



Little Crow

Solar Park

Little Crow Solar Park, Scunthorpe

DRAFT STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND WITH LOCAL WILDLIFE TRUST

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DRAFT

LITTLE CROW SOLAR PARK LAND TO THE EAST OF STEEL WORKS, SCUNTHORPE

DRAFT STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND (SOCG)

<STATUS & INSERT DATE>

BETWEEN:

- I. LITTLE CROW SOLAR PARK; AND**
- II. LINCOLNSHIRE WILDLIFE TRUST**

ON BEHALF OF INRG SOLAR (LITTLE CROW) LTD

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PLANNING | **DESIGN** | **ENVIRONMENT** | **ECONOMICS**

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This draft Statement of Common Ground has been prepared as part of the application process for a Development Consent Order for the Little Crow Solar Park [“the Development”]. This draft document has been prepared jointly between the applicant and Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust.

Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust

1.2 Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust (LWT) is a voluntary charitable organisation which cares for Lincolnshire’s wildlife and countryside. The Trust also identifies and promotes opportunities for making Lincolnshire richer in wildlife through involvement in forward planning and in connection with developments. The Trust covers the whole of the historic county of Lincolnshire – from the Humber to the Wash. It is one of 47 similar Wildlife Trusts covering the UK which are affiliated to the Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts.

Purpose of Document

1.3 This draft statement of common ground is a working document prepared jointly by the applicant and LWT. The document has been structured to reflect the matters and topics relevant between the applicant and LWT

1.4 As this is a working document, the general approach for each topic-specific sections is to provide common ground text set out in a tabulated format for LWT to comment upon and then either agree, disagree or identify need for further negotiations. A second table is then provided which discusses the comments made during the consultation phases.

1.5 During consultation to date, LWT have indicated that discussions concerning ecological issues and biodiversity enhancement proposals that have taken place between the applicant and the North Lincolnshire Council biodiversity officer have been satisfactory, with little in the way of further comments deemed necessary from LWT. As such, this draft SoCG considerably mirrors that prepared between the applicant and North Lincolnshire Council.

1.6 As the SoCG evolves, the aim will be provide three distinct table covering matters that are agreed; matters which are subject to further negotiations; and matters not agreed.

1.7 The remainder of this document is split into the following sections:

Section 2: Development Description

Section 3: Consultation Undertaken

Section 4: Ecology and Biodiversity

Section 5: Declarations

2. DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 The main element of the Development is the construction, operation, maintenance and decommissioning of a ground mounted solar park with a maximum design capacity of up to 150MWp (megawatts peak) and battery storage capacity of up to 90MW. Battery storage will allow the development to fully utilise the network connection capacity when the solar park is not exporting at peak capacity. The battery element of the proposal would be available to store energy from and release electrical energy to the electricity network.
- 2.2 The solar and battery elements could either be delivered and connected to the electricity network independently of each other or at the same time. They could therefore be constructed and become operational either independently or together. An operational lifespan of 35 years is sought for each element and, subject to when they are constructed, the operational lifespans could run concurrently or interdependently.
- 2.3 A single main substation compound will serve the whole Development, and this will be required for the duration of the Development and retained thereafter. The substation compound would be located near the northern perimeter of the site and to the east of the existing double row of 132kV overhead electricity pylons which traverse the site and duly provides the point of connection to the local electricity network.
- 2.4 The Development area can be effectively split into seven land use zones, these are:-
- Zone 1: Ground mounted solar photovoltaic arrays
 - Zone 2: Battery Compound Yard
 - Zone 3: Ecological corridors
 - Zone 4: Central substation compound and connection to the national grid
 - Zone 5: Main access track
 - Zone 6: Perimeter development buffer
 - Zone 7: Temporary construction compound

- 2.5 The proposed land use zoning plan is provided at Appendix 1. The proposed layout drawings are provided at Appendix 2.

