

Appendix 1

Reference/ Pages	Description	NSDC's Comments
PEIR – VOL 1		
Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6.	Introduction, EIA, Description of Site and Surrounding Area, Our Project and Methodology for the PEIR.	We have reviewed these chapters and have no observations to make.
Chapter 5 – Pg 37	Legislative and Planning Policy Context	At paragraph 5.13, reference is made to each of the adopted development plans for the 'host' authorities. In the case of Newark and Sherwood District Council (hereafter referred to as NSDC) reference is made to the Amended Core Strategy (2019) and the Second Publication Amended Allocations and Development Management Development Plan Document (2023) (ADMDDP). The applicant does not make reference to the current version of the ADMDDP as adopted in July 2013. This also remains as being part of the Development Plan, until such time that it is replaced by the emerging and amended version of the ADMDDP). Accordingly, it should be taken into account as part of the EIA for the scheme as part of the local planning policy context. We would ask for a thorough review of the PEIR, as we note in other technical chapters, no specific reference is made to any NSDC local plan policies. These are noted as being relevant material considerations in the consideration of this NSIP project and should be given proper consideration in the Environmental Statement and other key documents, including (but not necessarily limited to) the Planning Statement.

<p>Appendix 4-2</p>	<p>Environmental Register</p>	<p>It is noted that Table 1-9 set out some ‘indicative’ measures for how impacts are proposed to be mitigated during the construction stage. We acknowledge that these are outline proposals at this stage, but NSDC would welcome the opportunity for an early review of the Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP). Whilst it is noted that this may be contingent on completion of the EIA and production of the ES, many of the mitigation measures for construction projects of a scheme of this nature are typically relatively standardised, to allow for the early production of the CEMP. Related to this, NSDC would also welcome early discussion on ‘requirements’ so that the means to which mitigation measures can be secured (as part of the DCO itself) are agreed.</p>
<p>Chapter 7 – Pg 2 onwards.</p>	<p>Biodiversity</p>	<p><u>Assessment of likely significant effects on foraging bats</u></p> <p>In previous comments made to the applicant, NSDC raised concern regarding the scope and extent of the survey work undertaken to assess potential impacts on foraging bats. This was also discussed during the meeting in March and included in the April response by NSDC. Section 7.150 of the PEIR has confirmed that additional surveys are being undertaken in relation to the activity of bats within the Site. In our response of 11/04/2024 we requested clarification regarding the design/scope of the proposed additional bat activity surveys, but we are not aware that this has been provided.</p> <p><u>Assessment of likely significant effects on riparian mammals (Otter and Water Vole)</u></p> <p>In our comments at the EIA scoping stage, we noted the limited survey work that had been undertaken for these priority species but acknowledged that the scoping report indicated that additional survey work for water vole and otter would be done in 2024.</p> <p>The PEIR has confirmed that additional survey work is being undertaken so we look forward to that survey work being considered within the Environmental Statement.</p>

		<p><u>Assessment of likely significant effects on common reptiles, specifically grass snake</u></p> <p>In our comments on the scoping report, we considered there should be some assessment via targeted survey work for reptiles, particularly grass snake.</p> <p>The PEIR has confirmed that additional survey work is being undertaken in 2024 (specifically for grass snake), but this will be via sampling surveys rather than survey of all riparian/bankside habitat within the Site. Whilst this is likely a proportionate approach, we would expect the Environmental Statement (or supporting appendix) to provide a rationale and methodology for determining sample size and sample locations.</p> <p>We also note and welcome that reptiles are scoped in (Table 7-8 Defining Importance of Ecological Features within the PEIR).</p> <p><u>Likely significant (negative and positive) effects</u></p> <p>The emerging ecological assessment identifies that it is not expected there would be any likely significant negative effects on the ecological features scoped into the assessment as these would mostly occur during the construction phase and would be mitigated by measures set out in the outline Construction and Environmental Management Plan. However, likely positive significant effects are equally important and the PEIR indicates that the project is expected to deliver likely significant positive effects “...resulting from habitat creation and enhancement delivered through embedded measures and Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG).” Whilst this is expected, and welcomed, caution is raised in respect of BNG.</p> <p>In our response of 10/04/2024 we brought to the applicant’s attention that since our initial comments of 01/12/2023, NSDC had adopted an interim BNG policy regarding ‘strategic significance’. We note that this policy has not been included in Appendix 7-1: Key Policy and Legislation of the PEIR under the ‘Local Policy’ Section. We consider it should have been included as this is a relevant local planning policy. If the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy has not been published by the time that any BNG calculations relating to</p>
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		<p>land falling within the Newark and Sherwood District are undertaken, we consider that this policy should be followed. This can be accessed from this location https://www.newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk/biodiversity/.</p> <p>Practitioners of BNG are aware that the process has the potential to be somewhat restrictive and can constrain some innovative habitat creation and enhancement proposals. Large scale projects like this provide opportunities for innovative biodiversity enhancements. Therefore, whilst the proposal for the project to voluntarily provide at least a measurable 10% BNG is welcomed, we would suggest that beyond 10% gain, proposed habitat creation and habitat management measures should not be entirely steered by the desire to generate an even higher percentage gain, and as a result, potentially stifle innovation. Within our own district, beyond a 10% gain, we would potentially give more merit to some proposed biodiversity measures based on what is being proposed, rather than the BNG they would generate. This could be particularly important in relation to ensuring that proposed biodiversity measures take into full consideration local nature conservation priorities, which is something that has been highlighted by many consultees during the consultation process to date.</p> <p>One area where this could apply relates to non-statutorily designated Local Wildlife Sites (LWS). The single LWS that falls within the proposed Site, and four of the seven LWS that are immediately adjacent to the proposed Site, are within the Newark and Sherwood District. Because of the non-statutory nature of the LWS designation, there is no legal obligation on the owners of LWS to manage them in any specific way, but they are a material consideration within the planning process. If the owners of these LWS's were agreeable, the project could consider their current condition (e.g., do they still meet the LWS selection criteria, are they currently being managed favourably etc.?) and consider supporting the owners in terms of future management of these sites, along with the creation of appropriate buffering habitats and creation of habitats linking these sites to other features.</p>
