



**NEWARK &
SHERWOOD**
DISTRICT COUNCIL

LOCAL IMPACT REPORT

GREAT NORTH ROAD SOLAR FARM

December 2025

NEWARK AND SHERWOOD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Overview

In preparation of this Local Impact Report (LIR) Newark and Sherwood District Council (NSDC) have focussed on those matters, for which we hold technical expertise at an officer level, supplemented by external advice on the topics of Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) and Agricultural Land Classification (ALC). For those matters whereby Nottinghamshire County Council (NCC) hold officer level expertise (such as Highways, Flood Risk and Archaeology), we have largely left to NCC to respond upon, except where we have any local emphasis to add, including through engagement with the local community. Accordingly, our LIR focuses upon the following main topic areas.

- Landscape and Visual Impact (Including Residential Amenity).
- Biodiversity (including Net Gain) and Arboriculture.
- Noise and Vibration
- Air Quality
- Land use and Soils.
- Built Heritage
- Socio Economics.

Reference to the NCC LIR should be made for the following topic areas.

- Transport, Access and Public Rights of Way.
- Flood risk and water (Environment Agency are the regulatory adviser on water quality).
- Archaeology.

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1. Terms of Reference and Introduction

- 1.1. This report comprises the Local Impact Report (LIR) of Newark and Sherwood District Council (NSDC). The Council has also had regard to the purpose of LIRs as set out in s60(3) of the Planning Act 2008 (as amended), and Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: Advice for Local Authorities¹ Guidance, in preparing the LIR.

2. Scope, Purpose, and Structure of the Local Impact Report

- 2.1. The LIR relates to the proposed development insofar as it affects the administrative area of NSDC. Specifically, it describes the impact of the proposed 'Works' (as described in the Development Consent Order (DCO)) and as referred to in section 3 below. Noting that the proposed development falls within two 'host' local authority areas, this LIR should be read in association with the equivalent LIR produced by Nottinghamshire County Council.
- 2.2. This LIR has been prepared to highlight the ways in which the proposed development will affect the locality and local communities and the associated impacts. It is not intended as a precise technical document – the application is accompanied by a significant amount of technical information from the applicant – but as a broad overview of the likely issues (positive, negative, and neutral) that might arise from the proposed development. As noted by Government Guidance (also referred to above) this LIR provides an appraisal of the projects compliance with relevant local planning policy and guidance, but it does not contain an assessment of relevant National Policy Statements, on the basis that such an assessment is carried out by the Examining Authority.
- 2.3. The LIR is intended as a factual document and does not attempt to come to a conclusion on the acceptability, or otherwise of the proposals. It does, however, seek to identify where there is compliance (or conversely where there is a tension or conflict) with, in particular, local plan policy, and to distinguish between matters that are of most potential impact and those that are either temporary or less significant in the longer term.
- 2.4. NSDC are currently engaged with the applicant in preparing a Statement of Common Ground, an iterative document which further explains elements of the proposed development which are being discussed with the applicant. Due to the evolving nature of these discussions, NSDC's position as recorded in this document is subject to change.
- 2.5. In addition, NSDC has not, at this stage, undertaken a full review of the draft Development Consent Order. NSDC will review in detail the draft articles and requirements as prepared by the applicant, and suggest any necessary additions and amendments, at the

¹ [Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: Advice for Local Authorities - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/612222/Nationally_Significant_Infrastructure_Projects_Advice_for_Local_Authorities_-_GOV.UK.pdf)

appropriate time during the Examination and intends (among other things) to address these matters in its Written Representations.

3. The Scheme

- 3.1. This LIR does not describe the proposed development any further, relying on the applicant's description as set out at paragraph 5.4.1 (Summary of the Development) of document 6.2.5 Environmental Statement - Chapter 5 (Doc Ref: APP-048) which states:

'The Development will comprise an array of solar PV modules, energy storage and associated development infrastructure, together with biodiversity enhancements including 64,500 trees and 50 km of new hedgerow. The general flow of electricity across the Development will be as set out in this Section, 5.4.1, explaining at high level the linkage and function of the principal electrical components of the solar park. The habitat changes are described in Chapter 8, Ecology and Biodiversity [EN010162/APP/6.2.8] and specified in the Outline LEMP [EN010162/APP/6.4.5.1]. In addition, 27 new permissive routes are proposed, comprising 21 footpaths and 6 bridleways, totalling 32.6 km of new recreational routes. These are shown on Figure 5.2, Masterplan [EN010162/APP/6.3.5.2] and assessed in Chapter 18, Recreation [EN010162/APP/6.2.18].'

- 3.2. The key components of the proposed development are further set out in paragraph 5.4.1.1 to 5.4.1.7 and of document 6.2.5 Environmental Statement Chapter 5 (Development Description and Illustrative Design) which notes and describes the following elements:

- Solar PV Modules.
- Strings.
- Combiner Boxes.
- Central Inverters.
- Transformer Stations.
- Intermediate Substations.
- BESS/400 kV Substation.

- 3.3. Paragraph 5.4.2 provides an overview of the development areas stating that the areas within the Order Limits are described as being one of the following:

- Work no. 1: Solar PV;
- Work no. 2: Cables;
- Work no. 3: Mitigation/enhancement;
- Work no. 4: Intermediate substations;
- Work no. 5a: BESS;
- Work no. 5b: 400 kV compound;

- Work no. 6: National Grid Staythorpe Substation and connection point;
- Work no. 7: Consented Staythorpe BESS and Connection; and
- Work no. 8: Access Works

3.4. Paragraph 5.4.1.8 sets out the additional components associated with the proposed development, stating that

‘In addition to the electrical infrastructure as set out above, the Development will include control buildings, environmental mitigation and enhancement measures and minor alterations to the local transport network to facilitate vehicular access to the site.’

4. Information on Newark and Sherwood and the surrounding area

- 4.1. The settlement of Newark on Trent is the main settlement within the District of Newark and Sherwood and is located along the navigable River Trent. The District of Newark and Sherwood, at over 65,000 ha, is the largest in Nottinghamshire and is situated in the northern part of the East Midlands Region.
- 4.2. Adjoining the District to the west are the Nottingham and Mansfield conurbations; whilst Lincoln lies to the north-east and Grantham to the south-east.
- 4.3. In Newark and Sherwood, the population size has increased by 7.0%, from around 114,800 in 2011 to 122,900 in 2021² (Office for National Statistics, 2024) This is higher than the overall increase for England (6.6%), where the population grew by nearly 3.5 million to 56,489,800. Nearby Districts of Rushcliffe, North Kesteven and South Kesteven have seen population increases by around 7.1%, 9.5% and 7.2% respectively, while others such as Gedling saw an increase of 3.3% and Melton 2.8%. In Newark and Sherwood between 2011 to 2021 there has been an increase of 26.7% in people aged 65 years and over living in the District, an increase of 2.9% in people aged 15 to 64 years and an increase of 1.3% on children aged under 15 years. The largest increase is people between 70 to 74 years at 47%.
- 4.4. The settlement pattern of the District is dispersed, given its large rural nature, and ranges from market towns and large villages to smaller villages and hamlets. Newark, Southwell, Ollerton and Boughton act as a focus for their own communities and those in the wider area, whilst the larger villages function in a similar role for their immediate rural areas. Outside of this however, services are limited, and some higher level and specialist facilities are only found in larger urban areas adjoining the District. Public transport services are limited outside of the main centres and routes, and as a result accessibility to employment and services is more difficult in rural areas, making the use of a private car more preferable.
- 4.5. The District's economy supported 65,400 people aged 16 and over in employment in the year ending December 2023. This is up from the previous year when there were 60,600 people who were employed. However, of people living in the District aged between 16 to 64 years, 77.5% were employed in the year ending December 2023. This is a decrease of the previous year when it was 79.0%. Unemployment has however risen to 3.7% which is comparable to the East Midlands as a whole (Office for National Statistics, 2024)³.
- 4.6. Key to the District's distinctiveness is its rich and diverse natural and built heritage, reflected in the unspoilt and open countryside and many traditional settlements. The

² <https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/censuspopulationchange/E07000175/>

³ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/labourmarketlocal/E07000175/>

District has an outstanding built heritage with 1,397 listed buildings, 47 Conservation Areas and a wealth of other heritage assets. Complementing the built environment are a number of sites important in nature conservation and biodiversity terms. The River Trent, and its associated floodplain, along with the remnants of the historic Sherwood Forest are the two most dominant landscape features within the District.

