



Little Eau Solar Farm

Planning Statement

January 2015



Submitted on behalf of Little Eau Solar Limited

Prepared By: BE Renewables Limited

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PLANNING APPLICATION
SUBMITTED ON BEHALF OF LITTLE EAU SOLAR LIMITED

SOLAR FARM DEVELOPMENT:
AREA LOCATED IN THE PARISH OF SUTTON ST JAMES IN
LINCOLNSHIRE, APPROXIMATELY 3.5km SOUTH WEST OF THE
VILLAGE OF SUTTON ST JAMES

PLANNING STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF PLANNING APPLICATION TO
SOUTH HOLLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL

JANUARY 2015

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GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS

AGL	Above Ground Level
ALC	Agricultural Land Classification
AOD	Above Ordnance Datum
AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
BAP	Biodiversity Action Plan
BERL	BE Renewables Limited
DCLG	Department for Communities and Local Government
DNO	Distribution Network Operator
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EPS	European Protected Species (EU Habitats Directive)
ER	Environmental Report
EU	European Union
FRA	Flood Risk Assessment
GLNP	Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership
Ha	Hectare
HGV	Heavy Goods Vehicle
HV	High Voltage
IDB	Internal Drainage Boards
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
LPA	Local Planning Authority
LB	Listed Buildings
LBAP	Local Biodiversity Action Plan
LCC HER	Lincolnshire County Council Historic Environment Records
LDF	Local Development Frameworks
LDP	Local Development Plan
LDV	Light Duty Vehicles
LTP	Local Transport Policy
LV	Low Voltage
M	Metres
MAGIC	Multi-Agency Geographical Information for the Countryside
MW	Megawatt
MWh	Megawatt hour
MWp	Megawatt 'peak'
NBN	National Biodiversity Network
NE	Natural England
NERC	Natural Environment and Rural Communities
NGR	National Grid Reference
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
ODPM	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
PPG	Planning Policy Guidance
PTZ	Pan Tilt Zoom
PV	Photovoltaic
RSS	Regional Spatial Strategies
SAC	Special Area for Conservation
SAM	Scheduled Ancient Monument
SFRA	Strategic Flood Risk Assessment
SHDC	South Holland District Council
SUDS	Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems
UK	United Kingdom
UK BAP	United Kingdom Biodiversity Action Plan
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
WCA	Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 Schedule 5 Species
WP	Watts of Power
WPD	Western Power Distribution

APPENDICES

Please read this report alongside the following appendices (submitted as part of the full planning application);

Appendix 1 – Site Location Plan
Appendix 2 – Site Layout Plan
Appendix 3 – Typical String Inverter
Appendix 4 – Typical Substation
Appendix 5 – Camera Mounting System
Appendix 6 – Wooden Post, Stock Proof Fence
Appendix 7 – Typical Access Gate
Appendix 8 – Typical Cable Trench Details
Appendix 9 – PV Framework Elevations
Appendix 10 – Typical Front and Piled Front Elevations
Appendix 11 – Access Track Elevations
Appendix 12 – Traffic Management Schematic
Appendix 13 – Biodiversity and Habitat Management Plan
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Appendix 17b - Development Zone Constraints Map
Appendix 17c – Agricultural Land Classification (Post Construction)
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Appendix 21 – Cassini Map 1805 – 1874
Appendix 22a – Overview of Sectional Views
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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview:

This Planning Statement has been prepared by BE Renewables Limited (BERL) (the 'agent') on behalf of Little Eau Solar Farm Limited (the 'applicant'), to support the submission of a planning application for the development of a solar photovoltaic (PV) power plant of up to 5 Mega Watt peak (MWp) known as 'Little Eau Solar Farm' (referred to in this document as the 'project' or the 'site').

1.2 The Agent:

BERL is a UK based renewable energy developer specializing in the delivery of utility scale renewable energy infrastructure, primarily commercial solar farms. BERL has secured funding for their developments established for the purposes of developing, funding and operating commercial scale solar PV projects within the UK. BERL is currently developing several commercial scale solar PV farms across the UK.

1.3 Environmental Impact Assessment:

A Screening Request was submitted to South Holland District Council (SHDC) in February 2013 in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulations 2011. In response to the Screening Opinion Request, SHDC concluded that an Environmental Statement would **not** be required but considered that the proposed development could result in some effects and that these should be assessed within the planning application (please refer to Appendix 14 for the full Screening Opinion) including (but not limited to);

- Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA),
- Noise,
- Glare,
- Ecological Assessment
- Traffic / Highway Issues
- Cultural Heritage
- Flood Risk

1.4 Planning Application Documents and Appendices:

In addition to the Application Forms, Certificates and the Planning Statement, these documents comprise:

Design and Access Statement
Environmental Report (ER)
Statement of Community Involvement

Appendices;

Appendix 1 – Site Location Plan

Appendix 2 – Site Layout Plan
 Appendix 3 – Typical String Inverter
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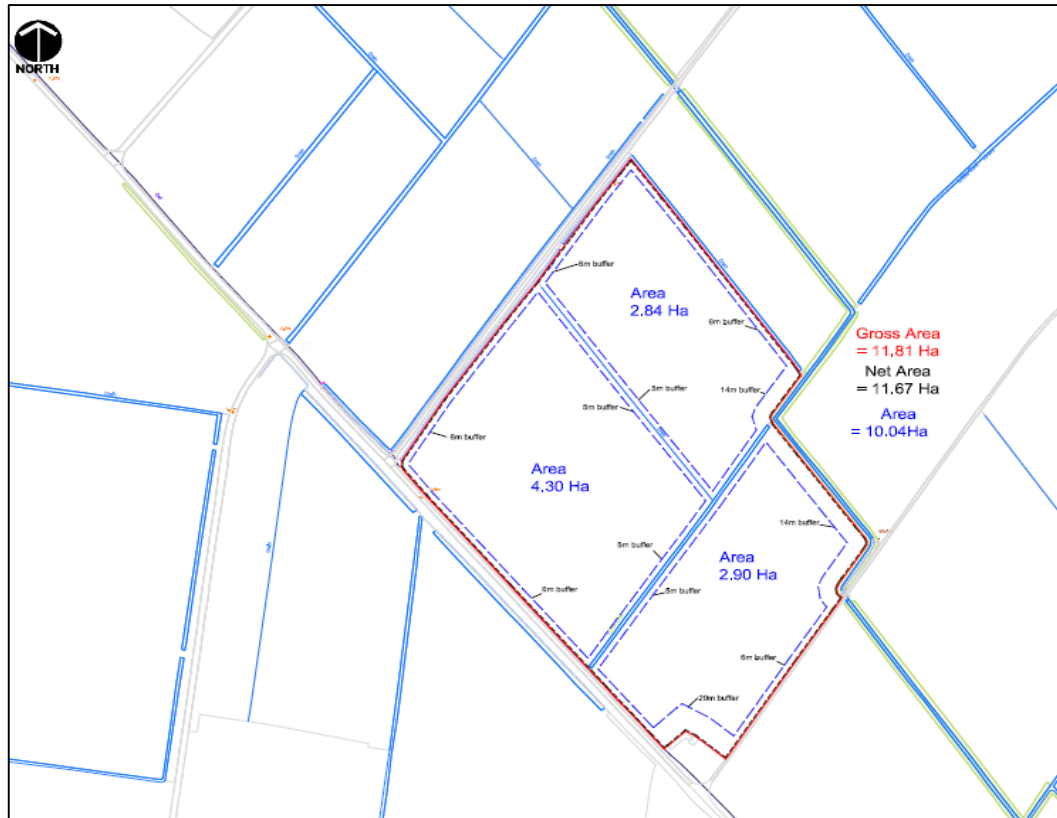
1.5 Consultation:

