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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1.0 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 Authorities[1] Guidance, in preparing the LIR.

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

2.1. The LIR relates to the proposed development as far 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 appropriate time during the Examination and intends (among other things) to address these matters in its Written Representations.

[1] Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: Advice for Local Authorities - GOV.UK

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 2021[2] (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.

[2] https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/censuspopulationchange/E07000175/

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 I 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 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 466,250[4] 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.

[3] https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/labourmarketlocal/E07000175/
[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

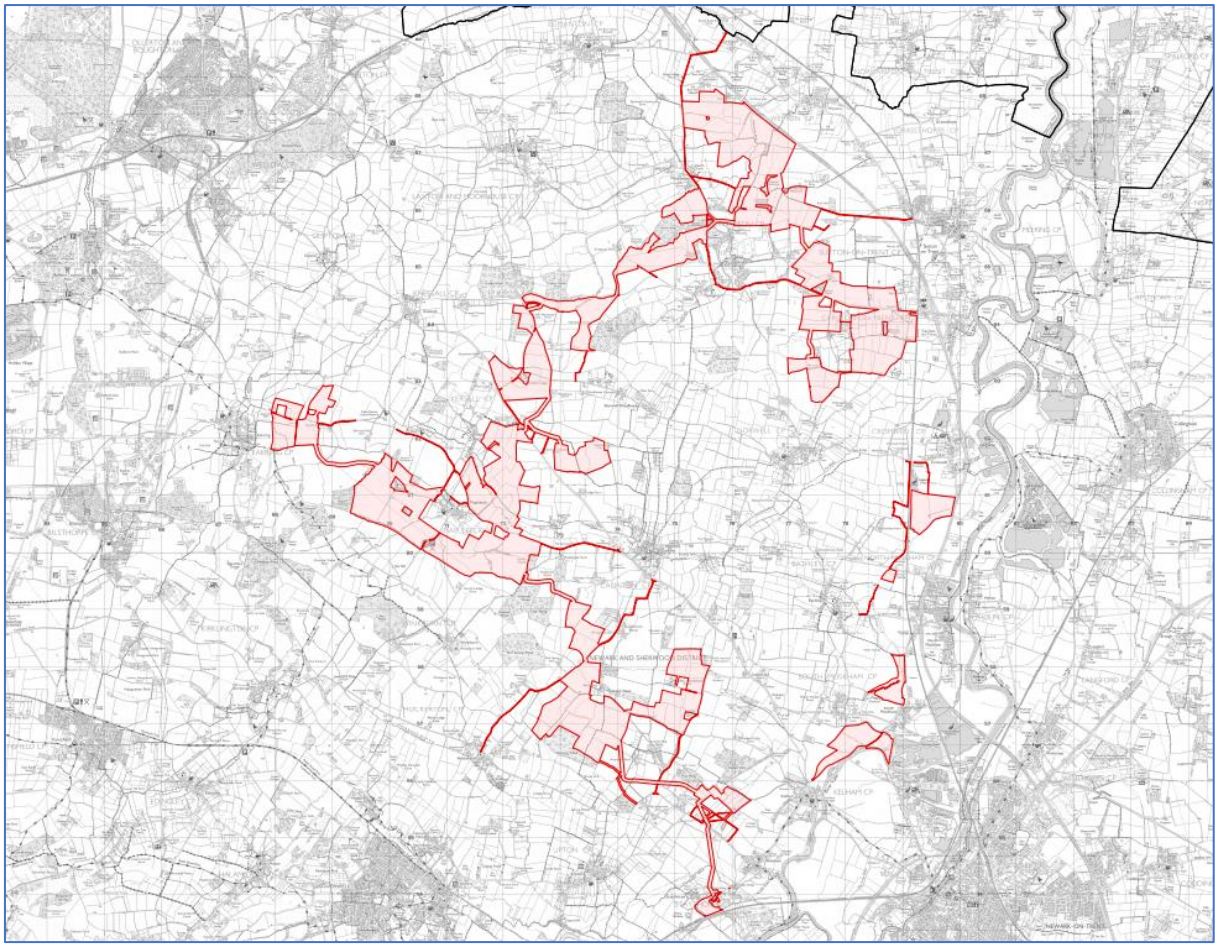

Figure 1 – GNR Solar Farm – Order Limits (Source – Applicant OL Plan - EN010162-APP-2.9[5]).

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

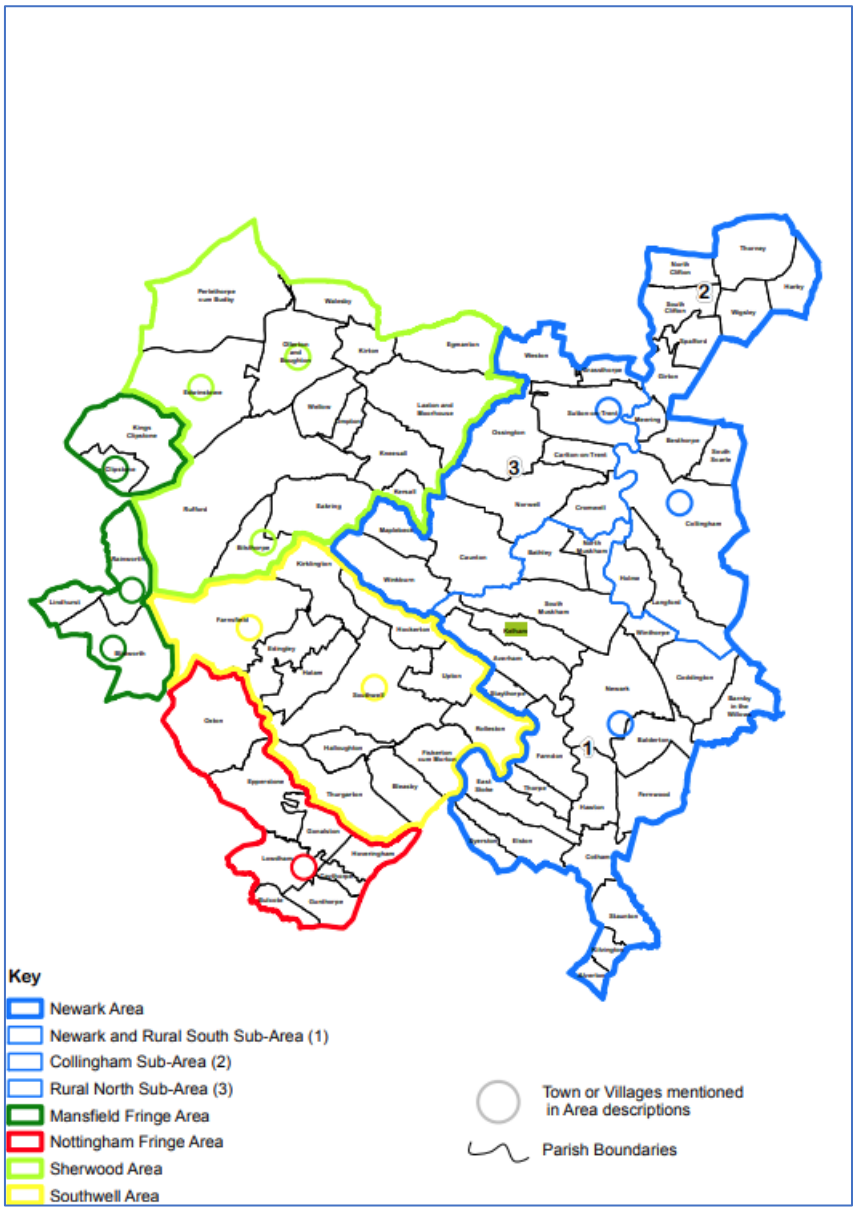

Figure 2 – Areas of Newark and Sherwood (Source: NSDC Amended Core Strategy)[6]

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 Authorities[9] 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 Framework[10] (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

[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

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.

