

## **Officers Report**

### **Planning Application No: 142117**

**PROPOSAL:** Planning application for construction and operation of a solar photovoltaic farm, including fencing, internal service tracks, inverters, transformer stations, cabling, CCTV, landscaping, substations and ancillary cabins.

**LOCATION:** The Old Airfield Reepham Road Fiskerton Lincoln LN3 4EZ  
**WARD:** Cherry Willingham  
**WARD MEMBER(S):** Cllr C Darcel  
**APPLICANT NAME:** Mr Andy Fifield, "Grey Street Solar Ltd", 20 North Audley Street, London

**TARGET DECISION DATE:** 08/04/2021  
**DEVELOPMENT TYPE:** Major - Other  
**CASE OFFICER:** George Backovic

**RECOMMENDED DECISION:** Grant Conditional Permission

---

#### **Description:**

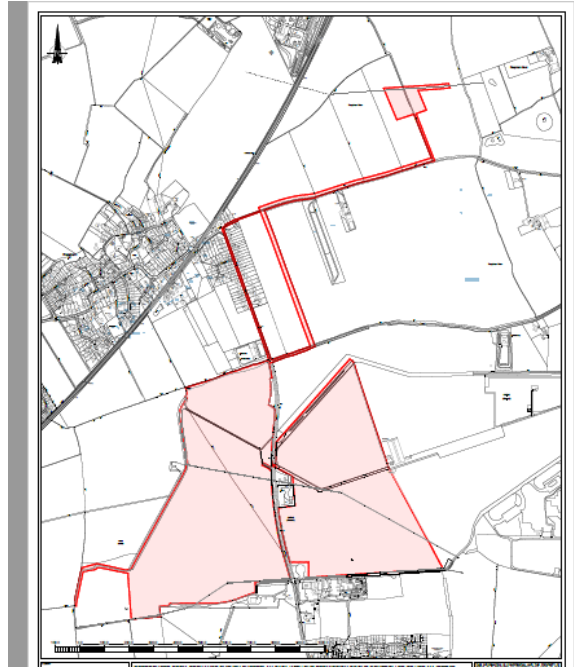
The site is located in the open countryside between Reepham to the north and Fiskerton to the south. It comprises of large fields either side of Reepham Road. Historically the application site was formerly the RAF Fiskerton Airfield, which was used in the Second World War. RAF Fiskerton opened in January 1943, and Lancaster squadrons were based there until September 1945. During the 1990s the land was sold and has since been used for agricultural purposes. There is evidence of its former use as RAF Fiskerton with the remains of hardstanding and sections of runway. It is currently arable land and as part of the planning application for the adjacent solar farm an agricultural land classification was undertaken which concluded that the land was 3b (moderate quality); limited by wetness. (Ref: 130671) To the west is the settlement of Cherry Willingham and a section of the south western boundary runs along site "CL 1181" allocated for residential development in the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan<sup>1</sup> under policy LP 52: Residential allocations – Large Villages. East of the site is a partially completed solar farm on the remains of the former airfield with a total approved site area of 70 hectares although visibility of this is limited. There are two poultry sheds located adjacent to the eastern site boundary. The landscape is generally open and relatively level in this location.

There are a number of separate Public Rights of Way in close proximity to or crossing the site. Fiskerton /120/1 runs through the western half of the site with a direct link to Reep /120/1 that runs north towards Reepham. Fiskerton 121 /1 runs to the south along part of the south western section of the site. Fiskerton 119/2 crosses a small section of the south eastern corner of the

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.n-kesteven.gov.uk/central-lincolnshire/>

site. Part of the southern boundary on the eastern section of the site is adjacent to Primetake Ltd an ammunition manufacturer. In the far north, the site boundary extends along an arable Farm track and also encompasses a small area of an arable field to the north of Moor Lane.



**Proposal:** A large scale solar farm covering an area of approximately 74 hectares of the 84 hectare site including: Photovoltaic panels; matt finished mounting frames; inverters; transformers housed in prefabricated containers and associated cabling; a 132kV distribution network operator substation and meter point; customer substation; internal service roads; deer fencing; infra-red CCTV; temporary set down area and site access for construction and operational purposes. A scheme of landscaping and biodiversity enhancements are also proposed.

The facility will have an export capacity of 49.9MW. The proposed development will export enough electricity to power over 13,000 homes per year and offset approximately 13,300 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> every year, the equivalent of taking over 5,000 cars off the road. The proposed point of connection is located on the existing 132kV overhead line approximately 1km to the north of the proposal site. The panels will be arranged in rows in an east-west alignment across the site and will be angled between 10° and 35° to the horizontal and orientated south. All panels will be mounted on frames and have a height of up to 2.6m above ground level; the lowest part of the panel will be 0.75m above ground level. The rows of panels will be set to between 4m and 6m apart to avoid shadowing and allow for scheduled maintenance. Transformer and substations are proposed. The solar arrays will be secured by a 2m high deer fence or similar with wooden posts and galvanised wire. The scheme will have a lifespan of 40 years after which all equipment will be removed from site. The solar panels will be connected to small inverter units typically located on the racking of the frames. The inverters will connect to transformer stations which converts the electricity from Direct Current (DC) to

Alternating Current (AC). The transformers ensure that electricity can be transferred to the substation and then to the 'local grid' more efficiently.

The application site will be served via Reepham Road. This will provide access during the construction phase. As part of the construction phase a temporary set down area, adjacent to Reepham Road will be provided for the delivery of materials, equipment and welfare facilities.

The construction phase is expected to last 8 months.

Three "permissive routes" are to be provided. These are 3 to 4 metre wide strips of grassed land for public use following completion of the construction phase.

Once operational, the site will be manned remotely offsite. However, the site will be required to have monthly maintenance checks.

### **Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017:**

The development has been assessed in the context of Schedule 2 of the Regulations and after taking account of the criteria in Schedule 3 it has been concluded that the development is not likely to have significant effects on the environment by virtue of its nature, size or location. Neither is the site within a sensitive area as defined in Regulation 2(1). Therefore the development is not 'EIA development'.

**Relevant history:** None

### **Representations:**

**Clr Darcel:** As a District Councillor I am also concerned that a number of residents have expressed their concerns to me about the loss of open countryside views that presently greet you as you drive from Reepham to Fiskerton and the size of the development. These opinions have been expressed to me verbally over the last eight or nine months and more recently a village wide survey conducted by the Parish Council. The Parish Council also feel that there has been no proper consultation with residents or the Parish Council and that undue weight has been given to out-side groups rather than Fiskerton Parish Council in coming up with the submitted proposal. Had the Parish Council and residents actively been involved the council believes the submitted plan may well have been different? For the reasons of scale of the development, the potential loss of open countryside views and the impact the scheme on life in in the village make it important that application is reviewed by the Planning Cttee. In a village wide survey held in October 2019, 2/3rds of the responders gave the rural environment and countryside and footpaths as being their main reason for enjoying living in the village.

## **Fiskerton Parish Council: Object**

### 02.03.21

1. The Airfield is not marked as Green Wedge or protected Green Space on the CLLP Policies Map but the proposed site is an effective green wedge and an important open space between Fiskerton and Reepham and Fiskerton and Cherry Willingham. LP23. The proposal is contrary to LP 17 to protect and enhance the intrinsic value of our landscape.

2. In the CLLP "Our Vision" it states that, "The natural and historic environment will be protected". The FPC should hold WLDC to account on this especially as this proposed plan is so large (74 Ha) and will have a negative effect on the natural and historic environment. While new enhanced footpaths to Reepham are proposed, a "much used unofficial open space" north of Primetake will be lost LP17. LP24 &LP25.

3. Fiskerton PC supports low carbon energy production but not at the expense of our landscape and other assets. 74 Ha of solar panels between Reepham and Fiskerton (all in the Parish of Fiskerton) will eliminate the green space between the villages. Since 2012 Fiskerton residents have expressed the view, in multiple surveys, that they wish for the green space between Fiskerton and Reepham and Cherry Willingham to be maintained to ensure the separate identity of Fiskerton as a small rural village. LP23.

4. The CLLP Page 16 reports that "Medium Villages (E.g. Fiskerton). Unless otherwise promoted via a neighbourhood plan or through the demonstration of clear local community support, the following applies in these settlements: they will accommodate a limited amount of development in order to support their Function and/or sustainability." LP4. This plan does not have local community support. FPC carried out a survey in February 2021 and 66% of respondents were against the plan. LP4 "A proposal on the edge of a village in categories 5-6 of the settlement hierarchy should be accompanied by a demonstrable evidence of clear local community support". The plan submitted does not have this support.

5. In the survey residents expressed disappointment at not being consulted and that there was very little planning gain offered to the residents. Had the Parish Council been consulted, the footpath between Fiskerton may not have been considered a priority and its provision and maintenance is considered to be the responsibility of the County Council. Had the "consultation" taken place other ideas on planning gain may have been put forward.

6. FPC approved the planning application for a large solar panel farm to the east of the airfield several years ago. This development should be completed before another application is approved.

7. Fiskerton PC would like to develop a sustainable visitor economy. This application does not meet any of the CLLP stated requirements. LP7

8. Fiskerton Parish Council does not approve this application because it contravenes the Local Lincolnshire Plan, particularly Policies LP4, LP7, LP17, LP 19, LP 20, LP 23, LP24& LP25.

This plan:

- a. Does not contribute to the local economy
- b. Is of no benefit to the local community or visitors
- c. Does not respect the local farmed environment
- d. Is not appropriate for the character of the local environment in scale and nature.

The residents of Fiskerton have indicated a full presentation and discussion should be held in the village and that they would like to see more planning gain for the village to compensate for the loss of the visual amenity and open countryside that will result from the planned development. The Parish Council believes the application should be withdrawn or delayed until after such a consultation has taken place in the Village Hall. Covid 19 has been unfortunate but a full consultation with the community needs to be held. It is part of the proper planning process.

