



Little Crow

Solar Park

Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project in the Energy Sector

**ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT
SCOPING REPORT
TECHNICAL APPENDICES**

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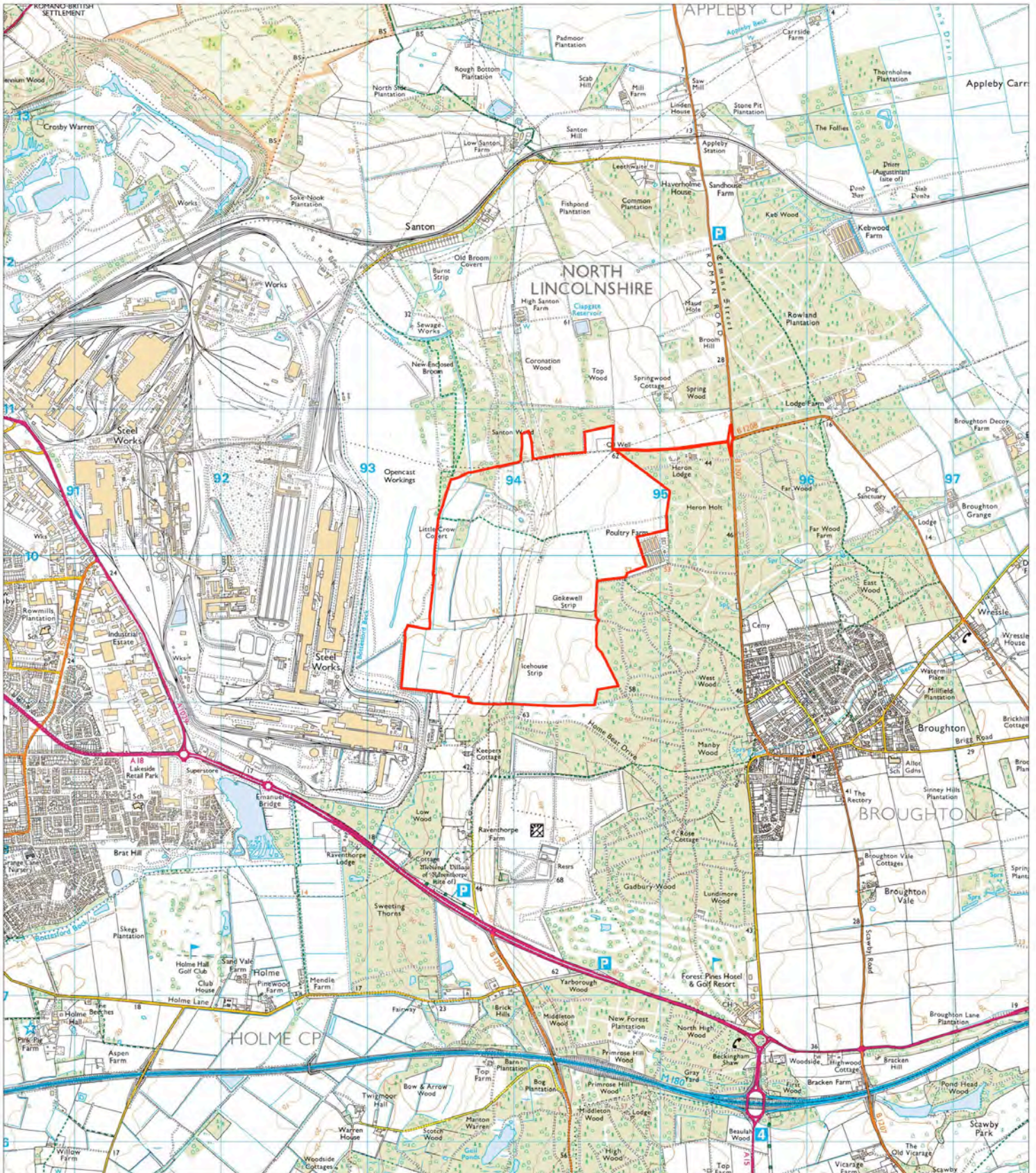
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APPENDIX 1.1

