

Officers Report

Planning Application No: WL/2026/00176

PROPOSAL: Planning application for ground mounted solar array and associated works

LOCATION:

MAYFIELD

LINWOOD ROAD

MARKET RASEN

LN8 3QE

WARD: MARKET RASEN

WARD MEMBER(S): Cllr Bunney, Cllr Bennett and Cllr Westley

APPLICANT NAME: Mr S Bunney

TARGET DECISION DATE: 13/04/2026 [extension of time agreed until 28/5/26)

CASE OFFICER: Vicky Maplethorpe

Recommended Decision: Grant permission

This application has been referred to the Planning Committee as the applicant is an elected Member of the Council.

Site Description and Proposal:

The application site comprises a small field adjacent to Mayfield, a detached house located to the south of Market Rasen and surrounded by open countryside.

The application seeks permission to install 10 ground mounted solar panels with associated works to supply the adjacent residential dwelling.

Relevant Planning History

No relevant history recorded.

Representations

Chairman/Ward member(s): None received

Parish/Town Council/Meeting: None received

Local residents: None received

LCC Highways and Lead Local Flood Authority: No objections

LCC Archaeology: The proposed development is located in an area of archaeological sensitivity, being located immediately south of an excavated area of relatively dense Roman archaeology. We note that the proposed development is small in scale with limited areas of ground disturbance outside of the previously disturbed footprint. Based on the provided Product Spec sheet we would suggest ballasted foundations, or Direct Fix where the foundations do not extend below the topsoil, would be the most suitable to prevent damage to the archaeological resource during the installation of the ground mounted solar array.

Relevant Planning Policies and Legislation:

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 2023) and the Lincolnshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan (adopted June 2016).

Development Plan

- ***Central Lincolnshire Local Plan 2023 –***

Relevant policies of the CLLP include:

S1: The Spatial Strategy and Settlement Hierarchy

S5: Development in the Countryside Policy

S14: Renewable Energy

S53: Design and Amenity

S60: Protecting Biodiversity and Geodiversity

S61: Biodiversity Opportunity and Delivering Measurable Net Gains

<https://www.n-kesteven.gov.uk/central-lincolnshire/adopted-local-plan-2023>

- ***Market Rasen Neighbourhood Plan (NP)***

<https://www.west-lindsey.gov.uk/planning-building-control/planning/neighbourhood-planning/all-neighbourhood-plans-west-lindsey>

The site is not within a designated Neighbourhood Area and there is not currently a Neighbourhood Plan to take into consideration.

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

<https://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/planning/minerals-waste>

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

National policy & guidance (Material Consideration)

- 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 December 2023. Paragraph 225 states:

However, existing 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).

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

- National Planning Practice Guidance

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance>

- National Design Guide (2019)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-design-guide>

- National Model Design Code (2021)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-model-design-code>

Main Considerations:

- Principle of development:
- Design and visual amenity:
- Neighbouring/Residential amenity
- Biodiversity Net Gain
- Other Considerations

Assessment:

Principle of the Development:

Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Support for the principle of renewable energy is found at national and local level. The acceptability principally rests on an assessment of the detailed impacts of such proposals. Policy S14 of the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan states that proposals for renewable energy schemes will be supported where the following tests have been met:

i. The impacts are acceptable having considered the scale, siting and design, and the consequent impacts on landscape character; visual amenity; biodiversity; geodiversity; flood risk; townscape; heritage assets, their settings and the historic landscape; and highway safety and rail safety; and

ii. The impacts are acceptable on aviation and defence navigation system/communications; and

iii. The impacts are acceptable on the amenity of sensitive neighbouring uses (including local residents) by virtue of matters such as noise, dust, odour, shadow flicker, air quality and traffic;

The proposal is small in scale, comprising 10 ground mounted solar panels in an array (in a row east to west) to supply a residential dwelling with the panels being located approximately 5 metres to the south of the said dwelling in an adjacent field.