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<p>Chapter 8 — Pg 2 onwards.</p>	<p>Hydrology and Hydrogeology</p>	<p>NSDC note that the Environment Agency are the key statutory consultee in respect of this topic area and are therefore best placed to offer commentary on this technical topic area. Notwithstanding this, NSDC note that at paragraph 8.4 it is stated that it is difficult to define a study area with confidence, but that <i>‘consideration of the impacts that occur in the wider area has been made.</i> There does not appear to be any evidence of how the wider area has been defined and considered.</p>
<p>Chapter 9 – Pg 2 onwards.</p>	<p>Land and Soils</p>	<p>The Land and Soils Chapter has been reviewed by NSDC’S externally appointed advisor on Agricultural Land Classification. As such, we would wish to offer the following observations on this chapter.</p> <p>Section 9.28 under the heading of ‘Soil’ describes soil composition. In this regard, we note that land drainage is a key factor in assessing both land classification and also land restoration. This impact is particularly paramount along any cable or grid connection route, where trenches are dug and/or where soils are stripped, even on a temporary basis.</p> <p>As detailed later in the Chapter, the land within the Order Limits has been subject to an Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) Survey, although it is noted that full access to land has not yet been achieved for a number of land parcels and therefore the work to date is not complete. NSDC would seek to comment on this issue once the full survey is complete and a full understanding is provided on the implications of the loss of BMV agricultural land. We would also add that at present there is no accepted consensus, as to whether the long term (temporary) use of land should be considered as ‘not significant’ and therefore the loss of any BMW over the 20-hectare threshold may still be considered a ‘significant’ impact. In respect of the ALC Survey Methodology, the Soil augering of the site should be undertaken in line with TIN 049 and the MAFF 1988 Guidelines, one auger point per hectare and with occasional soil pits particularly where soil types vary. On a site of this size the amount of augering should be around 1,600+ auger holes and probably 10 to 20 pits to verify the soil profiles – more if there are significantly different soils.</p>

		<p>Turning to Soil structure, it should be noted that during the construction phase of development of this nature, the movement patterns of heavy vehicles associated with the works when soils are wet can cause considerable damage. Whilst there is a means to remedy some of the impacts post construction, not all of this impact can be mitigated, leaving long term drainage issues with the soil structure as a result.</p> <p><u>Cable Routes</u></p> <p>At the present, it is noted that the cable routes have not been surveyed in detail, but once clearly identified this should be undertaken. The cable route will be a temporary construction feature with soils reinstated. The soil management plan should also consider the cable route in order to minimise the impact on soil structure, land drainage and ultimately soil quality.</p> <p>The route passes across and will be buried under mainly open countryside that is largely arable farmland. Two key groups of impacts have been identified elsewhere for the purpose of defining receptor sensitivity and impact magnitude:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land use and tenure: these are the potential impacts on human activity, including landowners, occupiers, local communities, and other land users • Agriculture: these are potential impacts on the soil resource, the surrounding environment, and the agricultural productivity of the land. Whilst we agree with these key impacts, we would also confirm that any assessment should include land drainage impact during construction and restoration of cable trenches. <p><u>Ecological Effects</u></p> <p>If the land is used for biodiversity, it would not be available for agriculture. However even if it is available for some form of cutting or grazing it is unlikely that the ALC grade will change significantly during the lifetime of the project. There is evidence that organic matter builds up in biodiversity areas at a faster rate than arable farmland and this may benefit the land, but it is not a factor in the assessment of ALC. Further to this, there is the possibility that where biodiverse land becomes ecologically important, this could be recognised through environmental designations, which limit its return to active agricultural use.</p>
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<p>Chapter 10 – Pg 2 onwards.</p>	<p>Buried Heritage</p>	<p>NSDC have received external advice from Lincolnshire County Council on matters of buried heritage and this detailed advice is presented below.</p> <p><u>Overview</u></p> <p>Currently there is limited provision of archaeological baseline assessment normally expected at this stage of the NSIP. In the absence of this assessment, the PEIR should present an appropriate methodology and describe in detail how the applicant intends to provide this data to inform their DCO application and an appropriate archaeological mitigation strategy (AMS).</p> <p>A summary of the Historic Environment Record data has been presented in Chapter 10, however a full Desk-Based Assessment (DBA) has not yet been undertaken and would normally be expected as the first step in archaeological assessment. This along with geophysical survey and a robust programme of trial trenching constitute the standard suite for archaeological evaluation which should be undertaken prior to submission of the DCO application.</p> <p>The results of all these stages are required as baseline evidence to inform reasonable mitigation of the developmental impact across the redline boundary, including the cable route, as the range of proposed developmental impacts on a landscape scale will damage and destroy currently unknown surviving archaeology.</p> <p>We understand the geophysical survey is ongoing which is welcomed, and we await the full results in due course. Arrangements for a meeting to discuss the applicant’s approach to trial trenching are underway, however the initial approach appears to be to investigate a very limited number of selected sites. This is concerning and our position is that the full impact area within the redline boundary must be subject to trial trench evaluation with between 3% to 5% coverage to ensure sufficient evaluation has been undertaken to allow for an appropriate assessment of the development’s impact on buried archaeology.</p>
