and are instead controlled through maximum design parameters within the Draft DCO.</p> <p>20.12 The Council recognises that final design will be influenced by technical and operational requirements. However, the use of this approach introduces a degree of uncertainty in the scale, form and appearance of these elements at this stage.</p> <p>20.13 The Council considers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The detailed design of these elements will be an important factor in determining the extent of landscape, visual and heritage impacts; and It is therefore essential that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> appropriate design principles and controls are secured through the DCO; and sufficient flexibility is retained to enable refinement of siting, layout and screening to minimise impacts. 	<p>The Applicant refers to its response to BC86 above on these matters.</p>
BC89	<p>20.14 The Council considers that design plays a key role in mitigating the effects identified in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Landscape character and visual amenity; and The setting of heritage assets, including those within neighbouring authority areas. <p>20.15 In particular, the Council notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Layout, setbacks and screening are important in reducing the visibility of infrastructure; and Further refinement of the design could assist in minimising impacts on sensitive viewpoints and heritage receptors. 	<p>The potentially adverse effects identified within ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual [AS-016] take account of various mitigation measures embedded within the Scheme, which were designed to limit potentially adverse effects upon the landscape and visual amenity. These mitigation measures are secured by the Design Principles, Parameters and Commitments [APP/5.8.2], the spatial extents shown on the Works Plan [APP-009], the oOEMP [APP/7.8.2] and the oLEMP [REP1-060]. This design approach is embedded within the Applicant's Global Design Principle 2 and more specifically Project Principles 2.5 "respect setting of heritage assets along the Nar Valley", 2.8 "consider experience of people travelling along adjacent roads, including the A1065, South Acre Road, River Road and Narford Lane" and 2.9 "consider experience of people using the PRow".</p> <p>The considered layout, setbacks from receptors and the Order limits and screening i.e new planting have all been included as mitigation measures.</p> <p>Mitigation measures have included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retention of the majority of existing landscape features within and around the boundaries of the Site, namely mature hedgerows and tree cover which contribute to the landscape character of the local context. These landscape features serve to restrict, filter and enclose visibility within the Site and study area south of Bartholomew's Hills Plantation. There is some loss of vegetation proposed as part of the Scheme to allow for the Grid Connection Infrastructure, Site and internal field access Offset and buffering of the Scheme with new, woodland, hedgerow and tree planting to mitigate potential views from the nearby PRow, roads and residential dwellings both within and in close proximity to the Site In addition to the establishment of new hedgerow and hedgerow trees, the embedded mitigation also includes the retention, gapping up and enhancement of existing hedgerow within the Site. New planting species would be native, locally prevalent and include a mixture of deciduous and evergreen species to provide year-round screening. Alongside the existing hedgerow and trees within the Site's context, the gapping up of hedgerow with



Reference	Comments	Applicant's Response
		<p>native trees and whips would provide visual screening of the Scheme from visual receptors within the wider study area, and from PRow and droves within the Site itself</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The long-term management and maintenance of existing and new vegetation is an embedded mitigation measure which ensures vegetation would be actively managed in the long term, as secured and detailed within the oLEMP [REP1-060]. The prescribed maintenance height of hedgerow at 3m is an embedded mitigation measure which aims to screen views towards taller elements of the Scheme from nearby PRow. The active management and maintenance of trees and woodland within the Order limits, both newly planted and existing, aims to ensure they not only survive but reach maturity and establishment in the medium and long term durations. In turn, these landscape features are primary mechanisms for filtering and screening views towards the Scheme from nearby PRow, roads and residential dwellings Setting back the Scheme from key landscape features within and adjacent to the Site, such as droves, trees, hedgerow and woodland. The minimum offsets/buffers from existing landscape features, are outlined fully in ES Chapter 5: The Scheme [REP1-032]. The Scheme would be offset from existing PRow by a minimum of 15m, to respect the amenity and experience for PRow users along existing routes and allow for the sowing of extensive areas of new grassland along the margins of the Scheme. New grassland/wildflower areas are also proposed to be sown underneath the Solar PV Arrays which would enhance biodiversity within the Site; and As referred to within the oLEMP [REP1-060], 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 network. In addition to this, a number of new permissive routes are proposed, of approximately 3.5km in total, which would link to the existing PRow network within the study area to provide recreational benefits <p>With regard to minimising impacts on sensitive viewpoints, the assessment concludes that there would be no potential long term significant adverse visual effects upon visual receptors within the Site and wider LVIA study area.</p>
BC90	<p>20.16 The Council's Relevant Representations, including the advice of its Tree and Countryside Officer, identify specific arboricultural considerations relevant to the design of the Scheme.</p> <p>20.17 These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The importance of retaining existing trees and hedgerows as part of the site's landscape framework; and The need to minimise encroachment into root protection areas (RPAs) through appropriate layout and alignment of infrastructure and access tracks. <p>20.18 The Council considers that these matters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Represent design constraints which should inform the layout of development; and Are capable of being addressed through design refinement, including adjustments to array layout and access arrangements. 	<p>The Applicant notes the Council's comments and agrees that the retention of existing trees and hedgerows, and the minimisation of encroachment into RPAs, are important design considerations. These matters have been embedded as design principles within the Scheme, secured through the minimum offsets to existing landscape features set out in the Design Principles, Parameters and Commitments [APP/5.8.1] and oLEMP [REP1-060]. These offsets have informed the illustrative layout and will continue to be applied through detailed design, with internal access tracks following the alignment of existing agricultural tracks where practicable. A detailed Arboricultural Method Statement, based on post-DCO detailed design, will be produced prior to construction commencing and included within the detailed Construction Environmental Management Plan, secured via Requirement 13 of Schedule 2 of the draft DCO [APP/3.1.2].</p>



Reference	Comments	Applicant's Response
BC91	<p>20.19 The Council notes that elements of the Scheme design may also influence the overall environmental effects of the development, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction access routes; • Temporary works; and • Mitigation measures such as planting and bunding (where/if required). <p>20.20 The Council considers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The final form and extent of mitigation measures will be an important factor in determining the effectiveness of the Scheme in reducing impacts; and • These measures should be capable of being refined through detailed design and secured through the DCO. 	<p>The Applicant agrees with these comments and has included appropriate controls for further refinement at the detailed design stage within the management plans, such as the oCTMP [REP1-052] and the oLEMP [REP1-060], which are secured within the draft DCO [APP/3.1.2].</p>
BC92	<p>20.21 Given the parameter-based nature of the Scheme, the Council considers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is potential for further design evolution during the Examination and post consent stages; and • This should be directed toward: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ reducing impacts on landscape and heritage; ○ maximising the retention of existing natural features; and ○ ensuring that the Scheme responds appropriately to the local context. 	<p>The assessment within ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual [AS-016] concludes that there would be no potential long term significant adverse visual effects upon visual receptors within the Site and wider LVIA study area. With regard to landscape character, the assessment concludes that there would be potential long term significant adverse landscape effects upon LCA D1 Swaffham Heath and LCA E6 North Pickenham Plateau. However, these effects upon the LCAs are only judged to be significant where they fall within the Site. There are no potential long term significant adverse landscape effects beyond the Order limits.</p> <p>The potentially adverse effects identified within ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual [AS-016] take account of various mitigation measures embedded within the Scheme, which were designed to limit potentially adverse effects upon the landscape and visual amenity. These mitigation measures are secured by the Design Principles, Parameters and Commitments [APP/5.8.2], the spatial extents shown on the Works Plan [APP-009], the oOEMP [APP/7.8.2] and the oLEMP [REP1-060]. This design approach is embedded within the Applicant's Global Design Principle 2 and more specifically Project Principles 2.5 "respect setting of heritage assets along the Nar Valley", 2.8 "consider experience of people travelling along adjacent roads, including the A1065, South Acre Road, River Road and Narford Lane" and 2.9 "consider experience of people using the PRow".</p> <p>Mitigation measures have included the retention of existing natural features, extensive new planting and setbacks from receptors and the Order limits to ensure the Scheme responds to its local context. Other mitigation measures include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retention of the majority of existing landscape features within and around the boundaries of the Site, namely mature hedgerows and tree cover which contribute to the landscape character of the local context. These landscape features serve to restrict, filter and enclose visibility within the Site and study area south of Bartholomew's Hills Plantation. There is some loss of vegetation proposed as part of the Scheme to allow for the Grid Connection Infrastructure, Site and internal field access • Offset and buffering of the Scheme with new, woodland, hedgerow and tree planting to mitigate potential views from the nearby PRow, roads and residential dwellings both within and in close proximity to the Site • In addition to the establishment of new hedgerow and hedgerow trees, the embedded mitigation also includes the retention, gapping up and enhancement of existing hedgerow within the Site. New planting species would be native, locally prevalent and include a mixture of deciduous and evergreen species to provide year-round screening. Alongside the existing hedgerow and trees within the Site's context, the gapping up of hedgerow with



Reference	Comments	Applicant's Response
		<p>native trees and whips would provide visual screening of the Scheme from visual receptors within the wider study area, and from PRow and droves within the Site itself</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The long-term management and maintenance of existing and new vegetation is an embedded mitigation measure which ensures vegetation would be actively managed in the long term, as secured and detailed within the oLEMP [REP1-060]. The prescribed maintenance height of hedgerow at 3m is an embedded mitigation measure which aims to screen views towards taller elements of the Scheme from nearby PRow. The active management and maintenance of trees and woodland within the Order limits, both newly planted and existing, aims to ensure they not only survive but reach maturity and establishment in the medium and long term durations. In turn, these landscape features are primary mechanisms for filtering and screening views towards the Scheme from nearby PRow, roads and residential dwellings Setting back the Scheme from key landscape features within and adjacent to the Site, such as droves, trees, hedgerow and woodland. The minimum offsets/buffers from existing landscape features, are outlined fully in ES Chapter 5: The Scheme [REP1-032]. The Scheme would be offset from existing PRow by a minimum of 15m, to respect the amenity and experience for PRow users along existing routes and allow for the sowing of extensive areas of new grassland along the margins of the Scheme. New grassland/wildflower areas are also proposed to be sown underneath the Solar PV Arrays which would enhance biodiversity within the Site; and As referred to within the oLEMP [REP1-060], 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 network. In addition to this, a number of new permissive routes are proposed, of approximately 3.5km in total, which would link to the existing PRow network within the study area to provide recreational benefits. <p>The Applicant has included appropriate controls for further refinement at the detailed design stage within the management plans, which are secured within the draft DCO [APP/3.1.2].</p>
BC93	<p>20.22 The Council recognises that the design of the Proposed Development has evolved through the application process and incorporates a number of embedded mitigation measures. However, it is considered that there remains scope for further refinement, particularly in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the detailed design of substations and associated infrastructure; and the interaction between layout and environmental constraints, including arboriculture and landscape features. <p>20.23 The Council therefore considers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The detailed design of the Scheme will be an important factor in determining the extent of its impacts; and Appropriate controls and flexibility should be secured through the DCO to ensure that the final design represents an appropriate response to the existing landscape and local area. 	<p>The Applicant welcomes the acknowledgement that the design has evolved through the pre-application process.</p> <p>The Applicant has considered the environmental constraints and has committed to a number of design commitments and minimum offsets from environmental features as set out in the Design Principles, Parameters and Commitments [APP/5.8.2].</p> <p>The Applicant agrees with the conclusions in paragraph 20.23 and has included appropriate controls for further refinement at the detailed design stage within the management plans, which are secured within the draft DCO [APP/3.1.2].</p>
Summary and Overall Conclusions		
BC94	<p>Landscape and rural character</p> <p>21.5 The Council considers that the Proposed Development would result in a material change in the character of the Site and its surroundings, through the</p>	<p>The assessment within ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual [AS-016] concludes that there would be no potential long term significant adverse visual effects upon visual receptors within the Site and wider LVIA study area. With regard to landscape character, the assessment concludes that there</p>



Reference	Comments	Applicant's Response
	<p>introduction of large-scale solar infrastructure within a predominantly rural and agricultural landscape.</p> <p>21.6 Whilst such effects are likely to be focused on the site and the surrounding landscape in spatial extent, they are of particular importance in a district characterised by its rural landscape and settlement pattern.</p>	<p>would be potential long term significant adverse landscape effects upon LCA D1 Swaffham Heath and LCA E6 North Pickenham Plateau. However, these effects upon the LCAs are only judged to be significant where they fall within the Site. There are no potential long term significant adverse landscape effects beyond the Order limits.</p>
BC95	<p>Agricultural land and land use</p> <p>21.7 The Council notes that the Proposed Development would involve a substantial area of agricultural land being taken out of conventional agricultural production over the operational life of the Scheme.</p> <p>21.8 Whilst the use is described as reversible, the Council considers that this represents a long-term change in land use, and that the presence and extent of best and most versatile agricultural land is an important consideration, along with the cumulative loss of agricultural land across Norfolk.</p>	<p>The Site is currently used for arable production, pigs, poultry and sheep production, as well as agri-environmental land use cover. Continued agricultural use in the form of sheep grazing can continue in combination with solar energy production.</p> <p>There is no policy or initiative for agricultural land to be used in any particular manner. The effects on the local and wider economy and food production are set out in the ES Chapter 11: Soils and Agriculture [AS-018]. The Applicant has responded to the points regarding the reversibility of the Scheme and cumulative loss in the corresponding rows above.</p>
BC96	<p>Historic environment</p> <p>21.9 The Council has identified that potential effects on the setting of heritage assets, including those located within neighbouring authority areas, are a key consideration.</p> <p>21.10 The Council supports and aligns with the position of King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council and the advice of Historic England, considering that the assessment of harm, and the application of the planning balance in accordance with national policy, are matters requiring careful consideration during Examination.</p>	<p>ES Chapter 8: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [APP-057] presents a robust and proportionate assessment of the setting of heritage assets in their landscape context and clearly identifies levels of harm. The Applicant has responded to KLWN's comments on the historic environment in BKLWN1-9, 12 and 13 of this document and KLWN1-4 and KLWN2-5 of Applicant's Response to Written Representations and other Deadline 1 Submissions [APP/8.13] and to HE's comments in HE1 – HE50 of Applicant's Response to Written Representations and other Deadline 1 Submissions [APP/8.13].</p>
BC97	<p>Cumulative effects</p> <p>21.11 A central theme of the Council's assessment is the cumulative context of solar development within Breckland and the wider Norfolk area.</p> <p>21.12 The Council further notes that many of the schemes contributing to this cumulative context, including High Grove Solar Farm, are not yet subject to finalised design or consent. As such, there remains a degree of uncertainty as to their ultimate form and impacts.</p> <p>21.13 The Council considers that this limits the extent to which cumulative effects can be fully and definitively assessed at this stage and is therefore a relevant consideration for the ExA in determining the weight to be given to the cumulative assessment presented. This in itself is not a criticism of the assessment methodology but reflects the practical difficulty of assessing cumulative effects where vital details of cumulative schemes remain uncertain.</p> <p>21.14 The Council considers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Proposed Development forms part of a wider pattern of large-scale solar and energy infrastructure; and • Whilst individual schemes may be acceptable in isolation, their combined effect may result in a progressive and material change to the rural environment across Breckland and the wider Norfolk area. <p>21.15 This is a matter of particular importance in relation to:</p>	<p>The Applicant has responded to matters regarding the cumulative assessment methodology within Section 2.2 of Applicant's Response to Relevant Representations [REP1-067], which sets out that the assessment of cumulative effects has been undertaken in line with the requirements of the EIA Regulations and the Planning Inspectorate's Advice Note on Cumulative Effects Assessment.</p> <p>The Planning Inspectorate's Advice Note on Cumulative Effects Assessment recognises that there will be a varying levels detail available depending on the stage of any cumulative development and that the cumulative assessment should be undertaken at a level of detail proportionate to the information available.</p> <p>The Applicant would also note that the High Grove Solar Farm will be required to undertake a comprehensive cumulative impact assessment as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment to support their DCO Application. The Environmental Statement accompanying the High Grove DCO application will present the cumulative assessment based upon the detail set out in the Scheme's DCO Application and the detail of the High Grove Solar Farm, along with any further mitigation measures if required.</p> <p>The Applicant welcomes and agrees with Breckland Council's comments regarding the practical difficulty of assessing cumulative effects where vital details of cumulative schemes remain uncertain.</p>



Reference	Comments	Applicant's Response
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landscape character and visual amenity; • Land use; and • The overall perception of the countryside. 	
BC98	<p>Design certainty and grid connection infrastructure</p> <p>21.16 The Council has identified that a degree of uncertainty remains in relation to the layout and form of key elements of the Proposed Development, including grid connection infrastructure, the associated substations and the assessment of cumulative effects across the wider area. The Council also notes that uncertainty remains in relation to the form of mitigation required to address aviation and glint and glare impacts, and that this may have implications for the assessment of environmental effects.</p> <p>21.17 The Council notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Scheme is presented on a parameter based (Rochdale Envelope) basis, with detailed design to be confirmed post consent; and • The precise siting and configuration of certain infrastructure remains subject to ongoing discussion with National Grid Electricity Transmission. <p>21.18 The Council considers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This introduces a significant degree of uncertainty as to the final form of the development; and • Has implications for the assessment of environmental effects, including landscape and visual, heritage and land use impacts, which have been assessed on the basis of the parameters currently defined. <p>21.19 The Council therefore considers that the adequacy of the Environmental Statement in assessing a reasonable worst-case scenario, and the extent to which the Scheme is sufficiently defined to support robust decision making, are matters requiring careful consideration through the Examination. As such, the Council reserves the right to make additional representations should the scheme be amended as a result.</p>	<p>As acknowledged by Breckland Council, the Applicant has undertaken a reasonable worst-case assessment based upon the parameters (Rochdale Envelope) for the Grid Connection Infrastructure. The Rochdale Envelope Approach is a recognised approach to undertaking environmental impact assessment for schemes of this nature as set out The Planning Inspectorate's Advice Note Nine; Rochdale Envelope.</p> <p>At this stage of the Scheme, the Applicant considers that it is necessary to incorporate flexibility into the application for development consent. The Applicant has described the flexibility for Scheme, including the Grid Connection Infrastructure, within the written and spatial parameters which are set out within the Design Principles, Parameters and Commitments [APP/5.8.2] and the Works Plan [APP-009] both of which are secured through the draft DCO [APP/3.1.2]. The Applicant has submitted a series of management plans, which are secured by the draft DCO [APP/3.1.2], which includes further written prescription which will be used to guide the detailed design of the Scheme.</p> <p>The EIA process has informed the design process, as recognised by Breckland Council in their LIR, as well as informing the management measures set out within the management plans to reduce the effects of the Scheme. The Environmental Statement presents the assessment of the Scheme, based on these parameters and management prescriptions, and the Applicant is of the opinion that the parameters provide sufficient information to enable the likely significant effects on the environment to be assessed, and this has been presented within the Environmental Statement.</p> <p>The Applicant acknowledges Breckland Council's concerns regarding additional representations, and should the Scheme be amended, the Applicant will provide clarification as to whether the changes would result in any changes to the conclusions of the Environmental Statement.</p>
BC99	<p>Other matters</p> <p>21.20 The Council acknowledges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Proposed Development would deliver economic benefits, particularly during construction, although these are likely to be limited in scale and duration at the local level; and • Matters such as noise, traffic, flood risk and environmental protection can be appropriately managed through established controls, informed by consultee advice. <p>21.21 The Council also draws attention to its Relative Representations in relation to community benefits and commitments, which, whilst not material to the determination, are of local interest.</p> <p>21.22 The Council has reviewed the Draft DCO and associated provisions. The Council's detailed comments are set out within its Relevant Representations and are being actively progressed through the Examination,</p>	<p>The Applicant agrees with the comment in paragraph 21.20 and has responded to the comments in paragraphs 21.21 and 21.22 in the Applicant's Response to Relevant Representations [REP1-067].</p>



Reference	Comments	Applicant's Response
	<p>including via Statements of Common Ground where appropriate. The Council will continue to engage with the Applicant to ensure that appropriate controls and mitigation are secured through the DCO.</p>	
BC100	<p>21.23 The Council considers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Scheme would result in a material change to the character and use of land within the local area; and • The cumulative effects of solar development across Breckland and the wider Norfolk area are a matter of significant relevance to the overall planning balance. <p>21.24 In particular, the interaction between these matters and the scale and distribution of solar development across the area is central to the overall planning balance.</p> <p>21.25 The Council therefore considers that these matters should be given appropriate weight by the Examining Authority and the Secretary of State, alongside the benefits of the Scheme and the advice of relevant consultees.</p>	<p>The assessment within ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual [AS-016] concludes that there would be no potential long term significant adverse visual effects upon visual receptors within the Site and wider LVIA study area. With regard to landscape character, the assessment concludes that there would be potential long term significant adverse landscape effects upon LCA D1 Swaffham Heath and LCA E6 North Pickenham Plateau. However, these effects upon the LCAs are only judged to be significant where they fall within the Site. There are no potential long term significant adverse landscape effects beyond the Order limits.</p> <p>ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual [AS-016] outlines the approach and details that cumulative effects may arise as a result of effects associated with the Scheme combining with effects associated with other developments. The Scheme has been assessed strategically in the context of existing (as part of the baseline context) and proposed solar and energy infrastructure schemes, including NSIP scale projects Norfolk wide. Only one development, High Grove Solar, has the potential to result in significant cumulative effects on Landscape and Visual within the associated LVIA Study Area.</p> <p>Section 6.11 undertook a Cumulative Effects Assessment, this assessment included High Grove Solar Farm which concluded that there would be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • significant adverse visual effects during construction for receptors within Visual Receptor Group 4: Great Palgrave and Little Palgrave; and • significant adverse landscape effects during construction and operation on the E6 North Pickenham Plateau LCA. <p>Section 9.4 of the Planning Statement [REP1-012] gives neutral weight to both the material change to the character and use of land, and the cumulative effects.</p>
BC101	<p>21.26 The Council welcomes continued engagement with the following parties to address outstanding matters through the Examination, including through the development of Statements of Common Ground where appropriate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Applicant; • Statutory consultees; and • Neighbouring authorities. 	<p>The Cover Letter for Deadline 2 [APP/8.15] sets out that the Applicant has confirmed with Breckland Council that a draft SoCG will be submitted at Deadline 3. Continued engagement and a record of current progress on SoCGs with statutory consultees, Breckland Council, and neighbouring authorities is set out in the Statement of Commonality [REP1-018].</p>



3 Norfolk County Council's [\[REP1-094\]](#) LIR

Reference	Comments	Applicant's Response
Impacts of the Proposed Project – Strategic Comments		
NCC1	<p><i>Loss of best and most versatile (BMV) agricultural land</i></p> <p>6.2 NPS EN-1, paragraph 5.11.12 makes clear that applicants should seek to minimise impacts on the best and most versatile agricultural land (defined as land in grades 1, 2 and 3a of the agricultural land classification) and preferably use land in areas of poorer quality (grades 3b, 4 and 5) and EN-5. Paragraph 3.10.136 states that the secretary of state (SoS) should take into account the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land. The SoS should ensure that the applicant has put forward appropriate mitigation measures to minimise impacts on soils or soil resources.</p> <p>6.3 As set out in the relevant representation, NCC strongly opposes plans for the proposed Droves solar farm which sits on 840 ha of agricultural land to the north of Swaffham.</p>	<p>The Applicant considers that it has demonstrated each of these points through the design process. The Applicant has sought to minimise the amount of BMV land by adopting a sequential approach in its site selection and can justify its inclusion given the lack of a suitable alternative on brownfield land as set out in ES Chapter 4: Reasonable Alternatives and Design Evolution [APP-053] and the temporary nature of the Scheme as set out in ES Chapter 11: Soils and Agriculture [AS-018]. The Scheme falls under the CNP criteria, as set out by NPS EN-1 paragraphs 4.2.5 and 3.3.63, and would contribute to the UK's urgent requirement for the delivery of new renewable energy generation capacity and infrastructure.</p> <p>Sections 3.1 and 8.3 of the Planning Statement [REP1-012] set out that the Applicant has considered the policy requirements of the NPSs and NPPF to account for the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land. Paragraph 8.3.217 of the Planning Statement [REP1-012] sets out that for the impact on sheep business. The Applicant expects a beneficial effect for the duration of the operational phase given that sheep grazing can continue and expand under and around the PV panels.</p> <p>The Applicant concludes in ES Chapter 11: Soils and Agriculture [AS-018] that with the appropriate embedded mitigation measures in place as set out in Section 11.7 of this chapter, there are no significant adverse effects (in EIA terms) on soils and agriculture.</p>
NCC2	<p>6.4 In addition to this proposal there are three other major solar farms across Norfolk, which are of a large enough scale which means they will need to be determined as NSIPs. These projects include the neighbouring High Grove solar farm project (1,400 ha); the East Pye solar farm in South Norfolk (1,110 ha); and the Tasway solar farm in South Norfolk (1,100 ha). The latter scheme is understood to have been paused as it has not received a gate 2 grid connection offer from the National Energy Systems Operator (NESO).</p> <p>6.5 These NSIPs could therefore result in the cumulative loss of over 4,000 ha of agricultural land across Norfolk. The County Council has repeatedly expressed concerns regarding the loss of best and most versatile (BMV) agricultural land in the context of this and other solar projects. It is understood that over 54% of the land taken up by this proposed solar farm would be on BMV land (i.e. Grade 1; 2; and 3a).</p>	<p>The Applicant has responded to this point previously at NCC2 of the Applicant's Response to Relevant Representations [REP1-067].</p> <p>The Applicant understands also that there will be a developer-led delay to the planning submission process for Tasway Energy Park until the project has better visibility of a grid connection point.</p> <p>The Applicant's approach is different because the Scheme includes a new substation proposed to be operated by NGET, meaning that the Scheme could be delivered through "infrastructure ... contained in a single application to the Secretary of State" (NPS EN-5 (2023), paragraph 2.7.2)</p> <p>Being in Gate 1 means the grid connection location and date is not yet firm. However, the Applicant is continuing to development the Scheme, and the Scheme can apply again to move into Gate 2 in future connection queue reprioritisation rounds.</p> <p>Section 2.9 of the Statement of Need [APP-042] explains that the Government is clear that the Clean Power plan and Connections Reform is not about stopping projects, but is about prioritising projects for 2030, while maintaining a robust pipeline beyond 2030. Projects which continue to demonstrate they are 'ready' are expected to be re-prioritised, especially as Government continues to refine its criteria for 'strategic alignment'. It is also anticipated that some projects currently in the queue may drop out.</p>
NCC3	<p><i>Impacts on the Nar Valley</i></p> <p>6.6 NCC is concerned that the Droves solar farm raises serious environmental concerns not only in terms of the solar panels proposed but also the ancillary supporting infrastructure required including; a converter station; battery storage facility; and grid connection infrastructure (400kV substation).</p> <p>6.7 The County Council has made clear that it favours the use of fixed solar panels with a lower height (3.5 metres) rather than tracking panels (up to 4.5</p>	<p>The Applicant has undertaken a reasonable worst-case assessment based upon the parameters (Rochdale Envelope) for the Scheme, which includes the Solar PV Arrays and Grid Connection Infrastructure. The Rochdale Envelope Approach is a recognised approach to undertaking environmental impact assessment for schemes of this nature as set out in The Planning Inspectorate's Advice Note Nine; Rochdale Envelope.</p> <p>At this stage of the Scheme, the Applicant considers that it is necessary to incorporate flexibility into the application for development consent. The Applicant has described the flexibility for Scheme,</p>



