



Monday, 27 February 2023

FAO: The Planning Manager
South Holland District Council
Council Offices
Spalding
Lincolnshire
PE11 2XE

RE: Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening Letter for Caudwell Solar Farm E0128

Dear Sir or Madam,

Green Energy International are pleased to present our letter to identify whether an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is required for the 49.9MW solar PV development at Caudwell Farms, Holbeach St Matthew. The proposed scheme is currently under evaluation on behalf of our clients and owners of the proposed site. To help you understand the development further, a site location plan is attached to the email, alongside this document.

Once we have your feedback and that of all the relevant statutory consultees (and subject to the proposals looking acceptable), we will look to move forward with this development onto the next stage.

Please let me know you have received this letter and keep me informed of your progress.

If you require any further information to complete your assessment, please don't hesitate to contact me using the details below.

Best regards

Mathew Bayley
Associate Director (Planning)

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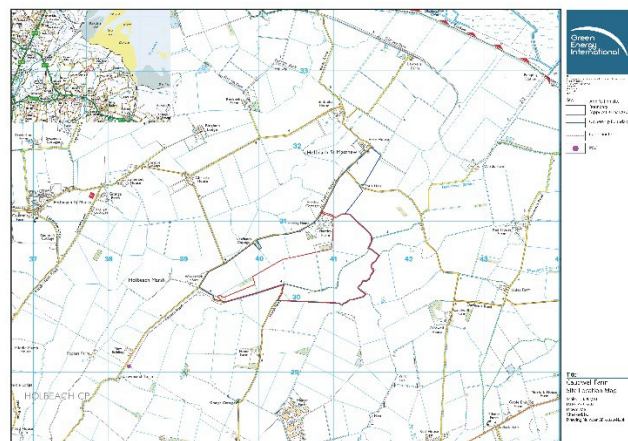
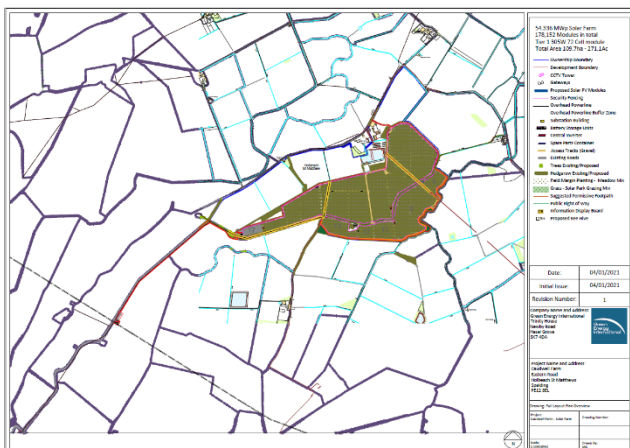
Date: 11th January 2021
Our Ref: EIA Screening GEI
Your ref:

South Holland District Council
Council Offices
Priory Road
Spalding
PE11 2XE

Proposed Solar PV Development at Caudwell Farm, Eastern Road (land east of the A17, within Holbeach St Matthew)

Dear sir/madam,

Green Energy International is currently investigating the suitability of a Solar Farm at Caudwell Farm, east of the A17 and west of the The Wash, approximately 3km of the coast, within the South Holland district of Lincolnshire, PE12 8EW (see location maps below). The site has been identified as having good potential for PV generation due to its location and excellent irradiation levels.



We are writing to request a formal screening opinion as to whether the development is an EIA Development under Part II of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England) Regulations 2017.



In order to facilitate your decision-making process, further information on the background to the project is given below. The Regulations require that a screening opinion request be accompanied by a plan sufficient to identify the land; a brief description of the development and of its possible effects on the environment; and such other information or representations as the person making the request may wish to make or provide. This submission therefore contains the necessary information.

Description of Development

The purpose of the development is to provide a large-scale renewable electricity source that will be connected to the National Grid.

The desired installation will be a 49.9MWp PV solar farm, covering approx. 236 acres, with all related equipment and structures including monitoring meters and surveillance equipment along with any necessary security fencing.

The detail of any PV panel layout may alter for any final planning submission, but it would be within the area identified (PV array area as indicated in yellow):

- Installation of PV panels, approximately 1metre (m) off the ground; with a maximum height of approximately 3m from ground level; facing South with a 25 degree angle. Screws or piles driven into the ground will secure the solar panels;
- Construction of ancillary works include access tracks;
- Temporary construction compound;
- Inverter/Substation.

The final PV panel to be used on this site has not yet been determined as detailed technical site investigations are currently being completed. The findings of these investigations will determine the final layout and panel choice, but as stated above all panels will be located within the area identified. The PV panels will be laid out in arrays of long rows running across the site. Each array will be mounted on a simple metal framework.

