

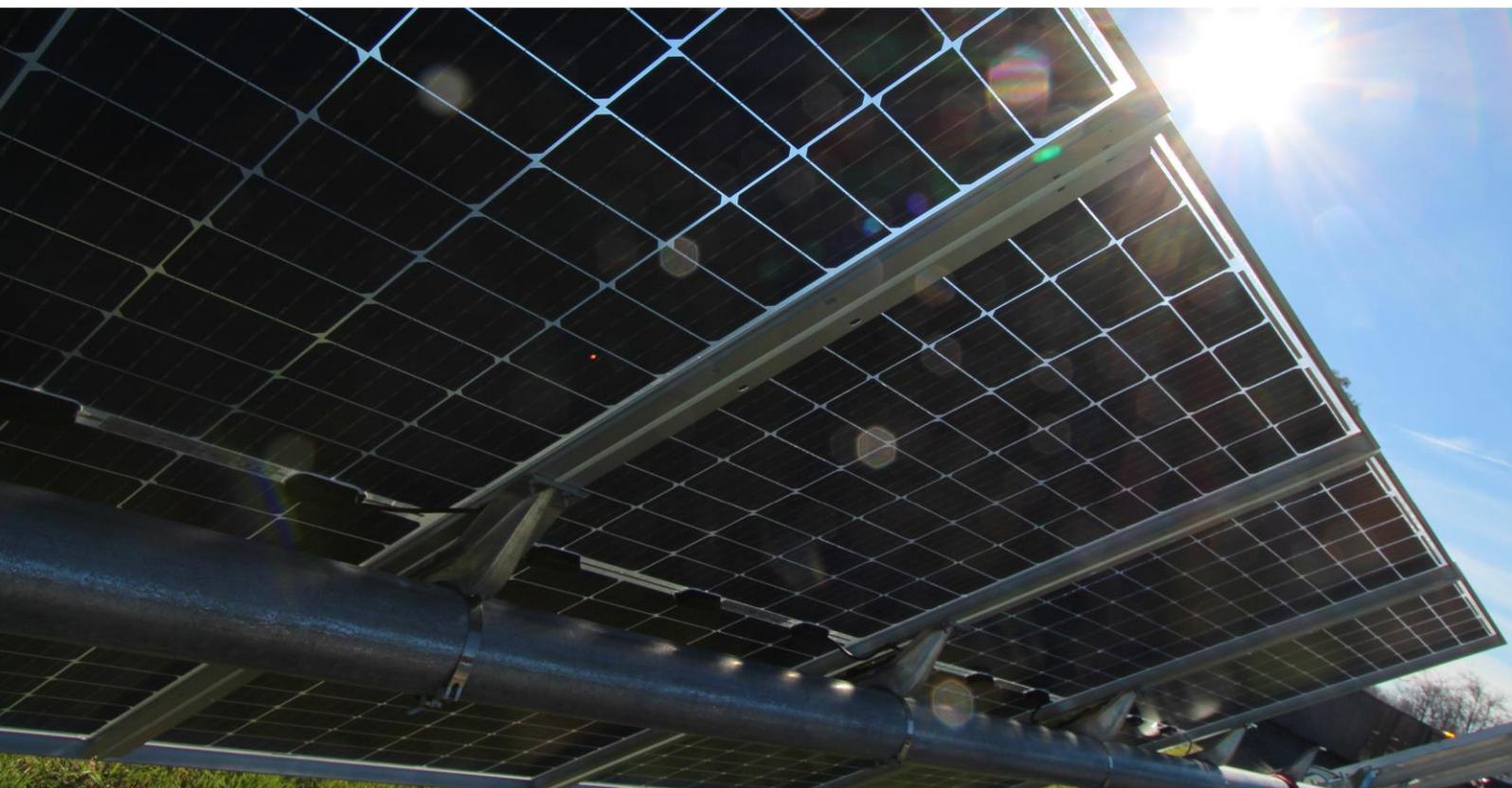


SUPPORTING STATEMENT

GUNTHORPE ROAD SOLAR FARM ACCESS TRACK APPLICATION

**LAND BETWEEN EAST BANK/GUNTHORPE ROAD AND GUNTHORPE ROAD
SOLAR FARM, WALPOLE BANK, WALPOLE MARSH, WISBECH,
NEAR PE14 7JJ**