SITE LOCATION PLAN

KEY: SITE LOCATION PLAN
 APPLICATION BOUNDARY



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LITTLE CROW SOLAR PARK - SITE LOCATION PLAN **Pegasus**
 Design

APPENDIX 1.2

COPY OF NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE INFORMAL PRE-APPLICATION RESPONSE

Enquiries to: Andrew Law
Direct Dial: 01724 297490
E-mail: andrew.law@northlincs.gov.uk

Our Ref: PRE/2018/137
Your Ref: GRO/P17-0718

Date: 30 October 2018

Colin Virtue
Executive Director
Pegasus Group
First Floor
South Wing
Equinox North
Great Park Road
Almondsbury
Bristol
BS32 4QL

Dear Mr Virtue,

National Significant Infrastructure Project in the Energy Sector Informal Consultation with North Lincolnshire Council - Little Crow Solar Park, Scunthorpe

Thank you for your consultation letter dated 3 August 2018, I apologise for the delay in responding to this informal stage of pre-application consultation.

I have taken the opportunity to review the Draft Environmental Statement and Draft Technical Appendices and documents submitted to the authority. Technical consultees within the Council have raised matters which will hopefully advise the final production of the Environmental Statement and support you in making a robust submission to the Planning Inspectorate. I have enclosed these consultation responses for your information, please feel free to discuss these matters with the relevant people and do not hesitate to contact me should you require any contact details for the consultees. I would be grateful if you could keep me copied into any future correspondence with technical consultees so that I can project manage this scheme and collate formal responses to you in the future.

North Lincolnshire Council does not wish to raise any objection to the principle of the proposed scheme at this moment in time. At the examination stage North Lincolnshire Council will produce a Local Impact Report which will need to be agreed by local members at Planning Committee and as such we do reserve the right to

raise concerns at a later stage following consideration of the application by committee members.

At this stage of informal pre-application consultation I would like to make the following observations:

Landscape and Visual Impact

Having reviewed Chapter 6 of the Draft ES I can confirm agreement to the approach to the assessment and mitigation of landscape and visual impacts.

The proposal for planting of new hedgerows along the security fences adjacent to the public right of way through the site and the sowing of wildflower seed in the margins between the path and the hedges is supported on the understanding that the hedging would be of mixed native species and that the wildflower seed is of UK origin. However, it should be noted that for the hedgerows and wildflowers along the Public Right of Way to be of lasting benefit, they will require ongoing management. The council's responsibilities in this respect are limited to way-clearance and maintenance of the route only. The landowner or solar farm operator will therefore need to make provision for ongoing management of the hedgerows and wildflowers for the 35-year lifetime of the project.

Ecology and Nature Conservation

Having reviewed Chapter 7 of the Draft ES and the comments supplied by the council's ecologist I can confirm that the survey methods used and survey effort deployed is appropriate for the site in question.

Section 7.5.2 of the Draft ES lists ecological and enhancement measures that are generally acceptable and welcomed. However, it is noted that this section proposes that the grassland will be grazed by sheep. The local authorities experience with other local solar farms is that where grazing has been proposed at the application stage, no grazing has actually taken place on the sites once operational. Therefore, alternative measures to maintain habitat quality may need to be secured should grazing not be forthcoming.

Sections 7.6.155 – 7.6.157 detail appropriate mitigation and enhancement measures to conserve invertebrates, including priority species of butterfly. Where possible the deployment of sandy and stony substrates would also benefit these species. In particular the grayling butterfly, within Lincolnshire/East Midlands, only exists on the eastern edge of Scunthorpe and could greatly benefit from such habitat.

The proposed Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) will need to be carefully drafted, agreed in writing and fully implemented for the lifetime of the project to ensure that the proposed mitigation and enhancement measures achieve the desired outcomes.