The proposal due to its size, scale, siting and design is considered to meet the 3 tests stated of Policy S14 of the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan (see following sections of this report on visual and residential amenity).

Additional matters for solar based energy proposals of S14 specifically refers to "*Proposals for solar thermal or photovoltaics panels and associated infrastructure to be installed on existing property will be under a presumption in favour of permission unless there is clear and demonstrable significant harm arising.*

Proposals for ground based photovoltaics and associated infrastructure, including commercial large scale proposals, will be under a presumption in favour unless:

- there is clear and demonstrable significant harm arising; or*
- the proposal is (following a site specific soil assessment) to take place on Best and Most Versatile (BMV) agricultural land and does not meet the requirements of Policy S67; or*
- the land is allocated for another purpose in this Local Plan or other statutory based document (such as a nature recovery strategy or a Local Transport Plan), and the proposal is not compatible with such other allocation.*

Proposals for ground based photovoltaics should be accompanied by evidence demonstrating how opportunities for delivering biodiversity net gain will be maximised in the scheme taking account of soil, natural features, existing habitats, and planting proposals accompanying the scheme to create new habitats linking into the nature recovery strategy."

It is considered that due to the domestic size, scale and location of the proposed solar panels no significant harm will arise from them.

It was not considered reasonable to request a site specific soil sample due to the size and scale of the proposal.

The site is not allocated for any another purpose in the Local Plan.

The application has been accompanied with evidence of opportunities for delivering BNG.

It is therefore considered that the presumption in favour of development is engaged, and the principle of development can be supported.

Residential Amenity

Local Plan Policy S53 states that all development must not result in harm to people's amenity either within the proposed development or neighbouring it through overlooking, overshadowing, loss of light or increase in artificial light or glare. It further states that development must provide homes with good quality internal environments with adequate space for users and good access to private, shared or public spaces.

The proposal is small in scale and there are no nearby neighbours likely to be affected. It is therefore considered that this proposal would not detrimentally affect the residential amenity of neighbouring dwellings in accordance with the NPPF and Policy S53 of the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan.

Biodiversity Net Gain

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is mandatory on minor developments from 2nd April 2024 under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021). It requires that development must deliver a net gain of 10% to ensure that habitats for wildlife are left in a measurably better state than they were before the development. This is also a requirement of local policy S61 of the CLLP which requires "All qualifying development proposals must deliver at least a 10% measurable biodiversity net gain attributable to the development. The net gain for biodiversity should be calculated using Natural England's Biodiversity Metric". This has now been formally superseded by national regulations, however it is still a policy requirement of the CLLP to get a 10% net gain.

The application site is part of a field adjacent 'Mayfield, Linwood Road, Market Rasen'. The application seeks permission to install 10 ground mounted solar panels in a row to supply a residential dwelling in the location described above.

The proposed development has been accompanied by a Biodiversity Net Gain calculation which has concluded a BNG score of -2.84%.

However, the planting of one native broad-leaved tree within the wider grass field which is under the applicant's control would give a post-development habitat score of 0.0466, which is a net gain of +32.50%, thereby meeting and exceeding the target.

The ecologist has reviewed the submitted information and stated:

'Although BNG details have been provided I am of the view the application is exempt. The floor space of the solar panels is beneath 25m² and all other impacts such as the cabling route will be temporary (less than 2 years for the habitat to return to current condition) as such I am satisfied the de-minimis exemption could/should be claimed.

We welcome the provision of BNG details as this will allow us to assess the site against local and national policy.

Newts are also a constraint to this site.'

The agent has confirmed that the development affects more than 25sqm. However, the cable trench and routes will be temporary and therefore, the impact, as defined by BNG is under 25sq m. This will be subject to the condition recommended by the ecologist.

Whilst the proposed development is not subject to the Biodiversity Net Gain condition in law it is noted that the applying is providing biodiversity enhancements by planting a native tree within the wider site.