7.10. 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, NPSs 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 NPSs, 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 (ADMDPD[11]) 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:

[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

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. • 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]

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

[12] https://www.newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk/aadm-represenatation/ Amended Allocations Document last accessed 23/06/2025

	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

8.1. The Landscape and Visual methodology are set out in Technical Appendix A7 – LVIA Methodology. In this regard, we would draw attention to the following points:

The future baseline at A7.Paragrpah 2.2.9 sets out that *'The future baseline consists of changes to the landscape which are considered certain or likely to happen – including consented proposals which are not yet present in the landscape but are expected to be constructed.'*

The level of Effect and Significance is set out at A7. Paragraph 2.6.36 which sets out that *'Where the effect has been classified as Major or Major/Moderate this is considered to equivalent to likely significant effects referred to in the EIA Regulations. Where 'Moderate' effects are predicted, professional judgement is applied to ensure that the potential for significant effects arising has been thoroughly considered.'*

The approach to Cumulative Assessment is set out in A7 Paragraph 2.9 and although it set out a general approach to the assessment which is acceptable, it does not advance the assessment at the strategic level which we now consider is required. This is set out in our Written Summary of Verbal Representations at Issue Specific Hearing 1.

Visualisations

8.2. The Visualisations have been prepared in accordance with the accepted guidance and provide clear information.

Worst Case Design Scenarios

8.3. A7 Paragraph 1.4.16 sets out the assumptions made at post-decommissioning stage and include:

- That permissive rights of way created as part of the Development would be removed. This element requires further consideration and is referred to further down in section 8.12.
- Diversions to ProW created as part of the Development would remain in place. Circumstances may occur where the diverted ProWs are no longer in the most

optimum position once the solar array have been removed and therefore this assumption should be reconsidered.

- Woodland and hedgerows (except those created to form a second hedge alongside a permissive route) will be retained, as will the community orchard, but in other areas the land would be restored to agriculture. This assumption becomes relevant for reconsideration should the approach to permissive routes and their retention , particularly as part of the Circular Walk, is reconsidered.

Landscape and Visual Assessment

8.4. The following comments are made in respect of the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment as presented within Chapter 7 of the Environmental Statement.

Study Area

8.5. The Study Area as defined at Paragraph 7.1.5 is acceptable with the exception of Cumulative. This may need to be clarified, in this section or a later location in the chapter.

Assumptions and Limitations

8.6. At Paragraph 7.1.6.20 it is set out that no visits were made to private properties. Although this section does not review the RVAA, note should be made that there is therefore an assumption that all relevant views could be assessed from accessible public locations.

8.7. It is our understanding that Assessment should be based on the actual Definitive Map not 'what was seen on the ground' Clarity should be given where there is a difference accompanied by an explanation of the assessment made.

Assessment Scenario and Potential Effects

8.8. At Paragraph 7.1.7 the typical scenarios Construction, Operation and Decommissioning are set out. It is understood that the average lifespan of solar panels are 25-30 years although at this time they are likely to be performing at only 80% efficiency. It is not clear if the LVIA accounts for replacement of the solar arrays and the potential impacts of this phase.

Consultation

8.9. We agree with the consultation set out in Table 7.1, relevant to NSDC and Landscape and Visual Matters

Landscape and Visual Baseline

8.10. The Landscape and Visual baseline information is set out within sections 7.4 and 7.5.

8.11. In Table 7.3 Embedded Mitigation Measures it is set out that the Solar Panels would be mostly within larger scale, flatter arable landscapes. The Landscape Character of the study area is largely undulating, particularly in Mid Nottinghamshire Farmlands, this is recognised on Figure 7.2 Landscape and Topography and also shows that the arrays are on mid ground levels between 81-41m AOD.

8.12. Table 7.4 Embedded Enhancement Measures refers to the Circular Walk and that it comprises a mix of existing PRoW, diverted PRoW and permissive routes. Clarification is required on how the Circular Walk remains in place post decommissioning as these permissive routes will be closed.

8.13. Referencing 'Interpretation' the addition of interpretation that describes the solar farm itself is not considered to be an enhancement to the 'Cultural' aspects of the landscape value.

Assessment of Likely Landscape and Visual Effects

8.14. Overall, the Assessment process is clear and transparent and is supported by appropriate figures, appendices and makes reference to the applicable plans. Key points are set out below.

8.15. It is appropriate to consider the commissioning and decommissioning across multiple locations simultaneously, as set out in Paragraphs 7.7.2.103 and in 7.7.2.104, that there are three key stages of assessment, these being, Construction and early operation, Operation, and decommissioning and After decommissioning allowing for a 'worst case scenario' assessment at all stages. However, as raised previously, the replacement of the solar arrays is no considered in these phases.

8.16. NSDC agree the effects are permanent as they would last longer than 25 years as set out within Paragraph 7.7.3.106.

Changes on Landscape Fabric

8.17. Tree losses are set out in this section, 98 trees are affected by the works, 28 individual trees and 70 trees which are part of groups. 11 of these trees are Cat. A. Hedgerow losses amount to 1,308m of permanent hedgerow removals.

8.18. Compensation includes 31 ha of new woodland, 8.5ha of woodland pasture creation, 50km of species rich hedgerow creation and scattered individual trees.

8.19. It is judged that overall, these effects are not significant and that they will have an increasing benefit. This benefit is clear in terms of the landscape fabric in isolation.

ZTV

8.20. The methodology is acceptable, and the extent is agreed 'that visibility occurs within 1-2km of the solar panel areas.'

Landscape Assessment

8.21. Only Mid Nottinghamshire Farmlands/Village Farmlands with Ancient Woodlands receives a Major/Moderate and Adverse and Significant effect, as noted in the table below.

Landscape Character Area	**Construction and Early Operation**	**Operation and Decommissioning**	**Post Decommissioning**
Mid Nottinghamshire Farmlands/Village Farmlands with Ancient Woodlands	Major/Moderate and Adverse **Significant**	Major/Moderate and Adverse **Significant**	Minor and Neutral

8.22. The remaining LCAs, even those which include development, are not judged to receive significant effects, despite some of those effects being Moderate and adverse.

Visual Assessment

8.23. The following comments are made on the visual assessment, but exclude the points on cumulative effects, which are considered later. In this regard, Consultation has been open and responsive with regard to the viewpoint analysis. The views have been discussed, and further refinement has been done through the process to reflect consultee requests. Selected views represent the receptor groups and Figure 7.6 represents the scale of change along the PRoWs prior to mitigation, representing a range of visual receptors.

8.24. Table 7.5 sets out the Viewpoint Analysis Summary for non-negligible scale of effects. Section 7.7.10 sets out the Visual Effects across the Grouped Visual Receptors. The Visual Assessment s differs from the Landscape Assessment in that it sets Minor/Moderate as not significant, rather than potentially Moderate effects. This is confirmed in TA7.5.3.48. Where visual receptors are judged to experience Moderate effects, **at any phase**, these are considered significant. The summary of effects is presented in the table below.