JANUARY 2025



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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Supporting Statement has been prepared on behalf of Enso Green Holdings R Limited (“The Applicant”) to accompany a planning application to South Holland District Council (SH DC) for the installation of an access track and associated development (“the Proposed Development”) on land between East Bank/Gunthorpe Road and Gunthorpe Road Solar Farm, Walpole Bank, Walpole Marsh, Wisbech, near PE14 7JJ (“the Site”).
- 1.2 This Statement first provides an overview of the Site (Section 2), the Proposed Development (Section 3), before detailing planning and relevant considerations (Section 4) with the Statement then concluded (Section 5).

2. THE SITE

- 2.1 The Site forms land between East Bank/Gunthorpe Road and Gunthorpe Road Solar Farm, Walpole Bank, Walpole Marsh, Wisbech, near PE14 7JJ. The land forms a corridor, typically of 10 m width, totalling approximately 0.98 hectares (ha). The Site includes land on Gunthorpe Road/East Bank within the adopted highway and land within Gunthorpe Road Solar Farm.
- 2.2 The Site is predominantly rural land in an agricultural use. The surrounding area comprises a wider network of farmland in arable cultivation with rural farmsteads and small settlements (the Walpoles and Foul Anchor) nearby. The River Nene, with associated embankment, lie to the immediate west.
- 2.3 The Site is not covered by any statutory or non-statutory designations or assets that relate to biodiversity, landscape and cultural heritage. The Site is Flood Zones 3. There are no heritage assets on the Site. The Site is not a protected ecology or biodiversity area. Land adjacent to East Bank, forms a Local Wildlife Site (see Policy 28) within the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan 2011-2036.
- 2.4 The Site lies within the King's Lynn Internal Drainage Board (IDB) boundary with no IDB drains within the Site.
- 2.5 The Site contains no Public Rights of Way (PRoW), however 'Bridleway SuBr/6/3' is to the immediate the west along the raised River Nene embankment broadly north - south and the 'Walpole St Peter FP1' footpath lies to the immediate south (within the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk) across agricultural land broadly east - west.
- 2.6 There is no known ground contamination on the Site.
- 2.7 The Site is not allocated for development within the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan 2011-2036, being considered 'Countryside' outside of any defined settlement boundary. While the access track is within South Holland District Council (SH DC), to the south of the Site lies the administrative area of the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk (KL&WN BC).

3. THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

3.1 The Proposed Development comprises:

“Installation of access track and associated development”

3.2 Approximately 560 m of compacted aggregate access track with a width of 3.5 m to 6 m is to be installed. The typical width of the access track will be 5 m. A cross section of the access track is shown in Figure 1.

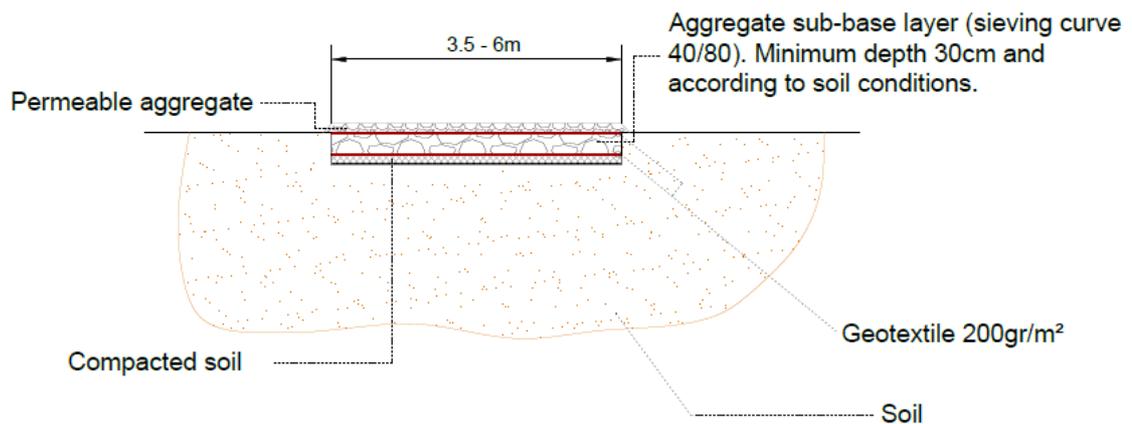


Figure 1. Extract of Drawing GR5.0 Rev 01, dated 17th May 2021.

