

Officers Report – Addendum 18th August 2026

Planning Application No: WL/2025/00667

PROPOSAL: Planning application for construction of solar farm and battery energy storage system, comprising ground mounted solar photovoltaic panels, battery containers, transformers, high voltage electrical substation and ancillary infrastructure including underground cabling, fencing, CCTV, internal access tracks, water storage tanks and an attenuation pond together with landscape enhancements, woodland and a permissive footpath for a temporary period of 40 years (cross boundary application with North East Lincolnshire Council)

LOCATION: LAND OFF STALLINGBOROUGH ROAD KEELBY GRIMSBY DN41 8DH WARD: CAISTOR AND YARBOROUGH TARGET DECISION

DATE: EoT until 23/07/2026

CASE OFFICER: Josh Turner

1. Introduction

- 1.1 On Monday 17th August 2026, the Government published its revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)¹. This replaces the previous version published in December 2024.
- 1.2 As the NPPF itself states, “*The policies in this Framework are material considerations which must be taken into account in decision-making from the day of its publication* [Monday 17th August 2026].”
- 1.3 It therefore is a material consideration in the determination of this application.
- 1.4 It remains the case that Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan (here, both the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan and Keelby Neighbourhood Plan), unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

¹ [National Planning Policy Framework - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework-2024)

- 1.5 However, the NPPF makes clear (chapter 1, paragraph 3) that “*The national decision-making policies in this Framework are a material consideration in making these decisions and should be read alongside the policies in the development plan.*” It further states (chapter 1, paragraph 1) that “*The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the government’s policies for planmaking and for making decisions on development proposals in England. It is a material consideration of critical importance in both contexts.*”
- 1.6 It further states (Annex A, Paragraph 2) that “*Development plan policies (or parts of those policies) which are materially inconsistent with national decision-making policies in this Framework should be given very limited weight... Other development plan policies should not be given reduced weight simply because they were adopted prior to the publication of this Framework.*”
- 1.7 Accordingly, the revised NPPF is now a material consideration of “critical importance” and its decision-making policies should be considered alongside the policies of the development plan.

2. Relevant National decision-making policies of the National Planning Policy Framework (August 2026)

2.1 It is considered that policy W3 is most relevant to this application:

W3: Renewable and low carbon energy development and electricity network infrastructure

1. In considering proposals for renewable and low-carbon energy development and electricity network infrastructure, substantial weight should be given to:

- a. The benefits for improving energy security, supporting economic development and/or the transition to a net zero future;
- b. In the case of applications for the re-powering and life-extension of existing sites, the additional benefit of utilising an established site for this purpose; and
- c. The contribution that small-scale and community-led renewable and low carbon energy projects can make to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, along with their associated economic and social benefits.

2. Applicants should not be required to demonstrate the need for renewable or low carbon energy development and electricity network infrastructure. Where proposals for this form of development come forward outside areas which have been identified as suitable for them in the development plan, their acceptability should be assessed against the national decision-making policies in this Framework, taken as a whole.

3. Where development is expected to be time-limited, applications should be accompanied by proposals for decommissioning and site restoration, including details of how these measures are expected to be implemented.

2.2 This does not substantially deviate from previous iterations of national policy. It remains the position (policy W3(1)) that the decision-maker must give “substantial weight” to the benefits for improving energy security, supporting economic development and/or the transition to a net zero future.

2.3 It also remains the position (W3(2)) that the applicant should not be required to demonstrate the need for renewable or low carbon energy development.

2.4 Finally it is national policy (W3(3)) that *“time-limited applications should be accompanied by proposals for decommissioning and site restoration, including details of how these measures are expected to be implemented.”* Planning permission is being sought for 40 years as set out in the development description.

2.5 The accompanying planning statement addresses decommissioning and states:

“The Proposed Development will cease operation after a period of 40 years. At the point of decommissioning, an appropriate Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan (DEMP) will be prepared and submitted to NELC and WLDC for consideration and agreement.