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		<p>to archaeology are permanent and irreversible, and significance can only be determined with adequate baseline evidence obtained through sufficient evaluation.</p> <p>We note that there are several references in the PEIR to habitat creation and enhancements such as PEIR Chapter 7: Biodiversity section 7.129 which states that 'Habitat enhancements proposed as part of the design and delivering BNG.' These areas need to be included in the evaluation work along with hard and soft landscaping measures as many of the mitigation measures will impact any surviving archaeology.</p> <p><u>Specific Comments</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Section 10.101 states that 'An Outline Operational Environmental Management Plan (OOEMP) will ensure that any area of heritage value will be protected during operation and maintenance, and no further ground disturbance is anticipated to occur during this stage or, where non practicable adequate mitigation measures will be implemented prior to this.' <p>If this is being offered as preservation in situ mitigation the full extent of the archaeological areas must be determined through evaluation and each area must be fenced off and subject to a programme of periodic monitoring throughout the construction, operation, and the decommissioning phases. There will be no ground disturbance which may disturb or affect the archaeological remains, including plant movement or storage. The fencing will need to remain in place and be maintained throughout the lifetime of the scheme including decommissioning and refits. This will require monitoring by an appointed Archaeological Clerk of Works (ACoW) and the management strategy for the preservation in situ areas will need to be included in all their management plans to ensure the protection measures stay in place throughout the development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regarding Decommissioning, section 10.103 states that 'it is expected that the decommissioning phase will not have any additional impacts compared to the construction phase.'
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		<p>There is no information on the specific ground impacts of how infrastructure and the solar arrays will be removed or information regarding the impacts of refits throughout the 60-year lifetime of the scheme.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 10.106 states that ‘The archaeological mitigation scope and method statement, the Project Design and WSI will be discussed and agreed where possible with the relevant stakeholders...’ <p>The mitigation works should not be undertaken until the AMS and all WSIs are agreed in full by the relevant planning authority. Failure to do so may mean that the mitigation measures are insufficient or inappropriate to deal with the developmental impact or the archaeological significance and any associated DCO Conditions are unenforceable.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 10.107 includes ‘Geoarchaeological deposit modelling/profiling (coring) in areas of paleo-environmental potential’ as mitigation. <p>We would expect this to be included instead in the evaluation phase as it provides baseline data rather than being a method of avoiding harm.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 10.117 lays out the basis of impact assessments progressing from an understanding of the buried heritage assets, understanding the degree of impact, assessing the potential for currently unknown archaeological assets and for determining their significance. <p>We stress again the necessity for the completion of a full competent desk-based assessment and programme of evaluation trenching across the full impact zone. This will need to include not only trenching across known or suspected archaeology to determine their presence or absence, depth, extent, and significance but also across the ‘blank’ areas to obtain baseline evidence where previous evaluation techniques have not identified archaeological remains.</p>
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		<p>Historic England state in their Piling and Archaeology guidance and good practice (revised 2019) ‘a general estimation (based on laboratory studies and on-site observations) is that driven displacement piles can damage an area twice the width of the pile cross section (and so four times the area).’ (HE revised Piling and Archaeology)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 10.129 states that <i>‘Should a pile location (or even several pile locations) coincide with buried archaeological remains, the quantity of displaced archaeological remains in the case of larger features, such as the in-filled ditches described above, would be insignificant compared to that left undisturbed. For discrete or less robust buried features such as pits, post holes or stake holes, the probability that piles would be aligned in such a way that any more than a tiny percentage of the features would be affected is very low, and complete avoidance is the most likely outcome.’</i> <p>This paragraph is worryingly dismissive and deliberately reductive in terms of potential impact: ‘displaced’ means destroyed, and the unexamined unrecorded archaeology may be ‘ditches’ or may be ‘inhumations.’ To decide that impacts on unevaluated archaeology will be ‘insignificant’ is arbitrary and to assume that piles would somehow avoid significant archaeology is an unprofessional and fundamentally unsound approach to effective mitigation. If unevaluated unknown archaeology must be assigned a value, it should be High until sufficient work is undertaken to determine it is not.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 10.130 states that <i>‘It is not considered, at the time of the writing, that traffic or access of heavy machinery (such as plants) and the associated weight loading/ vibration for the construction operations of our Project may cause impacts on buried heritage assets that are in excess of the impacts arising from the current agricultural activities on our Site, including the use of farm/agricultural machines. The use of gravel and track mats to distribute the weight of heavy machinery, will mitigate the impact arising from ground loading.’</i>