Reference	Comments	Applicant's Response
	<p>metres) as they would have less visual and landscape impacts. The applicant has indicated that these matters have yet to be finalised. As such there remains concern regarding the potential impacts associated with tracking solar panels, which are of greater height, and are likely to be significantly more visible across this sensitive environmental and historic area.</p> <p>6.8 The proposal will also involve new pylons connecting the solar farm to the 400kV transmission network. This raises significant concerns given this would involve new transmission infrastructure (pylon towers and overhead lines) in the sensitive Nar Valley and which is in close proximity to the historic settlement of Castle Acre with its castle and priory.</p>	<p>within the written and spatial parameters which are set out within the Design Principles, Parameters and Commitments [APP/5.8.2] and the Works Plan [APP-009] both of which are secured through draft DCO [APP/3.1.2]. The Applicant has submitted a series of management plans, which are secured by the draft DCO [APP/3.1.2], which includes further written prescription which will be used to guide the detailed design of the Scheme. The Applicant is of the opinion that the parameters provide sufficient information to enable the likely significant effects on the environment to be assessed and have been presented within the Environmental Statement.</p> <p>The design of the Scheme has evolved to reduce visual prominence on the Nar Valley and Castle Acre throughout the design process, as documented in ES Chapter 4: Reasonable Alternatives and Design Evolution [APP-053]. This included the setting back of the BESS and Substation areas to the south of Bartholomew's Wood. The potential impacts of the new transmission network upon the Nar Valley and Castle Acre with its castle and priory is fully assessed within from a historic environment perspective in ES Chapter 8: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [APP-057] and from a landscape and visual perspective within ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual [AS-016]. There are concluded significant visual effects on Nar Valley Southern Slope and Settlement in the short term during operation, but these reduce to not significant in the medium and long term. No significant effects are concluded on the historic environment during the operational phase.</p>
NCC4	<p>Impact on local communities and businesses</p> <p>6.9 NCC is concerned that the scheme will cause significant disruption during its construction on local residents and businesses; particularly on the local road network. There are also serious concerns associated with the battery storage element of the proposal in relation to the County Council's role as Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS).</p>	<p>The assessment of the construction traffic related effects on the local road network have been considered within ES Chapter 9: Transport and Access [REP1-036] which concludes there are no significant effects anticipated. This assessment indicates there is unlikely to be any perceptible impacts to local businesses or the Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service given the change in traffic due to the Scheme is negligible and within daily traffic fluctuations that would already be happening on the network.</p> <p>The responses in relation to the battery storage and Norfolk Fire and Rescue comments are provided within NCC36 at Applicant's Response to Relevant Representations [REP1-067].</p>
NCC5	<p><i>Impacts on aviation</i></p> <p>The County Council has expressed concern that the impacts of glint and glare need to be thoroughly considered and has recommended that the applicant consult with the Ministry of Defence and the Civil Aviation Authority, RAF Marham, the airfield operator at the Great Friar Thornes Farm Airfield, the highway authority and potentially also National Highways. The examining authority will also be aware that the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) have submitted an objection to the scheme on the basis that it will be a source of multi-path reflections of the radar's transmissions. This would cause interference to the precision approach radar (PAR) impacting upon its ability to accurately detect and track aircraft during critical stages of their approach to runway 23 at RAF Marham. The Examining Authority will be aware from the discussion during Issue Specific Hearing 1 (ISH1) that there was considerable discussion about potential mitigation, from which it emerged that this would most likely comprise the construction of additional bunds. NCC is concerned that this may result in mitigation proposals that themselves have the potential to have significant impacts on the landscape including historic landscape and flood risk and surface water management.</p>	<p>The Applicant has had further pragmatic engagement with the MoD following Deadline 1 regarding glint and glare and the potential mitigation solutions to resolve the potential impacts to radar. The Applicant is working through potential mitigation options with the MoD, which will be confirmed at a future deadline. Following this process, a review of the potential for any likely significant effects will be undertaken and, if necessary, further assessment will be undertaken. This would include, as appropriate and necessary, consideration of landscape and visual, biodiversity, land use, and interactions between topics (in-combination effects).</p> <p>No significant impacts are predicted in the ES Appendix 16.2: Solar Photovoltaic Glint and Glare Study [APP-176] upon receptors at Great Friar Thornes Farm Airfield or road receptors including the A1065 and it is therefore not considered necessary to have a specific requirement to consult with these stakeholders regarding Glint and Glare.</p>
NCC6	<p><i>Lack of benefits for Norfolk</i></p> <p>6.11 The County Council has advised the applicant on the need to actively engage with the County Council and other key stakeholders, including National Grid and United Kingdom Power Networks (UKPN), to explore and</p>	<p>The Statement of Need [APP-042] provides evidence that there is an urgent need for an unprecedented capacity of new low carbon electricity generation schemes to come forward to deliver legally binding carbon emission reduction targets, maintain security of supply and deliver on the affordability of energy. "Solar is a key part of the government's strategy for low-cost decarbonisation of the energy sector", per paragraph 2.10.9 of NPS EN-3 (2023). NPS EN-3 (2025) explains at</p>



Reference	Comments	Applicant's Response
	<p>provide clarity as to how the project could bring benefits for the County in terms of clean energy supplies. There is no evidence that such engagement has taken place to any meaningful extent; and as such there remain serious concerns regarding the lack of benefits the project will bring to both residents and businesses in Norfolk in line with the County Council's climate and economic strategies.</p>	<p>paragraph 2.10.2 that “solar energy is at the heart of [the Government's] Clean Power 2030 Mission” and at paragraph 2.10.5 that “solar farms are one of the most established renewable electricity technologies in the UK and the cheapest form of electricity generation”.</p> <p>Such an increase in generation capacity is needed to decarbonise current electricity demand and also to meet the expected significant increase in electricity demand over the coming years “as large parts of transport, heating and industry decarbonise by switching from fossil fuels to low carbon electricity”, per paragraph 3.3.3 of NPS EN-1 (2023). The 2025 NPS maintains the same wording at paragraph 3.3.3, which further supports our position as the policy has remained consistent in this regard.</p> <p>The Statement of Need [APP-042] also explains that the overhead line, into which the Scheme will connect, is an existing part of the National Electricity Transmission System with sufficient capacity to transmit the energy that the Scheme will generate, so will provide access to low carbon, low marginal cost and will secure energy for both local and national consumers. This is a key benefit of the Scheme.</p> <p>Efforts to provide specific benefits in locally impacted communities are set out in the oESSCS [APP-195] (for employment and economy), which has been informed by a review of relevant local and national planning policy and economic development strategies, including Norfolk County Council's economic strategy, and identifies alignment with local priorities.</p> <p>Further benefits are set out in the oLEMP [REP1-060] (for landscape and ecological improvements) and additional community benefits would be provided through measures such as new permissive access routes (as secured in the oPRoWPPMP [APP-192]).</p> <p>The Applicant is committed to ensuring that communities benefit from the Scheme. As set out in the Planning Statement [REP1-012], the Applicant has committed to providing a Community Benefit Fund. 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. The Community Benefit Fund 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). 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. There are, however, no current plans to provide subsidised energy or rebates to the local community directly as a result of the Scheme.</p> <p>As always, the Applicant remains open to engaging with Norfolk County Council regarding community benefits.</p>
NCC7	<p><i>Lack of strategic approach</i></p> <p>6.12 The County Council is concerned at the lack of a strategic approach to the siting of solar farms across the County and the cumulative impacts associated with multiple large scale solar farms will have on Norfolk's environment, and local communities and businesses affected as indicated above. The lack of any strategic foresight in solar farms coming forward in Norfolk is leading to large piecemeal developments coming forward across Norfolk following existing transmission lines (400kV). Reforms to the grid-connection system leading to the creation of the NESO was supposed to provide the necessary checks and balances to ensure a more strategic joined up approach to the delivery of renewable energy projects. In Norfolk that does not seem to have happened as this project while not receiving a firm gate 2 grid connection offer from the NESO, is nevertheless still actively being taken</p>	<p>In response to 6.12, the Applicant has responded to this point previously at NCC1 of the Applicant's Response to Relevant Representations [REP1-067].</p> <p>Being in Gate 1 means the grid connection location and date is not yet firm. However, the Applicant is continuing to develop the Scheme and the Scheme can apply again to move into Gate 2 in future connection queue reprioritisation rounds.</p> <p>Section 2.9 of the Statement of Need [APP-042] explains that the Government is clear that the Clean Power plan and Connections Reform is not about stopping projects, but is about prioritising projects for 2030, while maintaining a robust pipeline beyond 2030. Projects which continue to demonstrate they are 'ready' are expected to be re-prioritised, especially as Government continues to refine its criteria for 'strategic alignment'. It is also anticipated that some projects currently in the queue may drop out.</p> <p>The Applicant notes 6.13 and the strong national policy support for electricity transmission projects.</p>



Reference	Comments	Applicant's Response
	<p>forward through the planning process. These grid connection issues are considered in more detail below.</p> <p>6.13 The examination process to which the application is now subject to is designed to test the application as submitted and recommend either consent or refusal. Given the strong national policy support for electricity transmission projects, aside from raising significant concerns/opposition to the project, the County Council seeks to ensure the best possible outcome for Norfolk through avoidance, reduction, mitigation, and compensation measures that are feasible within the examination timetable.</p>	
NCC8	<p><i>Grid connection</i></p> <p>6.14 As part of the DCO application the grid connection is shown on the applicant's masterplan in the north-eastern part of the site and involves the proposed 400kV substation connecting into the 400 kV transmission network. As set out above, the proposal envisages the diversion of the existing 400 kV overhead line south to connect to the solar farm substation.</p> <p>6.15 It was confirmed by the applicant at ISH1 that it does not yet hold a gate 1 grid connection offer from the NESO. It was also noted that National Grid Electricity Transmission (NGET) are not currently developing proposals to build a new substation within the project's Order limits. The location of the new substation is still to be confirmed with siting studies to be reviewed post connection reform, and therefore maybe sited in a different location. Furthermore, NGET in its relevant representation has confirmed that it is not currently developing proposals to build a new substation within the project's Order limits.</p> <p>6.16 As NGET is currently unable to confirm the connection point at this stage, NCC has expressed its concern that it is not possible to fully assess the impacts of the proposal, in what is a sensitive natural and historic landscape.</p>	<p>The Applicant agrees with the comment in paragraph 6.14.</p> <p>In response to 6.15, the Applicant refers to its Written Summary of Applicant's Oral Submissions and Responses to Action Points at Issue Specific Hearing 1 [REP1-071] in which, at Agenda Item 3.2, it sets out its position in this regard. Specifically, the Applicant wishes to reiterate that it has an existing connection agreement with NESO, but has been informed that its agreement has been re-prioritised as a Gate 1 agreement. This means that its agreement will be subject to an Agreement to Vary to new Gate 1 terms.</p> <p>However, no Agreement to Vary has yet been received by the Applicant (and in this sense, the Applicant does not yet hold a Gate 1 connection offer). Therefore, Applicant's position, as set out at electronic page 13 and 14 of 37 of Written Summary of Applicant's Oral Submissions and Responses to Action Points at Issue Specific Hearing 1 [REP1-071], is that until NGET or NESO confirm otherwise, the contractual obligations comprising the Applicant's grid connection offer for the Scheme remain binding.</p> <p>In response to 6.16, the Applicant considers that the Scheme is sufficiently defined such that the impacts of the proposals can and should be assessed as they are presented. Should the location of the connection point change, the Applicant refers to its Response to Section 89(3) Letter dated 17 March 2026 [AS-063] for an analysis of this possibility – the Applicant's expectation is that NGET will determine that the proposed location for the National Grid Substation is suitable (given the Applicant's site selection methodology being akin to NGET's site selection process). However, the Applicant retains the ability to separately seek consent for the grid connection from the Customer Substation to the National Grid Substation in the unlikely event that NGET subsequently decides that they would prefer to site the National Grid Substation elsewhere. If that situation arises after consent for the DCO is granted, then any future consent application (whether as a change to the DCO or a separate planning application under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) for the connection from the Customer Substation to that National Grid Substation would cumulatively assess that application with the works consented under the DCO. This will ensure there is no 'gap' in the assessment of environmental effects, and could include the production of a new Environmental Statement for the separate connection application. The Applicant reiterates that it is not a barrier to granting consent for a generating station if the point of connection is not yet identified or consented. The Applicant has addressed this point in further detail in response to NGET8 of the Applicant's Response to Written Representations and other Deadline 1 Submissions [APP/8.13].</p>
NCC9	<p><i>Alternatives</i></p> <p>6.17 NCC is disappointed that the application does not include an underground alternative for the proposed diversion of the existing dual circuit 400kV overhead line (OHL) into the new National Grid substation, as it had requested in response to the PIER statutory consultation. The application states that up to 10 new pylons will be built along the proposed diversion route</p>	<p>In response to 6.17, the Applicant refers to its submissions on this matter on page 11 of the Written Summary of Applicant's Oral Submissions and Responses to Action Points at Issue Specific Hearing 1 [REP1-071].</p> <p>With respect of 6.18, paragraph 2.9.21 of NPS EN-5 sets out that the government's position is that overhead lines should be the strong starting presumption for electricity networks developments in general, unless proposed developments cross parts of a nationally designated landscape.</p>



Reference	Comments	Applicant's Response
	<p>leading into the new substation, although the proposed decommissioning of up to seven of the pylons on the existing alignment is welcome.</p> <p>6.18 NPS EN-5, paragraph 2.9.14 requires applicants to demonstrate due consideration of costs and benefits of feasible alternatives, and the absence of undergrounding leaves a significant gap in mitigation for landscape and visual impacts. NCC urges the applicant to explore additional measures to reduce, mitigate, or compensate for residual impacts in line with the mitigation hierarchy set out in NPS EN-1.</p>	<p>Section 8.3 of the Planning Statement [REP1-012] sets out how the Applicant applied the mitigation hierarchy set out in NPS EN-1 to the landscape and visual impacts of the Scheme, with Paragraph 8.3.168 noting that impacts have been minimised as far as practicable and cannot be mitigated further. Despite this approach, some significant residual visual effects would remain for two landscape receptors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D1: Swaffham Heath LCA • E6: North Pickenham Plateau LCA <p>Section 5 of the Planning Statement [REP1-012] and the Statement of Need [APP-042] set out the critical need for the Scheme. Section 9.4 of the Planning Statement [REP1-012] sets out the planning balance for the Scheme which concludes that the adverse impacts identified are clearly outweighed by the substantial public benefits that would arise from the provision of low carbon energy to meet the need identified in NPS EN-1.</p>
Landscape and Visual		
NCC10	<p>7.1 NCC in its relevant representation identified a number of issues in relation to professional judgement, interpretation of the assessment and the conclusions drawn. These were raised to ensure that potential adverse effects are fully understood and that suitable measures can be secured through the DCO. Some of these concerns still remain, in particular that the assessment of landscape value which places emphasis on the absence of formal designation which may underplay the experiential and recreational qualities, particularly in relation the historic landscape. That the experience of recreational users of PRoW and promoted routes could be understated, and that the timing and effectiveness of proposed landscape mitigation measures, and the mitigation measures themselves represent a significant change and impact on the landscape, which may adversely impact on the users of PRoW and Norfolk and national trails in the area.</p>	<p>The assessment within ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual [AS-016] concludes that there would be no potential long term significant adverse visual effects upon visual receptors within the Site and wider LVIA study area. The baseline assessment of PRoW and promoted routes is well documented within the LVIA and visually presented within:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ES Figure 6.10: PP1-16 and PPa-g Winter Photograph Panels (Part A) [APP-087] • ES Figure 6.10: PP1-16 and PPa-g Winter Photograph Panels (Part B) [APP-088] • ES Figure 6.10: PP1-16 and PPa-g Winter Photograph Panels (Part C) [APP-089] • ES Figure 6.10: PP1-16 and PPa-g Winter Photograph Panels (Part D) [APP-090] • ES Figure 6.11: PP1-16 and PPa-g Summer Photograph Panels (Part A) [APP-091] • ES Figure 6.11: PP1-16 and PPa-g Summer Photograph Panels (Part B) [APP-092] • ES Figure 6.11: PP1-16 and PPa-g Summer Photograph Panels (Part C) [APP-093] • ES Figure 6.11: PP1-16 and PPa-g Summer Photograph Panels (Part D) [APP-094] <p>With regard to landscape character, the assessment concludes that there would be potential long term significant adverse landscape effects upon LCA D1 Swaffham Heath and LCA E6 North Pickenham Plateau. However, these effects upon the LCAs are only judged to be significant where they fall within the Site. There are no potential long term significant adverse landscape effects beyond the Order limits.</p> <p>The Applicant does not agree that the judgments made within ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual [AS-016] do not accurately reflect the landscape value and that the Applicant has understated any significant landscape effects.</p> <p>The methodology for assessing landscape value is detailed within Section 6.5 of ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual [AS-016]. Definitions of varying levels of landscape value are detailed within Table 6-2.</p> <p>Experiential and recreational qualities identified in the baseline have been considered when determining landscape value and have influenced sensitivity conclusions through an assessment of landscape value included within Table 3 of ES Appendix 6.5: Evaluation of Landscape Value [APP-143]. This value assessment considered a number of factors such as Natural Heritage, Cultural Heritage, Landscape Condition, Associations, Distinctiveness, Recreational, Perceptual (scenic), Perceptual (wilderness and tranquillity) and Functional. The value</p>



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		<p>rating for these factors varied between local value, community value and limited value – reflecting the presence and value of respective qualities within the Site and its context. The overall judgement for the value of a landscape receptor, such as an LCA of community value, takes account of the different value ratings ascribed to the factors referred to above. These judgements are balanced and representative of the qualities highlighted within the assessment. The landscape value of LCA within the Site and the wider study area were also identified through desktop studies of published material and numerous extensive fieldwork visits within summer and winter months.</p> <p>With regard to timing and effectiveness of proposed landscape mitigation measures, and whether the mitigation measures themselves represent a significant change and impact on the landscape, as outlined in ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual [AS-016], section 6.7 and 6.8 of the LVIA details the advance planting of new hedgerow whips within the Site, stating that “one of the aims of the advanced planting is to increase visual screening from year 1 of the operational phase.”</p> <p>The oLEMP [REP1-060] section 7 and appendix 3 details the approach to the advance planting. With regard to mitigation planting, not including the advance planting which has already been implemented, section 7.3 states “planting will be undertaken in the planting season between October and March during construction, or within the first available year/season post construction”.</p> <p>ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual [AS-016] states the Scheme has been assessed taking account of the advance planting and other mitigation planting measures such as new hedgerow, trees, woodland and scrub at the assumed growth rates “the assumed vegetation growth rate is 300mm/year for the first five years and 400mm of growth per year thereafter. This is based on Predicting Trees and Hedgerow Growth (Ref 6-1) growth rates which have been adjusted down to err on the side of caution to reflect local variation in discussion with the Applicant’s arboriculturist and based on project experience. This would be applicable to all elements of the proposed vegetation within the Site and has been taken into account for the year 15 visualisations of the Scheme.” The proposed mitigation planting, in combination with the advance planting already implemented, is judged to be appropriate and effective. This is demonstrated where there is a reduction in potentially adverse visual effects from construction through to long term operation of the Scheme, as new planting matures and establishes.</p> <p>This is a reasonable and justified approach, with growth rates detailed in Para 6.4.14 “the assumed vegetation growth rate is 300mm/year for the first five years and 400mm of growth per year thereafter”. This is based on Predicting Trees and Hedgerow Growth (ISEP) growth rates which have been adjusted down to err on the side of caution to reflect local variation in discussion with the Applicant’s arboriculturist and based on project experience. This would be applicable to all elements of the proposed vegetation within the Site and has been taken into account for the year 15 visualisations of the Scheme. The proposed mitigation planting is judged to be characteristic, appropriate and well sited to mitigate the Scheme as far as reasonably possible.</p> <p>The new mitigation planting does not represent a significant change and impact on the landscape. As detailed within ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual [AS-016] and the published landscape character assessment, the baseline context of the Site is well vegetated, with existing roads and PRow mostly aligned with a variety of landscape features including mature hedgerow, trees and woodland.</p> <p>The enhancement of existing landscape features through new planting and gapping up is in keeping with the landscape character and amenity of existing routes within the Site. Where there are gaps in existing landscape features and or short stretches of no vegetation, the new areas of mitigation planting are required to mitigate and reduce potentially adverse landscape and visual effects for receptors within the study area, screening views towards the Scheme once matured in the long term. It is acknowledged within section 8.6 of ES Figure 6.8: Amenity and Recreation [APP-085], that where there is the introduction of new hedgerow and trees along previously unvegetated stretches of PRow, such as PRow South Acre RB2, these measures may result in “the loss of open, medium-</p>



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		<p><i>distance views southwards across adjacent enclosed agricultural fields, to a more visually enclosed route with views focussed in an east-west orientation, along the extent PRow. Visibility of the Scheme would be at its greatest until the various mitigation planting measures have matured in the long term. The mitigation planting proposals along the droves and PRow is intended to create an enclosed feel and character along the routes, to reflect its previous historic landscape character."</i></p>
NCC11	<p>7.5 The project does not pass through any nationally designated areas in Norfolk, but paragraph 5.10.12 does recognise that there are landscapes which are highly valued locally. In Norfolk, as discussed at ISH1, the Nar Valley is a particularly locally valued historic landscape, as set out in paragraph 3.4 of NCC's relevant representation. EN-1 paragraph 5.10.12 goes on to say that locally valued landscapes should not be used in themselves to refuse consent. While this may be the case, NCC's view is that although locally valued landscapes do not justify refusal of an application, the applicant should still take a proactive approach to mitigation and compensation in such an area.</p>	<p>There are no nationally designated landscapes within the Site or LVIA study area.</p> <p>The methodology for assessing landscape value is detailed within Section 6.5 of ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual [AS-016]. Definitions of varying levels of landscape value are detailed within Table 6-2. The ES Appendix 6.5: Evaluation of Landscape Value [APP-143] states that the landscape value of the Site and its immediate context should be considered of a 'Community' value.</p> <p>The Nar Valley is visually represented in published Breckland District Landscape Character Assessment 2007 under LCA F1, also shown on ES Figure 6.4: Landscape Character [APP-081]. ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual [AS-016] concludes there would be a potentially adverse moderate-slight effect on landscape character for this LCA, in the long term. This effect is not significant. LCA F1 lies to the north of the Site and has been assessed as having a medium sensitivity (community value and high susceptibility). The 'community value' judgement within the LVIA notes that LCA F1 is appreciated by the local community but has little wider recognition of its value. LCA F1 is not a locally designated landscape. It is judged that this LCA would not be of Local value, which is defined as "<i>locally designated landscapes; areas which documentary evidence and/or site observation indicate as being more valued than the surrounding area.</i>" Para 5.10.12 of EN-1 states "<i>locally valued landscapes should not be used in themselves to refuse consent</i>".</p> <p>The potentially adverse effects identified within ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual [AS-016] take account of various mitigation measures embedded within the Scheme, which were designed to limit potentially adverse effects upon the landscape. These mitigation measures are secured by the Design Principles, Parameters and Commitments [APP/5.8.2], the spatial extents shown on the Works Plan [APP-009], the oOEMP [APP/7.8.2] and the oLEMP [REP1-060]. This design approach is embedded within the Applicant's Global Design Principle 2 and more specifically Project Principles 2.5 "<i>respect setting of heritage assets along the Nar Valley</i>", 2.8 "<i>consider experience of people travelling along adjacent roads, including the A1065, South Acre Road, River Road and Narford Lane</i>" and 2.9 "<i>consider experience of people using the PRow</i>".</p> <p>Mitigation measures have included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retention of the majority of existing landscape features within and around the boundaries of the Site, namely mature hedgerows and tree cover which contribute to the landscape character of the local context. These landscape features serve to restrict, filter and enclose visibility within the Site and study area south of Bartholomew's Hills Plantation. There is some loss of vegetation proposed as part of the Scheme to allow for the Grid Connection Infrastructure, Site and internal field access • Offset and buffering of the Scheme with new, woodland, hedgerow and tree planting to mitigate potential views from the nearby PRow, roads and residential dwellings both within and in close proximity to the Site • In addition to the establishment of new hedgerow and hedgerow trees, the embedded mitigation also includes the retention, gapping up and enhancement of existing hedgerow within the Site. New planting species would be native, locally prevalent and include a mixture of deciduous and evergreen species to provide year-round screening. Alongside the existing hedgerow and trees within the Site's context, the gapping up of hedgerow with native trees and whips would provide visual screening of the Scheme from visual receptors within the wider study area, and from PRow and droves within the Site itself



