

# Tillbridge Solar

PEI Report Volume II Appendix 14-1: Socio-Economics and Land Use Legislation and Policy  
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# 1. Introduction

- 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, policy and guidance are considered at national and local levels.
- 1.1.3 This PEI Report appendix does not assess the Scheme against legislation, policy and guidance, instead the purpose of considering legislation and policy in the EIA is twofold:
- To identify legislation, policy and guidance 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
  - To identify legislation, policy and guidance that could influence the methodology of the EIA and signposting where this dealt with in the PEI Report. 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 **Chapter 14: Socio-Economics and Land Use** of this PEI Report.

# 2. Legislation and Planning Policy

## Legislation

- 2.1.1 There is no legislation of relevance to the assessment of socio-economic and land use effects.

## National Planning Policy

### Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (NPS EN-1) (2011)

- 2.1.2 The NPS-EN1 (Ref 14-1) states that the Infrastructure Planning Commission (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.
- 2.1.3 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*”.
- 2.1.4 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*”.

- 2.1.5 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.
- 2.1.6 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*”.
- 2.1.7 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.
- 2.1.8 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) (2023)**

- 2.1.9 The Draft NPS EN-1 (Ref 14-2) provides updated guidance for energy infrastructure projects in the UK, following on from NPS EN-1 (2011).
- 2.1.10 It states in Section 3.3.23 that applications for solar farms above 50MW in England will continue to be defined as Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) and require consent from the Secretary of State.
- 2.1.11 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.
- 2.1.12 It also reinforces that 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.
- 2.1.13 Paragraphs 5.13.2 highlight that local or regional socio-economic impacts should be included as part of the ES. These impacts may include the following:
- “*The creation of jobs and training opportunities (Applicants may wish to provide further information relating to the sustainability of the jobs created)*;

- *The contribution to the development of low-carbon industries at the local and regional level as well as nationally;*
- *The provision of additional local services and improvements to local infrastructure, including the provision of educational and visitor facilities;*
- *Any indirect beneficial impacts for the region hosting the infrastructure, in particular in relation to use of local support services and supply chains;*
- *Effects on tourism;*
- *The impact of a changing influx of workers during the different construction, operation and decommissioning phases of the energy infrastructure. This could change the local population dynamics and could alter the demand for services and facilities in the settlements nearest to the construction work (including community facilities and physical infrastructure such as energy, water, transport and waste). There could also be effects on social cohesion depending on how populations and service provision change as a result of the development; and*
- *Cumulative effects - if development consent were to be granted to for a number of projects within a region and these were developed in a similar timeframe, there could be some short-term negative effects, for example a potential shortage of construction workers to meet the needs of other industries and major projects within the region.”*

### **Draft NPS for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3) (2023)**

2.1.14 The Draft NPS EN-3 (Ref 14-3) builds upon the NPS EN-3 (2011) and provides guidance for applications for nationally significant renewable energy infrastructure projects.

2.1.15 In relation to the socio-economic and land use assessment, it states in Section 3.10.26 that proposals should consider effects on provision of local footpaths and public rights of way (PRoWs) which may need to be temporarily stopped due to construction. It should also be the applicant’s intention to keep all PRoWs open where possible.

2.1.16 Section 3.10.60 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)**

2.1.17 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Ref 14-4) 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; and
- **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.

2.1.18 It 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.

2.1.19 Section 8 in relation to promoting healthy and safe communities states (Paragraph 100) that “*planning policies and decisions should protect and enhance public rights of way and access, including taking opportunities to provide better facilities for users*”.

2.1.20 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).

### **National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)**

2.1.21 The NPPF is supported by additional guidance found in the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) (Ref 14-5).

2.1.22 This guidance emphasises the need for local planning authorities to incorporate the existing and potential future needs of the population into their planning and economic strategy, in terms of economic development, jobs and employment opportunities.