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		<p>The above measures may be appropriate, but only once the nature of any buried remains below the protective matting has been fully understood through appropriate evaluation. A recent NSIP evaluation encountered unexpected Saxon skeletons/burials within 20cm of the ground surface which would still be impacted as a result of the above measures.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Section 10.131 states that <i>'The embedded buffer around the Scheduled Monuments and some of the medieval villages would mitigate or remove any adverse effect on any known buried heritage assets included in the buffer areas.'</i> <p>Significant remains associated with the scheduled areas are likely to extend well into the impact zone, even with the proposed buffer areas. Sufficient evaluation will be necessary to identify the extent and nature of this to provide an appropriate mitigation strategy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Section 10.132 states that <i>'Based on our current understanding and our professional judgment and considering the above preliminary assessment and the Environmental Measures discussed from paragraph 10-94, it is considered that with the implementation of adequate mitigation measures there will not be significant residual effects on buried heritage assets arising from our Project. The Detailed Scope of Assessment in Appendix 10-5 illustrate the preliminary Magnitude of Effects on buried heritage assets arising from the effects discussed above and the Residual Risk after the application of the mitigation measures outlined in Paragraph .'</i> <p>Please see our comments on Table 10-7 above. The currently proposed level of evaluation will not provide the level of baseline information necessary to deliver the level of mitigation promised in this section of the chapter. The rest of the Buried Heritage Chapter is very vague in terms of the degree of the site-specific evaluation work which will be undertaken and when.</p>
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		<p>Sufficient field evaluation is an essential aspect of effective project management, particularly as unevaluated areas of unknown archaeological potential leave a high degree of risk to the development given the potential for archaeology to have significant impacts on work programmes and budgets. Failure to adequately evaluate the site at the application stage could lead to unnecessary destruction of heritage assets, potential programme delays and excessive cost increases that could otherwise be avoided and may ultimately lead to a scheme which is undeliverable. There is no public benefit in the destruction of unknown heritage assets.</p> <p>Historic England’s, Piling and Archaeology guidance and good practice (revised 2019) has not been included in Appendix 10-1: Buried Heritage Legislation, Policy, and Guidance, nor indeed has it been used to effectively guide the approach or process of this Buried Heritage chapter of the PEIR. Please be advised that in accordance with Historic England’s revised Piling and Archaeology guidance <i>‘The applicant will need to provide sufficient information demonstrating an adequate understanding of the significance of the archaeological site and assessment of potential harm to that significance arising from the development.’</i> (p2) (HE revised Piling and Archaeology).</p> <p><u>Conclusion</u></p> <p>The PEIR has presented limited baseline information to date. Some archaeological assessment work is underway which is welcomed, however there are concerns that the proposed programme seems to fall short of providing the necessary data to inform an appropriate archaeological mitigation strategy for the DCO application.</p> <p>The EIA will need to consider the full suite of comprehensive desk-based research, non-intrusive surveys, and intrusive field evaluation for the full extent of proposed impact area. The results should be used to minimise the impact on the historic environment through informing the project design and an appropriate programme of archaeological mitigation. The provision of sufficient baseline information to identify and assess the impact on known and potential heritage assets is required by the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (Regulation 5 (2d)), National Planning Statement Policy EN1 (Section 5.8), and the National Planning Policy Framework.</p>
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		<p>This is also set out in The Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 which states "The EIA must identify, describe and assess in an appropriate manner...the direct and indirect significant impacts of the proposed development on...material assets, cultural heritage and the landscape." (Regulation 5 (2d)).</p>
<p>Chapter 11 – Pg 2 onwards.</p>	<p>Cultural Heritage</p>	<p>In respect of Cultural Heritage, NSDC agree that the proposed viewpoints as identified in Figure 11-4 are appropriate. Further to this, as with previous discussions undertaken with the applicant, we are content with the heritage assets both scoped into and out of the assessment. Finally, we note that assessment of significance for each heritage asset is very descriptive, but at this stage it is considered the impact upon these assets as a result of the proposed development is not fully understood. This should be further developed once the scheme design is fixed, so that an appropriate level of assessment is undertaken with robust reasoning and justification.</p>
<p>Chapter 12 – Pg 2 onwards.</p>	<p>Landscape and Visual</p>	<p>In respect of Landscape and Visual, NSDC have received advice from its externally appointed advisors and as such would wish to make the following comments.</p> <p>Overview</p> <p>Paragraph 4.36 commences a consideration of the design progression following the consultation process. A range of changes and amendments have been made to the project layout. This includes the removal of panels between north and south Clifton. Land adjacent to the village of Thorney has been removed from the development to protect the setting of the village. The design evolution is welcome, however we believe that the extent of impact during construction, re-construction (it is stated that during the lifetime of the project, the panels will be replaced at least once, it is not explained in detail the process of this renewal) and decommissioning have not been fully considered in the PEIR, for example the volume and scale of traffic on local roads and the vegetation loss to enable the delivery of the lorry loads on to the site. We also believe that there can be improvements to the masterplan by careful and strategic placement of mitigation</p>