Group	**Construction and Early Operation**	**Operation and Decommissioning**	**Post Decommissioning**
A – PRoW users	Major/Moderate and Adverse **Significant**	Major/Moderate and Adverse **Significant**	Moderate and adverse, Not significant
A – Road users	Minimal and Neutral	Minimal and Neutral	Minimal and Neutral
B – PRoW users	Major/Moderate and Adverse	Major/ Moderate and Adverse	Major/Moderate and Adverse

	Significant	**Significant**	Significant
B – Road users	Moderate and Adverse **Significant**	Minimal and Neutral	Minimal and Neutral
C – PRoW users	Moderate and Adverse **Significant** [13]	Major/ Moderate and Adverse **Significant** [14]	Moderate/Minor and adverse
C – Road users	Moderate and Adverse **Significant**	Minimal and Neutral	Minimal and Neutral
D – PRoW users	Major/Moderate and Adverse **Significant**	Major/Moderate and Adverse **Significant**	Moderate and Adverse Not Significant
D – Road users	Major/Moderate and Adverse **Significant**	Moderate and Adverse Not Significant	Moderate/Minor and Adverse Not Significant
E- PRoW users	Major/Moderate and Adverse **Significant**	Major/Moderate and Adverse **Significant**	Moderate and Adverse Not Significant
E – Road users	Moderate and Adverse Not Significant	Minor and Adverse Not Significant	Minimal and Neutral
F-PRoW users	Major/Moderate and Adverse **Significant**	Major/Moderate and Adverse **Significant**	Major/Moderate and Adverse **Significant**
F – Road users	Major/Moderate and Adverse **Significant**[15]	Moderate and Adverse Not Significant[16]	Minimal and Neutral

8.25. Effects on the following visual receptors are assessed to be not significant and Moderate/minor or less. They are summarised in TA A7.5 [EN010162/APP/6.4.7.5]:

- Kersall (0.1 km);
- A1 (0 km);
- A616 (0 km);
- A617 (0.3 km);
- East Coast Main Line railway (0 km); and
- Robin Hood Way (0.1 km).

8.26. Effects on the following visual receptors are assessed to be Negligible for the reasons described below or within TA A7.5 [EN010162/APP/6.4.7.5]:

[13] Effects on routes to the north Moderate/Minor and adverse
[14] Effects on routes to the north Minor and adverse
[15] In the southern part of this area Minor adverse and not significant
[16] In the southern part of this area Minimal neutral and not significant

- All visual receptors beyond 2 km, based on the geographic distribution of changes to views set out in section 7.7.8;
- Averham and Staythorpe (0.5 km);
- Cromwell (1.5 km);
- Eakring (0.2 km);
- Maplebeck (0.2 km);
- Group G: East of the A1 (0.0 km);
- Group H: Ossington to Cromwell and A616, including Norwell, Norwell Woodhouse and Caunton (0.2km);
- Group I: Hockerton, Upton, Staythorpe, Averham and Kelham (0.3 km);
- Group J: Between Hockerton and Eakring (0.5 km);
- Group K: Kneesall to Laxton and Egmanton (0.2 km);
- Recreational users of the River Trent (1.0 km), and
- Nottingham to Lincoln (Newark Castle) Railway (1.7 km).

Cumulative Effects

8.27. The ES Chapter sets out the consideration of cumulative effects in section 7.9 and these are further referenced within the associated Technical Appendix.

8.28. The Cumulative Assessment does not assess the wider impacts on Landscape Character and Visual Amenity, it focuses on the immediate landscape character of the scheme and the study area which is not a 'wrong' approach but given the extent of schemes now being consented and the increase in NSIPS in the examination stages, there is the requirement for the assessment to expand to regional level and consider the impacts of the proposals in combination with the identified schemes on the wider landscape area.

8.29. Renewable Energy is identified in the LCAs as having the potential to change the landscape character and previously it has been relatively well controlled so that the region's rural character, and the historic settlement pattern of small red brick villages, is still intact. However, this is now at risk.

8.30. Local NSIPS which have already tested, or are in the process of examining, the assessment of cumulative effects includes Tillbridge and One Earth, where it has been drawn to the attention of the ExA that multiple schemes collectively influence the perceived character, openness, and rural qualities of the landscape.

Summary and Conclusion

8.31. The Development would lead to Significant adverse effects on the landscape and visual amenity of the area across all the stages of the scheme (construction and early operation, operation and decommissioning and Post decommissioning) The scale of replacement of

the solar arrays has not been considered in the LVIA, although the Operation and Decommissioning stage is judge to have a Major/Moderate, adverse and significant effect.

8.32. The LVIA needs to be clear on the embedded mitigation the benefits of the scheme and how these can be managed post decommissioning to ensure that they are long lasting and genuine.

8.33. There is the potential for this Development to have an adverse and significant effect on the landscape resource at a regional scale, as it is cumulatively considered with a number of large NSIPs and consented schemes. Previous Developments have taken this approach, and a more strategic scale Cumulative Assessment is required. This is a rural agricultural landscape and the schemes in combination have the potential to permanently change the character of the immediate and wider landscape.

8.34. The scale and extent of the Development would also lead to Significant effects on views from large group of receptors across the scheme area, changing rural view through the introduction of the solar arrays. The LVIA does consider the 'sequential 'views at a Site level, however the cumulative impacts on receptors as they move through the landscape has not been assessed. The LVIA needs to address receptors on PRoWs and local roads, who are moving through this landscape across several kilometres.

Local Policy

8.35. 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.'*

8.36. 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.'*

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

8.38. Landscape Character Assessment Supplementary Planning Document 2013.[17]

8.39. 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.

8.40. 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.

8.41. 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

Methodology

9.1. The Ecological Impact Assessment methodology is presented section 8.4 of Chapter 8 of the ES and within the accompanying Technical Appendices. NSDC are of the opinion that the level of survey effort, survey methods and desk-study research undertaken to identify important habitats and establish the baseline biodiversity is broadly appropriate, however there are concerns that Chapter 8 does not sufficiently quantify baseline habitats, specifically the timing and survey effort and is currently under discussion. The applicant has committed to updating the baseline habitat surveys and condition assessments post-consent which is welcomed in this regard.

9.2. Section 8.4.2 describes the impact assessment methodology, which is based on the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA). The applicant has provided justification for deviating from the methodologies outlined in Chapter 2 of the ES for determining significant effects and for departing from the generic matrix. However, we remain concerned about the transparency of the process used to conclude that no significant effects occur for all key ecological receptors. Although Table 8.12 summarises the likely effects, the rationale for defining potential effects is not clearly presented.

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

Baseline Conditions

9.3. The existing ecological features identified during the desk study, consultations and field surveys are summarised with full details including survey methods and field survey results being provided in appendices (with the Badger elements within Appendix A8.10 and Schedule 1 Breeding Birds within Appendix A8.11 as confidential).

9.4. Although the ecology reports submitted in support of the DCO adhere to CIEEM guidelines, they provide limited information on the relevant expertise and qualifications of the competent experts involved in preparing the ES. This is particularly notable for the Modular River Physical (MoRPh) survey. Furthermore, the Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) technical appendix (A8.13) does not include baseline condition assessments, which are necessary to enable a transparent review of the baseline.

Construction Phase Impacts

9.5. The main impacts in relation to biodiversity would stem from the construction phase of the development.

Positive

9.6. NSDC have identified no positive impacts during this phase.

Neutral

9.7. A 'shadow' Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) has been submitted in support of the proposal. The HRA identifies the Birklands and Bilhaugh Special Area of Conservation (SAC) located approximately 7km to the northwest and Sherwood Forest possible potential Special Protection Area (ppSPA) situated approximately 4.5km to the west and northwest in relation to impacts. Although outside of the 'screening distance' the Humber Estuary SAC/Ramsar is also included. Loss, disturbance, and displacement of mobile species using Functionally Linked Land is identified for assessment and this is considered appropriate, as is hydrological connectivity and air quality impacts. Impacts on the above listed sites are ruled out in the assessment and this is agreed as appropriate and that an Appropriate Assessment is not required. As a result, NSDC agree that the scheme would not result in a likely significant effect on any European site either alone or in combination with other projects or plans.

9.8. No statutory designated sites fall within the Order Limits (OL) and eight Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) are located within the search area. Of these, three sites have been scoped into the assessment and potential impacts could include permanent habitat loss, temporary habitat loss as a result of disturbance, habitat fragmentation, habitat change and direct disturbance of fauna these sites support.

9.9. Mitigation for Eakring and Mapplebeck Meadows SSSI include work timings to avoid the breeding bird season, Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD) and dust and water pollution mitigation measures as detailed within the outline CEMP.