Reference	Comments	Applicant's Response
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The long-term management and maintenance of existing and new vegetation is an embedded mitigation measure which ensures vegetation would be actively managed in the long term, as secured and detailed within the oLEMP [REP1-060]. The prescribed maintenance height of hedgerow at 3m is an embedded mitigation measure which aims to screen views towards taller elements of the Scheme from nearby PRow. The active management and maintenance of trees and woodland within the Order limits, both newly planted and existing, aims to ensure they not only survive but reach maturity and establishment in the medium and long term durations. In turn, these landscape features are primary mechanisms for filtering and screening views towards the Scheme from nearby PRow, roads and residential dwellings Setting back the Scheme from key landscape features within and adjacent to the Site, such as droves, trees, hedgerow and woodland. The minimum offsets/buffers from existing landscape features, are outlined fully in ES Chapter 5: The Scheme [REP1-032]. The Scheme would be offset from existing PRow by a minimum of 15m, to respect the amenity and experience for PRow users along existing routes and allow for the sowing of extensive areas of new grassland along the margins of the Scheme. New grassland/wildflower areas are also proposed to be sown underneath the Solar PV Arrays which would enhance biodiversity within the Site; and As referred to within the oLEMP [REP1-060], 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 network. In addition to this, a number of new permissive routes are proposed, of approximately 3.5km in total, which would link to the existing PRow network within the study area to provide recreational benefits.
NCC12	<p>7.22 NCC still has key concerns relating to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The assessment of landscape value which places emphasis on the absence of formal designation, and which while correct, may as a result underplay the experiential and recreational qualities. The experience of recreational users of PRow and promoted routes which could be considered as understated. That while clarification has been provided regarding the certainty, timing and effectiveness of proposed landscape mitigation measures, the changes to the landscape the mitigation measures themselves represent a significant change and impact on the landscape. These measures may also mean that users of PRow and Norfolk and National Trails in the area may have an increased feeling of disconnection while moving through the area. 	<p>The Applicant does not agree that the judgments made within ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual [AS-016] do not accurately reflect the landscape value and that the Applicant has understated any significant landscape effects. The methodology for assessing landscape value is detailed within Section 6.5 of ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual [AS-016]. Definitions of varying levels of landscape value are detailed within Table 6-2. The ES Appendix 6.5: Evaluation of Landscape Value [APP-143] states that the landscape value of the Site and its immediate context should be considered of a 'Community' value'.</p> <p>The Applicant does not agree that the judgments made within ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual [AS-016] do not accurately reflect the effects upon PRow users and users of promoted routes and that the Applicant has understated any significant landscape effects. ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual [AS-016] and ES Appendix 6.8: Amenity and Recreation Assessment [APP-146] outlines potential effects upon users of PRow and promoted routes through the Site and study area. The assessments conclude that there would be no potential long term significant adverse visual effects upon visual receptors within the Site and wider LVIA study area.</p> <p>The potentially adverse effects identified within ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual [AS-016] take account of various mitigation measures embedded within the Scheme, which were designed to limit potentially adverse effects upon the landscape. The proposed enhancement and reinforcement planting along the droves, within the Site, would lead to a greater degree of visual enclosure, however this strategy serves to re-establish their historic character with established hedgerow and trees aligning them. The mitigation planting also serves to screen views towards the Scheme, limiting potentially significant visual effects in the long term. With regard to landscape character, the mitigation planting proposals would reinforce the existing character of the landscape within the Site and host landscape character area. Many of the field boundaries and PRow are lined with hedgerow, trees, scrub and woodland blocks; the mitigation planting proposals use these same planting typologies to ensure the mitigation is in-keeping with the local landscape and therefore restores and reinforces the landscape character of the Site.</p>



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		<p>These mitigation measures are secured by the Design Principles, Parameters and Commitments [APP/5.8.2], the spatial extents shown on the Works Plan [APP-009], the oOEMP [APP/7.8.2] and the oLEMP [REP1-060]. This design approach is embedded within the Applicant's Global Design Principle 2 and more specifically Project Principles 2.5 "<i>respect setting of heritage assets along the Nar Valley</i>", 2.8 "<i>consider experience of people travelling along adjacent roads, including the A1065, South Acre Road, River Road and Narford Lane</i>" and 2.9 "<i>consider experience of people using the PRow</i>".</p> <p>Mitigation measures have included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retention of the majority of existing landscape features within and around the boundaries of the Site, namely mature hedgerows and tree cover which contribute to the landscape character of the local context. These landscape features serve to restrict, filter and enclose visibility within the Site and study area south of Bartholomew's Hills Plantation. There is some loss of vegetation proposed as part of the Scheme to allow for the Grid Connection Infrastructure, Site and internal field access Offset and buffering of the Scheme with new, woodland, hedgerow and tree planting to mitigate potential views from the nearby PRow, roads and residential dwellings both within and in close proximity to the Site In addition to the establishment of new hedgerow and hedgerow trees, the embedded mitigation also includes the retention, gapping up and enhancement of existing hedgerow within the Site. New planting species would be native, locally prevalent and include a mixture of deciduous and evergreen species to provide year-round screening. Alongside the existing hedgerow and trees within the Site's context, the gapping up of hedgerow with native trees and whips would provide visual screening of the Scheme from visual receptors within the wider study area, and from PRow and droves within the Site itself The long-term management and maintenance of existing and new vegetation is an embedded mitigation measure which ensures vegetation would be actively managed in the long term, as secured and detailed within the oLEMP [REP1-060]. The prescribed maintenance height of hedgerow at 3m is an embedded mitigation measure which aims to screen views towards taller elements of the Scheme from nearby PRow. The active management and maintenance of trees and woodland within the Order limits, both newly planted and existing, aims to ensure they not only survive but reach maturity and establishment in the medium and long term durations. In turn, these landscape features are primary mechanisms for filtering and screening views towards the Scheme from nearby PRow, roads and residential dwellings Setting back the Scheme from key landscape features within and adjacent to the Site, such as droves, trees, hedgerow and woodland. The minimum offsets/buffers from existing landscape features, are outlined fully in ES Chapter 5: The Scheme [REP1-032]. The Scheme would be offset from existing PRow by a minimum of 15m, to respect the amenity and experience for PRow users along existing routes and allow for the sowing of extensive areas of new grassland along the margins of the Scheme. New grassland/wildflower areas are also proposed to be sown underneath the Solar PV Arrays which would enhance biodiversity within the Site; and As referred to within the oLEMP [REP1-060], 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 network. In addition to this, a number of new permissive routes are proposed, of approximately 3.5km in total, which would link to the existing PRow network within the study area to provide recreational benefits.



Reference	Comments	Applicant's Response
NCC13	<p>7.23 Chapter 6 clearly sets out that landscape sensitivity is derived from a combination of susceptibility and value. The LVIA baseline identifies landscape characteristics within the study area that include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intact estate farmland patterns • Wooded skylines and shelterbelts (forming defining horizons) • Historic parkland and designed landscape elements • Sparse settlements, tranquillity and relative remoteness • The presence of PRow and promoted recreational routes. <p>7.24 These features are consistently identified within the baseline landscape character descriptions and supporting appendices. NCC considers that such characteristics are generally associated with increased susceptibility to large scale solar development, particularly where development introduces built form, perimeter fencing, substations and associated infrastructure over a wide area.</p> <p>7.25 However, NCC is concerned that the subsequent judgements on landscape sensitivity do not appear to fully reflect this susceptibility. There is also potential that the mitigation measures specified will themselves increase the magnitude and significance of the effects. Landscape sensitivity is a key determinant in the assessment of magnitude and significance of effects – where susceptibility is underplayed there is a risk that significant landscape effects also become understated.</p> <p>7.26 NCC understands that this is a matter of judgement not a methodological concern, but it considers that it is suitable to raise this concern and to again ask the applicant to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide further justification explaining how the identified susceptibility factors have been weighted in reaching the overall landscape sensitivity judgements. • Clarify how perceptual qualities such as tranquillity, enclosure, skyline integrity and recreational function have influenced sensitivity conclusions. • Confirm that sensitivity judgements are considering baseline online and not including assumptions about mitigation effectiveness. Including where this mitigation will itself produce an impact. 	<p>ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual [AS-016] outlines potential landscape and visual impacts as a result of the Scheme. Paragraph 6.5.18 and Table 6-3 outline the approach in determining the susceptibility, and therefore sensitivity, of landscape and visual receptors within the study area. The Site falls within numerous LCAs, as outlined within the Breckland Landscape Character Assessment (2007) and confirmed and validated through fieldwork.</p> <p>The Applicant does not agree that the judgments made do not accurately reflect the susceptibility and that the Applicant has understated any significant landscape effects.</p> <p>A review of published assessments and fieldwork to the Site and the surrounding study area informed a professional judgement of the identified susceptibility factors and the landscape sensitivity judgements made. The variation in identified susceptibility factors for different LCAs informed the weighting of the overall landscape sensitivity judgements.</p> <p>For clarity and with regard to the LCA within the Site; LCA D1: Swaffham Heath LCA and LCA E6: North Pickenham Plateau LCA are deemed to be of community value and have a medium susceptibility to the type of development proposed in resulting in overall medium-low sensitivity for these LCAs. LCA B7: River Nar Tributary Farmland LCA and F1: River Nar Valley LCA are deemed to be of community value and have a high susceptibility to the type of development proposed resulting in an overall medium sensitivity for the LCA.</p> <p>Perceptual qualities such as, but not limited to, tranquillity, enclosure, skyline integrity and recreational function have influenced sensitivity conclusions through an assessment of landscape value included within ES Appendix 6.5: Evaluation of Landscape Value [APP-143]. The perceptual characteristics of other LCAs within the wider study area were also identified through desktop studies of published material and numerous extensive fieldwork visits within summer and winter months.</p> <p>It is confirmed that sensitivity judgements consider baseline conditions only and do not include assumptions regarding mitigation effectiveness. The methodology for assessment is detailed within Section 6.5 of ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual [AS-016].</p>
NCC14	<p>7.27 Chapter 6 assesses the landscape value of the study area. NCC notes that while the assessment acknowledges the community level value, there is a strong emphasis on the absence of national or local designations when determining value. This is particularly important given the local significance of the historic landscape in and around the Nar Valley, as was made clear at ISH1.</p> <p>7.28 There is a risk that this approach may underrepresent certain important values such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experiential and perceptual value • Recreational value 	<p>The methodology for assessing landscape value is detailed within Section 6.5 of ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual [AS-016]. Definitions of varying levels of landscape value are detailed within Table 6-2.</p> <p>As detailed previously, the various experiential and recreational qualities within the Site and LVIA study area, identified in the baseline, have been considered when determining landscape value and have influenced sensitivity conclusions through an assessment of landscape value included within Table 3 of ES Appendix 6.5: Evaluation of Landscape Value [APP-143]. This value assessment considered a number of factors such as Natural Heritage, Cultural Heritage, Landscape Condition, Associations, Distinctiveness, Recreational, Perceptual (scenic), Perceptual (wilderness and tranquillity) and Functional. The value rating for these factors varied between local value, community value and limited value – reflecting the presence and value of respective qualities within the Site and its context. The overall judgement for the value of a landscape receptor, such as an LCA of</p>



Reference	Comments	Applicant's Response
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The contribution of historical landscape features <p>7.29 Landscapes may be valued for reasons beyond formal designation and where value is understated the combined outcome for landscape sensitivity may not fully reflect the importance of the landscape to communities and users.</p> <p>7.30 NCC would therefore like to ask the applicant to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further clarify how experiential and recreational qualities that have been identified in the baseline have been considered when determining landscape value, particularly where landscapes are not formally designated but contribute to the perceived value and enjoyment of the area. Further consider recognition of higher community value in sensitivity judgements Further consider additional mitigation or enhancement measures where effects are identified while ensuring that these mitigation measures themselves do not cause detrimental impacts on enjoyment of the area. 	<p>community value, takes account of the different value ratings ascribed to the factors referred to above. These judgements are balanced and representative of the qualities highlighted within the assessment.</p> <p>With regard to experiential qualities, the value assessment assessed perceptual (scenic) as community value, noting <i>“the Site is relatively visually contained in the central and southern areas and is of greenfield nature. In the Site’s northern area, there are some views northwards across the Nar Valley towards heritage assets within Castle Acre. The context of the Site to the north, east and west is currently rural and generally typical of the surrounding landscape. Swaffham is situated to the south of the Site, however there is limited intervisibility between the Site and settlement. In the local landscape, passing traffic is visible and audible along the A1065 and A47. As such, these highways serve as detractors within the local landscape.”</i> With regard to wilderness and tranquillity, the value is assessed as limited and notes <i>“a degree of tranquillity is experienced in the vicinity of the Site. However, the nighttime presence of Swaffham, adjacent villages and nearby A1065 to the east affect both tranquillity and any potential for dark skies. The agricultural land within the Site has altered the landscape so that it cannot be considered wild.”</i></p> <p>With regard to recreational qualities, the value is assessed to be of local value and states <i>“There are a number of PRow and recreational routes within the Site that connect to other local PRow networks and long distance trails within the Site’s context. The surrounding landscape is accessible by a number of interconnected PRow that exist between local villages in the surrounding landscape, as shown on Figure 6.8 Amenity and Recreation Facilities [APP/6.3]”</i>.</p> <p>Mitigation for LVIA involves planting throughout the Site which is embedded into the Scheme and secured in the design, meaning additional mitigation is not available. No additional mitigation measures for the Scheme are proposed.</p> <p>The potentially adverse effects identified within ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual [AS-016] take account of various mitigation measures embedded within the Scheme, which were designed to limit potentially adverse effects upon the landscape. The proposed enhancement and reinforcement planting within the Site would reinforce the existing character of the landscape within the Site and host landscape character area. They would not cause detrimental impacts on enjoyment of the area. As previously established, many of the field boundaries and PRow are lined with hedgerow, trees, scrub and woodland blocks; the mitigation planting proposals use these same planting typologies to ensure the mitigation is in-keeping with the local landscape and therefore restores and reinforces the landscape character of the Site.</p> <p>These mitigation measures are secured by the Design Principles, Parameters and Commitments [APP/5.8.2], the spatial extents shown on the Works Plan [APP-009], the oOEMP [APP/7.8.2] and the oLEMP [REP1-060]. This design approach is embedded within the Applicant’s Global Design Principle 2 and more specifically Project Principles 2.5 <i>“respect setting of heritage assets along the Nar Valley”</i>, 2.8 <i>“consider experience of people travelling along adjacent roads, including the A1065, South Acre Road, River Road and Narford Lane”</i> and 2.9 <i>“consider experience of people using the PRow”</i>.</p> <p>Mitigation measures have included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retention of the majority of existing landscape features within and around the boundaries of the Site, namely mature hedgerows and tree cover which contribute to the landscape character of the local context. These landscape features serve to restrict, filter and enclose visibility within the Site and study area south of Bartholomew’s Hills Plantation. There is some loss of vegetation proposed as part of the Scheme to allow for the Grid Connection Infrastructure, Site and internal field access



Reference	Comments	Applicant's Response
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offset and buffering of the Scheme with new, woodland, hedgerow and tree planting to mitigate potential views from the nearby PRow, roads and residential dwellings both within and in close proximity to the Site • In addition to the establishment of new hedgerow and hedgerow trees, the embedded mitigation also includes the retention, gapping up and enhancement of existing hedgerow within the Site. New planting species would be native, locally prevalent and include a mixture of deciduous and evergreen species to provide year-round screening. Alongside the existing hedgerow and trees within the Site's context, the gapping up of hedgerow with native trees and whips would provide visual screening of the Scheme from visual receptors within the wider study area, and from PRow and droves within the Site itself • The long-term management and maintenance of existing and new vegetation is an embedded mitigation measure which ensures vegetation would be actively managed in the long term, as secured and detailed within the oLEMP [REP1-060]. The prescribed maintenance height of hedgerow at 3m is an embedded mitigation measure which aims to screen views towards taller elements of the Scheme from nearby PRow. The active management and maintenance of trees and woodland within the Order limits, both newly planted and existing, aims to ensure they not only survive but reach maturity and establishment in the medium and long term durations. In turn, these landscape features are primary mechanisms for filtering and screening views towards the Scheme from nearby PRow, roads and residential dwellings • Setting back the Scheme from key landscape features within and adjacent to the Site, such as droves, trees, hedgerow and woodland. The minimum offsets/buffers from existing landscape features, are outlined fully in ES Chapter 5: The Scheme [REP1-032]. The Scheme would be offset from existing PRow by a minimum of 15m, to respect the amenity and experience for PRow users along existing routes and allow for the sowing of extensive areas of new grassland along the margins of the Scheme. New grassland/wildflower areas are also proposed to be sown underneath the Solar PV Arrays which would enhance biodiversity within the Site; and • As referred to within the oLEMP [REP1-060], 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 network. In addition to this, a number of new permissive routes are proposed, of approximately 3.5km in total, which would link to the existing PRow network within the study area to provide recreational benefits. <p>Heritage impacts are fully explored in ES Appendix 8.2: Stage 1 and Stage 2 Setting Assessment [APP-152] and ES Chapter 8: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [APP-057] which recognise the role that setting (and landscape) contribute to significance of heritage assets. The bulk of the Order limits that will be subject to change, arising from the Scheme, are not considered to make any contribution to the significance of the identified heritage assets due to the lack of shared experience between the plateau land and the heritage assets, which is a prerequisite for contribution to significance. Large tracts of agricultural land lie between the Order limits and the assets, and the understanding and context of these assets will, therefore, remain to be clearly appreciated. In terms of historical landscape features, those within the Order limits that contribute to an understanding of the evolution of the historic landscape comprise the droves, field boundaries, marl pits, plantations and buildings (Keepers Cottage and former barns at the corner of Fincham Drove), all of which will be retained, and in some cases enhanced, as part of the Scheme as secured and detailed within the oLEMP [REP1-060].</p> <p>In addition, Section 3.6 Cultural Heritage of the Written Summary of Applicant's Oral Submissions and Responses to Action Points at Issue Specific Hearing 1 [REP1-071] contains the relevant information on the historic environment including the Nar Valley (specifically</p>



Reference	Comments	Applicant's Response
		<p>the fourth paragraph starting with [REDACTED] further stated that the contextual relationship and the 11th paragraph starting with <i>In response to points made by [REDACTED]</i>).</p>
NCC15	<p>7.31 The LVIA identifies several PRoW and promoted routes within and around the study area. While visibility may be intermittent or filtered, NCC is concerned that the change in landscape character experienced along the routes may be more substantial than is reflected in the Applicant's conclusions. For recreational users effects are not limited to individual viewpoints but instead relate to the cumulative experience of moving through the landscape. Consideration should be given to the effects of proposed mitigation measures such as hedgerow height increases, gapping up etc and how these may change the connection with the landscape of users of routes through and alongside the development.</p> <p>7.32 NCC would like to ask the applicant to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further consider the experiential change along the routes outside of individual viewpoints and how route specific mitigation measures through planting or landscape enhancements can be used to offset experiential change in way that does not itself create a negative experiential change to the connection with landscape provided by these routes. <p>7.33 Overall, the matters raised above are primarily concerned with the application of professional judgement rather than deficiencies in methodology, and consequently NCC is satisfied that these issues are capable of resolution through further clarification and consideration of the scheme.</p>	<p>The Applicant does not agree that the change in landscape character experienced along the routes may be more substantial than is reflected in the conclusions.</p> <p>ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual [AS-016] outlines potential landscape and visual impacts as a result of the Scheme. ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual [AS-016] assesses the potential sequential visual effects upon visual receptors within the Site and study area.</p> <p>Paragraph 6.6.71 of ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual [AS-016] states “<i>The different types of groups assessed within this ES chapter encompass local residents; people using key longer distance routes such as roads, cycle ways, recreational routes and navigable waterways; people within accessible or recreational landscapes; people using PRoW; or people visiting key viewpoints. In assessing areas of settlement, PRoW and local roads, receptors are grouped into areas where effects might be expected to be broadly similar, or areas which share particular factors in common. Longer distance routes and specific viewpoints are not included within these groupings, to allow the sequential experience of travelling along the routes or the key elements that make up a specific view to be considered in a coherent way.</i>”</p> <p>Generally, the assessment considers visual effects upon routes as part of their wider respective Visual Receptor Group (VRG). A total number of 7 VRGs have been identified within the Site and Study Area. Paragraph 6.6.84 of ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual [AS-016] states “<i>Where receptors overlap with one or more VRGs, i.e. PRoW within the Site that extend across both VRG 1 and VRG 2, they are considered within both VRG's. This approach highlights any variations in effect upon a Receptor across the Site which may occur due to proximity to new development and the type of new development proposed at certain points along a route, for example.</i>”</p> <p>For longer distance routes, i.e the Peddars Way and Norfolk Coast Path, routes are assessed as a “standalone” receptor with narrative on potential sequential views.</p> <p>The proposed maintenance and management of hedgerow heights at 3m serves to not only screen views towards the Scheme from PRoW within the Site but also reinforces the existing character of the landscape within the Site and host landscape character area. As previously established, many of the field boundaries and PRoW are lined with hedgerow, trees, scrub and woodland blocks; the mitigation planting proposals use these same planting typologies to ensure the mitigation is in-keeping with the local landscape and therefore restores and reinforces the landscape character of the Site.</p> <p>With regard to visual connection to the landscape, the proposed enhancement and reinforcement planting along the droves, within the Site, would lead to a greater degree of visual enclosure, however this strategy serves to re-establish their historic character with established hedgerow and trees aligning them. The mitigation planting also serves to screen views towards the Scheme, limiting potentially significant visual effects in the long term. As such, the proposed management heights of hedgerow would not lead to negative experiential change to the connection with landscape for PRoW users along these routes, but in general lead to a restoration and re-establishment of the landscape fabric that once aligned these routes.</p>
NCC16	<p>7.34 NCC has no comments at this stage on the Draft DCO or the requirements set out in Schedule 2 in relation to landscape and visual impacts.</p>	<p>The Applicant welcomes this confirmation from NCC.</p>