## **3. Local Planning Policy**

### **Central Lincolnshire Local Plan (2023)**

3.1.1 The Central Lincolnshire Local Plan (Ref 14-6) is a revision of the adopted Central Lincolnshire Plan (adopted in 2017) to ensure it remains current and consistent with latest national guidelines and local circumstances. Following approval by the Central Lincolnshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee at the end of April 2023, consultation on the plan ran between March and May 2022.

3.1.2 Policy S5 relates to development in the countryside and states that proposals for non-residential developments will be supported provided that: the rural location of the enterprise is justifiable by means of enhancing the local economy or proximity to existing features; the location is suitable in terms of

accessibility; the location would not result in conflict with neighbouring uses and the development is of a size and scale commensurate with the proposed use and character of the location.

- 3.1.3 The transition to net zero carbon is discussed in Policy S14, which relates to renewable energy. It states that “*proposals for renewable energy schemes, including ancillary development, will be supported where the direct, indirect, individual and cumulative impacts on the following considerations are or will be made, acceptable*”. Impacts assessed should include those on the amenity of sensitive neighbouring uses (including local residents) by virtue of matters such as noise, dust, odour, air quality and traffic.
- 3.1.4 Policy S42, relating to sustainable urban tourism, sets out that development proposals which result in the loss of facilities or attractions that support the visitor economy, including hostels and guesthouses, will not be permitted except in specific circumstances where there are overriding benefits from the proposal and the existing use is demonstrated to be unviable.
- 3.1.5 Walking and cycling infrastructure is referenced in Policy S48, and states that proposals should:
- Protect, maintain and improve existing infrastructure;
  - Provide high quality attractive routes that are safe, direct, legible and pleasant and are integrated into the wider network;
  - Ensure the provision of appropriate information, including signposting and way-finding to encourage the safe use of the network;
  - Encourage the use of supporting facilities, especially along principle cycle routes;
  - Make provision for secure cycle parking facilities in new developments and in areas with high visit numbers across Central Lincolnshire; and
  - Consider the needs of all users through inclusive design.
- 3.1.6 Policy S50 relates to community facilities and highlights the importance of community facilities in achieving and maintaining sustainable, well-integrated and inclusive places. As such, the policy sets out that, where possible, the loss of community facilities due to developments will not be supported.
- 3.1.7 Green and blue infrastructure in Central Lincolnshire will be safeguarded, as set out in Policy S59. Development proposals should ensure that existing and new green and blue infrastructure
- 3.1.8 Policy S65 sets out that important open spaces, including churchyards, cemeteries, recreation grounds and local authority owned allotments will be safeguarded from development.
- 3.1.9 Policy S67 refers to best and most versatile agricultural land. This policy sets out that “*proposals should protect the best and most versatile agricultural land so as to protect opportunities for food production and the continuance of the agricultural economy*”. Development resulting in the loss of best and most versatile agricultural land will be supported in specific circumstances, including if:



- The need for the proposed development has been clearly established and there is insufficient lower grade land available;
- The benefits and/or sustainability considerations outweigh the need to protect such land when taking into account the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land;
- The impacts of the proposal upon ongoing agricultural operations have been minimised through the use of appropriate design solutions; and
- Where feasible, once any development which is supported has ceased its useful life the land will be restored to its former use.

