

Our Ref: 2920-01/CH

2nd September 2021

Development Management  
Boston Borough Council  
Municipal Buildings  
West Street  
Boston  
Lincolnshire  
PE21 8QR

planning

transportation  
planning

environment

design

Sent via [planning@boston.gov.uk](mailto:planning@boston.gov.uk)

Dear Sir/Madam,

**PROPOSED SOLAR FARM ON LAND TO THE NORTH AND WEST OF NORTHORPE AND TO THE WEST OF BICKER, INCLUDING GRID CONNECTION CABLING EXTENDING TO THE NATIONAL GRID SUBSTATION TO THE NORTH-WEST, LINCOLNSHIRE.**

**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT) REGULATIONS 2017 - REGULATION 6 – REQUEST FOR A SCREENING OPINION**

We are writing on behalf of AGR Solar 2 Limited (the 'Applicant') to request a formal Screening Opinion under Regulation 6 of The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England) Regulations 2017 (hereafter referred to as 'the EIA Regulations') for the above development proposal, hereafter referred to as 'the Proposed Development'. The location of the site, access and grid connection is illustrated on Figure 1.

The Proposed Development would be partially located within Boston, and partly within South Holland. As such, the screening request has been submitted to both Boston Borough Council and South Holland District Council.

To assist in the adoption of a Screening Opinion we have provided a summary of the Proposed Development location and a brief description of the nature and purpose of the Proposed Development.

We then set out our view on whether the Proposed Development falls within Schedule 1 or Schedule 2 of the EIA Regulations.

Finally, consideration is given to the information required to complete the EIA Regulations Screening Matrix<sup>1</sup>. This is presented under the following headings:

1. Natural Resources
2. Waste
3. Pollution and Nuisances
4. Population and Human Health

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[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/643241/TCPA\\_EIA\\_Screening\\_Matrix\\_2017\\_Regs.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/643241/TCPA_EIA_Screening_Matrix_2017_Regs.pdf)

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5. Water Resources
6. Biodiversity (Species and Habitats)
7. Landscape and Visual
8. Cultural Heritage/Archaeology
9. Transport and Access
10. Land Use
11. Land Stability and Climate
12. Cumulative Effects
13. Transboundary Effects

Each section seeks to address the selection criteria for screening Schedule 2 development provided in Schedule 3 of the EIA Regulations.

### **Site Location and Context**

The Site is located to the north and west of Northorpe and to the west of Bicker (see Figure 1). The solar panels and associated infrastructure would be within the red line boundary shown on Figure 1. There would be a grid connection running north along Cowbridge Road, and then in a westerly direction along Bicker Drove and Vicarage Drove to the sub-station.

The red line area is circa 92 hectares and the solar panels and associated infrastructure would be within this. In addition, a temporary construction compound will also be required. The precise location of this temporary construction compound has not been identified at this stage, but it is likely to be within the footprint of the main development. The Site comprises farmland crossed by a network of ditches and drains, with some trees and hedgerows, and an area of woodland. These features are characteristic of the local landscape.

The Site is served by a number of existing access routes, which could be used for construction and maintenance access. The current intention would be to access the Site from Cowbridge Road to the north-east. Cowbridge Road links to Ing Drove which runs west from Bicker. Ing Drove becomes Ing Road where it meets Cowbridge Road and continues west.

The solar farm site would be located partly within South Holland District Council (SHDC) and partly within Boston Borough Council (BBC).

Based on Lincolnshire County Council's online mapping there are no Public Rights of Way (PROW) within the red line boundary. Hammond Beck is a PROW which runs near to various parts of the Site. From Cowbridge Road to the north of the Site Hammond Beck runs in a south-westerly direction and would be partially adjacent to the northern boundary of the Site. It then turns south and runs to the west of sub-areas 1 and 2. It continues south and runs to the east of sub-areas 3 and 4.