Cultural Heritage

The council's Historic Environment Record make comments on the content of Chapter 8 of the Draft ES and these comments are set out in the enclosed consultation response. In addition to these comments it is understood that an archaeological evaluation of the site has been commissioned. The agreed strategy for archaeological evaluation, prepared by Cotswold Archaeology, comprises geophysical survey, fieldwalking and trial trenching. As far as I am aware the archaeological evaluation is currently underway. The results of the completed evaluation will inform an updated Heritage Assessment of the significance of the heritage assets and any direct and indirect impacts of the proposed development. In turn, the Heritage Assessment will inform any appropriate mitigation measures to conserve relevant assets either in situ or by record. Where possible this information should be fed into the ES prior to submission of the application. Where results are not available within this timescale it is expected that they will be submitted as addenda to the ES for consideration during the determination process.

Land Quality

No concerns have been raised by the council's Environmental Health team with respect to the methodology used to prepare the Draft Ground Conditions Desk Study. The desk study indicates that the current site has a prolonged history of agricultural usage, with no evidence of large-scale ironstone extraction or landfilling within the boundaries. However due to the proximity to the Scunthorpe Steel Works, it is recommended to check for the location of ironstone gulleys and mineshafts in the area prior to development being undertaken.

Operational Noise

No information has been provided in relation to operational noise from the development, including the use of battery storage containers. However, given the location and nature of the development, it is likely that operational noise will not give rise to significant adverse impact provided that any necessary mitigation measures are included. The LPA would expect to see some consideration of operational noise as part of the application.

In addition, it is noted that noise, dust, light etc. during the construction phase has the potential to impact on amenity. To prevent local residents and other sensitive receptors being affected during the construction of the proposed development the LPA would recommend the inclusion of requirements to secure an appropriate Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and to control the hours of operation.

Highway Safety

The council's Highways team has raised no objections to the proposed development and anticipate that operational traffic will be relatively minor. However, there is likely to be significant traffic generated as a result of the construction and decommissioning of the solar farm and as such the LPA would expect a Construction Phase Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) to be submitted and agreed prior to construction operations taking place. This plan could be secured via a requirement as part of any forthcoming DCO. In particular, the CTMP will need to give consideration to the suitability of the existing access into the site and the management of the crossroads at the access point during construction and decommissioning.

Drainage

Having reviewed the Draft Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy and taking advice from the council's drainage officers I can confirm that the scope and detail of the draft report is acceptable. Notwithstanding this, it is important that the developer ensures that all watercourses within the development site are maintained throughout the lifetime of the development in accordance with their riparian responsibilities.

Cumulative Impact

With respect to proposals which are not currently in existence and may need to be taken into account as part of a cumulative impacts assessment the only major scheme that I am aware of which may have the potential to have cumulative environmental impacts is PA/2018/1316, a pending application for the retention of an existing wellsite for long-term hydrocarbon production at Lodge Farm, Clapp Gate, Appleby.

The council does maintain an up-to-date weekly list of submitted planning applications on its website and we would be able to carry out a search of recent planning approvals and pending planning applications in a specified Zone of Influence should this be required.

Community Consultation

I have already provided comments on the informal draft Statement of Community Consultation in my email dated 3 October 2018, confirming agreement to the proposed consultation strategy subject to a minor revision to the 'Prescribed Bodies' set out in table 4.3. I have no further comments to make in this respect at the current time and will provide an updated response to the formal consultation on the SOCC in due course.

I trust that the comments contained within this letter and enclosures are helpful. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you wish to discuss any aspect of this response or this development.