9.10. Embedded mitigation measures will ensure that construction works do not encroach into Mather Wood SSSI and proposed measures to avoid water pollution and mitigation potential surface water effects will reduce any potential harm to Laxon Sykes SSSI. All mitigation for statutory designated sites will be secured through Requirements 12 (CEMP) and 8 (LEMP) which is detailed within the outline documents provided.

9.11. A total of 16 non-statutory sites designated for biodiversity importance, all of which comprise Local Wildlife Sites (LWS), either fall within or border the OL. Additional LWS including Kersall Grassland LWS and Hunt's Meadow LWS and Coppice, Mather, and Lady Woods LWS have been scoped in due to their direct connectivity so Eakring and Maplebeck Meadows SSSI and Mather Wood SSSI, respectively. Likewise, mitigation will be secured through Requirements 12 (CEMP) and 8 (LEMP) which is detailed within the outline documents provided. This is to include HDD where Work no.2 cables intersect LWS, protective fencing, a minimum 15m buffer and new habitat creation complimentary to the existing habitats. As a result, NSDC are generally satisfied that sufficient information has been provided to conclude that there would be no potential for significant effects these or any more distant designation as a result of the Scheme.

9.12. Areas of Priority Habitat located within the OL that were identified through the desk study comprise Good Quality Semi-Improved Grassland, Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh (CFGM), Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland and Wood-pasture and Parkland. Through field surveys only the areas of deciduous woodland were considered to meet the Priority Habitat Criteria. The area of CFGM is located on the banks of the Mapplebeck and whilst it is anticipated that there would be no negative impact upon this habitat, NSDC have raised queries regarding the assessment process to determine ecological importance as set out within our Relevant Reps response.

9.13. It is anticipated that mitigation measures secured through Requirements 12 (CEMP) and 8 (LEMP) will minimise potential impacts on habitats. Nevertheless, NSDC has expressed concerns regarding the transparency of the assessment and does not consider that aggregating habitats identified as having the highest ecological value (broadleaved woodland, native hedgerows, rivers and streams and ponds) constitutes a robust methodology. However, issues relating to the evaluation of hedgerows have been satisfactorily resolved with the applicant, as documented within the draft Statement of Common Ground (SoCG).

9.14. There has been some discussion between NSDC and the Applicant regarding the adequacy of reptile survey effort. However, following the provision of further justification, the level of survey effort is considered acceptable, given the commitment to include Reasonable Avoidance Method Statements within the final CEMP.

9.15. Two of the proposed watercourse crossings have confirmed evidence of water vole, with a further five assessed as having optimal or good suitability for the species, and four crossings considered to provide suitable habitat for otter. The final locations of cable crossings will not be determined until the detailed design stage. The proposed design for new culverts is broadly acceptable and is appropriately secured through Requirement 12, along with pre-commencement checks for works affecting watercourses and their riparian zones. The use of HDD for major watercourse crossings is supported, as it will avoid impacts on these species. Where water vole presence has been confirmed, works will proceed under a CL31 displacement class licence. Overall, NSDC considers that impacts on water vole should be avoided; however, details regarding timing constraints for displacement under licence and the implementation of mitigation measures remain under discussion with the Applicant.

9.16. Badgers may be adversely impacted by the proposed development through loss of habitat in which to build setts, accidental direct harm during construction, disturbance by vehicles and personnel or the compaction of soil around setts. Appropriate development free buffer zones around all known setts according to their status have been designed into the scheme and pre-construction surveys are secured through the oCEMP. Connectivity is to be maintained through the development by delivering mammal access points within the fencing.

Neutral

9.17. Although most baseline habitats are of relatively low biodiversity value and the development has potential to deliver biodiversity enhancements, NSDC has raised concerns regarding the methodology used to quantify existing habitat value, as outlined in the Relevant Representations. Habitats may have been undervalued within the BNG assessment due to limited sampling of areas of higher ecological importance, such as Lowland Mixed Deciduous Priority Habitat and semi-improved neutral grassland. Furthermore, no consideration appears to have been given to whether arable margins qualify as Priority Habitats, despite the presence of rare and scarce arable plants identified in the desk study. Arable field margins, together with the hedgerow and ditch network, represent the primary sources of wildlife value within the Scheme, and their loss would therefore be significant.

9.18. A total of 33 track/road watercourse crossings and 34 fence crossings are proposed across the OL. Whilst clear span bridges have been prioritised over culverts where possible and it is acknowledged that final designs will be confirmed following granting of the DCO, there is uncertainty around how associated encroachment levels have been assessed within the context of the BNG assessment and is under further discussion to establish whether the assessment is precautionary enough.

9.19. The value of watercourses within the OL may also have been underestimated within the context of the BNG assessment. In particular there is a low sampling rate for ditches

which the applicant has justified due to changes in the OL during the design process. Once fully assess it is considered that it will be difficult to meet a 10% uplift in watercourse units on-site.

9.20. The Council's Relevant Representations also raised concerns regarding veteran trees. Chapter 8 does not identify any veteran trees, whereas Technical Appendix A8.12 (Arboricultural Report) states in section 8.12.6 that nine trees were classified as veterans, with additional trees listed in Appendix D as exhibiting veteran features. Confirmation has been requested on whether any mature trees are considered veteran under the UKHabitat classification system and how these receptors will be addressed. At present, insufficient information has been provided to demonstrate that all veteran trees will be protected throughout the lifetime of the development or that the scheme will comply with local planning policy requirements in this regard. Securing this commitment during construction is essential to achieving Biodiversity Net Gain as veteran trees represent irreplaceable habitat.

9.21. Great crested newt (GCN) has been confirmed to be present within ponds within the south-western extent of the OL. As outlined within the Council's Relevant Representations, concerns have been raised regarding uncertainty as to whether impacts upon GCN have been adequately addressed. Given the design of the proposal, NSDC agree that no breeding ponds would be lost to the scheme, however potential impacts to habitat connectivity and fragmentation have not been thoroughly considered and could impact on meta-populations.

9.22. Accidental damage or pollution events during construction could degrade the hedgerow and watercourse network leading to localised, temporary adverse reductions in habitat quality for foraging bats.

9.23. Whilst Chapter 8 and the oCEMP and ooCEMP do have regard to lighting impacts in relation to bats and other nocturnal fauna, these considerations are insufficient with respect to light-sensitive species, particularly barbastelle. This species is particularly important within the Newark and Sherwood District being at the northern extent of its known range in Nottinghamshire and is vulnerable to large scale infrastructure schemes.

9.24. The introduction of tall structures and associated equipment into arable fields is expected to substantially, and potentially entirely, displace nesting birds. Certain species, such as yellow wagtail, may be less affected due to their ability to nest in taller vegetation and tolerate reduced visibility. This displacement is likely to persist for the duration of the project, potentially fragmenting local bird populations and increasing competition within adjacent arable and grassland habitats, which may already be close to their ecological capacity. Population dynamics of species such as skylark, yellow wagtail, and grey partridge are anticipated to be moderately adversely affected at a Local, and possibly District, level (though not at County level) in the absence of mitigation. While embedded mitigation is proposed, clarity is lacking on how measures

such as skylark plots will be secured and whether features like beetle banks will remain post-decommissioning. Although a worst-case scenario has been assessed, additional provision within Works 1 areas is unlikely to create suitable breeding habitat for skylarks due to their requirement for long, uninterrupted sightlines. The presence of solar PV panels reduces landscape openness, diminishing its suitability for skylark nesting due to increased predation risk. Furthermore, the revised OL offers less enhanced arable land compared to the Preliminary Ecological Impact Report (PIER). Monitoring is included within the oLEMP; however, no triggers have been defined to indicate when remedial action should be implemented.