The Proposed Development, including the ground fixings, is fully reversible and all structures can be removed from the Site and the Site fully returned to agricultural use. Decommissioning activities are expected to be similar to construction, with vehicle movements anticipated to be the same as per the construction period.

At this stage it is considered premature to submit a DEMP for works that would not commence for another 40 years. The Applicant therefore expects a planning condition would be attached to any grant of planning permission requiring the submission and approval of the DEMP in advance of decommissioning, as per the industry standard for this type of development. The DEMP would include details pertaining to the recycling of equipment and full reinstatement of the land to its agricultural use. Furthermore, if deemed necessary by NELC/WLDC, a Soil Management Plan planning condition would ensure that soil quality (at the solar site) is fully restored to its existing condition at decommissioning.”

2.6 The submission of a decommissioning report prior to the end of the use is fairly common practice and is the approach employed with the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Solar Projects within the District. It is considered that a condition to secure its submission remains a valid and necessary approach.

2.7 Finally, it should be noted that at Annex A, Paragraph 10, the revised NPPF includes a list of Written Ministerial Statements (WMS) and other policy documents “which have been incorporated or superseded”. This includes:

- Solar and protecting our Food Security and Best and Most Versatile (BMV) Land (15 May 2024)

This WMS is therefore no longer deemed to be a material consideration in the assessment of this application.

- 2.8 It is considered that CLLP policy S14 is consistent with NPPF policy W3 and still carries full weight in the assessment of the application.

3.0 Conclusions

- 3.1 Having reviewed the national decision-making policies of the revised NPPF, it is considered that the benefits of the proposed development must be given “substantial weight”. The development would, across the two authority areas, provide a 49.9MW solar project that would supply energy to the national grid at Werst Grimsby Substation.
- 3.2 It is considered that there are not significant adverse impacts identified that would outweigh the substantial weight afforded to the benefits.
- 3.3 It therefore remains the recommendation that planning permission is granted, subject to conditions.
- 3.4 Following the requirement to agree pre-commencement conditions, and further discussion with the applicant, it is recommended that the following conditions are attached to any grant of planning permission:

Recommended Conditions:

1. The development hereby permitted must be begun before the expiration of five 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 take place until a written Habitat Management and Maintenance Plan (HMMP) in accordance with The Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment carried out by Clarkson & Woods Ecological Consultants (February

2026) is to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The HMMP shall relate to all 'significant' biodiversity gains on site and must be produced in accordance with sections listed below:

- a. a non-technical summary;
- b. the roles and responsibilities of the people or organisation(s) delivering/monitoring the HMMP;
- c. the details of funding, resources and mechanisms for long term delivery of the HMMP.
- d. the planned habitat creation and enhancement works for the initial completion period and date by which the initial works will be completed;
- e. the management measures to maintain habitat for a period of 30 years from the end of initial habitat creation.
- f. the monitoring/reporting methodology and frequency in respect of the retained, created and/or enhanced habitat to be submitted to the local planning authority on years 1,5,10,15,20,25,30. All reports must be submitted no later than September 1st on each reporting year (reports must be completed by a suitably qualified ecologist)
- g. the mechanisms of adaptive management and remedial measures to account for changes in the work schedule to achieve required targets.

Reason: To ensure the development delivers a biodiversity net gain on site in accordance with Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and Policy S61 of the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan 2023-2043.

3. No development shall take place until a written Ecological Mitigation & Enhancement Plan (EMEP) in accordance with is submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The EMEP shall include: -

- A plan showing habitat protection zones
- Details of any precautionary method statements for protected species
- Details of a sensitive lighting strategy

- Details, specification location of measures to provide access for movement of wildlife across and around the site to include wildlife access points at frequent intervals in all fencing
- Details, specification and location of the following species enhancements incorporated across the site:
 - A range and variety of post/tree mounted bird boxes
 - A range and variety of post/tree mounted bat boxes

The EMEP shall be implemented in strict accordance with the approved plan. All features shall be installed during construction and retained as such thereafter.

