23 November 2023

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Planning Department
Wiltshire Council
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BA14 8JN

By email only: developmentmanagement@wiltshire.gov.uk

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Our Ref LH22-67
Your Ref

Dear Sir or Madam,

**Request for an EIA Screening and Scoping Opinion in accordance with Regulations 2 and 4 of Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England) Regulations 2017.**

**Proposed solar farm with a 49.9MW output for a temporary period of 50 years, associated infrastructure, permanent grid connection hub and environmental enhancements at land to the south of Potterne Park Farm, Potterne Wick, Potterne, Devizes, SN10 5QT.**

I write to formally request an EIA screening opinion in respect of the abovementioned proposals. The site measures 218 acres (88.2 hectares) in size and comprises of agricultural land. The application rectangular shaped and is located to the south of Potterne Park Farm and the site is immediately to the northwest of the main railway line. To the south-west of the site is an area of woodland knows as *Folly Wood* and site is crossed by Scottish and Southern Energy ("SSE") power lines.

The site boundary is outlined on the location plan submitted with this enquiry. It is also shown on the site area plan and an aerial image, both with the site edged red for reference purposes – attached in **Appendix A and B.**

Proposals

The proposed development is for the Installation of a solar farm with a 49.9 MW output for a temporary period of 50 years, associated infrastructure, grid connection point and environmental enhancements. The proposals will consist of the following components:

- Fixed solar panels in rows mounted on a framework system which is fixed into the ground on steel piles
- Small substation buildings/transformers and associated small scale plant including inverters and CCTV
- On-site grid connection point. A small substation would be located within the site and a connection made to the existing 132kv pylon within the site.
- Stock proof deer fencing up to 2m around the perimeter of the site (within field boundaries)
- Maintenance and enhancement of existing hedgerows

The solar farm will comprise rows of fixed (non-rotating) solar panels set out over 88.2 hectares of land together with associated plant, cable routing and associated works. The solar panels will be spaced to avoid shadow and elevated on a pivoted frame supported by pile-driven stakes erected with minimal disturbance to the ground and sited to achieve optimum exposure for sunlight absorption. The photovoltaic panels will not emit noise, dust or vibration.

The electricity generated from the proposals will feed directly into the local distribution grid. The development would remain in position for 50 years after which the site will be returned to agriculture; accordingly, the proposals are fully reversible. It is intended that the land will remain available for livestock to graze between the panels to retain an agricultural use. Existing hedgerows would be retained and reinforced with native species to deliver improved habitats and ecological benefits whilst screening views into the site.

Images of the proposals and typical details are provided at **Appendix C**.

## Environmental Designations

### Existing Use

The site compromises an area of undeveloped agricultural, prominently semi-improved grassland interspersed with tree planting. The south eastern boundary is formed by a railway line and the site benefits from existing hedgerows. There is a small area of woodland in the northern corner of the site, but this is excluded from the application site.



*Figure 1 Photograph of the site.*

### Potential for Flooding

The site is not in a Flood Zone, except for a small piece the along the western boundary, as detailed in the map below.

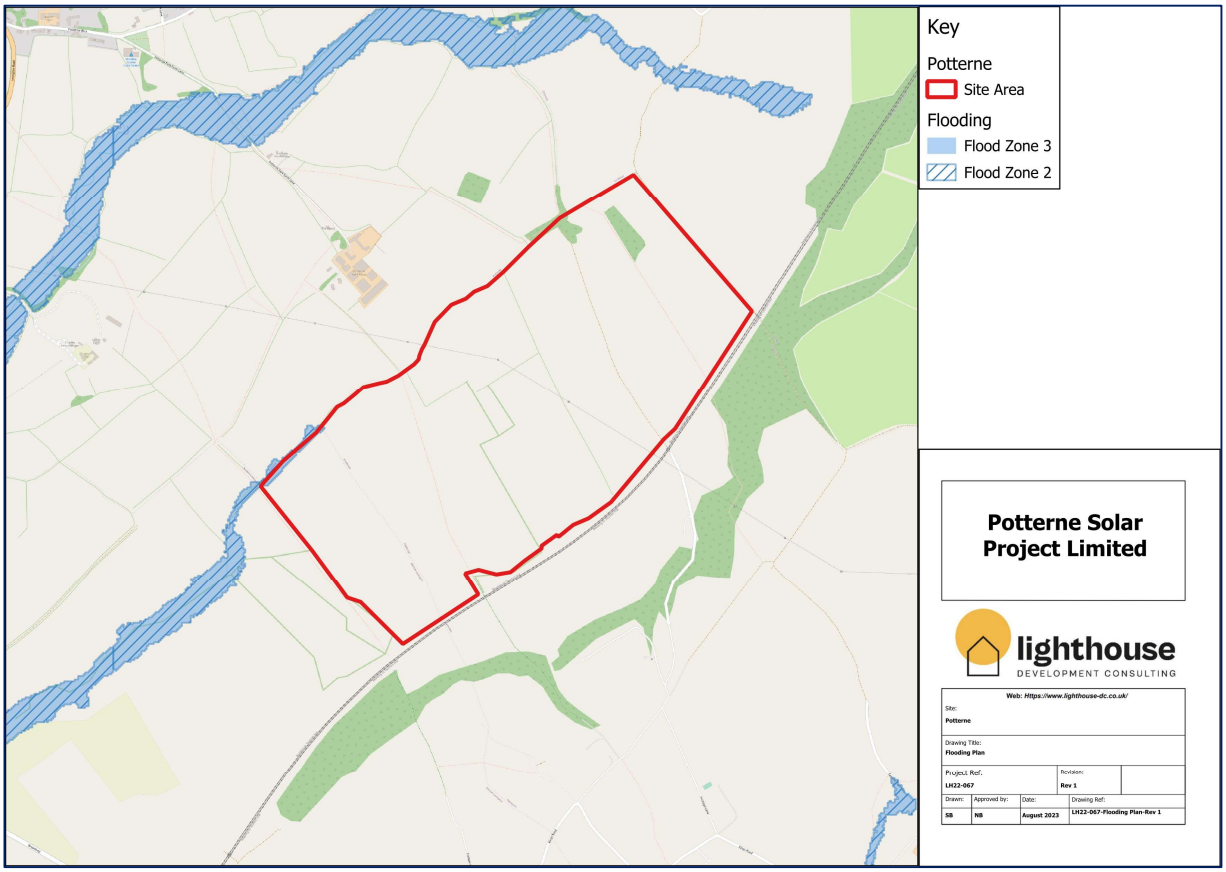



*Figure 2 Flood map*

Solar farms are classified as “essential infrastructure” within the NPPF (Annex 3) and as such are compatible with flood zone 3 and considered an acceptable land use. But in any case, no solar panels will be sited in this very small portion of the site.