A Pre-planning Public Consultation Event was held on Thursday 11th July 2013 from 3pm – 8pm in the village hall of Sutton St James. 76 people attended the exhibition, including local parish councillors and members of the public. 35 attendees completed a consultation questionnaire at the exhibition. Of the 35 people who completed a questionnaire, twenty three (66%) are supportive of the plans and two (5%) are undecided. Ten (29%) are opposed. Please refer to the Statement of Community Involvement for more details.

CHAPTER TWO: SITE LOCATION AND CONTEXT

2.1 Overview:

BERL has been appointed by the applicant to prepare a planning application for the development of a ground mounted solar farm (forthwith referred to as 'Little Eau Solar Farm'). Please see below;



(EXTRACT FROM APPENDIX 1 – SITE LOCATION PLAN)

The site will be on approximately 11.81 Ha of arable farming land located in the parish of Sutton St. James in Lincolnshire, approximately 3.5 km south west of the village of Sutton St. James. The National Grid Reference for the centre of the site is TF375159.

Selection of the proposed site for the Little Eau Solar Farm followed a review of the land throughout Lincolnshire using Geographical Information Systems (GIS). From this review a list of potential sites were identified.

These sites were assessed and grouped according to the administrative and/or planning authority areas. From this exercise, a number of sites were identified within the planning authority area of SHDC.

No brownfield sites were identified within the above screening that satisfactorily achieved the qualitative criteria for development of a solar farm.

Please refer to Appendix 17a and 17b for the full Impact Assessment and Sequential Test.

2.2 Site Context:

Little Eau Farm is located south west of Sutton St James, near Spalding, Lincolnshire. It lies within Natural England's (NE) Joint Character Area (JCA) 46 - The Fens (Appendix 18a).

Key characteristics of this area, (as applicable to the landscape context of the site) are:

- Large-scale, flat, open landscape with extensive vistas to level horizons and huge skies.
- A hierarchy of rivers, drains and ditches provide a strong influence throughout the area.
- Woodland cover sparse. Occasional avenues to roads, elsewhere isolated field trees have marked significance. Shelter belts including poplar, willow and leylandii hedges around farmsteads.

The South Holland District Landscape Capacity Study¹ identified the site as located within the 'Peaty Fens Landscape Character Type' (Appendix 18b).

Key Characteristics of this area are:

- Flat topography dissected by long straight roads, rivers, ditches and drains, often on raised banks (1-3m high). A strong linear pattern.
- Geometric / linear fields, linear settlement and isolated farmsteads with associated shelterbelts.
- Simple, open, not as intensive as 'Settled Fens'.

¹ Strategic Landscape Capacity Study (John Campion Associates)

CHAPTER THREE: NEED FOR RENEWABLE ENERGY

3.1 The Need for Renewable Energy:

Global climate change is widely recognised as being one of the greatest environmental challenges facing the world today. Most of the observed increase in global average temperatures since the mid-20th century is due to the observed increase in anthropogenic greenhouse gas concentrations. The principal cause is a rise in the concentration of carbon dioxide (CO₂) in the atmosphere, a major contributor being the use of fossil fuels to generate electricity.

Renewable sources of energy are those that are not based on infinite reserves stored within the earth. In recent years, the Government has given its support, and emphasised the benefits of, renewable energy and the need to develop future capacity within the UK. The Government's Renewable Energy Roadmap Update 2013 states that solar PV is considered to be one of the *'key renewable energy technologies that can help to create a balanced UK energy mix'*. Solar PV is seen to have significant advantages in that it is versatile and scalable, can be installed quickly and the fuel, solar radiation, is free. Utilising this asset effectively will assist in meeting national targets for the reduction of CO₂ emissions.

The UK Government has set targets to reduce Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions by at least 12.5% by 2012 and 80% by 2050 compared with the baseline emissions of 1990. This was established in the 2008 Climate Change Act, which is the world's first legally binding climate change target. Meeting these targets will also help the UK to become less reliant on imported fossil fuels and higher energy prices in the future.

In April 2013 David Cameron said, *'when I became Prime Minister I said I wanted Britain to have the greenest government ever and I am as committed to that today as I was then'*. The development of Little Eau Solar Farm will provide an important contribution towards achievement of these renewable energy targets, both locally and nationally throughout the UK. In addition to installing a renewable energy development, the project will also provide valuable inward investment into the local community during the development and construction stages. Inward investment will progress during the operational stage as current agricultural activity continue as well as operational and maintenance works sourced from local providers and companies.

The opportunity for Little Eau Solar Farm Limited to make a long-term contribution to the community will not be overlooked but occur through the establishment of a 'Community Benefit Fund' (CBF). We consider that the investment opportunity derived through the development of Little Eau Solar Farm will underpin the economic viability of the agricultural business with the local community benefitting through the local investment through the 25 year period.

The development of Little Eau Solar Farm will provide an important contribution towards achievement of these renewable energy targets by providing renewable energy to 939 homes as well as to help reduce approximately 2,714 tonnes of the UK's CO₂ emissions per year. In addition to installing a renewable energy development, the project will also provide

valuable inward investment into the local community during the development, construction and operational stages.

3.2 Benefits of Renewable Energy:

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) points out that in determining an application for renewable energy developments (paragraph 93), *‘planning plays a key role in helping shape places to secure radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimising vulnerability and providing resilience to the impacts of climate change, and supporting the delivery of renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure. This is central to the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development’*.