Ecology and Biodiversity



Reference	Comments	Applicant's Response
NCC17	<p>8.1 NCC considers that the assessment of the impacts on ecology and biodiversity are broadly acceptable, but it considers that the buffer around outlier setts should, based on guidance from the Badger Trust, should be based on disturbance type around the sett not the sett type.</p> <p>8.2 There are also trading errors within the Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Metric. The applicant has outlined that this is due to the need to update information relating to the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS).</p>	<p>Badgers within the Site are habituated to disturbance within close vicinity to their setts given the current agricultural use, with fields adjacent to these setts being regularly disturbed by ploughing, etc. Buffers of 20m around outlier setts are in line with Statutory guidance from Natural England (Badgers and Development. A Guide to Best Practice and Licensing. December 2011) and as such are considered appropriate.</p> <p>The Applicant updated the Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment Report [REP1-048] at Deadline 1 in order to reflect the LNRS publication and address the trading errors.</p>
NCC18	<p>8.7 No impacts to internationally designated sites are anticipated, however the surveys of birds linked to the Breckland special protection area (SPA) outline that while the area may not be used by birds under that designation, but it is possible that bird species may move into the area concerned. Therefore, the development should be considered as having a potential impact on the qualifying features of the SPA itself.</p>	<p>The Site is located entirely outside of the 1.5km constraint zone identified by Natural England based on the Stone Curlew Planning Tool (SCPT) (Ref: www.breckland.gov.uk/article/20784/Brecks-Special-Protection-Area, accessed September 2025). Natural England has also confirmed that it <i>“agrees that there would be no adverse effect on the integrity of the Breckland SPA or Norfolk Valley Fens SAC, nor damage to the notified features of the Breckland Forest, River Nar or Potter & Scarning Fens SSSIs”</i>.</p>
NCC19	<p>8.8 The DCO is within 500m of the River Nar site of specific scientific interest (SSSI). The report declares that there is not significant impact within the DCO red line but acknowledges that the Skylark Mitigation areas are closer to the SSSI. The impact of the Skylark Mitigation areas on the SSSI should also be considered.</p>	<p>The specific proposed Skylark Mitigation measures within the areas identified do not in themselves represent any potential to impact on the River Nar SSSI, whilst the overall management of these areas following the implementation of the Skylark Mitigation will remain consistent with their current agricultural/arable use, and as such remain unchanged in relation to the River Nar SSSI as a result of the development. These measures are as set out within the ES Appendix 7.3: Proposed Mitigation Strategy for Ground Nesting Birds Requiring Open Habitats [APP-149] and the oLEMP [REP1-060], and secured through Requirements 7 and 9 in Schedule 2 to the draft DCO [APP/3.1.2]. The potential impact of the Skylark Mitigation areas has therefore been considered previously, within the assessment, whilst the acknowledgement that the Skylark Mitigation areas are closer to the SSSI highlights that the relevant details of the Scheme (including location of relevant elements within the DCO red line) have been considered.</p>
NCC20	<p>8.9 NCC raised a number of questions at the PIER stage and subsequently in its relevant representation in relation to the detailed consideration of ecology and biodiversity. It remains concerned that adequate buffer areas around badger setts should be maintained, in line with guidance from the Badger Trust and that any works which has the potential to disturb badgers may require a licence.</p> <p>8.10 In the non-technical summary [APP-180] paragraph 4.2.36 states that “Minimum offsets/buffers from existing landscape features have been embedded within the design of the scheme (Table 4-1) and are secured within the design principles, parameters and commitments [APP/5.8] by requirement of the DCO Application, see Table 4-1, with the exception of where access tracks, perimeter fencing, cabling and/or grid connection cables are required to cross an existing feature. These are secured within the DCO”.</p> <p>8.11 Table 4-1 describes the buffer area round badger setts recommendations are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buffer setts (main) – 30m • Buffer setts (outer) – 20m <p>8.12 As previously advised in NCC’s relevant representation it considers that the buffer around outlier setts should not be smaller. The area is based of</p>	<p>Badgers within the Site are habituated to disturbance within close vicinity to their setts given the current agricultural use, with fields adjacent to these setts being regularly disturbed by ploughing, etc. Buffers of 20m around outlier setts are in line with Statutory guidance from Natural England (Badgers and Development. A Guide to Best Practice and Licensing. December 2011) and as such are considered appropriate.</p>



Reference	Comments	Applicant's Response
	guidance from the Badger Trust the buffer areas should be based on disturbance type around the sett not the sett type.	
NCC21	8.13 It is noted that there are trading errors within the BNG Metric. The applicant has outlined that this is due to the need to update information therein as it pertains to the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS). NCC considers that these trading errors need to be resolved in advance of the determination of the DCO.	The Applicant updated the Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment Report [REP1-048] at Deadline 1 in order to reflect the LNRS publication and address the trading errors.
NCC22	8.14 NCC has no comments at this stage on the Draft DCO or the requirements set out in schedule 2 in relation to ecology and biodiversity impacts.	The Applicant welcomes this confirmation from NCC.
Archaeology		
NCC23	<p>9.1 NCC considers that the potential impacts on below-ground archaeological remains from piling for PV panel mounting structures are not negligible. The cumulative impacts of the piling and cables will have an adverse impact on below-ground archaeology. The magnitude of the impact is in part dependant on the nature of the below-ground archaeological remains.</p> <p>9.2 NCC also considers that the removal of piles and cables will have a destructive effect on below-ground archaeological remains which will need to be mitigated at the pre-construction stage.</p> <p>9.3 NCC is in broad agreement with the ES appendix 8.7 outline archaeological mitigation strategy [APP-161]. There are some differences of opinion between NCC and the applicant's archaeological consultants regarding the cumulative level of impact piling and cable for the solar arrays, and the need to have some level of testing by trial trenching of all areas of the scheme not previously trenched.</p>	<p>9.1 Based upon the nature of archaeological remains identified within the Order limits as detailed within ES Appendix 8.3: Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment [APP-153], ES Appendix 8.4: Geophysical Survey Report [APP-154 - APP-158], ES Appendix 8.5: Air Photo Services Report [APP-159] and ES Appendix 8.6 Archaeological Trial Trenching Report [APP-160] the impact from piling alone, given the small size of individual piles and the spacing between each pile, would not compromise the integrity of the archaeological features nor the ability to understand the 'archaeological site' should future archaeological investigation take place. It should also be noted that the predicted impact of piling of 0.1% to 0.05% (which is calculated on the basis of double pile width to allow for disturbance from removal) is not an impact upon archaeology but the total below ground impact of the piling, therefore, the majority of the piles are not likely to impact archaeology at all. It is for these reasons that the impact of piling for the solar arrays has been assessed as negligible.</p> <p>9.2 As the impact of piling and cables will be mitigated prior to the Construction phase, as outlined in ES Appendix 8.7: outline Archaeological Mitigation Strategy [APP/6.4.1], the removal of piles and cables (in the decommissioning phase) will have no further impact upon the archaeological resource.</p> <p>9.3 Paragraph 3.4 of ES Appendix 8.7: outline Archaeological Mitigation Strategy [APP/6.4.1] allows for trial trenching of all areas of impact of the Scheme at a level to be agreed with NHES that is proportionate to the overall impact of the Scheme. The proposed wording of 'proportionate to the cumulative impact of all elements of the Scheme' was the suggestion of NHES.</p>
NCC24	<p>9.14 NCC nevertheless has a number of comments in relation to the ES non-technical summary and the ES Chapter 8 – Cultural Heritage and Archaeology. These are as follows:</p> <p>9.15 Paragraph 9.3.2 of the ES non-technical summary states that "No significant effects are anticipated from piling for the PV panel mounting structures, excavations for cabling and other below-ground elements of the scheme, and direct/indirect impacts on designated or non-designated heritage assets".</p> <p>9.16 NCC does not agree that this would be the case. NCC considers that potential impacts on below-ground archaeological remains from piling for PV panel mounting structures are not negligible. The cumulative impacts of the piling and cables will have an adverse impact on below-ground archaeological. The magnitude of the impact is in part dependant on the nature of the below-ground archaeological remains.</p>	<p>ES Chapter 8: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [APP-057] details the methodology for determining the impact of the proposed development upon the archaeological resource. Differing levels of impact are identified from different elements of the Scheme during the construction phase (paragraphs 8.8.18 and 8.8.19).</p> <p>With regarding to piling and cables, the chapter states:</p> <p><i>'Impacts resulting from piling for the PV panel mounting structures would result in very low percentages of truncation and are considered to have a negligible impact. Excavations for cabling and other below ground elements of the Scheme would result in partial truncation of archaeological remains resulting in a low impact. For archaeological remains of low sensitivity (as indicated by the informative trial trenching to be present within the Site), this negligible and low magnitude of impact to archaeological remains, prior to additional mitigation measures being put in place, would result in a Neutral and Minor Adverse effects, which is not significant in EIA terms'.</i></p>



Reference	Comments	Applicant's Response
		<p>Whilst NCC may not agree that the impact from piling is negligible, it cannot be regarded as anything other than low, which would still not be significant in EIA terms.</p>
NCC25	<p>9.17 Paragraphs 9.3.5, 9.4.4, 9.5.5 state that there will be “No significant effects on archaeology and cultural heritage are anticipated as a result of the decommissioning phase”, that there will be “No significant effects have been identified for any receptors during the decommissioning phase, and therefore no additional mitigation measures are required” and that “There will be no residual effects on non-designated heritage assets and archaeological remains during the decommissioning phase”.</p> <p>9.18 NCC considers that the removal of piles will have a destructive effect on below-ground archaeological remains which will need to be mitigated at the pre-construction stage.</p>	<p>Direct impacts to below ground archaeology was scoped out of the ES, per ES Appendix 2.2: Scoping Opinion Response [APP-134] (ID 3.3.2). This was due to the fact that any such impacts would have already been mitigation prior to the construction phase.</p>
NCC26	<p>9.19 ES Chapter 8 – Cultural Heritage and Archaeology, paragraphs 8.8.14 - 8.8.15 state that the “impacts from piling for the ground mounted PV modules will be at a very low level, typically ranging between 0.1% and 0.05% by area, depending upon the separation between rows” and that “cabling within the Solar PV Site will have a greater impact than piling, yet will still be relatively low, typically involving c.110m in length per hectare at widths of between 1.6m and 0.6m. Unlike piles, however, this impact will not be evenly spread and has potential to cause more localised impact”. NCC considers that the cumulative impacts of the piling and cables will have an adverse impact on below-ground archaeological remains which will need to be mitigated at pre-construction stage. The assessment of impact does not include the impact of the removal of the piles, which cause a buffer halo effect of impact greater than the diameter of the piles.</p>	<p>The range of below ground impact from piling of between 0.1% and 0.05% by area is based upon an impact of double the pile radius to account for additional disturbance caused by the removal of the piles. This was communicated to NCC during verbal discussions regarding the proposed mitigation strategy on 18 September 2025.</p> <p>It is agreed that pre-construction mitigation will be required and this is laid out in ES Appendix 8.7: outline Archaeological Mitigation Strategy [APP/6.4.1] which was formulated in consultation with NCC.</p>
NCC27	<p>9.20 ES Chapter 8 – Cultural Heritage and Archaeology, paragraph 8.8.17 states that “trial trenching of the Site has established the depth of the archaeological horizon ranges from 0.2m to 0.8m, and as such, remains are shallow enough to be sensitive to the above impacts. The possible burnt mound in Field 23, the Iron Age settlement in fields 9 and 15, the Roman settlement in Field 9 and the Roman road between fields 9 and 15 (followed by Fincham Drove) are considered to have the most potential to address the research priorities of the region and are potentially of low (local) sensitivity. The remaining fields contain features relating to low-level agricultural activities of less interest”.</p> <p>9.21 To date archaeological trial trenching has mainly targeted areas where geophysical survey detected anomalies potential archaeological origin, a very small part of the overall scheme. Apparent ‘blank’ areas within the geophysical survey have not been tested with trail trenching. The overall effectiveness of the geophysical survey has not been adequately tested.</p>	<p>The archaeological trial trenching undertaken to date has primarily targeted areas where the geophysical survey had identified a high archaeological potential, although a number of trenches were positioned in areas where no geophysical responses were noted but identified features could reasonably have expected to extend (ES Appendix 8.6 Archaeological Trial Trenching Report [APP-160]). Geophysical survey is not infallible, and will not identify all feature types, it is, however, very useful in identifying the principal concentrations of archaeology and there is no reason to believe this is not the case. As outlined in ES Appendix 8.7: outline Archaeological Mitigation Strategy [APP/6.4.1] further stages of trial trenching are proposed within geophysically ‘blank’ areas in order to identify archaeology that may not have been picked up by the technique.</p>
NCC28	<p>9.22 Paragraph 8.1.18 states that the impacts resulting from piling for the PV panel mounting structures “would result in very low percentages of truncation and are considered to have a negligible impact. Excavations for cabling and other below ground elements of the scheme would result in partial truncation of archaeological remains resulting in a low impact. For archaeological remains of low sensitivity (as indicated by the informative trial trenching to be present within the site), this negligible and low magnitude of impact to</p>	<p>Based upon the nature of archaeological remains identified within the Order limits as detailed within ES Appendix 8.3: Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment [APP-153], ES Appendix 8.4: Geophysical Survey Report [APP-154 - APP-158], ES Appendix 8.5: Air Photo Services Report [APP-159] and ES Appendix 8.6 Archaeological Trial Trenching Report [APP-160] the impact from piling alone, given the small size of individual piles and the spacing between each pile, would not compromise the integrity of the archaeological features nor the ability to understand the ‘archaeological site’ should future archaeological investigation take place. It should also be noted that</p>



Reference	Comments	Applicant's Response
	<p>archaeological remains, prior to additional mitigation measures being put in place, would result in a neutral and minor adverse effects, which is not significant in EIA terms".</p> <p>9.23 NCC considers that the potential impacts on below-ground archaeological remains from piling for PV panel mounting structures are not negligible. The cumulative impacts of the piling and cables will have an adverse impact on below-ground archaeology. The magnitude of the impact is in part dependant on the nature of the below-ground archaeological remains.</p>	<p>the predicted impact of piling of 0.1% to 0.05% (which is calculated on the basis of double pile width to allow for disturbance from removal) is not an impact upon archaeology but the total below ground impact of the piling; therefore, the majority of the piles are not likely to impact archaeology at all. It is for these reasons that the impact of piling for the solar arrays has been assessed as negligible.</p> <p>Paragraph 3.4 of ES Appendix 8.7: outline Archaeological Mitigation Strategy [APP/6.4.1] allows for trial trenching of all areas of impact of the Scheme at a level to be agreed with NHES that is proportionate to the overall impact of the Scheme (i.e. to include the cumulative impact of piling and cables).</p>
NCC29	<p>9.24 Paragraph 8.9.4 states that “informative trenching will be undertaken in the remaining areas of the site not subject to previous trenching. It has been agreed with the Norfolk Historic Environment Service (NHES) that the amount and location of any additional trenching will be targeted on areas of higher impact and proportionate to the overall impact. As such the amount and location of the trenches can only be confirmed following detailed design”. At present NCC consider that the applicants’ archaeological consultants are underestimating the cumulative overall impact of the piled, cables and subsequent removal of the piles.</p>	<p>The full extent of below ground impact by piles and cables will not be known until detailed design stage; however, the assessment of impact upon the archaeological resource presented in ES Chapter 8: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [APP-057] is based upon professional experience and is considered to be fully robust.</p> <p>As detailed in response to NCC26 above, the typical impact of piling has included calculations which allow for additional disturbance from the removal of piles.</p>
NCC30	<p>9.25 Paragraph 8.9.14 states that “there are no significant effects identified for any receptors at the decommissioning phase and as such, no additional mitigation measures are required. However, it is suggested that the detailed Decommissioning Strategy (DS), to be prepared in accordance with the outline DS [APP/7.10] submitted with the DCO Application, will be submitted to the relevant local planning authority in consultation with the NHES, which will be sufficient to safeguard any archaeological remains during the decommissioning phase. Such measures will include locating the decommissioning compounds in areas of low sensitivity to both the archaeological resource and the settings of designated heritage assets, and ensuring that minimal below ground disturbance is undertaken in the removal of infrastructure”. NCC considers that the removal of piles will have a destructive effect on below-ground archaeological remains which will need to be mitigated at the pre-construction stage.</p>	<p>It is agreed that pre-construction mitigation will be required and this is laid out in ES Appendix 8.7: outline Archaeological Mitigation Strategy [APP/6.4.1] which was formulated in consultation with NCC.</p>
NCC31	<p>9.26 In relation to the ES Appendix 8.7 outline Archaeological Mitigation Strategy [APP-161], NCC is in broad agreement with the strategy. There are some differences of opinion between NCC and the applicant’s archaeological consultants regarding; the cumulative level of impact piling and cable for the solar arrays; and the need to have some level of testing by trial trenching of all areas of the scheme not previously trenched.</p>	<p>Paragraph 3.4 of ES Appendix 8.7: outline Archaeological Mitigation Strategy [APP/6.4.1] allows for trial trenching of all areas of impact of the Scheme at a level to be agreed with NHES that is proportionate to the overall impact of the Scheme (i.e. to include the cumulative impact of piling and cables). The proposed wording of ‘proportionate to the cumulative impact of all elements of the Scheme’ was the suggestion of NHES.</p>
NCC32	<p>9.27 NCC has no comments at this stage on the Draft DCO, or the requirements set out in schedule 2 in relation to the impacts on archaeology.</p>	<p>The Applicant welcomes this confirmation from NCC.</p>
Traffic and Transport		
NCC33	<p>10.1 NCC considers route C unsuitable for construction traffic from the Narford Road junction with the A47 due to substandard road widths. Similarly, it considers that Big Wood Lane and South Acre Road should not be</p>	<p>The updated oCTMP [REP1-052] and oOTMP [REP1-056] submitted at Deadline 1 confirm that Route C will not be used by any construction traffic associated with the Scheme, with the routing for both the construction and operational phases of the Scheme being secured through these documents.</p>



Reference	Comments	Applicant's Response
	<p>promoted for construction traffic. Additional detailed technical comments are included in NCC's relevant representation.</p> <p>10.2 The applicant has confirmed that route C will be removed from any updated documentation. NCC otherwise considers the current cumulative traffic information to be acceptable.</p>	<p>The Applicant welcomes NCC's confirmation that the cumulative traffic information is acceptable.</p>
NCC34	<p>10.13 NCC in its relevant representation expressed concern that the proposed construction traffic and access arrangements present significant challenges due to routing constraints. Specifically, it considers route C unsuitable for construction traffic from the Narford Road junction with the A47 due to substandard road widths. Similarly, it considers that Big Wood Lane and South Acre Road should not be promoted for construction traffic. Additional detailed technical comments are included in NCC's relevant representation, for the sake of brevity these have not been repeated in this LIR.</p> <p>10.14 The applicant has subsequently confirmed that route C will be removed from any updated documentation. NCC otherwise considers the current cumulative traffic information to be acceptable. NCC Highways have no further comments on the requirement 8 as standard highway condition.</p>	<p>The Applicant refers to its response to NCC33 above.</p>
NCC35	<p>10.15 NCC has no comments at this stage on the requirement 8 or requirement 15 relating to the submission of an operational traffic management plan as standard highway condition.</p>	<p>The Applicant welcomes this confirmation from NCC.</p>
Water Resources (including Flood Risk)		
NCC36	<p>11.1 The application is currently incomplete due to inconsistencies and limited information provided to support the application. The submitted Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) (ES Appendix 12.2: Flood Risk Assessment (Clean) (Revision 1) [AS-053]11 is not adequate. The application lacks information that demonstrates commitment to ensuring there is no increase in flood risk on site or elsewhere. In addition, NCC advised that there are a number of instances where the information provided is unclear and clarification is required to understand what is being proposed.</p> <p>11.2 The NCC LLFA is continuing to work with the applicant's flood risk consultant to address the issues set out above, although it considers that they will need to gather more site specific information and further information will be required.</p>	<p>The Applicant notes this comment and addresses the specific points made by the LLFA in turn below. However, the Applicant wishes to note from the outset that it does not agree with the LLFA's suggestion that the DCO Application lacks information that demonstrates commitment to ensuring there is no increase in flood risk on the Site or elsewhere, nor that it is unable to manage change in surface water runoff from areas of the Site without increasing flood risk.</p> <p>Accordingly, the Applicant is satisfied that the DCO Application contains sufficient and proportionate information to demonstrate that changes in surface water runoff arising from the Scheme can be appropriately managed, and that the Scheme will not result in an increase in flood risk on-site or elsewhere. The Applicant remains committed to ongoing engagement with the LLFA to resolve any outstanding points of clarification.</p>
NCC37	<p>11.8 In its relevant representations, NCC, in its role as LLFA, made clear that it considers that the application is currently incomplete due to inconsistencies and limited information provided to support the application. In short, the submitted Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) is not adequate. The application lacks information that demonstrates commitment to ensuring there is no increase in flood risk on site or elsewhere. In addition, NCC advised that there are a number of instances where the information provided is unclear and clarification is required to understand what is being proposed. Despite these comments and a further meeting with the applicant's flood risk consultant held on 18th May, it remains NCC's view that it is not clear whether the proposed development is able to manage change in surface water runoff from areas of</p>	<p>The Scheme has Work Nos. and does not have a detailed design at this stage. A detailed drainage plan will be provided once the detailed design of the Scheme has been progressed and finalised, following the issue of the DCO (if consented), as secured within Section 12.4 of ES Appendix 12.2: Flood Risk Assessment [APP/6.4.2].</p> <p>This will ensure surface water flood risk will be managed at the BESS, National Grid Substation and Customer Substation during temporary and permanent phases.</p> <p>The detailed design of the SuDS network for the Scheme will be provided to the LLFA, following issue of the DCO (if consented).</p> <p>As discussed with the LLFA in meetings in September 2025 and May 2026, the whole area for Work Nos. 2 – 4 was assessed as fully impermeable (with a Cv value of 1.0) for the purposes of the outline</p>



Reference	Comments	Applicant's Response
	<p>the site without increasing flood risk either onsite or elsewhere and therefore that further information will be required. The following provides a summary of NCC's LLFA's comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The information in the FRA and the ES is not adequately supported with appropriate technical information, the proposed design does not contain enough information for a drainage strategy to be suitable development and the information in the FRA and ES has many inconsistencies, contradictions and gaps. • There are inconsistencies and contradictions between both the FRA and the various relevant chapters in the ES. All this can be resolved but at the moment both the FRA and the relevant ES chapters need further work to be undertaken including some more consideration of the proposed development design and site-specific data. • Key points would include the lack of design detail relating to the impermeability of the proposed development platforms, access tracks and construction compounds. • The recently updated national fire chiefs' guidance for Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) sites has reduced the distance before the BESS units resulting in an increase density of units. As each unit is stood on a concrete plinth foundation this would increase the impermeable area and result in large areas of surface water attenuation being required. • The applicant has not consistently confirmed what the proposed surface water drainage features would include. The DIO supported this view in their comments (at ISH1) when they too acknowledged there was lack of information about where the proposed drainage features would be located. • The information supporting the FRA and the drainage is incomplete. At the moment there is no preliminary site-specific infiltration testing in areas of interest. • The drainage strategy is not able to confirm where the surface water drainage would discharge too and is unable evidence whether this would be to the ground or whether discharge to a watercourse is viable. • The LLFA has identified its concerns in relation to the prepared hydraulic modelling and that there is a lack of information about the data and approach contained in the modelling report. The model is important in the assessment of flood risk along a combined surface water flow path and ordinary watercourse. If this is not undertaken in an appropriate manner, then it not only undermines the FRA but also the relevant ES assessment. • There are inconsistencies and gaps in the ES assessment method for considering flood risk from surface water and ordinary watercourses. • Ultimately, there is not enough detail on the scheme, site specific information or appropriate drainage design information to determine what the proposed surface water management scheme is and whether it is viable. <p>11.9 The LLFA is continuing to work with the applicant's flood risk consultant to address the issues set out above, although it considers that they will need</p>	<p>drainage calculations presented in Section 12.4 BESS and Substations Surface Water Management of ES Appendix 12.2: Flood Risk Assessment [APP/6.4.2]. As such, the assessment of the volume of attenuation required for Work Nos. 2 – 4 is conservative and will be refined once the detailed design of the Scheme is available.</p> <p>Infiltration testing is discussed within paragraphs 12.4.2 and 12.4.3 of ES Appendix 12.2: Flood Risk Assessment [APP/6.4.2]. Table 12-2 shows that infiltration testing has been successful for all but one location.</p> <p>Infiltration testing was intentionally limited to the specific areas where impermeable surfaces will be introduced and represent the only elements of the Scheme where infiltration-based SuDS may be required to manage runoff.</p> <p>Observations from the site walkovers indicates that the superficial cover is homogenous across the Order limits and as such, it is anticipated that infiltration rates will be similar to the tested areas.</p> <p>Infiltration testing was not extended to the wide site areas as infiltration will continue to occur as per baseline conditions. The Scheme does not increase surface water runoff in these areas, as outlined in paragraph 12.3.16 of the ES Appendix 12.2: Flood Risk Assessment [APP/6.4.2]. Therefore, additional infiltration testing is unnecessary and not required to demonstrate compliance with NPPF policy on surface water management.</p> <p>Multiple infiltration tests were undertaken within Work Nos. 2 - 4, and the recorded infiltration rates showed minor variation across the test points.</p> <p>The lowest (worse-case) infiltration rate, as presented in Annex B of ES Appendix 12.2: Flood Risk Assessment [APP/6.4.2], was selected for use within the preliminary sizing of the infiltration basin.</p> <p>This is consistent with the principle set out in the LLFA Developer Guidance that designs must take account if the lowest observed infiltration performance to ensure conservative and reliable sizing of SuDS features.</p>



