

Report to Planning Committee 4 December 2025

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Report Summary

Report Title	Great North Road Solar Farm – Local Impact Report (LIR)
Purpose of Report	To present for approval, the Local Impact Report.
Recommendations	That members approve the draft LIR, to enable its release to the Examining Authority by Deadline One.

1.0 **Background**

- 1.1 By way of background and a general update, the Great North Road Solar Farm Project is now in the examination stage, with the Preliminary Meeting scheduled for the 26th November 2025 and Issue Specific Hearing One and an Open Floor Hearing to take place on the 26th and 27th November 2025.
- 1.2 The examination is scheduled to take place over a 5-month period (although the maximum period it can take is 6 months) and will primarily be a written process, supplemented by hearings throughout that period. There are a series of deadlines that are fixed by the Examining Authority (ExA) whereby the council must make responses, to ensure that we retain the opportunity to influence the process.
- 1.3 The Local Impact Report (LIR) must be submitted to the ExA by **Deadline One** which is the **10th December 2025**. The LIR is defined under the auspices of Section 60 (3) of the Planning Act 2008¹ which states that ‘A “local impact report” is a report in writing giving details of the likely impact of the proposed development on the authority’s area (or any part of that area).’
- 1.4 Further to this, the Planning Act 2008 also states at Section 104(2) that the Secretary of State, must have regard to a LIR in making their decision (amongst other matters). In simple terms, the LIR is designed to assist the ExA in the consideration of the issues and understand the areas of impact brought about by a NSIP project, set within the local context.
- 1.5 The regulations are also supplemented by relevant guidance for local planning

¹ [Planning Act 2008](#)

authorities² which makes it clear that the LIR is a technical evidence-based assessment of all local impacts, stressing that the LIR is *‘therefore not the document where the local authority should set out its objections or support for the application.’*

- 1.6 Members should be aware that the LIR is a specific area of work defined by the regulations and requested by the ExA, but there are a number of opportunities throughout the examination period, whereby the Council will be able to make representations and express their views on the proposed development, in both written submissions and verbally at hearings that are arranged by the ExA.
- 1.7 Although government guidance makes it clear that the content of the LIR is a matter for the local authority, it makes recommendations on the topics to be covered within the LIR, to include such matters as a description of the surrounding context, relevant constraints, and an appraisal of the projects compliance with local planning policy and guidance. The draft LIR largely follows the recommended guidance and follows a similar format to the previously prepared LIR for the One Earth Solar Scheme, including the reporting of impacts in a simple manner, summarised as positive, neutral, or negative.

2.0 Draft LIR

- 2.1. The draft LIR is presented as an Appendix to this planning committee report and should be referenced for detailed reporting of the impacts, although at the time of publication of this committee report, specialist inputs are still awaited from the council’s conservation and ecology officers and external advice from a landscape consultant. An updated version of the draft LIR will therefore be circulated as a ‘late item’ in advance of the committee meeting, once these inputs are provided.
- 2.2. Whilst this report does not seek to replicate the details of the LIR, further explanation is provided below on how the report has been drafted and the means to which the key issues have been identified as this stage.
- 2.3. Throughout the previous submission milestones of the Great North Road Solar Farm project (at the pre-application and pre-examination stages), officers have agreed to focus on those technical topic areas, for which we have technical expertise, supplemented by external consultancy support on the topics of Landscape and Visual Impact and Agricultural Land Classification. To this end, working collaboratively with officers at Nottinghamshire County Council (NCC), we have agreed that NCC will comment on the following topics area within their LIR:
 - Transport, Access and Public Rights of Way.
 - Flood risk and water.
 - Archaeology.
- 2.4. Other than where there is a specific local consideration to follow, the council’s LIR focusses on the following main topic areas.
 - Landscape and Visual Impact.

² [Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: Advice for Local Authorities - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nationally-significant-infrastructure-projects-advice-for-local-authorities)

- Land use and Agriculture.
- Biodiversity (including Net Gain).
- Built Conservation.
- Noise and Vibration.
- Air Quality and Land Contamination.
- Socio-economics.

- 2.5. At the time of writing this committee report, it is anticipated that negative impacts will be reported in respect of Landscape and Visual Impacts and Best and Most Versatile Agricultural land, with neutral/potential positive impacts in respect of Biodiversity and neutral impacts in respect of Built Conservation, Noise and Vibration, Air Quality and land contamination. A verbal update of any changes to the nature of the anticipated impacts, will be reported at the planning committee meeting.
- 2.6. At the present time (at the time of writing this report) officers are still in the process of reviewing the application submission documents and finalising the draft LIR in time for the **10.12.25** deadline, but the final draft LIR for approval will be made available in advance of the committee meeting via late items.
- 2.7. In order to ensure that the Council's LIR is taken into account by the ExA, it must be issued on or before the **10.12.25**. Officers are therefore seeking approval to issue the LIR by this deadline and will take into account any additional points members wish to raise as noted at the committee meeting. If the LIR is not issued by the set deadline, the ExA has no obligation to take it into account, in accordance with the provisions set out in the Planning Act 2008.

3.0 Implications

- 3.1 In writing this report and in putting forward recommendation's officers have considered the following implications: Data Protection, Digital and Cyber Security, Equality and Diversity, Financial, Human Resources, Human Rights, Legal, Safeguarding and Sustainability, and where appropriate they have made reference to these implications and added suitable expert comment where appropriate.

3.2 Legal Implications - LEG2526/5010

- 3.3 Planning Committee is the appropriate body to consider the content of this report. A Legal Advisor will be present at the meeting to assist on any legal points which may arise during consideration of this agenda item.

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.