According to Paragraph 7 of the NPPF there are three parts of Sustainable Development:

- Economic,
- Social, and;
- Environmental

Each part gives rise to the need for the planning system to perform a number of roles:

- *‘an economic role – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure;*
- *a social role – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and*
- *by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community’s needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being; and*
- *an environmental role – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy’.*

At the core of the NPPF is the *‘presumption in favour of sustainable development.’*

Potential benefits of the Little Eau Solar Farm contributing to Sustainable Development include;

ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS OF LITTLE EAU SOLAR FARM		
ECONOMIC BENEFITS	Direct Job Opportunities	Throughout the commercial development, planning, construction and management phase as well as the operational maintenance of the solar farm.
	Indirect Job Opportunities	Production of components for the solar farm (E.g. modules, mechanical works, inverters, substations, transformers, switchgear, etc.)
	Increased Reliability and Security of Supply	Increased diverse sources and technology types, more distributed generation closer to the point of use, distances reduced so less power wastage in transmission.

	Possibilities of Indirect Benefit through Marketing	The local area is 'green', improves the image of the area – possibility of inward investment by related technologies.
SOCIAL BENEFITS	Community Benefit	To be decided with the local community but it might include a Community Fund to support good causes, reduced electricity costs, or apprenticeships.
	Educational Opportunities	Wider awareness of renewable energy, specifically solar, increased interest in environmental issues.
	Quality of Life Benefits	Protection of properties, surrounding area and biodiversity through mitigation of the effects of climate change.
ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS	Small Loss of Agricultural Land	Only approx. 30% of each acre is covered by solar panels. The remaining land can still be used for agricultural activities such as grazing.
	Increased Biodiversity	Existing hedgerows along the site boundary will be reinforced. New native hedgerows will also be planted where vegetation is currently absent (refer to the Proposed Soft Landscaping Plan within the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment).
	Reduction of Carbon Emissions	Helping to meet the UK targets. Moving towards a low carbon economy.
	Air Quality Improvements	Indirect benefit – as solar (renewable) energy reduces fossil fuel emissions.

CHAPTER FOUR: SITE SELECTION

Below is an overview of the site selection process. Please refer to Appendix 17a and 17b – ALC Impact Assessment and Sequential Test with Constraints Map for the full, detailed assessment regarding this.

The UK's solar PV Strategy sets out that in identifying sites for development, brownfield sites and other sustainable energy measures (such as panels on roofs) should be considered first. In the absence of suitable brownfield sites, greenfield sites can then be considered. This ordering of options is essentially a sequential test.

The European Directive 2009/28/EC² deals with the promotion and use of energy from renewable sources. The Directive sets mandatory targets for the share of renewable energy to be obtained from renewable sources for each European Member State. The target for the United Kingdom is to equal or exceed 15% of gross final consumption of energy from renewable sources by 2020.

The UK Government has, in turn, published a family of documents presenting a set of measures that would enable the UK to meet its 2020 target. The National Renewable Energy Action Plan for the United Kingdom expressly encourages the delivery of renewable energy schemes.

It identifies that solar has the potential to form a significant part of the renewable energy generation mix and believes that the solar market can bring forward a total of 20GW by 2020. The current level at the start of 2014 is 2.5GW. SHDC should favourably consider renewable energy schemes (at least until such time its local renewable energy target has been reached).

Government sets out how it expects local planning authorities to plan for renewable energy developments through the NPPF.

Paragraph 97 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that Local Planning Authorities should consider identifying suitable sites for renewable and low carbon energy sources.

BERL on behalf of the applicant investigated the suitability of this site and numerous alternative sites for solar development.

OVERVIEW OF SEQUENTIAL TEST STEPS	
STEP ONE	Discussions and assessment of suitable grid connection locations, and Assessment of grid capacity and fault contributions that may result in any constraint to as future grid connection Review of Western Power Distribution network 'heat maps' Application and confirmation for budget grid connection capacity and costs for possible connection to Western Power Distribution network
STEP TWO	Location mapping of potential grid connection locations High-level sensitivity mapping for site constraints mapping within 2km development zone area around each identifiable connection point Identification of landowner(s) Assessment of each development area. Preparation of GIS Constraints map for the preferred development zone

² <http://ec.europa.eu>

	Investigation of site availability and suitability with the preferred development zone Selection of preferred zone of development
STEP THREE	Submission of Grid Application Form(s) Discussions of development with landowner(s) Final selection of the site for development of a solar farm within the preferred development zone.

Little Eau Solar Farm meets the key technical requirements for selection as an appropriate site for the development of a solar farm. This site is within a location selected to minimise its proximity to sensitive receptors, provide sufficient available land for the project and outside the greenbelt. The site is well located for solar gain since it is south facing and free of any buildings or landscape features which could cause overshadowing.

In addition, the proximity of the site to a substation that has capacity is essential to the proposed solar farm development as generated electricity will be exported to the National Grid via an underground cabling route laid from the location of the proposed substation at Little Eau.

In terms of providing solar PV on roofs, this is not possible due to the size of site required and the necessary maintenance and security issues that need to be monitored throughout the operational period.

CHAPTER FIVE: PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The proposal is to develop a solar farm that has a maximum peak power capacity of approximately 5 Megawatts (MWp). Connection to the national grid will be achievable by an underground cable route. Solar energy systems produce energy by converting solar irradiation into electricity or heat. PV facilities use panels comprised of many individual PV cells which absorb solar energy which excites electrons inside the cells and produces energy. The electricity produced by the cells is direct current and an inverter is used to convert this current into alternating current.

The PV cells are commonly constructed from silicon and the cells are linked together behind a glass sheet (for protection).

5.1 Key Components of the Proposed Development:

The design and layout of the proposed development will be informed by the Building Research Establishment National Solar Centre Biodiversity Guidance for Solar Developments document. This document also includes valuable guidance on biodiversity improvements that will be considered to mitigate and enhance any habitats that are considered to be adversely affected by the proposed development.

The key components of the proposed solar farm include the following (please refer to the Environmental Report for more details regarding each component):

- Solar Panels / Modules
- Solar Panel Frames
- Inverters
- Marshalling Cabinets / Combiner Box
- Transformers
- Substation

Solar Panels / Modules:

The solar farm comprises of the installation of a number of solar panels, mounted to steel and aluminum frame structures, using typically 3 to 4-row landscape, at an angle of approximately 25-35 degrees. The frames are arranged into rows set south facing, at ~3m apart. *Please note: the number of and distance may vary slightly as a result of final design, size and capacity of the modules.*

Solar Panel Frames:

The frame structures consist of steel uprights and aluminum cross bars. The uprights are 'augured' or 'pushed' into the ground to a depth of approximately 1.5m, dependent upon ground conditions. Typically the uprights are not driven into the ground for two reasons;

- To ensure the development is 'reversible' as this method allows the site to be easily restored to a more intensive agricultural use.