Reason: In the interest of nature conservation and to accord with the National Planning Policy Framework and local policy S60 of the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan 2023.

4. Notwithstanding the detail contained within the application, prior to their installation on site, details of the proposed materials, size, colours and finishes of the solar panels, frames, fencing, buildings and equipment on the site shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Thereafter, the development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and maintained as such for the lifetime of the development.

Reason:

To ensure the satisfactory appearance of the development upon completion in the absence of precise details accompanying the application, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and local policy S5, S14 and S53 of the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan 2023-2043.

5.No development shall take place until a detailed Landscape and Ecology Strategy Plan and Landscape Planting Phasing Plan based on the Indicative Landscape and Ecology Strategy Plan ref. AW0274 - PL - 02 Rev C and the Landscape Phasing Plan ref. ref. AW0274 - PL – 03 has been submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

The agreed landscaping scheme and phasing/timescales shall be implemented on the site in accordance with the approved Landscape and Ecology Strategy Plan and Landscape Planting Phasing Plan.

Reason:

To ensure the satisfactory appearance of the development and proposed landscaping plan upon completion in the absence of precise details accompanying the application, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and local policy S5, S14 and S53 of the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan 2023-2043.

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

6. With the exception of the detailed matters referred to by the conditions of this consent, the development hereby approved must be carried out in accordance with the following proposed drawings:

- Site Location Plan ref. 01 Rev A
 - Site Layout Plan ref. ref 02 Rev A
 - Solar Panel Mounting Structure Detail ref. 04
 - Power Conversion Unit ref. 06
 - Deer Fence and Gate Details ref. 08
 - CCTV ref. 10
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- Indicative Landscape and Ecology Strategy Plan ref. AW0274 -PL -02 Rev C - Proposed Landscape Phasing Plan ref. AW0274 -PL -03

The works must be carried out in accordance with the details shown on the approved plans and in any other approved documents forming part of the application.

Reason:

To ensure the development proceeds in accordance with the approved plans and to accord with the National Planning Policy Framework and local policy S5, S14 and S53 of the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan 2023-2043.

7. The development hereby approved shall be temporary, and shall cease use within 40 years from the date of the first exportation of electricity from the site ('the date of first export'). The applicant, or their successor in title, shall, within 1 month of first export, notify the local planning authority in writing of the date of the date of first export.

Reason

To confirm the proposed 40-year temporary period of the permission for the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

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

8. Within a period of 39 years and 6 months following the date of first export of electricity from the site, **and no less than six months before the temporary use is ceased**, a scheme for the decommissioning of the solar farm and its ancillary equipment shall be submitted

to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme shall include details of:

- how the land is to be restored and shall include a programme for the completion of the decommissioning and restoration works;
- how it shall make provision for the removal from the land of the solar panels and associated above-ground works approved under this permission;
- the management and timing of any works;
- a traffic management plan to address likely traffic issues during the decommissioning period, and
- an environmental management plan to include details to be taken during the decommissioning period to protect wildlife and habitats.

Thereafter, the decommissioning of the solar farm shall be undertaken in accordance with the approved details and timings.

Reason: To ensure the decommissioning phase is completed with limited disturbance to the local area and the site is restored to its former appearance and use to accord with the National Planning Policy Framework, local policies S5, S14, S47, S53 and S56 of the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan 2023-2043.

9. Notice in writing shall be given to the Council within 15 working days of the Initial habitat creation and enhancement works as set out in the Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) being completed.

Reason: To ensure the development delivers a biodiversity net gain on site in accordance with Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and Policy S61 of the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan 2023-2043.

10. The Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) submitted and approved as part of condition 2 must be strictly adhered to and implemented in full for a minimum of 30 years following the initial completion period approved pursuant to condition 9.

Reason: To ensure the development delivers a biodiversity net gain on site in accordance with Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and Policy S61 of the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan 2023-2043.