09.02.21: Fiskerton Parish Council is overwhelmingly against this application. It will be canvassing the opinion of village residents by means of a leaflet drop questionnaire; after which a full response will be submitted to WLDC. It has been noted that the company did visit neighbouring parish of Reepham in respect of their plans, but did not visit Fiskerton - as the development is wholly within the parish of Fiskerton, councillors would like time to actively work with the company, and would appreciate the same approach, albeit having to be via a virtual meeting, as per Reepham Parish Council

Detailed changes to the submission are recommended including removal of land within the application site and its replacement on land next to but not within the red line application boundary (outside the control of the applicant). An additional 4 metres of width along the concrete strip on the south western boundary north of Primetake for the benefit of dog walkers

### **Reepham Parish Council**

The majority of Reepham Parish Council broadly support the principle of the proposed solar farm, though it has a number of concerns and would wish to see the following taken into consideration in relation to this application:

1. It is not considered that the developers have fully discharged their obligation to undertake a proportionate community consultation. Many residents still have no idea that such an installation has been proposed or that an application has been made and this situation has been further compounded by the decision to lodge the application during the present lockdown. A situation that is likely to explain the almost total absence of any on-line comment on the planning website. Much is made in the application of the letters that were sent to properties immediately adjacent to the site and to the notices posted to advise walkers but the scale and location of this proposal is such that it will affect each and every person travelling between Reepham and Fiskerton, regardless of whereabouts in the villages they live.

A more direct approach to all residents is required to ensure that there is an appropriate level of awareness in these Covid constrained times. However, if the WLDC is minded to consider the application on the basis of the present submission we would ask that the following concerns are addressed:

2. There are two possible routes proposed for a cable to link it to the National Grid. The Parish Council strongly object to Route 1 along Fiskerton road. This would cause significant disruption not only to the residents of Fiskerton Road whilst the work is done but to all residents of the village and traffic passing through it. Route 2 across fields is far less disruptive.

3. There will be a significant number of HGV movements through the village delivering equipment to site during construction phase. The bends through our village are not conducive to such vehicles. Some councillors wish to object to this route altogether, suggesting an alternative route from the new Lincoln bypass at the Fiskerton Road roundabout, through to Fiskerton and from there to the airfield. This would avoid the dangerous Kennel Lane/A158 junction, the multiple corners in Reepham which large vehicles find difficult to negotiate, the railway crossing that causes hold-ups, and going past the village school in the centre of the village. The route through Reepham passes through its Conservation Area and past three Listed buildings as well as several 'Landmark' buildings identified in the Conservation Area Assessment. If this route is still chosen the mitigation measures suggested by the developer, particularly the times of the day for vehicle movements do little to avoid conflict with existing traffic movements and takes no account of the long stretches of parked vehicles along High Street for most parts of the day which effectively turn this part of the route into a single track road. In addition large parts of the route through the village already have a poor road surface and this is only likely to get worse with the increased and heavier traffic proposed. Therefore, we would wish to see a contribution from the developer towards the cost of a complete resurface of the main road through the village when construction work is complete.

4. The height of the proposed fencing will be very intrusive given the extent of the development. It is noted that existing hedging will be allowed to grow to at least 2.5 to 3 metres to help screen visibility and gaps in existing hedgerows will be filled. However, this will take several years to fully establish. Further details in respect of hedgerow screening is required and assurances that sufficient hedge planting will take place to screen the development along with an assurance this will be maintained going forward including replacement of any 'failures'. The visual impact of the 'tunnel' effect that will inevitably be created by developing along both sides of the road could be mitigated to a degree by increasing the distance that the installation boundary is set back from the road.

5. Whilst the application refers to mitigating the visual impact of the solar panel array, there is no mention of mitigating the visual impact of the substation on Moor Lane. Reepham. Moor Lane is a quiet rural road giving Reepham residents easy access to open countryside. The open views of

woodland and the Wolds in the distance enhance this rural aspect. The large fenced area of the substation will be very noticeable from the Lane. A planting scheme is needed to hide this from view and enhance the biodiversity of this area. An archaeological watching brief is also needed when this is being constructed.

6. The new footpath along the Reepham Road is welcomed but the opportunity should be taken to create a cycleway/footpath here between Reepham and Fiskerton.

7. A series of permissive paths are proposed around the edge of the scheme. Can this be extended along the southern boundary of the western section? This would then create a circular route around the western block.

Given the scale and significance of the proposal it is considered appropriate to point out that a number of Parish Councillors, albeit a minority, strongly object outright to the planning application on the following grounds:

1. The sheer size of the development which will have a negative impact on the open countryside between the villages and the historical heritage of the locality. This application will alter a very large area of rural land for at least twenty five years and any benefits of footpaths etc. are not a worthy trade off.
2. There will be no beneficial economic impact for local people as it does not create any significant long term jobs.
3. Concerns regarding the maintenance of the site when the installation is finished. The existing solar farm immediately to the east of that proposed is only rough cut a few times a year and the boundary edges grow rough and messy up the fencing and is a trap for litter.
4. A hedge or trees would take years to grow to cover the view of eight foot high metal fences.

**Cherry Willingham Parish Council:**

1. Clarification of location for the wildflower – edge or centre?
2. It would be desirable to have a circular walk round the airfield.
3. Also suggestion of footpath along the side of Reepham Road to be a footpath/cycleway.

**Local residents:**

2 The Holt Fiskerton (object):

The promoters of this scheme have made no attempt to consult with local people about this development. It's about making a lot of money for some people for many years to come. The land owners, developers and designers seem to have a disregard for the destruction of arable land, visual amenity, wildlife and drainage.

I may consider supporting the scheme if there were guarantees to:

- 1) Require the developer to adopt and pay for the maintenance of the Fiskerton flood alleviation scheme.

Reason: Much of the surface water drains into the flood alleviation lagoons. As the ground hardens the fields on which the proposed solar panels are situated will be slower to absorb and soak away rain water and a larger proportion will flow into the lagoons which could risk exceeding its capacity and flooding in the village. In essence the parish will be paying for the disposal of surface water from the development site and need to be compensated.

2) When the original scheme was constructed the developer provided solar panels for the village hall and the scouts building. This provided to a small income to help with community projects. Assets created were: bus shelters, planters and seating, It would be a show of good faith from the developer if they offered to replace and improve the solar panels.

Reason: As the solar panels age their performance deteriorates and the income reduces. Newer solar panels are more efficient and would increase income and help with the maintenance of assets and delivery of projects.

3) Tidy up and keep tidy the whole site area.

Reason: The existing solar panel site is littered with all kinds of debris, fly tipped road arising's and cable drums. The proposed site is also used for fly tipping, the illegal burning of waste which is allegedly illegally transported to the site by unlicensed waste carriers. (See google earth) I can also provide photographic evidence. There is also piles of road arising's which contain waste contaminated with tar and asbestos. The whole lot should be removed and properly disposed of.

4) Construct a footpath between Fiskerton and Reepham.

Reason: the construction traffic will increase and be hazardous to pedestrians. A proper footpath is required to link the two villages.

5) Wildlife considerations. A lot of wildlife will be affected. Many rare and unusual species frequent this area including; Bats, Roe Deer, Rabbits, pheasants, snakes and hedgehogs. The developers wild life assessment if not comprehensive and ignores any provision for these species.

Reason: to maintain a safe and sustainable habitat for existing wild life.

6) As I understand it part of the site is within the Primetake exclusion zone. Primetake make or handle explosives'. There does not seem to be any risk assessment as to how electricity generating solar panels will react and how public safety will be assured if there is an incident.

Reason: The exclusion zone is there for a purpose and should be respected.

7) Landscaping and maintenance of the WW2 memorial. Improvements to the car park surfacing.

Reason: the memorial has many visitors and is used for services on Armistice Day. The facility should be enhanced.

8) It should be a condition to remove existing shipping containers.

Reason: Six shipping containers are on the site for which there is no planning consent.

9) Removal of driving school facility.

Reason. The site is being used without planning consent for the running of a driver training facility.

If the above conditions are fulfilled and there are assurances that the developer will continue to maintain the site in a clean safe and visually attractive state, only then would the application get my support.



The Old Rectory Reepham Road Fiskerton (object):

The proposed plan is too big. It is too close to the village of Fiskerton and is Damaging to the rural and visual character of the village. Since the planning application has been made, no consultation has taken place with the residents of Fiskerton, no information has been sent out to neighbouring residents and no information has been publicly posted. Your consultation with Reepham Parish Council lead to footpath access on the north and west sides. Consultation with Fiskerton Parish Council would indicate a need for access on the southern side. There has been no problem with the public walking past the gate to the north of the Primetake site and that footpath is used regularly. Your characterisation of the land as Fenland is misleading. It is productive farmland and we all need food, preferably locally produced, as much as green energy. I support green energy production but there are many sites in Lincolnshire that can accommodate a large area of panels such as this with much less visual impact and further away from existing villages. From your earlier survey, the majority of the respondents were against the plan. Should you wish to continue with the application please consider permissive access along the southern boundary of the site and some planning gain for the residents of Fiskerton.

St Anne's Villa 1 Church Lane Reepham (General Observation):

I would wish you to take into consideration the public viewpoint that has been expressed on 6 points along Fiskerton/Reepham Road through [widenmypath.com](http://widenmypath.com). The comments identify road safety concerns and the need for pedestrian/cycle path alongside the length of this road. These are supported by 70 responses on [widenmypath.com](http://widenmypath.com). These views are generally in line with the comments made by both Reepham and Fiskerton Parish Councils and The Witham Valley Access Project. Fiskerton Road / Reepham Road is frequently used by walkers undertaking local walks. Cyclists use this route to access the National Route 1 cycle route/Water Railway and journeys between villages. As such it is an important link. Access to and from this site for construction or maintenance during its lifetime, represents increased risk to pedestrians and cyclists. It is my view that the provision of a shared cycle/pedestrian track alongside the proposed Solar Farm is a necessity. I feel that adequate construction, finish and maintenance to enable its safe use should be a condition prior to the commencement of the project. The recently added document "Cross Section across Reepham Road" has prompted me to write. It shows a 2m wide footpath with no cycle path provision and gives no indication of construction, surface finish or maintenance. Surrounding vegetation will soon reduce this width if it is not maintained and unless the construction and surface finish are adequate, it will not be capable of all year-round use. I would encourage the landowner, WLDC, LCC /Highways to widen their consultation over this proposal. It is important to identify the opportunities that this development could present, rather than generate fears of constraints. During the Pandemic, local footpaths and cycle routes have been heavily used. As a resident of Reepham who makes use of the local footpaths and cycle routes, I find it surprising that consultation with the wider community on whom it will impact, has not taken place and who are largely unaware. I would also urge consultation with Sustrans for an informed view on the potential opportunities and impact of this proposal.