Landscape Designations

As shown below, the site is also not located in any landscape designations. Specifically, the site is not located in an a AONB or Area of Great Landscape Value. The site is not within a buffer for either designation. The site is not therefore sensitive in terms of landscape impact.

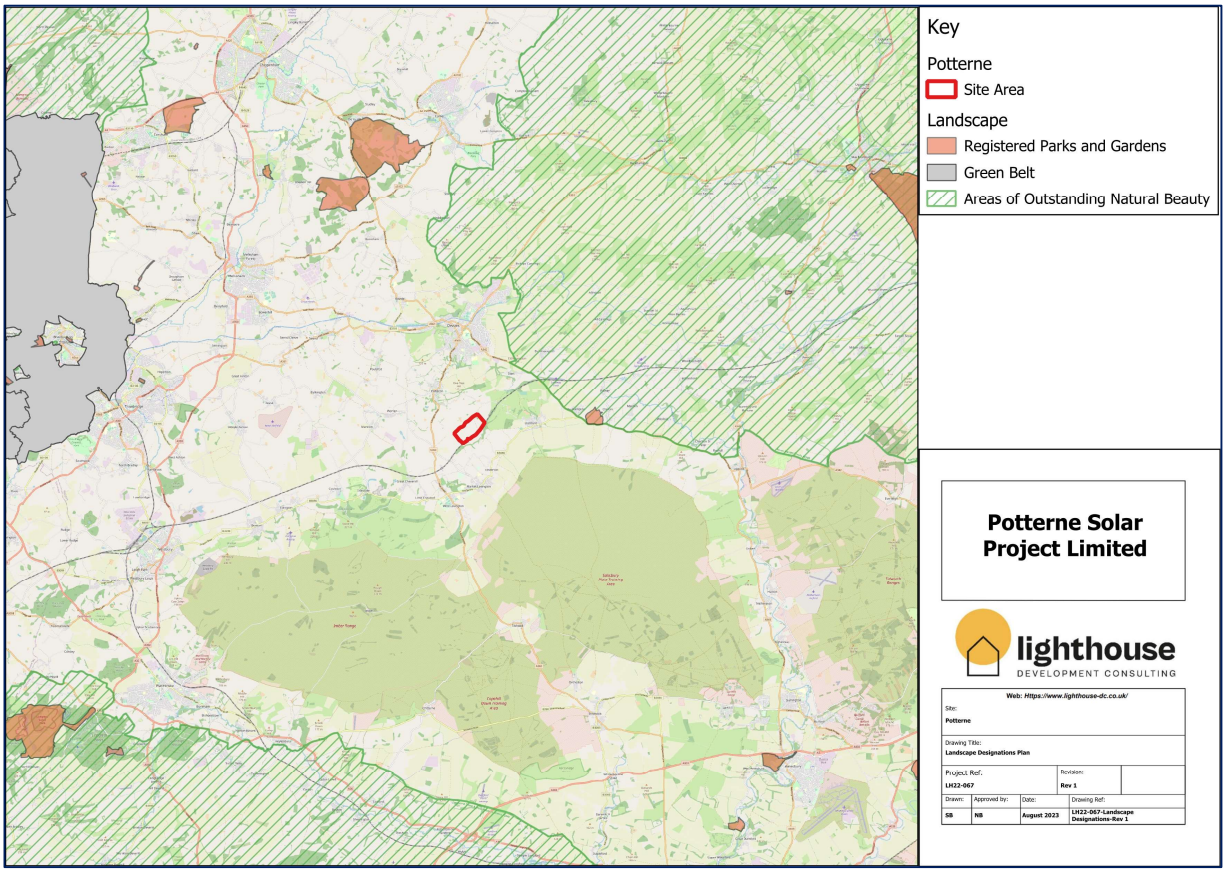



*Figure 3 Landscape Designations Plan*

Habitat Designations

The site is not subject to any ecological designations, including SSSI, RAMSAR, SAC or SPA designated land.

As shown below, the closest designation is to the north and is approximately 900m to the north-east of the site identified as the Stert Brook Exposure. The Salisbury Plain SSSI is located approximately 2.7km to the south-west of the site.