Yours Sincerely

Andrew Law
Strategic Development Officer

PLANNING CONSULTATIONS

REFERENCE: PRE/2018/137

CASE OFFICER: ANDREW LAW



TEAM: HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD

AUTHOR: ALISON WILLIAMS, HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT OFFICER

TEL: 01724 297471

EMAIL: alison.williams@northlincs.gov.uk



SUBJECT: PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE - Ground mounted solar park up to 150MWp, Little Crow Solar Park, Santon, Scunthorpe

PARISH: SCAWBY

DATE ISSUED: 13/09/2018

SUMMARY OF ADVICE

- The proposed development has the potential to impact on non-designated heritage assets and their settings, including any as yet undiscovered heritage assets of archaeological interest of equivalent significance to scheduled monuments
- The applicant has prepared a Baseline Heritage Assessment based on current recorded information (Draft ES, Appendix 8.1); this has previously been submitted to the HER
- The applicant has also commissioned an archaeological evaluation of the site in line with NPS EN-1 paragraph 5.8.8, NPPF paragraph 189 and Local Plan policies CS6 and HE9
- The agreed strategy for archaeological evaluation, prepared by Cotswold Archaeology, comprises geophysical survey, fieldwalking and trial trenching; the geophysical survey is currently underway
- The results of the completed archaeological evaluation will inform an updated Heritage Assessment of the significance of the heritage assets and any direct and indirect impacts of the proposed development; in turn, this assessment will inform any appropriate mitigation measures to conserve relevant assets either in situ or by record
- Where possible, this information should be fed into the ES prior to submission of the application; where results are not available within this timescale we should expect that they will be submitted as addenda to the ES for consideration during the determination process
- Further comments on Chapter 8 of the Draft ES are set out below.

HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD (HER) FUNCTION: To hold, maintain, interpret and manage heritage information, enhancing the understanding of the area's historical development as a distinctive and attractive place. HER information provides source material for interpretation by heritage professionals and for use by community groups and individuals. The HER database is updated as new information about the historic environment is discovered.

The HER also provides advice on development proposals that affect, or may affect, the sites and settings of all heritage assets i.e. designated and non-designated historic buildings, archaeological sites and monuments, and historic places, areas and landscapes. This advice is provided against saved local plan policies and national historic environment policies. See <http://www.northlincs.gov.uk/planning-and-environment/historic-environment-and-conservation/>

DETAILED ADVICE: Thank you for consulting the HER on this pre-application proposal. The Cultural Heritage section of the Draft Environmental Statement comprises Chapter 8 of Volume 1 and Technical Appendix 8.1 Heritage Desk Based Baseline Survey Report. Eddie Rychlak and I were consulted on the latter report earlier this year; Eddie confirmed that the setting assessment of the built heritage assets is satisfactory. This memo therefore focusses on the archaeological heritage resource.

My comments on Chapter 8 of the Draft Environmental Statement (ES) are as follows:

8.2 ASSESSMENT APPROACH

Paragraph 8.2.5 Settings Assessment, refers to designated heritage assets only, whereas Historic England's Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (Second Edition) is clear that all heritage assets may have a setting. Step 1 of this guidance: Identify which heritage assets and their settings are affected, does not differentiate between undesignated and designated heritage assets, nor does the NPPF (para 197) or NPPG. The draft ES should include setting assessments of the undesignated assets; the Baseline Report included a setting assessment for the site of Gokewell Priory, one of the undesignated heritage assets within the site.

Paragraph 8.2.10 (and paragraph 8.2.26) could usefully include the rest of NPPF paragraph 189 regarding archaeological evaluation, and note that the description of significance of any heritage assets in the ES may be added to in response to the iterative gathering of survey data following the archaeological evaluation as referred to in paragraph 8.1.2

Table 8.1 Criteria for Assessment of the Significance of Heritage Assets and paragraph 8.2.16. I welcome the methodology of moving away from the matrix-led approach to one based on a more discursive approach. However, table 8.1 appears to be missing categories that I would expect to see considered such as the inclusion of the following:

- Non-designated heritage assets of equivalent significance to scheduled monuments (NPPF 193b footnote 63);
- Non-designated heritage assets the significance of which has been ascertained through sufficient evaluation and assessment;
- The category of Uncertain is not appropriate, it is already covered by non-designated heritage assets the significance of which has not yet been ascertained through sufficient evaluation and assessment
- Negligible: remains that have been sufficiently demonstrated to have no archaeological interest as defined in the NPPF Glossary

Paragraph 8.2.18 refers to temporary effects on the settings of heritage assets if the development has a limited lifespan, and that these temporary effects can be short, medium or long-term, but does not quantify any of these terms.

