



Third
Revolution
Projects

Environmental Summary: Non-Technical Summary

Tydd Solar: Proposed Solar Farm, Land at Treading Field, Treading Drain, Tydd St. Giles, Cambridgeshire PE13 4PL



Applicant: Pathfinder Clean Energy UKDev Ltd

July 2026

Contents

1.0 Introduction 4

2.0 Environmental Impact Assessment 5

3.0 Overview of the project 5

4.0 Assessment of Effects..... 9

5.0 Agricultural Land Use 11

July 2026

Prepared by: Third Revolution Projects Ltd.

Third Revolution Reference: 1136

Applicant: Pathfinder Clean Energy UKDev Ltd

1.0 Introduction

- 1.0.1 This document is a Non-Technical Summary (NTS) of the Environmental Statement (ES) accompanying the appeal application submitted to the Planning Inspectorate by Third Revolution Projects (TRP) ("The Agent") on behalf of Pathfinder Clean Energy UKDev Ltd.
- 1.0.2 Planning permission is being sought via appeal for the construction, operation and removal (after 40 years) of a renewable-led energy scheme comprising a solar farm and battery storage facility ("The Proposed Development") at land to the east of Guanockgate Road, Sutton St. Edmund, Cambridgeshire PE13 4PL.
- 1.0.3 The Proposed Development was initially screened for EIA in 2022. Both South Holland District Council (SHDC) and Fenland District Council (FDC) issued screening opinions that the Proposed Development would not comprise EIA development and did not require an ES in support of the planning application. These decisions are available at Appendix 5 and Appendix 6.
- 1.0.4 Following the negative EIA screening, the Proposed Development was submitted for planning permission to both SHDC and FDC. Both councils refused the application in 2025. The decision notices for both applications can be found at Appendix 7 and Appendix 8.
- 1.0.5 Subsequent to the application being refused, the applicant appealed both decisions concurrently to the Planning Inspectorate. Following this, the councils wrote to the Planning Inspectorate to issue a further EIA screening opinion on the basis of additional renewable energy schemes coming forward in local area and the potential for cumulative effects between those schemes and the Proposed Development.
- 1.0.6 The Planning Inspectorate issued a Screening Direction on 27th January 2026 stating that the Proposed Development is an EIA development on the grounds for potential cumulative effects to Landscape and Visual effects and effects to Agricultural Land. The Screening Direction can be found at Appendix 1.
- 1.0.7 The Proposed Development is made up of several components that work together to generate and store renewable energy and would comprise the following:
- Solar panels between 800mm and 3.5m high that convert sunlight to electrical energy. The panels are ground-mounted on frames that produce solar power from both the top and bottom sides of the panel.
 - String inverters that are attached to the rear of the panels that transform the electricity into a form that can be transmitted from the site to the National Grid.
 - Battery storage containers approximately 3m high located near the small copse of trees in the centre of the site. These containers will store energy during times of high generation and will discharge it during times of high demand.
- 1.0.8 More information on the different elements of the Proposed Development is included in section 2 of this NTS

2.0 Environmental Impact Assessment

- 2.0.1 The aim of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is to protect the environment by ensuring the Local Planning Authority, when deciding whether to grant planning permission for a proposed development which is likely to have significant effects on the environment, does so in full knowledge of what the likely significant effects will be.
- 2.0.2 The EIA process is systematic and objective and provides for the identification, assessment and mitigation (as far as is reasonably practicable) of the possible significant environmental effects of a project. The EIA process and its outcomes are reported in the Environmental Statement and its Appendices. This NTS is provided to allow a wider understanding of the environmental effects of the project.
- 2.0.3 The process of deciding if EIA is required is known as Screening. The formal Screening Direction of the Planning Inspectorate was sought by the Appellant once an appeal was submitted against the decision of the local authorities to refuse the application. The Screening Direction was delivered by the Inspectorate on 27th January 2026 and can be found at Appendix 1. The Screening Direction confirmed that, based on cumulative effects with other nearby renewable energy schemes, the Proposed Development would be an EIA scheme. The Inspectorate reached this conclusion based on...
- 2.0.4 The process of then identifying what should be covered by the EIA is known as Scoping. The formal Scoping Opinions from South Holland District Council and Fenland District Council of the Council was sought on 18th February 2026.
- 2.0.5 A scoping opinion from South Holland District Council was received on 26th March 2026, and from Fenland District Council on 17th April 2026. Both Scoping Opinions confirmed that the scope of the EIA is limited to an assessment of agricultural land considerations and landscape and visual considerations, and the cumulative impacts of each taking into consideration nearby developments.
- 2.0.6 The Environmental Statement has been prepared by competent experts experienced in undertaking EIA and technical assessments.