		<p>planting so that blanket hedgerows which do not necessarily fit the character of the area are avoided.</p> <p>Given the continuing evolving nature of the project, the design is not fixed and consequently the Rochdale Envelope principle is applied to the PIER. Paragraph 4.53 considers a set of broad design principles which include climate and the sensitivity of the local environment, the impact of local communities, supporting the natural and built environment, as well as enriching the ecosystem and identifying opportunities to add value to the local community. As the design evolves, we welcome opportunities to discuss the assessment parameters including viewpoint selection and proposed mitigation. The design parameters must be clearly identified within the ES, and subsequently it must be clear and transparent within the LVIA those parameters that have been assessed. This should include not only the height and size/mass of elements of the scheme, but also areas or zones they will be located, such as on works or parameter plans.</p> <p>The project will be operational for 60 years, and it is an expectation that the panels will be replaced once during the operational period. It is not stated whether this would be a phased replacement over a number of years or a task to be completed over a period of time comparable with the construction phase of the project, which is currently predicted to span 2 years. The effects predicted during construction, for example the lorry movements within the local road network and the need for wider access points at various locations across the Site, would be replicated to accommodate the reconfiguration of the panels. The Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (oCEMP) will be issued as part of the DCO Application, but as stated earlier in this response we would welcome an early opportunity to consider this and other management plans in advance of the DCO submission.</p> <p>Given the stated operational time of 60 years, there is the question of reversibility and duration. Taking account of GLVIA3 and other related guidance, it is clear that this project is long term. Given that 60 years is comparable to two generations as a minimum, there is some strength to the consideration that this would amount to</p>
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		<p>a permanent project, especially considering the average lifespan of building design is circa 50 years. There is clearly potential for significant landscape and visual impacts, especially considering that in this timescale, the panels will be replaced. It is stated in the PEIR that this would be once, but given the pace of technology, it should be considered if it is likely that the panels could be replaced on numerous occasions. At this stage we would need additional information regarding the phases of replacements in order to consider whether there is one single construction stage, or a series of staged re-construction stages.</p> <p>Decommissioning is considered from paragraph 4.71. This will include all aspects of the project with the exception of the two substations, which we understand would be retained at the decommissioning phase. Permissive paths are proposed to be removed, but underground cables may remain. Figure 4.5 clarifies the access points to the Site, which will be used during all phases of the project. These will be accessed from existing and upgraded strategic points on the public road network. At this stage the impact of the access points appears vague and would need to be clarified further as the design evolves, we welcome further dialogue on this matter.</p> <p>Access is an important consideration, given the potential for vegetation removal, road reconfiguration and the large vehicles on a local road network. Figure 4.5 identifies a number of access points, and we note that some of these directly correlate with selected viewpoints. Continuing on-Site assessment and dialogue will be useful as the design evolves. The masterplan in the current iteration highlights numerous access points and compounds, however the chapter is light on the extent of vegetation loss expectant of the movement of large and numerous vehicles over a significant period of time. Similarly, as mentioned previously, the anticipated panel replacement is lightly explained; the potential to change a significant proportion of the development throughout the 60-year lifespan of the development would recreate an unexplained proportion of the construction period at least once and possibly more given the pace of technological development. We would anticipate that, as the design evolves towards the DCO submission, that the impact of the reconstruction, the mitigation measures to be implemented and the</p>
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		<p>number of reconstructions anticipated throughout the lifespan of the development is clarified fully.</p> <p>Appendix 4.1 describes the project and introduces the concept of ‘good design,’ and that this is a consideration that has influenced the design from onset; influencing the siting, sustainability, and appearance of the project. The iterative process of the masterplan has resulted from on-going consultation. We have contributed to the consultation and will continue this as the project evolves. Four project principles are directing the design, these are climate, people, place, and value. These principles have led to design decisions including offsets from features including trees, woodlands, hedgerows, PRoWs, and rivers/ waterbodies. Such principles are welcomed and will be tested through onsite investigations, desk-based reviews, and viewpoint/ photomontage appraisals. Through ongoing dialogue, we expect these principles to be utilised within the masterplan to further minimise, or reduce, adverse visual effects. We welcome the mitigation measures; however, we expect the mitigation to reflect the character of the study area and not blanket the site with planting simply to screen. We look for a masterplan that enhances the existing grain of planting whilst respecting long to medium range views. For example, mitigation along the river needs to be carefully sited to respect long range views.</p> <p>The description of the project components, including a breakdown of construction tasks is useful within appendix 4.1. Table 2 breaks the tasks and quantifies likely timescales for the completion of those tasks. This is useful in determining the extent and period of landscape and visual impacts. Management plans will be submitted as part of the DCO application, and we welcome ongoing dialogue as these develop prior to the application submission. Table 4 repeats the process of assessment by considering the decommissioning of the project. As stated above, the mitigation measures need to be carefully designed to respect the existing grain of the site. However, we also need to have a robust management plan that ensures maximum success rate in the establishment of the mitigation planting. Climate change has resulted in an environment that can be harsh for plant establishment with long dry springs and summers. We would wish to see a management plan that</p>
