

Appendix 15.2: Consultation

This appendix presents a full summary of consultation undertaken to date, including scoping comments.

Consultation Undertaken to Date

Consultation will be ongoing throughout the preparation of the DCO application; to date, it can broadly be divided into the following key stages:

- EIA Scoping;
- Early Non-Statutory Consultation; and
- Direct Topic-Specific Consultation.

Table 1 provides a summary of the consultation activities undertaken in support of the preparation of the Socio-economic Chapter.

Table 1 – Summary of Consultation Undertaken to Date

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EIA Scoping				
Planning Inspectorate (PINS) on behalf of SoS	26/05/2023	Scoping Opinion	<p><i>"The Applicant proposes to scope out negative side effects of local economic growth (specifically price inflation and economic dependence on the Proposed Development) on the basis that these are unlikely due to the scale and type of the Proposed Development.</i></p> <p><i>The Inspectorate has considered the characteristics of the Proposed Development and is content that significant side effects on price inflation and economic dependence on the Proposed Development are unlikely to result in</i></p>	Negative side effects of local economic growth remain scoped out.

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			<i>likely significant effects and therefore this matter can be scoped out."</i>	
			<i>"The Applicant proposes to scope out the effects of population immigration from the Proposed Development on local services and infrastructure. The reasoning provided is that a large part of the workforce would likely come from the Direct and Indirect Areas of Influence (AOIs). As noted in paragraph 13.5.2 of the Scoping Report, no details are available at this stage concerning the number of direct and indirect jobs expected. As such it is not clear on what basis the assumption that the majority of the workforce would come from the Direct and Indirect AOIs has been made. Therefore, on the basis of the information provided, the Inspectorate cannot agree to scope this matter out at this stage."</i>	Pressure on local services and infrastructure from population immigration are now scoped in and assumptions on workforce numbers are presented.
			<p><i>"The Scoping Report states that the Proposed Development is unlikely to result in the physical displacement of households or farms in the Proposed Development area as "the land is mostly agricultural, and the final design of the cable routes and solar farms should omit any construction". This wording is unclear. The Inspectorate assumes that the Applicant is implying that the Proposed Development area is in an area of very low population density and construction activities would not directly impact on households or farm buildings through their displacement.</i></p> <p><i>Figure 13.1 in the Scoping Report shows the location of communities and farms in relation to the Proposed</i></p>	Physical displacement scoped in due to partial information on the cable route and access route location. At this stage the understanding of effects is limited until the final route is determined.

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			<p><i>Development site boundaries. This figure shows that there are communities and farms located within and near the site boundary (namely Howell on the edge of the Northern solar array site, Boughton and Little Hale Fen Farm located within the Cable Route Search Area and Thorpe Latimer farm on the edge of the Southern Solar array site). Although the Cable Route Corridor is not yet refined at this stage, based on the information provided, it is unclear whether physical displacement of these receptors could occur. Therefore, the Inspectorate cannot agree to scope this matter out at this stage."</i></p>	
			<p><i>"The Scoping Report states that mitigation measure requirements will not be covered within the socioeconomic assessment and instead will be covered within other environmental aspects of the ES. Where such measures avoid what would otherwise be significant socioeconomic effects, these measures, as well as the mechanism by which they are secured by the DCO, should be adequately described within the socioeconomics chapter and cross-referencing provided to enable intra-project effects to be understood".</i></p>	<p>Cross-referencing provided for environmental mitigation measures where such measures avoid what would otherwise be significant socioeconomic effects.</p>
			<p><i>"The Proposed Development site will affect a number of PRow but no surveys are proposed to understand the baseline use of these PRow. It is therefore unclear of the usage of these routes. The ES should assess impacts to PRow from the Proposed Development where significant effects are likely to occur and clearly</i></p>	<p>Qualitative baseline surveys are to be undertaken of PRow for including in the ES, in the Socio-economic chapter (Chapter 15). These surveys will include site walkovers and engagement with local walking groups to determine</p>

