

Environmental Statement – Volume 3: Non-technical Summary

Environmental Statement: Part 5 Regulation 18 of The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017

3MW solar array and ancillary development

Land north of the A303, Chicklade, Wiltshire, England, SP3 5SS

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Non-Technical Summary (NTS) explains the key findings of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for a proposed 3MW solar array on land north of the A303 at Chicklade. It is written in clear, plain English so that the public, stakeholders and decision-makers can understand the development, its environmental effects and how those effects will be managed.
- 1.2. The proposal is for a 3MW solar photovoltaic (PV) array located within the southern portion of a 12-hectare arable field. The electricity generated will supply the newly constructed EV charging service station. The development includes PV panels, a transformer station, deer-proof fencing, native hedgerow planting, woodland planting, wildflower grassland, and a new access via the service station. After its 40-year operational life, the solar array can be removed and the land restored.

2. Environmental Impact Assessment

- 2.1. The key objectives of this EIA are to:
- Set out baseline information for the study area to identify those features which may be impacted upon by the development;
 - Identify and assesses predicted environmental impacts;
 - Identify where environmental impacts can be avoided, and environmental benefits achieved, through mitigation inherent within the site design; and
 - Taking any mitigation measures into account, assesses the residual impacts of the development proposal.
- 2.2. The NTS summarises the Environmental Statement which forms Volume 1 and the associated Appendices which form Volume 2.

3. Site Description

- 3.1. The site is located approximately 120m north of the A303 and 900m west of Chicklade village. It lies within the Cranborne Chase National Landscape but is visually influenced by nearby buildings and the A303 corridor. The field is currently in arable use, bordered by hedgerows. The site lies within Flood Zone 1 and is not at risk from surface water flooding.
- 3.2. The Site comprises a cropped arable field and the Site Location is shown at **Figure 1** below:

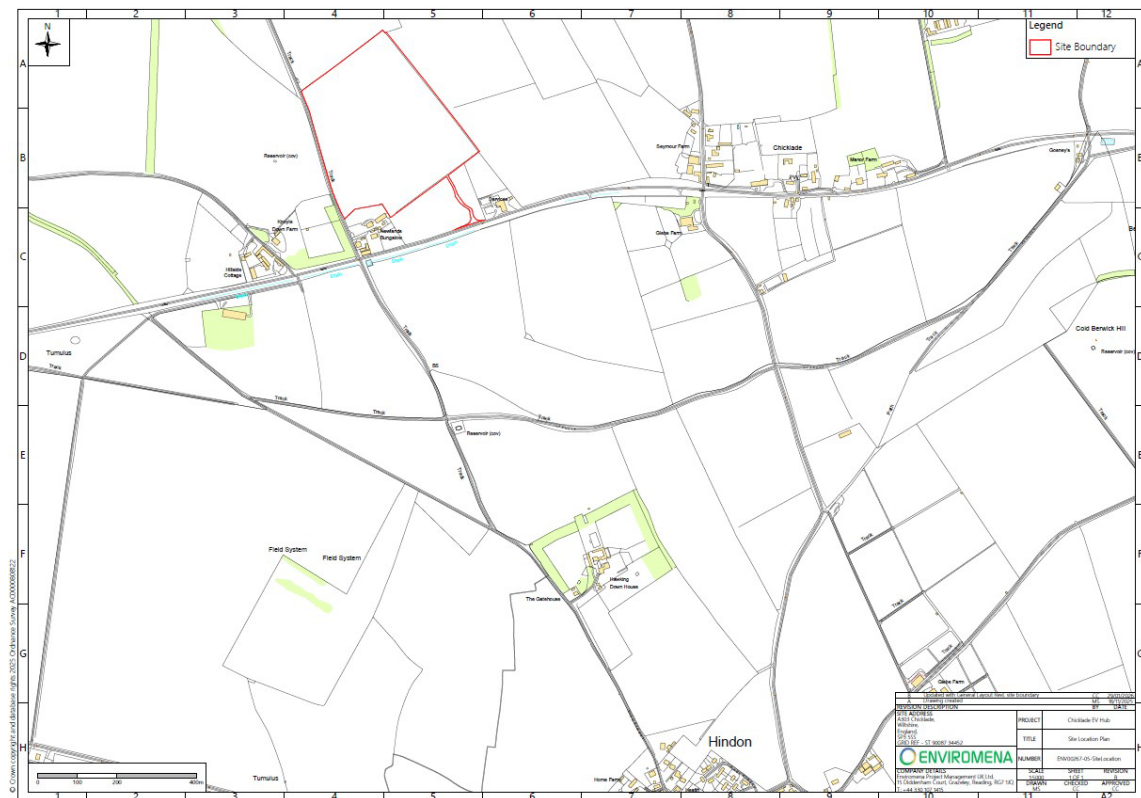


Figure 1 - Site Location - outlined in red

4. Description of Development

4.1. The proposal comprises the construction of a temporary solar farm to include the installation of solar photovoltaic (PV) panels to generate electricity, comprising:

- PV Array;
- Perimeter Fence;
- Transformer Station;
- Vehicular access;
- Hedgerow planting; and
- Ancillary works.