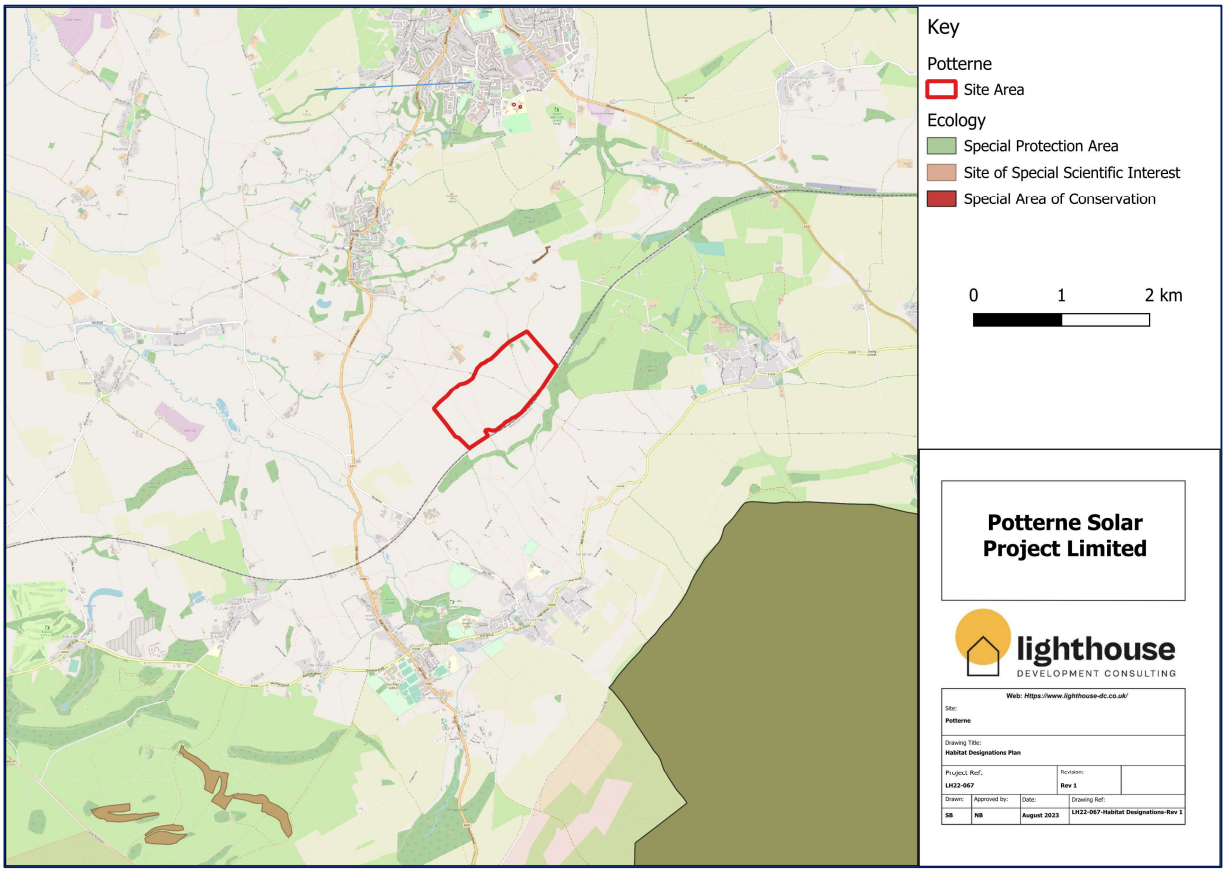



*Figure 4 Habitat Designations Plan*

Heritage Considerations

The map in Figure 5 below identifies several listed buildings and conservation areas three conservation areas nearby the site.

However, there are no listed buildings directly within or immediately adjacent the site with the closest listed building being approximately 650m from the northern corner of the site and separated by a large number of fields and hedgerows. There is also a Scheduled Monument to the north of the site named 'Moated site 300m north east of Potterne Park Farm' list entry no. 1012152.

There are no anticipated impacts on the settings of listed buildings due to the distances, the low level of development, the flat landscape and the absence of inter-visibility. A full heritage assessment would be provided to assess settings impacts in greater detail but there are no significant potential impacts anticipated that would trigger EIA.

The site does not appear to have significant below ground archaeology based upon a desktop review and geophysical survey.

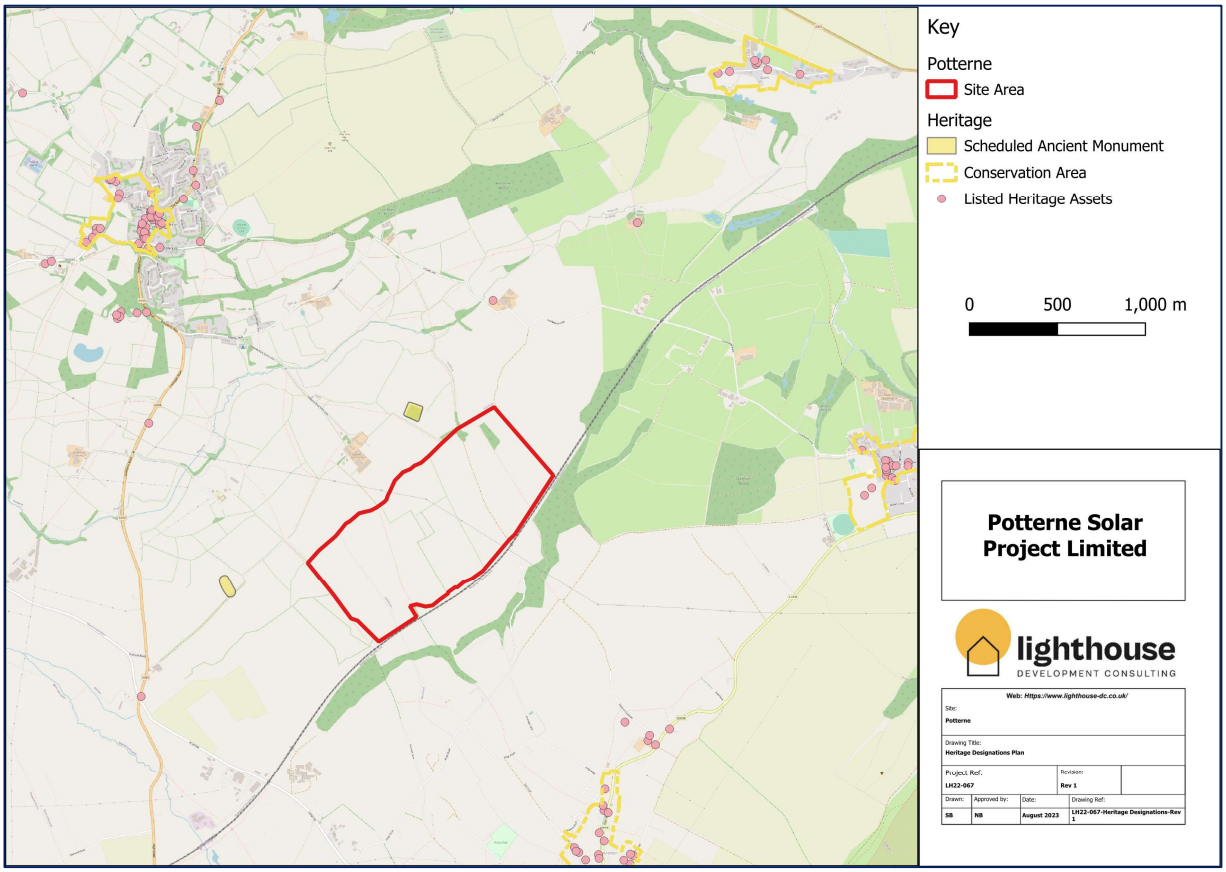



*Figure 5 Heritage Designations Plan*

Public Rights of Way

The OS plan below reveals that there are three Public Rights of Way (PROW) running through the site identified as the East10, East 12 and East 14 paths. These are all detailed in **Appendix D.**

Impacts upon users of these PROWs will be assessed through the above mentioned LVIA**.** The PROWs will remain in place and will not be closed or diverted. Indeed, it is proposed to include signficant buffer zones along the PROWs and design landscape planting to enhance biodiversity and visual interest along the routes which would completely screen the proposals.

**Proposed Planning Application**

Subject to this EIA Screening Request, a full planning application is proposed to be submitted to the LPA. This would be accompanied by all of the necessary technical assessment work in order to inform an understanding of the likely impacts of the development. This would comprise the following scope of plans and reporting:

- Site Location Plan
- Site Layout Plan and elevations of all componentry
- Planning, Design & Access Statement
- Landscape and Visual Assessment

- Flood Risk Assessment
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report and Protected Species Surveys if required
- Construction Traffic Management Plan
- Landscape and Environmental Management Plan (LEMP)
- Desk Based Heritage Assessment informed by Geophysical survey
- Tree survey
- Glint and Glare Assessment

**National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) – EIA Process**

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) provides guidance on EIA screening and how to assess whether a development is likely to give rise to significant environmental effects. PPG 018 (Ref ID: 4-018-20170728) states:

*"only a very small proportion of Schedule 2 development will require an Environmental Impact Assessment".*

In order to assist LPAs to determine whether a project is likely to require an assessment a set of indicative thresholds and criteria have been prepared and presented as a tabulated annex to the PPG (Paragraph 058 Reference ID:4-058-20150326).