- To mitigate the production of construction noise.

The rows of panels are inset from the perimeter site security fence to prevent overshadowing (Appendix 2) and to permit the construction of the perimeter access track (Appendix 11). There is a separation gap between each row, to ensure that the panels are not overshadowed and that access can be gained between each row.

The solar panels are fixed and do not track the path of the sun.

Inverters:

The solar module arrays are connected to an internal electrical collection system, which is suspended from the support tables. These cables are then connected to each solar arrays string inverter which are mounted to the rear, behind the rows of solar modules.

A string inverter (Appendix 3) will connect to each row of PV panels to convert the direct current (DC) output to alternating current (AC). The inverters are manufactured with cabinets with an appropriate IP rating to resist the environmental conditions in which they are housed.

They are solid state and do not emit any noise.

Marshalling Cabinets / Combiner Box:

Each string inverter will be connected to a marshalling cabinet by the installation of below ground cables in accordance with the trenching details as shown in Appendix 8. The marshalling cabinets terminate the connection of multiple string inverters. This marshalling cabinet enables the combined output of numerous sting inverters to be connected to the adjacent transformer(s) which are then be connected to the substation by installation of further below ground cables.

Transformers:

The proposed transformers are mounted adjoining the identified substation compound. The transformer will be mounted on a small concrete pad within a permeable compound.

Substation:

This is primarily a requirement of the DNO to enable the generation from the solar farm to be exported and connected to the regional electricity network system, as operated under their license.

A new single sub-station will be built as part of the development to facilitate connection of the solar power farm to the national grid network via the existing transmission facilities. The substation will be to standard specification of the DNO to meet their requirements. It will house the Western Power Distribution (WPD) High

Voltage (HV) Grid Protection Switches and the applicant's metering and consumer side HV switch. The building will also accommodate a small store room.

Details of the substation are as shown in Appendix 4.

5.2 Planning Considerations:

This section provides an assessment of the planning considerations raised by the proposal.

We consider the considerations to be:

1. Is the development of the site for renewable energy supported by current and emerging planning policy guidance?
2. Is the site suitable or appropriate for continued agricultural use?
3. Will the solar farm adversely affect the character of the area in terms of landscape and visual impact?
4. Is the scale and massing of the solar farm appropriate for the site?
5. Is the solar farm accessible?
6. Will the solar farm have any adverse on ecology?
7. Will the solar farm result in increased flood risk?

1 IS THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SITE FOR RENEWABLE ENERGY SUPPORTED BY CURRENT AND EMERGING PLANNING POLICY GUIDANCE?

The proposed site lies within the countryside. There is currently a presumption that development in the countryside is restricted. However, the proposals are considered to be acceptable as they represent an alternative use of the land for the generation of renewable energy. There is a strong presumption in favour of renewable energy developments at National and Local levels.

2 IS THE SITE SUITABLE OR APPROPRIATE FOR CONTINUED AGRICULTURAL USE?

The site will be capable of being used for agricultural use. The whole of the site will be seeded with a proprietary grass and wildflower mix to develop the arable field into an area that greatly benefits local wildlife. The field will be grazed by sheep. During the 25 year lifespan of the solar farm, the agricultural use is decreased, but the site can be swiftly returned to full agricultural production if required. Unlike other more permanent forms of development such as housing or commercial development.

The key point is that the proposals represent only a temporary use of the site for a period of 25 years and is completely reversible. The proposal also allows the soil to recover, after years of intensive agricultural use.

3 WILL THE SOLAR FARM ADVERSELY AFFECT THE CHARACTER OF THE AREA IN TERMS OF LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT?

The proposals would have minimal effect on the visual amenity and quality of the surrounding landscape as the development proposals are benign in nature and partially screened by existing and proposed landscaping. The extent of landscape and visual effects predicted for this solar array proposal will be limited to users of the immediate

roads of the site, and walkers within the edge of the site. Please refer to the Environmental Report for more details.

The proposed landscape mitigation measure will include woodland planting along the boundaries, infill planting to encourage thickening of the existing perimeter hedgerows. Please refer to the Environmental Report for more details.

4 IS THE SCALE AND MASSING OF THE SOLAR FARM APPROPRIATE FOR THE SITE?

The solar farm has been designed to maximise the exposure of the PV panels to irradiation from the sun. The number of PV panels on the site maximises the electricity generating power of the site in order to ensure the viability of the project. Viability is a significant factor that should be given the proper consideration in any decision to grant planning consent. The solar farm is of low profile and follows the contours of the land.

It is considered that the low heights of the scheme will enable the solar farm to be accommodated into the wider surroundings, therefore limiting any visual effects.

5 IS THE SOLAR FARM ACCESSIBLE?

Vehicular access to the site is provided from the B1165. The route to the site will follow a right-turn into Jiggles Gate and then a left turn at the T-junction onto Old Fen Dyke and onto the Sun Cross Road and a right turn into Broadgate. The route will then follow Broadgate and take the left fork and enter New Fen Dike and shortly after the route will access the site directly off New Fen Dike.

When the solar farm is operation, it will not generate any significant traffic movements, security and maintenance staff will be the only visitors. There will also be a small amount of traffic associated with the management of the sheep grazing the land surrounding the panels, this will also provide additional surveillance over the solar installation. During the temporary 16 weeks construction of the site, vehicle movements will be slightly higher and as a result warrant more detailed consideration. See Environmental Report and Design and Access Statement.

It is envisaged that 32 HGV movements will be required to and from the site during the construction phase of the solar farm.

6 WILL THE SOLAR FARM HAVE ANY ADVERSE ON ECOLOGY?

The location of the solar farm has been sited to mitigate any potential ecological issues. The site is not located within any ecological statutory designations. The ecological implications of the solar farm have been considered in the Environmental Report which accompanies the planning application. A Biodiversity and Habitat Management Plan has been prepared also. The solar farm will have an overall positive effect on ecology.

7 WILL THE SOLAR FARM RESULT IN INCREASED FLOOD RISK?

The development proposals are secured through piles augured (or pushed) into the ground, ensuring no excavation is required. This removes the need for concrete foundations.

The total site covers an area 11.81 hectares and the area of impermeable surfacing following development is 0.00287 hectares. Due to the small increase in the proportion of impermeable surfacing on site and the proposed use of infiltration SUDS, no formal offsite drainage discharge is required.