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		<p>carefully itemises the number of visits, the actions during those visits, the process of replacing lost plants and ongoing longterm management to ensure the vegetation thrives and enhances the character of the study area. We would also expect any management plans cover an establishment period up to 15 years as a minimum, to cover landscape and visual effects up to the residual phase, but also that the management plans be reviewed and updated regularly to cover the 60-year project period.</p> <p>Detailed Comments</p> <p>The study area has evolved from an initial 5km range, it is stated in para 12.11 that it is unlikely that the project would result in significant landscape and visual effects beyond the 2km range from the Site. This assumption alongside the fieldwork undertaken has resulted in the adoption of a 2km study area for assessment. While we agree with this in principle, and the ZTV does appear to broadly support this, we do have some reservations. We agree that the development of a large-scale solar farm on rural landscape would likely result in significant landscape and visual effects at all stages within the study area of 2km. We do believe that some areas beyond the 2km extent there is the potential for significant impacts especially during construction, the early years of operation and decommissioning, and areas beyond 2km should not be discounted in any assessment. For example, the traffic movement to and from the site will have during construction, reconstruction, and decommissioning impacts beyond 2kms. Given the evolving design, with many unconfirmed design parameters, it is conceivable that visual impacts will be noticeable beyond 2kms in certain areas. Similarly, as a consequence of the programme for the replacement of panels, this may result in impacts comparable with construction during the operational phase of the project. Within the landscape, construction traffic will have a broad range impact. To determine this fully we welcome the range of selected viewpoints, and we provide comment on the viewpoints in section C, below. The ZTV does illustrate, on a bare earth basis, that some visibility is possible beyond the 2km extent. The selection of viewpoints beyond the 2km extent is important, for determining the accuracy of the generated models and fully scrutinising the assumption that significant effects will not be experienced beyond the 2km extent. This is important as the design evolves, and</p>
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		<p>the true extent of the development is confirmed. At present there are no viewpoints beyond 2km assessed, and we consider this to be an omission, as well as a leap of faith given the full parameters of the design are not yet fixed.</p> <p>The baseline landscape analysis conforms with best practice, analysing the landform and topography, the land use and infrastructure, vegetation coverage, PRow's, and designations. The PEIR then considers the national and regional character areas of the Site as well as village character areas. The assessment proceeds to assess the strategic national designations before moving towards the fine-grain local character, which is a best-practice approach we welcome and it is important that the subsequent LVIA consider the elements and features that make up the landscape character of the Site and Study Area so the effects of development upon these can be fully understood.</p> <p>The visual baseline is analysed with receptor groups identified in Table 1. The table is useful in that the receptors are identified in relation to representative viewpoints. It is also useful that it is split between villages, isolated properties, PRow users and road network users, which will likely have differing levels of susceptibility to change. The receptors identified are comprehensive within the 2km study area, however, given all of the points raised above, we should not discount receptors beyond the 2km boundary, especially as the design evolves. We would need to see the assessment of some receptors beyond the 2km range, even if to simply scope out.</p> <p>Figure 12.8 shows the selected viewpoints in the context of the Site. However, no viewpoints are located beyond the 2km boundary. It would be useful to have a list of representative viewpoints that have been scoped out of the project assessment. As mentioned previously, while it is a fair assumption that beyond 2kms visibility is significantly reduced, it should be proven within the documentation. We would welcome a section in the LVIA that justifies the scoping out of viewpoints that were initially selected.</p>
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		<p>The chapter emphasises that the design has evolved through compliance with stated design principles, these were discussed in the above section. The environmental opportunities as set out in the NCA 48 document, alongside guidance from the Landscape Institutes Infrastructure Technical Guidance Note are both referenced as drivers for the design principles. Paragraph 12.54 provides a description of the embedded environmental measures that have been included in the masterplan. While the NCAs provide good overarching information and guidance, the key design parameters should evolve from the dissemination of the information provided in published local character assessments, field work and coordination with relevant disciplines such as ecology, heritage, or civil engineers (flooding and land form). This is particularly relevant in carefully and sensitively positioned mitigation planting. The design evolution has been an iterative process and has responded to feedback both from NSDC and other parties in the stages preceding the PEIR.</p> <p>Methodology is considered from paragraph 12.55 and also Appendix 12.2. At this stage, the detail of many elements is not fixed and as a result the worst-case scenario is considered. The methodology follows best-practice assessment methodologies by identifying construction, operational and decommissioning effects. Operational is assessed based on year 1 and year 15, but it does not identify in sufficient detail the magnitude of effect due to replacement of panels, which it is stated will occur once in the lifecycle of the project.</p> <p>Appendix 5 covers the Outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan; this details the mitigation proposals and begins to address the important aspect of ensuring that the planting thrives and matures in order to achieve the maximum output in regards minimising the landscape and visual effects of the project in the landscape. The list of species proposed to be planted, alongside planting protocols is useful, however the appendix is light on the methodology for ensuring maximum success rate of planting. It is also light on the impact of the construction, reconstruction, and decommissioning processes on existing vegetation – both retention and removal. We would welcome the development of this appendix as</p>