- 4.7. The distinctive character is integral to the District's significant tourism appeal, with on average 466,250⁴ visitors were recorded as having visited Newark in 2023. The District's historical heritage and especially the attractive Market Town or Newark, is an attractive destination with the Castle (partially destroyed in the English Civil War), National Civil War Centre, traditional Market Place, buildings of special architectural or historical interest and an extensive Conservation Area.
- 4.8. In terms of connectivity, Newark is well placed to provide quick rail links to wider settlements such as London, Leeds, Edinburgh, and Nottingham due to its two stations providing both north to south (East Coast Main Line) and east to west connections. A central bus station located within the town is a hub for the connections on the extensive bus network. To the east of the Newark settlement is the A1(T) which provides the main road connection north and south with links east provided via the A17 connection and the A46(T) also joining this connection. The A46(T) is a key link from the Humber ports to Tewkesbury.

5. Site description

- 5.1. The Order Limits area covers a significant proportion of land that extends to approximately 1,765ha of land, which is in agricultural use, the majority of which is used for arable crops. An extract of the Order Limits Plan is presented below as **Figure 1**, to demonstrate the overall spatial extent of the proposed development.

⁴ <https://www.newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk/media/newark-and-sherwood/images-and-files/strategies-and-policies/pdfs/Visitor-Economy--Strategy-2020-23---FINAL.pdf> Last accessed 23/06/2025

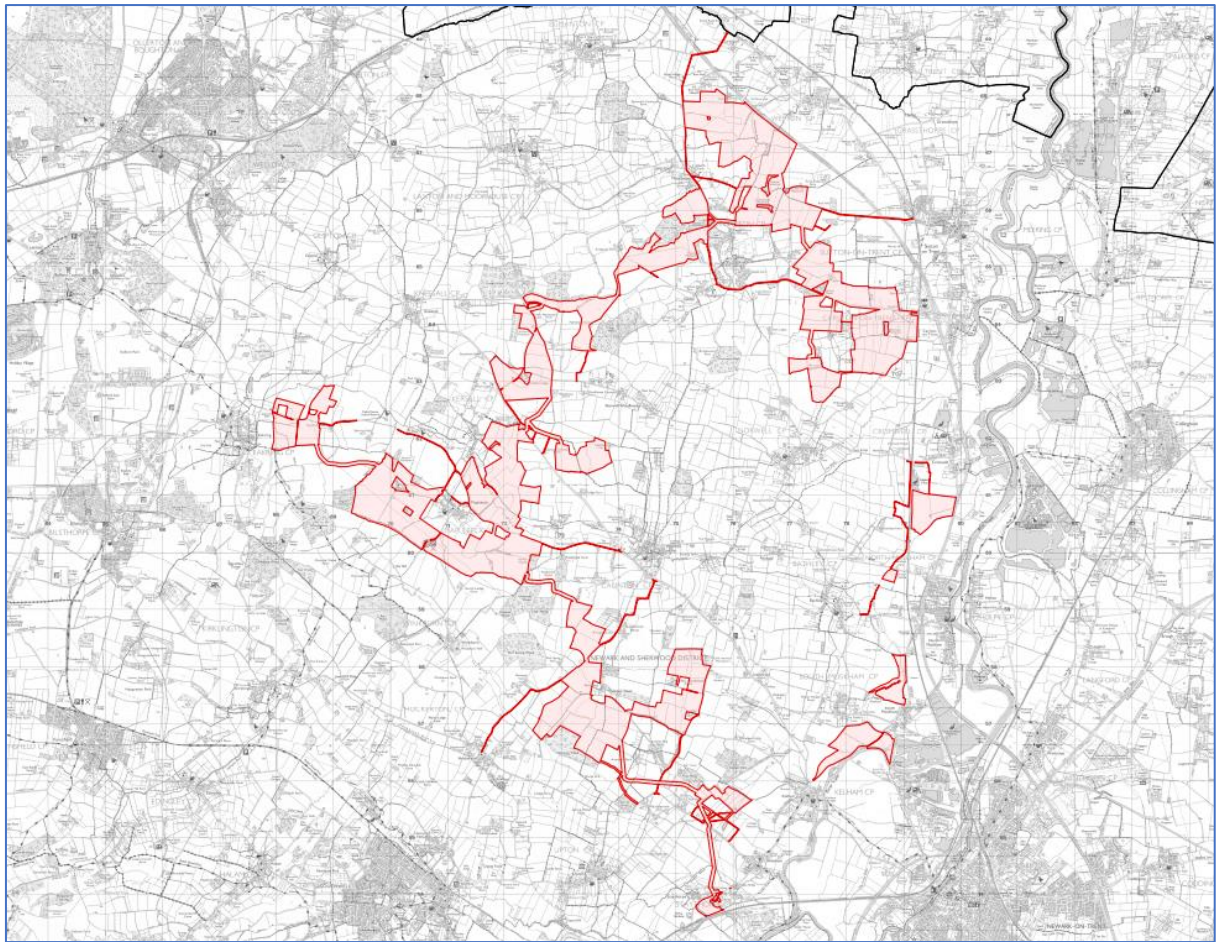


Figure 1 – GNR Solar Farm – Order Limits (Source – Applicant OL Plan - EN010162-APP-2.9⁵).

- 5.2. The existing land within the Order Limits consists of a series of separate but substantial land parcels that extends from the north eastern side of Kelham, extending broadly northwards along the Great North Road (A1) corridor, with following parcels of land to the north western side of South Muskham and areas of land to the south of North Muskham and Cromwell.
- 5.3. More substantial areas continue to the north, which includes Carlton on Trent, Sutton on Trent and land to the north of Kneesall (where it runs parallel to the south western side of the A1). From this point, the Order Limits turns back in a south westerly direction, covering land in and around Ossington and running south, to the eastern side of Kneesall and Kersall, linking to a substantial land parcel in and around Maplebeck. Beyond this, the Order Limits extends to the west of Caunton, in and around Knapthorpe with another more substantial area of land, which subsequently links to the Staythorpe to the South passing beyond Averham and the grid connection point at Staythorpe.
- 5.4. The Amended Core Strategy (ACS) as Adopted in 2019 defines the NSDC district into 8 distinct areas as detailed on **Figure 2** below, which also includes Parish Boundaries and towns and villages within the area descriptions (see below).