Table 8.2 Magnitude of Effect upon Heritage Assets and paragraph 8.2.20. Drawing a distinction between designated and undesignated heritage assets in relation to the level of harm is potentially confusing and unhelpful; the scale of harm to all heritage assets irrespective of any designation status should be expressed in consistent terminology as substantial harm or less than substantial harm equivalent to loss of significance in whole or part (NPPF paragraph 199).

Paragraph 8.2.30 Limitations to the Assessment, could usefully refer to the ongoing archaeological field evaluation being undertaken in accordance with NPPF 189 & Local Plan policies CS6 & HE9, and that the results will inform an updated assessment of significance as they become available, as part of the iterative process set out in paragraph 8.1.2.

8.3 BASELINE CONDITIONS

Paragraphs 8.3.13-15 The Setting of Designated Heritage Assets, designated and non-designated heritage assets should be included in this assessment. It is not explained in the draft ES why the setting assessments refer only to designated heritage assets. All heritage assets may have a setting and the HE guidance does not state that only designated heritage assets should be identified for appropriate assessment.

Paragraph 8.3.17 Known and Potential Archaeological Remains. It should be noted that following the completion of the ongoing archaeological evaluation of the site, and an updated Heritage Assessment informed by the results, the potential for any further undiscovered archaeological remains within the site would be considerably reduced, in line with the iterative approach to the preparation of the ES.

Paragraph 8.3.18 Cropmarks of a round barrow, to note that these archaeological investigations are ongoing and results will update the draft ES.

8.4 ASSESSMENT OF LIKELY SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS

8.4.4 Operation Phase Effects. I disagree with the proposal to scope out buried archaeological remains as this does not take into account any indirect effects on their settings and assessment of impact on significance. This assessment will need to be informed by the results of archaeological evaluation.

8.4.6 I disagree with the proposal to scope out effects as a result of the decommissioning phase ; the ES does need to assess the impacts of decommissioning on any heritage assets informed by the results of archaeological evaluation and taking into account any mitigation measures that may be required for construction phases; an informed assessment of impact based on the details of the decommissioning activities should therefore be scoped into the heritage assessment.

8.5 MITIGATION AND ENHANCEMENT


Paragraph 8.5.2 reference to NPPF paragraph 135 should be 197 and paragraph 141 should be 200.

The sections of Mitigation by Design and Additional Mitigation including Table 8.3 will need to be updated following the results of archaeological evaluation and revised Heritage Assessment of significance and impact.

Paragraph 8.5.9 Enhancements, I welcome the inclusion of this proposal and would certainly look for a firm commitment to produce and install an interpretive board alongside Gokewell Priory Site beside the adjacent PROW.

Paragraph 8.7.5 should refer to Gokewell Priory Site, unless the archaeological evaluation demonstrates that there would be no direct or indirect effect. Of the second sentence, this has not yet been ascertained until the completion of the archaeological evaluation and the results have been assessed.

I will keep you informed of progress with the archaeological evaluation as Cotswold Archaeology updates the HER.

I N T E R	<h1>MEMO</h1>	
O F F I C E		

To: Andrew Law, Development Management

From: Environmental Health (Commercial)

Your Ref: Pre planning application, PRE/2018/137

Our Ref: PLU 003933

Subject: Ground mounted solar park up to 150MWp

Location: Little Crow Solar Park, Santon, Scunthorpe

Date: 30 August 2018

Thank you for your email requesting this department's comments on the above pre Application request.

The applicant has included details of the proposed development for the installation of a solar park with a maximum export capacity of 100Mw. The proposal will also include approximately 50Mw of battery storage containers that will provide a frequency response to the national grid at times when the solar park is not exporting at peak capacity.