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	to gather more site-specific information, and further information will be required.	
NCC38	11.11 NCC have no comments at this stage on the Draft DCO, or the requirements set out in schedule 2 in relation to the impacts on water resources, including flood risk.	The Applicant welcomes this confirmation from NCC.
Socio-economics, Recreation and Tourism		
NCC39	<p>12.6 The assessment of the socio-economic impacts of the development are set out in the ES Chapter 14: Socio-Economics [APP-063]12. The chapter identifies and proposes measures to address the potential impacts and likely significant effects on socio-economics, during the construction, operational and maintenance, and decommissioning phases. It concludes that there will be no significant adverse effects.</p> <p>12.7 NCC in its relevant representation acknowledged that the applicant has estimated, taking the net direct and net indirect jobs together, that the project is expected to support 1,145 net additional jobs during the construction phase (extending over a twenty-four-month period), with between 285 and 575 of these being taken by local residents.</p> <p>12.8 It also noted that an outline Employment, Skills and Supply Chain Strategy (ESSCS) has been prepared which sets the applicant's strategy for promoting competition, innovation, and skills in relation to the DCO application for the construction, operation, maintenance, and decommissioning of The Droves solar farm.</p>	The Applicant agrees with this comment.
NCC40	12.9 It also requested that the applicant should provide appropriate compensation packages for those homes and businesses directly affected by both the construction works, and any long-term impacts. No explicit proposals for any such compensation packages are included in the application. It also requested that the applicant provide a community benefit fund.	<p>The Planning Statement [REP1-012] confirms that community benefits would be realised at a local level, should consent be granted for the DCO Application. For example, the oPRoWPPMP [APP-192] establishes how permissive paths proposed as part of the Scheme will be designed and implemented to improve accessibility across the Site. The oESSCS [APP-195] sets out proposals to promote local apprenticeships and training schemes, with the aim of enhancing local skills and qualification rates.</p> <p>The Community Benefit Fund proposed by the Applicant 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). However, it will be available to fund local projects.</p> <p>The Applicant will continue engagement during all stages of the Scheme, to support the development and delivery of community benefits.</p>
NCC41	<p>12.10 NCC welcomes the inclusion of a draft requirement to secure the preparation an ESSCS prior to commencement. NCC considers that the requirement appropriately provides for approval by NCC, in consultation with the NCC's skills and employment team, and ensures the detailed ESSCS is prepared in accordance with the outline strategy.</p> <p>12.11 It will be important that the detailed ESSCS includes clear targets, delivery arrangements and monitoring mechanisms, and that it is developed in continued engagement with the County Council to ensure alignment with local labour market priorities and the County Council's Employment and Skills Framework.</p>	<p>The Applicant notes NCC's support for the inclusion of a requirement (and the wording of this requirement) to secure the preparation of a detailed ESSCS.</p> <p>The Applicant confirms that the matters raised in 12.11 are already provided for within the oESSCS [APP-195]. In particular, the oESSCS [APP-195] sets out the approach to delivery, including roles and responsibilities, stakeholder engagement (including ongoing engagement with NCC and its skills and employment team), the establishment of clear objectives and targets, and monitoring and reporting mechanisms aligned with NCC's Employment and Skills Framework.</p> <p>The detailed Employment, Skills and Supply Chain Strategy will be prepared in accordance with the oESSCS [APP-195].</p>



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	12.12 NCC's comments otherwise remain as set out in its relevant representation.	
NCC42	12.13 NCC has no comments at this stage on the Draft DCO or the requirements set out in schedule 2 in relation to the socio-economic and tourism impacts.	The Applicant welcomes this confirmation from NCC.
NCC43	<p>12.14 As part of the Scheme design, there are approximately 3.5km of permissive path proposed within the Order limits. Specific measures focus on the creation of permissive paths to the southeast of the Order limits, linking to off-site permissive paths associated with High Grove solar farm to achieve a continuous permissive path referred to as the "Swaffham Link" between Swaffham, South Acre, the Nar Valley and surrounding villages. NCC welcomes the increase in access this provides and considers this should be secured beyond the lifetime of the project.</p> <p>12.15 NCC acknowledges the measures that will be in place during construction and requests that discussions required around temporary closures or effects on PRow are entered into at as early a stage as possible.</p> <p>12.16 Mitigation measures for PRow during operation phase are clear. Consideration should be given to ensure that these do not in themselves produce an impact on the experience and enjoyment of the landscape.</p> <p>12.17 Consideration should also be given to ensure that the impact of the development on the feel of movement through the landscape is being adequately mitigated as discussed in the landscape and visual chapter.</p> <p>12.18 Input should be sought from the national trails team at NCC regarding impact on the Peddars Way national trail and any mitigation.</p>	<p>The Applicant welcomes NCC acknowledges of the benefit of that the onsite permissive paths, as detailed within the oPRowWPPMP [APP-192].</p> <p>The Scheme will be decommissioned after 60 years of operation, after which the Applicant will hand back the land to the landowner. The Applicant therefore does not have control of the land beyond the lifetime of the Scheme and is unable to commit to the permanence of the permissive paths after the Scheme is decommissioned.</p> <p>The oCEMP [APP/7.6.2] and oPRowWPPMP [APP-192] confirm that details of any temporary closures (if required) will be set out in the detailed Public Right of Way and Permissive Path Management Plan which is secured through the draft DCO [APP/3.1.2] and requires the approval by the relevant planning authority.</p> <p>The Applicant welcomes the comment that the mitigation measures and management of the PRow during the operational phase, as set out within the draft DCO [APP/3.1.2], are clear.</p> <p>ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual [AS-016] and ES Appendix 6.8: Amenity and Recreation Assessment [APP-146] outlines potential effects upon users of PRow and promoted routes, including the Peddars Way, through the Site and study area. The assessments conclude that there would be no potential long term significant adverse visual effects upon visual receptors within the Site and wider LVIA study area.</p> <p>The potentially adverse effects identified within ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual [AS-016] take account of various mitigation measures embedded within the Scheme, which were designed to limit potentially adverse effects upon the landscape. The proposed enhancement and reinforcement planting within the Site would reinforce the existing character of the landscape within the Site and host landscape character area. They would not in themselves produce an adverse impact on the experience and enjoyment of the landscape. As previously established, many of the field boundaries and PRow are lined with hedgerow, trees, scrub and woodland blocks; the mitigation planting proposals use these same planting typologies to ensure the mitigation is in-keeping with the local landscape and therefore restores and reinforces the landscape character of the Site.</p> <p>Mitigation measures have included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retention of the majority of existing landscape features within and around the boundaries of the Site, namely mature hedgerows and tree cover which contribute to the landscape character of the local context. These landscape features serve to restrict, filter and enclose visibility within the Site and study area south of Bartholomew's Hills Plantation. There is some loss of vegetation proposed as part of the Scheme to allow for the Grid Connection Infrastructure, Site and internal field access Offset and buffering of the Scheme with new, woodland, hedgerow and tree planting to mitigate potential views from the nearby PRow, roads and residential dwellings both within and in close proximity to the Site In addition to the establishment of new hedgerow and hedgerow trees, the embedded mitigation also includes the retention, gapping up and enhancement of existing hedgerow within the Site. New planting species would be native, locally prevalent and include a mixture of deciduous and evergreen species to provide year-round screening. Alongside



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		<p>the existing hedgerow and trees within the Site's context, the gapping up of hedgerow with native trees and whips would provide visual screening of the Scheme from visual receptors within the wider study area, and from PRow and droves within the Site itself</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The long-term management and maintenance of existing and new vegetation is an embedded mitigation measure which ensures vegetation would be actively managed in the long term, as secured and detailed within the oLEMP [REP1-060]. The prescribed maintenance height of hedgerow at 3m is an embedded mitigation measure which aims to screen views towards taller elements of the Scheme from nearby PRow. The active management and maintenance of trees and woodland within the Order limits, both newly planted and existing, aims to ensure they not only survive but reach maturity and establishment in the medium and long term durations. In turn, these landscape features are primary mechanisms for filtering and screening views towards the Scheme from nearby PRow, roads and residential dwellings • Setting back the Scheme from key landscape features within and adjacent to the Site, such as droves, trees, hedgerow and woodland. The minimum offsets/buffers from existing landscape features, are outlined fully in ES Chapter 5: The Scheme [REP1-032]. The Scheme would be offset from existing PRow by a minimum of 15m, to respect the amenity and experience for PRow users along existing routes and allow for the sowing of extensive areas of new grassland along the margins of the Scheme. New grassland/wildflower areas are also proposed to be sown underneath the Solar PV Arrays which would enhance biodiversity within the Site; and • As referred to within the oLEMP [REP1-060], 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 network. In addition to this, a number of new permissive routes are proposed, of approximately 3.5km in total, which would link to the existing PRow network within the study area to provide recreational benefits. <p>As detailed within the ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual [AS-016], the visual impact of the Scheme would not be significant in the long term, once mitigation planting is established and has matured. The long-term management and maintenance of existing and new vegetation is an embedded mitigation measure which ensures vegetation would be actively managed in the long term, as secured and detailed within the oLEMP [REP1-060]. The prescribed maintenance height of hedgerow at 3m is an embedded mitigation measure which aims to screen views towards taller elements of the Scheme from nearby PRow. The active management and maintenance of trees and woodland within the Order limits, both newly planted and existing, aims to ensure they not only survive but reach maturity and establishment in the medium and long term durations. In turn, these landscape features are primary mechanisms for filtering and screening views towards the Scheme from nearby PRow, roads and residential dwellings.</p> <p>Contact has been made between the Applicant and the National Trails team at NCC with regard to seeking their input on potential impacts on the Peddars Way national trail and any mitigation. It is envisaged a discussion will take place in due course.</p>
NCC44	12.19 NCC has no comments at this stage on the Draft DCO or the requirements set out in schedule 2 in relation to the impacts on recreation, including PRow.	The Applicant welcomes this confirmation from NCC.
Health and Wellbeing		
NCC45	13.1 NCC has a responsibility under section 2B of the National Health Service Act 2006 to improve the public health of people in Norfolk. As part of this role,	The Applicant makes note of NCC's comment. In terms of mental health, these matters are considered in ES Chapter 15: Human Health [APP-064] . The assessment concluded no significant



Reference	Comments	Applicant's Response
	<p>we consider the effects of development proposals on public health when responding to planning applications and applications for development consent. NCC does not comment on matters such as noise or pollution which fall within the statutory duties of district councils.</p> <p>13.2 NCC welcomes the inclusion of a standalone human health chapter which now considers that the proposed development is likely to have a minimal overall effect on local health and wellbeing. Nonetheless, there remains potential for minor positive and negative impacts locally, with the principal area of concern relating to residents' mental wellbeing, particularly where changes to the local environment (i.e. around landscape character) and concerns associated with the development may contribute to stress, anxiety or reduced wellbeing.</p>	<p>adverse health effects on any receptors. However, the Applicant recognises that some residents may feel unease as the environment changes. To address this, the Applicant will provide clear and accessible information and maintain ongoing engagement with the community through the Community Liaison Group, as secured through the oCEMP [APP/7.6.2], oOEMP [APP/7.8.2] and oDS [REP1-058]. This is intended to ensure that concerns are heard and responded to throughout all phases of the Scheme.</p>
NCC46	<p>13.5 NCC in its relevant representation welcomed the inclusion of a standalone human health chapter and commended the applicant for taking on board comments made at the scoping and PEIR consultation stages. NCC public health noted the chapter's conclusion that the project is likely to result in positive health and wellbeing impacts, particularly in relation to employment, education and training, and physical activity.</p> <p>13.6 Overall, NCC public health now considers that the proposed development is likely to have a minimal overall effect on local health and wellbeing. Nonetheless, there remains potential for minor positive and negative impacts locally.</p>	<p>The Applicant agrees with this comment.</p>
NCC47	<p>13.7 NCC notes the findings of the human health chapter of the ES, which identifies likely positive effects in relation to employment, education and training, and physical activity. NCC also welcomes the provision of 4.7km of new permissive paths, which may improve opportunities for recreational access and support physical activity.</p>	<p>The Applicant welcomes this comment.</p>
NCC48	<p>13.8 In terms of potential adverse effects, NCC considers that the principal area of concern relates to residents' mental wellbeing, particularly where changes to the local environment (i.e. around landscape character) and concerns associated with the development may contribute to stress, anxiety or reduced wellbeing. These effects may be compounded by the proximity of the proposed High Grove solar (EN0110010), giving rise to the potential for cumulative impacts. Although some degree of such impact may be unavoidable in developments of this nature, clear communication and effective engagement with affected communities can help to minimise concern. There is also the potential for mental wellbeing impacts surrounding the perceived impacts of electromagnetic fields (EMFs). NCC welcomes the applicant's commitment to providing clear and accessible information to the public on EMF levels through the community liaison group, as proactive and transparent communication is essential for addressing concerns that local residents may have.</p>	<p>The Applicant agrees with this comment.</p>
NCC49	<p>13.9 NCC has not identified any need for mitigation beyond that which is proposed by the applicant. NCC has no comments at this stage on the Draft DCO or the requirements set out in schedule 2 in relation to the impacts on public health.</p>	<p>The Applicant welcomes this confirmation from NCC.</p>



Reference	Comments	Applicant's Response
Arboriculture		
NCC50	<p>14.1 NCC is concerned about foreseeable negative impacts to trees adjacent to the highway that did not appear to be considered within ES Chapter 16: Other Environmental Matters [APP065]14 or the AIA [APP/6.4.1]. ES Appendix 9.2: Traffic Assessment indicates that vegetation removal (including removal of trees) will be required to achieve the proposed visibility splays and signage. If the impacts are not avoided or insufficiently mitigated, then alternative access routes will need to be considered.</p>	<p>The Applicant disagrees with the assertion that foreseeable negative impacts to trees adjacent to the highway have not been considered within ES Chapter 16: Other Environmental Matters [APP-065] or the ES Appendix 16.4: Arboricultural Impact Assessment [APP/6.4.1].</p> <p>ES Appendix 16.4: Arboricultural Impact Assessment [APP/6.4.1] provides a comprehensive assessment of the likely impacts on existing trees, groups of trees, woodlands and hedgerows. The need to maintain visibility splays, including vegetation clearance and ongoing management, is identified, assessed and secured within ES Appendix 16.4: Arboricultural Impact Assessment [APP/6.4.1], the oCEMP [APP/7.6.2] and ES Appendix 9.2: Traffic Assessment [APP-163].</p> <p>There are, therefore, no unassessed or unforeseen impacts to trees arising from highway visibility requirements, and alternative access routes are not considered necessary.</p>
NCC51	<p>14.9 NCC in its relevant representation expressed concern about foreseeable negative impacts to trees adjacent to the highway that did not appear to be considered within the ES Chapter 16: Other Environmental Matters or the AIA.</p> <p>14.10 ES Appendix 9.2: Traffic Assessment indicates that vegetation removal (including removal of trees) will be required to achieve the proposed visibility splays and signage.</p> <p>14.11 The impacts should be considered within the AIA. If the impacts are not avoided or insufficiently mitigated, then alternative access routes will need to be considered.</p> <p>14.12 It is assumed that trees adjacent to the highway are under the ownership of the adjacent landowner and not NCC Highways, but no checks have been made on this. It is expected that the scheme confirms tree ownership, especially where impacts are foreseeable, and to have the permission of the tree owner prior to carrying out any works to facilitate this development.</p>	<p>The Applicant disagrees with the assertion that foreseeable negative impacts to trees adjacent to the highway have not been considered within ES Chapter 16: Other Environmental Matters [APP-065] or the ES Appendix 16.4: Arboricultural Impact Assessment [APP/6.4.1].</p> <p>ES Appendix 16.4: Arboricultural Impact Assessment [APP/6.4.1] provides a comprehensive assessment of the likely impacts on existing trees, groups of trees, woodlands and hedgerows. This assessment has been informed by, and is consistent with, the tree removal and management approaches set out on the Vegetation Removal Plan at Appendix 2 of the oLEMP [REP1-060]. The need to maintain visibility splays, including the requirement for vegetation clearance and ongoing management, has been clearly identified, assessed and secured within these documents, as well as within the oCEMP [APP/7.6.2] and ES Appendix 9.2: Traffic Assessment [APP-163].</p> <p>There are, therefore, no unassessed or unforeseen impacts to trees arising from highway visibility requirements, and alternative access routes are not considered necessary.</p> <p>The Applicant confirms that trees adjacent to the highway are under the ownership of the adjacent landowner and not NCC Highways. The Scheme will have permission of the tree owner prior to carrying out any works to facilitate this Scheme.</p>
NCC52	<p>14.13 NCC has no comments at this stage on the Draft DCO or the requirements set out in schedule 2 in relation to the impacts on trees.</p>	<p>The Applicant welcomes this confirmation from NCC.</p>
Minerals and Waste		
NCC53	<p>15.1 NCC does not consider that the proposed development will result in needless sterilisation of safeguarded mineral resources. This is due to the temporary, all be it a long-term temporary, nature of the project, the founding methods to be used for the project, and the limited areas of safeguarded mineral resources within the project boundary.</p> <p>15.2 NCC is also pleased to note that the ES Chapter 16: Other Environmental Matters contains an assessment of the waste management capacity in the vicinity of the project boundary and considers the potential impacts from the waste quantities generated by the construction and operation of the project. An outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (oCEMP) [APP-186] has been developed based on these assessments</p>	<p>The Applicant welcomes this confirmation from NCC.</p>



Reference	Comments	Applicant's Response
	<p>and will be secured through the DCO. A Site Waste Management Plan (SWMP) will be developed as part of an Operational Environmental Plan to address waste prevention, reuse, recycling and recovery during the operational phase, a SWMP for the construction phase will be submitted under a requirement of the DCO. NCC as the mineral and waste planning authority considers that the measures within the Draft DCO are appropriate to address the potential mineral and waste issues raised by the proposed development.</p>	
NCC54	<p>15.13 NCC was pleased to note that the ES Chapter 16: Other Environmental Matters contains an assessment of the waste management capacity in the vicinity of the project boundary and considers the potential impacts from the waste quantities generated by the construction and operation of the project. An oCEMP [APP-186]18 has been developed based on these assessments and will be secured through the DCO. Table 19 of the oCEMP states that the re-use of materials will take place on-site wherever feasible, such as excavated soil. A Site Waste Management Plan (SWMP) will be developed as part of an Operational Environmental Plan to address waste prevention, reuse, recycling and recovery during the operational phase, a SWMP for the construction phase will be submitted under a requirement of the DCO.</p>	<p>The Applicant welcomes this confirmation from NCC.</p> <p>The Applicant confirms that the detailed Construction Environment Management Plan is secured under Requirement 13 of Schedule 2 of the draft DCO [APP/3.1.2] and the detailed Site Waste Management Plan is secured under Requirement 19 of Schedule 2 of the draft DCO [APP/3.1.2].</p>
NCC55	<p>15.14 NCC as the mineral and waste planning authority considers that the measures within the Draft DCO are appropriate to address the potential mineral and waste issues raised by the proposed development.</p>	<p>The Applicant welcomes this confirmation from NCC and acknowledges that all matters relating to waste management have been now agreed with NCC under the relevant Statement of Common Ground (SoCG with Norfolk County Council [REP1-019]).</p>
Fire and Safety		
NCC56	<p>16.9 NCC has confirmed that any the detailed BSMP will need to be formally agreed by Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service, and it requires that a requirement in the DCO on this matter should be included, which is proposed (Requirement 6). It has also advised that risk control recommendations for all BESS installations should be subject to a suitable fire risk assessment and the development and production (amongst others) of the following strategies and plans:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A risk reduction and mitigation strategy that covers the design, construction, installation, operation and decommissioning phases of the project to minimise the impact of an incident. • An emergency response plan in consultation with Norfolk Fire & Rescue Service, which details site specific information regarding the hazards, locations of hydrants or stored water supplies, electrical isolators, measures to be taken during an incident and responses required post incident. Coordination should also include regular onsite training and familiarisation for operational fire service personnel. • An environmental impact and risk assessment must be completed. This must include firefighting water run-off including containment and treatment as necessary. Air pollution must also be considered. • A transport strategy to minimise the impact of additional vehicle movements and prevent an increase in the potential number of traffic incidents, especially in largely rural settings. 	<p>The Applicant acknowledges the points raised by the NCC regarding the contents of the detailed BSMP and the direction regarding confirmation by the Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service. The Applicant will consult with the Norfolk Fire and Rescue in the development of both the detailed Battery Safety Management Plan and the Emergency Response Plan. The commitment to do so is detailed in the outline Battery Safety Management Plan (oBSMP) [APP-194].</p>



Reference	Comments	Applicant's Response
NCC57	<p>16.10 Norfolk Fire & Rescue Service further advises that where appropriate, these plans should be supported with specific fire tests. Property insurers should be involved at an early stage in discussions to agree on a suitable fire strategy for BESS installations. The potential for both property loss and business interruption should be considered. The fire protection and mitigation strategy should be determined on a case-by-case basis, based on battery technology type, BESS site location, layout, compartment construction, system criticality, and other relevant factors. It should be multilayered and include a combination of; good design, thermal runaway avoidance, early detection, and automatic suppression. Manual fire control provision and planning, including water supplies, should be commensurate with BESS and other site fire hazards.</p> <p>16.11 Norfolk Fire and Rescue do not have any further comments at this stage.</p>	<p>Whilst the exact make and models of BESS and other associated infrastructure has yet to be finalised, the Applicant acknowledges the requirement to procure BESS Units that have appropriate fire test certification, specifically UL9540A testing.</p> <p>The detailed Battery Safety Management Plan will list the testing undertaken and include reference to test certification. The commitment to do so is detailed in the oBSMP [APP-194].</p>
NCC58	<p>16.12 NCC have no comments at this stage on the Draft DCO or the requirements set out in schedule 2 in relation to the impacts on recreation, including PRow.</p>	<p>The Applicant welcomes this confirmation from NCC.</p>
Requested changes to the Draft DCO		
NCC59	<p>Page 47, Proposed Change: The appropriate drainage arrangements need to be included in requirement 5, there is currently no mention of drainage or cross referencing to the drainage design of these areas of hard surfacing.</p> <p>Page 47, Explanation: Requirement 5 Detailed Design Approval includes information about the hard surfacing materials but there is no mention of drainage or cross referencing to the drainage design of these areas of hard surfacing. It is necessary for appropriate drainage arrangements to be included within this work otherwise it is likely there would be an increase in surface water flood risk.</p>	<p>Requirement 11 of the draft DCO [APP/3.1.2] states that no part of the Scheme may commence until written details of the surface water drainage scheme and (if any) foul water drainage system for that part have been submitted to and approved by the relevant planning authority. This approval must be in consultation with the Environment Agency and Anglian Water Services Limited (or its successor in function as the relevant water undertaker).</p> <p>The Applicant therefore considers that NCC's concerns (regarding drainage arrangements in relation to areas of hard surfacing) are already addressed by the Draft DCO [APP/3.1.2], as the surface water drainage scheme which must be approved before any works can take place (i.e. not solely those works to which Requirement 5 relates) will include details of the drainage arrangements referenced. The Applicant, therefore, does not propose to duplicate the drafting in the draft DCO [APP/3.1.2] via any amendments to Requirement 5.</p>
NCC60	<p>Page 50, Proposed Change: Environment Agency replaced with Lead Local Flood Authority, and the requirement separated into two separate requirements to reflect that surface water and foul water are managed by separate organisations.</p> <p>Page 51: Proposed Change: The LLFA suggests a separate requirement is listed for each phase of the development drainage design.</p> <p>Page 50, Explanation: In requirement 11 there is no mention of the need to consult the Lead Local Flood Authority, but rather the Environment Agency. As there is no main river on the site, but there is surface water flood risk and flood risk from ordinary watercourses, the Environment Agency are not the relevant organisation. Furthermore, as both the surface water and foul water are managed by separate organisations, it is not clear why they are covered in one shared requirement. Therefore, the draft requirement does not reflect the consultation of the right organisations.</p> <p>Page 51, Explanation: The LLFA also notes that Requirement 11 would need to be discharged at the same time as Requirement 5 as the design and scale</p>	<p>The Applicant does not propose to alter the drafting of the draft DCO [APP/3.1.2] in either of the instances highlighted by NCC. In relation to consultation, the Applicant notes that Requirement 11 of Schedule 2 of the draft DCO [APP/3.1.2] requires the Applicant to submit "to the relevant planning authority" (i.e. Breckland Council and/or NCC) the written details of the surface water drainage scheme and (if any) foul water drainage system. As part of this approval, the Councils must consult with the Environment Agency and Anglian Water Services Limited or its successor in function as the relevant water undertaker. However, the Councils are also entitled to consult with any other organisation if they deem it necessary to do so, which can include NCC in its role as the Lead Local Flood Authority (particularly given that is a branch of the same organisation providing the approval, i.e. one of the Councils). It is therefore unnecessary for the potential for this consultation to be spelt out on the face of the draft DCO [APP/3.1.2].</p> <p>As for NCC's point regarding phasing, the Applicant considers that it would be disproportionate to include a separate requirement for each phase of the Scheme in relation to drainage design. The Applicant has fully assessed the drainage impacts of each phase of the Scheme. The documents will be submitted under Requirement 11 at a time where sufficient information is available to the Applicant, and the Applicant notes (in relation to NCC's concern regarding decommissioning) that the oDS [REP1-058] (with which the detailed decommissioning strategy, submitted ten weeks before</p>