### 9 St Hughs Close: (object)

This application is bought by newly incorporated shell companies with no assets on behalf of the Shanghai Electrical Company. The animus behind this application is in China and there will be no economic benefit to the ordinary resident of Cherry Willingham, Reepham and Fiskerton. This application should be referred to the Secretary of State because at the present rate of technological and climate change the power generated, on a balance of probabilities, will be in excess of 50MW on sunny summer days by the time the plant is commissioned. Failure to do so now would be Wednesbury unreasonable. If this Planning Committee proceeds to a debate and decision, I would wish to address the Committee. I keep bees and am a personal member of the BBKA and British Bee Improvers and Bee Breeders Association and the inverters will emit a low hum that will affect all insect life in the daytime, recent research has shown that bees are adversely affected by low level electro-magnetic fields and further the recent decision of Defra to allow neonicotinoids to be used on sugar beet seed this coming season, in this, the major sugar beet farming area will locally put pressure on the insect population. Nightingales sing in these trees and fields. Pipistrelle bats fly along the railway. They won't after this development which I assume will clear fell the whole area.

### **Tanglin, Fiskerton Road East (The Witham Valley Access Project):**

Witham Valley Access Project (WVAP)

WVAP was established to campaign for the protection, extension, and improvement of public access to the countryside around the villages of Cherry Willingham, Fiskerton and Reepham and comprises of local residents who are involved in countryside activities and are regular users of the local access network. The combined knowledge of the local network (its level of use, as well as its shortcomings) held by WVAP members, is therefore extensive. Recent activities and approach to new developments. In addition to successfully campaigning for improved access to the River Witham, WVAP members have been proactive in working with Cherry Willingham Parish Council in the construction and maintenance of new paths. Much of this practical work has also involved planting and managing native trees, shrubs and wildflower grassland. Over the last year, the importance of countryside access for physical and mental health has become more evident than ever before. Informal surveys of people encountered on local footpaths have emphasised the importance of being able to walk, run and cycle on routes which link to form a network and particularly facilitate circular trips. WVAP also believes that, although the creation and retention of routes is important, these have limited value to the community unless they have a high quality setting. In this context, routes created by members of WVAP have been accompanied by the planting of native trees, shrubs and wildflower grassland wherever possible. These have been valued by users both for their visual amenity and for the biodiversity which they support, and which add so much to enjoyment of the countryside. It is within the context of the above experience that WVAP has assessed the current solar farm proposal, specifically to:-

- Ensure the protection of existing Rights of Way.

- Promote the formalisation of existing well used routes through “permissive” status.
- Advocate the creation of entirely new routes where they could form important links in the network (again, through “permissive” status)
- Promote the retention or planting of native trees, shrubs, hedges and wildflower grasslands adjoining access routes. Response to the Fiskerton West Solar Farm proposal. In our comments to the Draft Plan in June 2020, during the pre-application public consultation, we made seven requests for amendments. We have detailed these below with our further comments.
  1. We requested that steps were taken to avoid creating an oppressive 3 - 4m wide corridor between security fences along the NW/SE right of way by varying the width and planting groups of native shrubs. We note that the width of the corridor has been increased to a minimum of 12m, which is to be welcomed, but the inclusion of groups of shrubs would make a significant additional improvement to the enjoyment of the walk and we think that this should be included.
  2. Designating the existing informal route along the Northern edge of the Western area as a permissive path has been included as we requested and should be welcomed. The design detail however shows a 4m wide path hard up against the security fence and again, some shrub planting would significantly improve the setting of this path and should be included in the plans.
  3. We requested blocks of trees and shrubs along the proposed new route running parallel to Reepham Road. What is proposed is a new hedge 4m from the existing roadside hedge. The idea is good, but by planting groups of hedge shrubs, with random gaps the “corridor” effect could be reduced. This should be easy to incorporate and possibly cheaper than the current proposal, so we think that this should be pursued. The shrubs saved with this type of hedge could be used by the side of the Northern edge of the Western area boundary path.
  4. We asked that the new route parallel to Reepham Road should double as a cycleway. The route has been specified as 4m wide but a suitable surface would be required for cycling.
  5. Our suggestion of a new permissive route along the southern edge of the western part of the site (to link the two rights of way without having to use a road which has no footway) has not been included. There is no explanation in the report of community engagement as to why not. We still think that it has a lot of merit and could be developed on the surplus land outside of the security fence, so is well worth including.
  6. Our request for native trees and hedges in places along access routes seems to have (with the exceptions referred to above) been incorporated, which we welcome.
  7. We requested that the site been sown with a wildlife grass mix containing yellow rattle throughout and wildflower seed. The information given in the application is conflicting and lacks clarity. (See, in particular, Design and Access statement 3.2.2 and compare with Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisal 6.1.8.) We request that for the sake of clarity the applicants be asked to submit a description of the contents of the different seed mixes proposed and a plan showing precisely where each mix will be spread.

Additional comments:

At this stage of the planning process, we might have expected to see some details of the path construction and materials in the application but could not find any. Given the extremely heavy clay soil locally, we don't really feel that a grass surface would provide for an all year round path network. In the current winter weather, the northern edge is pretty challenging in places due to the muddy path. A path of geotextile and planings type would give a much more sustainable and usable surface. This would especially apply alongside Reepham Road.

**LCC Highways (Summary):**

13.05.21: Does not wish to restrict the grant of permission.

The proposal will generate a number of HGV's passing through the village of Reepham, as outlined in the submitted Transport Statement. In highways terms, this volume of traffic can be accommodated at the junctions within capacity and will not result in an unacceptable impact on highways safety.

There is no precise definition of "severe" with regards to NPPF Paragraph 109, which advises that "Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe." Planning Inspector's decisions regarding severity are specific to the locations of each proposal, but have common considerations:

- The highway network is over-capacity, usually for period extending beyond the peak hours
- The level of provision of alternative transport modes
- Whether the level of queuing on the network causes safety issues.

In view of these criteria, the Highways and Lead Local Flood Authority does not consider that this proposal would result in a severe impact with regard to NPPF.

Directions and informatives to be added to decision notice recommended.

17.02.21: Requests that the applicants provide additional information as set out below.

The existing access is unsuitable for the proposal and will need reconstructing. It is requested by the Highway Authority that a drawing is submitted by the applicant showing this intention. The construction specification will be Lincolnshire County Council's heavy duty detail, to be provided as part of a Section 184 application post planning. Design of the reconstructed access is to have a suitable width and kerbed radii.

**NATS Safeguarding:**

The proposed development has been examined from a technical safeguarding aspect and does not conflict with our safeguarding criteria. Accordingly, NATS

(En Route) Public Limited Company ("NERL") has no safeguarding objection to the proposal.

**MOD (Safeguarding) – RAF Waddington:**

I can confirm the MOD has no safeguarding objections to this proposal.

**Health and Safety Executive:**

The proposed development site which you have identified does not currently lie within the consultation distance (CD) of a major hazard site or major accident hazard pipeline; therefore at present HSE does not need to be consulted on any developments on this site.

**Unidentified Pipelines**

There is at least one unidentified pipeline in this Local Authority Area. You may wish to check with the pipeline operator where known or the Local Authority before proceeding. The details HSE have on record for these pipelines is as follows:

4140921 EDF Energy Ltd Grayingham Offtake to West Burton B Power Station

4455752 Cadent Gas Ltd Hemswell Cliff Biomethane Pipeline

**Health and Safety Executive (Explosives Inspectorate):**

11.05.21: I can confirm that the transformer location in the revised plan is now outside SD2 of the adjacent explosives site.

23.04.21: The descriptions applied to 'protected places' may be found in Schedule 5 of the Explosive Regulations 2014

A Class D protected place is a building, whether a dwelling or not.

A Class E protected place is a 'vulnerable' building.

The safeguarding plan (SGP) for the explosives site shows the Class B (green), Class D (yellow) and Class E (purple) quantity distances.

A steel shipping container housing a transformer would be captured in the definition of a building (a transformer in the open surrounded by a fence would not). One transformer station appeared in the plans that I saw in January, this is on the southern side of the proposed development and was within the Class D protected distance from the explosives site.

Comparison of the SGP and the site plans should identify the position of the transformer station within the Class D distance.

Several other buildings on the proposed development were outside the Class D distance but within the Class E distance.

Schedule 5 of ER 2014 gives the definition of a 'vulnerable' building.

I would not anticipate the buildings on site to fit the definition of a 'vulnerable' building but we generally leave this open for the Planning Authority to check.

The view we take in CEMHD7 (the Explosives Inspectorate) is that we don't 'object' to any proposals. We merely point out that should the development go ahead we may have need to reduce the quantity of explosives on the adjacent site, which may in turn have an adverse effect on the business carried on at the explosives site.

28.01.21 HSE has reviewed the plans relating to the proposed development and notes that the proposed location of one transformer station lies within SD2 (inhabited building distance) of the licensed explosives site to the south of the proposed development, a second transformer station, a control cabin and a storage cabin lie within SD3 (vulnerable building distance) of the licensed explosives site. The current planning application appears to indicate that these proposed structures will be housed within converted steel shipping container type buildings. Provided that no buildings on the proposed site are located within the SD2 zone, or vulnerable buildings within the SD3 zone, HSE would have no comment to make on the proposed development, however if buildings of these types were permitted in these zones HSE would need to review, and possibly revise, the explosive licence at the adjacent explosives site.

