PLANNING STATEMENT

TREVETHOE FARM – SOLAR PROPOSALS

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.0 This Planning Statement has been prepared in support of a full planning application for the installation of a small-scale ground-mounted solar PV array comprising 112 panels rated at 590W each, located at Trevethoe Farm, Holbeach St Marks, Spalding, PE12 8EX.

1.1 The site lies within the administrative area of South Holland District Council (SHDC) and forms part of an established agricultural holding owned by The Crown Estate. The proposal seeks to contribute towards local and national renewable energy targets while utilising a discreet and well-contained area of the farmyard with minimal environmental impact.

1.2 The proposals are intended to support farm diversification, enhance on-site sustainability and contribute to wider local, regional and national sustainability targets. The panels will take-up less than 0.5 hectares of land, making development modest in size compared to other solar panel developments that have been approved in the wider South Holland Local Plan.

1.3 The purpose of this Planning Statement is to:

- Outline the Site and proposed development;
- Assess the scheme against relevant local, regional and national planning policies;
- Demonstrate the proposals align with planning policy and delivers environmental and economic benefits.

1.4 In accordance with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the application must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. This statement demonstrates that the proposal fully accords with the Development Plan and relevant national planning policy and should therefore be granted planning permission.

1.5 The Crown Estate has an established commitment to supporting sustainable land management and the transition to a low-carbon economy across its portfolio. As part of this approach, The Crown Estate is actively encouraging the delivery of appropriately sited renewable energy projects on its land, particularly where these can support agricultural operations, reduce operational carbon emissions, and make efficient use of existing developed areas.

1.6 The proposed solar PV development at Trevethoe Farm reflects this wider sustainability strategy, enabling on-site renewable energy generation while maintaining the primary agricultural use of the holding.

2.0 SITE OVERVIEW

2.0 The application site is located at Trevethoe Farm, Holbeach St Marks, approximately 3.5km south-west of Holbeach and 7km east of Spalding. The application site comprises of approximately 0.44 hectares of Grade 1 classified agricultural land.

2.1 The 0.44-hectare red line area is situated immediately adjacent to existing agricultural buildings and hardstanding associated with farm operations. The solar array itself occupies a smaller fenced compound, measuring approximately 51m by 40m, with the panel mounting area measuring approximately 41m by 30m, as illustrated on the submitted site plan.
Surrounding land uses comprise:

- Agricultural buildings and yards to the south and west
- Arable farmland to the north and east

- Existing planted boundaries and field margins which assist in visual containment.

2.2 The site is previously disturbed agricultural land associated with the operational farmstead and does not encroach onto open countryside beyond the farm complex. There are no listed buildings or conservation areas within the immediate vicinity of the proposal.

3.0 PROPOSALS

3.0 The proposal comprises:

- Installation of 112 ground-mounted solar PV panels, each with a capacity of 590W, giving a total installed capacity of approximately 66kWp
- Panels mounted on low-profile frames, angled to optimise solar gain
- A fenced compound to ensure site security
- Associated cabling and inverter equipment
- Retention of existing access arrangements
- No permanent buildings proposed.

3.1 No additional outbuildings will be required, as the current buildings will house the required technology to operate the panels.

3.2 The panels would be set at approximately 2.0-metres above ground level and aligned in rows to minimise visual impact. The development is fully reversible; all infrastructure can be removed at the end of its operational life, allowing the land to be restored to its former condition.

4.0 PLANNING POLICY

4.0 The site lies within the administrative area of South Holland District Council (SHDC).

4.1 The proposals within this application is of a modest scale and therefore clearly align with the NPPF's objectives to promote renewable energy while ensuring impacts are kept to a minimum.

Local Planning Policy

4.2 The Development Plan for South Holland District Council is the Southeast Lincolnshire Local Plan (2011-2036), which was jointly prepared by South Holland District Council and adopted in March 2019.

4.3 The Local Plan sets out a clear vision for sustainable development, including the need to respond positively to climate change and reduce carbon emissions across the plan area. The most directly relevant policy in this regard is Policy 27: Climate Change and Renewable and Low Carbon Energy.