It is therefore considered that the proposed development, would be in accordance with policies S14, S60 and S61 of the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan and paragraph 180 of the NPPF.

Other matters:

Impact on highway safety

It is considered that the proposal would not affect the local highway network. Lincolnshire County Council Highways have not objected to this proposal.

Archaeology

LCC Archaeology have stated that *'The proposed development is located in an area of archaeological sensitivity, being located immediately south of an excavated area of relatively dense Roman archaeology. We note that the proposed development is small in scale with limited areas of ground disturbance outside of the previously disturbed footprint. Based on the provided Product Spec sheet we would suggest ballasted foundations, or Direct Fix where the foundations do not extend below the topsoil, would be the most suitable to prevent damage to the archaeological resource during the installation of the ground mounted solar array.'*

Given the scale of the proposed development it is unlikely that it would cause harm to existing natural and historic features no conditions are considered necessary. However, the comments from LCC Archaeology will be added as a note to any permission.

Conclusion and reason for decision:

The decision has been considered against policy S1: The Spatial Strategy and Settlement Hierarchy, S5: Development in the Countryside, S14: Renewable

Energy, S53: Design and Amenity, S60: Protecting Biodiversity and Geodiversity, S61: Biodiversity Opportunity and Delivering Measurable Net Gains of the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan in the first instance and guidance contained in the National Planning Policy Framework, National Planning Practice Guidance, National Design Guide and National Model Design Code has also been taken into consideration.

The proposal due to its scale, siting and design is considered to meet the 3 tests stated of Policy S14 of the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan and therefore the principal of development can be supported. Furthermore, the proposal will not harm the character and appearance of the street scene or have an unacceptable impact on the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers. The proposal will also not have an adverse effect on the character and appearance of the surrounding countryside.

Policy S14 places a presumption in favour of permission unless there is clear and demonstrable significant harm arising. Significant harm has not been identified in the assessment of this application.

Recommended 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 take place until a written Ecological Mitigation & Enhancement Plan (EMEP) is submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The EMEP shall include: -
 - Details of any precautionary method statements for protected species
 - Must include Great crested newt specific mitigation such as sequential site clearance (with presence of a licenced ecologist) followed by newt exclusion fencing during construction and commitment to store all material during construction off ground
 - Must Include ramping/covering of pits/trenches overnight
 - Details of wildlife friendly landscaping/management within the applicant's ownership
 - Must include at least 1 native tree and Tussocky grass seed mixes (managed for amphibians) around and under the solar panels
 - Details, specification and location of the following species enhancements incorporated on land within the applicant's control
 - 1x herptile hibernacula

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.

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

3. No more than 25m² of are habitat or 5m of linear habitat must be lost or degraded as a result of this permission. Any storage of materials, erection of additional structures or any other action related to the works associated with this permission must not detrimentally impact the underlying habitat within the red line boundary. Where impact above 25m²/5m is unavoidable, all impacts must be temporary, and the existing habitat must be returned to the same habitat type and condition that was present when the application was made [or better] as defined by the Small Site Metric produced by Tim Smith dated 22/01/2026 within 2 years of works commencing.

Reason: To ensure the development remains compliant with biodiversity net gain exemptions in accordance with Regulation 4 of The Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024 and local policy S60 of the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan 2023-2043.

4. With the exception of the detailed matters referred to by the conditions of this consent, the development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the following drawing: RDS 11843 / 10 (C) dated December 2025. The works shall 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 Policy S53 of the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan.

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

None

INFORMATIVES

Biodiversity Net Gain

Unless an exception or a transitional arrangement applies¹, the effect of paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 is that planning permission granted for the development of land in England is deemed to have been granted subject to the condition “(the biodiversity gain condition”) that development may not begin unless:

- (a) a Biodiversity Gain Plan² has been submitted to the planning authority, and
- (b) the planning authority has approved the plan.