The site is not subject to any landscape, heritage or conservation area designations and there are no listed buildings on the site itself. Figure 2 shows the designated sites nearby. There are listed buildings in Bicker to the east. This includes the Grade I listed Church of St Swithin on Church Road, and other Grade II listed buildings which are all greater than 800m from the Site at its nearest point. There are also several listed buildings in Donnington to the south. This includes the Grade I Church of St Mary and the Holy Rood. The distance from the Site to

the nearest listed building is approximately 1.2km. There is one Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM) within 2.5km of the Site.

Figure 2 also shows the Environmental Constraints within the vicinity of the Site. There are no formal ecological designations within 2.5km of the Site. The closest statutory designated site is Horbling Fen SSSI which is approximately 3.75km to the south west: it is designated for its geological interest. The Wash SPA is over 13km to the east at its nearest point, which is designated for a host of qualifying bird species including over-wintering pink-footed geese, Bewick's swan, Brent goose, oystercatcher and curlew.

The Site is predominantly within flood zones 2 and 3, with some smaller areas at low risk or no risk. This is shown on Figure 2. Initial modelling using LiDAR data to identify the topography and to refine the flood risk has been undertaken. This is shown in Figure 4 and indicates that less of the Site is at risk of flooding than initially suggested by the high level Environment Agency mapping. There are some areas which are vulnerable to a 1 in 100 year flood event, but these are small. There are several areas around the Site which would be vulnerable in the event of a 1 in 1000 year flood event. They are distributed around the Site, with a substantial part of the northern and southern part of the Sites affected. Within this there are some areas which would be considered as vulnerable to a 1 in 100 year flood event with a climate change factor of 20% applied. The scheme would be designed to avoid vulnerable infrastructure in these areas.

Based on available baseline mapping the Site is considered to have a high likelihood of being Best and Most Versatile (BMV) agricultural land, and this is shown on Figure 3. In addition, the BMV Land Assessment Map (Defra, 2017) considers the likelihood of the Site being BMV agricultural land as 60%. The ALC map for the East Midlands Region shows the area as Grade 2 agricultural land.

There are no residential dwellings within the Site. There are some scattered dwellings located nearby. To the east of Cowbridge Road opposite the north-eastern part of the site there are two residential properties (circa 15m from the site boundary). Ing Road dissects the Site with a land parcel to the north of it and another to the south. Along Ing Road there are 4 residential properties (circa 10m from the site boundary). Towards the south of the Site there are some residential properties adjacent to Hammond Beck, and scattered dwellings along North Ing Drove, Middle Fen Drove and Northorpe Road. They are within circa 150m from the boundary of the Site.

### **Planning History**

A review of the Boston and South Holland planning websites has highlighted the following planning history that is relevant to the Proposed Development:

#### *Boston*

<b>Planning Ref.</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Date</b>
B/21/0121	Screening opinion under Regulation 6 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 for	March 2021

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	<p>proposed solar farm, battery storage and associated infrastructure at Land at Vicarage Drove, Bicker, Boston, PE20 3BF.</p> <p>- Not EIA Development</p>	
B/17/0340	<p>Installation of underground high voltage Direct Current cables for the Viking Link Interconnector project between proposed landfall at Boygriff in East Lindsey to a proposed converter station at North Ing Drove in South Holland; installation of underground alternating current cables from the converter station to the existing Bicker Fen 400 kV NGET Substation; as well as permanent access road to converter station, temporary facilities required during construction such as compounds and works areas are included within Boston Borough. (This application is for Environmental Impact Assessment development by virtue of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulation 2017 at Land off Vicarage Drove, Bicker Fen, Boston, PE20 3BN.</p> <p>- Approved</p>	September 2018
B/15/0001	<p>Installation of ground-mounted solar PV array at Land off Meeres Lane and adjacent to Pick's Barn, Kirton, Boston, Lincolnshire, PE20 1PR.</p> <p>- Approved</p>	May 2015
B/14/0287	<p>Installation of ground mounted solar PV array and associated infrastructure at Land at Friths Farm, Fen Road, Frampton West, Boston, Lincolnshire, PE20 1SA.</p> <p>- Approved</p>	August 2014
B/14/0267	<p>Erection of ground-mounted solar PV array at Nowhere Farm, Fishmere End Road, Sutterton, Boston, Lincolnshire, PE20 2HX.</p> <p>- Approved</p>	July 2014
B/13/0345	<p>Erection of ground mounted solar PV array at Land off Fen Road (To the South of the Lincolnshire Drainage and the Boston Borough Council Depot), Boston, Lincolnshire, PE21 7JD.</p> <p>- Approved</p>	December 2013