4.4 Policy 31 supports proposals for renewable and low-carbon energy generation where they contribute to the reduction of carbon emissions and where any impacts on the local environment, landscape character, residential amenity, and heritage assets can be satisfactorily addressed. The policy encourages schemes that are appropriately designed, sensitively sited, and proportionate to their surroundings. The proposal at Trevethoe Farm accords directly with these requirements, being closely related to existing farm buildings, modest in scale, and visually contained within the wider agricultural setting.

4.5 Further support is provided by Policy 1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development, which requires planning applications that accord with the Development Plan to be approved without delay unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

4.6 Policy 3: Development Management also requires development to be well designed and appropriate to its context, while Policy 24: The Natural Environment seeks to ensure that development avoids unacceptable harm to ecological or landscape assets. The proposed solar array complies with these policies, as it is low-impact, reversible, and does not give rise to conflict with environmental or amenity considerations

National Planning Policy (NPPF)

4.7 The NPPF (December 2024 update) encourages local planning authorities to adopt a positive strategy for renewable energy development and to support proposals where impacts can be satisfactorily addressed. The Framework places significant weight on the benefits of renewable and low-carbon energy generation as part of the transition to a low-carbon economy.

4.8 The proposed development directly supports these objectives through small-scale, on-site renewable energy generation, contributing to carbon reduction and energy resilience.

4.9 U.K. Government's clean power commitments require an increase in solar development, noting that solar is central to achieving the target of 95% clean power by 2030 and transitioning to a fully clean-energy led system.

4.10 The proposed development directly supports these national objectives through small-scale on-site renewable generation. Moreover, The NPPF makes clear that applicants are not required to demonstrate the need for renewable energy as significant weight should be given to the benefits of renewable energy developments.

5.0 PLANNING ASSESSMENT

Principle of Development

5.0 The principle of renewable energy development is strongly supported at national and local level. The proposed development makes a clear and measurable contribution to climate change mitigation in accordance with the NPPF and Policy 31 of the SELLP.

5.1 The proposal represents an appropriately scaled form of farm based renewable energy development, closely related to existing buildings and infrastructure, and is therefore acceptable in principle.

5.2 In assessing the proposal, the following key considerations have been examine:

5.3 Visual amenity, landscape character or quality, or skyscape considerations;

5.4 Residential amenity in respect of: noise, fumes, odour, vibration, shadow flicker, sunlight reflection, broadcast interference, traffic;

5.5 Highway safety (including public rights of way);

5.6 Agricultural land take;

5.7 Aviation and radar safety;

5.8 Heritage assets including their setting; and

5.9 The natural environment.

5.10 Each of these matters is addressed below.

5.11 Each of these matters is addressed below.

Visual and Landscape Impact

5.12 A Landscape and Visual Statement has been prepared in accordance with GLVIA3, proportionate to the scale and nature of the proposal.

5.13 The site lies within the Settled Fens landscape character area, which is not subject to statutory landscape designations and is characterised by large-scale arable farmland interspersed with agricultural infrastructure.

5.14 The assessment concludes that the proposal would result in very small to small changes to landscape character and minor adverse to negligible visual effects, with views largely screened by existing buildings, vegetation and contained horizons. The development would not break the skyline and would respect the character of the Lincolnshire Fens.

Residential Amenity

5.15 The closest residential property is Trevethoe House, located approximately 0.1km from the proposed solar PV area.

5.16 Given the intervening distance, modest scale of the development and existing agricultural context, the proposal would result in no significant adverse impacts in terms of glare, noise or outlook. The equipment is silent in operation, and the development is compatible with the existing farmstead setting.

Highway safety

5.17 The proposal would not generate any material increase in traffic once operational and would utilise existing access arrangements associated with the farmstead.

5.18 Construction traffic would be limited in duration and scale, and no adverse impacts on the safety or operation of the surrounding highway network are anticipated. The development therefore complies with highway safety requirements.