9.25. The potential extent and severity of impacts on overwintering birds are largely dependent on the timing of construction activities. Given the anticipated 24-month build programme, some works during winter are likely unavoidable. As a result, there remains a risk that flocks of wading birds, such as golden plover and lapwing, may be deterred from using parts of the Works Areas 1 & 2 they would ordinarily visit for foraging and shelter. However, considering the substantial availability of similar open habitats nearby, and the fact that habitats within the OL were not assessed as being of elevated importance or functionally linked to designated bird conservation sites, this impact is considered minor. This is particularly relevant as no permanent construction activities will occur within the south-eastern fields of the OL, where the majority of flocking wader and waterfowl species were recorded near the River Trent corridor. Nonetheless, disturbance and displacement risks remain in this location should cabling works occur during winter months.

Operational Phase Impacts

Positive

9.26. Water quality in ditches and other watercourses within the OL is expected to improve after development. This improvement is linked to the planned establishment of permanent grassland beneath the solar PV panels, which will help reduce sediment runoff, and the cessation of fertiliser and pesticide application. Similarly, the halt in agricultural activities is also likely to enhance water quality in existing ponds within the OL.

9.27. The shift away from intensive arable farming, particularly the discontinuation of insecticide use, and the conversion of land to permanent grassland for the lifespan of the solar array are expected to enhance both the diversity and abundance of invertebrates across the site.

9.28. Further positive effects are expected from the enhanced ability of the newly established and managed grasslands, along with other forb-rich habitats, to support a larger abundance invertebrates compared to arable land. These habitats will cover most of the OL, including areas beneath the solar PVs and within buffer zones and easements and

dedicated biodiversity mitigation areas. This is likely to boost the availability, variety, and productivity of foraging resources for a range of faunal species.

BNG

9.29. Although delivering a 10% uplift in Biodiversity Net Gain is not currently mandatory for NSIPs, the Statutory Biodiversity Metric (SBM) has been applied to calculate net gains for the Scheme, as detailed in Appendix 8.13. The BNG mitigation hierarchy has been adhered to, prioritising the avoidance of high- and medium-distinctiveness habitat types wherever possible, and a precautionary approach has been adopted.

9.30. Whilst in principle matters relating to biodiversity net gain are likely attributed with having a positive impact on the local area, NSDC has provided the applicant with detailed feedback on the BNG assessment as detailed within our Relevant Representations.

9.31. The level of detail is sufficient to understand what is being offered in broad terms but it does not constitute a full specification suitable to set terms of reference for agreement of the detailed plan later as a Requirement. Whilst the quantum of BNG to be achieved is likely to over 10% in all three habitat categories (habitat areas, hedgerows, and watercourses), this cannot be confirmed until adequate information is provided to verify the Applicant's BNG calculations. Further justification is required for the condition scores assigned to both baseline and proposed habitats, including enhancements to major watercourses within the OL, which currently rely on reduced encroachment and increased strategic significance rather than improvements to watercourse condition.

9.32. NSDC has also raised concerns regarding the classification of habitat beneath solar panels, as noted in the Council's Relevant Representation. However, the Council acknowledges that conversion of cropland to grassland will deliver a significant gain regardless of calculation method. Areas of concern include the absence of supporting soil tests to confirm nutrient indices for establishing species-rich grassland.

9.33. Furthermore, NSDC would welcome continued discussion and consultation on opportunities to deliver additional green corridors and connectivity to off-site Priority Habitats. Despite these concerns, the Scheme is expected to deliver positive outcomes overall and align with national and local policy objectives.

Neutral

9.34. Operational impacts are anticipated to be minimal, as vehicle access will be infrequent and controlled, with no expected requirement to enter watercourses or ditches during array operation. This significantly reduces the potential for disturbance, pollution, or physical damage.

9.35. It is acknowledged that predicting long-term effects of solar farms on bat populations remains challenging, as large-scale solar installations have not been routinely monitored for such impacts. While some studies indicate potential adverse effects on the abundance of certain bat species following Solar PV installation, these effects are not considered significant. This is due to the habitat creation and enhancement measures proposed, which are expected to deliver overall improvements to bat foraging and commuting habitats once established. The oCEMP includes provisions for pre-construction surveys to assess trees for potential bat roosts and to identify any necessary mitigation measures.

Negative

9.36. There is a potential risk of pond damage if sheep are used for post-construction grazing, as trampling may degrade pond habitats, harm adjacent vegetation, and increase suspended sediment levels in the water.

9.37. Given the scale of the project, there are opportunities to deliver innovative biodiversity enhancements that extend beyond simply maximising percentage Biodiversity Net Gain. While current proposals indicate the creation of species-rich grassland and wood pasture, achieving a minimum uplift of 60% in habitat units and an 11% increase in watercourse units, there remains scope for greater alignment with local nature conservation priorities. Potential missed opportunities include the creation or restoration of coastal floodplain grazing marsh and the enhancement of watercourses within the OL through in-channel improvements and riparian habitat enhancement.

Decommissioning Impacts

9.38. Activities relating to the removal of solar panel frames, some underground cabling, fencing and gates, some substations and concrete footings, some access tracks/roads and energy storage would be expected to have similar (or no worse) direct effects as those described in the construction phase impacts for each receptor. Comparable levels of disturbance from movement of vehicles and personnel would be expected.

Positive

9.39. Returning the land to open arable use could benefit certain farmland bird species that rely on clear sightlines, as well as plant species typically found along arable field margins. However, this potential benefit is uncertain at this stage and would depend on the implementation of a detailed decommissioning plan, of which has not yet been established.

Neutral

9.40. Depending on the ecological value of the habitats that develop over the lifespan of the scheme, it is realistic that certain areas of the site will be retained due to their value for

wildlife on decommissioning. Further surveys to identify the use of the newly created habitats by these receptors would therefore also be expected as a minimum.

Negative

9.41. Habitats created on former arable land are likely to be returned to their former land use, resulting in permanent habitat loss. This is most likely to constitute a loss of species-rich grassland. However, depending on the biodiversity value of these new habitats, this may not constitute a significant negative impact, as BNG requirements will have been met before decommissioning. Returning the land to arable production would likely involve increased pesticide and herbicide use, which are linked to biodiversity decline.

9.42. Based upon the baseline data, protected species which could be directly impacted by decommissioning activities could include badgers, water vole, otter, reptiles (grass snake), great crested newt and breeding birds.

Cumulative Impacts

9.43. The impacts of major solar farm developments should not be assessed in isolation. Proposals must be considered in the context of other similar schemes—whether consented, under construction, or operational—both within the District and in adjacent areas, to fully understand their cumulative effects. Cumulative impacts in relation to IEFs are assessed within section 8.9 of Chapter 8, though it is noted that the One Earth scheme has not been included within Table 8.11. NSDC consider this an omission given it had been identified to progress to stage 3 & 4 within the Cumulative Assessment Stages 1 and 2 technical appendix (TA A2.1). The Scheme will be a significant feature in the landscape with extensive landscape scale conversion of arable farmland to grassland and other habitats and this cumulative habitat loss should be further examined in terms of its specific biodiversity features of interest, in particular for farmland birds.

9.44. For the schemes that have been evaluated all environmental aspects have been considered and no significant effects are predicted on the receptors identified given mitigation proposed for this development and likely standard / good practice mitigation proposed for the other sites. Assuming that proposed mitigation for this proposal is adequately secured in the DCO, the Council agrees with the applicant's conclusions in relation to cumulative effects on ecology for the majority of the receptors assessed.

9.45. Ground-nesting birds are likely to experience displacement from each proposed project because solar infrastructure conflicts with the long, uninterrupted sightlines these species need to detect predators while nesting. The extent of negative impact will depend on the mitigation measures implemented by each scheme and the degree of spatial and temporal overlap. Therefore, if similar or less effective mitigation is applied, there is a potential for a moderate cumulative adverse effect on skylark populations at a local, and possibly district, scale. Comparable impacts may also occur for yellow wagtail

and grey partridge, as these species are likewise ground-nesting and could be displaced to varying degrees during the breeding season.