A Flood Risk Assessment forms part of the full planning application.

CHAPTER SIX: PLANNING POLICY REVIEW

6.1 Introduction:

This section of the Planning Statement determines whether the proposals for Little Eau Solar Farm comply with national and local planning policy. Under the plan-led approach of the planning system, proposals should accord with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The NPPF and practice guidance is examined, together with the relevant local policies from SHDC's Local Plan Core Strategy.

Initially, the UK Government's Solar PV Strategy is set out.

6.2 National Planning Policy:

6.2.1 UK Solar PV Strategy Part 1 –

Roadmap to a Brighter Future, Department of Energy and Climate Change, October 2013

The Government's solar strategy sets out four guiding principles which are:

'Support for solar PV should allow cost-effective projects to proceed and to make a cost-effective contribution to UK carbon emission objectives in the context of overall energy goals.'

Support for solar PV should deliver genuine carbon reductions that help meet the UK's target of 15 per cent renewable energy from final consumption by 2020 and in supporting the decarbonisation of our economy in the longer term.

Support for solar PV should ensure proposals are appropriately sited, give proper weight to environmental considerations such as landscape and visual impact, heritage and local amenity, and provide opportunities for local communities to influence decisions that affect them.

Support for solar PV should assess and respond to the impacts of deployment on: grid systems balancing; grid connectivity; and financial incentives'.

Of particular relevance to this planning application is guiding principle number three which relates to the siting of solar proposals, as well as the factors which require consideration. The roadmap considers that bringing forward appropriately sited solar installation is part of a responsible UK energy strategy and states that *'recently solar has achieved the highest public approval rating of all renewable energy technologies at 85 per cent'.*

The strategy recognises the importance of appropriately sited installations, ensuring that roofs and brownfield sites are utilised. The rationale for the solar farm installation at Little Eau is set out in Appendix 17a and 17b. The strategy also recognises that there has been an increase in deployment of solar PV schemes at all scales, including for large scale ground mounted schemes. The strategy sets out that *'the key issue is ensuring that proposals to deploy solar PV take account of the circumstances of each project. A brownfield site may contain a Site of Special Scientific Interest or be part of an Area of Outstanding National*

Beauty. Likewise, even plots of the highest grade agricultural land could include areas which are in themselves lower grade and could legitimately be used for solar PV deployment. There is increasing evidence that, if well planned and managed, there can be biodiversity benefits arising from the deployment of solar PV at large scale. Furthermore, a number of developers and environmental organisations are already developing biodiversity plans in conjunction with solar PV’.

6.2.2 UK Solar PV Strategy Part 2 –

Delivering a Brighter Future, Department of Energy and Climate Change, April 2014

The Solar PV Roadmap established the principles for solar PV deployment in the UK. This document focuses on the government’s ambitions for the key market segment and how they will be realised through innovation and partnership and the benefits this will bring for jobs and investment, in addition to emissions reduction. In terms of relevant guidance, this is reiterated from the document above and is not repeated here.

6.2.3 National Planning Policy Framework -

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) came into force in March 2012 and sets out the Government’s planning policies and how these are expected to be applied. The NPPF replaces the majority of PPSs and PPGs, except for PPS10 relating to Waste. The onus of the NPPF is to achieve sustainable development, indeed it states that *‘development that is sustainable should go ahead, without delay – a presumption in favour of sustainable development that is the basis for every plan, and every decision’*.

Relevant guidance from the NPPF is set out below:

MEETING THE CHALLENGE OF CLIMATE CHANGE, FLOODING AND COASTAL CHANGE -

Meeting the challenges of climate change through new development is a key part of achieving sustainable development. Paragraph 93 of the NPPF states that *‘planning plays a key role in helping shape places to secure radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimising vulnerability and providing resilience to the impacts of climate change, and supporting the delivery of renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure. This is central to the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development’*.

Paragraph 97 of the NPPF states that:

‘To help increase the use and supply of renewable and low carbon energy, local planning authorities should recognise the responsibility on all communities to contribute to energy generation from renewable or low carbon sources. They should:

- *have a positive strategy to promote energy from renewable and low carbon sources;*
- *design their policies to maximise renewable and low carbon energy development while ensuring that adverse impacts are addressed satisfactorily, including cumulative landscape and visual impacts;*

- *consider identifying suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy sources, and supporting infrastructure, where this would help secure the development of such sources;*
- *support community-led initiatives for renewable and low carbon energy, including developments outside such areas being taken forward through neighbourhood planning; and*
- *identify opportunities where development can draw its energy supply from decentralised, renewable or low carbon energy supply systems and for co-locating potential heat customers and suppliers.”*

Of particular note is the third bullet point which sets out that Local Planning Authorities should consider identifying sites for renewable and low carbon energy sources.

Paragraph 98 of the NPPF sets out that, in terms of determining planning applications, local planning authorities should:

‘not require applicants for energy development to demonstrate the overall need for renewable or low carbon energy and also recognise that even small-scale projects provide a valuable contribution to cutting greenhouse gas emissions; and approve the application if its impacts are (or can be made) acceptable. Once suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy have been identified in plans, local planning authorities should also expect subsequent applications for commercial scale projects outside these areas to demonstrate that the proposed location meets the criteria used in identifying suitable areas’.

It is noted that it is not required for applicants to set out the overall need for renewable energy, but nonetheless, Section 3 of this Planning Statement seeks to set out the need and benefits of renewable energy. This is in order to demonstrate that as well as the key benefits in respect to climate change, there are further economic, social and environmental benefits to the local and wider communities.

In relation to **FLOODING**, this is not actually within the NPPF or Planning Practice Guidance anymore. There is now - ‘EA Guidance to support the NPPF’ which we have used throughout our assessments³. The Flood Risk Assessment (see Environmental Report) demonstrates that ‘any increase of impermeable surface area and surface water runoff as a result of the proposals’ will be minimal.

CONSERVING AND ENHANCING THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT - Paragraph 109 of the NPPF states that *‘the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:*

- *protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, geological conservation interests and soils;*
- *recognising the wider benefits of ecosystem services;*
- *minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible, contributing to the Government’s commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;*

³https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/296964/LIT_8496_5306da.pdf

- *preventing both new and existing development from contributing to or being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability; and*
- *remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate’.*

This section of the NPPF covers issues relating to landscapes, biodiversity, agricultural land, designated sites, pollution and noise. Each of these aspects has been considered within this Planning Statement and/or forms the basis for accompanying reports. Where there is evidence that an impact will exist, this has been mitigated. However, in most areas, there will be no impacts in terms of air pollution, noise or odour once the solar farm is operational.