3.3 The application also includes the provision of 1.8 m (h) deer fencing, three passing places (where road width increases to ~ 7 m) and a drainage swale.

3.4 The access is required to provide abnormal indivisible load (AIL) access.

3.5 The access is proposed alongside an access previously permitted by SH DC and KL&WN BC as part of a solar farm and battery storage facility scheme with all associated works allowed on appeal in September 2023 ¹:

“Installation of a solar farm and battery storage facility with associated infrastructure”

¹ The previous planning permission KL&WN BC reference: 21/01442/FM and South Holland District Council reference: H-18-0741-21, granted on appeal (Planning Inspectorate reference: APP/V2635/W/22/3295141 and APP/A2525/W/22/329514) on 29th March 2023 has been subsequently varied on two occasions KL&WN BC references: 23/02080/F and 23/02080/F and South Holland District Council references: H18-1034-23 and H18-0448-24 extending the operational life to 40 year (approved in January/February 2024) and amending approved plans (approved in July 2024). The access was unchanged in these Section 73 planning permissions.

3.6 The current access route for the solar farm and battery storage facility scheme south of Gunthorpe Road Solar Farm is via the A17, King John Bank and Gunthorpe Road. This additional route for AIL only would be via the A17, East Bank and Gunthorpe Road. This application seeks to provide an additional access for AILs during construction and decommissioning. The previously permitted route would be used for construction HGV traffic. The routes are shown in Figure 2.