**APPENDIX 1 – LAND USE ZONING PLAN
APPENDIX 2 – PLANNING APPLICATION DRAWINGS**

Solar Arrays

- 2.6 All solar photovoltaic (PV) modules will be located within the fields enclosures / Zone 1 as defined on the zoning plan. The total solar output will not exceed 150MW with land coverage of the PV modules would be 800,000 sq m.
- 2.7 The PV modules would be static, mounted on aluminium metal racks. The racks will be laid out in multiple parallel rows running east to west across the various field enclosures. The distance between the arrays would respond to topography but would typically be between 3.5 metres to 6 metres. The maximum height of the solar panels fixed onto the framework would be under 2.5m. All PV modules will be south facing.
- 2.8 The mounting system will be primarily formed of piled posts set approximately 3.75m apart, except within areas of archaeological interest where the posts will be fixed into concrete pads resting on top of the ground. The PV modules would be dark blue, grey or black in colour with the frame constructed of anodized aluminium alloy.
- 2.9 For archaeological interests, a development exclusion zone has been provided around the area containing the former Gokewell Priory. No arrays or cable runs will go through this area. The area will be used to provide biodiversity measures and will be delineated with a stock-proof fence. The existing public right of way (Footpath 214) running through this area will be retained.
- 2.10 Inverters, transformers and associated switch gear which are required to convert the DC energy produced by the arrays into AC energy, will be spread equally across the site. Insulated DC cables from the solar modules will be routed in channels fixed on the underside of the framework. The electrical cabling from each array will be concealed through shallow trenches linking the modules to the inverters and transformers and then to the main substation. AC cables will also be laid in trenches and would run directly to the main substation compound.

- 2.11 The arrays would be set within stock-proof fencing up to 2m in height with wooden supporting posts placed at intervals of c. 3.5m. The stock proof fencing would be either green or galvanised aluminium in finish. The minimum distance between the edge of the arrays and the stock-proof fence would be 3m. Land between and beneath the panels would be used for biodiversity enhancements and seasonal sheep grazing.
- 2.12 A CCTV system mounted on poles would be positioned at intervals along the inside face edge of the stock-proof fencing (between the fence and the arrays).

Battery Storage Compound

- 2.13 The battery storage compound consists of industrial batteries that can store energy and are able to release or absorb energy from the power network. Being able to absorb and release energy, the battery storage at Little Crow can be used to contribute towards the frequency balancing services, where the power is being generated or absorbed statically or dynamically depending on the system frequency.
- 2.14 When there is not enough power, batteries are discharged to balance under frequency, preventing black and brown outs. To balance over frequency, batteries are charged to prevent dangerous spikes across electricity infrastructure¹.
- 2.15 All batteries will be located within the Zone 2 as defined on the zoning plan. The total land coverage of the battery compound would not exceed 3,500 m sq. The total storage capacity would not exceed 90MW.
- 2.16 The compound would be made secure by a 3m gated palisade fence. Battery containers would have a maximum length of 17m, maximum width of 3m and a maximum height of 4m. The maximum storage capacity of a single battery container would be c6MW. The battery containers would be dark green in colour. The maximum development footprint of the battery storage compound will be 55m by 100m and will be surfaced with stone chippings.

¹ The National Electricity Transmission System is an islanded network with no AC connections to other networks. In order to manage the system frequency within the normal operating range 49.5Hz to 50.5Hz, National Grid relies on frequency balancing service providers to modulate their active power output or consumption in order to minimise the imbalance between generation and demand on the system. The extent of the required modulation is determined by the deviation of the system frequency from 50Hz. A change in grid frequency is caused by an imbalance of supply and demand.

Substation

- 2.17 A single substation compound will be required for the Development and this will be constructed at the start of the development of the whole site. Following construction and commissioning the substation compound will be adopted and become the property of the District Network Operator (DNO, who will maintain the compound throughout the lifetime of the Development. The decommissioning of the substation is not considered as part of the Application as this will be the property of the DNO and as such would be outside the gift of the developer to decommission.
- 2.18 The maximum development footprint of the substation yard will be 80m by 80m and will be surfaced with stone chippings. Under normal conditions the site would be unmanned.

Landscape and ecological management plan

- 2.19 The Development proposal presents considerable opportunity for landscape and biodiversity mitigation and enhancement. The Landscape and Biodiversity proposal are discussed in detail in the supporting Landscape and Ecological Management Plan.
- 2.20 Ecological and biodiversity measures are promoted across the entire site and these enhanced areas are shown as land zone 3, as shown on the zoning plan. Land between and beneath the panels would be used for biodiversity enhancements and seasonal sheep grazing. Tree planting would be introduced along the north east section of the development boundary.
- 2.21 The existing woodland plantations that surround the various field enclosures would continue to be managed by the landowner as part of its woodland forestry licence. The hedgerows surrounding the field edges will also be managed via the Landscape and Ecological Management Plan.

Access

- 2.22 It is proposed that construction traffic will arrive from the M180 junction 4, the A15, the A18, the B1208 and B1207 to the site access. From the M180 junction 4 vehicles will use the A15 northbound to the Briggate Lodge Roundabout and then travel east along the A18 towards Brigg. From the A18, vehicles will turn left onto the B1208. The B1208 measures between approximately 5.5 and six metres wide.

Vehicles will travel along the B1208 to the junction with the B1207 and then continue straight ahead into the site access.

- 2.23 No construction vehicles associated with the development proposal would travel through Broughton.