**EIA Precedence**

The site itself does not have any significant planning history and no renewable energy history, however through reviewing Wiltshire Council planning database, approximately 6km north from the site is application 13/05244/FULL. This was a 32.2 hectare solar farm and the conclusions from the EIA Screening request concluded that the proposal was not EIA development and that:

*"the wider geographical area … has sufficient capacity to absorb the development without adversely affecting its environmental sensitivity to a sufficiently significant degree"*

Therefore, in the interest of consistency given the similar site designations and location in comparison to this proposal it can be concluded that this proposal is not EIA development.

**Cumulative Impact**

There is not an over concentration of other solar farms in this part of the County. There are two other solar farms located 4km and 6km respectively away from this site and are separated through landscape features, field boundaries and developments to ensure that they are not visually or functionally linked.

The planning application for this development will be justified and combined impacts fully assessment as part of a LVIA process but the relatively flat landscape existing features, the containment of the site by the railway line and the absence of any landscape designations results in there not being any significant cumulative impacts that are likely to arise.

**Screening Request**

This request is made in accordance with the EIA Regulations, Part 2 Section 6 and Schedule 3. In accordance with those provisions the following information is provided:

A. a plan sufficient to identify the land;
B. a description of the development, including in particular—
(i) a description of the physical characteristics of the development and, where relevant, of demolition works;
(ii) a description of the location of the development, with particular regard to the environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected;
C. a description of the aspects of the environment likely to be significantly affected by the development;
D. to the extent the information is available, a description of any likely significant effects of the proposed development on the environment resulting from—
(i) the expected residues and emissions and the production of waste, where relevant; and
(ii) the use of natural resources, in particular soil, land, water and biodiversity; and
E. such other information or representations as the person making the request may wish to provide or make, including any features of the proposed development or any measures envisaged to avoid or prevent what might otherwise have been significant adverse effects on the environment.

**Assessment of proposed development against EIA Regulations**

The Proposed Development is not a Schedule 1 development and does not automatically require an EIA. However, it does constitute a project under category 3(a) of Schedule 2 of the Regulations as an "industrial installation for the production of electricity" whereby the applicable threshold to undertake screening is when the site area exceeds 0.5 hectares.

| EIA Screening Assessment | |
|---|---|
| Is the project Schedule 1 development according to Schedule 1 of the EIA Regulations? | No |
| Is the project Schedule 2 development under the EIA Regulations? | Yes |
| If YES, under which description of development in Column 1 and Column 2? | 3. Energy (a) Industrial installations for the production of electricity, steam and hot water (unless included in Schedule);<br>1) The area of the development exceeds 0.5 hectares |
| Is the development within, partly within, or near a 'sensitive area' as defined by Regulation 2 of the EIA Regulations? | No (defined in the EIA Regulations as : Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and European Sites, National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and World Heritage Sites and Scheduled Monuments.) |
| Are the applicable thresholds/criteria in Column 2 exceeded/met? | Yes. Site is 88.2 hectares in size |
| Would the development proposal be likely to have significant effects on the environment (nature, size, location) | No, as described in assessment table below |

The proposals include a station/plant for the purposes of generating electricity and would have a generating capacity of 49.9 megawatts. The site area exceeds 0.5 hectares. The development would therefore represent Schedule 2 development, in accordance with Schedule 2(3)(a) of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 ('the EIA Regulations').

**Schedule 3 Selection Criteria**

In determining whether a development proposal is likely to have a significant effect on the environment, Schedule 3 identifies three broad criteria which should be considered:

- The characteristics of the development
- Location of development
- The types and characteristics of the potential impact

**The characteristics of the development**

The proposed development comprises rows of panels on a mounting system pushed into the ground, however the site could continue to be grazed by sheep with large areas between rows and large undeveloped buffer areas at the site boundaries. The site will not consume resources (besides solar energy) and would beneficially reduce the intensity of the agricultural use of the land, allowing the ground to rest and restore nutrients as it is grazed. The proposed development would not produce any waste or arisings such as dust or noise nor result in any localised pollution besides some small impacts during the construction and decommissioning phases. The development would not cause risks of major accidents nor risks to human health, particularly as the solar panels are inert structures, which would be fenced off and on private land.

**Location and the environmental sensitivity of the site**

The site lies outside of any National Park, AONB, Green Belt or other landscape designations. The site is not subject to any ecological designations, including SSSI, RAMSAR, SAC designated land. There are no Scheduled Monuments or listed buildings within the Site. There are listed buildings within 1 km of the site boundary but with no inter-visibility. The vast majority of the site is in a Flood Zone 1 with just a very small part of the site is within flood zone 3.

| Screening Assessment against Schedule 3 | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Characteristics of development | Screening Assessment | EIA Development? |
| a) the size and design of the whole development | The site area is 88.2 hectares and therefore above the 0.5 hectares, as a result the development exceeds the threshold in Colum 2 of Schedule 2 of the EIA regulations 2017. It is therefore necessary to consider the size and design if the development to consider the characteristics<br><br>The proposed development would consist of a solar farm with an installed capacity of 49.49 MW. The solar panels would be mounted on frames set at an angle of between 15-35 degrees and would face south. The lowest part of the arrays would be approximately 0.8 - 1m high, with the highest part being likely to be no higher than 3.1m. Other infrastructure on site would include inverters and transformers to convert the current for export to the electricity distribution network and there would be an underground cable to an existing grid yard nearby to the east of the site.<br><br>The limited height and nature of the development ensures that the potential visibility would be low. The site is also well contained within the wider landscape and contained by the railway infrastructure to the south. | No |
| b) Cumulation with other existing development and/or approved development | There are no other solar schemes within the immediate setting of this site, with the closest other sites being located approx. 4km away. There is no intervisibility of other sites with this site and as such it is not considered that this development in culmination with other sites will result in any adverse environmental impacts. | No |
| c) the use of natural resources, in particular land, soil, water and biodiversity | The panels are mounted on metal frames with a height no higher than 3.1m. The way in which the panels are mounted does not require foundations as are pushed into the earth using hydraulic machines. There is no demand on water or other natural resources. As such the development will not have a significant impact on natural resources. | No |
| d) the production of waste | The development will not produce any waste during the operational phase. At the decommissioning stage, the materials used can be recycled. | No |
| e) pollution and nuisances | The proposed development would not produce any waste or arisings such as dust or noise nor result in any localised pollution besides some small impacts during the construction and decommissioning phases. The panels are inert. | No |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| f) the risk of major accidents and/or disasters relevant to the development concerned, including those caused by climate change, in accordance with scientific knowledge | The development would not cause risks of major accidents nor risks to human health, particularly as the solar panels are inert structures, which would be fenced off and on private land. | No |
| g) the risks to human health (for example, due to water contamination or air pollution) | The risks to human health are minimal given the nature of the solar panels. The site is on private land and monitored through CCTV and fenced off securely. | No |

