



Report to Planning Committee 13 February 2025

Business Manager Lead: Oliver Scott – Planning Development

Lead Officer: Simon Betts, Planner (Major Projects)

Report Summary	
Report Title	Great North Road Solar and Biodiversity Park – Update Report
Purpose of Report	To provide an update on the current statutory consultation for the GNR Project.
Recommendations	None. For information Purposes.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 This report seeks to provide an update on the current status of the GNR NSIP project which remains at the pre-application stage, but for which the applicant is currently undertaking their statutory consultation for the project.
- 1.2 Members will recall that in a report to the Planning Committee on the 5th December 2024, a general update was provided on the GNR project (alongside the OESF scheme) which included future milestone dates. The statutory consultation period for the GNR project commenced on the 9th January and runs until the 20th February. Further information on the applicant’s consultation is provided below.
- 1.3 Members may also recall the report, provided for information to the 1st August 2024 Planning Committee, which detailed the Council’s response to the pre-application statutory consultation on the OESF project. This report seeks to provide a similar update for the GNR project, although an opportunity is provided for members to highlight any key areas of concern, to be considered by officers in formulating the Council’s formal response to the statutory consultation.

2.0 Update

- 2.1. The Statutory consultation for the GNR project (and all NSIP projects) must be undertaken in accordance with Section 42 (Duty to Consult) of the Planning Act 2008 (PA2008), which requires applicants to consult ‘host’ local authorities (and other statutory consultees/affected parties). In addition to this, there is an obligation to consult the local community in accordance with Section 47 of the PA2008. In respect of the consultation with the community, this must be conducted in accordance with the applicant’s Statement of Community Consultation (SOCC). The SOCC (again, in

accordance with Section 47 of the PA2008) was subject to formal consultation with the Council, before it was finalised and officers previously provided comments to the applicant on this document in August of 2024. The current consultation includes a mix of both ‘in person’ and virtual events, as part of the process of informing the community about the proposals and seeking feedback. A summary of these events is presented below, as an extract from the applicant’s consultation material.

Great North Road Solar and Biodiversity Park

Phase Two Community Consultation

Thursday 09 January to Thursday 20 February 2025

Elements Green is launching the second phase of consultation for the Great North Road Solar and Biodiversity Park, a proposed solar and energy storage park located to the northwest of Newark-on-Trent, Nottinghamshire.

We welcome you to take part in our second phase of consultation between **Thursday 09 January and 20 February 2025**.

Attend one of our in-person exhibition events or our community webinar for the opportunity to speak to members of the project team, ask questions and view information about our updated proposals for the Great North Road Solar and Biodiversity Park.



Location	Date & Time
Maplebeck Village Hall Main Street, Maplebeck, Newark, NG22 0BS	Thursday 23rd January 2pm - 7:30pm
Sutton on Trent Sports Club Grassthorpe Rd, Sutton on Trent, Newark, NG23 6QX	Friday 24th January 2pm - 7:30pm
North Muskham Rural Community Centre North Muskham, Newark, NG23 6HL	Saturday 25th January 11am - 3pm
Laxton Village Hall High St, Laxton, Newark, NG22 0NX	Wednesday 29th January 2pm - 7:30pm
Kelham House Country Manor Main Street, Kelham, Newark, NG23 5QP	Thursday 30th January 11am - 3pm
Carlton on Trent Village Hall Main Street, Carlton-on-Trent, Newark, NG23 6NW	Friday 31st January 2pm - 7:30pm
Eakring Cator Hall Kirklington Road, Eakring, Newark, NG22 0DA	Tuesday 4th February 2pm - 6:30pm
Newark Town Hall Newark, Nottinghamshire, NG24 1DU	Wednesday 5th February 11am - 3pm
Online Community Webinar Zoom	Monday 10th February 5:30pm - 7:00pm

- 2.2. In addition to the above, the applicant also organised a pre-briefing ‘in person’ event at the Air and Space Institute on the 15th and 16th of January, open to Parish Councils, Members and Officers. Officers did attend the 15th of January event, as an opportunity to understand how the forthcoming public consultation events would be delivered.
- 2.3. The consultation being undertaken by the applicant is accompanied by a variety of information. One of the key documents is the Preliminary Environmental Impact Report (PEIR), which in effect is an early-stage version of the eventual Environmental Statement (ES) that will be produced, to accompany the application submission (scheduled for the summer of 2025). Also included are the detailed masterplan proposals for scheme at this stage and a draft of the Development Consent Order (DCO) itself.
- 2.4. At the present time (at the time of writing this report) officers are still in the process of reviewing the various consultation material and drafting a formal response to the consultation, which includes internal consultation and specialist advice from external advisors on topics to include Landscape and Visual and Agricultural Land Classification. As the project remains in the pre-application stage, the comments to be made in response to the statutory consultation will not be the final comments the Council makes and this reflects that post the statutory consultation, the applicant will need to spend time reviewing and taking into account all consultation responses made, before

finalising the scheme design and completing the environmental assessment work, leading up to the submission of the application. The Council's response will therefore seek to comment on any inadequacies in the assessment work undertaken so far, alongside the nature of any potential impacts at this stage. There is also an opportunity to make early comments on the Draft Development Consent Order (DCO) which is the proposed statute that will set out the powers the applicant is seeking, in order to construct and operate the proposed development.

- 2.5. All of the documents forming part of the consultation are available on the applicant's website: [Documents – GNR Solar Park](#) with their being hard copies available of certain documents at the consultation events and specified deposit point locations, which also includes the Council Offices.
- 2.6. In order to ensure that the Council's comments are taken into account, our formal comments must be issued directly to the applicant, on or before the 20th February. If they are not made within this time period, the applicant has no formal requirement to take them into account, in accordance with the provisions set out in the PA2008. Accordingly, due to the need to formulate a response, which includes a variety of documents and different technical responses, it is important that the Council's response is finalised and composed in advance of the deadline.
- 2.7. Notwithstanding this, in order to provide members the opportunity to comment, this report is being brought to Planning Committee, so that any verbal feedback as expressed by members can be recorded and taken into account in the formulation of the response to consultation. In addition, should members wish to raise any specific points in writing for officers to take into account, they are asked to do so by the 14th February, to allow sufficient time for the Council's final response to the statutory consultation to be issued by the 20th February.

3.0 Implications

- 3.1 In writing this report and in putting forward recommendations officers have considered the following implications; Data Protection, Equality and Diversity, Financial, Human Rights, Legal, Safeguarding, Sustainability, and Crime and Disorder

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.