### **Adopted Bassetlaw Core Strategy (2011)**

- 3.1.10 The Bassetlaw Core Strategy (Ref 14-7) was adopted on 22 December 2011 and sets out a vision of change in Bassetlaw to 2028.
- 3.1.11 Policy DM1 in the Adopted Bassetlaw Core Strategy refers to economic development in the countryside. This policy highlights the ‘General Principles’ that show where proposals for development in rural areas will be supported, including that the development requires the specific location proposed, the scale, design and form of the proposal is appropriate for its location and setting, and they will not create or exacerbate existing environmental or highway safety problems.
- 3.1.12 Policy DM7 relates to securing economic development, including those that *“bring significant, good quality inward investment opportunities to the District”, “guarantee employment programmes for local residents that provide opportunities for training and development and will contribute to raised workforce skill levels within the district”* and/or *“deliver, or contribute to, opportunities for the growth of indigenous businesses”*.
- 3.1.13 Policy DM9 relates to green infrastructure, including open space and sports facilities. This policy sets out that development proposals will be expected to support the Council’s strategic approach to the delivery, protection and enhancement of multi-functional Green Infrastructure. It states that *“Development proposals will be expected to demonstrate that... they protect and enhance green infrastructure assets affected by the development and take opportunities to improve linkages between green corridors [and] where they overlap with or will affect existing green infrastructure nodes or corridors, such assets are protected and enhanced to improve public access and use”*.
- 3.1.14 The need for renewable and low carbon energy is emphasised in Policy DM10, which states that *“the Council will be supportive of proposals that seek to utilise renewable and low carbon energy to minimise CO2 emissions”*. Proposals for such infrastructure need to demonstrate that they:
- Are compatible with policies to safeguard the built and natural environment;
  - Will not lead to the loss of or damage to high-grade agricultural land (Grades 1 & 2);
  - Are compatible with tourism and recreational facilities;
  - Will not result in unacceptable impacts in terms of visual appearance; noise, pollution; watercourse engineering; or traffic generation; and

- Will not result in an unacceptable cumulative impact in relation to the factors above.

3.1.15 Policy DM11 relates to developer contributions and infrastructure and states that all applications will be expected to demonstrate that the necessary infrastructure will be in place in advance of the new development, and how arrangements for the provision or improvement of infrastructure required by the proposed development will be secured.

#### **Draft Bassetlaw Local Plan (2022)**

3.1.16 The Draft Bassetlaw Local Plan (Ref 14-8) is being produced to help guide development in Bassetlaw over the plan period from 2020 – 2037.

3.1.17 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 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...”*.

3.1.18 Policy ST39 refers to Green and Blue Infrastructure and states that *“the connectivity, quality, multifunctionality, biodiversity and amenity value of the green and blue infrastructure network will be enhanced, extended and managed”*. This includes through protecting and enhancing ancient and mature woodland and hedgerows and linking walking and cycling routes, bridleways and public rights of way.

3.1.19 Policy ST45 relates to the protection and enhancement of community facilities and states that proposals that result in the loss of community facilities will be resisted.

3.1.20 Policy ST47, Promoting Sport and Recreation, highlights the need for sport and recreational facilities and land in Bassetlaw to be protected.

3.1.21 Policy 48 relates to safeguarding the quality of life of residents and improving the environmental quality of the District. It states that new development should be: designed to ensure that the private amenity of existing and new residents can be experienced without undue intrusion; should avoid overlooking nearby dwellings; and seek to ensure good living standards.

3.1.22 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”*.

#### **Corringham Neighbourhood Plan (2022)**

3.1.23 The Corringham Neighbourhood Plan (Ref 14-9) was formally adopted by West Lindsey District council on the 24 January 2022.

3.1.24 Policy CNP1 sets out sustainable development principles for development including the following:

- Be appropriately located;

- Be of an appropriate scale and demonstrate a high standard of design;
  - Not unacceptably affect the amenity of nearby residents;
  - Where appropriate, provide for sustainable transport modes, including walking and cycling; and
  - Support will be given to proposals that seek to achieve or exceed standards for sustainable development and minimise CO2 emissions, including domestic scale green energy solutions.
- 3.1.25 Policy CNP10 relates to existing open spaces and recreation facilities, and highlights that all open spaces and recreation facilities should be protected from development which would unacceptably detract from their recreational use, landscape value and the views.
- 3.1.26 Policy CNP14 sets out that all community facilities in Corringham Parish will be protected and the loss of such facilities will not be supported except in specific circumstances.
- 3.1.27 Policy CNP16 relates to transport and active travel. It states that “*proposed developments that would generate additional traffic movement which would contribute towards evidenced traffic hazards should be supported by relevant measures to maintain highway safety and avoid vehicular/pedestrian conflict*”. It also highlights that development proposals should protect existing Public Rights of Way and the network of rural lanes and, where appropriate, incorporate them into their design and layouts.

