



**Prosperous Communities  
Committee**

**Tuesday, 15 July 2025**

**Subject: One Earth Solar Farm - WLDC submissions**

Report by:	Director of Planning, Regeneration & Communities
Contact Officer:	Russell Clarkson Development Management Team Manager  russell.clarkson@west-lindsey.gov.uk
Purpose / Summary:	To agree to the submission of a Local Impact Report (LIR) and Written Representations (WR) to the One Earth Solar Farm Development Consent Order (DCO) Examination

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. To agree the submission of a Local Impact Report (LIR) to the One Earth Solar Farm DCO Examination. To delegate authority to the Director of Planning, Regeneration and Communities following consultation with the Chair of this committee, to complete, finalise and submit the LIR to the Examination by the required deadline, having taken into consideration the committee's comments;
2. To agree the submission of accompanying Written Representations (WR) to the One Earth Solar Farm DCO Examination. To delegate authority to the Director of Planning, Regeneration and Communities following consultation with the Chair of this committee, to complete, finalise and submit the WR to the Examination by the required deadline, having taken into consideration the committee's comments.

## IMPLICATIONS

### **Legal:**

At a meeting of this committee on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2023 the scheme of decision and delegation protocols for NSIP applications was approved. This report is aligned with the approved process.

[Prosperous Communities Committee - Tuesday, 1st August, 2023 6.30 pm](#)

Legal Services Lincolnshire have instructed a Barrister from Kings Chambers to provide legal oversight of the process.

**(N.B.) Where there are legal implications the report MUST be seen by the MO**

### **Financial : FIN/45/26/PC/SST**

Resourcing of the NSIP process has been subject to a separate decision from this paper. Other NSIP projects have incurred costs of around £70k in fees.

WLDC has appointed Atkins Réalis to provide consultancy support and Counsel from Kings Chambers.

The Authority will seek to negotiate a Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) with the applicant. This is a voluntary legal agreement between the parties, where the developer may contribute towards costs incurred by the Authority in engaging with the application. However, this is subject to negotiation with the applicant, where any contributions will need to be agreed between the parties.

**(N.B.) All committee reports MUST have a Fin Ref**

### **Staffing :**

Resourcing implications for the NSIP projects has been subject to a separate decision from this paper.

**(N.B.) Where there are staffing implications the report MUST have a HR Ref**

### **Equality and Diversity including Human Rights :**

The Local Impact Report (LIR) seeks to identify all those members of the local community that may be impacted by the development of the One Earth Solar Farm.

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**Data Protection Implications :**

None expected to arise from this report.

**Climate Related Risks and Opportunities :**

The proposed development is a renewable energy project comprising a 740MW installed capacity solar farm that will import electricity to the national grid. It also includes a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) to store solar energy and release it to the grid in periods of demand.

The developer anticipates the project will generate enough electricity to power more than 200,000 homes.

**Section 17 Crime and Disorder Considerations :**

The identification of any potential crime and disorder considerations will be addressed as part of the Local Impact Report.

**Health Implications:**

The identification of any anticipated health implications for the local community are considered as part of the Local Impact Report.

**Title and Location of any Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:**

Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: Advice for Local authorities:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nationally-significant-infrastructure-projects-advice-for-local-authorities>

National Infrastructure Page: One Earth Solar Farm

<https://national-infrastructure-consenting.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/EN010159>

National Policy Statements for Energy Infrastructure:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-policy-statements-for-energy-infrastructure>

Prosperous Communities Committee 1st August 2023 Delegation of Responsibility for Participation in NSIP examinations

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**Risk Assessment :****Call in and Urgency:**

**Is the decision one which Rule 14.7 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?**

i.e. is the report exempt from being called in due to urgency (in consultation with C&I chairman)

Yes

☐

No

x

**Key Decision:**

A matter which affects two or more wards, or has significant financial implications