**Environment Agency:**

The Environment Agency does not wish to make any comments on this application. It does not appear to match any of the criteria on our consultation checklist.

**Cadent Gas:**

Searches based on your enquiry have identified that there is apparatus in the vicinity of your enquiry which may be affected by the activities specified. Can you please inform Plant Protection, as soon as possible, the decision your authority is likely to make regarding this application.

Due to the presence of Cadent and/or National Grid apparatus in proximity to the specified area, the contractor should contact Plant Protection before any works are carried out to ensure the apparatus is not affected by any of the proposed works.

**LCC Historic Services (Archaeology):**

This office has been consulted at pre-application stage and we welcome the Developer's early engagement and consideration of the potential impacts on the historic environment. With a development of this landscape scale there is the potential for multiple impacts on the historic environment, and we have taken the decision to discuss potential impacts on below ground and above ground heritage assets separately below.

Heritage Assets of Archaeological Interest

The proposed development is in an area of archaeological interest, not only for its 20<sup>th</sup> century military history as the site of RAF Fiskerton, but also with the potential for as yet unknown buried remains of much earlier activity.

This area on the edge of the Witham Valley a short distance from Roman and medieval city of Lincoln is a landscape that has been extensively exploited since prehistoric times. A detailed discussion of which is included in the developer's Heritage Impact Assessment.

There are no known below ground remains within the area of the proposed solar farm (although remains associated with the airfield may be expected), but there are two known sites of Roman settlement close to its boundary in

both the north and southwest. In the north this centres on an area either side of Fiskerton Road between the development and the modern village where a considerable number of finds such as pottery, coins, tiles, and a spearhead have been recovered from the surface of fields in the 1960s and 70s. Recent evaluations through the planning process for a development west of Fiskerton Road have also revealed a Roman ditch. In the southwest, close the edge of modern Cherry Willingham a concentration of Roman finds has also been made, including tile and building stone, thought to indicate a villa or farmstead site. In light of these areas of higher potential, following consultation with this office the developer has carried out a geophysical survey targeting the parts of the site nearest to these known focuses of Roman activity. The results, particularly in the northern part of the site have been affected by disturbance caused by the 20th century use of the site as an airfield. However, it has indicated some potential linear features in the southwest part of the site, which should be investigated further during a programme of trial trenching to confirm their date, depth and significance. It is also recommended that Geophysical survey is followed up with trial trenches in the northern area to confirm whether the later disturbance may be masking earlier remains. The proposed development's impacts on any below ground remains will consist mostly of many thousands of post holes for the PV panels themselves which will cover the landscape. These are created in such a way that they cannot be monitored usefully by an archaeologist, and therefore it is important that evaluation takes place to fully understand what remains are being impacted (as required by NPPF 189 and CLLP Policy LP25). It is noted that the developer has already agreed to carry out this trial trenching in their heritage Impact Assessment.

#### Impacts on the site of RAF Fiskerton

As noted above the proposed development covers much of the western part of the site of the 20th century airfield, formerly Royal Air Force Fiskerton. The site represents a non-designated heritage asset in the terminology of the National Planning Policy Framework and therefore should be a material planning consideration. It is also recorded in the Lincolnshire Historic Environment Record. The airfield was built during the early part of the war in 1942 and opened in January 1943 as a base for heavy bombers under Group 5 Bomber Command. At its peak it was home 2,300 personnel, with extensive facilities including a main runway, two secondary runways, extensive perimeter tracks and dispersal points (hardstanding's), over 400 buildings such as hangars, control tower, bomb stores, messes, chapel, mortuary and numerous dispersed accommodation sites. It closed in 1946, with the accommodation buildings hastily adapted to provide emergency temporary accommodation for displaced families until 1954. Since then almost all of the buildings of the base have been demolished, and some of the runways and other hardstanding's removed to enable the site to be partially returned to agriculture. The airfield was a dominating presence in the landscape in every sense, cutting across the earlier historic landscape of fields and country roads, dwarfing the then agricultural villages of Fiskerton, Reepham and Cherry Willingham. This reflects the urgency of the national response to the war and the technical and tactical requirements of its builders in response to the threats of that historical moment. Even in its current reduced form

today the remaining sections of runways, perimeter tracks and dispersal points, continue to be prominent features in the landscape, which are instantly recognisable and illustrative of this moment in national history and Lincolnshire's role as 'Bomber County'. Although not subject to any formal designations, the site of former RAF Fiskerton remains an important part of the area's historic landscape contributing to its sense of place. Its heritage is also well-understood and valued by the public. Its significance (see Historic England's Conservation Principles) is derived primarily from its historical value, which is both illustrative and associative. The remains of the airfield are strongly illustrative of the unique events during the Second World War that led to its creation, and connect people today with this moment in time. It is also closely associated with the specific units, squadrons, and the men and women that were based here, as demonstrated by the memorial set up by the public adjacent to the site in their memory. For those who served here, and their families, the site has even greater importance. Today, even in its reduced form, the surviving runways and perimeter tracks also have aesthetic value, with their utilitarian concrete forms weathered by age and surrounded by fields preserving the character of a historic airfield which had once been a hive of activity. The site does have some evidential archaeological value, although the loss of much of the standing buildings has reduced this primarily to any below ground remains that may have survived its decommissioning. These are likely to concentrate in the areas where most activity was focused outside the proposed development at the eastern end of the airfield, where the technical site and most of the buildings were located.

This office welcomes the proposals from the developer to protect all surviving runways and perimeter tracks from impacts during development in order to preserve the physical remains and securing their continued conservation. However, despite this there will be unavoidable impacts on the setting of the airfield, as a feature within the landscape, and how it is perceived by visitors. This is because land which is currently rural in nature and still reminiscent of the character of an airfield will be covered with intrusive modern PV panels and associated infrastructure transforming the way that the heritage asset is experienced during the construction and operation of the solar farm.

It is therefore understood that the developer proposes to offset these impacts through new measures to better reveal the significance of the heritage asset for the public (in line with paragraph 200 of the NPPF). This includes proposals to install new interpretation boards about the airfield's history on the existing footpaths and proposed new permissive paths, and through the provision of "an online link to help in the provision of further outreach to the public." This office is supportive of measures such as this that utilise the rich resources of the county's heritage to create new public benefits in terms of wider outreach and interpretation, and contribute to sense of place and the enjoyment of the historic environment. The new permissive paths will also enable greater public access to the historic site than at present, better integrating it into the local community.



The provision of enhanced interpretation and online content promoting the site's heritage would be in accordance with the Government's strategy for the historic environment outlined in the NPPF (192) requiring local planning authorities to take account of:

- "a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

It also accords with the positive strategy for the historic environment within the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan (Policy LP25), which states proposals will be supported where they:

- "e) Promote opportunities to better reveal significance of heritage assets, where possible;
- f) Take into account the desirability of sustaining and enhancing non-designated heritage assets and their setting."

The Visitor Economy is a priority for the Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership (alongside Low Carbon Energy), and they have identified the county's aviation heritage as a market leading offer and priority in the current Greater Lincolnshire Destination Management Plan. Lincolnshire County Council, and partners including West Lindsey District Council have for this reason carried out a range of aviation heritage projects under the 'Aviation Heritage Lincolnshire' banner to enhance this offer. The provision of new interpretation and online content as part of this development should therefore be seen in this context, and designed so as to support existing efforts by the Aviation Heritage Lincolnshire partnership to ensure maximum benefit for the local community and the visitor economy.

Recommendation: It is therefore recommended that:

- 1) The developer be required to carry out a programme of targeted trial trench Evaluation informed by the results of the previous geophysical survey. This should provide the local planning authority with site specific evidence for the significance and condition of any archaeological remains that would be impacted by the development. This is in accordance with NPPF 189 and CLLP LP25.
- 2) The developer should be required by condition to design, install and maintain a series of interpretation boards along existing footpaths and proposed permissive paths, to be in place before the solar farm becomes operational. The condition should require the approval in writing by the local planning authority of a specification prior to the boards being installed which would detail the number, location and content of the boards. This should be in accordance with a brief produced by this office, in collaboration with West Lindsey District Council's Tourism Officer and Aviation Heritage Lincolnshire. This is to ensure that the boards are accurate and well-designed to offset the impacts on the historic environment, and is coordinated with wider efforts to promote the county's aviation heritage offer. This is in accordance with NPPF 192 & 200 and CLLP LP25 & LP7.

3) The developer should be required by condition to design and maintain a digital resource (either on its own website or a suitable alternative and freely accessible site) to improve outreach of the site's heritage to a wider audience, to be in place prior to the solar farm becoming operational. The condition should require the approval in writing by the local planning authority of a specification for the resource prior to its publication that should detail its design and content. This should be in accordance with a brief produced by this office in collaboration with West Lindsey District Council's Tourism Officer and Aviation Heritage Lincolnshire. This is to ensure that the resource is accurate and well-designed to offset the impacts on the historic environment, and is coordinated with wider efforts to promote the county's aviation heritage offer. This is in accordance with NPPF 192 & 200 and CLLP LP25 & LP7.

4) The developer should be required by condition to protect the surviving historic runways, perimeter tracks, dispersal points and other hardstanding's or structures of RAF Fiskerton within the red line boundary throughout the construction and operation of the solar farm. This is to ensure that measures are put in place to protect them in any construction management plan, or subsequent landscape management plans for the site, and that details of their locations are communicated to any contractor and subcontractors to reduce the potential for unintentional impacts. This need not prevent use of these hardstanding's for vehicle movements or routine maintenance provided this is consistent with their continued conservation. This is in accordance with NPPF 190 & 197 & 200 and CLLP LP25.