3.0 Overview of the project

The development site

- 3.0.1 The centre of the site is at OS Grid Reference TF 38300 12886. The overall Site area is 140.5 hectares (ha), made up of 16 large agricultural fields generally demarcated by irrigation channels and a small copse of trees located at the centre of the site.
- 3.0.2 The site lies approximately 1km east of the settlement of Sutton St. Edmund. The settlement of Gorefield is also approximately 2km west from the Site.
- 3.0.3 The site lies within the administrative areas of SHDC and FDC as well as in both Cambridgeshire and Lincolnshire. The site comprises an area of 74.34ha which lies within SHDC and 66.22ha

of land lies within FDC. Both councils determined they would control the application land that remained within their control which created the situation for two planning applications and the subsequent dual appeal. The location of the site and the land within either authority can be seen at the site location plan at Figure 1.

- 3.0.4 The site is rural in character and is surrounded by additional agricultural fields with open boundaries. The topography of the site is almost completely flat. There is a large 132kV transmission line that runs through the southern portion of the site and comprises the point of connection for the Proposed Development.
- 3.0.5 The Site is comprised entirely of agricultural land in arable production. The land was surveyed for agricultural quality in June 2022 where it was found that 87% of the land is grade 3a land with the remaining land being grade 2 land. This means the Site is considered to be Best-and-Most-Versatile (BMV) Land.
- 3.0.6 The site is not subject to any statutory or non-statutory designations.
- 3.0.7 The entire site is located within Flood Zone 3 indicating high risk from flooding however it benefits from flood defences and solar farms are considered essential infrastructure suitable for development within Flood Zone 3.
- 3.0.8 There are no designated heritage assets within or immediately close to the site.

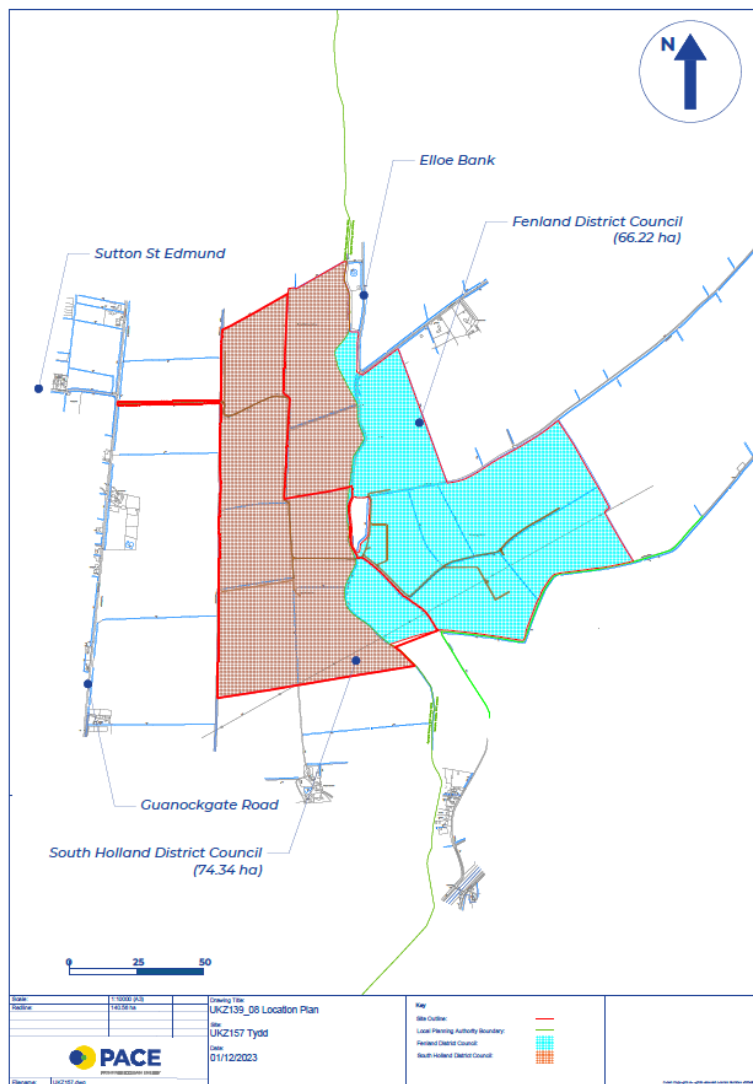


Figure 1: Location Plan

The Proposed Development

- 3.0.9 The main element of the Proposed Development is the construction, operation and decommissioning of a renewable energy scheme comprising a solar farm and battery storage facility. It would supply up to 49.9MW of clean, renewable electricity to the National Grid.
- 3.0.10 The proposed layout is provided at Appendix 9.
- 3.0.11 Over the course of the scheme design process, the project team have continuously refined the scheme design to address feedback from the council, its advisor and the public.
- 3.0.12 The Proposed Development would operate for a 40 year period, following which the built infrastructure would be removed and the Site revert to its current agricultural use.
- 3.0.13 Solar panels would be laid out in south-facing rows with gaps of approximately 2-6m between each row. Panels are mounted on a frame made of galvanised steel or aluminium. The metal framework that supports the solar panels would be fixed into the ground by steel or