⁵ [EN010162-000074-GNR 2.9 Location, Order Limits, and Grid Coordinates.pdf](#)

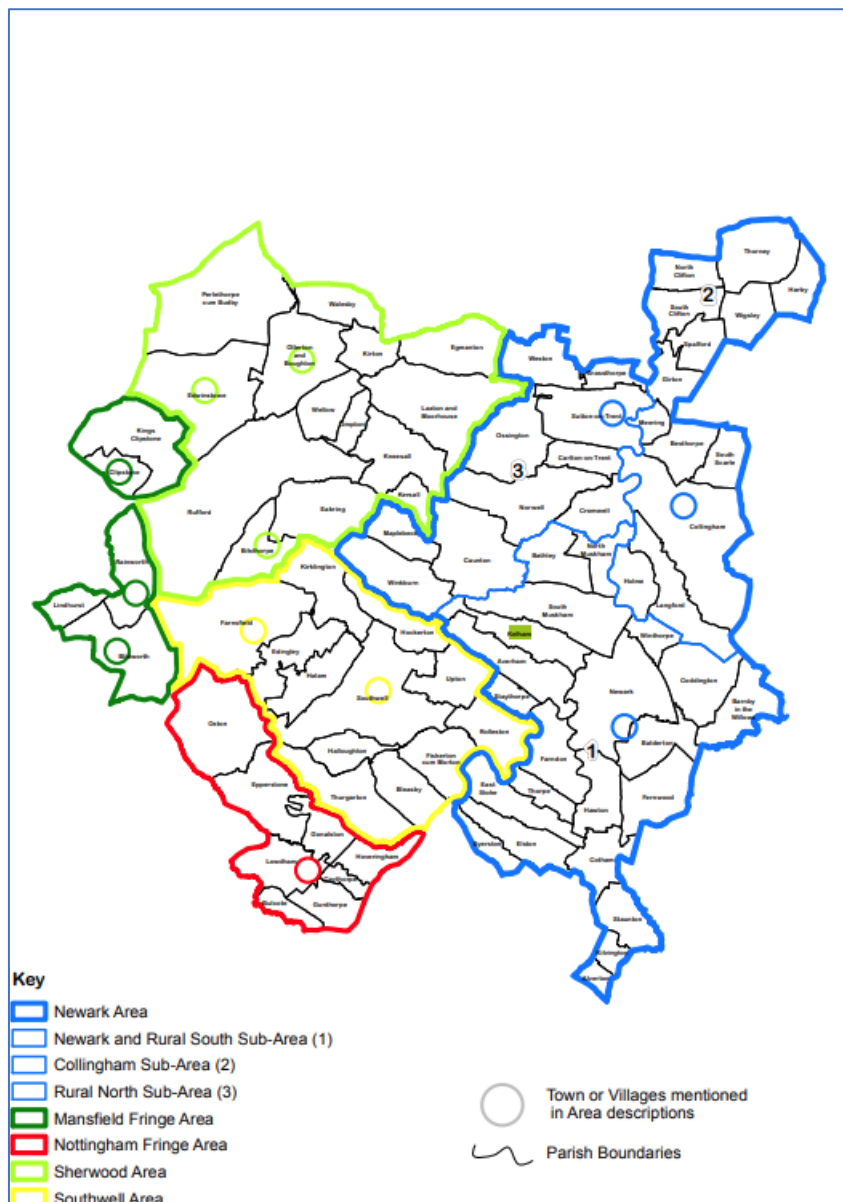


Figure 2 – Areas of Newark and Sherwood (Source: NSDC Amended Core Strategy)⁶

- 5.5. The Order Limits comprises land that falls within the Newark and Rural South Sub-Area (1), the Rural North Sub Area (3) and a smaller element within the Sherwood Area. The areas within the vicinity of the Order Limits area typically comprises small rural linear villages and hamlets of varying sizes, with more limited services and amenities. The exception to this, is Sutton on Trent, which is defined as a 'Principal Village' within the Amended Core Strategy, reflecting its larger size and access to more local services and amenities, although the main part of the settlement is located to the eastern side of the A1.

⁶ [amended-core-strategy-DPD.pdf](#)

- 5.6. The inherent and overriding character of the land that surrounds the settlements that are located within the Order Limits is that of a rural nature, surrounded by large swathes of attractive open countryside, with land that is primarily within agricultural use, with large open vistas, across these areas.
- 5.7. In respects of character. many of the named villages described above area located within Conservation Areas, which includes Averham, Carlton on Trent, Kelham, Kneesall, Maplebeck, Newark, Sutton on Trent.

6. Planning History (Cumulative Effects)

- 6.1. Cumulative Effects are not presented as a standalone chapter, but the approach and methodology to assessing such effects are outlined in Chapter 2 – Environmental Impact Assessment of the Environmental Statement (ES). The Applicant have been in contact with the Council gathering information on committed developments within the Order Limits. The projects that have been subject to assessment are presented within Volume 4 (Technical Appendix A2.1) of the ES which provide Stages 1 and 2 of the Cumulative Assessment. As part of its relevant representations and response to the Applicant's Statutory Consultation, NSDC have highlighted concerns around cumulative effects. NSDC are a 'host' authority for three NSIP Projects and one Electricity Act Project and there are a number of other NSIP projects located within neighbouring authority areas in both Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire, alongside other major energy and other projects that are determined at the local level. As such, we consider it imperative that a robust approach be undertaken to the assessment of cumulative effects.
- 6.2. The potential for significant adverse effects, as a result of cumulative effects, remains a key concern for NSDC and we will continue to make representations on this point, throughout the examination period.

7. Legislative and Policy Context

National Policy Statements

- 7.1. In accordance with Part 3, sections 14(1)(a) and 15 of the 2008 Planning Act, the Great North Road Solar Farm is classed as a 'Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project' (NSIP). In accordance with the 2008 Planning Act, NSDC has been invited to submit a Local Impact Report (LIR) giving details of the likely impact of the proposed development on the authority's area. The definition of an LIR is given in s60(3) of the Act as '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)'.
- 7.2. Local authorities are identified as consultation bodies under The Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017, in accordance with s43 of the PA 2008 (Planning Act 2008 Section 43(1) and (3)).
- 7.3. The One Earth DCO application was accepted for examination by the Examining Authority on 22nd July 2025. As such, NSDC note that in accordance with Section 104 (2) (a) of the Planning Act, the Secretary of State (SOS) must have regard to a National Policy Statement (NPS) where it has effect, which in the case of this project comprises of the Overarching

National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1)⁷ and the National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3)⁸.

- 7.4. NSDC note that the SoS must also have regard to any Local Impact Report (providing it is submitted in accordance with the set deadline) in accordance with Section 104 (2) (b) of the Planning Act in making its decision. NSDC note the Government Guidance on NSIP Projects: Advice for Local Authorities⁹ states under the recommended content that:

‘There is no need to undertake an assessment of compliance with an NPS. This assessment will be carried out by the Examining Authority.’

- 7.5. Accordingly, the following section sets out the prevailing policy framework in place at the local level, with brief reference for context purposes to other national planning policy and relevant guidance, where it is deemed relevant to NSIP projects.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), NPPG and Written Ministerial Statements

- 7.6. The National Planning Policy Framework¹⁰ (NPPF) was first published in 2012 and updated in 2018, 2019, 2021, 2023, 2024 and most recently on the 7th February 2025. Paragraph 5 of the NPPF states that the document does not contain specific policies for NSIPs. These are to be determined in accordance with the decision-making framework set out in the Planning Act and relevant National Policy Statements (NPS) for nationally significant infrastructure, as well as any other matters that are considered both important and relevant (which may include the NPPF).
- 7.7. Other statements of government policy may also be material when deciding applications, such as relevant Written Ministerial Statements and endorsed recommendations of the National Infrastructure Commission.
- 7.8. Whilst the NPPF is not used to determine DCO applications, there are elements which relate to various elements of the Great North Road Solar Scheme, such as, Achieving Sustainable Development (Part 2), Climate Change and Flooding (Part 14), the Natural Environment (Part 15) and Historic Environment (Part 16).
- 7.9. In terms of the economy, the NPPF indicates that planning policies should seek to address potential barriers to investment, such as inadequate infrastructure or a poor environment.