**Tree and Landscape Officer:**

The landscape scheme is shown on a landscape masterplan, so it shows where the planting is intended to be, and differentiates between trees and hedges, but no other information is shown, as is usual with a masterplan. The positions of the trees and hedges, including secondary hedges, shown on the plan are suitable, and should grow to provide good screening and softening of the development proposals within the landscape. Good landscaping is particularly important in this area due to the flat, open countryside character with long views across the fields.

A full scheme of landscaping plan and details should be required, to include details such as species, form, size, density, quantities etc....

**Natural England (Summary):**

Based on the plans submitted, Natural England considers that the proposed development will not have significant adverse impacts on designated sites and has no objection. Natural England welcomes the proposal to carry out ecological enhancements on site and recommends adopting the 'net gain' approach. Biodiversity net gain is a demonstrable gain in biodiversity assets as a result of a development project that may or may not cause biodiversity loss, but where the final output is an overall net gain.

**Environmental Protection:**

26.02.21 The application site is part on and part very close to an ex-military site and the applicant has advised that works which penetrate the ground (trenching and support poles across the site for the solar array) by up to 1.2m are to be undertaken, as such the desk top study to assess the site and any further work highlighted by this initial study which may be needed to mitigate against any contaminants found or suspected is in my opinion still required and is a reasonable request.

26.01.21 The area of land to be developed is a former RAF Airfield and as such may have the potential for contamination to be present on or under the land. The applicant should be aware of this previous use and undertake a suitable contaminated land phase 1 desk top study to assess for any potential contaminants which may impact construction contractors etc. during development, particularly in areas where excavation is required, including but not limited to cable trenches, piling locations and foundations. This assessment should be submitted to and approved by LPA prior to development along with any recommendations for further assessment or mitigation works. Should any contamination be suspected or found during development not previously identified and dealt with then development must cease until suitable investigations and any mitigation required has been undertaken and written approval received from LPA.

### **Relevant Planning Policies:**

Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Here, the Development Plan comprises the provisions of the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan (adopted in April 2017); and the Lincolnshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan (adopted June 2016).

### **Development Plan**

#### **Central Lincolnshire Local Plan 2012-2036 (CLLP)**

The policies considered relevant are as follows:

- LP1 A presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- LP14 Managing Water Resources and Flood Risk
- LP17 Landscape, Townscape and Views
- LP19 Renewable Energy Proposals
- LP21 Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- LP25 The Historic Environment
- LP26 Design and Amenity
- LP55 Development in the Countryside

<https://www.west-lindsey.gov.uk/my-services/planning-and-building/planning-policy/central-lincolnshire-local-plan/>

#### **Fiskerton Neighbourhood Plan**

West Lindsey District Council has approved the application by Fiskerton Parish Council to have the parish of Fiskerton designated as a neighbourhood area, for the purposes of producing a neighbourhood plan. However, at the

time of writing, no draft Neighbourhood Plan has been published that can yet be taken into account.

### **Lincolnshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan (LMWLP)**

The site is not within a Minerals Safeguarding Area, Minerals or Waste site / area.

### **National policy & guidance (Material Considerations)**

#### **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**

The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It is a material consideration in planning decisions. The most recent iteration of the NPPF was published in February 2019. Paragraph 213 states:

*"Existing [development plan] policies should not be considered out-of-date simply because they were adopted or made prior to the publication of this Framework. Due weight should be given to them, according to their degree of consistency with this Framework (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given)."*

Paragraph 148 indicates that the planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future and amongst many other things, supports renewable and low carbon energy and infrastructure. Paragraph 154 indicates that such applications should be approved if its impacts are (or can be made) acceptable.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

#### **National Planning Practice Guidance**

This sets out the particular planning considerations that relate to large scale ground-mounted solar photovoltaic farms. These include:

- encouraging the effective use of land by focussing large scale solar farms on previously developed and non-agricultural land, provided that it is not of high environmental value;
- where a proposal involves greenfield land, whether (i) the proposed use of any agricultural land has been shown to be necessary and poorer quality land has been used in preference to higher quality land;
- and (ii) the proposal allows for continued agricultural use where applicable **and/or** encourages biodiversity improvements around arrays. See also a speech by the Minister for Energy and Climate Change, the Rt. Hon Gregory Barker MP, to the solar PV industry on

25 April 2013 and written ministerial statement on solar energy:  
protecting the local and global environment made on 25 March 2015.

- that solar farms are normally temporary structures and planning conditions can be used to ensure that the installations are removed when no longer in use and the land is restored to its previous use;
- the proposal's visual impact, the effect on landscape of glint and glare and on neighbouring uses and aircraft safety;
- the potential to mitigate landscape and visual impacts through, for example, screening with native hedges;
- The approach to assessing cumulative landscape and visual impact of large scale solar farms is likely to be the same as assessing the impact of wind turbines. However, in the case of ground-mounted solar panels it should be noted that with effective screening and appropriate land topography the area of a zone of visual influence could be zero.

#### **Main issues**

- Principle
- Impact on the character and appearance of the site and wider area
- Impacts on existing Public Rights of Way
- Biodiversity and Ecology
- Archaeological and Heritage Interest
- Aircraft Safeguarding
- HSE Explosives Directorate
- Impacts arising from the Construction phase
- Highway safety
- Contamination
- Cable routing

#### **Assessment:**

**Principle:** Paragraph 148 of the NPPF indicates that the planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future and amongst many other things, supports renewable and low carbon energy and infrastructure. Paragraph 154 indicates that such applications should be approved if its impacts are (or can be made) acceptable. National Planning Practice Guidance sets out that “deployment of large-scale solar farms can have a negative impact on the rural environment, particularly in undulating landscapes. However, the visual impact of a well-planned and well-screened solar farm can be properly addressed within the landscape if planned sensitively”

LP 19 addresses non-wind renewable energy development. Proposals for non-wind renewable technology will be assessed on their merits, with the

impacts, both individual and cumulative, considered against the benefits of the scheme, taking account of the following:

- The surrounding landscape and townscape;
- Heritage assets;
- Ecology and diversity;
- Residential and visual amenity;
- Safety, including ensuring no adverse highway impact;
- MoD operations, including having no unacceptable impact on the operation of aircraft movement or operational radar; and
- Agricultural Land Classification (including a presumption against photovoltaic solar farm proposals on the best and most versatile agricultural land).

Proposals will be supported where the benefit of the development outweighs the harm caused and it is demonstrated that any harm will be mitigated as far as is reasonably possible. It would therefore be appropriate to conclude that there is a general presumption in favour of renewable energy generation proposals subject to consideration of the detailed impacts of the proposal which follow;

#### **Impact on the character and appearance of the site and wider area**

Policy LP 17 requires proposals to have particular regard to maintaining and responding positively to any natural and man-made features within the landscape and townscape which positively contribute to the character of the area. Where a proposal may result in significant harm, it may, exceptionally, be permitted if the overriding benefits of the development demonstrably outweigh the harm: in such circumstances the harm should be minimised and mitigated.

It is important to note that there are no statutorily protected or local landscape designations running across the site.

The layout of the arrays within the site is designed so that the existing hedgerows/trees around the site are retained. The historic sections of runway and access tracks will be retained. No runway structures will be removed as part of the development. All existing boundary hedgerows will be retained, including hedge trees. Existing “gaps” in perimeter hedgerows, will be filled with a native mixed species hedgerow mix. Hedges are to be allowed to grow up to at least 2.5-3m tall which help to screen visibility from publicly accessible areas to the solar farm. Tree and hedgerow planting will take place along the entirety of the western boundary together with additional secondary hedgerows and hedge trees to the west of Fiskerton and Reephram road. A new line of hedgerows / hedge trees is proposed along the northern boundary in the eastern section of the site. This is in line with the PPG which identifies the potential to mitigate landscape and visual impacts through, screening with native hedges.

In the gap between the boundary hedges and site security fence, grass pasture will be sown, a tussock grassland mix to naturally recolonise subject

to a low intensity management regime (an annual cut or grazing). In the main site area within the site security fence a meadow grassland seed mix will be sown and managed as meadow grassland, allowed to grow or grazed by sheep as deemed appropriate by the landowner.

No large buildings or structures are proposed within the landscape. The construction process of the solar arrays, the main land use feature of the development, is of a light footprint as the steel posts (of the panel frames) are driven into the ground with no foundations required. This construction method has minimal disturbance to ground conditions. The solar array will be no higher than 2.6 metres above ground level. The transformer stations, welfare / office and storage cabins are dispersed across the site with a maximum height of 2.9 metres. The tallest “plant /equipment” will be located where the site boundary extends along an arable farm track and encompasses a small area of an arable field to the north of Moor Lane to the northwest. This is to be a new substation which will be seen in the context of an existing pylon that it will be adjacent to. The change to the landscape is not permanent which is reflected in the PPG which states that planning conditions can be used to ensure that the installations are removed when no longer in use and the land is restored to its previous use. Conditions will be imposed to secure this.

A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) has been submitted with the application. This included assessing views from dwellings within 500 metres of the site boundary and noted that

“For each individual property close to the development site, the exact degree of visibility will depend on the orientation of the property, the orientation of the windows in the property, and the degree of screening provided by localised landform, trees, hedgerows and surrounding built features.”

The LVIA also considered the West Lindsey Landscape Character Assessment in its findings.

#### West Lindsey Landscape Character Assessment (LCA)

The West Lindsey Landscape Character Assessment designates the majority of the solar array as falling within “Fenland”. A small section of the western end falls within the “Lincoln Fringe” whilst arable land to the north forming part of the wider application site is located within the “Lincolnshire Lime Woods”.

The key characteristics of fenland are defined as:

- Low-lying, flat fen-like landscape
- Large agricultural field some boundaries marked by clumps of shrubby vegetation.
- Some lines of ash and willow trees indicating the wetland nature of the landscape.

- The River Witham flood defence bund is a prominent landscape feature; generally there is little riparian planting along rivers, dykes and ditches.
- Large scale agricultural buildings with little associated planting.