B/13/0306	Erection of ground mounted solar PV array at Land at Leverton Ings, Leverton, Boston, Lincolnshire.  - Approved	August 2013
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*South Holland*

Planning Ref.	Description	Date
H18-0741-21	Installation of a solar farm and battery storage facility with associated infrastructure at Gunthorpe Road Solar Farm, Land South of Gunthorpe Road, Walpole Marsh, Wisbech.  - Not yet determined	N/A
H18-1126-20	Change of use from agricultural land to solar farm and construction and operation of a solar photovoltaic (PV) development with capacity of up to 49.9mw with associated infrastructure and landscaping at Land to the South of Centenary Way, Sutton Bridge, Spalding, PE12 9TF.  - Approved	March 2021
H02-1004-15	Proposed solar farm and associated infrastructure-approved under H02-0454-14. Modification of Condition 2 to delete reference to Flood Risk Assessment at Decoy Farm, Spalding Road, Crowland, PE6 0LX.  - Approved	December 2015
H20-0764-14	Change of use of land from agriculture to mixed use for agriculture and use of the generation of renewable energy (solar) with the associated equipment, access tracks and fencing - re-submission of H20-0017-14 at Land at Fendyke Farm off Old Fendyke, Sutton St James, Spalding, PE12 0LQ.  - Approved	December 2014
H20-0017-14	Proposed development of solar photovoltaic panels and associated works including substation, string inverters, access tracks, security fencing and cameras at Fendyke Farm, Fen Dyke, Sutton St James, Spalding, PE12 0LQ.	July 2014

	- Refused due to impact on BMV agricultural land, landscape character, and the impact on neighbours)	
H20-0937-13	Installation of a solar park with a maximum output of 10MW at Grange Farm, Fishergate, Sutton St James, Spalding, PE12 0EZ.	March 2014
H11-0206-11	Proposed solar park including photovoltaic arrays, inverter housing national grid connection, landscaping/security fencing and vehicular access at Long Sutton Butterfly and Wildlife Park, Little London, Long Sutton, Spalding, Lincs, PE12 9LE.  - Approved	April 2011
H11-0126-11	Proposed photovoltaic renewable energy solar park at Land adjoining Bridge Road, Long Sutton, Spalding, Lincs.  - Approved	April 2011

*Development Consent Order*

<b>Planning Ref.</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Date</b>
EN020019	Application by Triton Knoll Offshore Wind Farm Limited for an Order Granting Development Consent for the Triton Knoll Electrical System.  - Granted	September 2016

In addition, a screening request has been made to North Kesteven Council for a site to the west.

Many of the developments identified are substantial distances from the Site. The most proximate and recent are those on Vicarage Drove in Bicker in the Borough of Boston (refs B/21/0121 and B/17/0340). Of these, the recent screening opinion (ref: B/21/0121) is of particular relevance. The development for which a screening opinion was sought was a solar farm of up to 49.9mw on a site of 122 hectares. The Council concluded that an EIA would not be required.

In South Holland the current planning application at Walpole March in Wisbech (ref: H18-0741-21) is cross boundary with Kings Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council. It covers an area of land measuring 78.6 hectares. Both Councils concluded that the development did not constitute EIA development.

Whilst accepting that no two sites are identical, these recent screening opinions demonstrate that large solar farm developments do not necessarily create impacts commensurate with EIA

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development. In the case of B/21/0121, the constraints and the character of the land are very similar to the Site.