As the solar farm will be operational for 25 years only, any impacts will be temporary and reversible, as once decommissioned, the site will be returned to its previous use.

CONSERVING AND ENHANCING THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT - Paragraph 128 of the NPPF states that, *‘In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes or has the potential to include heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation. In determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of:*

- *the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
- *the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and*
- *the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness’.*

Paragraph 132 states *‘When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of a grade II listed building, park or garden should be exceptional. Substantial harm to or loss of designated heritage assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, battlefields, grade I and II* listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional’.*

The visual influence of the development is considered unlikely to extend beyond a 2km radius of the development site. This is partly due to the lack of suitable vantage points, the flat topography and the limited number of visual receptors. It found that there are three listed building locations associated with the study area. However, our assessments have shown that there would also be no significant effect to the setting and perception of the listed buildings within the wider landscape, complying with the above policy.

In addition, the proposed development is a temporary use for 25 years, and, once decommissioned, the land will be reinstated to its previous use. Therefore, due to the temporary nature of this development, this proposal will not constrain any potential use of the site for future minerals working. It should be noted that the proposed Solar Farm may be beneficial in providing protection from permanent encroachment from other uses during the time it is operational.

6.2.4 How the Proposal Accords with the NPPF -

The table below demonstrates how the proposals accord with the relevant parts of the NPPF in terms of delivering sustainable development;

COMPLIANCE OF PROPOSALS WITH THE NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK		
NPPF GUIDANCE	POLICY SUMMARY	HOW PROPOSAL ACCORDS
MEETING THE CHALLENGE OF CLIMATE CHANGE, FLOODING AND COASTAL CHANGE	<i>Planning plays a key role in helping shape places to secure significant reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimising vulnerability and providing resilience to the impacts of climate change, and supporting the delivery of renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure.</i>	This proposal, which seeks to meet national and local energy need, is essential in contributing to a reduction in the UK's carbon emissions. The Solar Farm will generate electricity to supply approximately 939 homes in the UK as well as help reduce approximately 2,714 tonnes of the UK's CO ₂ emissions per year. This proposal will not increase the risk of flooding.
CONSERVING AND ENHANCING THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT	<i>Minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible, contributing to the Government's commitment to halt the overall</i>	This section of the NPPF covers issues relating to landscapes, biodiversity, agricultural land, designated sites, pollution and noise.

	<i>decline in biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures.</i>	Each of these aspects has been considered within the Environmental report. Where there is evidence that an impact will exist, this has been mitigated, although in most areas, there will be no impacts; this is in terms of designated sites, pollution and noise, once the solar farm is operational. As the solar farm will be operational for 25 years, any impacts will be temporary and reversible.
CONSERVING AND ENHANCING THE HERITAGE ENVIRONMENT	<i>The NPPF seeks to conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations.</i>	There are no designated heritage assets within the proposed application site area. Listed buildings in proximity of the site will not be materially affected due to the distance from the site and landscape format.
FACILITATING THE SUSTAINABLE USE OF MINERALS	<i>The NPPF seeks to ensure there is a sufficient supply of material to provide the infrastructure, buildings, energy and goods that the country needs. Therefore as minerals can only be worked where they are found, this section of the NPPF seeks to secure their long-term conservation.</i>	The Solar Farm will be operational for a period of 25 years and, once decommissioned, will be returned to its previous use. Therefore it will not prevent any future minerals working in this area. The proposal may be beneficial in providing protection from permanent encroachment from other uses during the time it is operational.

6.2.5 Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1) (DECC 2011) -

This National Policy Statement (NPS) highlights that in order to meet stringent emissions targets, the consumption of electricity will need to be almost exclusively from low carbon sources. This NPS emphasises the Government's commitment to renewable energy development and can also be used as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications for renewable energy developments.

6.2.6 National Planning Practice Guidance -

The recently published National Planning Practice Guidance accompanies the NPPF and sets out further explanation in some areas. A section on Renewable and Low Carbon Energy recognises that *'increasing the amount of energy from renewable and low carbon technologies will help to make sure the UK has a secure energy supply, reduce greenhouse gas emissions to slow down climate change and stimulate investment in new jobs and businesses. Planning has an important role in the delivery of new renewable and low carbon energy infrastructure in locations where the local environmental impact is acceptable'*.

The guidance sets out planning considerations that relate to large scale ground mounted solar farm installations, which are set out below;

COMPLIANCE OF PROPOSALS WITH THE NATIONAL PLANNING PRACTICE GUIDANCE	
PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS	HOW PROPOSAL ACCORDS
<i>'Particular factors a local planning authority will need to consider include...</i>	
<i>encouraging the effective use of land by focussing large scale solar farms on previously developed and non-agricultural land, provided that it is not of high environmental value;</i>	The rationale for the site selection process is set out in Appendix 17a and 17b.
<i>where a proposal involves greenfield land, whether (i) the proposed use of any agricultural land has been shown to be necessary and poorer quality land has been used in preference to higher quality land; and (ii) the proposal allows for continued agricultural use where applicable and/or encourages biodiversity improvements around arrays.</i>	The site is currently in use as arable agriculture. The land is not best and most versatile. The proposal allows for continued agricultural use in terms of providing space for sheep grazing.
<i>that solar farms are normally temporary structures and planning conditions can be used to ensure that the installations are</i>	The solar farm installation is a temporary use; as such the land will be reinstated to its previous use after the 25 year period of development.

<i>removed when no longer in use and the land is restored to its previous use;</i>	
<i>the proposal's visual impact, the effect on landscape of glint and on neighbouring uses and aircraft safety;</i>	A landscape and visual impact assessment has been undertaken and provided as supporting information to the planning application, please refer to the Environmental Report.
<i>the extent to which there may be additional impacts if solar arrays follow the daily movement of the sun;</i>	The solar arrays will not follow the movement of the sun, they will be stationary once installed on site.
<i>the need for, and impact of, security measures such as lights and fencing;</i>	CCTV and fencing are part of the proposal, and details are set out in the information enclosed with this planning application.
<i>great care should be taken to ensure heritage assets are conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, including the impact of proposals on views important to their setting. As the significance of a heritage asset derives not only from its physical presence, but also from its setting, careful consideration should be given to the impact of large scale solar farms on such assets. Depending on their scale, design and prominence, a large scale solar farm within the setting of a heritage asset may cause substantial harm to the significance of the asset;</i>	There are no designated heritage assets within the proposed Application site. The setting and appearance of the Listed buildings in proximity of the site will not be materially affected.
<i>the potential to mitigate landscape and visual impacts through, for example, screening with native hedges;</i>	A landscape and visual impact assessment has been undertaken and provided as supporting information to the planning application. This has identified mitigation measures, please refer to the Environmental Report.
<i>the energy generating potential, which can vary for a number of reasons including, latitude and aspect'.</i>	Noted. The energy generation potential is significant. The Solar Farm will generate electricity to supply approximately 939 homes in the UK as well as help reduce approximately 2,714 tonnes of the UK's CO ₂ emissions per year.