The description of the LCA states:

This narrow band of low lying landscape extends from the Lincoln Fringe along the edge of the River Witham to Southrey. The landscape is very flat, with dark soils and a large-scale pattern which resembles the fenlands to the south of the county. Field boundaries are typically open, but there are a few remnant clumps of shrubby hawthorn, field maple and willows, as well as a few lines of ash and willow trees. These remnant boundaries are the few landscape features remaining; they provide some degree of screening and boundary demarcation and indicate the low-lying, wetland character of the Landscape.

Landscape Sensitivity: This is a very flat, open, fen like agricultural landscape, with occasional large structures, rivers, dykes and ditches and few other landscape features. Relatively high levels of visibility render most areas sensitive to change. The most sensitive parts of the landscape are:

- remaining trees and shrubby vegetation - vertical elements in this otherwise flat landscape they provide some screening and boundary demarcation;
- extensive views across wide open flat fields which are sensitive to the proliferation of large scale agricultural buildings, and other built development

#### Lincoln Fringe (LCA)

The key characteristics are defined as:

- Flat agricultural landscape with a number of expanded settlements.
- Medium sized fields with low hawthorn hedge boundaries and few hedgerow trees.
- Approaches to settlements generally dominated by the built form.
- Views to Lincoln Cathedral.

#### Landscape Sensitivity:

A relatively flat agricultural landscape with expanded villages and long open views. The most sensitive parts of the landscape are:

- views to Lincoln Cathedral;
- The historic village cores with village greens, churches, mature trees, stone walls etc.
- enclosure roads;
- remaining tracts of open countryside between settlements which often have a relatively nondescript character;
- Trees and hedgerows, particularly on the fringes of settlements.



A convincing case is made that the Lincoln Fringe is the most characteristic of the site itself, an agricultural landscape influenced by suburban (and historic) development. At a site specific level, the site is further influence by the historic uses of the airfield, resulting in a locally distinctive open character, combined with lack of mature vegetation and few field boundaries. The area influenced by adjoining settlements and a solar farm (under construction), intensive farming and historic oil production.

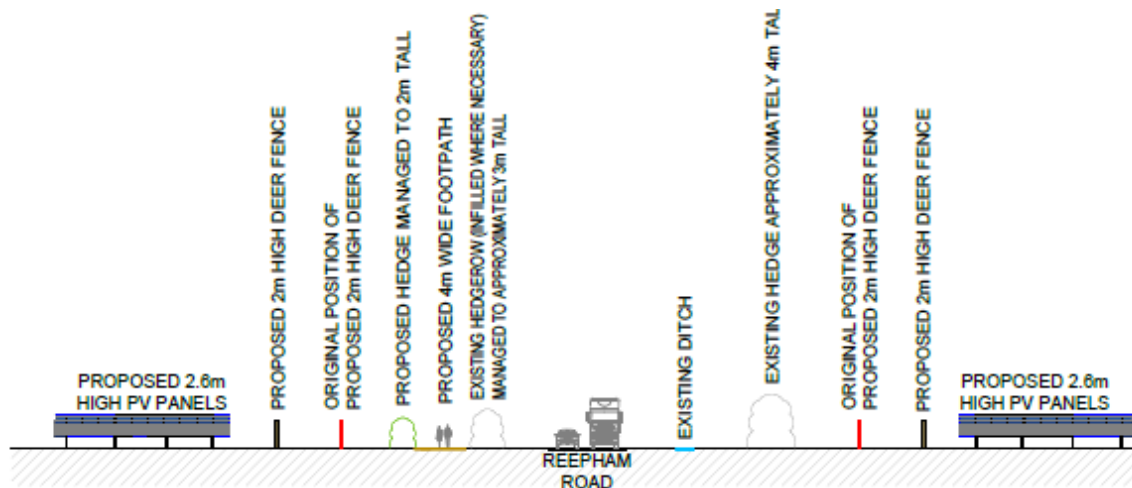
The PPG sets out that the approach to assessing cumulative landscape and visual impact of large scale solar farms is likely to be the same as assessing the impact of wind turbines. However, in the case of ground-mounted solar panels it should be noted that with effective screening and appropriate land topography the area of a zone of visual influence could be zero.

The LVIA states that “Overall, visibility is restricted by topography; the low lying and gently undulating nature of the local area does not provide opportunities for elevated medium to long distant views over the site area. Views from the main receptor to the south, Washingborough, upon locally rising land are restricted by built form and intermediate vegetation. The Fiskerton Road corridor which passes through the site and the near footpath corridors provide the greatest opportunity for visibility over the proposed development.” In terms of assessing

“Visibility of the site at a local level is relatively open, a legacy of the historic airfield use of the site, when all internal field boundaries removed, to create a flat to gently sloping site area. Although the site is open, due to the limited topographic variations, small scale local screening features, trees and scrub blocks, combine to restrict visibility, as is evidenced by the restricted local visibility to the existing solar farm to the east.”

“Although the development is likely to be perceptible to near receptors (focussed to users of Fiskerton Road and the public footpaths), due to the overall height of the panels and the actual visible extents (restricted intermediate visibility by local features) the geographical extent of effects are of a low medium scale, can be mitigated over time, and limited to a local geographical area. A low-medium level of effect is concluded when considering the geographical extent of the development, focussed to the site and immediately adjoining areas.”

The case officer does not take any issue with these findings which are considered reasonable on the basis of the evidence submitted. During the course of the application amendments were submitted increasing the distance from the solar array to both sides of Reepham Road. At its closest it will be approximately 23 metres away rising to a distance of 25 metres. A cross section is reproduced below which is useful as it indicates the intervening uses between the road and the panels.



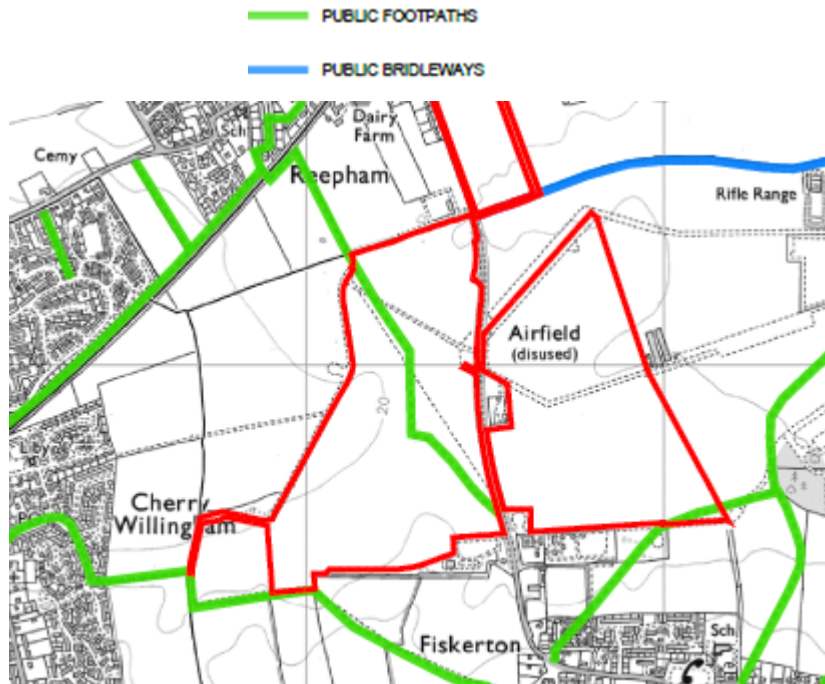
It is inevitable that there will be change to the landscape as it currently exists however there are no local ecological or statutory designations that cross the site. The historic association with the former RAF base is discussed below under Heritage Impacts where it is concluded that subject to the imposition of conditions allowing a greater understanding of the history of the site development would be acceptable. The nature of the development together with the additional landscaping shown on the masterplan that will be subject to conditions requiring details to be submitted and agreed in writing by the LPA and the retention of the majority of existing planting will help to screen and ameliorate the impact of this proposal within its rural context. Concerns have been expressed that this will erode the gap between the three villages leading to coalescence. This point would have more force if the application was seeking permission for a housing development with associated infrastructure that would lead to a permanent urbanisation of the landscape. This is not the case here as changes to the landscape will be reversible. In addition large areas of open space will remain beyond the boundary of the application site. As an example there will be a distance of approximately 400 m from the curtilage of 53 Fiskerton Road in Reepham to the application boundary. It is separated by a minimum distance of 430 m rising to 500 m from Cherry Willingham to the west. From the northern fringe of Fiskerton on Holmfield is a distance of approximately 255m.

It is concluded that subject to the imposition of conditions discussed above that the impact on the character and appearance of the site and wider area would fall within acceptable levels and accord with LP 17.

### **Impacts on existing Public Rights of Way**

Although there a number of rights of way close to and running along the site only 2 actually cut across the application site. Public right of way (Fisk/120/1) enters the southern boundary of the site to the west of Reepham Road and leaves via the northern boundary to the village of Reepham. In the far south eastern corner of the eastern plot footpath Fisk/119/2 crosses the site. These are shown below.

#### Public Footpaths in proximity of the site



The line of Fiskerton /120/1 will remain unaltered and unobstructed by the development with a 12m wide corridor passing through the site. Similarly provision is made for Fiskerton 119/2 with a hedgerow proposed to its north separating it from the solar arrays. In addition there are permissive routes proposed as part of this development. The first route will be along Fiskerton Road providing a pedestrian connection between Fiskerton and Reepham where none exists at present. The second will follow the line of an existing airfield track around the western perimeter of the site providing a connection between existing rights of way (Reep/120/1 and Cher/121/2). The final permissive route will run along the northern boundary of the western site to allow a connection to Fiskerton Road. This will allow a circular walking route to be provided. This is considered to be a benefit of the proposal as it will improve connectivity between existing rights of way. Comments made on the proposal seeking an upgrade of these permissive routes are noted but are not considered relevant to the determination of this application as it will not have any harmful impacts or displace existing provision. Highway Safety is raised as a further reason requiring this to be put in place although it is noted no highway safety objections have been raised to the proposal. The permissive paths put forward by the application are actually not a requirement of the current application and their removal would not give rise to a recommendation of refusal of planning permission.