Yes

x

No

☐

## **Executive Summary**

1. The One Earth Solar Farm (OESF) is an energy project comprising ground mounted solar photovoltaic arrays and on-site energy storage, along with associated development. It is stated to have an installed capacity of 740MW and would have its grid connection point at the decommissioned High Marnham power station site (Nottinghamshire). The development is being undertaken by Ørsted and PS Renewables.
2. The 1,409Ha site straddles the County boundary between Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire. Approximately 206Ha would fall within Lincolnshire and the district of West Lindsey.
3. The site currently comprises arable fields to the south / south-east of Newton-on-Trent. The site's northern-most boundary is approximately 200 metres from the village.
4. Due to its scale (>50MW), the development qualifies as a 'nationally significant infrastructure project', or NSIP. NSIPs are subject to a separate consenting regime, overseen by the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) on the behalf of the Secretary of State.
5. The application was submitted to PINS in February 2025 and formally accepted on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2025. It will now be subject to a public examination, overseen by an Examining Authority (ExA), scheduled to run 8<sup>th</sup> July 2025 – 8<sup>th</sup> January 2026. Following closure of the examination, the ExA will make its recommendations to the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, who will make the final decision as to whether to grant a Development Consent Order (DCO).
6. As part of the examination project, West Lindsey District Council, a Host Authority, is invited to submit both a Local Impact Report (LIR) and any further Written Representations (WR). The draft examination timetable sets out that this should be submitted by deadline 1 on Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> July 2025.
7. It is recommended to the Committee that it agrees to the submission of both a LIR and WR to be made to the OESF Public Examination, by the required deadline.

## 1 Introduction

- 1.1 The One Earth Solar Farm (OESF) is an energy project comprising ground mounted solar photovoltaic arrays and on-site energy storage, along with associated development. It is stated to have an installed capacity of 740MW and would have its grid connection point at the decommissioned High Marnham power station site (Nottinghamshire). The development is being undertaken by Ørsted and PS Renewables.
- 1.2 The Proposed Development encompasses approximately 1,409 hectares (ha) of land and falls across two county boundaries and three local authority boundaries.
- 1.3 Approximately 1,203Ha of the site would fall within the county of Nottinghamshire (within the Districts of Bassetlaw; and Newark and Sherwood). Approximately 206Ha would fall within Lincolnshire and the district of West Lindsey.
- 1.4 The development is within the south-western most corner of the district extending across the administrative boundaries into both Bassetlaw and Newark and Sherwood.
- 1.5 It is to be located on agricultural land – arable fields approximately 200 metres to the south and south-east of Newton on Trent.
- 1.6 This area does include some isolated farmsteads, poultry units, oil wells and Anglian Water facilities, which are excluded from the Order Limits (which define the application site), but are otherwise enclosed by them.
- 1.7 A copy of the site location plan showing the Order Limits, is provided at **appendix 1**.
- 1.8 The development is proposed to include the following elements:
  - > PV Modules;
  - > Mounting Structures;
  - > Power Conversion Stations (PCS);
  - > Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS);
  - > Onsite Substations and Ancillary Buildings;
  - > Low Voltage Distribution Cables;
  - > Grid Connection Cables;
  - > Fencing, security and ancillary infrastructure;
  - > Access Tracks; and
  - > Green Infrastructure (GI)

The application seeks consent for 60 years.

- 1.9 The Illustrative Masterplan (**appendix 2**) suggests that the area within West Lindsey would primarily accommodate solar PV panels (with power conversion stations and supporting infrastructure) and is also a proposed location for a substation and BESS site.