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			<i>signpost where this has been assessed in the ES. The Applicant's attention is drawn to ID 3.4.1."</i>	a better understanding of use of PRoWs.
(Lincolnshire County Council (LCC))	16/05/2023	Scoping Opinion	<i>"The range of the topics appears reasonable. We will be able to comment in further detail as the project progresses."</i>	No action needed.
North Kesteven District Council (NKDC)	18/05/2023	Scoping Opinion	<p><i>"The Scoping Report identifies potentially negative effects associated with the inevitable removal of land from agricultural production and that there may be businesses / tenants / occupiers currently undertaking agricultural operations across the site boundary who may cease to do so for the duration of the operational phase of the development.</i></p> <p><i>Paragraph 13.6.1 states that potential socio-economic impacts are based on the interactions between the expected project activities and the people and communities. Five examples are then given as to where impacts might be anticipated. This should be expanded to consider whether any tourism accommodation providers in the area that will be adversely affected by the solar farm. The chapter also implies that no livelihoods will be lost as a consequence of the development and that agricultural workers may be offered re-training and re-skilling to work on the solar farm, however there is no indication as to what number of farms will be affected by these proposals or what the potential loss of agricultural employment will be.</i></p>	<p>The following aspects have been added to this assessment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Net gain of jobs following HCA Additionality guidance to account for loss of agricultural jobs; • Quantification, to the extent possible, of the number of affected farms; • Quantification of local economic opportunities for local businesses, construction workforce and accommodation providers; • Outline of future opportunities in the Local Employment Plan (in preparation); • Assessment for the possibility of continued grazing; • Quantification of socio-economic benefits, to the extent possible, from the change from agricultural use to solar panels.

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			<p><i>The Scoping Report covers construction jobs (table 13.1), and how they might impact the local communities in terms of demands on service provision. However, there is limited reference to the type of local opportunities the construction process will offer, both in terms of direct job opportunities during the construction phase, and longer term in terms of permanent full time operatives to monitor and maintain the solar farm.</i></p> <p><i>The ES should therefore identify how local businesses may benefit from maintenance contracts related to the project, along with opportunities for specialist contractors to be hosted by local accommodation providers during the construction phase. In addition the Scoping Report refers to the potential to retrain agricultural workers to work on the solar farm, but it does not reference the potential for employment opportunities via apprenticeships. Economic benefits to the town of Sleaford should also be quantified if possible, associated with the possible hosting of construction workforce during the construction phase.</i></p> <p><i>In addition, there is only limited reference in the proposed scope to any socio-economic benefit enduring from continued agricultural use of part or all of the site. For example this could include enabling some continuance of agricultural activity through sheep grazing or alternative forms of cropping among panelled areas (subject to the above comments in relation to agricultural land and soils).</i></p>	

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			<p><i>The applicant should therefore quantify whether and how there are socio-economic benefits stemming from a change from predominantly arable agricultural use of the site predevelopment to a solar and possibly pastoral use post-development.</i></p> <p><i>We suggest that the applicant should also identify a mechanism by which any changes in agricultural activity (and ergo any associated socio-economic effect) can be secured through the DCO process.</i></p> <p><i>With reference to direct, indirect, temporary and permanent employment jobs created through construction, operation, maintenance and decommissioning, this information should be presented along with identification of:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• opportunities for using local businesses on various aspects of the construction phase;</i> <i>• how the applicant would go about supporting local business procurement;</i> <i>• financial estimates of economic benefits of the construction phase to the local economy including hotel spend etc;</i> <i>• opportunities to encourage apprenticeships; and</i> 	