**Biodiversity and Geodiversity:** LP 21 requires development to minimise impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity; and seek to deliver a net gain in biodiversity and geodiversity. An Ecological assessment which has incorporated a desk study, Extended Phase 1 Habitat and hedgerow surveys, habitat suitability index assessment (HSI) of ponds for great crested newts *Triturus cristatus*, ground-level assessment of trees for bat roost potential and

breeding bird surveys has been submitted. The results of which are **summarised** below:

#### Statutory Designated Sites

No statutory designated sites of international, national/regional or local nature conservation importance have been identified within 10km, 2km or 1km of the site, respectively. A portion of the site does fall within the Impact Risk Zone (IRZ) for Bardney Limewoods, Lincolnshire SSSI, which are a series of woodlands dominated by small-leaved lime *Tilia Cordata*. The closest of these Woodlands is located approximately 4.6km to the east of the site boundary.

#### Non-Statutory Sites

The desk study consultation identified three non-statutory sites of nature conservation value

- South Delph Local Wildlife Site – designated for its wetland habitats, located approximately 950m south;
- Cherry Willingham Fish Pond – pond with historical records of great crested newt, surrounded by residential development, located approximately 390m west; and
- Bush Reed, former meadow, now damp rough grassland, located Approximately 950m south.

#### Amphibians

No waterbodies considered suitable to provide breeding habitat for amphibians, including great crested newts, were present within the site. The ditches contained only small volumes of very shall water, considered to be ephemeral in nature, and therefore not providing suitable breeding habitat. The desk study identified a single waterbody within 250m of the site boundary. This was located approximately 70m north-west of the site boundary on the OS map however on inspection in the field it was found to no longer be present.

#### Reptiles

Grass snake records were provided by LERC, located 860m to the west of the site and 1km south. Small areas of suitable habitat were restricted to the site boundaries only, which were considered likely only to provide commuting and/or foraging habitat to reptiles as part of their wider environment. These boundary habitats are to remain largely unaffected by works, and therefore any impacts on reptiles are considered negligible.

The majority of arable land within the site was cultivated and therefore of negligible value for reptiles due to its homogenous structure and intensive management. The fallow arable field supported only sparse vegetation and therefore did not provide sufficient structure or cover to be suitable for reptiles.

#### Bats

One tree with low bat roost potential is located along the northern boundary. This will be retained as part of the development proposals. All boundary hedgerows, mature trees and woodland are to be retained and will be incorporated into the site wide landscape proposals, therefore commuting and foraging bats will not be impacted by the development.

#### Birds

Breeding Bird Surveys were carried out. A total of 43 bird species were recorded during the breeding bird survey. The total estimated number of Breeding species on site during the surveys was 18 - 25. The rural location provided suitable habitat for a range of common and widespread species.

### Badgers

No records of badger setts were returned in the desk study, however records of dead badger to the south of the site indicate that badger are present within the wider area. Field surveys undertaken in 2019 and 2020 recorded one active badger sett and one active latrine within the site. The sett was considered to be a subsidiary owing to its size and number of active holes but lack of surrounding evidence such as well-worn paths or latrines.

It is recommended that prior to commencement of works (including vegetation clearance), an updated badger survey should be undertaken by a suitably experienced ecologist. Mitigation measures are also set out.

### Conclusion

The majority of the site comprises cultivated and fallow arable land of low species diversity and low ecological value. The small areas of grasslands located at the edges of arable fields and along road verges and areas of ephemeral vegetation covering hardstanding paths were limited in species diversity and size, and therefore unlikely to represent habitats of recognised conservation value. The habitats considered to be of greater ecological value within the site were restricted to the site boundaries and included the small area of broad-leaved woodland and hedgerows.

### Ecological Enhancement Proposed

- Native species-tussock forming grassland which is to be seeded within the majority of the site, around and beneath the solar panels.
- Native species-rich wildflower grassland which is to be seeded around the outer edge of the solar farm and along paths through the site.
- Tree and hedgerow planting – using native species and good landscape planting, to create a substantive habitat corridor along the northern, western and central boundaries, linking to other areas of hedgerow habitat;
- Encouragement of planting of fruit tree and hedgerow shrubs to provide resources for invertebrates, including pollinating insects, and the fauna that preys upon them such as birds and bats;
- Provision of small gaps (13cm x 13cm) under the security fences to allow the free movement of hedgehogs and brown hare (as well as other wildlife) into the solar farm.
- Measures for protection of habitats (e.g. hedgerows and trees) during construction, and enhancement as part of the development proposals, to be provided as part of a Construction and Environmental Management Plan and Ecological Management Plan.

The loss of arable crop foraging will be replaced with seed producing verge species. Invertebrates will increase on site from the proposed significant increase in grassland habitat and a reduction in pesticide use across the site, providing increased foraging opportunities.

Subject to the imposition of conditions requiring a further badger survey to be carried out; detailed landscaping proposals to be submitted for written approval, together with a construction and environmental / ecological management plan with subsequent implementation in accordance with approved details there is no reason to withhold consent on the grounds of impact to biodiversity and geodiversity interests as the proposals would accord with LP 21.

### **Archaeology and Heritage**

Policy LP 25 sets out that development proposals should protect, conserve and seek opportunities to enhance the historic environment of Central Lincolnshire. Development affecting archaeological remains, whether known or potential, designated or undesignated, should take every practical and reasonable step to protect and, where possible, enhance their significance.

Archaeology: There are no known below ground remains within the area of the proposed solar farm but there are two known sites of Roman settlement close to its boundary in both the north and southwest. In light of these areas of higher potential, the developer has carried out a geophysical survey targeting the parts of the site nearest to these known focuses of Roman activity to inform the application process. The results, particularly in the northern part of the site have been affected by disturbance caused by the 20th century use of the site as an airfield. However, it has indicated some potential linear features in the southwest part of the site, which LCC recommends should be investigated further during a programme of trial trenching to confirm their date, depth and significance. It is considered reasonable and proportionate to deal with this request by way of condition prohibiting commencement of development prior to the required works being carried out. On this basis subject to the imposition of appropriately worded conditions impacts on archaeology do not constitute a reason to withhold consent.

Heritage: A Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) was submitted by the developer in support of the application. The comprehensive comments from LCC Historic Services (LCC HS) above emphasise the former RAF sites historical importance and associations. All surviving runways and perimeter tracks within the site will be retained. LCC HS conclude that there will be unavoidable impacts on the setting of the airfield, as a feature within the landscape, and how it is perceived by visitors. It is proposed as part of this application that that these impacts are offset through new measures to better reveal the significance of the heritage asset for the public. Paragraph 200 of the NPPF states that “Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its

significance) should be treated favourably. This is echoed within policy LP25 which states proposals will be supported where they:

"e) Promote opportunities to better reveal significance of heritage assets"

The proposals include the installation of new interpretation boards about the airfield's history on the existing footpaths and through the provision of "an online link to help in the provision of further outreach to the public." LCC HS "is supportive of such measures as this that utilise the rich resources of the county's heritage to create new public benefits in terms of wider outreach and interpretation, and contribute to sense of place and the enjoyment of the historic environment. The new permissive paths will also enable greater public access to the historic site than at present, better integrating it into the local community." This could also assist the visitor economy as set out in greater detail above as the county's aviation heritage is seen as a market leading offer and priority in the current Greater Lincolnshire Destination Management Plan. As LCC HS comment "Lincolnshire County Council, and partners including West Lindsey District Council have for this reason carried out a range of aviation heritage projects under the 'Aviation Heritage Lincolnshire' banner to enhance this offer. The provision of new interpretation and online content as part of this development should therefore be seen in this context, and designed so as to support existing efforts by the Aviation Heritage Lincolnshire partnership to ensure maximum benefit for the local community and the visitor economy.

Subject to the imposition of conditions suggested by LCC HS to ensure that the development better reveals the significance of former RAF Fiskerton, there are no reasons to withhold consent on the grounds of harm to Heritage Assets and it would be in accordance with LP 25.

**Aircraft (Safeguarding):**

No objections are raised from the MOD or NATS to the proposal.

**Health and Safety Executive (Explosives Inspectorate):**

Following receipt of the original comments further clarification was sought by the case officer. In response they confirmed that they "don't 'object' to any proposals. We merely point out that should the development go ahead we may have need to reduce the quantity of explosives on the adjacent site, which may in turn have an adverse effect on the business carried on at the explosives site." In order to avoid any impact on this existing business which would not be acceptable revised plans were submitted which relocated the transformers almost 200 metres to the north of Primetake outside the exclusion zone. On this basis there would be no need for the HSE to make any changes to the operation of the existing business.

**Impacts arising from the construction phase**

A Construction (Traffic) Method Statement (CTMS) has been submitted to support the submission. The main traffic and transport related effects will be associated with the movement of HGVs to and from the site during the construction and decommissioning phase of the development. The

construction phase is expected to last 8 months. Access to the application site during the construction period will be via Reepham Road, utilising the existing site access to the proposed set down area. Within the site, the former runway and perimeter track will be used as internal service roads. Additional service roads will be constructed from these to access all areas of the site. As part of the adjacent consented solar farm vehicles accessed the site from the A158 to the north through Reepham as this was the most direct route. It is proposed to adopt the same route from the A158 before turning south on to Kennel Lane, then east through Reepham, then onto Reepham Road before turning west into the site access.

It is proposed that hours of operation are Monday to Friday 0800 hours to 1800 hours and Saturdays 0800 hours to 1600 hours. To avoid any conflict with schools in the area, deliveries by large vehicles will be restricted during the hours of 0815-0915 and 1500-1600 during school term time. During the construction phase there is potential for disturbance to visitors at the RAF Fiskerton Memorial. To minimise the possible disturbance, dates and times of services at the memorial are to be requested and vehicle movements will be halted during these periods.