aluminium posts centred 6m apart. The posts would be pile driven (similar to a fence post) into the ground to a depth of around 1.5 - 3m. This approach means no concrete is required to secure the system and the posts can be easily removed during decommissioning. At their lower edge panels would be approximately 800mm from the ground and up to approximately 3.5m at their highest edge.

- 3.0.14 The string inverters for solar energy are housed in small containers fixed to the back of panels in order to reduce their visibility. These inverters are distributed throughout the site to provide necessary electricity transformation functions to allow energy export.
- 3.0.15 The existing agricultural access point into the Site from Guanockgate Road will be upgraded to form a bell-mount that allows a working arrangement for HGVs entering and leaving the site.
- 3.0.16 A package of landscaping and biodiversity benefits are proposed (See Appendix 10 for the Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment and Strategy) including the following:
- Taking the arable fields out of intensive production and re-seeding within native wildflower meadow will provide 84.5ha of native meadow habitats rather than ecologically poor cropland;
 - 309m of new species-rich hedgerow containing 5 or more species of native woody species are proposed to be planted along the site boundary at Elloe Bank/Broad Drove West;
 - Additional tree and shrub planting along the boundary of the site will create new habitats that are currently completely absent from the Site; and
 - Ditches around the site will be managed to create new reedbed habitat that had been lost due to arable cultivation providing 1.85ha of wetland habitat.
- 3.0.17 The biodiversity improvements to site are extremely substantial, resulting in a 173.6% net gain in habitat units as measured by the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA).
- 3.0.18 All existing public rights of way within the Site will be retained.
- 3.0.19 Construction of the Proposed Development is expected to be completed in 8-12 months, with an average of 4 HGV deliveries per day.

Alternatives

- 3.0.20 The alternatives considered as part of the project's evolution included the site location, the scheme design and technology choice.
- 3.0.21 Location is driven first and foremost by the need to be close to an available grid connection point, recognising that the viability of a renewable energy project reduces the further away it is.
- 3.0.22 Working with the National Energy System Operator (NESO), the Applicant identified grid capacity along the 132kV overhead line connecting to the Eaton Socon Circuit. After

identifying where grid capacity exists, the next step is to identify suitable sites. Any energy development needs to be at a close enough distance from the substation and grid line to ensure a viable connection can be made. These distances vary, depending on the connection costs and substation/circuit voltage. The Applicant has adopted a 1km 'study area' along either side of the 132kV overhead transmission line, in line with industry standards and best practices. Sites further away than 1km from the line were discounted on the basis that it would not be financially or practically feasible to deliver a solar scheme at such a distance from the grid point of connection.

- 3.0.23 Within the site area, several potential sites were identified as possibilities for solar farm development. However, many of these were discounted for reasons such as insufficient space, presence of significant heritage assets, high likelihood of higher-grade agricultural land, or more significant impacts to residential amenity.
- 3.0.24 The full process for identifying alternative sites and the reason for discounting these is outlined in Chapter 2.
- 3.0.25 Within the site itself, the design has followed an iterative process to arrive at a scheme that would be most suitable for the site and its constraints.
- 3.0.26 The position of the BESS within the site was under consideration and was originally to be positioned adjacent to the proposed substation. However, this would have resulted in potential noise impacts on the residents to the south of the Site so the BESS was re-positioned closer to the centre of the site to its current proposed position to avoid these impacts.

4.0 Assessment of Effects

Landscape and Visual Impacts

- 4.0.1 The likely effects of the development proposal on landscape character, landscape features and visual amenity have been assessed and are reported in full in Chapter 5 of this ES.
- 4.0.2 The Proposed Development has been designed to sensitively locate the solar arrays and associated infrastructure within the existing field structure and away from the existing hedgerow and public footpaths, maintaining buffers to allow vegetation to establish and mature.
- 4.0.3 The boundaries are largely open, except for a short section in the north-east corner of the site adjacent to Broad Drove West where the boundary is defined by a hedgerow and a small woodland block. Elsewhere, the site is bounded by a series of drainage channels including Treading Bank to the south-east and Straight Reach Drain along the west.
- 4.0.4 The principal landscape and visual effects would occur during the operational lifetime of the solar farm development. At the end of its lifespan of 40 years, the solar farm can be decommissioned, and the site restored to its existing condition (with proposed planting retained subject to landowner agreement).