### Description of the Development

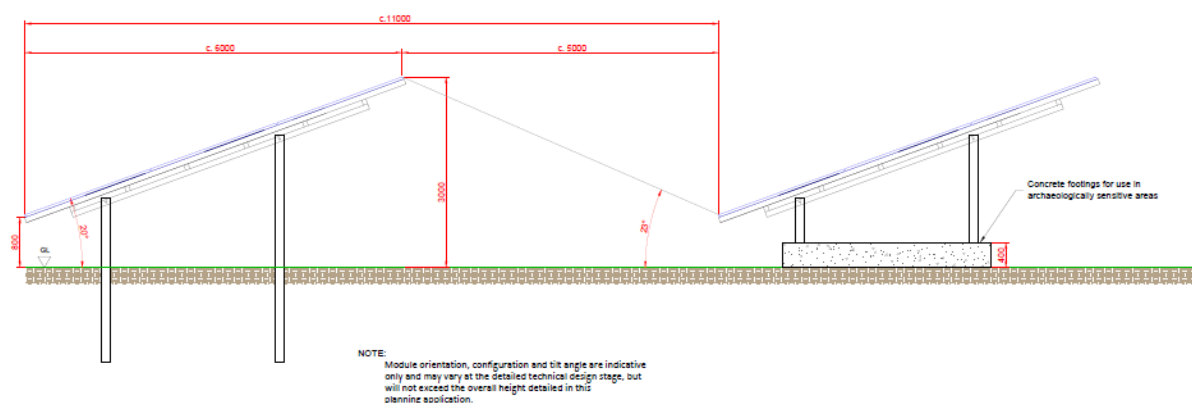
The Proposed Development would comprise a solar farm with an export capacity of up to 49.995MW of electricity (MWe). The site comprises an area of circa 92 hectares (excluding grid connection and access) but the detailed layout has not yet been designed. The solar farm would consist of the following key elements:

- Photovoltaic (PV) solar panels (up to 3m high) and associated support frames and cabling
- Inverter & Transformer Stations
- Battery Storage Containers
- Control Building
- Switchgear Building
- Storage buildings
- Access tracks
- Security fencing
- CCTV security cameras & supports
- Cable connection to substation

The intention is for solar panels to be located across most of the Site.

The Proposed Development would be for a time limited period of 40 years after which time the site would be decommissioned and restored back to full agricultural use.

A typical configuration for the solar panels and supports is illustrated in Diagram 1. During operation, the land under the solar panels would be managed for biodiversity gains and sheep grazing.



*Diagram 1: Typical configuration for the solar panels and supports*

The cable route would follow adopted and unadopted highways as described above.

The construction period for the solar farm is anticipated to last approximately 36 weeks.

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## **EIA Screening**

The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 define EIA development as that falling under either Schedule 1 Development, or Schedule 2 Development likely to have significant effects on the environment by virtue of factors such as its nature, size or location.

### ***Schedule 1 Development***

Projects defined within Schedule 1 are EIA development and it is mandatory for planning applications for such developments to be supported by an Environmental Statement.

The Proposed Development does not fall under any of the Schedule 1 categories. Therefore, the Proposed Development is not Schedule 1 development and mandatory EIA is not required.

### ***Schedule 2 Development***

Schedule 2 of the EIA Regulations includes a table that sets out various categories of development that may require EIA. The table includes applicable thresholds and criteria, which if exceeded, mean that the development is considered to be Schedule 2 development.

Schedule 2 development is required to be screened against the criteria set out in Schedule 3 to determine if the development is likely to give rise to significant effects on the environment. If the Proposed Development is deemed likely to give rise to significant effects by virtue of its location, characteristics or potential impacts then EIA is required.

In the context of Schedule 2 the Proposed Development is considered to be an 'industrial installations for the production of electricity, steam and hot water (Schedule 2, 3a).