Indicative HGV Movements are set out in the table below.

*Table 4.1 Indicative HGV Deliveries during Construction Phase*

Construction Activity	Month							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Delivery of plant, equipment and materials	60	60	50	20	20	20	10	
Erection of security fencing and construction compound	30	30	30					
Cabling on site		20		15			10	
Delivery of inverters, transformer & control equipment				15	15	10	10	
Delivery of frames & support posts			20	20	20	20		
Delivery of PV panels			60	60	60	60		
Removal of plant and equipment							10	30
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>30</b>

The construction phase of the solar farm would result in the temporary generation of construction and staff related traffic over the 8 month construction period. During this period, there will be approximately 785 deliveries to site, which on average is equivalent of 7 deliveries each working day. This is not considered an unacceptable level. Subject to conditioning implementation in accordance with the measures set out in the CTMS impacts arising out of the construction phase do not represent a reason to withhold consent.



### **Highway Safety**

No objections are raised subject to reconstruction of the proposed access. The revised proposals have been submitted and have been confirmed as acceptable by the Highways Authority.

### **Contamination**

The requested contaminated land and intrusive investigation report has been submitted as requested.

### **Cable Routing**

There are two possible routes proposed for a cable to link it to the National Grid. Route 1 runs along Fiskerton road whilst route 2 would be across fields. The developer has requested that the choice of route be dealt with by imposition of planning condition. As route 2 would have a lesser impact it is considered appropriate to approve that route and require approval in writing to any variation.

### **Agricultural Land Classification**

The PPG encourages the effective use of land focussing large scale solar farms on previously developed and non-agricultural land, provided that it is not of high environmental value. It does not however rule out the use of agricultural land if the proposed use of any agricultural land has been shown to be necessary and poorer quality land has been used in preference to higher quality land; and (ii) the proposal allows for continued agricultural use where applicable and/or encourages biodiversity improvements around arrays. There is also a presumption in LP 19 against photovoltaic solar farm proposals on the best and most versatile agricultural land). The best and most versatile land is defined as Grades 1, 2 and 3a. As the site falls within 3b (moderate) it is of poorer quality and will encourage the biodiversity improvements set out in the PPG.

### **Other Matters**

#### Representations received.

The concerns in relation to the impacts of HGVs travelling through Reepham are noted however no highway safety concerns are raised by the Local Highway Authority. In relation to disturbance effects it is noted that these will only be for a temporary period. The request for the developer to resurface the main road through the village would not be necessary, relevant to planning and to the development to be permitted, enforceable, precise and reasonable in all other respects. Policy LP4 is not relevant to the determination of this application. Policy LP23 is quoted however the site does not fall within an area identified as a Local Green Space on the Policies Map. The reference to a "much used unofficial open space" north of Primetake being lost" is noted however this is presumably in private ownership with no rights of access and is not a relevant material consideration. Pre-application community consultation is not a requirement of the policies relating to the determination of the application. Reference to very little planning gain is noted however this is not a material consideration determining the acceptability or otherwise of this application and has no relevance. The planning conditions address the

matters relevant to make the application acceptable. The request to delay making a decision on this application to enable a public consultation to take place is not considered reasonable. Prohibition on approval of this application until the adjacent Solar Farm is completed would not be lawful. References to reports of fly tipping, untidiness of existing site use as a driving school are not relevant to the determination of the application.

### **Planning balance and conclusion**

There is a general presumption in favour of renewable and low carbon energy and infrastructure. Support is found in LP19 where the benefit of the development outweighs the harm caused and it is demonstrated that any harm will be mitigated as far as is reasonably possible. Paragraph 154 of the NPPF indicates that such applications should be approved if its impacts are (or can be made) acceptable. It is considered that the benefits of the proposal are not limited to the generation of renewable energy that would export enough electricity to power over 13,000 homes per year and offset approximately 13,300 tonnes of CO2 every year, the equivalent of taking over 5,000 cars off the road. There will be no loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land. There will be an impact on the current character and appearance of the site however as the solar arrays reach a maximum height of 2.6 metres above ground level the retention of existing hedgerows / trees and making good any “gaps” in existing hedgerows together with additional landscaping is considered sufficient to help screen and ameliorate the development within its rural setting. It will be in accordance with LP21 and LP26. Due to nature of the development together with a distance of approximately 255 metres to over 500 metres from the boundaries of the site to the surrounding villages no coalescence will occur and it is noted that there is no protective landscape designation on the site. There will be an impact on the setting of part of the former RAF Fiskerton although this will be offset by proposed measures to help better reveal its significance which are supported by LCC Historic Services. Archaeological interests will be secured by condition and this will be in accordance with LP25. Ecological enhancements are proposed and adverse impacts on the interests of biodiversity are not considered to occur. It would be in accordance with the requirements of LP21. No objections are raised on the grounds of Highway Safety and the proposal would accord with LP13.

Therefore having considered the proposal against the provisions of the Development plan in the first instance, as well as against all other material considerations including the National Planning Policy Framework 2019 and National Planning Practice Guidance it is considered that the proposal would not have any unacceptable impacts and a grant of permission subject to conditions specified above is considered appropriate

**Recommendation:** Grant Planning Permission subject to the following conditions:

**Conditions stating the time by which the development must be commenced:**

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

**Reason:** To conform with Section 91 (1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

**Conditions which apply or require matters to be agreed before the development commenced:**

2. No development shall be carried out until details of a trail trench evaluation informed by the results of the previous geophysical survey has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The results of the trail trench evaluation including proposed remediation if required shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and works on the site shall be carried out in full accordance with the details approved.

**Reason:** To ascertain the significance and condition of archaeological remains that have the potential to be impacted by the development in accordance with Policy LP 25 of the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan and paragraph 189 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

3. No development shall be carried out until a detailed Landscape Scheme which accords with the submitted "Landscape Master Plan date 24.11.20" has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved details shall be carried out in the first planting and seeding seasons following the completion of the development, and any trees or plants which within a period of 5 years from the completion of the development die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species.

**Reason:** To help ameliorate the impact of the development within its rural setting and in the interests of biodiversity in accordance with policies LP17, LP21 and LP26 of the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan.

4. No development shall take place until an updated badger survey has been undertaken by a suitably experienced ecologist in accordance with the recommendation of the submitted Badger Survey Report date Nov 2020 and the results submitted for the written approval of the local planning authority;

**Reason:** In the interests of biodiversity in accordance with policy LP21 of the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan.

**Conditions which apply or are to be observed during the course of the development:**

5. With the exception of the detailed matters referred to by the conditions of this approval and the outline planning permission, the development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the following drawings and documents:

- Site Layout date 11.05.21 ARM1007/19/03 Revision 2;
- Permissive Footpath Details date 20.04.21 ARM1007 19 10 Revision 1;
- Reepham Road Boundary Details date 20.04.21 ARM1007 19 15 Revision 1
- PV Panel Details ARM1007/19/04 REV 0;
- Transformer Station ARM1007/19/05 REV 0;
- Substation and point of connection ARM1007/19/07 REV 0;
- Storage Cabins ARM1007/19/08 REV 0;
- Operational, Welfare and Office Cabins ARM1007/19/09 REV 0
- Security Fence Details date 29/7/2020 ARM1007/19/12
- Indicative Set Down Area date 29/9/2020 ARM1007/19/14 REV D
- Badger Survey Nov 2020
- Breeding Bird Report Nov 2020
- Ecological Appraisal Nov 2020
- Landscape Master Plan date 24.11.20 ARM1007/07/01 Revision 3
- CCTV Details date 29/7/2020 ARM1007/19/11
- Construction (Traffic) Method Statement date November 2020

**Reason:** To ensure the development proceeds in accordance with the approved plans in the interests of proper planning.

**6.** Notwithstanding the details shown on the Proposed Cable Route drawing ARM1007/19/13 permission is granted for the route that connects to Moor Lane without using Fiskerton Road. Any variation must be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

**Reason:** To reduce potential noise and disturbance in accordance with Policy LP26 of the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan

**7.** Work shall take place on the site in full accordance with the following reports, particularly in relation to mitigation and enhancement

- Badger Survey Nov 2020
- Breeding Bird Report Nov 2020
- Ecological Appraisal Nov 2020

**Reason:** To protect the interests of biodiversity in accordance with policy LP21 of the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

**8.** Activities shall take place in full accordance with the Construction Traffic Method Statement with particular reference to limiting the hours of operation from Monday to Friday 0800 hours to 1800 hours and Saturdays 0800 hours to 1600 hours and at no other times and the restriction on deliveries by large vehicles during the hours of 0815-0915 and 1500-1600 during school term time.

**Reason:** In the interests of highway safety and reducing noise and disturbance in accordance with Policies LP 13 and LP26 of the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan.

**Conditions which apply or relate to matters which are to be observed following completion of the development:**

9. Prior to the solar farm becoming operational details of a Heritage Strategy shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This shall include details of the number location and content of a series of interpretation boards along existing footpaths and permissive paths and a digital resource. This will be in accordance with a brief to be produced by LCC Historic Services in collaboration with West Lindsey District Council's Tourism Officer and Aviation Heritage Lincolnshire. The approved details shall be installed prior to the solar farm becoming operational and maintained and retained thereafter.

**Reason:** To offset the impacts on the historic environment by better revealing the significance of the Heritage Asset to the Public in accordance with Policy LP 25 of the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan and paragraphs 192 and 200 of the NPPF, which will also promote the county's aviation heritage in accordance with Policy LP7 of the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan

10. The solar panels shall be removed from the site on or before the 26th July 2061. Following the removal of the solar panels, the site shall be reinstated to its state prior to any works commencing.

**Reason:** In the interests of visual amenity of the surrounding area to accord with the National Planning Policy Framework, local policies LP17, LP19 and LP55 of the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan 2012-2036

Prepared by: George Backovic

Date: 13th May 2021

Signed



Signed:



Authorising Officer: Date: 14/05/2021