⁷ [EN-1 Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy](#) Last accessed 23/06/2025

⁸ [National Policy Statement for renewable energy infrastructure \(EN-3\)](#) Last accessed 23/06/2025

⁹ [Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: Advice for Local Authorities - GOV.UK](#) Last accessed 23/06/2025

¹⁰ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2> last accessed 23/06/25

7.10. National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG) provides more detailed guidance to support policies in the NPPF. The following matters are covered by the NPPG and are considered relevant to the Great North Road scheme:

- Air quality.
- Noise.
- Biodiversity Net Gain.
- Climate Change.
- Design.
- EIA.
- Flood risk.
- Healthy and Safe Communities.
- Historic Environment.
- Land affected by Contamination.
- Natural Environment.
- Open Space and public rights of way.
- Tree preservation areas and trees in conservation areas.
- Water supply, wastewater, and water quality.

7.11. To summarise, NPPGs provide the predominant policy context; and whilst the applicant's DCO application has cross referred to the NPPF and NPPG where applicable, where there are any inconsistencies between the NPPF and the relevant NPPGs, it is policies within the latter that prevails. This report has not sought to come to a balanced judgement on the policy context but will provide a local policy perspective for the Examining Authority to consider.

Newark and Sherwood Local Development Framework

Newark and Sherwood Amended Core Strategy (2019)

7.12. Newark Local Development Framework (LDF) is made up of two development plan documents, the Amended Core Strategy (2019) and the Allocations and development management development plan document (2013). Newark and Sherwood Amended Core Strategy (ACS), adopted in March 2019, provides the Strategic planning policies which provide the framework for the delivery of sustainable development in the district. The following ACS policies are relevant to the Great North Road Scheme.

Relevant Policies:

Amended Core Strategy Policy	Summary of relevant aspects of the policies
Spatial Policy 1: Settlement Hierarchy	This policy defines Newark as a Sub Regional Centre.

	Features - Major centre in the Sub-Region, containing services and facilities for the District. Function - To be the focus for housing and employment growth in Newark & Sherwood and the main location for investment for new services and facilities within the District. The Sub-Regional Centre is defined as Newark Urban Area which is made up of Newark, Balderton and Fernwood.
Spatial Policy 2: Spatial Distribution of Growth	Newark Urban Area will be the main location for new housing and employment growth in the District. Newark Town Centre will act as a focus for new retail, cultural and leisure development. To support such growth the District Council and its partners will work together to secure and provide new infrastructure, facilities, and services.
Spatial Policy 3: Rural Areas	Sets out that the rural economy will be supported by encouraging tourism, rural diversification, and by supporting appropriate agricultural and forestry development. The countryside will be protected and schemes to enhance heritage assets, to increase biodiversity, enhance the landscape and, in the right locations, increase woodland cover will be encouraged. Beyond Principal Villages, new development will be considered against the criteria of location, scale, need, impact, and character, noting that development in the open countryside will be strictly controlled and restricted to uses that require a rural setting.
Spatial Policy 5: Delivering the Strategy	To ensure that the housing and employment needs of the District are delivered over the plan period, sufficient sites have been allocated to more than meet the requirements. There are three large urban extensions in Newark which, combined, will deliver approximately 7500 new homes and associated infrastructure (Middlebeck to the south, Fernwood to the south east, and Land east of Newark.
Spatial Policy 6: Infrastructure for Growth	To ensure the delivery of infrastructure to support growth in the District, the District Council will secure Strategic Infrastructure via its Community Infrastructure Levy. Strategic Infrastructure is defined as improvements to the strategic highway network and other highway infrastructure as identified within the IDP and secondary education provision across the District; Local Infrastructure, including facilities and services that are essential for development to take place on individual sites, will be secured through Planning Obligations.
Spatial Policy 7: Sustainable Transport	Sets out the Council's commitment to work with Nottinghamshire County Council and National Highways to reduce the impact of

	roads and traffic movement and support alternative transport methods. Safeguarded locations of highway or public transport schemes identified within the Nottinghamshire Local Transport Plan and its implementation plan. The locations of these schemes are identified on the Policies Map. High quality, safe, cycle, footpath and bridleway networks will be safeguarded and extended to provide opportunities to reduce the number of short car journeys and for cycling, walking and horse riding for recreation in the countryside. Highway improvements which harm the character and environment of the area will be avoided and effective parking provision and vehicular servicing arrangements should be provided in accordance with Highways Authority best practice. Development proposals should ensure that vehicle traffic generated does not create or exacerbate existing on street car parking problems, nor materially increase other traffic problems.
Core Policy 6: Shaping our Employment Profile	The economy of Newark and Sherwood District will be strengthened and broadened to provide a diverse range of employment opportunities, through a variety of measures. This includes Working with learning and training bodies, job centres and higher education providers to raise workforce skill levels, improve employability and supporting economic development associated with these sources, and using planning obligations to provide opportunities to assist residents in accessing work.
Core Policy 9: Sustainable Design	The District Council will expect new development proposals to demonstrate a high standard of sustainable design that both protects and enhances the natural environment and contributes to and sustains the rich local distinctiveness of the District.
Core Policy 10: Climate Change	The District Council is committed to tackling the causes and impacts of climate change and to delivering a reduction in the District's carbon footprint. The District Council will work with partners and developers to: Promote energy generation from renewable and low-carbon sources, including community-led schemes, through supporting new development where it is able to demonstrate that its adverse impacts have been satisfactorily addressed. Policy DM4 'Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Generation' provides the framework

	against which the appropriateness of proposals will be assessed; • Ensure that development proposals maximise, where appropriate and viable, the use of available local opportunities for district heating and decentralised energy; • Mitigate the impacts of climate change through ensuring that new development proposals minimise their potential adverse environmental impacts during their construction and eventual operation. New proposals for development should therefore: • Ensure that the impacts on natural resources are minimised and the use of renewable resources encouraged; and • Be efficient in the consumption of energy, water, and other resources. • Steer new development away from those areas at highest risk of flooding, applying the sequential approach to its location detailed in Policy DM5 'Design'. Where appropriate the Authority will seek to secure strategic flood mitigation measures as part of new development; • Where appropriate having applied the Sequential Test move on to apply the Exceptions Test, in line with national guidance. In those circumstances where the wider Exceptions Test is not required proposals for new development in flood risk areas will still need to demonstrate that the safety of the development and future occupants from flood risk can be provided for, over the lifetime of the development; and • Ensure that new development positively manages its surface water run-off through the design and layout of development to ensure that there is no unacceptable impact in run-off into surrounding areas or the existing drainage regime.
Core Policy 12: Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure	The Policy sets out how the District Council will seek to conserve and enhance the biodiversity and geological diversity of the District by working with partners to implement the aims and proposals of the Nottinghamshire Local Biodiversity Action Plan, the Green Infrastructure Strategy, and the Nature Conservation Strategy.
Core Policy 13: Landscape Character	This policy sets out, based on the comprehensive assessment of the District's landscape character, provided by the Landscape

	Character Assessment Supplementary Planning Document, the District Council will work with partners and developers to secure new development which positively addresses the implications of relevant landscape Policy Zone(s) that is consistent with the landscape conservation and enhancement aims for the area(s) ensuring that landscapes, including valued landscapes, have been protected and enhanced.
Core Policy 14: Historic Environment	Newark & Sherwood has a rich and distinctive historic environment, and the District Council will work with partners and developers in order to secure the continued conservation and enhancement of the character, appearance and setting of the District's heritage assets and historic environment, in line with their identified significance as required in national policy. There are several heritage assets, including one Conservation Area, within close proximity of the Order Limits (South Clifton Conservation Area).

Newark and Sherwood Allocations and Development Management DPD (2013)

7.13. Adopted in July 2013, the Allocations & Development Management DPD (ADMDPD¹¹) forms part of the Local Development Framework and accords with the 2011 Newark and Sherwood Core Strategy and its approach to settlement growth in identifying specific sites where new homes and employment sites should be built. The DPD illustrates the location and extent of the allocated land on the Policies Map and provides guidance on how and when the sites should be developed. This DPD has been subject to review in recent times to ensure its policies accord with the Amended Core Strategy (2019) and National Planning Policy Framework.