To eliminate damage and destruction to existing hedgerows and trees on site a buffer zone will be left between the hedgerows and the solar panels. This will be discussed with the local South Holland Council ecologist.

Length of the panel arrangements will be dictated by site survey and optimized site layout arrangements, typically the completed sites will be similar to those shown below.

EIA Regulations

The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017, (EIA Regulations)



define EIA development as 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.

Solar PV development is not listed in Schedule 1 of the regulations but under Schedule 2 of the EIA Regulations a development area threshold of 0.5 ha is applied to category 3 (a) industrial installations for the production of electricity. The Development exceeds the Schedule 2 area threshold of 0.5 ha and, as such, whether the Development is EIA development or not depends on an assessment against the screening selection criteria, as set out in Schedule 3 of the EIA Regulations, which comprise:

- Characteristics of the development;
- Location of the development; and
- Characteristics of the potential impact.

Green Energy International have endeavoured in this document to provide sufficient information to South Holland Council to allow the council to determine the need or otherwise for an EIA to be completed. We have reviewed the project in line with the requirements of Schedule 3 below.

Characteristics of the Development

Schedule 3 states that the characteristics of the development must be considered having regard, in particular, to:

- (a) The size of the development;
- (b) The accumulation with other development;
- (c) The use of natural resources;
- (d) The production of waste;
- (e) The risk of accidents, having regard in particular to substances or technologies used.

It is not considered that this proposal would have a significant effect on the environment with reference to these criteria, for the following reasons:

- The size of the development will be 236 acres. The solar panels will not exceed 3m in height approximately. Number of rows will vary depending on final site design;
- There will be no cumulative impact, and we are not aware of any other solar farms close to the proposed site;
- The project will generate renewable energy from natural resources in a sustainable manner;
- No waste would be produced by on site processes; and
- Risk of accidents is considered to not be significant due to the nature of the technology proposed.



It is also envisaged that the proposed development will allow for biodiversity enhancement and the adding of ecological value to the site.

Location of Development

Schedule 3 states that the environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected by development must be considered, having regarded, in particular, to:

- (a) The existing land use;
- (b) The relative abundance, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources in the area;
- (c) The absorption capacity of the natural environment with particular reference to certain defined areas.

The PV panels will be located on grade 1 agricultural land with the area having been used for crop growing.

The site itself does not fall within any statutory or local areas designated for landscape quality. The site is located, west of the Wash an area of ecological significance, as it is a nature reserve and a Site of Special Scientific Interest, along with various other designations. There is one location of heritage importance, of which is a non-designated farmstead. The land around the site is utilised for farmland, with an area to the south of the site utilised for wind turbines. The site has a risk of flooding during significant flood events but has drainage to support increased surface water levels during heavy rainfall. No TPOs exist on the site. One footpath runs along the southern edge of the site.

The proposed development will aim to incorporate biodiversity enhancement measures and green landscaping that will add to the ecological value of the site and reduce the visual impact of the solar farm.

The land uses surrounding the PV site are mainly other farmland. There is a cluster of buildings to the in the central area of the site, which is the location of the landowner's farm buildings. Other clusters of buildings are located along the roads which surround the site, notably, west of the site, directly north and to the east of the site. The visual impact upon this development is likely to be low to medium due to the lack of any significant visual receptors nearby, and the flat nature of the terrain. The landscape across the horizon in all directions is of farmland, with the occasional cluster of farm buildings. The Wash is not visible, and the wind turbines to the south are more notable as visual receptors.

Characteristics of the Potential Impact

Schedule 3 states the potential significant effects of development must be considered in relation to the criteria set out above, and having regard in particular to:

- (a) The extent of the impact (geographical area and size of the affected population);



- (b) The transfrontier nature of the impact;
- (c) The magnitude and complexity of the impact;
- (d) The probability of the impact;
- (e) The duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact.

The development is a passive development in that there will be no pollution or emissions of gas, noise, light, or waste once construction is completed. Therefore the development is not dissimilar to the farming processes that farmers can undertake without planning permission i.e. laying polythene sheeting for potato cultivation.

There are no mechanical parts with the panels so there will be no noise generated by their presence on the site and so there will definitely be no noise impact on even the nearest local residents.

The hedgerows and trees on site will not need to be removed or destroyed for the development of the solar farm.

Due to the panel height not exceeding the approximate height of 2.3m the visual impact of this proposal on the wider landscape will be limited. Visual impacts can be dealt with by planting of vegetation to screen the development. The planting proposals also incorporate biodiversity enhancement opportunities into the development. The entire site will not be screened as that would not fit with the local landscape, the closest buildings with a direct view of the site could see some screening be implemented.