Reference	Comments	Applicant's Response
	<p>of the drainage system is intrinsically linked to the amount of hard surfacing materials. In addition, the LLFA notes that all phases of the development (construction, operation and decommissioning) would be covered by requirement 11. This could result in a delay to the scheme should there be design issues such as in relation to the construction and decommissioning phases where less information will be available at the time of preparation. The LLFA suggests that a separate requirement is listed for each phase of the development drainage design.</p>	<p>decommissioning (i.e. not before) must be substantially in accordance with) includes provisions relating to drainage.</p> <p>The Applicant, therefore, does not propose to depart from well-precedented drafting in made solar DCOs in either of these regards.</p>
NCC61	<p>Pages 51 and 52, Proposed change: 12.—(1) The authorised development must not be commenced until a programme of archaeological investigation has been carried out in accordance with the outline archaeological mitigation strategy. (2) No part of the authorised development may be commenced until a detailed or site-specific written scheme of investigation for that part has been submitted to and approved by the relevant planning authority.</p> <p>(3) Written schemes of investigation must be substantially in accordance with the outline archaeological mitigation strategy. (4) No development on any part of the authorised development shall take place other than in accordance with the detailed or site-specific written scheme of investigation approved under Part 2 of Requirement 12 and any addenda to that detailed or site-specific written scheme of investigation covering subsequent phases of mitigation (5) No part of the authorised development shall or put into first use until the site investigation and post investigation assessment has been completed in accordance with the programme set out in the archaeological written scheme of investigation approved under condition Part 2 of Requirement 12 and the provision to be made for analysis, publication and dissemination of results and archive deposition has been secured.</p> <p>Page 51, Explanation: The revised requirement wording brings it in line with standard archaeological condition wording; this ensures appropriate post-excavation and reporting and is in compliance with Historic England guidance https://historicengland.org.uk/imagesbooks/publications/morphe-projectmanagers-guide/</p>	<p>The Applicant does not propose to alter the drafting of Requirement 12 of Schedule 2 the draft DCO [APP/3.1.2] in the manner highlighted by NCC. ES Appendix 8.7: outline Archaeological Mitigation Strategy [APP/6.4.1] is secured by Requirement 12 and states within (at paragraph 1.2) that “<i>Written Schemes of Investigation will be appended to this AMS for each phase of works</i>”. These Written Schemes of Investigation(s) will include information relating to the detailed design relevant to archaeological mitigation measures being detailed within the document, and in turn are already secured through Requirement 12(2) of the draft DCO [APP/3.1.2] and will need to be approved by the relevant planning authority.</p> <p>ES Appendix 8.7: outline Archaeological Mitigation Strategy [APP/6.4.1] also already states, at paragraph 2.6, that “<i>all archaeological mitigation works will be undertaken to fully meet the requirements of all nationally recognised guidance for such work, including standards laid down by the former English Heritage (now Historic England) and the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists</i>”, which ensures that the Applicant will comply with relevant guidance from Historic England.</p> <p>The Applicant therefore considers that the concerns raised by NCC are already addressed in Requirement 12 and the related documents, and therefore does not propose to depart from well-precedented drafting in made solar DCOs in this regard.</p>
NCC62	<p>Page 57, Proposed change (to Article 4): (c) construct temporary works (including means of access), drainage, haul roads, security fencing, bridges, structures and buildings on that land;</p> <p>Page 57, Explanation: In Part 4, in relation to the "temporary use of land for constructing the authorised development", Paragraph 31. (1)b enables the applicant to "remove any buildings, structures, agricultural plant and apparatus, electric lines, drainage, fences, debris and vegetation from that land;" However, in Paragraph 31.(1)c the applicant is able to "construct temporary works (including means of access), haul roads, security fencing, bridges, structures and buildings on that land;" There are inconsistencies in the activities associated with the temporary works areas that result in the rights to removal of existing drainage arrangements (Paragraph 31. (1)b) but no responsibility to install the temporary drainage requirements (Paragraph 31. (1)c). This approach is not consistent with the key principle of NPPF on which EN-1 is based. NPPF (paragraph 170) and EN-1 (paragraph 5.8.27) agree there should be no increase in flood risk onsite or elsewhere throughout the lifetime of the proposed development, which would include the temporary</p>	<p>The Applicant assumes that NCC is referring to Article 31 of the draft DCO [APP/3.1.2], rather than Article 4.</p> <p>The Applicant does not propose to update the drafting of Article 31(1)(c) of the draft DCO [APP/3.1.2] in the manner suggested by NCC. NCC seek the inclusion of “<i>drainage</i>” in Article 31(1)(c) – however, Article 31(1)(e) already refers to the Applicant’s ability to “<i>construct any works on that land as are mentioned in Schedule 1 (authorised development)</i>”, and Schedule 1 (in turn) includes Work No. 7(f) for “<i>site drainage</i>” in the context of temporary construction and decommissioning laydown areas, plus the additional wording at the end of Schedule 1 includes “<i>surface water drainage systems</i>”.</p> <p>Therefore, “<i>drainage</i>” is already addressed via Article 31(1)(e), meaning the proposed amendment to Article 31(1)(c) is unnecessary.</p>



Reference	Comments	Applicant's Response
	<p>construction phase. This approach is supported by the LLFA's Developer Guidance that is publicly available. By having the right to remove existing drainage but with no responsibility to install drainage on a temporary works area, there is the potential for an increase in surface water flood risk from the temporary works areas. While in Works No. 7 which provides a limited description of the temporary construction and decommissioning areas, (f) "site drainage" is specifically mentioned. The NCC LLFA suggests that "drainage" is included into the wording of Paragraph 31.(1)c to address the Norfolk LLFA's concern.</p>	
NCC63	<p>Page 59, Proposed Change (to Work No.2): The LLFA suggests that "drainage" is included into the wording to address Norfolk LLFA's concerns.</p> <p>Page 59, Explanation: The NCC LLFA notes that in Works No. 2, there is an increase in impermeable area with no associated commitment to manage surface water runoff. Yet in the other Works No.s there is specific reference to either drainage or sustainable drainage. The LLFA suggests that "drainage" is included into the wording to address Norfolk LLFA's concern.</p>	<p>The Applicant does not consider it necessary to update the wording of Work No. 2 in the draft DCO [APP/3.1.2] in this regard. The wording at the end of Schedule 2 of the draft DCO [APP/3.1.2] clarifies that, across the entirety of the Order limits, the Applicant may undertake "<i>further associated development</i>" including "<i>surface water drainage systems</i>" – this power extends to the area of Work No. 2 shown on the Works Plan [APP-009] and therefore NCC's concern is already addressed in the drafting.</p>
NCC64	<p>Page 60, Proposed change (Work No. 5D): The LLFA suggests that "drainage" is included into the wording to address Norfolk LLFA's concerns.</p> <p>Page 60, Explanation: The NCC LLFA notes that in Works No.5D, there is an increase in impermeable area with no associated commitment to manage surface water runoff. Yet in the other Works No.s there is specific reference to either drainage or sustainable drainage. The LLFA suggests that "drainage" is included into the wording to address Norfolk LLFA's concern.</p>	<p>The Applicant does not consider it necessary to update the wording of Work No. 5D in the draft DCO [APP/3.1.2] in this regard. The wording at the end of Schedule 2 of the draft DCO [APP/3.1.2] clarifies that, across the entirety of the Order limits, the Applicant may undertake "<i>further associated development</i>" including "<i>surface water drainage systems</i>" – this power extends to the area of Work No. 5D shown on the Works Plan [APP-009] and therefore NCC's concern is already addressed in the drafting.</p>
NCC65	<p>Page 60, Proposed change (Work No.6): In Works No. 6 it is not clear what impermeable areas the sustainable drainage systems will be serving.</p>	<p>Work No. 6 comprises the works associated with the Solar PV Site, including internal access tracks and earthworks. As outlined in Design Principles, Parameters and Commitments [APP/5.8.2], these features could be served by SuDS to ensure the Scheme does not contribute to an increase in surface water runoff rates.</p>
NCC66	<p>Page 61, Proposed Change (Work No.11): It is not clear why the applicant has included an unnumbered Works item, after Works No. 11, for associated development within the Order limits. Also, it is not clear what additional associated development works this would relate to as most of the associated development works appear to have already been listed within the other Works No.</p>	<p>The additional wording at the end of Schedule 2 of the draft DCO [APP/3.1.2] (i.e. after Work No. 11) is included to ensure that the Applicant has the necessary powers to undertake further works (as listed) in connection with Work Nos. 1 to 11 within the Order limits. This effectively operates as a 'catch all' provision to ensure that the Scheme can be developed without unnecessary hindrance and is well-precedented across made solar DCOs.</p>
NCC67	<p>Page 63, Explanation: The LLFA notes that the applicant seeks to disapply the Norfolk Drainage Act 1815(a) and The Outwell, Stow Bardolph, Wimbotsham and Downham Drainage Act 1798(b). The LLFA does not have a copy of the text to understand the implications of disapplying these Acts.</p>	<p>The list of historic legislation included in Schedule 3 of the draft DCO [APP/3.1.2] has been comprised following a review by the Applicant of local legislation that might conflict with the powers and rights sought within the draft DCO [APP/3.1.2], relating to matters including land, railways and water within, and in the vicinity of, the Order limits. This list has been prepared taking a precautionary approach, because in some cases it was difficult to conclusively determine whether or not the provisions of the legislation were relevant to the draft DCO [APP/3.1.2], given that plans were not available in respect of the majority of the Acts considered to make clear their precise geographic scope. Article 6(1)(f) of the draft DCO [APP/3.1.2] disapplies the legislation listed in Schedule 3 of the draft DCO [APP/3.1.2] in so far as the provisions still in force are inconsistent with how the powers in the draft DCO [APP/3.1.2] can be exercised.</p>
NCC68	<p>Page 64, Proposed Change (Part 3): Amending Article 10 (4) to refer to paragraphs (1) and (2).</p>	<p>The Applicant notes that Article 10(4) of the draft DCO [APP/3.1.2] already includes reference to sub-paragraph (2) – i.e. the powers granted to the Applicant under that sub-paragraph are exercisable</p>



Reference	Comments	Applicant's Response
	<p>Page 63, Explanation: NCC recommends that the street works in schedule 5 should also be subject to NCC consent, unless other protective provisions or relevant highways agreement is put in place. This could be achieved by amending Article 10 (4) to refer to paragraphs (1) and (2).</p>	<p>only with the consent of the street authority. This is because the works proposed under sub-paragraph (2) are of a more varied nature, meaning the consent requirement is proportionate.</p> <p>Given the powers granted to the Applicant under sub-paragraph 1 of Article 10 of the draft DCO [APP/3.1.2] relate to works that are specifically defined (and consented, if the DCO is granted) and explained with reference to Schedule 5, there is no ambiguity as to the works proposed and therefore the requirement for the Applicant to obtain consent before undertaking these works would be disproportionate.</p> <p>The Applicant, therefore, does not propose to depart from well-precedented drafting in made solar DCOs in this regard.</p>



4 Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk's [\[REP1-076\]](#) LIR

Reference	Comments	Applicant's Response
Cultural Heritage and Landscape Context		
BKLWN1	2.1.1. The proposal area is rich in designated sites such as Listed Buildings and Scheduled Monuments. Designated heritage assets are concentrated within the settlements, in particular Castle Acre, South Acre and West Acre, with many of the buildings being within designated Conservation Areas. These historic sites together denote multiple periods of human occupation on and conflict. Development in their wider setting and the industrialisation of this key landscape will result in harm to the significance of the assets.	The extent of designated heritage assets in the vicinity of the Order limits is recognised and described in ES Chapter 8: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [APP-057] and supporting appendices. This comment suggests that all designated heritage assets in the vicinity will be harmed by the Scheme, which is not the case. ES Chapter 8: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [APP-057] identifies fifteen (out of a total of 151) designated heritage assets in the vicinity that could be sensitive to development proposals, and assesses those assets accordingly.
BKLWN2	2.1.2 The Council disagree with the assessment and level of harm that has been attributed to the development within Chapter 8.	The Applicant is satisfied that the levels of harm identified within ES Chapter 8: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [APP-057] are robust and justifiable. The disagreement is a matter of professional opinion.
BKLWN3	2.1.3. The Borough Council will rely on the views of Norfolk County Council in regard to below ground archaeology.	The Applicant acknowledges that KLWN defer to NCC on archaeological matters and has responded to points made by NCC accordingly.
BKLWN4	2.2.5. The Council considers that it is important the scheme demonstrates compliance with the requirements of NPS EN-3, on the following matters: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paragraph 2.5.2 in regard to demonstrating good design, particularly in respect of landscape and visual amenity, and in the design of the project to mitigate impacts such as noise and effects on ecology and heritage. Paragraph 2.10.107 onwards in regard to the impacts of solar PV developments on the historic environment. 	The Applicant considers the Scheme to be in compliance with the requirements of NPS EN-3 with regard to heritage. Both Paragraph 2.5.2 and 2.10.107 of EN-3 have been addressed by the Applicant on pages 111 and 113 of the Policy Compliance Document [REP1-014] .
BKLWN5	2.3.1. The Order limits lie to the north of Swaffham and to the south of the historic towns of South Acre, West Acre and Castle Acre. Although the site lies outside of the Borough of Kings Lynn and West Norfolk, it plays a crucial part in the setting of the Designated Heritage Assets listed in section 1.2.8 above and the Order limits form part of a sensitive and impressive historic landscape.	It is accepted that the administrative boundaries between Breckland Council and KLWN have no bearing on the contribution of setting to the significance of the identified designated heritage assets. A detailed assessment of the contribution of setting to the significance of designated heritage assets is presented in ES Appendix 8.2: Stage 1 and Stage 2 Setting Assessment [APP-152] . Whilst it is recognised that the Order limits make some contribution to the significance of a number of designated heritage assets, in no case has that contribution been assessed as 'crucial'. 'Crucial' would imply that this element of setting is key to the significance of the asset, when, as laid out in Appendix 8.2, the bulk of the Order limits make no contribution to the significance of the assets due to a lack of shared 'experience' and those elements which can be considered to contribute to significance are at such a distance that their contribution is very limited.
BKLWN6	2.3.2. Castle Acre is an impressive settlement set within a river valley. The topography of the Nar Valley is rare for Norfolk. The village of Castle Acre sits on the north side of the valley and has commanding views over the river and the opposite valley side as well as the surrounding landscape. Bartholemew's	2.3.2 A detailed assessment of the contribution of setting to the significance of designated heritage assets is presented in ES Appendix 8.2: Stage 1 and Stage 2 Setting Assessment [APP-152] . Bartholemew's Hill would appear to have been planted with trees at some point in the mid to late 19 th century, as evidence by historic cartographic sources (ES Appendix 8.3: Archaeological Desk-



Reference	Comments	Applicant's Response
	<p>Hill Planta on, which the proposed substation would be set behind is a key part of this view and the planta on is visible from both the castle and the castle bailey.</p> <p>2.3.3. The intended purpose of a castle was to ensure that it was able to defend itself and its lands from invasion during turbulent times. The Castle, as a result of its elevated position and far reaching views across the valley, would have been able to defend its people, protect its source of water and farm the surrounding land. This is the purpose of it being in this location. Although the upstanding remains and the underground archaeology are its reason for scheduling, the building cannot be read in isolation, its purpose and place in the landscape add to the significance of the upstanding and underground structures and places it in context. The agricultural character of this landscape is unchanged and while the hedgerows and field sizes may have changed, the nature of the land use has not. The Castle can still be appreciated across the valley as one nestled in amongst an agricultural, rural landscape over which it had control.</p> <p>2.3.4. The Conservation Area at Castle Acre is one of the jewels in the crown of West Norfolk. It is a collection of heritage assets, both designated and non-designated, that as a whole have a harmonious and coherent story to tell. The red pantiles of the streets as they rise up the valley side from the River Nar are atmospheric and glimpsed views of the rural landscape beyond as well as the ever dominant castle, are possible. It is indeed often the streets of rising pan led buildings that guide the eye up towards the civic buildings in the longer view, a visual interpretation of the hierarchy of power of the day.</p> <p>2.3.5. The proposed solar development has the potential to impact the setting of these heritage assets by dramatically changing the character of the landscape, the rural qualities of which are key to the understanding and context of these important buildings and places.</p>	<p>Based Assessment [APP-153] and, therefore, quite a late edition in the evolution of the landscape. Whilst the plantation is visible in views from the northern side of the valley, along with many other 19th and 20th century blocks of woodland which crest the ridge, is the Applicant does not see how this could be considered a 'key' part of the view and its visibility from the Castle and Priory is largely immaterial to the significance of the assets.</p> <p>2.3.3 The purpose and reasons for the siting of the castle are not in dispute and are discussed in both ES Appendix 8.2: Stage 1 and Stage 2 Setting Assessment [APP-152] and ES Chapter 8: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [APP-057], which also recognises the role that setting plays in contribution to the significance of the monument. However, the Applicant disputes that the character of the landscape has not changed. Whilst much of the surrounding landscape remains in agricultural use, it does not appear as it would have in the medieval period when the open field system would have been practiced. The enclosure of the open fields (reaching its peak in the 18th century) represents one of the biggest changes to the English agricultural landscape in history and radically transformed the appearance of the landscape. The 18th and 19th centuries also saw an increase in plantations to provide cover for game birds, which is particularly evident within and in the vicinity of the Order limits. The bulk of the Order limits are also unlikely to have been used as arable land in the medieval period, but would more likely have formed summer pasture/grazing land. The almost complete lack of medieval artefacts recovered during the trenching (ES Appendix 8.6 Archaeological Trial Trenching Report [APP-160]) suggests that the area was not being intensively manured in the period and was, therefore, unlikely to have formed arable land as it does today. The medieval rural countryside was also not purely agricultural but would also have been exploited for various industries such as charcoal burning and mineral extraction, albeit at a small scale. The landscape today is distinctly modern, farmed by modern agricultural practices and containing many modern elements such as the road networks, pylons, wind turbines, large chicken sheds, and pig rearing facilities. Therefore, whilst it is accepted that it remains a largely agricultural landscape, the landscape is not unchanged from the medieval period.</p> <p>In terms of the appreciation of the castle across the valley this is largely only appreciable on the northern side of the break of slope upon which the bulk of the Order limits is sited. Furthermore, there is a marked difference in being able to discern the presence of the monument (which can in itself be problematic given the distance from the plateau) and actually being able to appreciate the monument and aspects of its special interest, which requires closer proximity to truly appreciate.</p> <p>2.3.4 This description of Castle Acre Conservation Area, is, largely, accepted. However, these aspects described that add to its significance are not appreciable from the bulk of the Order limits, as described in ES Appendix 8.2: Stage 1 and Stage 2 Setting Assessment [APP-152] and ES Chapter 8: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [APP-057].</p> <p>2.3.5 The impacts of the Scheme are presented within ES Chapter 8: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [APP-057]. The bulk of the Order limits that will be subject to change, arising from the Scheme, are not considered to make any contribution to the significance of the identified heritage assets due to the lack of shared experience between the plateau land and the heritage assets, which is a prerequisite for contribution to significance. Large tracts of agricultural land lie between the Order limits and the assets, and the understanding and context of these assets will, therefore, remain to be clearly appreciated.</p>
BKLWN7	<p>2.3.6. The movement of the existing pylon line to behind Bartholomew's Hill Plantation would, if able to be achieved, have a positive impact upon the character and setting of the heritage assets inside Castle Acre however, the</p>	<p>Visualisations of the Scheme have been prepared from a number of locations, including from Castle Acre Castle and Castle Acre Priory. Parameter based photowires show the maximum parameter for the Grid Connection Infrastructure, these are included within ES Figure 6.12: PM6, PM8, PM12 and</p>



Reference	Comments	Applicant's Response
	<p>new line of pylons has not been shown on the visualisations, and it is unclear where in the landscape these would actually be placed. While the Council support the decommissioning and repositioning of the pylons in principle, additional information is required to ensure that they are placed in positions that would not be more prominent within this sensitive landscape.</p>	<p>PM14 Parameter Based Winter Photowires [APP-089] and ES Figure 6.13: PM6, PM8, PM12 and PM14 Parameter Based Summer Photowires [AS-031].</p> <p>The Grid Connection Infrastructure, which includes the new line of pylons, is shown on photomontages of an illustrative scheme are included within ES Figure 6.14: PM8, PM12 and PM14 Winter Photomontages - Illustrative Scheme [AS-039] and ES Figure 6.15: PM8, PM12 and PM14 Summer Photomontages - Illustrative Scheme [AS-045].</p>
BKLWN8	<p>2.3.7. The fencing around the scheme also requires some further consideration. Large high fencing along the road and between fields of solar panels, at this scale would turn this landscape into one of industrialisation rather than rural agricultural and changes the context of the castle and castle acre. This has also not been shown on any of the visualisations and could be key when considering the impact of the proposal from, for example Little Palgrave Hall.</p>	<p>The Design Principles, Parameters and Commitments [APP/5.8.2] sets out the parameters for the fencing within the Scheme. The fencing will be set back for the existing features within the Site, as set out within the Design Principles, Parameters and Commitments [APP/5.8.2].</p> <p>The fencing for the Scheme is not shown on the parameter based photowires as these parameter based photowire visualisations are primarily produced to demonstrate the scale and siting of development areas within the Order limits, of elements such as the Solar PV Arrays, BESS and Customer and National Grid Substations. Similarly, the fencing for the Scheme is not perceptible on the photomontages of an illustrative scheme as are they are from viewpoint locations 8, 12 and 14 which are situated within the wider LVIA study area. These photomontages are included within ES Figure 6.14: PM8, PM12 and PM14 Winter Photomontages - Illustrative Scheme [AS-039] and ES Figure 6.15: PM8, PM12 and PM14 Summer Photomontages - Illustrative Scheme [AS-045].</p>
BKLWN9	<p>2.3.8. Bunds have also been proposed around the substation and potentially are required around RAF Marham. The scale of these bunds, expected to be around 4m in height, would result in large areas of earth which could block out the views of the sky over the crest of the valley. This needs some further understanding before comments can be given but, has the potential to be impactful upon the character of the landscape and therefore the context of Castle Acre. It is also unclear whether fencing would be required on top of the bund. If so, this would raise the visibility of these features further.</p>	<p>ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual [AS-016] outlines potential landscape and visual impacts as a result of the Scheme, which includes the potential for bunds within Field 24 and 27 for BESS noise mitigation, as described in paragraph 5.4.46 of ES Chapter 5: The Scheme [REP1-032].</p> <p>The Applicant has had further pragmatic engagement with the Ministry of Defence (MoD) following Deadline 1 regarding the potential mitigation solutions to resolve the potential impacts to radar and aviation receptors. The Applicant is working through potential mitigation options with the MoD which will be confirmed at a future deadline. Following this process a review of the potential for any likely significant effects will be undertaken and, if necessary, further assessment will be undertaken. This would include, as appropriate and necessary, consideration of landscape and visual, biodiversity, land use, and interactions between topics (in-combination effects).</p> <p>The Applicant has committed to not placing security fencing on the top of a bund as set out the Design Principles, Parameters and Commitments [APP/5.8.2] submitted at Deadline 2.</p>
BKLWN10	<p>2.3.9. The impact of the SuDS scheme on the landscape could also be harmful if standard drainage basins are proposed. The SuDS should work with the existing landscape to provide a harmonious transition between the existing agricultural landscape and the designed landscape that inevitably comes with this sort of proposal.</p>	<p>The Scheme has Work Nos. and does not have a detailed design at this stage. A detailed drainage plan will be provided once the detailed design of the Scheme has been progressed and finalised, following the issue of the DCO (as consented). It is anticipated that shallow infiltration basins will be utilised to attenuate surface water and these would be grassed structures as opposed to over engineered detention basins.</p>
BKLWN11	<p>2.3.10. At present the land to the north of Bartholemew's Plantation is proposed to be skylark mitigation. No real indication has been provided as to what this land would look like and whether any infrastructure such as fencing or other paraphernalia is required to manage this. The ecological requirement for mitigation land is noted, however the change the character of the land from farmland to something else could itself have a negative impact on the setting of the area if not properly managed.</p>	<p>The Applicant has provided a description of the management of skylark mitigation areas within ES Appendix 7.3: Proposed Mitigation Strategy for Ground Nesting Birds Requiring Open Habitats [APP-149] and within paragraphs 7.3.111 and 7.3.112 of the oLEMP [REP1-060].</p> <p>The Applicant has committed to the provision of skylark plots (areas of bare earth) measuring 6m x 4m, within land cropped for cereal production that will be at least 50m from the nearest field boundary. Given the size and scale of this mitigation, and the continued farmland use of the fields, the Applicant does not consider this would have a negative impact of the setting of the area.</p>