- 1.10 The proposed BESS site would be set approximately 400m to the east of the A1133, to the immediate south-east of the Anglian Water Hall Water Treatment Works. The BESS site would be approximately 900m to the south of Newton on Trent.
- 1.11 As an energy generating station that would have a capacity that exceeds 50 megawatts (MW), the development qualifies as a Nationally Significant infrastructure Project (NSIP). The Planning Act 2008 ('PA2008') introduced a process intended to "*streamline the decision-making process for major infrastructure projects*". An NSIP therefore follows a different process to those planning applications that are typically considered by West Lindsey District Council, in its role as the Local Planning Authority.
- 1.12 The Planning Inspectorate (PINS) are the Government Agency responsible for examining applications for NSIPs, and will appoint Inspectors, known as the Examining Authority (ExA). Following examination, the ExA will make a recommendation to the relevant Secretary of State (SoS) who will ultimately take the decision whether to grant a Development Consent Order (DCO). For an energy proposal such as the OESF, the relevant SoS will be the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero (current role holder: The Rt Hon Ed Milliband MP).
- 1.13 The Local Authority does not therefore determine the application. However, local authorities are strongly encouraged to participate in the NSIP process and examination. The Government Guidance states:
- "Whilst the relevant Secretary of State will decide if development consent should be granted for a NSIP application it is in the local authority's interests to:*
- proactively engage with the applicant on their proposed scheme, particularly during the pre-application stage;*
  - take part in all the stages of the NSIP process"*
- 1.14 As land within West Lindsey is included within the development boundary – WLDC qualifies as a Host Local Authority and is a statutory consultee. Two of the key contributions a local authority may make to the process are through the submission of Written Representations (WR); and a Local Impact Report (LIR).

## **2 The Examination Process**

- 2.1 The DCO consenting process is administered by the Planning Inspectorate, on the behalf of the Secretary of State.
- 2.2 There are six stages to the process:

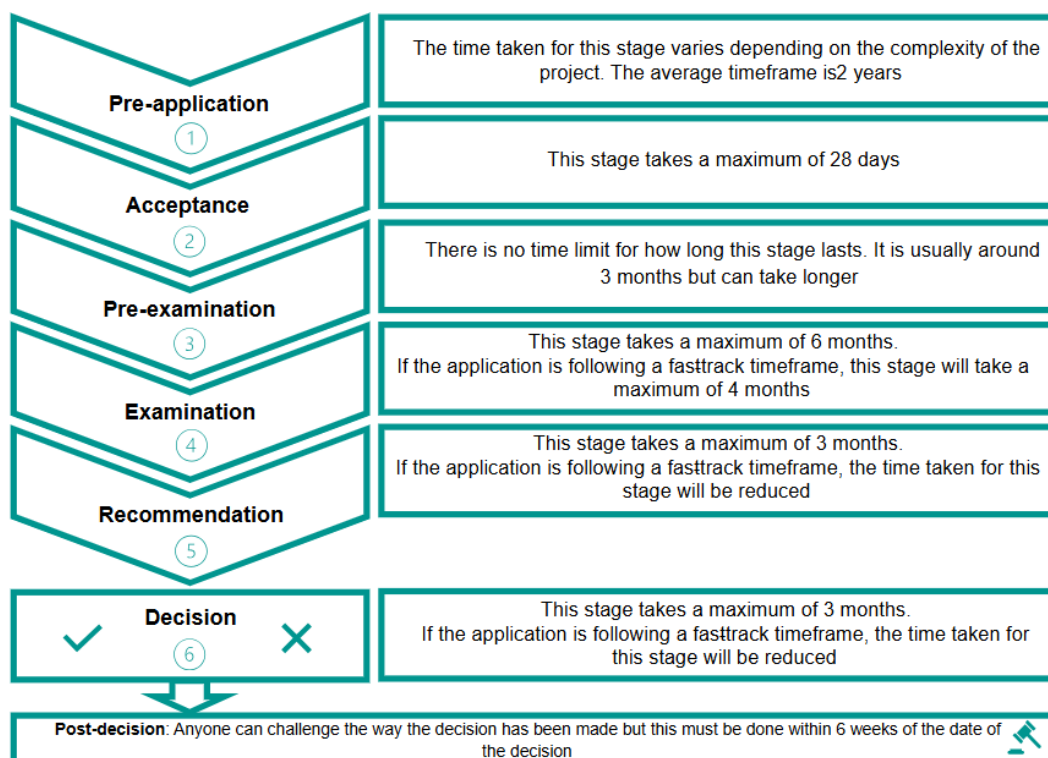


Figure 1: Stages of the NSIP Process (taken from Guidance: [‘Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: The stages of the NSIP process and how you can have your say’](#))