4.2. A photograph of a pv array, such as the one proposed is included on the cover of this document and the proposed layout of the PV array is shown at **Figure 2** below:

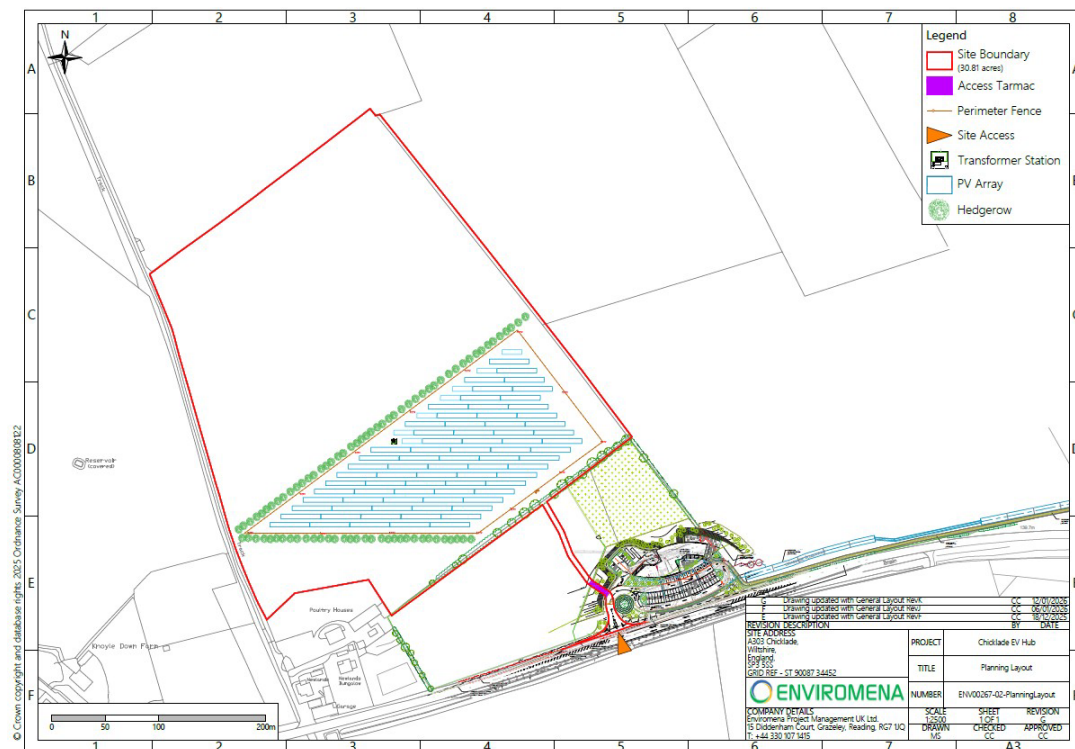


Figure 2 - Proposed Site Layout

5. Alternatives

- 5.1. Alternative technologies and layouts were considered. Wind turbines were discounted due to landscape sensitivity, and hydropower was not feasible. The site's proximity to the EV hub is essential to minimise transmission losses. The final layout was selected to improve separation from nearby properties, reduce views from sensitive locations and increase proposed planting.

6. Ecology and Biodiversity

- 6.1. The site contains arable habitat, hedgerows and field margins that support farmland birds, bats, invertebrates and occasional mammals. No designated ecological sites lie within 1km. The project delivers substantial biodiversity improvements through:

- new native woodland;
- traditional orchard creation;
- species-rich neutral grassland; and
- new and enhanced hedgerows.
- The development achieves a Biodiversity Net Gain of:
 - +150.18% for area habitats;
 - +91.11% for hedgerow habitats.

- 6.2. Residual ecological effects are considered to be beneficial.

7. Climate Change

- 7.1. The development will generate renewable energy, contributing positively to climate change mitigation. It is inherently resilient to future climate risks. Residual climate effects are considered moderate to major beneficial due to significant carbon reductions.

8. Landscape

- 8.1. The site lies within a nationally important landscape but is influenced by the A303 and adjacent development. The solar array will alter the appearance of the field, with the greatest visual effects experienced from nearby public rights of way. These effects will lessen as proposed hedgerows and woodland mature. Across the wider landscape, effects are considered to be slight to moderate adverse.

9. Cumulative Impact

- 9.1. A review of other developments found no nearby solar farms or infrastructure projects likely to result in significant cumulative effects when combined with this proposal.

10. Summary and Conclusions

- 10.1. The EIA concludes that the proposed solar array is environmentally acceptable. It provides:
- significant biodiversity enhancement; and
 - positive contributions to climate change mitigation.
- 10.2. Overall, the project offers clear long-term environmental benefits.



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