

Gate Burton Energy Park

Preliminary Environmental Information Report

Volume 3, Appendix 12-A: Legislation and Planning Policy

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Gate Burton Energy Park Limited

Quality information

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1. Socio-economics and Land Use

1.1 Purpose of this appendix

- 1.1.1 This PEI Report appendix identifies and describes the legislation, policy and supporting guidance considered relevant to the assessment of the likely significant effects of the Scheme on socio-economics and land use.
- 1.1.2 Legislation and policy are considered at national and local levels.
- 1.1.3 This PEI Report appendix does not assess the Scheme against legislation and policy instead the purpose of considering legislation and policy in the EIA is twofold:
- a. to identify legislation and policy that could influence the determination of important socio-economic and land use features (and therefore the significance of effects) and any requirements for mitigation; and
 - b. to identify legislation and policy that could influence the methodology of the EIA and signposting where this dealt with in the PEIR. For example, a policy may require the assessment of an impact or the use of a specific methodology.
- 1.1.4 The following sections identify and describe the legislation, policy and supporting guidance considered specifically relevant to the socio-economics and land use assessment (the assessment) as presented in **PEI Report Volume 1, Chapter 12: Socio-Economics and Land Use**.

1.2 Legislation and Planning Policy

National Planning Policy

Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (NPS EN1) (2011)

- 1.2.1 The NPS-EN1 (Ref. 1) states that the IPC (whose role has since been adopted by the Secretary of State) should consider environmental, social and economic benefits and adverse impacts at national, regional and local levels when assessing proposals.
- 1.2.2 NPS-EN1 paragraph 4.1.3 requires the decision maker to take into account potential benefits of development proposals including “...*contribution to meeting the need for energy infrastructure, job creation and any long-term or wider benefits*”.
- 1.2.3 NPS-EN1 paragraph 4.1.4 states that the decision maker “*should take into account environmental, social and economic benefits and adverse impacts, at national, regional and local levels*”.
- 1.2.4 In terms of socio-economics more directly, section 4.2.2 states that “*the IPC will find it helpful if the applicant sets out information on the likely significant social and economic effects of the development and shows how any likely*

significant negative effects would be avoided or mitigated". This could reference employment, equality, community cohesion and wellbeing.

- 1.2.5 The NPS-EN1 also makes reference to impacts on agricultural land in section 5.10.8 and suggests that proposals should seek to minimise these impacts and preferably use land in areas of poorer quality, *"except where this would be inconsistent with other sustainability considerations"*.
- 1.2.6 NPS-EN1 Section 5.12 deals in detail with socio-economic effects of major energy infrastructure and states that the assessment should consider all relevant socio-economic effects, which may include the following:
- The creation of jobs and training opportunities;
 - The provision of additional local services and improvements to local infrastructure, including the provision of educational and visitor facilities;
 - Effects on tourism;
 - The effect of a changing influx of workers during the different construction, operation, and decommissioning phases of the energy infrastructure; and
 - Cumulative effects.
- 1.2.7 It also states that applicants should describe the existing socio-economic conditions in the areas surrounding schemes and refer to how their socio-economic impacts correlate with local planning policies.

Draft Overarching National Policy Statement (NPS) for Energy (EN-1) (2021)

- 1.2.8 The Draft NPS EN-1 (Ref. 10) provides updated guidance for energy infrastructure projects in the UK, following on from NPS EN-1 (2011).
- 1.2.9 It states in Section 3.3.23 that applications for solar farms above 50MW in England will continue to be defined as NSIPs (Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects) and require consent from the Secretary of State.
- 1.2.10 Section 2.1.2 indicates that high quality energy infrastructure is crucial for economic growth, boosting productivity and competitiveness at both a local and national scale.
- 1.2.11 It also reinforces those proposals should set out information on the likely significant social and economic effects of the development and show how significant negative effects would be avoided, reduced or mitigated as discussed in NPS EN-1.

National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3) (2011)

- 1.2.12 NPS EN-3 (Ref. 8) details the overarching policies for renewable energy infrastructure development and other types of energy infrastructure including solar energy. Through supporting the transition to a low carbon economy the provision of affordable energy is considered likely to have positive effects, and both positive and negative effects on equality. The NPS-EN-3 provides no

additional information relevant to the socio-economics and land use assessment.

Draft National Policy Statement (NPS) for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3) (2021)

- 1.2.13 The Draft NPS EN-3 (Ref. 11) builds upon the NPS EN-3 (2011) discussed in the previous paragraphs and provides guidance for applications for nationally significant renewable energy infrastructure projects.
- 1.2.14 In relation to the socio-economic and land use assessment, it states in Section 2.49.5 that proposals should consider effects on provision of local footpaths and public rights of way (PRoWs) which may need to be temporarily closed due to construction or operation. It should also be the applicant's intention to keep all PRoWs open where possible.
- 1.2.15 Section 2.49.11 also states that during decommissioning, there may be socioeconomic benefits in retaining site infrastructure after the operational life, such as retaining pathways through the site or a site substation.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2021)

- 1.2.16 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Ref. 6) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It provides a framework within which locally prepared plans for housing and other development can be produced. Paragraph 8 defines three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways:
- **An economic objective** – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure
 - **A social objective** – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being
 - **An environmental objective** – to contribute to protecting and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.
- 1.2.17 The sets out guidance in section 6 in relation to building a strong, competitive economy. It states (paragraph 81) that "*significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development*". This approach is taken to allow areas to grow their strengths and address challenges of the future.