- 2.3 The OESF project is, due to commence the six-month **examination stage** on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> July.
- 2.4 The application was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2025, and was formally accepted (stage 2) on the 27<sup>th</sup> March 2025.
- 2.5 On the 10<sup>th</sup> June 2025, the Examining Authority (ExA) published its “Rule 6” letter (The letter was updated and reissued on 17<sup>th</sup> June to allow for a venue change). This announces that a Preliminary meeting will be held on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> July 2025. The preliminary meeting is a procedural meeting run by the ExA to discuss the examination process and timescales. It marks the start of the 6-month examination process.
- 2.6 The ‘Rule 6’ letter (see **appendix 4**) contains a provisional timetable that anticipates the examination will run until Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> January 2025. It sets out 8 deadlines throughout the process.
- 2.7 Hearings are scheduled for 8<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> July 2025, in Lincoln. This includes Open Floor Hearings where registered members of the public can speak directly to the Examining Authority. WLDC Officials continue to liaise with the “7000 Acres Group” a local pressure group who have actively participated in previous NSIP examinations and represent concerned residents. The timetable reserves a further two



weeks for the holding of public hearings, if required (w/c 1<sup>st</sup> September; w/c 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2025).

- 2.8 Deadline 1 on Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> July is given as the deadline for local authorities to submit their Local Impact Report (LIR) and for interested parties (which includes local authorities) to submit their written representations (WR). Whilst the final timetable will only be published after the preliminary meeting is held, it is recommended that WLDC is prepared in order to submit its representations by the indicative date for deadline 1.

- 2.9 The '[Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: Advice for Local Authorities](#)' advice note states that during the pre-examination period:

*“The local authority should begin to prepare their **LIR [Local Impact Report]**. Early preparation of this important technical document will help to ensure that it includes a comprehensive, evidence-based assessment of the local impacts of the project...*

*Host and neighbouring local authorities may also wish to consider preparing a **written representation [WR]**. This should not repeat what has been included in other submissions such as the relevant representation or LIR. Local authorities may decide not to send a written representation. However, the written representation is an opportunity to provide further details on evidence that may not have been available before, or to expand on any issues already raised.”*

- 2.10 It is therefore recommended that the Committee resolves to now submit both a LIR and WR to the examination, with the intention of being prepared to submit by the anticipated deadline of 29<sup>th</sup> July.

### 3.0 Other Solar Projects

- 3.1 The OESF is now the fifth “nationally significant” solar project to be proposed within the District. Figure 2 below summarises the other projects.

Project Name	Approximate Solar Capacity (MW)	Approximate battery storage capacity	Extent of Order Limits(Ha)	Consent Process Stage
<b>Gate Burton Solar Project</b>	531MW	500MWh	824	DCO Granted (July 2024)
<b>Cottam Solar Project</b>	600MW	1357MWh/ 2773MWh	1,451	DCO Granted (September 2024)
<b>West Burton Solar Project</b>	480MW	159MWh	886.4	DCO Granted (January 2025)
<b>Tillbridge Solar</b>	500MW	tbc	1,345	Recommendation (decision due by October 2025)

One Earth Solar Farm	740MW	tbc	1,409 (1203Ha in Nottinghamshire; 206Ha in Lincolnshire)	Examination commences 8 <sup>th</sup> July 2025
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*Figure 2: Summary of Solar NSIPs in West Lindsey and consenting stage*

- 3.2 The diagram at **appendix 3** shows the site in context to other known major and nationally significant developments in Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire.
- 3.3 The cumulative effects of development will need to be considered, as well as the effects of the development in solus.