Required Mitigation

9.46. The mitigation hierarchy, as dealt with in the EN-1, includes avoidance as part of the Design stage. This is evidenced separately within Chapter 4, where the scheme design was revised in response to ecological assessments to avoid Priority Habitats as far as possible and minimize areas of potentially significant impact and in this respect complies with local policy.

9.47. Mitigation and compensation have been considered and are dealt with in varying levels of detail. The outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (oLEMP) outlines some initial planting guidelines; however, there are few details regarding remedial measures required with regards to existing nutrient levels and no consideration of soil nutrient analysis. There are also minor discrepancies within habitat areas/lengths referenced between the oLEMP and the BNG assessment report and those inputted into the SBM. The guidance needs to be firmed up within the final LEMP in order to be assured that the enhancement proposed are likely to be successful and to create the screening required to lower the visual impact to surrounding sensitive landscape from the proposed Solar Farm and to ensure mitigation for farmland birds and BNG is delivered.

9.48. An outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (oCEMP) and outline Operational environmental Management Plan (ooCEMP) have been produced to detail construction and operational mitigation measures. An outline Decommission Management Plan also details mitigation measures for this later stage of the Scheme. The outlined plans are considered applicable and proportionate to the Scheme, though detailed feedback to address inconsistencies has been provided to the Applicant to incorporate into the final versions.

Local Planning Policy

9.49. 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.'*

9.50. Nottinghamshire is losing its wild species and habitats at an alarming rate (Nottinghamshire Local Biodiversity Action Plan). Nature is being increasing confined to small, fragmented areas with little or no connectivity.

9.51. 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.

9.52. 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

9.53. 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 (ADMDPD) Policy DM5 Design

9.54. 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."

ADMDPD Policy DM7 Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure

9.55. 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.'

9.56. The collective policies as reviewed above seek to protect biodiversity assets within the district, alongside promoting biodiversity enhancement. Whilst the latter is likely, given the proposals for Biodiversity Net Gain associated with the proposed development, in respect of impacts upon existing biodiversity, it is considered that through an appropriate level of mitigation to be agreed with NSDC, impacts are anticipated as being neutral.

Arboriculture – Neutral/Negative

Assessment Methodology

9.57. 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.'*

9.58. 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

9.59. 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.

9.60. 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.

9.61. 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.

9.62. 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

9.63. 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

9.64. 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.*

9.65. 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 as 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 Contmainaiton, 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 soli 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. 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 – Negative to Neutral

Assessment of significance

14.1. There are twenty-four heritage assets that have been identified as significant and that will be impacted by the proposed Great North Road Biodiversity Solar Park within the NSDC area. The Nottinghamshire County Council Historic Environment Record (HER) and Historic England National Heritage List has been used to cross reference the thirteen heritage assets scoped in for assessment as potentially sensitive receptors (*Chapter 11 – Cultural Heritage and Archaeology of the Environmental Statement*). Eleven additional

heritage assets have been included (with some of these assets being grouped together), as there is the potential for the proposal to impact their setting and it has been considered that clear and convincing justification for scoping out these assets has not been provided.

14.2. The heritage assets with the most likelihood of being directly impacted are Maplebeck Conservation Area, Kersall Conservation Area and Averham park and garden, the Park at Carlton Hall and the Park at Ossington Hall. (Non-Designated Heritage Assets). Part of the Maplebeck is situated within the order limits of the proposal. There are five listed buildings within Maplebeck, one being a Grade I listed Church. The proposed solar arrays would lie adjacent to Kersall, and part of the solar arrays will lie within the boundary of Averham park and garden, the Park at Carlton Hall and the Park at Ossington Hall. Four of the additional heritage assets (numbers 14-17) are located further away from the other heritage assets listed, and are all Grade II, with one Non-Designated Heritage Asset.

14.3. There are eleven heritage assets in *Chapter 11 of the Environmental Statement* (page 85) which have been identified as being located within close proximity to construction access. There would be no direct impact on these assets, and due to the temporary nature of the works, these have not been included in this assessment.

Impact

14.4. There are twenty-four heritage assets that have been identified (as indicated below), which are within proximity to the order limits boundary and would be impacted by the proposal. The heritage assets listed from 14 to 24 are comprised of the eleven heritage assets which have been added to the list of heritage assets scoped in for assessment in *Chapter 11*.

1. **Maplebeck Conservation Area;**
2. **Eakring Conservation Area;**
3. **Kersall Conservation Area;**
4. **Kelham Conservation Area;**
5. **Settlement W of Cromwell Village Scheduled Monument (1013490);**
6. **Willoughby Deserted Medieval Village Scheduled Monument (1013884);**
7. **Civil War Landscape and Scheduled Monuments;**
8. **Kelham Lodge Farmhouse Grade II (1370135);**
9. **Averham Park House Grade II* (1046003);**
10. **South Farm Grade II (1046004);**
11. **Grange Farm House Grade II (1046010);**
12. **North Park House Grade II (1179405);**
13. **Moorhouse Chapel Grade II* (1045631);**
14. **Church Farmhouse Grade II (1045632);**
15. **Park Lidget Grade II (1045962);**
16. **Beesthorpe Hall, Stable and parkland Grade II (1045977 and 1045978);**

17. **Edgefield House Hotel and Boundary Wall Grade II (1369986); and Coach house and wall at Edgefield House Hotel Grade II (1045947);**
18. **Rufford Abbey Park and Garden Grade II (1001085);**
19. **Thurgarton Hundred Workhouse (Grade II *) (1001591)**
20. **Newark Castle Gardens (Grade II) (1001318);**
21. **Park at Carlton Hall (Non-Designated Heritage Asset);**
22. **Park at Ossington Hall (Non-Designated Heritage Asset);**
23. **Winkburn Park (Non-Designated Heritage Asset);**
24. **Park at Kelham Hall (Non-Designated Heritage Asset).**

14.5. With close reference to section 212 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), considering potential impacts, it is noted that greater weight to the asset should be given the higher the listing status and its conservation irrespective of level of harm.

Assessment of impact on each heritage asset identified and mitigation measures

1. Maplebeck Conservation Area

Impact of Proposal

Maplebeck's Conservation Area (CA) is notable for its compact village form and strong sense of enclosure created by mature trees and boundary walls. Key features include the Grade I St. Radegund's Church (1045596), Grade II Maplebeck House (1045597), Grade II Maplebeck Farmhouse (1370160), Grade II Low Farmhouse (1370159), and a Grade II listed telephone kiosk (1396379). The prevailing vernacular comprises traditional cottages and farmhouses, typically constructed in brick and stone. The surrounding farmland and wooded slopes enhance the rural, tranquil setting. Conservation priorities include preserving original materials, protecting views across open countryside, and managing modern interventions sensitively.

The order limits encircle the CA and extend slightly within the edges at the north-eastern and western boundaries. Proposals to the north and south of the CA would comprise of cable routes only, with the solar array areas proposed 650m to the north, 300m to the south-east, and 400m to the west. It is stated in the assessment of the CA within *Chapter 11* that the 'assets within the Conservation Area do not derive their significance from the wider surroundings'. However, the views into and out of the CA contribute to the character and appearance of the CA and the setting of its heritage assets. It is noted that the topography of this area will limit some views, and a viewpoint (*Viewpoint 5*) is to be provided. The predicted changes note that there will be views of solar PV areas on the skyline to the north-east.

Recommended Mitigation

It has already been proposed to implement mitigation measures between the CA boundary and the PV array areas, although details of the mitigation have yet to be provided. It is noted in *Viewpoint 5* that mitigation planting around the solar PV areas

would screen the edges of the Solar PV areas, although views of the panels would remain visible along the skyline to the north-east. We would recommend that in areas where the use of planting would not conceal the solar panels, that the panels are removed from these areas. Increased planting of trees and hedgerows would be recommended to mitigate the impact as much as possible.