The Schedule 2 indicative threshold for industrial installations for the production of electricity, steam and hot water is that the area of the development exceeds 0.5 hectares. At approximately 92 hectares the Proposed Development exceeds the Schedule 2 threshold. Accordingly, the Proposed Development is considered to fall within category 3a of Schedule 2 of the EIA regulations.

In order to establish whether the proposed works are likely to give rise to significant environmental effects, and therefore if the application must be subject to EIA, planning authorities are required to consider (or 'screen') the proposals against the criteria set out in Schedule 3 of the EIA Regulations.

### ***Schedule 3***

Schedule 3 sets out three main criteria against which the development should be considered, as follows:

- 1) Characteristics of development;
- 2) Location of development; and
- 3) Types and characteristics of the potential impact.



A number of sub-criteria are also provided, and these are considered below in the context of the EIA Screening Matrix, referenced above. In addition, reference is made to government EIA guidance in respect of indicative thresholds and criteria for Schedule 2 developments.<sup>2</sup>

### **1. Natural Resources**

The Proposed Development will not lead to any significant change to the topography of the area and earthworks would be limited to soil stripping for track construction and formation of foundations for inverters, transformers, control building, switchgear building and service connections etc. Stripped soils would be retained on site and be cultivated into the areas below solar panels prior to seeding. The solar panel supports would be mechanically driven into the soil and would not require excavations or foundations. These types of activities are common to most types of renewable development and are unlikely to result in any significant environmental effects.

The Proposed Development would facilitate the generation of renewable energy and this would conserve natural resources that would otherwise be used to generate power. Whilst the solar panels, frames and ancillary equipment would use natural resources during construction this would not be in significant quantities that could have wider significant environmental impacts.

The site is indicated as Grade 2 agricultural land on Figure 3. As such the Site is likely to be considered the best and most versatile agricultural land. The Proposed Development would not result in the permanent loss of this natural resource. During operation the majority of the Site would be used for sheep grazing. The partial reduction in land management options (i.e. removal of arable options) would not result in significant long-term impacts on agricultural land in the context of this wider resource available within Boston or South Holland.

### **2. Waste**

The Proposed Development would not generate significant waste during construction or operation. Following decommissioning at the end of the scheme's operational life or when panels need to be replaced due to failures/damage solid waste will be created. PV panel disposal is covered by the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) Directive. As such, any disposal of panels will need to comply with this directive. PV panels comprise a high proportion of glass along with smaller amounts of plastic, aluminium and other metals. All of these components are readily recyclable, with circa 80% of the panel materials able to be recycled at specialist processors. Solid waste generated by decommissioning works can be effectively managed by moving waste up the waste hierarchy through recycling for beneficial use. As such significant effects associated with disposal of waste as a result of the Proposed Development would not occur.

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[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/630689/eia-thresholds-table.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/630689/eia-thresholds-table.pdf)

### **3. Pollution and Nuisances**

The Proposed Development would not result in any emissions to air, with the exception of vehicle emissions associated with the delivery/removal of material during construction/decommissioning and dust during construction/decommissioning. These potentially polluting activities would occur for a limited time period and potential for dust can be mitigated by standard construction management techniques. As such significant effects are not considered likely.

There would be limited noise and light pollution associated with the construction / decommissioning periods and this would be localised and mitigated by standard construction management techniques. During operation the main noise emissions would be from the transformers and inverters and this would be attenuated to levels that would not result in any significant impacts at sensitive noise receptors.

The site comprises previously undeveloped agricultural land and as such there is limited risk of any contamination of land and water as a result of existing ground conditions. The Proposed Development would not result in increased risk of contamination due to the nature of the development.

In conclusion, the Proposed Development is unlikely to result in significant pollution and nuisances.

### **4. Population and Human Health**

As set out above, effects as a result of emissions that could affect human health would be limited to vehicle movements during the limited construction and decommissioning phases. During these phases traffic controls would be put in place along with appropriate signage and management to ensure that there would be no conflict between construction traffic and pedestrians and cyclists. Construction activities could be controlled by a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) to ensure that risks to the public and environment are managed effectively.