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>financial estimates and local opportunities associated with ongoing maintenance over the 60-year operational period.</i> <p><i>In terms of potential economic benefits, the Council notes that an established way of calculating the extra value generated by local spend on contractors and services would be by using LM3 multipliers which the applicant might wish to consider depending on the certainty of construction contracts etc at this stage. The multiplier can be found at: https://www.lm3online.com/".</i></p>	
NKDC			<p><i>"Finally, paragraph 13.4.6 refers to tourism, with table 13.1 referring to potential impacts including potential 'reduction of touristic attraction and change of tourism profile' of the wider area. As set out in further detail below there are potential implications regarding the delivery of the Lincolnshire Reservoir which is partly overlapped by Beacon Fen South.</i></p> <p><i>The Anglian Water project website confirms that the proposed reservoir will also create space for wildlife, such as wetlands, alongside enabling new recreational and educational activities and natural places for people to explore including providing opportunities for local businesses and tourism. The illustrative site plan suggests that the proposals could include watersports and visitor centre facilities which (without prejudice) in their own right have potentially significant broader economic benefits for the District and surrounding areas.</i></p>	<p>After removing Beacon Fen South, comparing the two developments is no longer necessary. Nonetheless, this chapter includes an assessment of potential beneficial and adverse impact on tourism, recognising NKDC's key priority to enhance visitor economy.</p>

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			<p><i>Enhancement of the visitor economy is a key priority for North Kesteven District, and whilst there is not yet any quantitative, qualitative or financial assessment of the above options and opportunities associated with the Lincolnshire Reservoir, it would appear likely to offer more long term employment, socio-economic and tourism benefits and opportunities than the proposed solar farm at Beacon Fen South. Those impacts would also be permanent, not temporary (60 years). In the context of cumulative effects, the ES should therefore seek to quantify any negative socio-economic impacts stemming from potentially prejudicing delivery of the Lincolnshire Reservoir."</i></p>	
UK Health Security Agency (HSA)	12/05/2023	Scoping Opinion	<p><i>"Human Health and Wellbeing - OHID</i></p> <p><i>This section of OHIDs response, identifies the wider determinants of health and wellbeing we expect the ES to address, to demonstrate whether they are likely to give rise to significant effects. OHID has focused its approach on scoping determinants of health and wellbeing under four themes, which have been derived from an analysis of the wider determinants of health mentioned in the National Policy Statements. The four themes are:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• Access</i> <i>• Traffic and Transport</i> <i>• Socio-economic</i> 	<p>Agreed and no major change required in terms of including the determinants of health, the socio-economic chapter already scoped in the increased exposure of communities to noise and traffic, as well as the influx of workers causing stress on local services, and restricted access to recreation places.</p> <p>Following draft NPS EN-1 2023, assessing health impacts on identified vulnerable groups will be described in the ES and appropriate mitigation measure proposed.</p>

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Land Use</i> 	
			<p><i>“Suggestion to consider human receptors when designing mitigation and management of major accidents and disasters. Ultimately the likelihood of major accidents and disasters is considered to be low in connection to public health”.</i></p>	<p>Potential risks in relation to accidents and disasters are considered within the following chapters and reports, which did not identify likely effects of the Proposed Development which could result in an accident or disaster:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 9: Access & Traffic • Chapter 11: Water Resources & Flood Risk • Chapter 12: Climate Change • Chapter 13: Glint • Appendix 1.4: Ground Conditions Desk Study
			<p><i>“We support approaches which minimise or mitigate public exposure to non-threshold air pollutants, address inequalities (in exposure) and maximise co-benefits (such as physical exercise). We encourage their consideration during development design, environmental and health impact assessment, and development consent”.</i></p>	<p>More focus will be placed on determinants of health, taking into account inequalities in exposure to impacts and maximizing co-benefits in physical exercise when assessing the impact on recreation and designing mitigation measures.</p>
Direct Topic-Specific Consultation				
Solar Array Area Landowner	22/06/2023	In-person meeting on site	N/A	Baseline data collection
Ewerby and Evedon	22/06/2023	In-person meeting on	N/A	The aim of this meeting was primarily to inform the socio-

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Parish Council		site with Michael Scott, Parish Chairman.		economics baseline. The meeting also suggested the Ewerby and Evedon Parish Council is concerned about local traffic impacts during construction and overall visual impacts.
North Kesteven District Council (NKDC)	28/06/2023	Online meeting with Alan Gray and Michelle Tasker.	N/A	NKDC is concerned about accommodation availability due to construction workforce influx, especially in terms of cumulative impacts.