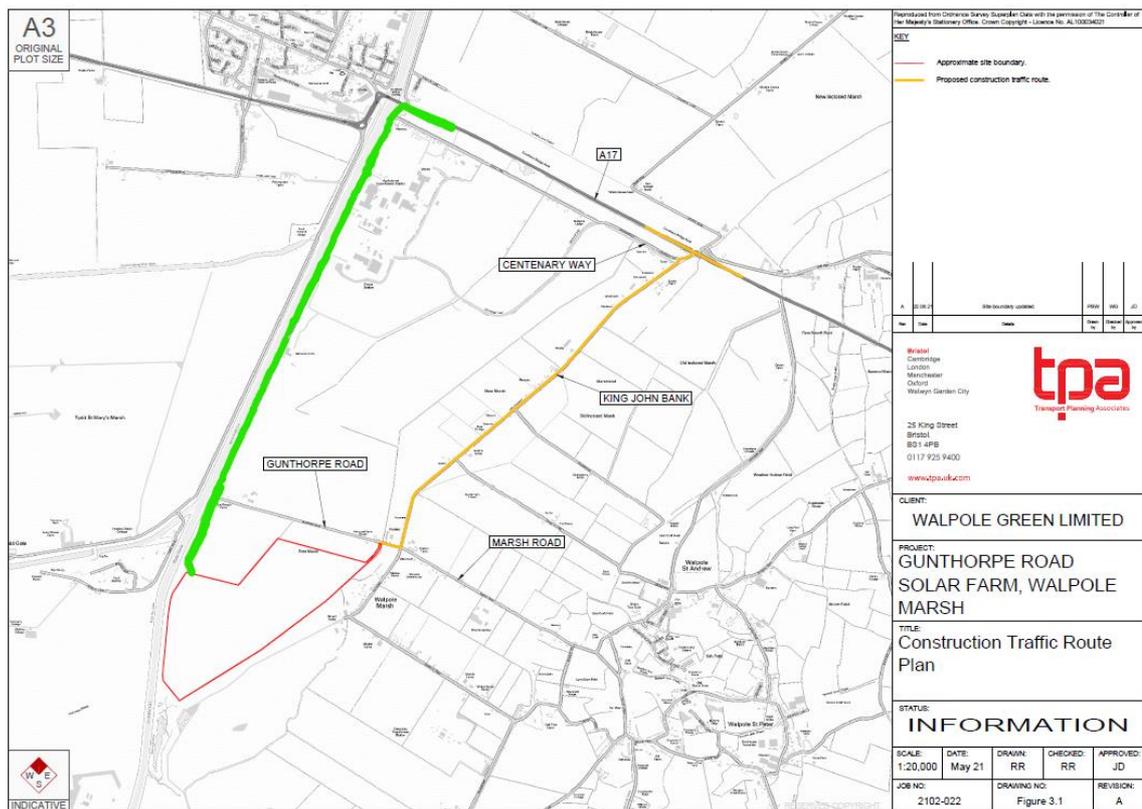


Figure 2. Extract of CTMP Figure 3.1 Rev A, dated May 2021 (new additional AIL route shown green).

- 3.7 No part of the access track is within the KL&WN BC area. Full details are shown on the accompanying plans.
- 3.8 No vegetation is required to be removed as part of the proposals. The Site includes land, of approximately 0.3 ha, within the Solar Farm site required for the provision of 'on site' Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) associated with this access track.
- 3.9 There is no proposed public access to the access track.
- 3.10 This statement continues to detail planning and relevant considerations.

4. RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

Planning Policy

- 4.1 As noted above the relevant Development Plan is the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan 2011-2036. The Site is within 'Countryside' and outside of any defined settlement boundary. An extract of the Policies Map is included in Figure 3.

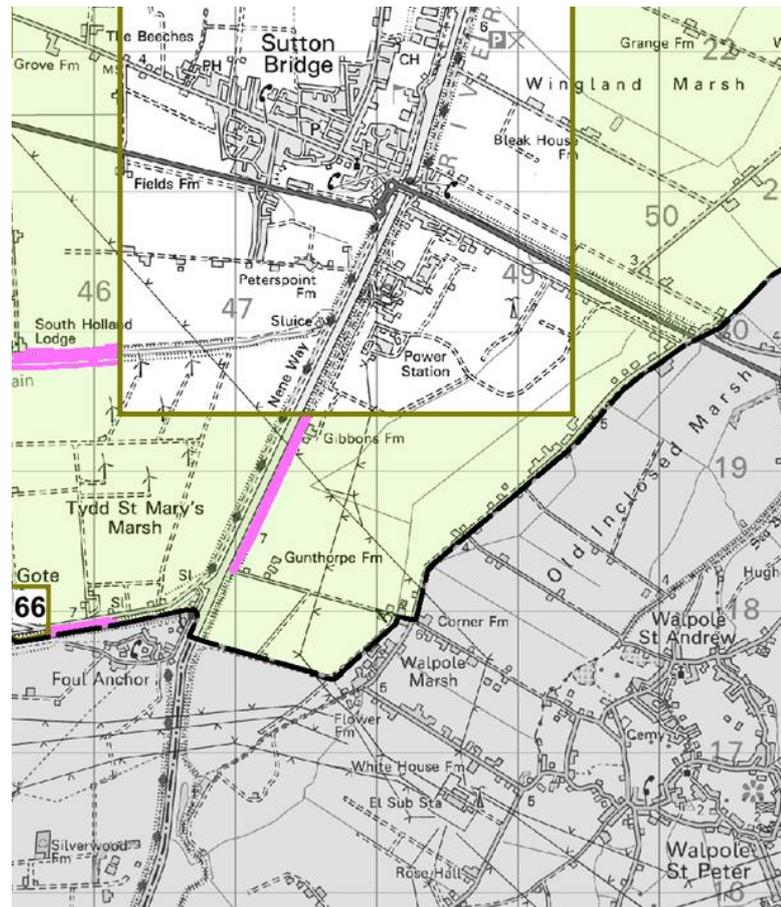


Figure 3. Extract of the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan 2011-2036 Policies Map.

- 4.2 The location of the access road is necessary within the 'Countryside', by virtue of serving as an abnormal load access to the Gunthorpe Road Solar Farm development (Policy 1 Part D).