6.2.7 UK Solar PV Strategy (2014) -

Part 1 of the Solar PV Strategy sets out four guiding principles, which form the basis of Government's strategy for solar PV. These principles are:

1.	Support for solar PV should allow cost-effective projects to proceed and to make a cost effective contribution to UK carbon emission objectives in the context of overall energy goals.
2.	Support for solar PV should deliver genuine carbon reductions that help meet the UK's target of 15% renewable energy from final consumption by 2020.
3.	Support for solar PV should ensure proposals are appropriately sited, give proper weight to environmental considerations such as landscape and visual impact, heritage and local amenity, and provide opportunities for local communities to influence decisions that affect them.
4.	Support for solar PV should assess and respond to the impacts of deployment on: grid systems balancing; grid connectivity; and financial incentives.

Part 2 of the strategy focuses on delivery, and sets out the Solar Trade Association's '10 Commitments' for solar farm developers which seeks to ensure that the impact of large scale solar farms on communities, visual impact and long-term land use are minimised. The 10 commitments are:

1.	<i>We will focus on non-agricultural land or land which is of lower agricultural quality</i>
2.	<i>We will be sensitive to nationally and locally protected landscapes and nature conservation areas, and we welcome opportunities to enhance the ecological value of the land.</i>
3.	<i>We will minimise visual impact where possible and maintain appropriate screening throughout the lifetime of the project managed through a Land Management and/or Ecology plan.</i>
4.	<i>We will engage with the community in advance of submitting a planning application.</i>
5.	<i>We will encourage land diversification by proposing continued agricultural use or incorporating biodiversity measures within our projects.</i>
6.	<i>We will do as much buying and employing locally as possible.</i>
7.	<i>We will act considerately during construction, and demonstrate 'solar stewardship' of the land for the lifetime of the project.</i>
8.	<i>We will seek the support of the local community and listen to their views and suggestions.</i>
9.	<i>We commit to using the solar farm as an educational opportunity, where appropriate.</i>
10.	<i>The end of the project life we will return the land to its former use.</i>

The above 10 commitments have been followed in the design stage of the project, and will continue to be adhered to in the construction, operation and decommissioning of the solar farm.

6.3 Local Planning Policy:

6.3.1 South Holland Local Plan 2006 –

Planning applications have to be determined in accordance with the provisions of the Local Planning Authority (LPA) development plan (unless other material considerations suggest otherwise). This application is consistent with the development plan with this section identifying the policies relevant to the proposed solar farm at Little Eau.

The South Holland Local Plan 2006⁴ was formally adopted in July 2006. A saving direction was issued by the Secretary of State in July 2009 in which a number of the policies within the local plan were saved. However, in the context of the proposal at Little Eau, many of the environmental policies, including those relating to renewable energy, protecting the natural environment and cultural heritage, have now expired. Of the remaining policies, those of most relevance are set out below identifying the overall strategy and general policies for the district.

- Policy SG1 – General Sustainable Development
- Policy SG4 – Development In The Countryside
- Policy SG13 – Pollution And Contamination
- Policy SG17 – Protection Of Residential Amenity
- Policy SG18 – Landscaping Of New Development
- Policy EC4 – Farm Diversification Projects

SOUTH HOLLAND LOCAL PLAN 2006		
PLANNING POLICY	PLANNING POLICY SUMMARY	HOW PROPOSAL ACCORDS
POLICY SG1 – GENERAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT	<i>‘Planning permission for development will be granted where the Council is satisfied that the proposal is consistent with the principles of sustainable development, and where the quality of life for residents is unimpaired or enhanced; reasonable measures have been taken to conserve energy and natural resources; and South Holland’s essential character and main environmental assets are not damaged’.</i>	Our proposal complies with Policy SG1 as evidence throughout the accompanying documents. Solar PV is key to creating a sustainable and mixed generation capacity for the UK, which is vital in tackling the need to reduce carbon emissions. Solar schemes are a model for sustainability that uses a blend of energy efficient measures. The completion of the impact assessments has shown that there is no evidence that the quality of life for residents will be impaired as a result of the development. Further there is no appropriate conclusion that can be drawn that indicates the essential character and the main environmental assets of SHDC will be damaged. Indeed

⁴ South Holland Local Plan - www.sholland.gov.uk/localplan/text/06_en_environment.htm#en1a

		the local ecology and bio-diversity will be a valuable enhancement to the area.
POLICY SG4 – DEVELOPMENT IN THE COUNTRYSIDE	<i>‘Planning permission will only be granted for development in the open countryside which is essential in the proposed location and cannot reasonably be accommodated within defined settlement limits. Development proposals that would result in an unacceptable impact upon the landscape character of an area, either individually or cumulatively, will only be permitted where; 1. The need for the development in that location outweighs its impact; 2. No other site or solution exists to accommodate the proposed development’.</i>	The current land use is for harvesting arable crops, this will change on the development of the solar farm to that of harvesting silage and seasonal grazing of sheep which is an important contribution to a valuable land management aid during the operational stage of the solar farm. There is therefore no change with the land staying in an agricultural land use, yet this efficient use of the land resource is slightly beneficial. The proposal supports ongoing farm diversification and contributes to a strong sustainable rural economy. The proposed development is moderately beneficial. The proposal makes and provides a significant contribution to the reduction of greenhouse gases, adding to the UK’s efforts to meet the UK Government’s climate change objectives. The proposal will make an important moderately beneficial contribution. The development will provide an important opportunity to support and strengthen the rural economy and farm diversification and is therefore seen as moderately beneficial. The project also provides an opportunity to strengthen and sustain an agricultural business within the local community that provides an important and well-established local amenity and should therefore be seen as slightly beneficial. The proposal also provides for the enhancement of the bio-diversity and species rich habitat creation that will increase the importance of the ecology and this is seen as moderately beneficial. There is no irreversible loss of agricultural land and this is therefore seen as neutral.
POLICY SG13 –		The solar farm will not cause