There are limited residential properties near to the site and in the unlikely event of an explosion or fire at one of the inverters/transformers or battery storage containers the risk to the public would be negligible.

As such there is limited risk to the surrounding population as a result of the Proposed Development.

### **5. Water Resources**

The Proposed Development is located adjacent to a number of drainage ditches and ditch crossings may need to be created for access tracks and cable crossings. Where possible cable crossing points would be combined with track crossings. With the exception of ditch crossings all development would be located more than 5-6m from all ditches. Subject to following best practice set out in the CEMP the risk of any pollution of ditches can be effectively managed. Crossings would be designed so as not to impede flows within the ditches to ensure that the existing hydrological continuity is maintained.

The site is remote from nearby rivers and does not overlay any ground water source protection zones. Hammond Beck, which passes immediately adjacent to the Site, is the principal arterial drain in the Swineshead catchment.

Whilst the solar panels would introduce large areas of impermeable material, each panel would drain to the land immediately below the support structure and rainwater would permeate into the ground as per the existing undeveloped situation. Water would drain from the battery storage to the adjacent land. Surface water would be managed by a suitable sustainable drainage system (SuDS) scheme that would ensure overall runoff rates from the site would not increase. This would ensure that there would be no increased risk of flooding as a result of any increased impermeable areas at the site.

The majority of the site is at low risk of flooding. However, there are some areas that are at medium risk (defended and undefended). Whilst the site covers a relatively large area the actual physical footprint of the development on the ground is much smaller and would be limited to the footprint of the support frames, inverter/transformer and battery container bases, control building, storage buildings and switchgear building. All inverter/transformer and battery container bases control building, storage buildings and switchgear building would be located outside areas of flood risk and as such the most vulnerable parts of the Proposed Development would not be at risk of flooding.

Effects on water resources can be effectively managed through design to avoid any potential for significant environmental effects that would trigger the need for EIA.

## **6. Biodiversity (Species and Habitats)**

The Site comprises open farmland with large fields crossed by a network of ditches and drains, characteristic of the local landscape. The Site may be used by notable over-wintering bird species, including those associated with the Wash SPA. Over wintering bird surveys were undertaken between November 2020 and March 2021. The surveys were generally quiet with an expected assemblage of farmland species including yellowhammer, reed bunting, starling, fieldfare and grey partridge. In addition, single observations were made of marsh harrier, snipe, and a single flock of 9 lapwing. There was a sighting in February of a pair of lapwing showing a courtship display suggesting likely breeding over the subsequent months. No large congregations of birds that would be significantly negatively impacted by a solar farm were identified.

A review of Ordnance Survey and aerial mapping indicates that there are no ponds within the Site, however one potential pond is located within 250m, approximately 80m west. Great crested newt class survey licence return records (dated 2015) confirm historic presence of this species close to the Site. Therefore, great crested newt survey presence/absence (eDNA) surveys could be carried out although incorporation of suitable precautionary avoidance measures is potentially adequate as an alternative.

The arable fields that would be used for the development are of low ecological value due to their intensive agricultural cultivation. However, the area could be used by different species at different times of the year depending on the nature of crops/cultivation.

The ditches, hedgerows, tree lines and wooded strips within the site are likely to represent the best habitat resource. The proposed development would ensure a minimum of a 5-6m buffers to these features and the buffer zone would be seeded with species rich grassland and wildflowers and managed for biodiversity benefits and to improve the habitat within the Site. This could include localised fencing to reduce grazing pressure along sections of ditches and planting of appropriate food sources to enhance the existing habitats water voles, etc.

The areas underneath the solar panels would be agricultural grassland and would be managed by low intensity sheep grazing and manual cutting as required.

Overall, it is considered that the Proposed Development would not have any significant effects on biodiversity and that there is potential for net biodiversity gains as a result of taking the land out of intensive arable production and managing the areas under and around the solar panels for habitat benefits.