The planning authority, for the purposes of determining whether to approve a Biodiversity Gain Plan in respect of this permission would be West Lindsey District Council.

Biodiversity Gain Plan

The biodiversity gain plan must include/accompanied by³:

- (a) information about the steps taken or to be taken to minimise the adverse effect of the development on the biodiversity of the onsite habitat and any other habitat;
- (b) the pre-development biodiversity value of the onsite habitat;
- (c) the post-development biodiversity value of the onsite habitat;
- (d) any registered offsite biodiversity gain allocated to the development and the biodiversity and the biodiversity value of that gain in relation to the development;
- (e) any biodiversity credits purchased for the development;
- (f) any information relating to irreplaceable habitat making up onsite habitat
- (g) information about steps taken or to be taken to minimise any adverse effect of the development on, and arrangements for compensation for any impact the development has on the biodiversity of, any irreplaceable habitat⁴ present within the onsite baseline.
- (h) any additional information requirements stipulated by the secretary of state⁵.

The effect of section 73D of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990

If planning permission is granted on an application made under section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (application to develop land without compliance with conditions previously attached) and a Biodiversity Gain Plan was approved in relation to the previous planning permission (“the earlier Biodiversity Gain Plan”) there are circumstances when the earlier Biodiversity Gain Plan is regarded as approved for the purpose of discharging the biodiversity gain condition subject to which the section 73 planning permission is granted.

Those circumstances are that the conditions subject to which the section 73 permission is granted:

- i. do not affect the post-development value of the onsite habitat as specified in the earlier Biodiversity Gain Plan, and

- ii. in the case of planning permission for a development where all or any part of the onsite habitat is irreplaceable habitat the conditions do not change the effect of the development on the biodiversity of that onsite habitat (including any arrangements made to compensate for any such effect) as specified in the earlier Biodiversity Gain Plan.

¹ listed exemptions from Statutory BNG and transitional arrangements can be found at [Biodiversity net gain: exempt developments - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/biodiversity-gain-plan). The LPA advises that all perceived exempt applications complete a Statutory Metric Baseline Assessment prior to commencement. Should the relevant exemption cease to apply following commencement, a higher value precautionary assessment will be required if an appropriate pre-commencement baseline was not conducted.

² The Statutory Biodiversity Gain Plan template can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/biodiversity-gain-plan>

³ Minimum legal requirements for the Biodiversity Gain plan can be found at [https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/30/schedule/14#:~:text=paragra%2015\).-,Biodiversity%20gain%20plan,-14](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/30/schedule/14#:~:text=paragra%2015).-,Biodiversity%20gain%20plan,-14)

⁴ Irreplaceable habitats for the purposes of Biodiversity Net Gain are defined by Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Irreplaceable Habitat) Regulations 2024. A full list of irreplaceable habitats can be found at <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2024/48/schedule/made>

⁵ Additional information required is outlined by Articles 37C(2) [Non Phased] 37C(4) [Phased] of The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 and may be subject to the nature of your application <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2015/595#:~:text=Additional%20content%20of%20plan>

Archaeology

The proposed development is located in an area of archaeological sensitivity, being located immediately south of an excavated area of relatively dense Roman archaeology. We note that the proposed development is small in scale with limited areas of ground disturbance outside of the previously disturbed footprint. Based on the provided Product Spec sheet we would suggest ballasted foundations, or Direct Fix where the foundations do not extend below the topsoil, would be the most suitable to prevent damage to the archaeological resource during the installation of the ground mounted solar array.

Decision Level: Committee

Human Rights Implications:

The above objections, considerations and resulting recommendation have had regard to Article 8 and Article 1 of the First Protocol of the European Convention for Human Rights Act 1998. The recommendation will not

interfere with the applicant's and/or objector's right to respect for his private and family life, his home and his correspondence.

Legal Implications:

Although all planning decisions have the ability to be legally challenged it is considered there are no specific legal implications arising from this report.