There will also be electrical connection infrastructure and the point of connection into the local electricity grid is directly to the 132kva electricity overhead pylon which already runs through the development site.

Due to the potential generating capacity, at over 50Mw, this project constitutes a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project and the application will go to the Secretary of State for a Development Consent Order.

The proposed development is 140m to the nearest sensitive residential receptors, this department therefore requires the following with any planning permission applied for.

Construction Environmental Management (CEMP)

This department is concerned that noise, dust, light etc. during the construction phase has the potential to impact on amenity. To prevent local residents and other sensitive receptors being affected during the construction of the proposed development, this department recommends the inclusion of the following conditions:

1. No stage of the development hereby permitted shall commence until a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The CEMP shall include the following:-

Noise and vibration: The CEMP shall set out the particulars of –

- a) the works, and the method by which they are to be carried out;
- b) the noise and vibration attenuation measures to be taken to minimise noise and vibration resulting from the works, including any noise limits; and
- c) a scheme for monitoring the noise and vibration during the works to ensure compliance with the noise limits and the effectiveness of the attenuation measures

Light: The CEMP shall set out the particulars of –

- a) Specified locations for contractors' compounds and materials storage areas,
- b) Areas where lighting will be required for health and safety purposes,
- c) Location of potential temporary floodlights,
- d) Identification of sensitive receptors likely to be impacted upon by light nuisance,
- e) Proposed methods of mitigation against potential light nuisance, including potential glare and light spill, on sensitive receptors.

Dust: The CEMP shall set out the particulars of –

- a) Site dust monitoring, recording and complaint investigation procedures
- b) Identification of receptors and the related risk of dust impact at all phases of the development, including when buildings and properties start to be occupied
- c) Provision of water to the site
- d) Dust mitigation techniques at all stages of development
- e) Prevention of dust trackout
- f) Communication with residents and other receptors
- g) A commitment to cease the relevant operation if dust emissions are identified either by regular site monitoring or by the local authority
- h) A no burning of waste policy

2. Construction and site clearance operations shall be limited to the following days and hours:

- 07:00 to 19:00hrs Monday to Friday.
- 07:00 to 13:00hrs Saturday.
- No construction or site clearance operations on Sundays or public holidays.
- HGV movements shall not be permitted outside these hours during the construction phase without prior written approval from the Local Planning Authority.
- Installation of equipment on site shall not be permitted outside these hours without prior written approval from the Local Planning Authority.

Operational noise

The applicant has not provided any information in relation to operational noise of the development site including the use of battery storage containers. However, given the location and nature of the proposed development, it is likely that operational noise will not give rise to significant adverse impact provided that any necessary mitigation measures are included. This department would expect a planning application to include details of operational noise sources and predicted noise levels at relevant locations.

Contaminated Land

A desk study has been included with this application. The desk study has indicated that the current site has a prolonged history of agricultural usage, with no evidence of large scale ironstone extraction or landfilling within the boundaries. However due to the proximity to the steel works, this department would recommend checking for the location of ironstone gullies and mineshafts in the area before any development is undertaken.

Fw: PRE/2018/137 - Little Crow Solar Park, Santon, Scunthorpe

Darren Cowling

Thu 20/09/2018 15:28

To: Andrew Law <Andrew.Law@northlincs.gov.uk>;

Cc: Planning <Planning@northlincs.gov.uk>;

Andy,

Louisa and I have had some discussions with the applicants representative regarding a Construction Phase TMP and have raised the question of where the site will connect to the grid.

These items will form the basis of any conditions we will advise.