#### **4.0 Local Impact Report (LIR)**

- 4.1 A LIR is defined in legislation as ‘*a report in writing giving details of the likely impact of the proposed development on the authority’s area (or any part of that area).*’ (Planning Act 2008 Section 60(3)).
- 4.2 It is not a requirement for West Lindsey DC to submit an LIR, and to do so is voluntary. However, where one is submitted, the SoS is placed under a statutory duty to have regard to any Local Impact Report when making his decision. The National Infrastructure Planning advice note states that “*Therefore, local authorities should not underestimate the importance of the report.*”
- 4.3 The Advice note states that “*The report should cover any topic the local authority consider is relevant to the impact of the project on their area and the local communities affected... The purpose of the LIR is to make the Examining Authority aware of the potential impacts of the project based on local knowledge. It is a technical evidence-based assessment of all the impacts. The LIR is therefore not the document where the local authority should set out its objections or support for the application*”
- 4.4 It further states “*The LIR should include a statement of positive, neutral and negative local impacts. However, it does not need to include a balancing exercise between positive and negative. The Examining Authority will carry out a balancing exercise of relevant impacts, including local impacts specifically reported in the LIR.*”
- 4.5 In preparation for the Examination, a draft LIR has been produced and is attached to these papers (**appendix 5**).
- 4.6 The LIR is structured to reflect the key environmental headlines in the applicant’s Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and has the following headlines:

### **Local Context**

*Providing key information regarding the characteristics of the West Lindsey District, including local landscape character and sensitivity.*

### **Legislative and Policy Context**

*Setting out the relevant legislation and policy important to the examination and determination of the application. This includes an assessment of how the development applies to the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan 2023.*

### **Cumulative impacts**

*Explaining the key impacts of the OESF cumulatively with other NSIP projects in the West Lindsey District. Topics include:*

- ***Lifespan of the projects***

*The impacts of the 60 year lifespan of all of the projects on the district and how they should be treated as ‘permanent’ for the purpose of decision making*

- ***Landscape and visual***

*The cumulative impacts on landscape character and visual effects across the district.*

- ***Traffic and transport***

*The amenity impacts of construction traffic in terms of the volume of traffic from multiple projects using local roads and disruption caused by traffic management over the cumulative construction period.*

- ***Tourism impacts***

*Cumulative impact of all projects on tourism is terms of availability of tourist accommodation and impact on the attractiveness of the area for visitors.*

- ***Agricultural land***

*The cumulative impact on the loss of land for the production of food.*

- ***Maintenance and replacement***

*The cumulative impact of multiple projects carrying out maintenance and replacement of solar farm infrastructure throughout the lifespan of the projects. Impacts include noise, air quality, general disruption, traffic, environmental impacts and the approach to the management of waste/recycling.*

### **Project specific impacts**

*Explaining the key impacts of the OESF in solus, in the West Lindsey District. Topics include:*

- **Need case**

*Overarching commentary recognising current Government policy with regard to the need for renewable energy generation.*

- **Project design**

*Views on the approach/methodology applied by the applicant in designing the project. Impacts will include the design decisions around site layout and the extent to which environmental constraints have been avoided.*

- **Landscape and visual**

*The impact on landscape character and the visual impacts experienced by communities and visitors.*

- **Agricultural land**

*The impacts of the loss of land currently available for food production, including the loss of Best and Most Versatile land ('BMV land').*

- **Traffic and transport**

*The impacts of construction traffic in terms of noise, disruption to communities due to traffic management, and the justification for all of the construction access points proposed.*

- **Tourism**

*The potential impact on tourism in terms of availability of tourist accommodation and negative impact on the attractiveness of the area for visitors.*

- **Cultural Heritage**

*The potential impacts on assets including the nearby Roman Fort and Royal Observer Corps monitoring post Scheduled Monument.*

- **Maintenance and replacement**

*The impact of carrying out maintenance and replacement of solar farm infrastructure throughout the lifespan of the projects. Impacts include noise, air quality, general disruption, traffic, environmental impacts and the approach to the management of waste/recycling*