#### **Glentworth Neighbourhood Plan (2019)**

- 3.1.28 The Glentworth Neighbourhood Plan (Ref 14-10) was formally adopted by West Lindsey District Council on the 4 November 2019.
- 3.1.29 The Neighbourhood Plan now forms part of the development plan for its area. Planning application decisions should be made in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 3.1.30 Policy 4 relates to community facilities and sets out that development proposals that will result in a detrimental impact on an existing community facility will be supported only where they can demonstrate that this impact is unavoidable and demonstrably outweighed by the benefit of the proposal and there are mitigation strategies in place.
- 3.1.31 Policy 5 emphasises the importance of green infrastructure, and states that, where practical, development proposals should enhance and manage existing green infrastructure assets and provide new public green spaces.

#### **Draft Hemswell and Harpswell Neighbourhood Plan (2022)**

- 3.1.32 The final Draft Hemswell and Harpswell Neighbourhood Plan (Ref 14-11) was published on the 7 February 2022 and has now reached examination stage.
- 3.1.33 In accordance with the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan policies, Policy 5 of the Draft Hemswell and Harpswell Neighbourhood Plan sets out that development proposals are required to demonstrate that they have considered the landscape character of the area. This policy also highlights the use of soft landscaping and tree planting to ensure that the visual impact of proposed developments are mitigated.

- 3.1.34 Policy 8 states that development will not be supported, except in exceptional circumstances, where that development would have an adverse effect on openness or special character of local green spaces.
- 3.1.35 Policy 9 relates to community facilities, and states that proposals that detrimentally impact on or redevelop community facilities for non-community uses will be resisted.
- 3.1.36 Policy 10 states that, where appropriate, development proposals should contribute towards the protection, enhancement and provision of new public rights of way for the benefit of the community.

#### **Sturton by Stow Neighbourhood Plan (2022)**

- 3.1.37 The Sturton by Stow Neighbourhood Plan (Ref 14-12) was formally adopted by West Lindsey District Council on the 4 July 2022.
- 3.1.38 The importance of sustainability in the Parishes of Sturton by Stow and Stow is highlighted in Policy 1. This Policy states that development will be supported where it is consistent with sustainable principles, including where developments make sustainable use of a site or is infrastructure provision required by a utility provider and consistent with the objectives and policies of this neighbourhood plan.
- 3.1.39 Policy 8 relates to community facilities and states that proposals to redevelop, change the use of or that have a detrimental impact on important community facilities will not be supported except in exceptional circumstances.
- 3.1.40 Policy 10 refers to local green space and highlights that development proposals within designated local green spaces will only be supported in very special circumstances.
- 3.1.41 Policy 10 refers to green infrastructure and states that development proposals should contribute to the enhancement and management of existing green corridors and infrastructure assets where possible. It also highlights that *“development proposals that result in unacceptable impact on the purpose or function of existing green infrastructure will not be supported unless they: demonstrate that the impact on the purpose or function of the green infrastructure is unavoidable and significantly and demonstrably outweighed by the benefits of the development; and provide for the implementation of alternative solutions to reinstate the green infrastructure following development”*.

#### **Rampton and Woodbeck Neighbourhood Plan (2021)**

- 3.1.42 The Rampton and Woodbeck Neighbourhood Plan (Ref 14-13) was formally adopted by Bassetlaw District Council, following the referendum held on the 6 May 2021.
- 3.1.43 The Neighbourhood Plan forms part of the statutory Local Development Plan for Bassetlaw and will be used when determining planning applications within the Neighbourhood Plan Area.
- 3.1.44 Policy 7 sets out the designated local green spaces and states that *“proposals for development within designated local green spaces will only be supported in very special circumstances”*.