Relevant policies:

Policy	Summary of relevant aspects of policy
DM4: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Generation	This policy sets out that in order to achieve the carbon reduction as set out in Core Policy 10, planning permission will be granted for low carbon energy generation development, where its benefits are not outweighed by detrimental impact upon: • Landscape character (arising from individual or cumulative impacts. • Heritage assets and or their settings.

¹¹ <https://www.newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk/media/nsdc-redesign/documents-and-images/your-council/planning-policy/supplementary-planning-information/allocations-and-development-management-dpd/Allocations-and-Development-Management-Development-Plan-Document.pdf> last accessed 23/06/2025

	• Amenity, including noise pollution, shadow flicker and electro-magnetic interference. • Highway safety. • The ecology of the local or wider area. • Aviation interests of local or national importance.
DM5: Design	<u>Amenity</u> The layout of development within sites and separation distances from neighbouring development should be sufficient to ensure that neither suffers from an unacceptable reduction in amenity including overbearing impacts, loss of light and privacy. Development proposals should have regard to their impact on the amenity or operation of surrounding land uses and where necessary mitigate for any detrimental impact. Proposals resulting in the loss of amenity space will require justification. The presence of existing development which has the potential for a detrimental impact on new development should also be taken into account and mitigated for in proposals. New development that cannot be afforded an adequate standard of amenity or creates an unacceptable standard of amenity will be resisted. <u>Local Distinctiveness and Character</u> The rich local distinctiveness of the district's landscape and character of built form should be reflected in the scale, form, mass, layout, design, materials and detailing of proposals for new development. In accordance with Core Policy 13, all development proposals will be considered against the assessments contained in the Landscape Character Assessment Supplementary Planning Document. <u>Trees, Woodlands, Biodiversity & Green Infrastructure</u> In accordance with Core Policy 12, natural features of importance within or adjacent to development sites should, wherever possible, be protected and enhanced. Wherever possible, this should be through integration and connectivity of the Green Infrastructure to deliver multi-functional benefits. <u>Ecology</u> Where it is apparent that a site may provide a habitat for protected species, development proposals should be

	supported by an up-to date ecological assessment, including a habitat survey and a survey for species listed in the Nottinghamshire Biodiversity Action Plan. Significantly harmful ecological impacts should be avoided through the design, layout and detailing of the development, with mitigation, and as a last resort, compensation (including off-site measures), provided where significant impacts cannot be avoided. <u>Unstable Land</u> Development proposals within the current and historic coal mining areas of the district should take account of ground conditions, land stability and mine gas, and where necessary include mitigation measures to ensure they can be safely implemented. <u>Flood Risk and Water Management</u> Development proposals within Environment Agency Flood Zones 2 and 3 and areas with critical drainage problems will only be considered where it constitutes appropriate development and it can be demonstrated, by application of the Sequential Test, that there are no reasonably available sites in lower risk Flood Zones. In accordance with the aims of Core Policy 9, development proposals should wherever possible include measures to pro-actively manage surface water including the use of appropriate surface treatments and Sustainable Drainage Systems.
DM7: Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure	The policy requires development to protect, promote and enhance biodiversity and the ecological network of habitats, species, and sites of international, national, and local importance. Development proposals in all areas of the District should seek to enhance biodiversity. Proposals should take into account the latest information on biodiversity including Nottinghamshire Biodiversity Opportunity Mapping, and the forthcoming Local Nature Recovery Strategy.
DM8: Development in the Open Countryside	In accordance with the requirements of Spatial Policy 3, development away from the main built-up areas of villages, in the open countryside, will be strictly controlled and limited to specific types of development, which includes (amongst others) rural diversification, equestrian uses, tourism uses, community and leisure facilities, employment uses, agricultural and forestry development.

DM9: Protecting and Enhancing the Historic Environment	In accordance with the requirements of Core Policy 14, all development proposals concerning heritage assets will be expected to secure their continued protection or enhancement, contribute to the wider vitality, viability, and regeneration of the areas in which they are located and reinforce a strong sense of place. All development proposals affecting heritage assets and their settings, including new operational development and alterations to existing buildings, where they form or affect heritage assets should utilise appropriate siting, design, detailing, materials, and methods of construction. Particular attention should be paid to reflecting locally distinctive styles of development and these should respect traditional methods and natural materials wherever possible. Where development proposals requiring planning permission involve demolition, the resulting impact on heritage assets will be assessed under this policy.
DM10: Pollution and Hazardous Materials	Development proposals involving the potential for pollution should take account of and address their potential impacts in terms of health, the natural environment and general amenity on: • Neighbouring land uses. • The wider population. • Ground and surface water. • Air Quality. • Biodiversity.
DM12: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development	A positive approach to considering development proposals will be taken that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework. Where appropriate, the Council will work pro-actively with applicants jointly to seek solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social, and environmental conditions within the district.

Newark and Sherwood Amended Allocations and Development Management DPD Submission (2024)¹²

¹² <https://www.newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk/aadm-representatation/> Amended Allocations Document last accessed 23/06/2025

7.14. Following a review of the ADMDPD (2013), the Amended Allocations & Development Management DPD (AADMDPD), along with its supporting documents has now been submitted for examination to the Secretary of State. The Submission Version of the Plan was approved at NSDC Full Council on 12th December 2023 with the recommendation to submit the Plan to the Secretary of State which was done so on 18th January 2024. The examination is currently ongoing, with a series of Hearings that took place in November 2024. The AADMDPD was recently subject to Main Modifications consultation between the 16th September and the 28th October 2025.

7.15. As such, we consider that the AADMDPD is at an advanced stage of preparation and will continue to advance during the examination of this project. Accordingly, it will become increasingly relevant during the later stages of the examination and will likely carry more weight in this regard. NSDC will provide any appropriate updates to the ExA during the examination in this respect. Relevant policies are presented below.

Relevant Policies:

Policy	Summary
DM4: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Generation	The main provisions of this policy as within the current ADMDPD are proposed to be carried forward with support for low energy carbon developments, sets out where its benefits are not outweighed by detrimental impacts, which continues to include those issues as identified within the current version of policy DM4.
DM5(b): Design	This policy sets out criteria to be used to assess planning applications against design principles set out in the National Design Guide and any local Design Codes. Of particular relevance are the aspects relating to amenity, local distinctiveness and character, Trees, Biodiversity and Green and Blue Infrastructure, ecology, flood risk and water management.
DM7: Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure	The policy requires development to protect, promote and enhance biodiversity and the ecological network of habitats, species, and sites of international, national, and local importance. Development proposals in all areas of the District should seek to enhance biodiversity. Proposals should take into account the latest information on biodiversity including Nottinghamshire Biodiversity Opportunity Mapping, and the forthcoming Local Nature Recovery Strategy. Except for exempt development proposals, the enhancement should be a net gain of at least 10% (or if different, the relevant percentage set out in the Environment Act) as measured by the applicable

	DEFRA metric or any successor document. These gains must be guaranteed for a period of at least 30 years.
DM8: Development in the Open Countryside	In accordance with the requirements of Spatial Policy 3, development away from the main built-up areas of villages, in the open countryside, will be strictly controlled and limited to specific types of development, which includes (amongst others) rural diversification, equestrian uses, tourism uses, community and leisure facilities, employment uses, agricultural and forestry development.
DM9: Protecting and Enhancing the Historic Environment	All development proposals concerning heritage assets will be expected to conserve them in a manner appropriate to their significance, contribute to the wider vitality, viability and regeneration of the areas in which they are located (including its contribution to economic vitality), reinforce a strong sense of place and be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations.
Policy DM10: Pollution and Hazardous Materials	This policy continues to set out that proposals involving the potential for pollution should take account of and address their potential impacts in terms of health, the natural environment and general amenity on: • Neighbouring land uses. • The wider population. • Ground and surface water (including a new reference to water courses and water quality). • Air Quality. • Biodiversity.
DM12: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development	A positive approach to considering development proposals will be taken that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework. Where appropriate, the Council will work pro-actively with applicants jointly to seek solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social, and environmental conditions within the district.