POLLUTION AND CONTAMINATION	<i>‘Planning permission will only be permitted for development proposals which; 1. Do not cause unacceptable levels of pollution of the surrounding area by noise, light, toxic or offensive odour, and airborne pollutants or by the release of waste products; 2. Provide, as necessary, appropriate treatment of land to clean up pollution and contamination’.</i>	unacceptable levels of pollution. Solar panels are designed to absorb, not reflect, irradiation. They are therefore responsible for only limited levels of either ‘glint’ or ‘glare’. Glint may be produced as a direct reflection of the sun onto the surface of the PV solar panel, but will be substantially reduced by the anti-reflective coating that the modules incorporate to maximise the light capture of the solar cells. Glare is a continuous source of brightness, relative to diffused lighting. This is not a direct reflection of the sun, but rather a reflection of the bright sky around the sun. Glare is significantly less intense than glint. Solar arrays will be installed using screw piled supported systems. They therefore cause no adverse impact on the ground and no contamination. Solar cells are inert solid state devices which convert light into electricity. The systems therefore produce virtually no noise and no emissions. There are no moving parts. The panels do not give rise to any emissions which will impact on air quality.
POLICY SG17 – PROTECTION OF RESIDENTIAL AMENITY	<i>‘Planning permission will be granted for development which would not cause material harm to residential amenity. In considering proposals the following criteria will be taken into account; 1. The extent of any overlooking or loss of privacy. 2. The extent of any overbearing or overshadowing effect. 3. Potential noise nuisance including that associated with vehicular activity. 4. The levels of smell, emissions and pollutants’.</i>	The proposed development would not cause material harm to any residential amenity. There will be no loss of privacy. The proposal will not cause an overbearing or overshadowing effect. Ground mounted solar PV modules, transformers and substation are inert solid state devices which work together to convert light into electricity. BERL have included in the planning and designing of the project, the evaluation of where to place the equipment and equipment selection by exploring options to minimise noise impacts to

		the surrounding area even more. There are no smell, emissions and / or pollutants associated with solar PV farm.
POLICY SG18 – LANDSCAPING OF NEW DEVELOPMENT	<i>‘Proposals for new development should, where appropriate, incorporate landscaping proposals as an integral part of their design and layout and a landscaping strategy will be required to support all major development proposals. Particular attention will be paid to; the protection of any existing trees and hedgerows, and any other attractive landscape features. The provision of strategic tree planting of indigenous species to improve the setting of development within the wider landscape. The maintenance and establishment of wildlife habitats and corridors’.</i>	Solar farms do not create adverse environmental impacts, only the physical and visual impacts of solar systems, mostly the solar array, will affect the landscape of the site. However our proposed designs minimise such impacts by; LIMITING THE HEIGHT OF THE SOLAR ARRAYS: The highest part of the solar panel will be less than 2400mm above ground level, often no higher than surrounding hedgerows. ROWS OF ARRAYS CAN BE ARRANGED TO FOLLOW LOCAL TOPOGRAPHY: The arrangement of discrete array blocks at staggered intervals and with spacing in between breaks up any potential visual monotony and avoids undue wind concentration or turbulence. VALUABLE ADDITIONAL HABITAT: The development provides valuable additional habitat through the proposed soft landscaping. PROVISION OF HIBERNACULA: This will provide habitat for invertebrate. PROVISION OF BAT BOXES AND BIRD NESTING HABITAT: This will result in a significant increase in the bio-diversity value of the area.
POLICY EC4 – FARM DIVERSIFICATION PROJECTS	<i>‘Proposals for farm diversification projects will be permitted provided that all of the following criteria are met: The proposed activity is compatible with agricultural operations on the farm and would not prejudice the</i>	The approach taken by the applicant indicates that the proposals offer opportunities for integrating the solar farm activity with ongoing commercial agricultural enterprise on the land, ensuring the use of the land is both beneficial in terms of supporting the

	<i>efficient functioning of surrounding land uses.</i> <i>‘Existing or redundant rural buildings are utilised wherever it is practicable to do so. Where a proposal involves utilising existing buildings which are of architectural or historic merit, the design, materials and detailing of any alterations or additions must be sympathetic to the character and appearance of the building. It does not result in excessive expansion and encroachment of building development into the open countryside. It does not result in an unacceptable traffic impact on roads servicing the site. The development would not result in an adverse impact on neighbouring residential properties or the local landscape and environment’.</i>	existing ongoing agricultural business and also continuing to support the wider agricultural community. The approach in the design and layout of the project has been directed throughout to ensure that the scheme does not create an unacceptable impact to either the use of the road network or on the surrounding properties. Policy EC4 outlines 6 key points that new developments will be judged against which the proposed development meets comfortably. The development will allow agricultural activities to continue on the land in a variety of differing forms and the land will be retained in agricultural use. Traffic increases will only be a concern during the construction period as there is minimal traffic associated with the maintenance of the site. During construction there will be a traffic plan and marshalling system in operation to mitigate any issues that may arise.
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6.3.2 Summary of Policy Analysis -

Solar PV is acknowledged to be one of the most technologically mature, viable and deliverable forms of renewable generation. This is recognised through the NPPF, as this has a general presumption in favour of sustainable and renewable energy development wherever it can be reasonably located i.e. when all local environments, economic and social effects have been taken into consideration.

This proposed solar farm development has taken all relevant policy into consideration and is considered to be compliant with national and local planning policies along with other material considerations detailed within this planning statement.

The development will sit within the existing farm land boundaries. The site will also continue to be utilized in its current use once construction has been completed.

The development of this site will provide a significant contribution towards renewable energy targets, not only locally but for the UK as a whole.

It has been designed to fit within the local context and to create minimum impact whilst being sensitive to the wider issues around environment and climate change.

Accordingly, there are no overriding policy reasons to refuse this application.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSIONS

The proposed solar farm installation at Little Eau will generate approximately 5 MWp and will generate electricity to supply approximately 939 homes in the UK as well as help reduce approximately 2,714 tonnes of the UK's CO₂ emissions per year tonnes of the UK's CO₂ emissions per year.

This site is ideal for a solar PV installation due to several factors;

- its size,
- lack of overshadowing,
- proximity to a substation and;
- that it is south facing.

The proposals set out mitigation, where possible, for any impacts that arise from the solar farm installation, although what is important to recognise is that any impacts are **temporary only** in nature. After a 25 year operational phase, the solar farm will be decommissioned and the land will be returned to its current use.

This proposal, which seeks to meet national and local energy need, is essential in contributing to a reduction in the UK's carbon emissions. As such, it is therefore requested that planning permission is granted, subject to reasonable conditions.