3.1.45 Policy 9 relates to the protection of local amenities which will be safeguarded for community purposes throughout the plan period.

#### **Treswell and Cottam Neighbourhood Plan (2019) and Draft Treswell and Cottam Neighbourhood Plan (2022)**

3.1.46 The Treswell and Cottam Neighbourhood Plan (Ref 14-14) was adopted by Bassetlaw District Council, following the Referendum held on the 21 February 2019.

3.1.47 The Neighbourhood Plan forms part of the statutory Local Development Plan for Bassetlaw and is used when applying for planning permission or determining planning applications within the Neighbourhood Plan Area.

3.1.48 In June 2020, the Neighbourhood Plan Group commissioned a review of the existing Neighbourhood Plan against the adopted Local Plan and updated NPPF and PPG. The draft review version of the Treswell and Cottam Neighbourhood Plan was published online for consultation in 2022 (Ref 14-15).

3.1.49 Policy 7 refers to protecting existing community facilities and states that proposals to redevelop or change the use of an existing community facility will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances.

3.1.50 Policy 8 sets out that developments will not be permitted on designated local green spaces.

3.1.51 Policy 10 relates to supporting local employment opportunities, and states that where planning permission is required for employment use, development should:

- Demonstrate that there will be no unreasonable impact to the community resulting from increased traffic, noise, smell, lighting, vibration or other emissions or activities relating to the proposed development.

## **4. Local Guidance**

#### **Protecting, Progressing, Prospering: Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Plan for Growth (2021)**

4.1.1 The Greater Lincolnshire LEP Plan for Growth (Ref 14-16) was adopted in 2021 as a strategy to help guide the Greater Lincolnshire area out of the Covid-19 pandemic and to help support all parts of the region to thrive.

4.1.2 This strategy builds upon local industrial strategy frameworks, with 'Energy' being a priority area for growth. The Strategy states that Greater Lincolnshire aims to "*Pioneer industrial decarbonisation, creating a template for other areas. We will be a test bed for technologies in clean energy generation, storage and distribution*".

#### **D2N2 LEP Recovery and Growth Strategy (2021)**

4.1.3 The D2N2 LEP Recovery and Growth Strategy (Ref 14-17) published in 2021 builds on and supersedes the Local Industrial Strategy. It recasts the strategy in light of the Covid-19 pandemic and the important policies that emerged during 2020 on EU exit and climate change.

4.1.4 This Strategy is now the key strategic document up to 2030 and focuses on three key propositions and three priorities for action within each proposition.

4.1.5 Proposition 1 focuses on low carbon growth, and priority 3, 'decarbonising growth' highlights the need to promote sectors that help innovate for low carbon.

4.1.6 Proposition 2 relates to productivity and highlights the need for "*an ambitious and bold skills system... in key growth sectors such as automotive manufacturing, bioscience and low carbon*".

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

4.1.7 This Strategy (Ref 14-18) 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*".

4.1.8 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.

#### **West Lindsey Visitor Economy Strategy and Action Plan**

4.1.9 The West Lindsey Visitor Economy Strategy and Action Plan (Ref 14-19) sets out objectives for adding value and stimulating the growth and development of the district's visitor economy.

4.1.10 The Strategic Priorities that underpin the Action Plan are:

- Create a sense of place and raise the profile of the area as a quality, sustainable visitor destination;
- Improve and enhance the Visitor Product with a focus on increased accommodation provision and outdoor recreation;
- Deliver an exceptional Visitor Experience;
- Develop and maintain improved planning and communication between key Stakeholders and Partners; and
- Introduce mechanisms to ensure effective monitoring and up-to-date customer insight.

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