The main environmental effects of the development will be during construction. Effects during construction are likely to include:

- (a) Increased traffic
- (b) Noise of construction
- (c) Construction of a temporary haul road

Construction of the solar farm is expected to be completed within approximately 12 weeks and therefore construction impacts will be short-lived. We propose to consult Lincolnshire County Council's archaeologist regarding potential issues in relation to archaeological interest, as South Holland Council does not have that role within its organisation.

In terms of the other criteria, the magnitude and complexity of the impact is expected to be limited and confined to the local area, and is predictable. The duration and frequency of the potential impacts are not significant and are largely reversible.

In conclusion, consideration of the proposed development against the criteria in Schedule 3 has determined that a significant environmental impact is not likely to arise and in our opinion an



Environmental Impact Assessment is not likely to be necessary in this case.

Conclusion

Consideration of the proposed development against the Environmental Impact Regulations 2017 has determined that the proposal is unlikely to result in significant effects in the environment and consequently an environmental impact assessment is not required.

Whilst it is considered that there will be impacts on the area over and above those which already exist due to the installation of PV on agricultural land, such as visual impact to the immediate locality, these are matters that can be dealt with as part of the planning application. This is supported by the fact that that the development is not within any sensitive environmental features

Should you consider that the proposed works do not require the submission of an Environmental Statement then we would propose to submit a planning application with an Environmental Report covering key environmental aspects and considerations associated with the project as you consider appropriate.

Should you consider that the proposals are likely to result in significant impacts and that therefore the preparation of an Environmental Statement will be a requirement, then we would also request that your Scoping Opinion accompany the requested Screening Opinion? In accordance with the Regulations, we would therefore be grateful if you could provide a screening opinion within three weeks of the date of the receipt of this request.

We hope that the above provides you with sufficient information to make a screening opinion on the project. Should you require clarification on any issue or further details, please do not hesitate to contact me. Otherwise I look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Yours faithfully,