- **BESS & Fire Safety**

*Recognising that the development will introduce a risk that will require mitigation and careful liaison with Lincolnshire Fire & Rescue.*

- **Draft Development Consent Order (DCO)**

*The process of securing the approval of 'requirements', including timescales for determination and application fees.*

- 4.7 Each chapter follows best practice in setting out the local planning policy context, an assessment of anticipated local impacts (positive, neutral and negative), and any requirements that may mitigate any harm. A summary is provided at the back of the LIR, setting out where we identify positive, negative and neutral impacts.
- 4.8 The draft LIR identifies a number of local impacts that may arise from the development. It sets out that WLDC has significant concerns regarding the cumulative impact of the scheme with other NSIP solar generating station projects. The likely impacts experienced during construction, operation and decommissioning will have significant adverse impacts upon the natural environment, character and communities within the West Lindsey District. The OESF project on its own merits will also give rise to significant adverse impacts on the natural environment and the amenity and lives of communities living in the near and surrounding area to the scheme.
- 4.9 It anticipates that there will likely be significant local impacts as a result of the development (both cumulatively with other projects and individually) on such matters as:
- Project design;
  - Landscape and visual impacts;
  - Agricultural land impacts (BMV);
  - Traffic impacts;
  - Tourism impacts;
  - Cultural heritage;
  - Maintenance; and
  - The draft Development Consent Order.

It recognises that WLDC will continue to liaise with the applicant to seek to address the adverse impacts, where possible.

## **5.0 Written representations (WR)**

- 5.1 Whilst only the host authorities may produce a Local Impact Report (LIR), all interested parties (including members of the public) are invited to make Written Representations (WR).
- 5.2 The Advice note states:

*“The local authority may wish to submit a written representation to clarify their views on the application that were included in their relevant representation. The written representation should be supported by any data, methodology and assumptions.*

*If they decide to submit a written representation then the local authority should not duplicate information that has been submitted elsewhere, in the LIR or relevant representation for example. It is helpful if the written representation can cross reference application information, the [Local Impact Report] LIR, the [Statement of Common Ground] SOCG, the [Principal areas of Disagreement Summary Statements] PADSS and other relevant submissions. The written representation should be concise and avoid repetition.”*

5.3 It is recommended that WLDC take the opportunity to submit written representations to the OESF examination.

5.4 In preparation of the examination, draft WR have been produced and are contained at **appendix 6**.

5.5 The draft WR proposes that the key impact of the scheme can be categorised, as follows:

*(i) Decision making – legislative and policy context*

*(ii) Cumulative impacts*

- *Project lifespan*
- *Landscape character*
- *Visual effects*
- *Traffic and transport*
- *Tourism*
- *Loss of land available for the production of food*
- *Approach to maintenance and replacement of infrastructure*

*(iii) Project specific*

- *Approach to design and avoiding key constraints*
- *Landscape character*
- *Visual effects*
- *Loss of land available for the production of food*
- *Traffic and transport*
- *Tourism*
- *Cultural heritage*
- *Approach to maintenance and replacement of infrastructure*
- *BESS & Fire Safety*

5.6 It concludes that the identified impacts, when assessed against policy, are such that WLDC raises significant objections to the project; key issues being the cumulative impact on the landscape and visual amenity and construction impacts, and the impact of the project in solus on landscape character and visual effects.

## **6.0 Recommendations**

6.1 It is recommended that both a Local Impact Report and accompanying Written Representations are submitted to the One Earth Solar Farm Public Examination.

- 6.2 It is recommended that the Committee review the draft LIR (**Appendix 5**) and WR (**appendix 6**) prepared for submission to the One Earth Solar Farm examination, and delegate authority to the Director of Planning, Regeneration and Communities to complete, finalise and submit the final LIR and WR to the examination by the required deadline, taking into consideration the committee's comments, and having consulted with the Chair of this Committee.