Thanks Darren



North Lincolnshire is a great place to live and work; if you want to foster, adopt or become a social worker we would love to hear from you.
Contact - fostering@northlincs.gov.uk | 01724 297024

From: Sarah-Lee Bootland <planningapplications@northlincs.gov.uk>

Sent: 21 August 2018 16:38

To: PlanningApplicationNotifications

Subject: PRE/2018/137 - Little Crow Solar Park, Santon, Scunthorpe

North Lincolnshire Council Planning

Case Officer: Andrew Law

ground mounted solar park up to 150MWp

Dear Sir/Madam

Your views are requested upon the above proposal. Please email your response direct to the case officer within 14 days of the date of this email quoting the application reference number

PRE/2018/137

Development Management

North Lincolnshire Council

Civic Centre

Ashby Road

Scunthorpe

North Lincolnshire

DN16 1AB

Tel: 01724 297000

Web: www.northlincs.gov.uk

I N T E R

O F F I C E

MEMO



To: Andrew Law, Development Control
From: Andrew Taylor, Environment Team
Your Ref: PRE/2018/137
Date: 10 October 2018

Subject: Ground mounted solar park up to 150MWp
Little Crow Solar Park, Santon, Scunthorpe

Summary

- EIA is required.
- The proposed approach to landscape and visual impact assessment is acceptable.
- The ecological survey methods used and the survey effort deployed are appropriate for the site in question.
- The site has importance for a number of protected and priority species and habitats.
- Appropriate mitigation and enhancement measures are proposed, but DCO requirements will need to be carefully drafted to ensure that important features are properly managed over the 35-year lifetime of the project.

Thank you for consulting the Environment Team on the above pre-application enquiry. Apologies for the delay in replying. The following opinion is given at your request and is without prejudice to any decision which may be made upon receipt of a formal application.

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)- general points.

I have read the draft Environmental Statement. I agree that EIA is required. I also agree with the proposal to consider alternatives.

The method proposed for the assessment of impact and the provision of mitigation and enhancement measures appears to be appropriate.

Landscape

Whilst I am not a landscape expert, I do tend to be asked to comment on the landscape assessments and impacts for proposals such as this. I agree with the approach to the assessment and mitigation of landscape and visual impacts, as set out in section 6 of the draft environmental statement.

Section 6.7.11 proposes, “the planting of new hedgerows along the security fences adjacent to the public right of way through the site and the sowing of wildflower seed in the margins between the path and the hedges.”

I support the planting of mixed native hedgerows and the sowing of UK origin wildflower seed, if a locally appropriate mix is used.

Where habitat creation is proposed as mitigation, compensation or planning gain, the underlying survey information should be adequate for regulatory authorities to assess whether the proposals are feasible. In addition to information on species and habitats, it will also be necessary to measure physical conditions including (but not exclusively) soil conditions and hydrology. Where applicable, the applicant should follow the standards set out in Natural England Technical Information Notes. For it to be worthwhile to sow wildflower seed, a nutrient poor soil is required- ideally with a phosphorus index value of less than 1. If such soils are not present at the moment, then remedial works will be required before sowing wildflower seed.

For the hedgerows and wildflowers along the Public Right of Way to be of lasting benefit, they will require ongoing management. The Council's responsibilities in this respect are limited to way-clearance and maintenance of the route only. The landowner or solar farm operator will therefore need to make provision for the ongoing management of the hedgerows and wildflowers for the 35-year lifetime of the project. This should be secured through the requirements attached to the DCO.

Protected and Priority Species

I have considered this application in accordance with Natural England's standing advice for protected species- <http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/planningtransportlocalgov/spatialplanning/standingadvice/default.aspx>.

“The Application Site consists of 16 predominantly arable fields bordered by a network of hedgerows and extensive woodland plantations. The land gradually slopes to the western edge of the site. Grassland, scrub and ruderal habitat are also present in discrete areas around the site” (Draft ES para 7.4.2). With these habitats, the standing advice guides us to consider the following protected species or groups:

Habitat, building or land	Species to look for
Meadows, grassland, parkland and pasture on the land or linked to the site (by similar habitat)	Bats, badgers, breeding birds, great crested newts, invertebrates, reptiles and protected plants
Ponds or slow-flowing water bodies (like ditches) on the site, or within 500m and linked by semi-natural habitat such as parks or heaths	Breeding birds, fish, great crested newts, water voles, invertebrates and crayfish
Rough grassland and previously developed land (brownfield sites), on or next to the site	Breeding bird, reptiles, invertebrate and protected plants
Woodland, scrub and hedgerows on, or next to the site	Bats, breeding birds, badgers, dormice, invertebrates, great crested newts, smooth snakes (see reptiles) and protected plants

Dormice, smooth snakes and white clawed crayfish do not occur in North Lincolnshire and do not need to be considered further.