Impact on Agricultural Land

5.19 While the site is classified as Grade 1 agricultural land, the development is confined to a small, contained area functionally associated with the existing farmstead. It does not prejudice the continued agricultural operation or long-term viability of Trevethoe Farm. The development is fully reversible and does not result in the permanent loss of best and most versatile agricultural land.

Aviation Safety

5.20 The site is not located within the safeguarding zone of any aerodrome, radar installation or flight path. As a result, the proposal raises no aviation or radar safety concerns.

Heritage Assets

5.21 There are no designated or non-designated heritage assets within the site or its immediate surroundings. Consequently, the proposal would not result in any harm to heritage assets or their settings, and no mitigation is required.

Ecological Considerations

5.22 No significant ecological constraints have been identified. Precautionary measures will be implemented in relation to protected species, including badgers, bats, reptiles, amphibians and nesting birds.

5.23 The proposal delivers a measurable Biodiversity Net Gain, achieving a 15.09% uplift in area habitat units and a 196.92% uplift in linear (hedgerow) units, exceeding the statutory minimum requirement. The development therefore fully complies with biodiversity legislation and policy.

Flood Risk

5.24 A Flood Risk Assessment has been prepared to support the application. The site lies within Flood Zone 3, but benefits from existing tidal flood defences associated with the River Welland and the Wash, which are maintained by the Environment Agency. When these defences are taken into account, the present-day risk of flooding from rivers and the sea is low.

5.25 The assessment confirms there is no risk from main rivers, surface water, groundwater, reservoirs or sewers, and no record of historic flooding at the site. The solar panels will be raised above ground level, will not increase flood risk elsewhere, and surface water will drain naturally to the ground, maintaining greenfield runoff rates. The Sequential and Exception Tests are satisfied, and the development can be delivered safely for its lifetime.

Sustainability Benefits

5.26 The development will:

- Generate clean, renewable electricity
- Reduce reliance on fossil fuels
- Support national and local net-zero objectives
- Contribute positively to the sustainability of the agricultural enterprise

In accordance with the NPPF, significant weight should be afforded to these benefits.

6.0 CONCLUSIONS

6.0 This Planning Statement demonstrates that the proposed small-scale ground mounted solar PV development at Trevethoe Farm, Holbeach St Marks accords fully with the adopted Development Plan and relevant national planning policy.

6.1 The proposal makes an appropriate and proportionate contribution to renewable energy generation, consistent with the objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which places significant weight on the delivery of renewable and low-carbon energy to support the transition to a low-carbon economy. In accordance with the NPPF, the proposal is not required to demonstrate need, and the environmental and sustainability benefits attract substantial weight in the planning balance.

6.2 At a local level, the development accords with the Southeast Lincolnshire Local Plan (2011–2036). It complies with Policy 31 (Climate Change and Renewable and Low Carbon Energy) and Policy 27, supporting appropriately sited renewable energy development where impacts can be satisfactorily addressed. The proposal also aligns with Policy 1 (Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development), as it delivers environmental and economic benefits without giving rise to unacceptable harm, and Policy 3 (Development Management) through its siting, design and compatibility with the existing farmstead context.

6.3 The assessment confirms that the proposal would not result in unacceptable impacts on landscape character, visual amenity, residential amenity, highway safety, heritage assets or the natural environment. The development is confined to a well-contained area associated with the existing farmyard, is reversible in nature, and does not prejudice the continued agricultural use or viability of the holding. In respect of the natural environment, the scheme delivers measurable Biodiversity Net Gain, exceeding statutory requirements and aligning with Policy 24 (The Natural Environment).

6.4 A Flood Risk Assessment demonstrates that the development can be safely accommodated for its lifetime, with no increased flood risk on- or off-site, and that the Sequential and Exception Tests are satisfied.

6.5 When considered as a whole, the proposal represents a modest, sensitively sited and policy-compliant form of development that contributes positively to climate change mitigation, farm diversification and on-site sustainability. There are no material considerations that indicate the application should be determined other than in accordance with the Development Plan.

6.6 Accordingly, it is concluded that the proposal is acceptable and that planning permission should be granted.

Carter Jonas