8. Landscape and Visual Impacts– *Neutral to Negative (depends on the landscape character area)*

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) Methodology

CHAPTER TO BE COMPLETED

8.1. XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Local Policy

8.2. Core Policy 13 (Landscape Character) Amended Core Strategy Development Plan Document 2019:

‘New development which positively addresses the implications of relevant landscape Policy Zone(s) that is consistent with the landscape conservation and enhancement aims for the area(s) ensuring that landscapes, including valued landscapes, have been protected and enhanced.’

8.3. Policy DM5 (Design) Allocations and Development Management Development Plan Document 2013:

‘Supporting text states - The diversity of landscape and built form within the District displays much local distinctiveness which the Council is keen to see reflected in new development. Development proposals should take reference from the Landscape Character Assessment SPD, locally distinctive layouts, design, detailing and methods of construction as a means of integrating itself into the surrounding area.’

8.4. Policy DM5(b) Design Amended Allocations and Development Management Development Plan Document (for examination in November 2024).

8.5. Landscape Character Assessment Supplementary Planning Document 2013.¹³

8.6. As indicated above, the NSDC strategic level policies as contained within the Amended Core Strategy seeks to integrate new development into landscape character areas. Given the scale and extent of the proposed development, the proposed development fails to meet with this objective, given the significant change in the landscape character that will result.

¹³ [Landscape Character Assessment SPD | Newark & Sherwood District Council \(newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk\)](https://newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk/)
last accessed 30/06/25

- 8.7. Core Policy 13 and policy DM5 are supplemented by Policy DM4 of the ADMDPD which identifies that proposals will be supported, where its benefits are not outweighed by detrimental impacts from the construction, operation, and maintenance of the development, with impacts on landscape character (both individually and cumulatively) being a key criteria.
- 8.8. As referred to above, the ES LVIA Chapter reports a number of significant adverse effects, during operation and given that NSDC is not the determining authority in this case, any weighing up of benefits is a matter for the ExA. Accordingly, the proposed development is judged to be in direct conflict with Policy DM4 of the ADMDPD in respect of landscape character and associated visual impacts.

9. Biodiversity – Neutral/ Biodiversity Net Gain – Positive

CHAPTER TO BE COMPLETED

- 9.1. XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
- 9.2. Newark and Sherwood's Vision as noted within the Council's Amended Core Strategy DPD 2019, states as follows.
- 'By 2033, Newark and Sherwood will...maximise **opportunities for appropriate renewable energy...while safeguarding and enhancing the natural environment**, strengthening green infrastructure, new green and woodland spaces will increase ecology, biodiversity and nature conservation, providing a resource for local people and encouraging personal well-being and health.'*
- 9.3. Nottinghamshire is losing its wild species and habitats at an alarming rate (Nottinghamshire Local Biodiversity Action Plan). Nature is being increasingly confined to small, fragmented areas with little or no connectivity.
- 9.4. Information exists on the biodiversity improvement priorities within the county. The most important areas for wildlife conservation remaining in Newark and Sherwood have been identified through the Nottinghamshire Biodiversity Map (BOM) Reports. BOMs are recognised as those areas where targeted maintenance, restoration and creation of priority habitats will have the greatest impact in improving connectivity and reducing habitat fragmentation. The Newark and Sherwood BOM was published in 2016, and which was used to inform the Focal Areas identified in Newark and Sherwood District Council's adopted document outlining Mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain Strategic Significance which was adopted by Cabinet on 23 January 2024.
- 9.5. Newark and Sherwood District Council produced a Green Infrastructure Strategy 2010, responding to the need to plan for predicted growth, enhance quality of life and ensure environmental sustainability in the District for generations to come.

NSDC Amended Core Strategy (AMC) Policy 12 Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure

- 9.6. Core Policy 12 (Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure) Amended Core Strategy Development Plan in 2019 sets out how developments should protect and enhance biodiversity, including the provision of new or improved green infrastructure. Supporting text states:

‘Seek to secure development that maximises the opportunities to conserve, enhance and restore biodiversity and geological diversity and to increase provision of, and access to, green infrastructure within the District.’

Allocations and Development Management Development Plan Document (ADMDDP)
Policy DM5 Design

- 9.7. Policy DM5(b) (Design) Allocations and Development Management DPD 2023 (Amended plan currently under examination) states that:

“...in accordance with the requirements of Core Policy 9, all proposals for new development shall be assessed against the following criteria: ...

...5. Trees, Woodlands, Biodiversity & Green Infrastructure

In accordance with Core Policy 12, natural features of importance within or adjacent to development sites should not be unnecessarily adversely impacted and development should first seek to respect existing features before the Council will consider removal of such features. The starting point should be through integration and connectivity of the Green Infrastructure to deliver multi-functional benefits.

7. Ecology

Where it is apparent that a site may provide a habitat for protected species, development proposals should be supported by an up-to date ecological assessment, including a Habitat survey and a survey for species listed in the Nottinghamshire Biodiversity Action Plan. Significantly harmful ecological impacts should be avoided through the design, layout and detailing of the development, with mitigation, and as a last resort, compensation (including off-site measures), provided where significant impacts cannot be avoided.”

ADMDDP Policy DM7 Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure

- 9.8. Policy DM7 (Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure) Allocations and Development Management DPD 2023 (Amended plan currently under examination) states that:

‘Development proposals in all areas of the District should seek to enhance biodiversity. Proposals should take into account the latest information on biodiversity including Nottinghamshire Biodiversity Opportunity Mapping, and the forthcoming Local Nature Recovery Strategy. Except for exempt development proposals, the enhancement should be a net gain of at least 10% (or if different, the relevant percentage set out in the Environment Act) as measured by the applicable DEFRA metric or any successor document. These gains must be guaranteed for a period of at least 30 years....

New development should protect, promote, and enhance green infrastructure to deliver multi-functional benefits and contribute to the ecological network both as part of on-site development proposals and through off-site provision.'

9.9. The collective policies as reviewed above seek to protect biodiversity assets within the district, alongside promoting biodiversity enhancement.....

Arboriculture – Neutral/Negative

Assessment Methodology

9.10. The presence of trees is considered within Technical Appendix A8.12 – Arboricultural Impact Assessment which sets out at paragraph 8.12.1.2 that *'The aim of the study was to assess the potential impacts of the Development on trees and woodland by addressing the following objectives:*

- *Identify potential constraints to inform the Development design such that it can avoid and reduce potential arboricultural impacts;*
- *Screen the Development design for residual arboricultural impacts;*
- *Carry out an arboricultural impact assessment on parts of the Development where potential impacts can reasonably be predicted; and*
- *Propose mitigation to avoid and reduce arboricultural impacts.'*

9.11. The field survey carried out a targeted survey of trees within the Order Limits Area and recorded trees within the following categories:

- Cat A – High quality trees with an estimated life expectancy of at least 40 years;
- Cat B – Moderate quality trees with an estimated life expectancy of at least 20 years;
- Cat C – low quality trees with an estimated life expectancy of at least 20 years, or young trees with stems below 150 mm diameter; and
- Cat U – Trees in a condition such that they will not survive beyond 10 years.

Assessment

9.12. The report confirms that as part of the survey, a total of 325 individual trees, 126 groups of trees were recorded and the following summary impacts on trees are noted (by category).

Ancient Woodland – Tree Groups identified will be outside of 15m buffer zone areas, other than one area where the works would take place outside of a Root Protection Area.

Veteran Trees – Nine veteran trees were recorded in the targeted survey area (with no ancient trees being observed). The proposed development will not result in the loss or pruning of veteran trees.