| **Types and characteristics of the potential impact** | | **EIA Development** |
|---|---|---|
| (a) the magnitude and spatial extent of the impact (for example geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected) | The proposed development would consist of a solar farm with an installed capacity of 49.49 MW within an area of 88.2 hectares. The solar panels would be mounted on frames set at an angle of 15-35 degrees and would face south. The highest part of the panels would be no higher than 3.1m. Other infrastructure on site would include inverters to convert the current for export to the electricity distribution network.<br><br>This site is well located in relation to the existing concentration of populations as is located approx. 2km south east of the settlement of Potterne and separated by field boundaries and vegetation.<br><br>The access to the site from the public highway is good and there is a A classed road that can provide access to the Strategic Road Network to deliver materials to the site.<br><br>The low impact method of construction together with the use of a construction management plan will ensure that disturbance to local residents during construction will be limited to a short construction period and will provide mitigation to limit disturbance.<br><br>The passive and inert nature of the proposed development, together with existing hedgerows and proposed landscape and biodiversity enhancement measures would minimise the extent of any impact on residential amenity or the local biodiversity. | No |
| (b) the nature of the impact | The nature of the development in terms of the panels and their siting the nature of the development is low.<br><br>The visual impact of the development on the landscape will be assessed through a Landscape Visual Impact Assessment but the panels sit low within the landscape and are effectively screened in | No |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | particular by the flood bund which wraps around the western flank of the site.<br><br>Whilst there will be some localised construction impact during construction this can be mitigated through a Construction, Environmental Management Plan that will seek regulate issues such as hours of construction, delivery and site compound access.<br><br>The construction is limited to the installation of the panels on metal frames which are pushed into the ground by mechanical equipment. The panels are then bolted to the frames with cables running between the equipment.<br><br>Given the nature of the construction and the form of the development the nature of the impacts are localised and can be understood and assessed within the scope of a planning application. | |
| (c) the transboundary nature of the impact | The proposed development site is contained within Wiltshire and there are no transboundary impacts that would need to be considered with this form of development. | No |
| (d) the intensity and complexity of the impact | The nature of the solar panels and their impact on the environment are well understood and can be mitigated through sensitive and careful use of design and mitigation. | No |
| (e) the probability of the impact | Several measures can be taken to limit the impact of the development on the local environment. Additionally, they are well understood and can be mitigated against.<br><br>Of relevance is that once the panels are installed through a low impact construction method, they remain static in the environment. This means that the impact on the environment is entirely predictable and limited.<br><br>Furthermore, the nature of the installation means that the existing land use can be maintained with grazing between the panels and a less intensive form of agriculture.<br><br>There is therefore a high degree of certainty associated with this development and its limited impact on the environment. | No |
| (f) the expected onset, duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact | The impact of the development during the construction phase is time limited and can be mitigated through a Construction Environment Management Plan.<br><br>The land use is temporary and will be limited to a 50 year period it and can be reversed thereafter without contamination or prohibitively high restoration costs. | No |
| (g) the cumulation of the impact with the impact of | The development sits sensitively within the landscape and will not result in harmful impacts combined with other development. | No |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| other existing and/or approved development; | This site is well contained with the southern boundary formed of the railway infrastructure and localised impacts on the environment. As such there is not a significant impact in relation to cumulative development. | |
| (h) the possibility of effectively reducing the impact | The development has been designed to meet the requirements required for energy generation and given the location and design together with mitigation. This is considered appropriate for this site.<br><br>This development will be effectively screened through a landscaping scheme which seeks to deliver a net gain in biodiversity and deliver a scheme that assimilates into the landscape.<br><br>Furthermore, the proposal is design led with the siting of panels being based on the impact on the landscape with areas of the site which are sensitive to change being avoided.<br><br>In addition, a series of mitigation measures will be provided which will include landscape management plan, construction management plan, security and safety plan and written scheme of investigation.<br><br>Taken together with the considerations around design, landscaping and mitigation this is a form of development that will have a very limited and localised impact on the environment. | No |

**Relevant Case Precedence**

It is generally uncommon for large scale solar farms to require a full Environmental Impact Assessment unless there are significant environmental constraints within or immediately adjacent to the site, such as SSSI.

An example of a scheme which is similar in scope and scale is provided in **Appendix E** and proposed ground mounted solar photovoltaic development. The site extends to approximately 99 ha, and comprises agricultural land, located near Beverely in Yorkshire. EIA was not sought for that proposal. Since 'Carr Farm' is the same form of development on a similar (slightly larger) scale with a comparable environmental context and did not require EIA, it is a useful example.

There are of course many other similar examples that can be provided upon request.

**Summary**

The proposed development will not lead to significant environmental effects; it is a relatively 'light touch' form of development since it does not involve foundations, permanent built form, it is silent, stationary and completely reversible. The site itself is not within or adjacent any environmentally sensitive areas. There are no triggers to justify the need for EIA.

Preliminary appraisals indicate that the relevant impacts will be localised and limited in duration. It is considered that these impacts will be largely resolved with careful design and landscape mitigation measures, together with well-conceived construction and transport methodologies and biodiversity enhancements.

The proposed application will be supported by a suite of environmental assessment work to ensure all potential impacts can be fully assessed without the need for an EIA.

The proposals will provide significant environmental benefits through the reduction of greenhouse gases in line with international, national and local plan policy and the economic benefits that arise in the local and wider economy. The proposals also have significant potential to deliver on-site environmental benefits through ecology and landscape enhancements.

I look forward to receiving your screening opinion in due course and thank you for your consideration.