Reference	Comments	Applicant's Response
BKLWN12	<p>2.3.11. Overall, the proposal would introduce industrialisation into this intensely rural and special part of landscape. Industrialisation and the paraphernalia that this brings with it, would change the character of the land and be impactful upon the setting, which forms a part of the significance of the designated heritage assets identified. The topography of the landscape, being on the valley side, means that the infrastructure and panels have the potential to be visible from further away.</p> <p>2.3.12. The Council maintain that as an integral part of the significance of the Castle and Conservation Area at Castle Acre, this change in land use would result in less than substantial harm, moderate in scale, to the significance of the castle at castle acre and a moderate level of less than substantial harm to the setting of Castle Acre Conservation Area.</p>	<p>ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual [AS-016] assesses the potential landscape and visual impacts as a result of the Scheme for the Site and wider study area. The assessment concludes that there would be no potential long term significant adverse visual effects upon visual receptors within the Site and wider LVIA study area, including publicly accessible views from within Castle Acre. With regard to landscape character, the assessment concludes that there would be potential long term significant adverse landscape effects upon LCA D1 Swaffham Heath and LCA E6 North Pickenham Plateau. However, these effects upon the LCAs are only judged to be significant where they fall within the Site. There are no potential long term significant adverse landscape effects beyond the Order limits.</p> <p>The impacts of the Scheme are presented within ES Chapter 8: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [APP-057]. The bulk of the Order limits that will be subject to change are not considered to make any contribution to the significance of the identified heritage assets due to the lack of shared experience between the plateau land and the heritage assets, which is a prerequisite for contribution to significance. In terms of the scales of impact as defined in the cultural heritage chapter, in order to be a moderate impact there would need to be considerable harm to a heritage asset's setting, such that the asset's significance would be materially affected/considerably devalued, but not totally or substantially lost. This is a relatively high level of impact which is not reflected by the proposals which would retain the village siting, the visual and spatial connection between the assets, the connection to the Peddars Way and the vast majority of the surrounding landscape visible from the heritage assets. The majority of views will be unchanged, with only very small elements of the wider Scheme (at least partially screened under the proposals) remaining.</p>
BKLWN13	<p>2.4.1. The success of the mitigation for heritage impacts will depend upon the detail of the scheme which is not currently available to the Council. Section 9 below details the Council's request for consultation when key details of the scheme are being discharged post-consent.</p> <p>2.4.2. Part of the mitigation's success will rely upon existing landscape features – including in particular Bartholomew's Hill Plantation being appropriately retained and managed throughout the construction, operation and post-decommissioning period, particularly given the intention for the substation to be retained in perpetuity.</p> <p>2.4.3. The Council has concerns that the scope of allowances for loss/removal of trees as written in Article 40 of the dDCO will not sufficiently protect these tree belts, woodland and hedgerows that have been specifically removed from the Order limit. The Council requests that the wording is amended to remove ambiguity given inclusion of the word 'near to any part of the authorised development' and suggest the wording is revised to that which reflects that of the Springwell DCO granted in April 2026 and protects the key landscape features, for example Bartholomew's Hill from damage given that these mature tree belts and woodland plantations provide crucial screening of the infrastructure as proposed.</p>	<p>2.4.1 It is accepted that some aspects of mitigation cannot be finalised until the detailed design is complete. The requests for further consultation at the detailed design stage are addressed in the Applicant's response to BKLWN47 below.</p> <p>2.4.2 Bartholomew's Hill Plantation does not lie within the Order limits and, therefore, the Applicant has no control over the plantation's management. However, the Applicant is not aware of any reasons why the plantation should not continue to be managed in its current form, in line with best practice.</p> <p>In response to 2.4.3, the drafting in Article 40 of the draft DCO [APP/3.1.2] reads "<i>near any part of the authorised development</i>". The meaning of 'near' is ascertained through the context of the remainder of paragraph (1). In order to have the power to lop a tree or shrub, the Applicant must reasonably believe it necessary to do so because of obstruction or interference with the construction, maintenance or operation of the Scheme, is a danger to persons using the Scheme, or obstructs construction vehicles. The tree must therefore be of such proximity to the Order limits that it is causing such an interference and would therefore only apply to trees that are effectively adjacent to the Order limits, rather than anything broader. If this wording was amended, an unhelpful situation could arise – for example, a tree could become damaged such that it is liable to fall towards the Scheme, presenting a danger to persons using the Scheme; however, that tree could, until it falls, remain wholly outside the Order limits. It is considered preferable to restrict the ambit of this power by reference to the harm that the tree is causing, as opposed to restricting the power geographically.</p>
Ecology and Biodiversity		
BKLWN14	<p>3.1.3. The baseline survey work appears to be thorough and the Council in general has limited concerns from an ecology perspective in regard to the impacts upon our Borough, subject to compliance with the construction</p>	<p>The Applicant welcomes this comment and provides the clarification requested in the corresponding responses below.</p>



Reference	Comments	Applicant's Response
	management plan and clarification in regard to Biodiversity Net Gain and proposed monitoring of the created habitat.	
BKLWN15	<p>3.2.3. The Council considers that it is important the scheme demonstrates compliance with the requirements of NPS EN-3, on the following matters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paragraph 2.5.2 in regard to demonstrating good design, the design of the project to mitigate impacts including effects on ecology • Paragraph 2.10.128-130 in regard to biodiversity and ecological conservation/mitigation 	<p>The Applicant has submitted a Design Approach Document [AS-009 - AS-011] which sets out how the Applicant has approached the design process for the Scheme. Appendix A of the Design Approach Document [AS-011] sets out how the Applicant has complied with Planning Inspectorate guidance on 'Good Design' for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs). Both Paragraph 2.5.2 and Paragraphs 2.10.128-130 have been addressed by the Applicant on pages 111 and 134 of the Policy Compliance Document [REP1-014].</p>
BKLWN16	<p>3.3.1. The submission relies on the lack of impact to potential roosting features within trees on site to rule out impacts upon on roosting bats. The retention of the proposed buffers throughout construction activities is therefore vital, given the lack of detailed survey work to confirm the nature, species and status of any individual roosts. Consideration will also need to be given to commuting corridors throughout construction, operation and decommissioning which also have not been specifically mapped. Measures with regard to preventing lighting impacts are also welcomed.</p> <p>3.3.2. Fragmentation of habitat connection could occur through severance of hedgerows, impacting upon foraging bats. One of the largest bat roosts in the country is recorded to the north of the site within the Stags Inn pub (soprano and common pipistrelles) and the bats within this roost may be reliant on habitats within the red line boundary. The retention of key features and the implementation of exclusion buffers is likely suitable to prevent loss of important navigational features, commuting routes or foraging areas. The lighting design within the substation/BESS compounds should take into account light spill and other potential impacts on bats, particularly given the records of barbastelle bats in this area.</p>	<p>Details of the bat activity survey work undertaken are set out within the ES Appendix 7.2: Baseline Ecological Survey Report [APP-148], whilst potential impacts on bats are fully assessed in ES Chapter 7: Ecology and Biodiversity [REP1-034]. This assessment considers baseline ecological conditions and evaluates likely significant effects from the construction, operation and decommissioning phases of the Scheme, including with reference to the individual species present and the key features, and concludes that, following the implementation of the embedded mitigation and additional mitigation proposed, no significant effects are anticipated in regard to foraging and commuting bats.</p> <p>Hedgerow removal and the creation or widening of gaps will be limited to that which is strictly necessary to facilitate access tracks, fencing and cable routes. Where practicable, existing gaps within hedgerows will be utilised to minimise the need for removal, as secured through the Design Principles, Parameters and Commitments [APP/5.8.2].</p> <p>The Design Principles, Parameters and Commitments [APP/5.8.2] and oLEMP [REP1-060] set out the commitment to provide a minimum buffer of 8m to hedgerows with the exception of crossing points.</p> <p>The Design Principles, Parameters and Commitments [APP/5.8.2] confirms that <i>"the Solar arrays will not be lit during the operational phase"</i>, such that any lighting will be limited to temporary construction lighting and health and safety/security requirements associated with the Customer Substation, National Grid Substation, and within the BESS compound. These areas represent a very small proportion of the Site, whilst measures to control lighting and prevent adverse effects (including secured by Requirement 13 of the draft DCO [APP/3.1.2]) are set out within the oCEMP [APP/7.6.2].</p> <p>Further, the key features identified to support bat commuting and foraging within the site are the hedgerows and woodland edges. The Customer Substation, National Grid Substation, and BESS will be located internally within fields and will not affect boundary features, including no significant light spill onto boundary features, and as such features of importance for bats will remain unaffected and connectivity maintained within the landscape.</p>
BKLWN17	<p>3.3.3. [REDACTED] have been identified within the [REDACTED] and the detailed design will need to accommodate them as per standard guidance, and a licence obtained where necessary. Fencing may prevent connectivity of foraging areas for badgers, however on the basis of fencing retaining key wildlife corridors in the field margins, no significant adverse impact has been identified.</p>	<p>The operational area of the Scheme will be enclosed within perimeter fencing; however, dispersal impacts on wildlife, including Badger, are not anticipated owing to the incorporation of above ground clearances and mammal gates. Further, the perimeter fencing will be set back from the boundary habitats retained as part of the embedded mitigation, as detailed within Section 7.7 of ES Chapter 7: Ecology and Biodiversity [REP1-034] and secured within the Design Principles, Parameters and Commitments [APP/5.8.2].</p>
BKLWN18	<p>3.3.4. Construction activities will result in the direct loss of arable habitat and therefore the loss of breeding and foraging habitat for various bird species. The assemblage of breeding birds on the site includes priority species and the loss of active nests or other disturbance during construction activity could</p>	<p>The Applicant notes and agrees with this comment, which is consistent with the information set out within ES Chapter 7: Ecology and Biodiversity [REP1-034] and does not raise any concerns with the approach or information provided.</p>



Reference	Comments	Applicant's Response
	<p>have adverse impacts on local populations. Measures set out within the proposed mitigation include timing of clearance works and nesting bird checks in order to safeguard nesting birds of any species and to avoid an offence under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).</p> <p>3.3.5. Potential effects on wintering birds during the construction phase relate to a direct loss of foraging habitat and/or potential disturbance. Birds are highly mobile during this season, and as such will be able to disperse away from any habitat clearance or construction works, meaning the magnitude of impact on bird populations would therefore be negligible.</p> <p>3.3.6. The majority of bird species on site are generalist species that make use of a wide variety of habitat and food sources and will likely therefore continue to use the field boundaries and buffers with any disturbance therefore unlikely to cause significant impacts. However, Skylark and Eurasian Curlews are priority species on the red list and have been identified within the site. The use of fields for solar PV will result in the loss of land currently used by these birds for ground nesting. Compensation measures are proposed as discussed below. These mitigation measures would also benefit Lapwing during the winter months.</p>	
BKLWN19	<p>3.3.7. The Skylark mitigation strategy uses an input figure of 50% to calculate required area of land to offset impacts and justifies this based on other consented solar farms (Cottam, Lincolnshire). There are however examples of solar projects delivering mitigation on a 2:1 basis (Wickham Hall Solar Farm, Uttlesford delivered 26 plots for impacts to 13 breeding pairs). The calculation provided within the Skylark mitigation strategy outputs an area requirement of 77.2ha. 77.2 ha could support 32 skylark territories ($0.56 \div 0.15 = 0.41 \times 77.2 = 31.65$). This would only equate to around 36% of the skylark territories impacted being mitigated.</p> <p>3.3.8. Accounting for the territories that could be absorbed into adjacent land (21), could use the curlew mitigation area (6) or were recorded with Field 32 (now removed from Order limits) (4) this leaves 90 territories to be mitigated for. Territories that could be displaced onto curlew mitigation land is calculated as 6 however the Council's Ecologist calculates it as 4 ($0.56 \div 0.15 = 0.41 \times 8 \text{ha} = 3.3$). It is also not clear if the 4 territories which are discounted due to the removal of Field 32 are counted again under the 21 being excluded due to proximity to the Order limits. The Breeding Bird Survey Results - North (Plan 6806/ECO7a-f) within the PEA suggest that 2 territories might fall into both categories.</p>	<p>As set out within the ES Appendix 7.3: Proposed Mitigation Strategy for Ground Nesting Birds Requiring Open Habitats [APP-149], the methodology used in relation to calculation of Skylark mitigation follows the approach set out within published methodology (Fox, 2022). As set out, the initial input figure of 117 pairs has been used in relation to the development footprint (i.e. excludes the 4 pairs within field 32 which is outside of the Scheme's boundary but includes the existing pairs within fields 33 and 35 and as such these are taken into account). In relation to territories that could be absorbed within 75m of the development edge habitats, in line with the published methodology this relates to an increase in capacity over the existing use due to increased foraging habitat in proximity to the edges of the development and accordingly, the exclusion of the existing pairs within field 32 from the calculations is no different from that within surrounding fields elsewhere, which would be anticipated to support a baseline of Skylark usage, and therefore consistent with the published methodology.</p>
BKLWN20	<p>3.3.9. It appears, given the contents of the Ecology Report that the mitigation land proposed is for the Eurasian Curlew population which has been identified on site. One stone curlew was identified during winter bird surveys, however this finding has not been mapped or expanded upon further. Local residents have suggested there may be at least one breeding pair of Stone Curlew within the Order limits which has not been accounted for within the DCO submission (likely due to the date of surveys in 2024). If a breeding pair of Stone Curlew are present, it is likely that the breeding pair rotate between fields which suggests that other habitat is available in the local area. The Council note the presence of Stone Curlew and extent of surveys is queried</p>	<p>Whilst precise location of nesting Stone-curlew (in line with other ground nesting birds) will indeed be dependent on crop rotations, due in particular to the need for open, bare stony ground during the breeding period, across the Site itself a range of crops were present during the survey period, including spring sown crops and suitable open ground (which also remain frequent within the offsite areas). Given the absence of Stone-curlew at the Site and the distance from the SPA, the assessment concluded that no significant effects on the SPA would be anticipated during the operation phase of the Scheme. This conclusion is proportionate and is in line with responses from Natural England through the scoping consultation, PEIR stage and ExQ1 response, which raised no concerns in relation to potential effects on functionally linked land in relation to Stone Curlew forming the identified interest feature of Breckland SPA.</p>



Reference	Comments	Applicant's Response
	<p>within Q3.0.1 of the ExQ1 and await the views of Natural England in regard to survey adequacy and functionally linked land.</p> <p>3.3.10. The presence electricity pylons and overheads lines within the proposed mitigation area could impact the suitability for the species, as raised by the Norfolk Wildlife Trust and Natural England, who note a requirement for predator-exclusion measures within the curlew mitigation grassland. The mitigation should be confirmed as appropriate prior to reliance on it.</p>	<p>Proposed Skylark and Eurasian Curlew mitigation measures are set out within the ES Appendix 7.3: Proposed Mitigation Strategy for Ground Nesting Birds Requiring Open Habitats [APP-149] incorporating a range of measures including the provision of the specific area of 8ha land managed as grassland for use by ground nesting birds including Eurasian Curlew, commensurate with the existing (low) levels of use of the site recorded (1-2 pairs of Eurasian Curlew). Impacts of the Scheme on ground nesting birds (in particular Skylark and Eurasian Curlew, including with reference to the proposed mitigation and compensation measures) have been specifically considered within section 7.8 of the ES Chapter 7: Ecology and Biodiversity [REP1-034] which concludes no significant effects are anticipated.</p> <p>Design Principles in relation to ongoing management measures are secured in the oLEMP [REP1-060]. Specific predator-exclusion measures would be anticipated to include secure fencing, further details of which, along with monitoring measures would be set out within the detailed Landscape and Ecological Management Plan, as secured through Requirement 7 in Schedule 2 to the draft DCO [APP/3.1.2] (including delivery of relevant mitigation for the duration of the operational lifespan).</p>
BKLWN21	<p>3.3.11. The Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA) outlines habitats of Principal Importance including lowland deciduous woodland, tree lines and veteran trees, most of which will be retained and protected.</p> <p>3.3.12. Veteran trees are an irreplaceable habitat under the Environment Act. A substantial number of veteran trees are present on site. The Biodiversity Net Gain Report states that 37 veteran trees are present whereas 39 have been identified by the Arboricultural Impact Assessment (see 5.2.2 of that document [APP-178]). It is of note that the way arboriculturists categorise veteran and the Environment Act categorise veterans differs, with the Environment Act having a lower threshold for veteran. If not already done so, the number of veterans on site should be confirmed by the Ecologist.</p> <p>3.3.13. Game cover crops that are under countryside stewardship schemes are also present on site as are two Schedule 9 species (of which it is offence to cause such species to grow in the wild). These species need to be carefully managed during construction to avoid an offence.</p>	<p>The Applicant notes this comment and can confirm the number of veteran trees (along with their individual references) were added into the user comments within the updated BNG metric for ease of reference during the updates undertaken to reflect the publication of the LNRS submitted at Deadline 1.</p> <p>In relation to BNG, the presence of individual veteran trees has been confirmed by the Applicant in line with the definitions set out in The Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Irreplaceable Habitat) Regulations 2024. Reference to the AIA is provided in order to allow comparison and cross-referencing of individual trees and to ensure consistency. Nonetheless, in light of the comments, further clarification and confirmation of this position was included within the updated BNG Assessment submitted at Deadline 1.</p> <p>Design Principles in relation to ongoing management measures are secured in the oLEMP [REP1-060], whilst specific measures such as those in relation the Schedule 9 species would be anticipated within the detailed Landscape and Ecological Management Plan.</p>
BKLWN22	<p>3.4.6. In general, subject to compliance with the outline Construction Traffic Management Plan and outline Construction Environmental Management Plan, the Council raises no objection in regard to impacts on Protected Sites.</p>	<p>The Applicant welcomes this comment.</p>
BKLWN23	<p>3.5.1. Notwithstanding that Biodiversity Net Gain is not yet a statutory requirement for DCO applications, given the general requirement for biodiversity enhancements enshrined within planning policy at a local and national level, the Council note that the information submitted for biodiversity net gain is not detailed enough to make any final assessment.</p> <p>3.5.2. Ultimately, the Metric and the condition assessments should be submitted in Excel format rather than provided as screenshots (as per the Biodiversity Net Gain Report). The Metric User needs to be a person not a company to enable assessment of the validity of the inputs. The Metric will also need to be updated to reflect October publication of LNRS – this is noted in the BNG report. The LNRS will affect the trees recorded in the baseline and the other neutral grassland being created post development. It is understood from discussions that the Applicant intends to clarify via submission of amended details at Deadline 1.</p>	<p>The Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment Report [REP1-048] was undertaken within the government's metric template, which is published in Excel format. However, the Examination Library created by PINS to receive submission documents is understood to be unable to accept Excel spreadsheet documents and therefore it was not possible to provide the Excel format document as part of the submission. The Applicant would therefore be happy to make this available to KLWN separately, if requested.</p> <p>The Norfolk LNRS was published in October 2025 following the initial assessment and accordingly, as noted within the submitted Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment Report [REP1-048], the assessment was updated at Deadline 1 in order to reflect the publication.</p> <p>Information in regard to detailed management actions, timings and monitoring will be provided within the detailed Landscape and Ecological Management Plan, as secured through Requirement 7 in Schedule 2 to the draft DCO [APP/3.1.2]. Further, detailed measures and monitoring requirements (including management actions, timings and monitoring methodologies) will be reviewed during the operational process (for example to take into account changes in the fauna present and reflect any</p>



Reference	Comments	Applicant's Response
	<p>3.5.3. Habitat monitoring should continue for the full lifespan of the project, to effectively demonstrate the success of the mitigation/compensation and achievement of a Biodiversity Net Gain. The final detailed LEMP should reflect the ongoing requirement of regular monitoring, as noted in Para 7.5.11 of the Outline LEMP [APP-191].</p>	<p>future colonisation or remediation measures that may occur). In addition, specific habitat monitoring and remedial measures (where necessary) will be required as part of the BNG commitments, including within the detailed Landscape and Ecological Management Plan, as secured through Requirements 7 and 9 in Schedule 2 to the draft DCO [APP/3.1.2].</p>
BKLWN24	<p>3.6.1. The information currently submitted suggests that the BNG will be delivered onsite and will be considered as significant. Typically, a Habitat Monitoring and Management Plan, completed in accordance with the Government's standard format, would be provided alongside the Biodiversity Gain Plan to allow clear assessment against BNG requirements at discharge stage. The Council recommend a similar approach is taken to this scheme, notwithstanding the Outline LEMP which has been submitted</p> <p>3.6.2. Schedule 2 of the dDCO sets out that no part of the authorised development may commence until the Biodiversity Net Gain strategy has been submitted to and approved by the relevant planning authority. The proposed permitted preliminary work (to be excluded from the definition of commencement) allow site clearance which will impact upon the BNG baseline. It is therefore imperative that the baseline is agreed as accurate prior to consent being granted.</p> <p>3.6.3. Subject to finer details being aligned throughout the submission, the BNG plans for the site are likely to be considered acceptable. For example, the Hedgerow Removal Works outlined in Schedule 12 of the Draft DCO must align with the detail on the LEMP and within the Biodiversity Net Gain Baseline and ultimately a HMMP or equivalent to ensure accurate results in regard to enhanced hedgerows versus replacement hedgerows.</p>	<p>The Applicant notes and agrees that the BNG to be delivered on site would be considered as significant. Information in regard to detailed management actions, timings and monitoring will be provided within the detailed Landscape and Ecological Management Plan, as secured through Requirement 7 in Schedule 2 to the draft DCO [APP/3.1.2], thereby ensuring their provision and appropriate management and monitoring.</p> <p>The Applicant also notes that the draft DCO [APP/3.1.2], at Requirement 9 of Schedule 2, ensures that "no part of the authorised development may commence until a biodiversity net gain strategy [which must contain details of how the minimum 10% BNG is secured] has been submitted to and approved by the relevant planning authority for that part in consultation with the relevant statutory nature conservation body". The Applicant agrees that the BNG baseline should be agreed as accurate prior to consent being granted. The BNG baseline is confirmed within the Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment Report [REP1-048] and accompanying metric, which was updated at Deadline 1.</p> <p>The Applicant notes and welcomes the confirmation that the BNG plans for the Site are likely to be considered acceptable subject to provision of further information, including within the detailed Landscape and Ecological Management Plan.</p>
Noise, Dust, Lighting and Residential Amenity		
BKLWN25	<p>4.1.1. The nature, size and duration of the construction phase of this development is likely to cause adverse effect on nearby sensitive receptors. This is primarily the remit of Breckland District Council given that the core impacts will be on their residents as closest dwellings.</p> <p>4.1.2. If the development is consented, it must be ensured that impacts have not been underestimated, that there are robust procedures to monitor those impacts and that where there are impacts, the mitigation reduces as much as reasonably practicable the impact on those affected</p>	<p>In response to 4.1.1: ES Chapter 10: Noise and Vibration [APP-059] includes assessment of construction noise and vibration effects on the nearest sensitive receptors. The effects are limited to within the Breckland Council remit, and therefore responses have been provided to Breckland Council's submissions accordingly.</p> <p>In response to 4.1.2: The noise assessment detailed in ES Chapter 10: Noise and Vibration [APP-059] adopts a conservative approach with worst-case scenarios, such as all plant (solar inverters, BESS, substation transformers) working at full capacity simultaneously, and no noise shielding is assumed from machinery or solar panels. As such, the assessment presents the worst-case noise impact and is likely overestimated than what would be observed in practice.</p>
BKLWN26	<p>4.3.1. Potential impacts during construction would be noise and vibration impacts from vehicle movements, including HGV deliveries as well as disturbance impact from construction itself - vibrations (noted as significant in PEIR documentation) - particularly for piled foundations planned for the photovoltaic panels - and construction site operational site lighting. These impacts would persist throughout the construction period, as well as during decommissioning.</p>	<p>ES Chapter 10: Noise and Vibration [APP-059] includes assessment of construction noise and vibration effects, including construction traffic effects, and ES Technical Appendix 10.3 Construction and Noise Modelling [APP-166] presents noise impacts from change in road traffic due to construction as well as noise from HGV movements. The respective effects were concluded to be not significant. Vibration from traffic was scoped out and vibration effects from piling activity was determined to be not significant based on separation distances between nearest receptors and piling areas. Additional mitigation measures consisting of separation distances, restricted working</p>



Reference	Comments	Applicant's Response
		<p>hours in a day, and localised screening where necessary were outlined to control noise from piling activities near noise-sensitive receptors. Residual effects with implementation of the stated additional mitigation measures were considered not significant, these measures have been set out in the oCEMP [APP/7.6.2], to be implemented via the detailed CEMP and secured via a requirement of the draft DCO [APP/3.1.2].</p>
BKLWN27	<p>4.4.1. Potential noise sources at operational phase will include the noise from vehicle movements, plant and machinery (the BESS and Substations etc.) and any permanent lighting. These effects will primarily be restricted to within Breckland District Councils boundary.</p> <p>4.4.2. The highest potential sources of operational noise are the Transformers and PCS Inverters associated with the BESS. Paragraph 8.3.242 of the Planning Statement [APP-043], relating to Chapter 5: The Scheme, refers to the creation of an earth bund alongside the BESS to create a noise buffer, however no detail of this bund has been provided, and no reference to the bund is made within the outline Landscape Ecological Management Plan [APP-191]. As such, it is not known where within the BESS compound this bund would be placed, or specifically what level of noise mitigation it would achieve.</p> <p>4.4.3. The Baseline Noise Survey (BNS) undertaken in November 2024 demonstrated that in the daytime, background levels of 25 to 35 dB LA90, 15min could be typically experienced at properties neighbouring the Solar PV Site, with higher noise levels of 53-54 dB LA90, 15min for locations exposed to traffic noise from the A47, and locations to the north of the Solar PV Site experienced a quieter environment during the daytime. During quiet evening periods noise levels at the two fixed positions decreased to 20 to 34 dB LA90, 15min and were regularly below 30 dB LA90, 15min at night-time.</p>	<p>In response to 4.4.1: The Applicant notes and agrees that noise and vibration effects will be restricted to within Breckland Council's administrative area.</p> <p>In response to 4.4.2: As stated in ES Chapter 10: Noise and Vibration [APP-059], in paragraph 10.7.8, an "acoustic barrier of 3.5m height is proposed along the western boundaries of Field 27 and partially along the western side of Field 24, between the Battery Energy Storage System compound and the PRow." The Planning Statement [REP1-012] and ES Chapter 5: The Scheme [REP1-032] state that "...earth removed to enable the construction of the Customer substation and National Grid Substation will be placed in a bund alongside the BESS to create a noise buffer." An earth bund effectively acts as a solid screen shielding from noise in the same way as an acoustic barrier. The volume of earth removed and therefore the extent of the bund is not known at this stage; however, its placement will be in line with the required acoustic barrier to the west perimeter of the BESS Compound in Field 27. This acoustic barrier can be either bund or barrier or a combination thereof to achieve an effective structural height of 3.5m to provide acoustic shielding. The level of mitigation from a bund would be the same (or better) than the acoustic barrier assumed in the assessment, as such the results presented in the ES assessment are worst-case.</p> <p><i>In response to 4.4.3:</i> The Applicant notes this comment. Full details of the noise survey results are presented in ES Technical Appendix 10.2: Noise Survey [APP-165].</p>
BKLWN28	<p>4.4.4. Plant types and specifications, and precise locations have not yet been confirmed. The applicant should be providing confident data that the significance of operational noise impacts are accurately modelled and are sufficiently low that they will remain negligible under all weather conditions (for example temperature inversions, positive downwind scenarios etc.) and throughout the life of the project, and will not impact those properties which might experience lower background noise levels at night than those reported in the Baseline Noise Survey.</p>	<p>The noise assessment presented in ES Chapter 10: Noise and Vibration [APP-059] is based on worst-case assumptions, and for the BESS this includes modelling all plant operating at 100% capacity i.e., full cooling operation (unlikely in practice), downwind noise propagation, no machine shielding (full collective noise emitted from BESS compound without any noise shielded from machinery regardless of layout), and BESS operating continuously (assessed against the lower night-time criterion). These assumptions provide overestimation of the predicted effects that likely in practice, and the Applicant is confident in the presented noise effects which represent worst-case effects and are concluded to be not significant. The oCEMP [APP/7.8.2] also sets out a commitment to meet the noise limits at all receptors as adopted in the chapter, as well as a commitment to monitor noise in the event of a complaint for compliance. This commitment will be implemented via the OEMP and secured via a DCO requirement.</p>
BKLWN29	<p>4.4.5. The details contained within the oCEMP are acceptable with respect to the options for dust monitoring and these should be moved forward to the final CEMP, following discussion and agreement. Agreements will be sought on the most appropriate measures considering sensitive human receptors when considering the location and timing of construction activities; the requirement being to consider dust mitigation controls and/or monitoring requirements dynamically and with regular opportunity for review. The CEMP should be reviewed and amended as necessary prior to the decommissioning phase.</p>	<p>As outlined in Table 22 of the oCEMP [APP/7.6.2], dust deposition, dust flux, or real-time PM₁₀ continuous monitoring locations are to be agreed with the relevant planning authority as needed.</p> <p>The Applicant has committed to preparing a Decommissioning Strategy which must be substantially in accordance with the outline decommissioning strategy and is secured via a Requirement in the draft DCO [APP/3.1.2].</p>