2. Eakring Conservation Area

Impact of Proposal

Eakring's Conservation Area (CA) reflects its medieval origins, with a distinctive street pattern and sunken lanes that define the village core. The Grade II* St. Andrew's Church (1370132), dating from the 15th century, anchors the settlement, while traditional brick cottages and farmhouses contribute to its rural character. The surrounding landscape of rolling hills and open fields enhances the area's setting. There are six Grade II Listed Buildings, comprised of farmhouses, cottages, a windmill, and a war memorial. Conservation efforts prioritise retaining original building forms, safeguarding views, and managing development to respect the village's heritage. Eakring remains a tranquil settlement with deep historical roots. Key views are from the north and north-east of the CA, where there is a rise in topography.

The nearest point of the order limits is proposed to be 270m from the east of the CA boundary, there is a proposed buffer of at least 250m between the CA and the solar array. Due to proximity, there would be glimpsed views of the solar arrays.

Recommended Mitigation

It is noted that there is an existing tree belt which limits views from the eastern edge and the rise in topography limits views. Additional screening in the form of trees and hedgerows should be implemented, particularly where planting is not already in place.

3. Kersall Conservation Area

Impact of Proposal

Kersall's Conservation Area (CA) reflects its agricultural heritage, with scattered farmsteads and cottages grouped around narrow lanes. The rural setting is reinforced by open fields, mature hedgerows, and woodland on higher ground. Conservation priorities include retaining original building forms, protecting views across farmland, and managing change to maintain the village's sense of place. Kersall exemplifies NSDC's commitment to preserving its historic rural landscapes.

The proposed solar arrays will lie adjacent to the eastern edge of the CA, there would be views of the solar PV areas which would impact the wider open rural setting of the CA.

Recommended Mitigation

It is acknowledged that mitigation measures are proposed, although it is noted in *Viewpoint 6* and *Viewpoint 7* that the solar array areas would still be visible once the proposed mitigation measures are in place. We would suggest that adequate planting is used to mitigate the visual impact as much possible. Where mitigation cannot screen the proposed solar PV areas, the panels should not be implemented/should be reduced.

4. Kelham Conservation Area

Impact of Proposal

Kelham's Conservation Area (CA) is dominated by the Grade I Kelham Hall, a Victorian country house of exceptional architectural interest, set within landscaped parkland. The village core includes traditional cottages, farmhouses, and the Grade I St. Wilfrid's Church, all arranged along narrow lanes. Mature trees and open spaces enhance the setting, while views across the Trent Valley add scenic value. Conservation objectives focus on preserving the hall and its associated buildings/structures within its grounds, safeguarding historic street patterns, and managing development sensitively.

The order limits are proposed 30m from the northernmost extent of the CA boundary, with a BESS area proposed 500m to the west of the CA. It is noted that the BESS will not be appreciable from the historic core of the CA.

Recommended Mitigation

Ensure that trees and hedgerows are used to mitigate visual impact, particularly around Kelham Hall and its associated grounds. Further details of this mitigation should be provided.

5. Settlement W of Cromwell Village Scheduled Monument (1013490)

Impact of Proposal

This Scheduled Monument consists of buried archaeological remains with no surface expression. The nearest proposed PV solar array is located 1.3km north-west of the Scheduled Monument.

Recommended Mitigation

This heritage asset should be considered as part of archaeological assessment rather than built heritage.

6. Willoughby Deserted Medieval Village Scheduled Monument (1013884)

Impact of Proposal

The Scheduled Monument is comprised of visible earthworks and is considered to be of archaeological significance. There is proposed to be PV arrays within close proximity to the asset.

Recommended Mitigation

This heritage asset should be considered as part of archaeological assessment rather than built heritage.

7. Civil War Landscape and Scheduled Monuments

Impact of Proposal

The Scheduled Monument comprises of earthworks associated with the Civil War defences, which is of historic and archaeological interest. The nearest PV arrays are proposed 2km away from the asset and cable routes will avoid direct impact to the Monument.

Recommended Mitigation

This heritage asset should be considered as part of archaeological assessment rather than built heritage.

8. Kelham Lodge Farmhouse (1370135)

Impact of Proposal

The Grade II listed farmhouse dates to the latter half of the 18th Century. The setting has historically been formed of agricultural land, associated with its historic use as a farmhouse. The order limits lie immediately east, approximately 100m beyond the A616. A proposed area of Solar PV arrays is proposed 600m south of the asset. Where the A616 dissects the wider landscape, there are hedgerows which are proposed to limit visibility, and this modern intervention has already altered the agricultural setting. However, there will still be glimpsed views of the arrays at a distance. As such, there would be a visual impact to the setting of the asset.

Recommended Mitigation

We would suggest increasing planting of trees/hedgerows to prevent visual impact.

9. Averham Park House (1046003)

Impact of Proposal

The Grade II* Listed Building dates to the 18th Century and sits within the Averham Park Unregistered Park and Garden (Nottinghamshire HER ref: MNT26653), a Non-Designated Heritage Asset. Formerly, the park and garden would have made a larger contribution to the significance of the asset (house), but given its current agricultural use, it no longer has a functional relationship with the former hunting lodge. The nearest solar array is proposed to be located 400m north-west of the Listed Building, but solar arrays will sit within the northern and north-west boundary of the park and garden itself. Therefore,

the proposal would have a direct impact to the significance of the Non-Designated Heritage Asset.

Recommended Mitigation

The impact of the proposal on the Non-Designated Heritage Asset needs to be considered. We would suggest that solar panels within the boundary of the park and garden are removed and screening through trees and hedgerows are used along the northern and north-west boundary of the park and garden to reduce the visual impact.

10. South Farm (1046004)

Impact of Proposal

The Grade II farmhouse dates to c.1720 and was formerly connected to Averham Park (1046003) through a cellar at the east end and sits within the Averham Park park and garden. The closest part of the order limit is 220m from the asset and the nearest solar arrays are proposed 400m to the north-west.

Recommended Mitigation

As discussed in the recommended mitigation for Averham Park House, the impact of the proposal on the Non-Designated Heritage Asset needs to be considered. We would suggest that solar panels within the boundary of the park and garden are removed and screening through trees and hedgerows are used along the northern and north-west boundary of the park and garden to reduce the visual impact.

11. Grange Farm House (1046010)

Impact of Proposal

The Grade II listed farmhouse originally dates to the 16th Century, with a 19th Century service addition. The nearest part of the order limits is proposed 360m south-east of the asset, with no proposed solar arrays within the vicinity.

Recommended Mitigation

None would be required for this heritage asset.

12. North Park Farmhouse (1179405)

Impact of Proposal

The Grade II farmhouse and adjoining farm buildings dates to the 18th Century. The closest part of the order limits is located 30m from the asset, which will provide access and cable routes. The nearest solar arrays are proposed 120m to the west of the asset.

Recommended Mitigation

It is acknowledged that an area of mitigation/enhancement is proposed to run between Moorhouse Road and the start of the array area, with planting to screen the panels from view. The use of screening through planting is encouraged.

13. Moorhouse Chapel (1045631)

Impact of Proposal

The Grade II* chapel was constructed in 1860 in a French Gothic Revival style. The chapel is located 100m from the proposed order limits, which will form an access route. *Chapter 11* notes that the nearest PV array area will be located approximately 500m to the east of the heritage asset. It is acknowledged that there are existing hedgerows which will partially screen the proposed solar arrays, although they will still be visible.

Recommended Mitigation

Further consideration should be afforded to how the proposed development impacts on the setting of this important heritage asset. Planting more trees and hedging to further screen views onto the site would further protect the setting of the heritage asset.

14. Church Farmhouse (1045632)

Impact of Proposal

The Grade II listed farmhouse dates to the early 18th Century. The setting has historically been formed of agricultural land, associated with its historic use as a farmhouse. This contributes to its historic significance. While it is acknowledged that the order limits would be approximately 50m away and the closest panels would be over 520m from the site – thus not encroaching on the immediate setting - we would wish to ensure that any potential visual impact is mitigated. Clear and convincing justification has not been provided for scoping out this asset from further assessment.