Yours faithfully,

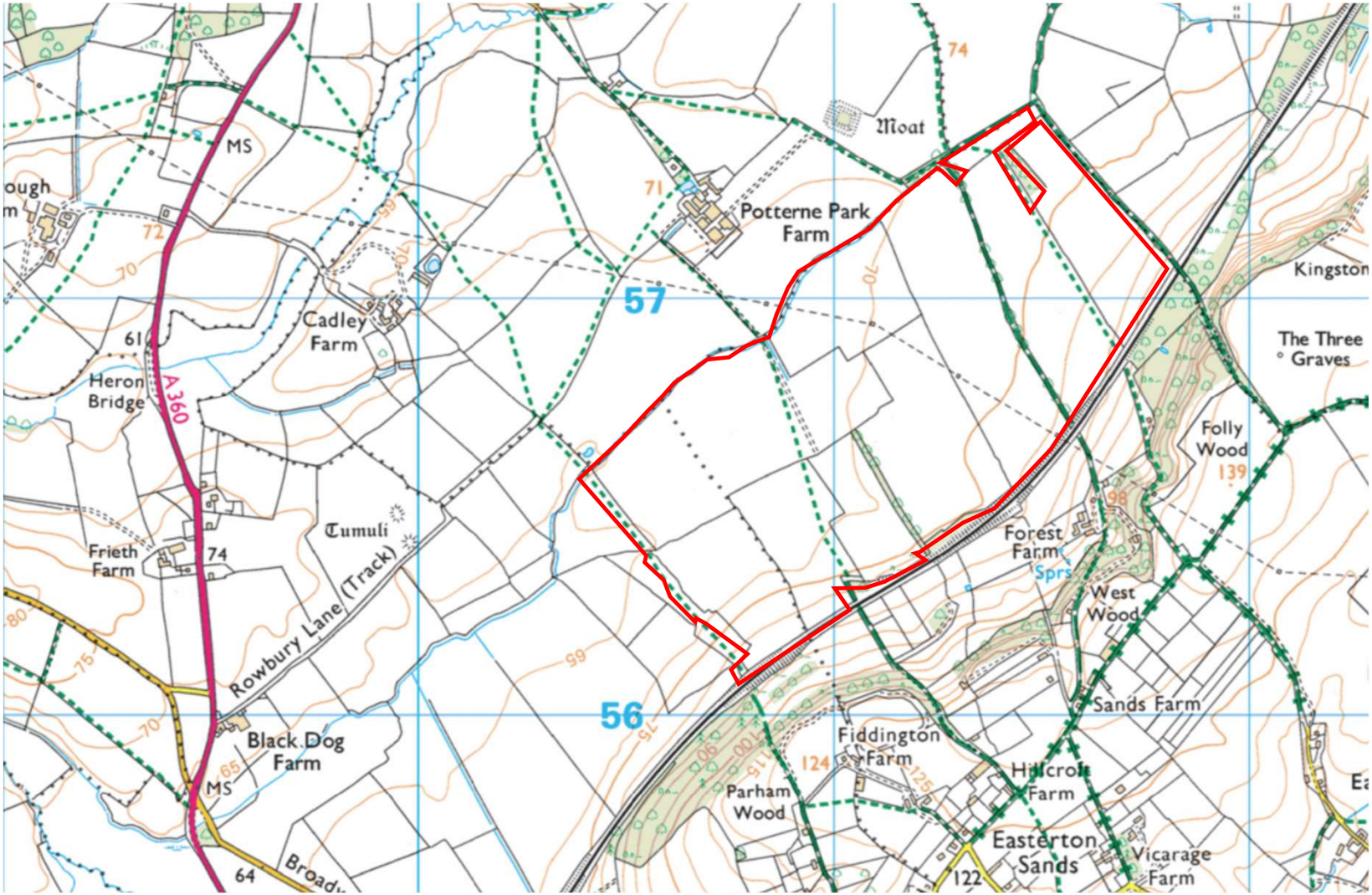


**Peter Grubb BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI**
Director

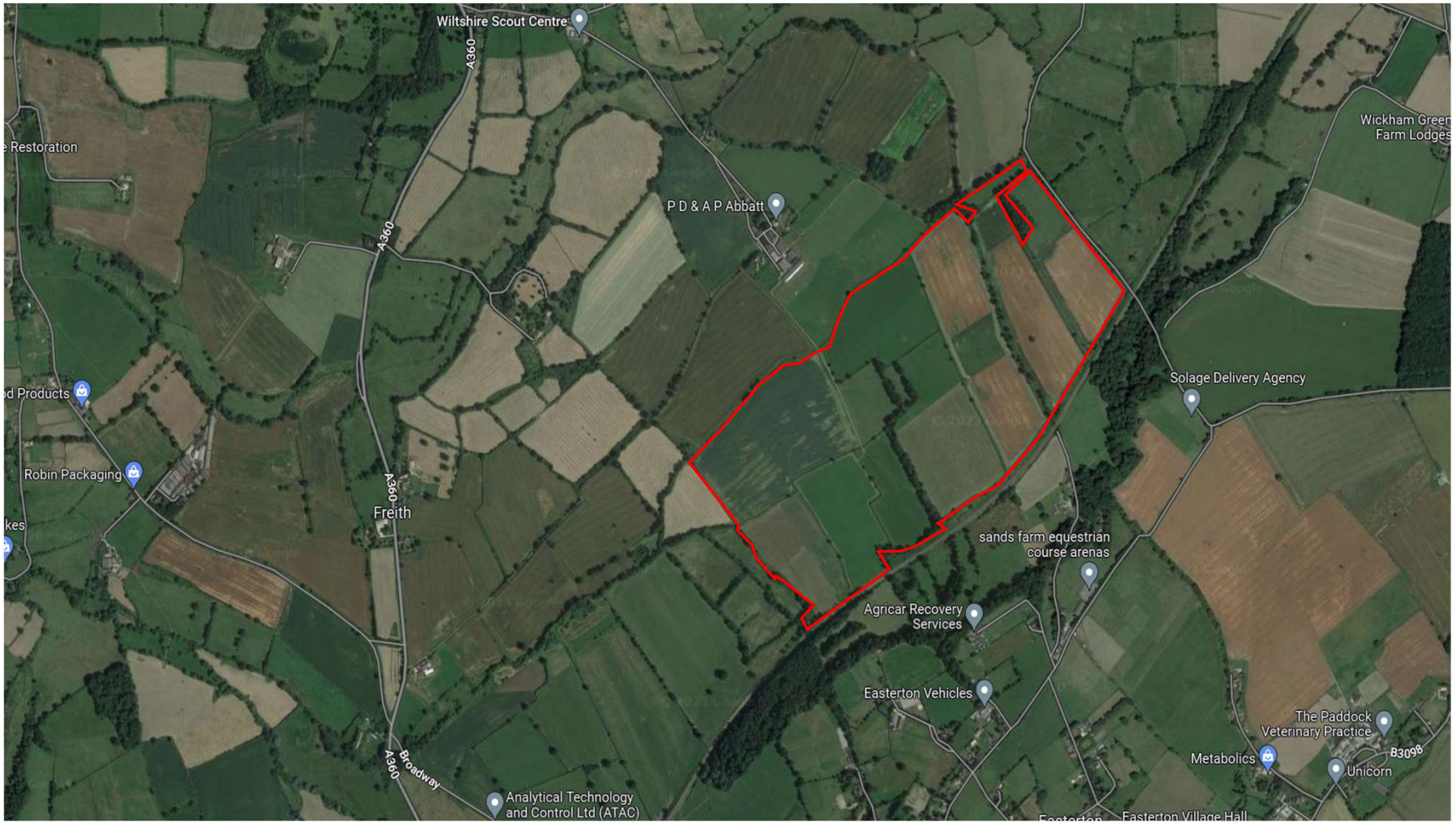
Enclosures:

Appendices A to E

Appendix A Site Location Plan



Appendix B Aerial Photo



**Appendix C: Images of the proposal – typical details**



**Image A: Underside of solar array under construction, showing framework system.**



**Image B: Framework system – ready for panels to be attached. Stakes are pushed into the ground and do not require 'foundations', digging or cement.**



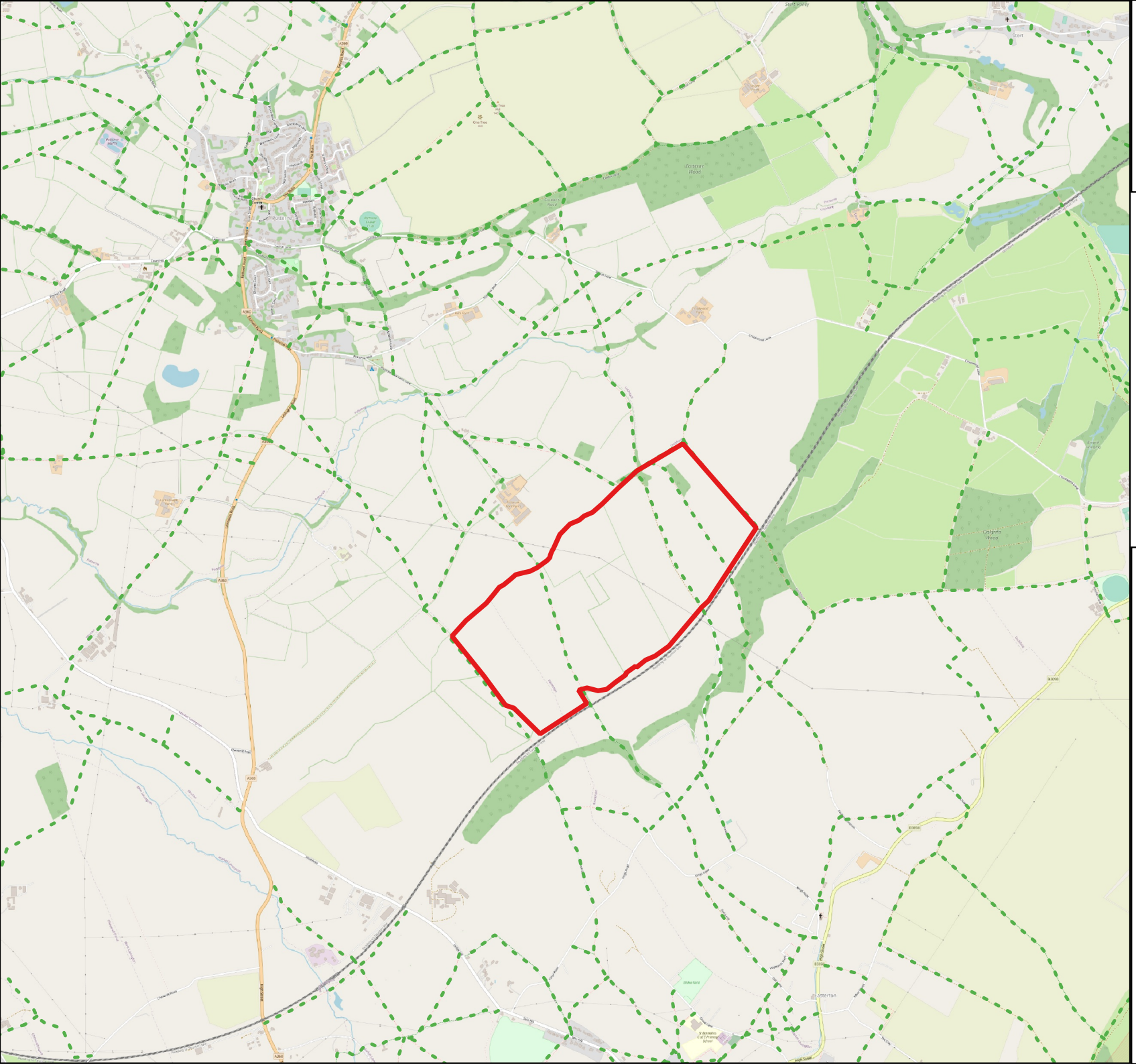
**Image C: Typical ground mounted solar array with spacing between rows and wild flower buffer between the arrays and the hedgerows**



**Image D: Typical stock proof fence with gap beneath to allow wildlife to forage (fence is usually PD)**




**Image E: Typical CCTV detail**



Key

Potterne

Site Area

PROW

Wiltshire PROW

0 500 1,000 m

# Potterne Solar Project Limited

lighthouse DEVELOPMENT CONSULTING

Web: *Https://www.lighthouse-dc.co.uk/*

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Site: **Potterne** | | | |
| Drawing Title: **PROW Plan** | | | |
| Project Ref: **LH22-067** | | Revision: **Rev 1** | |
| Drawn: **SB** | Approved by: **NB** | Date: **August 2023** | Drawing Ref: **LH22-067-PROW Plan-Rev 1** |

EAST RIDING
OF YORKSHIRE COUNCIL

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**E-Mail:** matthew.sunman@eastriding.gov.uk
**Tel. Direct:** (01482) 393735
**Date:** 09th November 2021

Dear Kate Cantwell

**Screening Opinion for Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)**

**Proposed installation of a solar farm plus ancillary infrastructure and equipment, landscaping and access**

**At: Carr Plantation, Ferry Road, Wawne, East Riding of Yorkshire**

I refer to your email dated 08th October 2021. I am writing to provide you with a screening opinion of the Local Planning Authority (LPA) under S.5 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulations 2017 for the above proposal (see attached).

Given its understanding of the site environment and the development proposal at the time of writing, the LPA considers that the development proposal would not comprise EIA development. As such, the LPA cannot asks you to undertake an EIA of the development proposal or submit an Environmental Statement with the application for planning permission.

Yours Sincerely

[redacted]

Andy Wainwright

Strategic Development Services Manager

Enc.