Construction phase & Temporary Construction Compound

- 2.24 As stated elsewhere in this section, the solar and battery elements could either be constructed and connected to the electricity network independently of each other or at the same time. If all elements were constructed as at the same time, then the construction period would take approximately 11 months (up to 47 weeks).

- 2.25 Construction activities will be carried out Monday to Friday 07:00-18:00 and between 08:00 and 13:30 on Saturdays. Where possible, construction deliveries will be coordinated to avoid HGV movements during the traditional AM peak hour (08:00-09:00) and PM peak hour (17:00-18:00).

- 2.26 During the construction phase (or phases) one main construction compound will serve the development proposal and this will be located off the main site entrance, thus reducing the distance delivery vehicles will need to travel after reaching the site's entrance.

- 2.27 The temporary construction compound would comprise: -

- Temporary portacabins providing office and welfare facilities for construction operatives
- Parking area for construction and workers vehicles
- Secure compound for storage
- Temporary hardstanding
- Wheel washing facilities
- Temporary gated compound
- Storage bins for recyclables and other waste

All construction vehicles will exit through the wheel wash area in order to reduce the spread of mud and dirt onto the local highway network. Temporary roadways may be utilised to access parts of the development site and this would be guided by weather conditions at time of construction.

Temporary Diversion of Public Rights of Way

- 2.28 A temporary diversion of a section of the right of way (footpath 214) traversing the site will be required during the construction and subsequent decommissioning phases. The temporary diversion will only be required to allow the build out and removal of the solar park and main substation compound and this will be for a maximum of 11 months. The proposed temporary diversion is presented at Appendix 3.

APPENDIX 3 - PROPOSED TEMPORARY DIVERSION OF PUBLIC FOOTPATH 214

Decommissioning

- 2.29 An outline decommissioning strategy is included within the Environmental Statement and sets out details of the decommissioning programme to be carried out after a 35 year generation period. It includes the methods for the removal of all the solar panels, cabins, structures, batteries, enclosures, equipment and all other apparatus above and below ground level from the site and details of their destination in terms of waste/recycling, and details of how the site is to be restored.

3. CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

- 3.1 A summary of consultation between Clarkson and Woods and LWT is provided in Table 4.2 below.

4. ECOLOGY AND BIODIVERSITY

4.1 The lead consultant on behalf of the applicant on ecology and biodiversity is Clarkson and Woods Ecological Consultants Ltd.

Table 7.1 Ecology & Biodiversity Common Ground

<i>Applicant comments</i>	<i>NE comments</i>	<i>Status e.g Agreed / not agreed N/A</i>
<i>Methodology</i>		
<p><i>Desk Study Methodology</i></p> <p>As part of a comprehensive desk study, data was purchased from the Lincolnshire Environmental Records Centre (LERC) in August 2017. This included data on protected species; red data book species; Species of Principal Importance; local Biodiversity Action Plan species and invasive species within 2km of the site. Records for notable and/or protected species within 1 - 2 km is considered to be of greatest relevance as this is usually the distance encompassing the typical home ranges of most of the species studied. Details of locally designated sites within 1km were also obtained. Due to the nature of the proposals, non-statutorily designated sites beyond 1km are unlikely to be within the zone of influence of the development. It is understood that the scope of the desk study is considered sufficient for the purposes of the assessment</p>		<i>Agreed</i>

<p><i>Survey Methodology</i></p> <p>A series of ecological surveys to establish the baseline have been undertaken between July 2017 and November 2019. The scope of detailed surveys was agreed in January 2018 primarily through liaison with North Lincolnshire Council. However, it is understood that LWT are satisfied that the survey effort and methods.</p>		<p>Agreed</p>
<p><i>Assessment Methodology</i></p> <p>The standard approach applied in the UK to Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA) is that developed by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) in 2016 and revised in 2018². This methodology has been followed and used to evaluate existing conditions, and to assess the significance of likely effects on ecological features that may arise. The assessment methodology is considered appropriate.</p>		<p>Agreed</p>
<p>Baseline Information</p>		
<p><i>Designated Sites</i></p> <p>Of the eleven locally designated sites identified within the desk study, seven were considered to be within the zone of influence, primarily due to the proximity to the application site. Four were of sufficient distance that no direct or indirect impacts were deemed likely to occur.</p> <p>Locally designated sites within the zone of influence were: Broughton West Wood Local Wildlife Site (LWS), Manby Wood LWS, Heron Holt LWS, Broughton Far Wood LWS, Rowland Plantation LWS Broughton West Wood Site of Nature</p>		<p>Agreed</p>

² CIEEM (2018) Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine. CIEEM, Winchester.