- 4.0.5 Effects on landscape character would be greatest within the Site and its immediate context where the present land use would change from an agricultural landscape to a solar farm development. Effects would reduce with distance from the Site, as the Proposed Development would be increasingly difficult to perceive as distance grows.
- 4.0.6 Effects on landscape character would be confined to a small part of the host landscape character area. Mitigation planting would result in a small reduction in effects beyond the Site once mature. Effects would be Moderate and Adverse during construction and early operation of the Proposed Development. Over time, effects on landscape character would reduce to Minor and Adverse, after the proposed planting matures.
- 4.0.7 With respect to visual effects, the most affected receptor groups would be users of the PRow that pass through the Site. Major, Adverse and Significant effects would arise for these receptors. There would be close views of the solar panels from the PRow through the Site, which would remain throughout the life of the Proposed Development. Moderate, Adverse and not significant visual effects would arise for users of the local roads, reducing to Moderate/minor, Adverse and not significant as proposed vegetation matures.
- 4.0.8 Residents, visitors and users of local roads in the vicinity of Goredike Bank and Turnover Road, would experience Moderate, Adverse and not significant effects at all stages of the Proposed Development as a result of changes to views towards the Site. The Proposed Development would be seen looking north over North Level main Drain.
- 4.0.9 6.4.4 People living in and visiting Sutton St Edmund would experience visual effects as a result of visibility of the solar arrays, fences and CCTV cameras, when looking out across the fields to the east of the village. They would experience Minor, Adverse and not significant effects at all stages of the Proposed Development.
- 4.0.10 Given that the primary concern of this EIA is potential cumulative effects, these types of effects are what has been assessed by the appropriate specialist.
- 4.0.11 They have assessed the Proposed Scheme in conjunction with two proposed schemes nearby. The first is Treading Bank Solar which is located immediately adjacent to the proposed scheme. The extent of this scheme can be seen within Appendix 11. The second scheme is Meridian Solar Farm which is located approximately 3km west of the proposed Site on the other side of Sutton St. Edmund.
- 4.0.12 A cumulative effects assessment of the proposed scheme, the Proposed Development with each of the nearby schemes, and all three proposals together has been undertaken to support the appeal and this EIA and can be found at Chapter 5.
- 4.0.13 The cumulative effects assessment measured the potential effects from eight different viewpoints around the Proposed Development and the wider area. These viewpoints can be seen within Appendix 11. The analysis from these viewpoints finds that the Proposed Development will have small-negligible or negligible cumulative effects with some medium effects reducing to small effects after 7-10 years located only at the Ashtree Farm viewpoint.

5.0 Agricultural Land Use

- 5.0.1 The likely effects of the Proposed Development on the use of agricultural land are reported in full in Chapter 5 of this ES.
- 5.0.2 The proposed development has been the subject of a detailed Agricultural Land Classification survey that has identified the Site contains 15ha of Grade 2 land and 117ha of grade 3a land.
- 5.0.3 The screening decision issued by the Planning Inspectorate on 27th January 2026 indicated that the Proposed Development has the potential for environmental impact on the basis that, in cumulation with other nearby schemes, it would result in a negative (albeit temporary) effect to agricultural land in the local area.
- 5.0.4 The technical assessment of the cumulative effects finds that the impact on soils are of a low magnitude resulting in a minor adverse effect and not significant. Further, the assessment finds that impacts on the farm business associated with the Site are also minor adverse and not significant.
- 5.0.5 The assessment further notes that the proposed BMV area of 132 ha comprises a negligible portion of the croppable area within Lincolnshire or Cambridgeshire. Together these two areas contain a total of 282,087 ha of croppable land compared to a proposed site area of 132 ha. This means the proposed development would occupy 0.000467% of the croppable area within the two counties.
- 5.0.6 Furthermore, the cessation of arable farming on the site is temporary in nature (lasting up to 42 years), and over that time period, soil quality is likely to improve within the site due to the absence of intensive farming.
- 5.0.7 While the impacts of Meridian Solar Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) on BMV land is not publicly available, even the loss of more than 1000 ha of BMV land within the local area would represent approximately 0.3% of croppable area in Lincolnshire or 0.56% of the croppable area in Cambridgeshire. This results in a temporary minor adverse effect which is considered not significant.
- 5.0.8 Based on the above, the technical assessment of agricultural land in the area finds there is no significant cumulative effect.