TPO Trees – The proposed development will not result in the loss or pruning of TPO Trees, as all works are either outside of the 15m buffer zone, or do not encroach into their RPA.

- 9.13. The report confirms that Work No. 2 Cables may require up to 89 trees to be removed, whereas the BESS and substation do not require any trees to be removed. The new access, passing place and associated visibility splays may require up to 9 trees to be removed, although this is considered a worst case scenario.
- 9.14. In addition, the report also notes that a total of 98 trees will be affected by works, 28 individual trees and 70 trees that are part of groups or partial groups.
- 9.15. In respect of Hedgerows, the report confirms that the permanent loss of hedgerows associated with fencing, access and new roads/tracks to an amount of 1,308m. Further to this hedgerow losses caused by cables is detailed as being 1,908m but are judged to be 'temporary' because the hedgerows will be reinstated or translocated.

Mitigation

- 9.16. The report acknowledges that tree and hedgerow losses will be compensated through planting proposals as outlined in the Outline LEMP which in summary would comprise:
- 31 ha of new woodland creation;
 - 8.5 ha of wood pasture creation;
 - 50 km of species-rich hedgerow creation; and
 - Scattered, individual trees.

Local Policy

Allocations and Development Management DPD 2013

- 9.17. Policy DM5 (Design) states as follows.

Trees, Woodlands, Biodiversity & Green Infrastructure - In accordance with Core Policy 12, natural features of importance within or adjacent to development sites should, wherever possible, be protected and enhanced. Wherever possible, this should be through integration and connectivity of the Green Infrastructure to deliver multi-functional benefits.

Supporting text states:

Features of natural importance such as trees and hedges significantly contribute to the landscape character of the District and can also be used to help integrate new

development into it. Where a site contains or is adjacent to such features, proposals should take account of their presence and wherever possible incorporate or enhance them as part of the scheme of development in order to improve the connectivity of the Green Infrastructure. Where it is proposed to remove features, justification will be required, and re-planting should form part of development proposals.

- 9.18. Whilst the Applicant has set out a significant programme of new planting, there is no guarantee that such additional planting will take place in and around where existing trees or hedgerows will be lost. Further discussion is required to ensure that the value of existing trees to be lost, is reflected in any replanting programme.

10. Noise and Vibration – Neutral

Baseline

- 10.1. Baseline noise conditions have been determined through a baseline noise measurement survey which was carried out between *Monday 15th April and Tuesday 23rd April 2024*. The survey was designed to capture noise levels across the Order Limits during *the daytime (0700 hrs to 2300 hrs) and night time (2300 hrs to 0700 hrs)* periods using monitoring locations which are representative of the assessed receptors.
- 10.2. The existing noise environment was found to be affected by traffic noise *on the A1, A616 and A617, as well as train movements on the East Coast Mainline*.

Assessment

- 10.3. A study area has been defined for each phase of the development, with receptors within this area considered for assessment. Outside of this study area, noise from the development is not considered to be significant.
- 10.4. Noise impact has been assessed in line with Planning Practice Guidance for Noise (PPG(N)) and The Noise Policy Statement for England (NPSE). Construct Traffic was assessed based upon Design Manual for Roads and Bridges LA 111 'Noise and Vibration' (DMRB LA 111) and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) Guidelines for Environmental Noise Impact Assessment (ENIA Guidelines), construction noise following BS 5228-1 (2014), and operational noise BS4142 (2019).
- 10.5. Assessment has been undertaken both without and taking account of mitigation. Mitigation measures identified include:

Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP): This plan includes measures to control noise and vibration during construction activities. It includes scheduling noisy activities during less sensitive times of the day, using quieter equipment and machinery, implementing noise barriers and enclosures around noisy equipment.

Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP): This plan aims to minimise noise from construction traffic by designating specific routes for construction vehicles, limiting the speed of vehicles, scheduling deliveries to avoid peak traffic times.

- 10.6. At present, only outline management plans have been produced, pending final development details. Additionally, a Construction Noise Management Plan (CNMP) will be developed based upon finalised location and equipment details and submitted prior to commencement of works.

Operational Phase

- 10.7. The development has been planned so far as possible to maximise distances from receptors to substation and BESS areas. Acoustic fencing is proposed within work area 5. Final details of plant have not yet been confirmed, as a result of which the final location, orientation and mitigation of plant may need to be amended. An operational noise assessment based upon finalised details is to be submitted prior to commencement of each phase of development.

Local Policy

- 10.8. The NSDC Allocations and Development Management Development Plan Documents (ADMPD) as adopted in July 2013, includes Policy DM4 – Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Generation, seeks to ensure that benefits of such development are not outweighed by any detrimental impacts, upon various issues, but with point 4 of the policy referring to *Amenity, **including noise pollution**, shadow flicker and electro-magnetic interference*.
- 10.9. Taking account of the wording of policy DM4, as noted in the explanatory text of the policy, proposals should take account of impacts generated during the preparation and installation process and those arising thereafter. At this stage, it is noted that the output of the Environmental Assessment work indicates that construction noise and vibration is judged to be not significant, and operational noise is assessed as being not significant, with the imposition of mitigation. As such, the impacts in respect of noise are expected to be neutral, although this is an interim conclusion, based upon the available information and noting that the Draft DCO contains requirement 15 which will provide further information on operational noise impacts.

11. Air Quality – *Neutral*

Baseline

- 11.1. In respect of Air Quality, NSDC have reviewed Chapter 16 (Miscellaneous Issues) of the ES, which considers air quality impacts associated with the proposed development.
- 11.2. Turning first to traffic movements, NSDC note that Construction traffic emissions have been scoped out due to predicted vehicle movements being below IAQM/EPUK guidance threshold limits.
- 11.3. In respect of the potential for dust The assessment appropriately uses IAQM methodology to consider dust impact risks. Following identification of potentially sensitive receptors, the dust risk is considered and is deemed to be low to medium. Dust mitigation measures are proposed in the outline CEMP.

Assessment

- 11.4. NSDC consider that a (in the absence of full details of mitigation measures proposed and the detailed design) detailed dust risk assessment and mitigation plan should be prepared and submitted for approval prior to construction and secured via a 'requirement' once the final layout is confirmed. In addition to the proposed mitigation this should include such matters as details of how, when and how often any monitoring will be carried out, how it is recorded and shared with stakeholders and by whom, should specify thresholds for action and should include contingency plans for unforeseen circumstances such as unseasonable high winds or exceptionally prolonged dry periods, a site contact name and number should be displayed at each site entry point and should be contactable to discuss any concerns or complaints.
- 11.5. Non-Road Mobile Machinery (NRMM) has been considered further within the assessment and Chapter 16 of the ES states that the use will be limited to short periods in any location.

Mitigation

- 11.6. An outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (oCEMP) has been submitted which lists generic air quality and dust mitigation measures. It is expected that this will be refined and shall include some site-specific measures for later iterations.

Local Policy

- 11.7. The ADMDPD, includes Policy DM10 – Pollution and Hazardous Materials, which seeks to manage proposals which have the potential for pollution and manage impacts on health, the natural environment and general amenity in respect of (amongst other things) Air Quality. Whilst there is further information that is expected to be made available in due

course, impacts on Air Quality are expected to be neutral, with the appropriate best practice mitigation measures in place.

12. Ground Conditions and Contamination – *Neutral*

Baseline – Contamination

- 12.1. In respect of Ground Conditions and Contamination, NSDC have reviewed the Preliminary Risk Assessment (PRA) report (Study Areas 1-8) as contained in Volume 4 – Technical Appendices of the ES. This includes an environmental screening report, an assessment of potential contaminant sources, a brief history of the site's previous and current uses and a description of the site walkover.
- 12.2. The PRAs for Study Areas 1–8 follow current guidance including EA's Land Contamination Risk Management (LCRM). The Conceptual Site Models (CSMs) are well-structured and identify plausible contaminant linkages.