Landscape and arboricultural resource

- 4.3 The Site is not within a designated landscape. The Proposed Development would have no impact upon the landscape as the access track is laid at existing ground level and deer fence is of comparable agricultural specification. Given its nature there would be no harm to the key characteristics of the landscape or visual impacts. No vegetation is to be removed. Vegetation adjacent to Site would be retained and protected. Accordingly, it is concluded the

arboricultural resource can also be protected within the Site. Biodiversity Net Gains are secured on the main Solar Farm site as detailed within the accompanying Metric.

Ecology

- 4.4 As per good industry practice pre-works checks and construction practices will ensure there is no harm to priority or protected species during the undertaking of the works. Any other licences or assents required would be sought from the appropriate regulatory bodies. The existing Site predominantly forms agricultural land having limited ecology and biodiversity value. Land adjacent to East Bank, forms a Local Wildlife Site (Policy 28 Natural Environment). Through the use of good practice construction methods, including prior to commencement walkover survey legislative compliance can be secured and it is concluded there is no ecological constraint to development. The accompanying preliminary ecology report, prepared by Avian Ecology, concludes “is unlikely that the Site will support any other protected or notable species”. Land within the Solar Farm site, is included to provide improved Biodiversity Net Gain over the ‘future baseline’ of the wider Site, as detailed in the accompanying Metric. This ensures compliance with the Environment Act requirements.

Flooding

- 4.5 The Site forms Flood Zone 3. The access track is of permanent aggregate design. The works would be managed to ensure no temporary impacts to flood zone during the construction works. Following construction there would be no impact given no change in ground levels or introduction of impermeable surfaces. The track is of permeable design. It is considered the works would not give rise to increased risk of flooding given their limited nature and extent.

Traffic and Transport

- 4.6 Limited HGV and construction movements will be required as part of the works. It is expected the works would give rise to only a handful of additional movements associated with the delivery of additional temporary fencing, traffic management and aggregate for the works.
- 4.7 The accompanying technical note and Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP), prepared by TPA. The access is suitable for abnormal loads.
- 4.8 Swept Path Assessment has been undertaken by Wynns, provided as an Appendix to the CTMP. An assessment of the access route, via A17, East Bank and Gunthorpe Road is provided concluding the access route is suitable with implementation of traffic management.

Agricultural land

- 4.9 The Natural England Regional Agricultural Land Classification Maps indicates the Site to form Grade 1 'Excellent' agricultural land. Approximately 2,800 m² (560 m (L) x average 5 m (W) (0.28 ha)) of aggregate is to be installed at the edge of an agricultural field. This forms a very small portion of the agricultural land within both the Site and the South Holland District Council area as a whole. The track will be removed alongside the Solar Farm development after 40 years.

Heritage

- 4.10 There would be no harm to any heritage asset. The Proposed Development would have no impact, including during construction, upon the nearest heritage assets forming Grade II Listed Buildings to the west of River Nene within Foul Anchor.

Miscellaneous

- 4.11 Design matters are limited given the nature of the proposed development. Minor earthworks comprising a swale/shallow infiltration drainage ditch is located east of the access track, despite the permeable design, as a form of betterment to aid land drainage. Fencing is included to the west of the access track and a gate set back from the highway at the access of East Bank.
- 4.12 The offsite PRoW 'Bridleway SuBr/6/3' and the 'Walpole St Peter FP1' will remain open and are unaffected by the access.
- 4.13 Therefore, the principle of the development is considered acceptable.

5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1 This Supporting Statement has been prepared on behalf of Enso Green Holdings R Limited to accompany a planning application to South Holland District Council for the installation of an access track and associated development on land between East Bank/Gunthorpe Road and Gunthorpe Road Solar Farm, Walpole Bank, Walpole Marsh, Wisbech, near PE14 7JJ.
- 5.2 This statement has set out a summary of the Site, Proposed Development and relevant considerations.
- 5.3 The access is to form an additional abnormal indivisible load access to that previously permitted, as part of a solar farm and battery storage facility scheme with all associated works, which is located south of Gunthorpe Road. Approximately 560 m of crushed aggregate track is to be installed.
- 5.4 The Proposed Development would have no impact on landscape, arboriculture, ecology, heritage or flooding in this location the scheme can be implemented without any unacceptable harm.
- 5.5 It is concluded planning permission should be granted without delay.



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