## ***7. Landscape and Visual***

There are no areas or features on or around the Site which are protected for their landscape and scenic value. The Proposed Development would be located within a landscape setting that contains a limited amount of screening features in the form of hedgerows, tree lines and woodland block, but is generally open with long views across the surrounding landscape. Major energy infrastructure associated with the National Grid Substation, Triton Knoll Onshore Substation and onshore windfarm is already visible in these views. There is an area of woodland within the northern part of the Site which has the potential to screen parts of the development from the east and north.

Additional hedgerow and tree planting would be incorporated within the solar farm layout and existing hedgerows could be managed to maximise screening. With mitigation in place visibility of the Proposed Development from the wider landscape could be dramatically reduced.

In this context the Proposed Development would not give rise to widespread significant landscape and visual effects that would trigger the need for EIA.

## ***8. Cultural Heritage/Archaeology***

There are no SAMs, listed buildings, conservation areas, registered parks and gardens or historic battlefields within or immediately adjacent to the site. The nearest such features are illustrated on Figure 2. There are a number of listed buildings within Bicker and Donnington.

The Proposed Development would not be widely visible from these heritage assets and as such effects on the setting of these assets would not be significant.

There remains the potential for previously unknown archaeological remains to be present on the Site. However, with appropriate mitigation in place, such as preservation by record and /or preservation in-situ significant effects are unlikely to occur. Diagram 1 above illustrates non-penetrative construction options for any areas of the site identified as containing significant archaeological remains following further evaluations. This would ensure that there would be no likely significant effects of cultural heritage or archaeology.

## 9. Transport and Access

There would be no long-term direct impacts on public rights of way (PROW), although some short term disruption could occur during construction, and whilst new planting takes place.

There would be temporary short term effects on Cowbridge Road, and to a lesser extent on Ing Drove, during installation of the grid connection cable. These works would be of short duration and temporary. Access would be maintained at all times through appropriate signage and health and safety measures.

Construction and maintenance traffic could potentially access the Site from points around the Site including Ing Road, North Fen Drove, Day's Lane and Northorp Road. The most logical route would be via Bicker and along Ing Drove and north up Cowbridge Road, and it is understood that construction traffic serving the Viking Link already uses this route. The traffic would be managed through the CEMP and delivery scheduled to avoid peak traffic periods.

Table 1 summarises the number and type of deliveries that are anticipated to be generated during the 36 week construction period.

**Table 1 – Anticipated Trip Generation during the Construction Period**

Description of Temporary / Ancillary Works and Equipment	Details of Load	Number of Loads
Office / welfare accommodation (portacabins)	Low loader	3
Generator	Pickup	1
Excavator	Driven or low loader	2
Crane	Driven or low loader	1
Piling machine	Pickup	2
Switch gear	Low loader	2
Building material for substation	Pick up	10
HV installation	Hiab delivery	2
<b>Construction Support</b>		<b>24</b>
PV panels	HGV	192
Metal frames	HGV	204
Cabling	Curtain sided lorry	153
Inverters and transformers	Low loader	26
Fencing	Pick up	51
Aggregate for roadways	Tipper truck	600
<b>PV Equipment / Components</b>		<b>1226</b>
<b>TOTAL (one-way deliveries)</b>		<b>1250</b>

As summarised in Table 1, it is anticipated that the total number of deliveries requiring access to the development site would be some 1,250 one-way trips (2,500 two-way trips) across the full 36 week construction period.

During the first 4 weeks of the construction period, there would be a total of approximately 55 daily two-way delivery-related movements to the site, on average. This would reduce to approximately 7 two-way delivery-related movements per day for the remainder of the construction period. This level of trip generation is considered to be insignificant.

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In addition to the above, there will also be approximately 50 staff requiring access to the site per day, on average. During peak activities, the number of construction-related staff may rise to 120.

Overall, traffic generated during construction traffic would be modest and would be short term and temporary.