<p>Conservation Interest (SNCI) and Santon Wood SNCI. Parts of Manby Wood and Broughton West Wood were identified as being Plantation on Ancient Woodland Site (PAWS). All locally-designated sites with the Zone of influence were evaluated as being of County importance</p> <p>The classification and evaluation of designated sites has been agreed with North Lincolnshire Council, and it understood that LWT are satisfied with this.</p>		
<p><i>Habitats and Species</i></p> <p>Several habitats and species present on or adjacent to the Site, which are described in section 7.4 of the ES chapter, were classified as Important Ecological Features and were taken forward within the assessment. The baseline evaluation of species and habitats was agreed with North Lincolnshire Council.</p> <p>It is understood that LWT are satisfied with the evaluation agreed with North Lincolnshire Council.</p>		<p>Agreed</p>
<p><i>Impact Assessment and Mitigation</i></p>		
<p>As described in section 7.6 of the ES Chapter, key sources of impacts during construction were identified to be habitat loss, fragmentation, disturbance of species through noise and vibration, degradation of habitats by pollution or dust deposition and the incidental mortality of species during construction.</p> <p>The key mitigation measure to minimise construction related effects will be the implementation of a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP), a draft of which is provided as a technical Appendix (7.7).</p>		<p>Agreed</p>

<p>Fenced biodiversity protection zones are to be installed between habitats of high importance (namely woodland, hedgerows, ponds, ditches and trees) to protect from damage and degradation.</p> <p>It is understood the LWT are satisfied that the protection zones are adequate for the safeguarding of nearby Local Wildlife Sites and PAWS.</p> <p>Protection zones are also to be retained around badger setts to avoid damage/disturbance to setts and badgers therein, and thereby ensuring legal compliance.</p> <p>The CEMP also outlines good practice measures to be adopted during construction with the purpose of protecting biodiversity.</p> <p>Proposed protection zones and good practice measures outlined in the CEMP are considered adequate to reduce construction phase impacts to acceptable levels.</p> <p>The proposals include planting of approximately 2.5km of new native hedgerow planting, which is expected to give rise to beneficial effects through increasing connectivity as well as foraging and nesting/sheltering habitat for a range of species.</p> <p>The assessment of impacts and key mitigation measures are considered to be common ground.</p>		
<p>Fewer operational phase effects were noted as post construction activity at the site would be minimal.</p> <p>A draft Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) has been prepared which sets out how the site will be managed post construction in order to</p>		<p>Agreed</p>

<p>maximise its ecological value and ensure the operational mitigation measures are implemented.</p> <p>The cessation of intensive arable farming practices and creation of grassland habitats will likely give rise to beneficial effects for a range of ecological features.</p> <p>It is understood that LWT are satisfied with the proposals outlined in the LEMP</p>		
<p><i>Residual Effects</i></p>		
<p>Residual effects after mitigation measures have been applied are described within section 7.4 of the ES chapter. Residual effects for all Important Ecological Features are either non-significant, or are considered to be positive effects which are significant at Local level. The description and classification of residual effects are understood to be agreed.</p>		
<p><i>Enhancements</i></p>		
<p>A number of ecological enhancements are proposed which deliver additional ecological benefits beyond those expected to occur as a result of the mitigation measures described above. These are described in section 7.9 of the ES chapter. Management prescriptions designed to ensure delivery of the proposed enhancements are set out within the LEMP.</p> <p>This includes easements of existing arable land sown with acid grassland seed mixes containing foodplants of target butterfly species (including grayling, wall and small heath) which are known to be present in the locality. Increasing opportunities for these species is a priority in the region LC and was highlighted during</p>		<p><i>Agreed</i></p>

<p>correspondence with North Lincolnshire Council in January 2018.</p> <p>A range of features for wildlife (including bat and bird boxes) are to be installed at the site, and existing habitats (including ponds, ditches and hedgerows) are to be brought under management to increase their value to wildlife.</p> <p>The enhancements have been designed within input from North Lincolnshire Council and are expected to deliver positive impacts for biodiversity. It is understood that LWT are satisfied with the proposed enhancement measures.</p>		
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4.2

Table 4.2 Ecology and Biodiversity Consultee Responses

<i>LWT comments</i>	<i>Applicant comments</i>	<i>Status e.g Agreed / not agreed N/A</i>
<p>LWT were consulted in March 2019 on the proposals. Clare Sterling (CS) – Conservation Officer for LWT - indicated that discussions between the applicant and the North Lincolnshire biodiversity officer on ecological work to date and enhancement proposals was satisfactory from LWT viewpoint and had no further comments to make.</p>	<p>None.</p>	

4.3

5. DECLARATIONS

5.1

5.2