Recommended Mitigation

We would recommend that the visual impact of the proposal on this heritage asset is assessed fully and would suggest that any visibility is mitigated through the planting of trees and hedgerows.

15. Park Lidget (1045962)

Impact of Proposal

The Grade II farmhouse dates to the 18th Century. The surrounding agricultural land, which has been present throughout the history of the farmhouse, contributes to its historic significance. The order limits are located 513m away and may not directly affect the heritage asset, however, there is the potential for visual impact.

Recommended Mitigation

We would require clear and convincing justification for scoping out further assessment of this heritage asset, as there is the potential for the proposal to impact its setting. We would suggest that any visual impact is mitigated through the planting of trees and hedgerows.

16. Beesthorpe Hall, Stable and parkland (1045977 and 1045978)

Impact of Proposal

The Grade II Beesthorpe Hall and Attached Cottage dates to the 17th Century and the Grade II Stables were a later addition constructed in the 18th Century. These Listed Buildings also form part of the significance of the surrounding parkland, a Non-Designated Heritage Asset (Nottinghamshire HER ref: MNT26658). The key setting that contributes to these assets is the immediate surrounding grounds, however, the wider agricultural setting which was present throughout the history of the heritage assets, also contributes to their historic significance. The proposed solar panels have the potential to be visible to the north-west and south-west of these heritage assets.

Recommended Mitigation

It is noted that it is proposed, as part of the *Landscape Masterplan* (Figure 5.2), to include a hedge/tree belt along the boundary of the order limits at the south-west, which would help to mitigate the potential visual impact. However, we also would suggest adding additional screening of trees and hedgerows along the boundary of the Order Limits surrounding the proposed solar panels located north-west of the site. We would also suggest a more detailed assessment of the heritage assets would be required to determine the impact and whether the mitigation measures proposed would be sufficient.

17. Edgefield House Hotel and Boundary Wall (1369986) and Coach house and wall at Edgefield House Hotel (1045947)

Impact of Proposal

These Grade II Listed Buildings date to c.1863 and have a group value. The order limits are located 48m from the heritage asset and the proposed solar arrays are 350m north of the heritage assets, as such, there is the potential for impact to the setting of these Listed Buildings.

Recommended Mitigation

We would suggest that further assessment of the potential impact of the proposal on the heritage assets is conducted.

Impact on Registered Parks and Gardens

The Environmental Statement Volume 4 – Technical Appendices (Technical AppendixA11.2: Settings and Assessment Scoping Exercise (Doc Ref: EN010162/APP.6.4.11.2 Rev No 1 June 2025) identifies 1 Grade II Registered Park and Garden within 2km of Order Limits

18. Rufford Abbey (Grade II) (1001085)

Impact of Proposal

The Order Limit is 2km from the boundary of the RPG and no assessment has been made on the impact of the proposals on the RPG that is outside the immediate surroundings of the Abbey. This needs to be provided so that the long distance visual impacts can be accurately assessed.

Recommended Mitigation

We would require clear and convincing justification for scoping out further assessment of this heritage asset, as there is the potential for the proposal to impact its setting. We would suggest that any visual impact is mitigated through the planting of trees and hedgerows.

The Environmental Statement Volume 4 – Technical Appendices (Technical AppendixA11.2: Settings and Assessment Scoping Exercise (Doc Ref: EN010162/APP.6.4.11.2 Rev No 1 June 2025) identifies 1 Grade II* and 1 Grade II Registered Park and Garden within 2-5km of Order Limits

19. **The above document scoped out the impact of the proposal on Thurgarton Hundred Workhouse (Grade II *) (1001591)** - distance of Greet House from Order Limits 2.27km.

Impact of Proposal

The proposals do not form part of the surroundings within which this RPG can be experienced and therefore change within the Order Limits will not alter the ways in which the significance of this asset is experienced or appreciated.

Recommended Mitigation

None.

20. **The above document scoped out the impact of the proposal on Newark Castle Gardens (Grade II) (1001318)** - distance of Newark Castle from Order Limits 2.9km

Impact of Proposal

The Order Limit is situated 2.9km from this RPG and with modern development between the RPG and the surrounding landscape. The areas closest to the RPG are proposed for cable routes and impacts from these elements will not result in the setting of the RPG being altered on a permanent basis. However, there is an external viewing platform is currently being constructed on the top of Newark Castle that will allow up to 30 people at a time to enjoy much longer distance views over the surrounding countryside. The impact of the solar panels themselves on this view and experience of the castle has not been assessed and is required to be assessed.

Recommended Mitigation

We would require clear and convincing justification for scoping out further assessment of this heritage asset, as there is the potential for the proposal to impact its setting in long distance views from the asset and would detract from its experience and enjoyment. We would suggest that any visual impact is mitigated through the planting of trees and hedgerows.

Impact on Historic Landscapes and Historic Park and Gardens (Averham Park and Beesthorpe Park have been considered above)

21. Park at Carlton Hall (Non-Designated Heritage Asset)

Impact of Proposal

The proposal sits within Field Nos. 59, 61-63 which are situated within the boundary of this Park. The designed landscape forms an integral part of the heritage of Newark and Sherwood. Therefore, the proposal would have a direct impact to the significance of the Non-Designated Heritage Asset.

Recommended Mitigation

The impact of the proposal on the Non-Designated Heritage Asset needs to be considered. We would suggest that solar panels within the boundary of the park and garden are removed and screening through trees and hedgerows are used along the appropriate boundaries of the park and garden to reduce the visual impact.

22. Park at Ossington Hall (Non-Designated Heritage Asset)

Impact of Proposal

The proposal sits within Field Nos. 24, 25, 28-30 and 36 which are situated within the boundary of this Park. The designed landscape forms an integral part of the heritage of Newark and Sherwood. Therefore, the proposal would have a direct impact to the significance of the Non-Designated Heritage Asset.

Recommended Mitigation

The impact of the proposal on the Non-Designated Heritage Asset needs to be considered. We would suggest that solar panels within the boundary of the park and garden are removed and screening through trees and hedgerows are used along the appropriate boundaries of the park and garden to reduce the visual impact.

23. Winkburn Park (Non-Designated Heritage Asset)

Impact of Proposal

Although Figure 11.1.2 does not yet identify the boundary of Winkburn Park, within Ref 2.7.7 of the Draft Statement of Common Ground (Doc Ref: - EN10162/APP/8.2 Rev No 2 dated November 2025) it states that this Park has been excluded from further assessment as the setting of the asset does not extend to the Order Limit. However, this information has not been presented spatially as yet and without this information it is not possible to accurately assess the impact of the proposal on the Park accurately or provide comment on whether mitigation works would be required, at this stage.

24. Park at Kelham Hall (Non-Designated Heritage Asset)

Impact of Proposal

Within Ref 2.7.7 of the Draft Statement of Common Ground (Doc Ref:- EN10162/APP/8.2 Rev No 2 dated November 2025) it states the impact of the proposal on the setting of this historic Park is still under discussion between the Applicant and NSDC. Once this is completed, consideration can be given as to whether mitigation would successfully deal with impacts.

Summary and Conclusions

The most impacted heritage assets are Maplebeck Conservation Area, Kersall Conservation Area, Averham Park park and garden, Park at Carlton Hall and Park at Ossington Hall. In these areas, we would suggest that areas of the proposed solar arrays are removed or reduced, to limit the direct impact to the heritage assets. Other heritage assets, as noted above, require additional assessment to ensure that the impact of the proposal on the assets has been fully considered. Whilst mitigation measures were noted in *Chapter 11*, and the *Landscape Masterplan* (Figure 5.2) has depicted that trees and hedges would be utilised to reduce the visual impact on heritage assets, we would recommend additional screening and planting measures. Although the current mitigation measures may be appropriate for certain assets, if further information has been provided on the impacts upon these assets.

Local Policy

14.6. 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 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.