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		<p>the project progresses to DCO and will be happy to provide further advice on our expectations of this document.</p> <p>We welcome the approach to continued design evolution to refine areas where significant effects have been identified. The changes to the design to date have been part of the consultation process and this is an approach we would continue towards DCO submission. To aid this we would welcome speedy resolution to the currently unconfirmed aspects of the project.</p> <p>Appendix 12.6 provides imagery of each of the selected viewpoints, the images conform to best practice and generally are clear and well selected. We consider the viewpoints most directly relevant to the Newark and Sherwood district are 9 to 25 inclusive. Given the scale of the project and the open character of the landscape other views beyond the 2km study area are possible. At present no viewpoints have been selected beyond the 2km study area, but as stated above, we believe this needs to be tested to scope out. This is particularly relevant in areas where the ZTV does show potential for visibility.</p> <p>The viewpoints have covered a wide range of receptors, including PRoW, Sustrans route, roads, residential receptors. Some views such as viewpoint 9 are split in to two with a view to the north extending beyond the scope of a single view sheet.</p> <p>The images are clear, photographed during dry clear spring conditions and the Site is clearly identified alongside key locations such as farms and key landscape features.</p> <p>Viewpoint 12, along the Sustrans route, needs to be reconsidered as it is located within woodland and the merit of the view is therefore diminished. Likewise, viewpoint 18, which is from footpath 153/3/1 is dominated by a hedgerow in the foreground, and we would suggest a more carefully selected view, which captures the same receptor experience but provides a wider context than an enclosed route due to the hedgerows. An alternative view could be from South Clifton looking south.</p>
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		<p>Viewpoint 19 is not well sited, and alternatives around the settlement of South Clifton should be considered. The view here is blocked by the residential property and a wider context view from the edge of the settlement would be more appropriate.</p> <p>At present no viewpoints have been developed into photomontages. We understand that this will evolve as the design evolves. We wish to be involved in the selection process for this to maximise the benefit of the process.</p> <p><u>Conclusion</u></p> <p>The design is evolving, and consequently there are significant gaps in the information provided. We understand and expect this at this stage of the process, and we have provided commentary on these and trust that the applicant will engage with relevant stakeholders and interested parties to enhance the DCO package.</p> <p>There are omissions which need addressing and are independent of the design evolution, for example the omission of viewpoints beyond 2kms from the development, even to if only to confirm the assumption that there will be no significant impacts beyond 2kms. The management and establishment of the mitigation planting is only considered on a broad level and not in detail within the oLEMP. Mitigation should not be used without careful consideration of the character of the open landscape. Simply filling views with planting will diminish receptor experiences.</p> <p>Generally, the viewpoints are well considered, there are some exceptions where more selective locations could have been found while still conveying the message. It is not useful to see hedgerow or woodlands as the key focus of the view when the point was to capture the receptor experience in the wide context of the landscape. As mentioned previously, the lack of viewpoints beyond 2km is an omission as the design is not fixed.</p>
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		<p>Finally, this Chapter has also been reviewed by NSDC’s Tree Officer and we would also wish to make the following observations.</p> <p>a. P 12:27 “there is no ancient woodland within our site” this statement is not supported by data and as such is suggested to be misleading. Going directly to government guidance Ancient woodland, ancient trees and veteran trees: advice for making planning decisions - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) - with specific reference to” Ancient woodland smaller than 2 ha, may not appear on these inventories.” “You should use this guidance for all ancient woodlands and ancient veteran trees whether there on the inventory’s or not”. As such without a specific detailed survey it is not possible to say whether there is or is not ancient woodland, or veteran trees, or ancient trees within the application site. The premise suggested /information required is that all trees and all woodlands are either veteran or ancient unless proven otherwise. Evidence required in the guidance is stated as fieldwork and historic maps, BS5837 survey, as it appears absent the supposition that the ancient woodland et cetera not present is suggested as false.</p> <p>Given the level of impact from either an ancient woodland or veteran tree or ancient tree is suggested that this is a critical error.</p>
<p>Chapter 13 – Pg 2 onwards.</p>	<p>Transport and Access</p>	<p>As Nottinghamshire County Council are also a ‘host’ authority for the purposes of this DCO application and are also the responsible Highway Authority, at this stage, we will leave NCC to respond on this topic area directly to the applicant, as part of their consultation response.</p>
<p>Chapter 14 – Pg 2 onwards</p>	<p>Air Quality</p>	<p>In respect of Air Quality, it is noted that the PEIR seeks to screen out many of the impacts in relation to the construction, operational and decommissioning phases. In doing so, reliance is placed upon the following:</p> <p>Dust Management Plan (DMP) Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (oCEMP)</p>

		<p>Outline Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan.</p> <p>As these reports are not currently available and have not been subject to review, limited reliance can be placed upon them for the purpose of screening out such impacts. As is mentioned throughout this response, NSDC would welcome the early opportunity to review all draft management plans, prior to the DCO submission, so that we can confirm their adequacy. This is particularly important where they are proposed for use as a tool to screen out the necessity for further assessment and/or where they are being relied upon for mitigation purposes.</p>
Chapter 15 –	Carbon and Climate Change	<p>In respect of Carbon and Climate change and the Greenhouse Gas Assessment (GHG) the significant potential beneficial effect on climate change as set out within table 15-9 (due to zero carbon electricity generation) is noted and welcomed. In respect of the Climate Change Resilience Assessment (CCR) it is noted that this part of the assessment will be developed further with additional design detail beyond this preliminary assessment. Furthermore, it is also acknowledged that the CCR will also consider the specific impacts aligned to the stages of the project (construction, operation, and decommissioning) separately, including any specific risks and impacts related to final agreed options for BESS and substation locations, alongside the river cable crossing. As with other work presented within the PEIR, NSDC look forward to considering the full extent of the Environmental Statement at the next stage.</p>
Chapter 16 – Pg 2 onwards.	Noise and Vibration	<p>Chapter 16 of the PEIR identifies that the construction activities that are likely to cause disturbance and identified sensitive receptors that may be impacted. As noted in the Chapter, details of the exact locations of noise sources have yet to be finalised and therefore a conclusive and detailed assessment has yet to be concluded in this regard. NSDC would therefore welcome the opportunity to consider an updated assessment on Noise and Vibration once the site layout has been fixed.</p>