I have read Ecology chapter of the submitted draft Environmental Statement. The survey methods used and the survey effort deployed are appropriate for the site in question. The application site is largely arable land, but supports the following important features:

- Arable margins, supporting the vulnerable plant henbane.
- Semi-improved grassland with a variety of orchid species.
- Mixed broadleaved woodland.
- Hedgerows
- Ponds
- Badger setts
- Bats- five species foraging.
- Priority species of farmland bird (breeding)- Skylark, Yellow wagtail, Lapwing, Reed Bunting, Bulfinch, Linnet, Song thrush, Dunnock.
- An assemblage of wintering farmland birds. On one occasion, 107 lapwing were recorded- equivalent to over 1% of the Humber Estuary population for this species. There is no evidence to indicate whether or not this flock was linked to the Humber Estuary.

In addition, the site lies next to ancient woodland and near to the important open mosaic habitats of the steelworks, which support priority species of butterfly, including wall, small heath and grayling.

Evaluation

Section 7.5.2 of the draft Environmental Statement lists some ecological mitigation and enhancement measures that are broadly welcomed. I shall not repeat the list here. However, it is worth noting that this section states that the grassland will be grazed by sheep. For other local solar farms where grazing has been proposed at the application stage, no grazing is actually taking place on the site once operational. We should therefore use DCO requirements to secure grazing or alternative measures to maintain habitat quality.

Sections 7.6.14-7.6.19 detail appropriate mitigation measures to protect woodland, and ancient woodland in particular.

Sections 7.6.35-7.6.36 detail appropriate mitigation measures to conserve arable plants.

Sections 7.6.91-7.6.96 detail appropriate mitigation measures to conserve badgers.

Sections 7.6.123-7.6.129 detail appropriate mitigation measures to conserve farmland birds.

Sections 7.6.155-7.6.157 detail appropriate mitigation and enhancement measures to conserve invertebrates, including priority species of butterfly. Where possible, the deployment of sandy and stony substrates would also benefit these species. In particular the grayling butterfly, in Lincolnshire/East Midlands terms, only exists on the eastern edge of Scunthorpe and could benefit greatly from such habitat.

The other proposed mitigation and enhancement measures in section 7.6 are acceptable.

The proposed Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) will need to be carefully drafted, agreed in writing and fully implemented for the lifetime of the project to ensure that the proposed mitigation and enhancement measures achieve the desired outcomes.

Biodiversity Enhancement

The National Planning Policy Framework states that:

“The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, geological conservation interests and soils;
- recognising the wider benefits of ecosystem services;
- minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible, contributing to the Government’s commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures...”

and

“opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around developments should be encouraged;”

With this proposal, biodiversity enhancement should be secured as described under “Evaluation” above.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Andrew Taylor
Project Officer (Ecologist)

Annex- Ecology and Legal Protection

Bats

All species of bat are protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and Schedule 2 of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 making all species of bat European Protected Species. Details of the legislation can be found at:

Wildlife and Countryside Act

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1981/69/contents>

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act:

http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2000/ukpga_20000037_en_7#pt3-pb8-l1q81

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010

http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2010/uksi_20100490_en_1

Nesting birds

It is an offence under Section 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act of 1981(WCA 1981) to intentionally take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while it is use or being built. The WCA 1981 also provides that all wild birds and their eggs are protected and cannot be killed or taken except under licence.