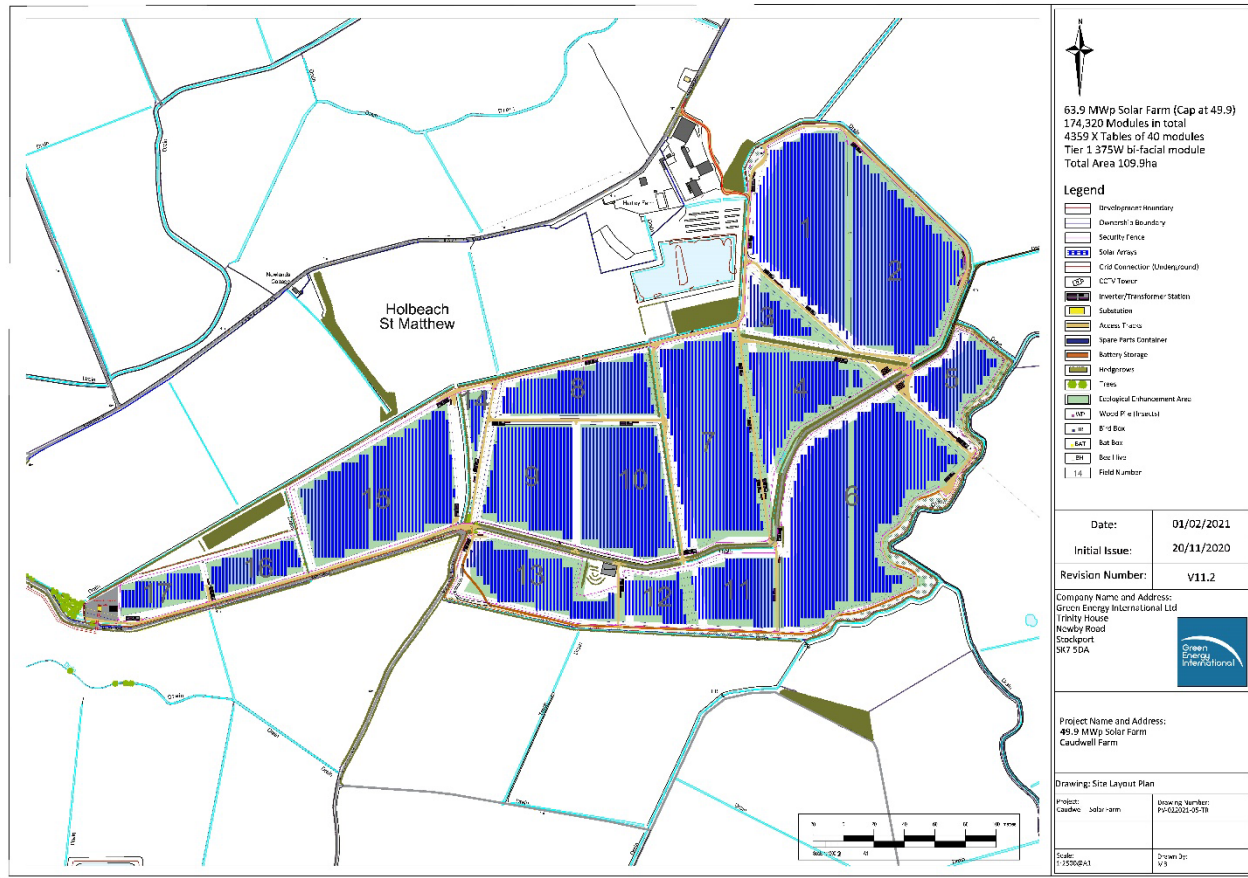
Mathew Bayley

For and on behalf of Green Energy International



Additional Information

Site Layout Plan

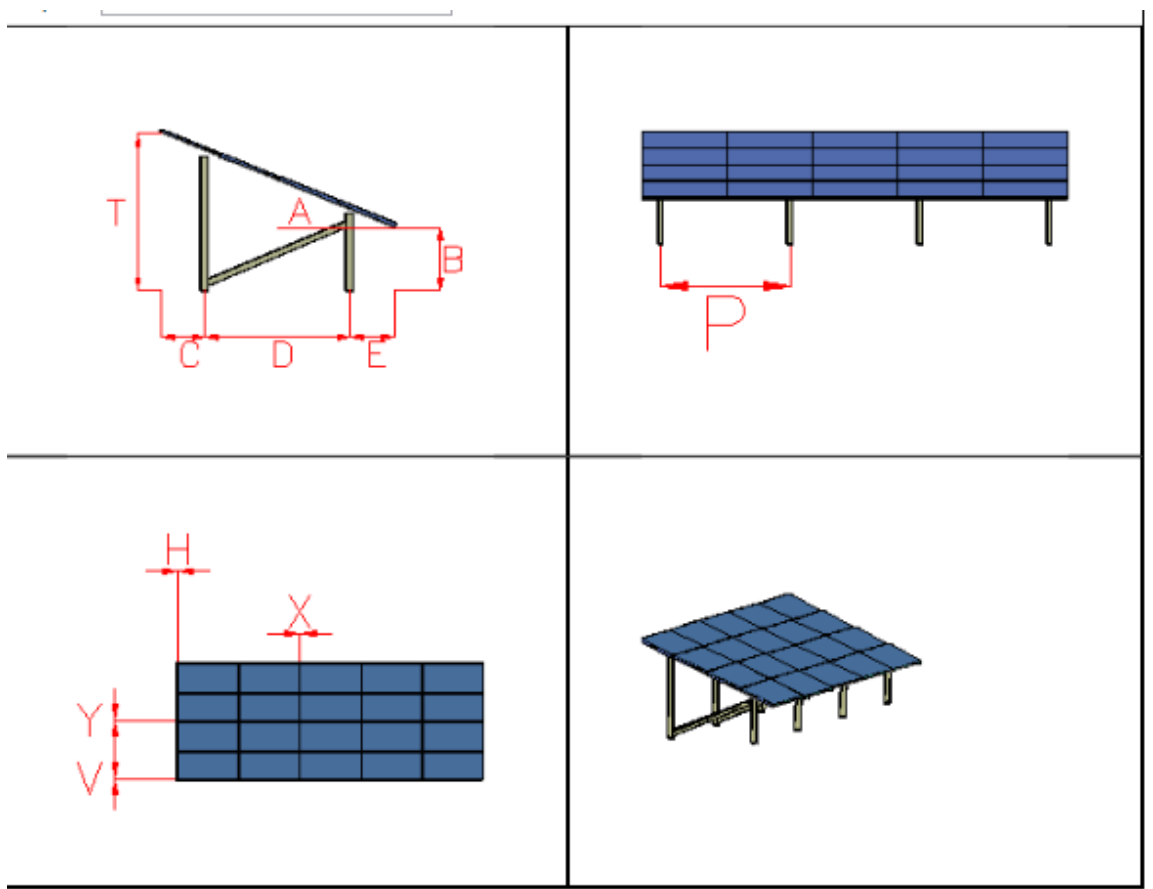




Additional Images
Typical Site Equipment



Typical Solar Panel Sections





Typical Electrical Compound



Typical Solar Panel Cross Section





Typical Site Layout Once Built