The operational phase would generate a small number of trips related to monitoring and maintenance of the equipment.

The Proposed Development is unlikely to result in significant environmental effects associated with effects on a PROW or increased traffic on the public highway.

### **10. Land Use**

The site is not allocated in the local development plan for any land use other than agriculture. Whilst likely to result in restrictions on the use of BMV agricultural land some farming activities (sheep grazing) would be able to continue. The agricultural land holdings that would be affected are all involved with the project and their overall farm businesses would not be adversely affected by the Proposed Development.

There are no land use designations / allocations nearby. As such the Proposed Development would not conflict with land use designations or existing adjacent uses, and significant effects in terms of land use are unlikely.

### **11. Land Stability and Climate**

Whilst parts of the Site are within defended and undefended flood zone the scheme can be designed in such a way that key infrastructure is protected and that there is no increased risk of flooding elsewhere.

The development of renewable energy projects is essential for addressing climate change and delivering the Government's target of net zero by 2050. As such, there would be beneficial climates impacts associated with the Proposed Development.

### **12. Cumulative Effects**

There are existing, consented and proposed solar farms in Boston and South Holland, although the planning history demonstrates that most are some distance from the Site. The main cumulative effects are associated with a reduction in the BMV agricultural land. However, the solar farm would be subject to a temporary consent and would be removed at the end of its life and the land restored to full agricultural use. As such there would be no long-term cumulative impacts in this respect.

Traffic associated with this and other construction would be temporary in nature and would be unlikely to all occur at the same time or affect the same highway networks. As such significant cumulative traffic effects are not considered likely.

Whilst solar farms in the surrounding landscape could be visible, their effects would be localised due physical separation and the screening effects of localised vegetation, and

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proposed mitigation planting. This can reduce intervisibility between schemes. As such, cumulative visual effects are likely to be in succession as people move through the landscape, rather than in combination. This would help reduce any cumulative landscape and visual effects with other projects and ensure that there would be no long-term cumulative landscape and visual impacts associated with the operation of the solar farm.

### **13. Transboundary Effects**

Due to the geographic location, scale and nature of the Proposed Development there would be no potential for transboundary effects. The site extends across two local authority areas but this in itself does not constitute a transboundary effect.

### **Screening Request**

This letter provides a brief description of the Proposed Development and the likely significant effects on the environment in line with the requirements of Regulation 6(2) and Schedule 3 of the EIA Regulations. Whilst the Proposed Development is Schedule 2 development, screening against Schedule 3 of the EIA Regulations, and the related guidance in the PPG, clearly demonstrates that with appropriate standard mitigation in place the Proposed Development is not likely to result in significant environmental effects. As such, it is considered that the Proposed Development does not constitute 'EIA development'.

### **Planning Submission**

Notwithstanding the above, the planning submission will be accompanied by a series of assessments setting out the details of the Proposed Development and the results of various technical assessment. These will include the following:

- Planning and Design & Access Statement;
- Planning Drawings;
- Glint and Glare Assessment;
- Ecological Assessment;
- Flood Risk Assessment and Surface Drainage Strategy;
- Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
- Cultural Heritage Assessment;
- Noise Assessment
- Agricultural Land Assessment, and
- Transport Statement.

Based on the previously undeveloped nature of the site it is not proposed to submit Phase 1 Ground Condition reports.

The final list of documents to be submitted in support of the detailed planning applications will be confirmed with both Boston and South Holland District Councils.

We trust that the contents of this letter along with the attached plans are sufficient to aid you in adopting a screening opinion. We look forward to receiving your response within the statutory three-week period; in the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact us should you

Cont'd./...

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Our Ref: 2920-01

September 2021

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have any queries. We look forward to your views on the intended scope of the planning application.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'CH', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Christopher Heather

**Senior Consultant**

Enclosed:

Figure 1: Site Location Plan

Figure 2: Environmental Constraints

Figure 3: Provisional Agricultural Land Classification

Figure 4: Modelled Flood Extents and Topography