# SCREENING OPINION

# FOR ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA):

**Proposed installation of a solar farm plus ancillary infrastructure and equipment, landscaping and access**

**At: Carr Plantation, Ferry Road, Wawne, East Riding of Yorkshire**

## Introduction

The purpose of this document is to provide a Screening Opinion on the need for an EIA in relation to the above development proposal. It therefore provides an outline of relevant legislation and guidance, as well as the Local Planning Authority's (LPA's) interpretation and application of this legislation and guidance in the case concerned.

## Relevant Legislation and Guidance

The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulations 2017 require the submission of an Environmental Statement (ES) with applications for planning permission for "EIA development".

The 2017 Regulations differentiate two types of EIA development - Schedule 1 and Schedule 2. Schedule 1 development (and changes/extensions thereto) is EIA development and therefore requires an EIA. Schedule 2 development (and changes/extensions thereto) is only EIA development if - **in the opinion of the LPA** - it is likely to have significant effects on the environment by virtue of factors such as size, nature or location.

In seeking to determine whether the Schedule 2 development comprises EIA development, the LPA is required by the Regulations to take into account the criteria as set out in Schedule 3 (i.e. selection criteria for screening Schedule 2 development):

1. Characteristics of development (e.g. size, cumulation, use of natural resources, waste production, pollution and nuisances, risk of accidents);

2. Location of development (i.e. environmental sensitivity with regard to existing land use, relative abundance and regenerative capacity of natural resources in area, absorption capacity of the natural environment - and in particular areas such as wetlands, coastal zones, nature resources, densely populated areas etc);

3. Characteristics of the potential impact (i.e. the potential significant effects of development in relation to the extent, magnitude, complexity, probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact concerned).

## Statutory Guidance

The National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) provides guidance to LPA's on the interpretation and implementation of the 2017 Regulations.

In order to help LPA's determine the need for EIA of a development proposal, the NPPG (Paragraph 030) provides a flow chart with five tests ("the fivefold test") as follows:-

1. Is the development type listed in Schedule 1?

2. Is the development type listed in column one of Schedule 2?

3. If it is Schedule 2 development, is it located in a sensitive area?

4. If it is Schedule 2 development, but is not in a sensitive area, does it meet any of the relevant thresholds and/or criteria in column two of Schedule 2?

5. If it is Schedule 2 development (and is **either** in a sensitive area **or** meets one of the relevant thresholds and criteria in Schedule 3), is it likely to have significant effects on the environment?

The NPPG includes at paragraph 058 an Annex on Indicative Screening Thresholds, to aid the LPA in assessing whether a project is likely to have significant environmental effects. The table also gives an indication of the types of impact that are most likely to be significant for particular types of development.

**Application of Legislation and Guidance to the Development Project**

Applying the "fivefold test" to the development project set out above, it can be concluded that:

a. The development is not a Schedule 1 development.

b. The development is a Schedule 2 development because it falls into the category defined in Class 3 (A) industrial installations for the production of electricity, steam and hot water.

c. The site is not located in a sensitive area as defined within the 2017 Regulations.

d. The development exceeds the schedule 2 criteria and thresholds (the area of the development 99 ha is more than the 0.5 ha threshold).

e. The proposed development would not give rise to significant effects on the environment within the meaning of the 2017 Regulations and the associated guidance. Please see below for the Local Planning Authority's reasons.

**Discussion**

Taking into the account the selection criteria at Schedule 3 of the 2017 Regulations and the advice at Paragraph 58 of the NPPG, the Screening Opinion of the LPA is the proposals does not comprise EIA development.

The development relates to the installation of solar panels on existing agricultural land. The area of the proposed works would be around 99 hectares in area and therefore in excess of the 0.5ha threshold for section 3(a) of schedule 2 development. It is envisaged the proposal would produce approximately 49 MW of electricity annually for export to the national grid. The PPG is clear the indicative criteria and thresholds is a thermal output of more than 50MW (this proposal is below this threshold). Key issues to consider are emissions to air, arrangements for the transportation of fuel and any visual impact.

A Screening Report, submitted with this EIA Screening Opinion Request, includes consideration of the developments environmental effects; including emissions to air, transportation of fuel and visual impacts. In considering the points raised, it is likely that the proposals effects would be limited to the local area and the impacts mitigated against.

The site does not lie within a sensitive area as defined in part 2(1) of the Regulations. Any future application will be submitted with a full ecological report. It is, however, anticipated – due to its nature – the proposed development could be undertaken without significant impacts on the environment.

Within 2km of the site there is one Local Wildlife Site (LWS) adjacent to the west of the site known as Figham Pastures LWS, one approx. 1.5km east known as Meaux LWS, one approximatley 2km to the north west known as Swine Moor LWS and one approximately 2km north east known as Cote Wood LWS. However, none of the previously mentioned LWS comprise part of the Site.

The NPPG states – "*In certain cases, local designations which are not included in the definition of "sensitive areas*", but which are nonetheless environmentally sensitive, may also be relevant in determining whether an assessment is required".

The site itself includes arable fields, drainage ditches, and hedges with hedgerow trees. The development is limited in extent and, unlike other built developments, will retain grassland across the site between and under the solar panels, and will retain the hedges and hedgerow trees. Additional planting of trees and hedgerows could also be planted along the sites perimeter and a wildflower seed mix throughout the site is proposed. The previously mentioned LWS sites would be safeguarded.

East Riding of Yorkshire Council will be seeking any subsequent application for planning permission to provide significant ecological enhancements demonstrating biodiversity net gain.

With references to selective criteria in Schedule 3, development characteristics (size, design, cumulative, use of natural resources, production of waste, pollution, nuisances, risk of major accidents and risks to human health) are limited and a significant effect is not likely ; in terms of location the environmental sensitivity of the geographical areas to be affected by the development are again limited and a significant effect is not likely; and finally the proposal will not have a tansfrontier impact; the magnitude, spatial extent, nature, transboundary, intensity, complexity, cumulative and complexity of the impact as well as the onset, probability, duration, reversibility and frequency would also be limited and a significant effect is not likely.

Because of the nature of the proposed development, together with its scale, glare is a specific visual impact that any subsequent application needs to address such as through a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) proportionate to the proposals nature of development and scale.

With this in mind the Screening Opinion of the Local Planning Authority (LPA) is that although the development would compromise works which meet the applicable threshold and criteria in column 2 it does not compromise EIA development as it would not have the potential to have significant adverse impact on the environment within the meaning of the 2017 Regulations.

Taking into the account the selection criteria at Schedule 3 of the 2017 Regulations and the advice at Paragraph 018 of the NPPG, the Screening Opinion of the LPA is that the proposed development does not comprise EIA development. Therefore an Environmental Statement does not need to be submitted.

Matthew Sunman

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East Riding of Yorkshire Council