- 1.2.18 It is also discussed in paragraph 156 that *“local planning authorities should support community-led initiatives for renewable and low carbon energy, including developments outside areas identified in local plans or other strategic policies”*.
- 1.2.19 Section 15 addresses conserving and enhancing the natural environment. It notes that decisions should recognise the *“intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland”* (paragraph 174).

Industrial Strategy: Building a Britain fit for the future (2017)

- 1.2.20 This policy document (Ref. 3) outlines the Government’s Industrial Strategy White Paper ambitions to increase productivity and drive growth. One way of achieving this that is highlighted is through Clean Growth to lead the world in the development, manufacture and use of low carbon technologies.

Local Planning Policy

Central Lincolnshire Local Plan (2017)

- 1.2.21 The West Lindsey Local Plan (First Review) was adopted on 19 June 2006 and formally replaced by the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan on 24 April 2017.
- 1.2.22 The Central Lincolnshire Local Plan (Ref. 4) discusses Policy LP5 which surrounds delivering prosperity and jobs. It states that proposals will be supported that assist in the delivery of economic prosperity and job growth to the local area.
- 1.2.23 Policy LP12, in regard to infrastructure to support growth, states that all developments should be supported by and have good access to all necessary infrastructure. *“Planning Permission will only be granted if it can be shown that there will be sufficient infrastructure capacity to meet all necessary requirements arising from the proposed development”*.
- 1.2.24 Furthermore, Policy LP19 discusses renewable energy and states that proposals *“will be assessed on their merits, with the impacts, both individual and cumulative, considered against the benefits of the scheme, taking into account factors such as: the surrounding landscape... residential and visual amenity... and Agricultural Land Classification”*.
- 1.2.25 Agricultural Land Classification will specifically be considered on a presumption against photovoltaic solar farm proposals on the best and most versatile agricultural land.

Draft Bassetlaw Local Plan (2021)

- 1.2.26 The Draft Bassetlaw Local Plan (Ref. 2) is being produced to help guide development in Bassetlaw over the plan period from 2020 – 2037. It states under Policy ST11 that *“proposals for the growth of businesses in the rural area and outside established employment sites/allocations will be supported where as all of the following are met: there is a proven need for the development...; the scale of development is appropriate...; the development*

will have no adverse impacts on the character of the location...; and safe access can be achieved...”.

- 1.2.27 Policy ST51 notes that development that generates renewable and low carbon energy will be supported subject to demonstrating the “*resolution of relevant wider impacts (including cumulative impacts) upon: location, setting and position in the wider landscape; historic environment...; affected existing dwellings and communities...; and existing highway capacity and highway safety*”.

Bassetlaw Local Development Scheme (2022-2025)

- 1.2.28 The Local Development Scheme (LDS) provides details on the Bassetlaw Local Plan and other planning documents to give context on wider planning progress. It discusses “Greening Bassetlaw”, a supplementary planning document, which gives additional guidance on the Council’s approach to addressing the impacts of climate change. This includes giving favour to delivering localised zero carbon energy schemes and carbon offsetting.

Other Planning Guidance

West Lindsey Sustainability, Climate Change and Environment Strategy (2021)

- 1.2.29 This Strategy (Ref. 7) discusses land use and green space and states that the focus is on “*higher levels of renewable energy production, reduced carbon emissions, improved quality of life, a protected natural environment and community and economic benefits*”.
- 1.2.30 The “Power” section also states that weight should be given to developments that maximise and realise the potential for low carbon and renewable energy generation and storage, using assets and across the district, whilst taking account of major constraints to deployment.

1.3 References

- Ref. 1 Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) (2011) Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1).
- Ref. 2 Bassetlaw District Council, (2021). Draft Bassetlaw Local Plan 2020 – 2037.
- Ref. 3 HM Government (2017) Industrial Strategy: building a Britain fit for the future.
- Ref. 4 Lincolnshire County Council, “Central Lincolnshire Local Plan 2012-2036,” Lincolnshire County Council, Lincoln, 2017.
- Ref. 5 MHCLG (2016) Draft Planning Practice Guidance.
- Ref. 6 Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) (2021) National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- Ref. 7 West Lindsey District Council Sustainability, Climate Change and Environment Strategy (2021).
- Ref. 8 Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) (2011). National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy (EN-3).
- Ref. 9 Bassetlaw District Council, (2022). Bassetlaw Local Development Scheme 2022-2025.
- Ref. 10 Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, (2021). Draft Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1).
- Ref. 11 Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, (2021). Draft National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3).