Assessment

- 12.3. The Detailed Desk Study (Stage 2), also as contained in Volume 4 – Technical Appendices of the ES identifies medium to high risk in Study Areas 2, 7, and 8. This is recommended to be mitigated by the use of tool-box talks, inclusion of UXO in the Contractor's Risk Assessments and Emergency Response Plans. Debdale Tip in Parcel 4 is now outside of the order limits and therefore will not be subject to any further investigation.
- 12.4. Potential human health contaminant receptors (which lie in the NSDC administrative area) are limited to existing neighbouring residential properties given that risk to site workers falls within the developer's health and safety obligations.
- 12.5. A 'Discovery Strategy' protocol is recommended for contamination and NSDC note that at present there is a draft requirement (17) within the Draft DCO to capture the additional work to be undertaken. We would wish to make further representations on the wording of this condition as currently drafted in due course, to ensure the usual validation/verification process is captured to demonstrate any necessary remediation has been successfully implemented. Furthermore, any contamination identified should require all phases of investigation, remediation and verification as stipulated in the EA LCRM guidance.

13. Agricultural Land Classification – Negative

13.1. Turning to the issue of Agricultural land classification, NSDC have received advice from its externally appointed advisors on the technical elements of the soil survey investigative work (in respect of the Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land) and in this regard wish to make the following key observations.

13.2. This has included the review of Chapter 17 of the ES and the associated Technical Appendix within Volume 4 of the ES, which contains the Agricultural Land Classification Report (Parts 1 and 2).

- A detailed base line ALC has been undertaken across 1,690 hectares, following Natural England consultation, in detail at a standard density of 1 auger bore per hectare.
- 62% of the site is BMV quality, based on a detailed survey, BMV is mainly Grade 3a.
- The Applicant state they have avoided siting on the highest-grade land based on data provided by Natural England, but 8% of the land is identified as of Grade 2.
- An Outline Soil Management Plan is provided and includes sections on construction, management, and decommissioning. The decommissioning bond is stated to guarantee funding for the removal of equipment after 40 years.
- The cable routes have also been ALC surveyed, and the details reported, the methodology was agreed with Natural England. The cable routes are similar quality to the overall site.
- It is noted that the Applicant states that local farmers will graze sheep under and around the solar PV arrays, where practicable. Given this is likely influenced by the future economics of farming, the Applicant should set out in clear terms a minimum acreage of land that would be available for grazing and how access would be obtained for such ongoing use, given security considerations for the site. Moreover, as this is a potential benefit in the continuation of some form of agricultural activity, we would expect the Applicant to demonstrate there is both a commercial demand for grazing use across the site, that it can be delivered and if so, how that would be secured within the Development Consent Order.
- It is further noted that removing intensive farming is considered to eliminate nitrates and phosphates, supporting soil health, biodiversity and improving water quality. However, there is no detail as to if and how improved soil health will be maintained after the decommissioning stage, including the financing of any ongoing programme that may be necessary.

- There is some soil health assessment and assessment of loss of land for food production and the impact on any agricultural holdings affected is also addressed. Overall, the impact is considered low in all cases.

Local Policy

- 13.3. Spatial Policy 3 of the Amended Core Strategy – Rural Areas, deals with agriculture, stressing the need to protect agriculture in developments within a rural setting.
- 13.4. As such, NSDC note that a total of 62% of BMV land will be impacted by the proposed development, of which 8.5% is classified as Grade 2 Land. Whilst the Applicant notes that this is for a temporary period (as also referred to below in respect of cumulative impacts) the proposed development has a long operational lifespan of 40 years, which establishes a degree of permanence. NSDC are very concerned about the impacts on BMV land. Referring back to our earlier comments on alternatives, NSDC suggest that the Applicant demonstrate how other areas of land have been considered that may have involved a lower degree of BMV land. NSDC particularly take the view that loss of Grade 2 (Very Good Agricultural Land) land should be avoided. As such, NSDC consider that only Grade 3a and Grade 3b (or lower grade quality) should be utilised, on the basis of the long-term loss of such valuable land for food production purposes. Further to this, we consider the Applicant should set out to what extent (perhaps as part of the ongoing maintenance programme) any of the PV areas could be scaled back over the operational life of the proposed development, reflecting continuing improvements in technology, which presents potential to return high value BMV land to agricultural use and brings additional benefits in scaling back the impacts of the proposed development.

14. Built Heritage – Neutral – TBC

CHAPTER TO BE COMPLETED

Assessment of significance

- [illegible]

- 14.2. The key policies within the local plan, include Core Policy 14 – Historic Environment of the Amended Core Strategy which seeks to ensure the continued conservation of the district’s heritage assets and historic environment in line with their identified significance and in accordance with national policy. Policy DM9 – Protecting and enhancing the Historic Environment notes that all development proposals affecting heritage assets should utilise appropriate siting, design, detailing and methods of construction. In this regard, at the present, NSDC do not anticipate any adverse impacts from the proposed development in respect of heritage assets, but in order to minimise the level of harm, there are a number of mitigation recommendations, as outlined above.

15. Socio Economics – Positive

- 15.1. In respect of Socio Economics, Chapter 13 of the ES 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 20 net FTE jobs during the operational lifespan of the proposed development.
- 15.2. Although construction jobs are likely to be more significant, with the creation of 173 FTE jobs during the construction phase, this is only considered to be a moderate benefit, given the temporary nature of the construction programme.
- 15.3. NSDC can confirm that some early and limited discussions have taken place with the Applicant at the Pre-application stages on the ways in which the economic benefits of the development (through job creation) could be secured (should permission be forthcoming). Moreover, we have recommended that the Applicant consider how they can work with other Applicants for other projects in the Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire region to deliver such benefits. We note that this and other measures are presented in the Outline Skills, Supply Chain and Employment Plan (OSSCEP).
- 15.4. Without prejudice to any view that NSDC may take on the proposed development, this should be developed further during the examination stage, such that NSDC can understand the benefits of the proposed development in respect of 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.

Local Policy

- 15.5. Core Policy 4 of the Amended Core Strategy – Shaping our employment profile, seeks to strengthen and broaden the economy of the district and provide a diverse range of opportunities. The OSSCEP should be developed further to demonstrate how working with learning and training bodies, job centres and higher education to raise workforce skill levels can raise and improve employability. Noting the greatest beneficial impacts would occur in the construction stage and only very minor operational benefits, in order to demonstrate compliance with Core Policy 4, the mechanisms for delivery to ensure the benefits are deliverable, are an important part of the examination process.

16. Summary and Conclusions

- 16.1. The purpose of this LIR has been to outline the likely effects of the Great North Road Solar Farm at a local level and to briefly evaluate these effects in the context of local planning policy and not to come to an overall balanced conclusion which is the responsibility of the Examining Authority.
- 16.2. Newark and Sherwood District Council (NSDC) note the need for Renewable Energy development and the wider benefits that this brings, but there are some specific and direct negative impacts associated with the proposed development including landscape and visual impacts, leading to a marked change in the character of the area and the loss of Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land.
- 16.3. In addition, there are impacts around the potential loss of trees, other areas of potential impacts and areas of mitigation that require further development during the examination, so as to clearly understand the means to which more significant impacts associated with the proposed development will be suitably mitigated, including the mechanisms to ensure this mitigation is fully implemented.
- 16.4. NSDC will continue to work proactively with the Applicant during the examination to understand the full impacts of the proposed development, including evidence of necessary mitigation to address any significant impacts, including the joint production of Statements of Common Ground.
- 16.5. NSDC has not undertaken a full review of the draft Development Consent Order at this stage and will suggest any necessary amendments at the appropriate time during the Examination.