Chapter 17 –	Human Health	<p>We have no specific comments to make on this chapter.</p>

<p>Chapter 18 –</p>	<p>Socio Economics</p>	<p>In respect of Socio Economics, Chapter 18 sets out the potential for direct and indirect job creation during the construction, operation, and decommissioning phases. Whilst job creation is noted as a potential positive benefit, any permanent direct employment is limited to a net change of between 0-5 jobs (once displacement is taken into account).</p> <p>Although construction jobs are likely to be more significant (peaking at 750 over the course of the construction period) it is noted that the average could be lower. NSDC acknowledge that reference is made to the ‘Local Area’ which is based around four Lower-Layer Super Output Areas (LSOA), but without a further breakdown provided distinct to the Newark and Sherwood district in respect of jobs, it is difficult to quantify the specific benefits to the authority. Notwithstanding this, construction jobs are in any event of a temporary nature. NSDC would welcome further clarification on both potential job creation at the district level and how such potential jobs can be secured as direct and tangible employment on either a temporary or permanent basis.</p>
<p>Chapter 19 –</p>	<p>Cumulative Effects</p>	<p>NSDC have previously identified (at EIA Scoping stage) that the cumulative assessment should consider all relevant types of projects and not simply be limited to solar farm projects. We have also previously advised that The Environmental Statement (ES) should consider whether regional scale likely significant effects could occur with other large scale solar projects e.g., arising from changes in land use and disposal of waste. Furthermore, we have also previously stated that this should be agreed with all the authorities. The information has not thus far been presented to NSDC for consideration.</p> <p>Whilst it is noted that the cumulative assessment has had regard to Advice Note 17, there is no detailed justification and/or methodology for how a long list has been created and a short list established. NSDC would recommend that the applicant in particular make use of Appendix 1: Matrix Identification of ‘other development’ for CEA, which is an Appendix to Advice Note 17. The text associated with Appendix 1 notes that <i>‘It can be used to demonstrate that a</i></p>

		<p><i>systematic approach to identifying development for inclusion in CEA has been adopted.'</i></p> <p>NSDC consider that further detailed work and justification is paramount to ensure that the cumulative assessment undertaken as part of the ES is both robust and thorough. We look forward to further explanation of that and the opportunity to agree those schemes that should be captured within the cumulative assessment.</p>
Chapter 20 –	Conclusions of Preliminary Significance	<p>NSDC notes that the preliminary assessment identifies a number of topic areas with likely significant adverse effects, including LVIA and Cultural Heritage. Whilst it is accepted that a detailed assessment will be presented within the ES, informed by the detailed design for submission purposes, NSDC expect a full and robust ES that quantifies and clearly explains the significance of effects across all topic areas, including the extent of residual effects once mitigation is applied.</p>
PEIR – VOL 2		
EIA Scoping Consultation. Pg 2 Onwards.	Scoping Report and PINS Adopted Scoping Opinion.	<p>NSDC note that Volume 2 Contains a Copy of the EIA Scoping Report and the PINS Response to that formal request. NSDC would not wish to make any further comments on Volume 2, other than to request that these previously made comments by NSDC continue to be taken into account in the formulation and finalisation of the ES.</p>
PEIR – VOL 3		
PEIR Report	Non-Technical Summary	<p>In respect of the Non-Technical Summary (NTS) of the PEIR, NSDC would encourage the applicant to consider whether this could be further simplified and summarised in a more targeted way. We note that the Annex to Advice Note 7 – Presentation of the Environmental Statement states the following:</p> <p><i>'The Planning Inspectorate advises that the ES should be laid out clearly avoiding (where possible) over-reliance on detailed and technical terminology. The ES should provide a clear, objective, and realistic description of the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development. Information should be presented so as to be comprehensible to the specialist and non-specialist, alike. The Planning</i></p>

		<p><i>Inspectorate recommends that the ES be concise with technical information placed in appendices as appropriate.'</i></p> <p>Noting that the PEIR is not the finalised version of the ES, NSDC would encourage the applicant to consider whether the NTS could be more focussed, which at 52 pages long, is an extensive document in its own right and noting the advice as referred to above and to ensure that a key summary document for the ES is accessible and comprehensible.</p>
PROJECT LEAFLET		
Community Consultation	We have reviewed the project leaflet and have no specific comments to make.	
PROJECT BOOKLET		
Consultation Booklet	We have reviewed the project booklet and have no specific comments to make.	
STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY CONSULTATION		
SOCC	NSDC have previously responded to the formal consultation on the SOCC from the applicant and therefore have no further comments to make, beyond those originally made.	
MASTERPLAN		
Illustrative Masterplan		NSDC note that the latest iteration of the masterplan includes the removal of Solar PV Panels, in the land in between North and South Clifton. As these locations are sensitive residential receptors, this change is welcome. Notwithstanding this, NSDC note that significant areas of PV panels will remain to the east of both these villages

		<p>and to the west of Thorney. This will require very careful consideration as the design for the scheme is finalised and the EIA is finalised and reported within the ES.</p> <p>Finally, in the development of the final scheme design, we would ask that all components of the scheme, including the PV panels, BESS, substation, pipeline, and mitigation areas are clearly presented in both the masterplan and all associated plans that need to be prepared for the DCO submission. It would also be helpful to NSDC and all authorities if the administrative boundaries of the authorities are presented on the plans.</p>
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Please consider the comments made above and enclosed with this correspondence to constitute Newark & Sherwood District Council's formal consultation response in response to the Applicant's Statutory Consultation under Section 42(b) of the Planning Act 2008.

Yours sincerely,

Simon Betts MRTPI
Planner, (Major Projects) Planning Development Business Unit
On behalf of Newark & Sherwood District Council