Reference	Comments	Applicant's Response
BKLWN30	4.4.6. Operational lighting is not expected to result in neighbour amenity concerns on residents of our Borough.	The Applicant welcomes this confirmation.
BKLWN31	<p>4.5.1. The Council will ultimately defer to the views of Breckland District Council in terms of the impact on their residents, however, note that the proper management of the construction and operational phases is an important consideration for residents of both areas.</p> <p>4.5.2. The intensive construction works of the scheme have the potential to impact upon the rural noise climate if not appropriately managed however the majority of these impacts will fall within the remit of Breckland District Council in their consideration as host authority and the Council will therefore defer to the host authority to comment in detail.</p>	The Applicant agrees with this comment and has provided responses to Breckland Council's submissions accordingly.
BKLWN32	<p>4.5.3. Ultimately, various measures are proposed to manage the effects of noise and vibration during construction. This will include good practice measures as proposed within the Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan [APP-186]:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliveries and construction activities being limited to the hours 07:00 to 18:00 Monday to Friday and Saturday 08:00 to 13:30, with additional precautions during certain piling works • Direct liaison with local residents and the wider community to notify them when particular activities causing elevated noise or vibration levels will occur and how long they will last, and • Contractors employing Best Practicable Means (BPM) to reduce noise from plant, machinery, and construction activities. 	The Applicant agrees with this comment.
BKLWN33	<p>4.5.4. These measures, and general compliance with the Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (oCEMP) will be secured as final documents by a requirement of the DCO. The Council raises no objection on noise or residential amenity grounds on that basis.</p> <p>4.5.5. An outline Operational Environmental Management Plan (oOEMP) has also been submitted with the application, including measures to monitor & maintain equipment, and noise levels, and a complaints procedure for members of the public to report noise disturbance at residential properties – again a final version will be secured as a requirement of the DCO.</p>	The Applicant agrees with, and welcomes, this comment.
Contamination – Land and Air Quality		
BKLWN34	<p>5.1.1. The site is a greenfield site and is outside the borough council boundary, therefore the potential for unacceptable risks from land contamination in the borough is limited. No cross-boundary risks from contaminated land are reported in the information submitted.</p> <p>5.1.2. The Council would agree therefore, that the construction traffic levels in this council's area are less than the IAQM screen for further air quality assessment. Therefore, as long as the CTMP is implemented as set out we would have no objection, as the road links in BCKLWN area not anticipated to be used for construction.</p>	The Applicant agrees with, and welcomes, this comment.



Reference	Comments	Applicant's Response
BKLWN35	<p>5.3.1. The Council are not aware of significant sources of land contamination in our area in the vicinity of the proposed development and note that the Draft DCO contains protective provisions for Exolum Pipeline System Ltd. An abandoned MOD fuel pipeline runs north south through the site, and this is accounted for within the submission documents.</p> <p>5.3.2. The Draft DCO includes documents and plans to be certified including the Environmental Statement, Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan, and Outline Soil Management Plan.</p> <p>5.3.3. The Council welcome the submission of the Construction Environmental Management Plan and Soil Management Plan which should help to manage any potential impacts from contaminated land and should contribute the sustainable use of soils.</p>	<p>The Applicant agrees with, and welcomes, this comment.</p>
BKLWN36	<p>5.4.2. In terms of impacts the Dust Assessment submitted as Appendix 1 within the oCEMP [APP-186] identified the potential risk of construction dusts based on IAQM's guidance (IAQM, 2024). This highlighted that the track out of dusts to be of the largest magnitude category (assessed as Large), followed by earthworks (Medium) and actual construction as having a small risk category due to the modular type of build out being proposed.</p> <p>5.4.3. As explained within the relevant representation response, potential sensitive receptors are those within 250m of these activities, but for those nearest there should be actual air quality monitoring to be considered within the CEMP. According to the IAQM in its latest (2024) guidance this is highly recommended for all risk categories.</p>	<p>As outlined in Table 16-1 of ES Chapter 16: Other Environmental Matters [APP-065], dust deposition, dust flux, or real-time PM₁₀ continuous monitoring locations are to be agreed with the relevant planning authority as needed. This will be undertaken for the detailed CEMP.</p>
BKLWN37	<p>5.4.4. In terms of sensitive receptors, the Dust Assessment describes the sensitivity of the area as low based on the predicted background concentration of PM10 (less than 24 µg/m3) in conjunction with the limited number of sensitive receptors located near to the source of these dusty activities. However, the Dust Assessment (Table 1.9) only lists the potential receptors, without plotting them spatially or providing grid references. The likelihood is that air quality monitoring (dusts / PM10) may not be required for receptors in BCKLWN area, but this should be based on agreement between the local authorities when presented with information in a suitable map (shape file) based format</p> <p>5.4.5. Tables 16.1 and 16.2 within Chapter 16 [APP-065] set out that air quality monitoring is still to be agreed, which could be secured through the CEMP under Requirement 13 of the Draft DCO.</p>	<p>The Applicant refers to its response to BKLWN36 above.</p>
BKLWN38	<p>5.4.6. In terms of construction vehicle emissions, the Council has previously stated that this could be scoped out for further and more detailed air quality assessment based on IAQM screening criteria, as long as sufficient information was provided on vehicle movements (24-hr AADT) during the construction and decommissioning phases.</p> <p>5.4.7. Transport Assessment (TA; Appendix 9.2) explained that the routing for HGVs will be secured by way of a requirement in the DCO through a detailed CTMP (Requirement 15). The routing strategy is for HGVs to primarily arrive from the A47 to the south of the site within Breckland Council area, and with access via the A1065, which forms the preferred Route A of</p>	<p>The Applicant confirms that the oCTMP [REP1-052] (the detailed version of which will be secured by way of a Requirement in the draft DCO [APP/3.1.2]) includes the restrictions on the vehicle routing for vehicles to access the Scheme, ensuring that the conclusions of the assessment of effects remains valid. Given this confirmation, the Applicant welcomes BKLWN's position that there is no objection in relation to this matter.</p>



Reference	Comments	Applicant's Response
	<p>this CTMP as set out in the ES Figure 9.25. It adds that subject to the sourcing of the relevant materials, there may also be a nominal level of HGVs arriving from the north via the A1065 (s II within Breckland). The TA added that it is not proposed for any HGVs to access the Scheme via Route C (Narford Lane route). Part of Route C in is BCKLWN area.</p> <p>5.4.8. As confirmed within our relevant representation [RR-010] the Council had calculated change in HGV within the affected road network as presented with the TA which confirmed up to 87 HGV to access the site via Route A in Breckland DC area. The road link 9 (off from Route C) within the Council's area was consistent with the outline CMTP with no construction traffic shown via this route.</p> <p>5.4.9. The Council would agree therefore, that the construction traffic levels in this council's area are less than the IAQM screen for further air quality assessment. Therefore, as long as the CTMP is implemented as set out the Council would have no objection, as the road links in BCKLWN area not anticipated to be used for construction purposes. Once operational, PV panels and batteries will need to be replaced, but traffic levels will be much reduced when compared to construction period.</p>	
Other Material Considerations		
BKLWN39	<p><i>Electro Magnetic Fields</i></p> <p>6.1.1. The Environmental Statement on Electromagnetic Fields (EMF) considers EMF Risk Assessment and well-being concerns (ES Appendix 16.4). The Council note the conclusion that there is no potential for significant effects as a result of the Scheme in respect of EMF.</p>	The Applicant agrees with this comment.
BKLWN40	<p><i>Impacts on RAF Marham</i></p> <p>6.2.1. Policy LP10 of the Council's Local Plan acknowledges the importance of RAF Marham as a key economic contributor to the Borough 4.38 The RAF base (and associated facilities) at Marham is the largest single employment site in the Borough, supporting over 4,000 jobs, with a wide range of roles, and in particular a strong emphasis on high-end engineering skills. The estimated annual value to the local economy is in excess of £150 million. The base also hosts the whole of the RAF strategic strike capability, and this pre-eminence will continue into the future. Any impacts upon the RAF base, for example from impacts upon the precision radar or from glint and glare would be at odds with this Local Plan policy and would not be supported by the Council. Any physical mitigation measures could have additional impacts which would need careful consideration given the landscape and heritage considerations above.</p>	The Applicant has had further pragmatic engagement with the MoD following Deadline 1 regarding the potential mitigation solutions to resolve the potential impacts to radar and aviation receptors. The Applicant is working through potential mitigation options with the MoD which will be confirmed at a future deadline. Following this process, a review of the potential for any likely significant effects will be undertaken and, if necessary, further assessment will be undertaken. This would include, as appropriate and necessary, consideration of landscape and visual, biodiversity, land use, and interactions between topics (in-combination effects).
BKLWN41	<p><i>Grid Connection</i></p> <p>6.3.1. BCKLWN have previously discussed the lack of Gate 2 Grid Connection Offer with the Applicant. This Local Impact Report and our engagement is based upon the plans and supporting information as submitted. The lack of a formal connection offer raises concerns from the Borough Council's perspective as to the uncertain details of the proposal.</p>	<p>In response to 6.3.1, being in Gate 1 means the grid connection location and date is not yet firm. However, the Applicant is continuing to develop the Scheme and the Scheme can apply again to move into Gate 2 in future connection queue reprioritisation rounds.</p> <p>Section 2.9 of the Statement of Need [APP-042] explains that the Government is clear that the Clean Power plan and Connections Reform is not about stopping projects, but is about prioritising projects for 2030, while maintaining a robust pipeline beyond 2030. Projects which continue to demonstrate they are 'ready' are expected to be re-prioritised, especially as Government continues</p>



Reference	Comments	Applicant's Response
	<p>6.3.2. Ultimately, it is a matter for the Examining Authority to consider whether or not the proposal has been suitably detailed to allow assessment of the significant effects on the environment and to comply with the relevant regulations.</p> <p>6.3.3. As noted during pre-application discussions, the position of key infrastructure is a key concern for BCKLWN, and any change to the grid connection would likely result in knock on impacts, for example on the incredibly sensitive historic setting or the surrounding landscape and this may alter the Borough Council's stance to the development as a whole.</p>	<p>to refine its criteria for 'strategic alignment'. It is also anticipated that some projects currently in the queue may drop out.</p> <p>In response to 6.3.2, the Applicant considers that the Scheme is sufficiently defined such that the impacts of the proposals can and should be assessed as they are presented. The Applicant refers to its Response to Section 89(3) Letter dated 17 March 2026 [AS-063] and its Written Summary of Oral Submissions and Responses to Action Points at Issue Specific 1 [REP1-071] (specifically with reference to Agenda Item 3.2) in this regard.</p> <p>In response to 6.3.3, should the location of the connection point change, the Applicant refers to its Response to Section 89(3) Letter dated 17 March 2026 [AS-063] – the Applicant's expectation is that NGET will determine that the proposed location for the National Grid Substation is suitable (given the Applicant's site selection methodology being akin to NGET's site selection process). However, the Applicant retains the ability to separately seek consent for the grid connection from the Customer Substation to the National Grid Substation in the unlikely event that NGET subsequently decides that they would prefer to site the National Grid Substation elsewhere. If that situation arises after consent for the DCO is granted, then any future consent application (whether as a change to the DCO or a separate planning application under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) for the connection from the Customer Substation to that National Grid Substation would cumulatively assess that application with the works consented under the DCO. This will ensure there is no 'gap' in the assessment of environmental effects, and could include the production of a new Environmental Statement for the separate connection application. The Applicant reiterates that it is not a barrier to granting consent for a generating station if the point of connection is not yet identified or consented. The Applicant has addressed this point in further detail in response to NGET8 in Applicant's Response to Written Representations and other Deadline 1 Submissions [APP/8.13].</p>
Cumulative Impacts		
BKLWN42	<p>7.1.2. The project would result in the loss of BMV land. The Agricultural Land Classification (Appendix 11.2, [APP-168]) sets out the grading of a total of 829.4ha of land (the Application Cover Letter, Appendix 1.1 states the total order limit is 838.77ha). 17.5ha is graded as Grade 1, 276.4ha as Grade 2, 160.9ha as Grade 3a. This results in approximately 55% of the site falling within the definition of Best and Most Versatile (BMV) agricultural land. Whilst the 60 year decommissioning timeframe set out by Requirement 20 is noted, the loss of BMV, particularly in combination with other schemes across Norfolk as a whole is a concern for the Borough Council.</p>	<p>ES Chapter 11: Soils and Agriculture [AS-018] sets out the land quality of the Site, as noted. The Site is 54% BMV, which is below-average proportion of the area. This land is not, however, lost. There will be changes to the land use, the implications of which are set out in ES Chapter 11: Soils and Agriculture [AS-018], but in terms of land loss of BMV this is limited to 8.8 ha, including 4.3 ha of woodland (paragraph 11.10.3).</p>
BKLWN43	<p>7.2.1. The Borough Council support the concerns of Norfolk County Council and Breckland District Council raised at Relevant Representations stage in regard to the in-combination effects of solar developments across Norfolk as a whole.</p> <p>7.2.2. Particular attention is drawn to the potential implications of High Grove Solar Farm to the east of the site which also adjoins Swaffham and the potential in-combination effects on adjoining settlements, in particular in relation to the landscape and heritage assets as discussed above.</p>	<p>The Applicant refers to BCKLWN52 in the Applicant's Response to Relevant Representations [REP1-067] for of its response to this comment.</p>
Specific comments on DCO and Discharge of Requirements		



Reference	Comments	Applicant's Response
BKLWN44	<p>8.1.1. The Council have reviewed the Draft DCO [APP-021] and has commented on it on a topic by topic basis above, where relevant. At the time of writing, the Council are working alongside Norfolk County Council and Breckland District Council to review and assess the implications of the wording. As it stands, The Council's current views include the following.</p> <p>8.1.2. The definition of 'Permitted Preliminary Works' in the context of the Draft DCO has the opportunity to allow significant works, for example to pylon lines or site clearance before the detail of works or management plans have been confirmed. The Council request that the implications of this definition are carefully considered and suggest that where permitted preliminary works have the potential to impact upon available or appropriate mitigation, the definition of Commencement within each requirement is qualified appropriately. For example, a sub-paragraph could be added to Requirements 7, 9, 10, stating that 'For the purposes of subparagraph (1), "commence" includes any permitted preliminary works.'</p> <p>8.1.3. The Council also suggest that any advanced planning to allow for an earlier establishment of protective screening is specifically included as a 'permitted preliminary work' to allow for beneficial so landscaping to be put in place at the earliest stage (subject to details being agreed) and to allow its early maturation.</p> <p>8.1.4. For the avoidance of doubt, the Council also suggest that the definition of Maintain is amended, to state 'inspect, repair, adjust, alter, remove, refurbish, reconstruct, replace and improve any part of, but not remove, reconstruct or replace the whole of, the authorised development and "maintenance" and "maintaining" are to be construed accordingly;'.</p>	<p>8.1.1. The Applicant notes that the Councils are in dialogue and has responded to each point raised by KLWN in the corresponding rows.</p> <p>8.1.2. Rather than update the Requirements suggested by KLWN individually, in relation to permitted preliminary works, the Applicant proposes to submit a permitted preliminary works environmental management plan at Deadline 3. This will set out the methodology to be used for any permitted preliminary works, which the Applicant trusts will address the concern of KLWN in this regard. In anticipation of this plan, the Applicant has updated Requirement 13 in Schedule 2 of the draft DCO [APP/3.1.2] at Deadline 2 to require that the permitted preliminary works are carried out in accordance with the permitted preliminary works environmental management plan.</p> <p>8.1.3. The Applicant does not consider that the proposed amendment to the definition of "permitted preliminary works" is necessary. The planting mitigation is secured via the oLEMP [REP1-060] and this includes details (at Appendix 3) of the advanced planting (totalling 2.8km) that has already taken place in winter 2025/26.</p> <p>8.1.4. The Applicant does not consider that the proposed amendment to the definition of "maintain" is necessary. The Applicant has fully assessed the complete replacement of the solar panels, meaning the definition of "maintain" is not required to be amended to exclude this.</p>
BKLWN45	<p>8.1.5. In Regard to Schedule 1, Part 6, Article 40, the Council has serious concerns with the flexibility provided by the current wording in regard to felling or lopping of trees and removal of hedgerows. The Council requests that the wording is amended to remove ambiguity and scope of allowances of the phrase 'near to any part of the authorised development' and suggest the wording is revised to that which reflects that of the Springwell DCO granted in April 2026, or similar.</p> <p>8.1.6. It is essential that the DCO wording protects the key landscape features, in particular Bartholomew's Hill Plantation, from damage for the duration of the construction, operation, and decommissioning periods, given that the mature tree belts and woodland plantations which adjoining the Order limits in various locations provide crucial mature screening of the infrastructure as proposed.</p>	<p>The Applicant refers to its response to BKLWN13 above on this matter.</p>
BKLWN46	<p>8.1.7. In relation to Schedule 2, Requirement 5 and whilst the requirements of the Landscape and Ecological Management Plan controlled by Requirement 7 are noted, the Council suggest that given the importance of landscape screening, that this provision should be reworded to include specific details of so landscaping. It is assumed that any bunds required would be fully detailed as part of para 5.c.</p>	<p>The Applicant does not consider that the proposed amendments to Requirement 5 are necessary. The drafting is well-precedented across made solar DCOs and, as KLWN rightly points out, the relevant landscaping requirements are secured via Requirement 7 – indeed, Requirement 7 states that no part of the Scheme may commence until a written landscape and ecological management plan (which must be substantially in accordance with the oLEMP [REP1-060]) has been submitted to and approved by the relevant planning authority. The Applicant does not consider it necessary to duplicate the drafting by updating Requirement 5 as proposed.</p> <p>In relation to KLWN's final point, the Applicant notes that it has not proposed bunds as a mitigation measure in respect of the Scheme's design. However, the Applicant is considering this position in</p>



Reference	Comments	Applicant's Response
		light of comments from Interested Parties and discussions that took place during Issue Specific Hearing 1, and as part of ongoing discussions (related to associated technical modelling) with the MoD. If it is decided that bunds are proposed as a mitigation measure, details of these would indeed be provided under the " <i>proposed finished ground levels</i> " wording of Requirement 5 of the draft DCO [APP/3.1.2] .
BKLWN47	<p>8.2.1. Given the potential cross boundary implications of the scheme, the Council request to be included as a named consultee in the discharge of the following requirements within Schedule 2 of the Draft DCO where the requirements impact upon the Borough, its heritage and its landscape setting and its residents.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requirement 5 - Detailed Design Approval • Requirement 7 – Landscape and Ecological Management Plan • Requirement 8 – Operational Management Plan • Requirement 9 – Biodiversity Net Gain • Requirement 10 – Fencing and other means of enclosure • Requirement 13 – Construction Environmental Management Plan • Requirement 14 – Operational Environmental Management Plan • Requirement 15 – Construction Traffic Management Plan • Requirement 18 – Skills, Supply Chain and Employment • Requirement 20 – Decommissioning and Restoration 	The Applicant notes that all of the Requirements referenced by KLWN require the Applicant to submit a document " <i>to the relevant planning authority</i> " for approval. The definition of " <i>relevant planning authority</i> " states that this is the local planning authority for the area in which the land to which the provisions of the draft DCO [APP/3.1.2] apply is situated, i.e. Breckland Council and/or NCC, as the host authorities. As part of this approval, those Councils are entitled to consult with other local authorities affected by the Scheme, including the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk, if they deem it necessary to do so (indeed, the Applicant notes that the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk have stated above that it is already in dialogue with Breckland Council and NCC). It would be disproportionate (and not common practice across made solar DCOs) for the neighbouring authority to be listed as a statutory consultee pursuant to the corresponding requirement in the DCO. The Applicant, therefore, does not consider it necessary to update the drafting of the draft DCO [APP/3.1.2] in this regard.
Conclusion		
BKLWN48	<p>9.1.1. This Local Impact Report has considered the potential impacts of The Drovers NSIP proposals at a local level in respect of the Borough Council of Kings Lynn and West Norfolk's administrative area, which the Order limits immediately adjoin. Within this LIR, the Council has considered positive, negative, and neutral impacts within the context of its knowledge and understanding of the area and against the proposals as currently submitted.</p> <p>9.1.2. Whilst the benefits of renewable energy and the Government's targets in this regard are noted, and the policy support for such development is clearly acknowledged, this support is subject to compliance with a number of other policy considerations in relation to the impacts of the proposed development.</p> <p>9.1.3. The ExA will need to be satisfied that the residual impacts arising from the proposed development are capable of being outweighed by public benefits of the proposal.</p>	The Planning Balance analysis in Section 9.4 of the Planning Statement [REP1-012] considers the positive, negative and neutral impacts of the Scheme, concluding that the adverse impacts identified are clearly outweighed by the substantial public benefits that would arise from providing low-carbon energy to meet the needs identified in NPS EN-1.
BKLWN49	<p>9.1.4. Of the matters that fall within the Council's jurisdiction, we have identified the following potentially positive impacts which can be summarised as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribution to the production of clean energy and energy security 	The Applicant welcomes this confirmation from KLWN. Further positive impacts of the Scheme are set out in Paragraphs 9.4.5 – 9.4.10 of the Planning Statement [REP1-012] including GHG emissions savings, enhanced and improved connectivity, additional jobs and the enhancement of local education through these employment schemes.



Reference	Comments	Applicant's Response
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ecological benefits and biodiversity benefits arising from the development (subject to ongoing consideration of BNG and detail required within the outline LEMP). 	
BKLWN50	<p>9.1.5. Of the matters that fall within the Council's jurisdiction, we have identified the following potentially negative impacts which can be summarised as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The scale and significance of the impact on the landscape setting, in particular the identified harm to the landscape setting of designated heritage assets, and the visual amenity of the area more generally The potential adverse impacts upon RAF Marham and the current lack of known mitigation/resolution to the concerns raised by the Defence Infrastructure Organisation. The in combination effects of the scale of the solar development and loss of BMV land across Norfolk as a whole, albeit noting that the loss of BMV land would be temporary in nature given the 60 year decommissioning period. The implications of the lack of certainty over Grid Connection, and the knock on implications on the assessment of the above matters. 	<p>Whilst negative impacts have been identified, the Applicant notes that only significant adverse effects have been identified for the following disciplines as summarised in ES Chapter 18: Summary of Effects [APP-067]:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Landscape Noise Soils and Agriculture <p>With regards to the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) / MoD, the Applicant refers to its response to BKLWN40 above.</p> <p>With regards to the loss of BMV land, the Applicant refers to its response to BKLWN42 above.</p> <p>With regards to the uncertainty over the Grid Connection, the Applicant refers to its response to BKLWN41 above.</p>
BKLWN51	<p>9.1.6. Of the matters that fall within the Council's jurisdiction, we have identified the following neutral impacts, subject to appropriate mitigation, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construction period benefits to the workforce spending, employment and supply chain effects The impacts arising from noise and vibration, glint and glare (save for any impacts on RAF Marham), and air quality 	<p>In relation to the first bullet point, the Applicant considers (as set out in the Planning Statement [REP1-012]) that limited positive weight should be afforded to construction phase benefits to the workforce spending, employment and supply chain effects.</p> <p>In relation to the second bullet point, the Applicant agrees that this matter should be afforded neutral weight, as set out in the Planning Statement [REP1-012].</p>

