

Proposed Solar Photovoltaic Park at the Former RAF Desborough Airfield and Associated Electrical Connection

Environmental Statement

Volume 2: Appendices

On behalf of **Northfield UK Solar**

Project Ref: 31549 | Rev: AA | Date: April 2015



Document Control Sheet

Project Name: Proposed Solar Photovoltaic Park at the Former RAF Desborough Airfield and Associated Electrical Connection

Project Ref: 31549

Report Title: Environmental Statement, Volume 1: Main Report

Date: April 2015

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For and on behalf of Peter Brett Associates LLP				

Revision	Date	Description	Prepared	Reviewed	Approved
00	02/04/15	Planning Application	SB	SB	DS

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Appendices

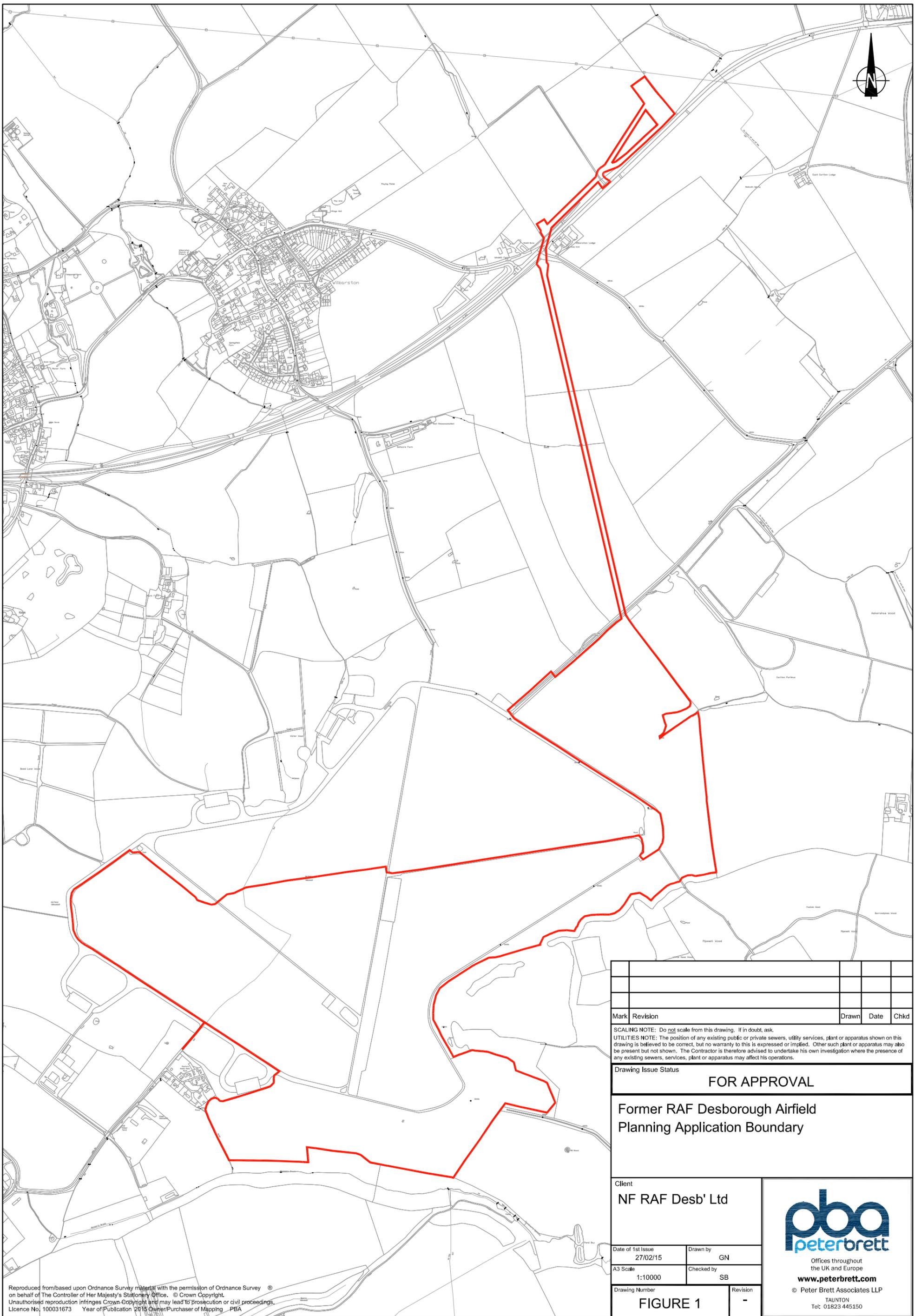
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Appendix A.1 Site Location Plan



Mark	Revision	Drawn	Date	Chkd

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Drawing Issue Status **FOR APPROVAL**

**Former RAF Desborough Airfield
 Planning Application Boundary**

Client
NF RAF Desb' Ltd

Date of 1st Issue 27/02/15	Drawn by GN
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Appendix A.2 Agricultural Land Classification

NF RAF Desb' Limited

Land at RAF Desborough,
Northamptonshire

**Agricultural Land Classification
and
Soil Resources**



May 2014

Reading Agricultural Consultants Ltd
Beechwood Court, Long Toll, Woodcote, RG8 0RR
www.readingagricultural.co.uk

1. Introduction

1.1 Instruction

- 1.1.1 Reading Agricultural Consultants Ltd (RAC) is instructed by NF RAF Desb' Ltd to investigate the agricultural land classification (ALC) and soil resources of land at RAF Desborough, Northamptonshire.

2. Site and Climatic Characteristics

2.1 General Features, Land Form and Drainage

- 2.1.1 The site is located at a disused RAF base to the north-east of Desborough, Northamptonshire. The base was decommissioned in 1953 and the land brought into agricultural production.
- 2.1.2 The site extends to around 130 hectares (ha) and is bounded on all sides by other agricultural land. Pockets of woodland are also present in the vicinity of the site, and to the south-west are the Pasture Mobile Home Park and a car scrap yard.
- 2.1.3 Topography at the site comprises a very shallow slope downward to the east, falling from around 140m to 135m above Ordnance Datum (AOD).

2.2 Climatic Conditions

- 2.2.1 Agro-climatic data for the site has been interpolated from the Meteorological Office's standard 5km grid point data set at a representative altitude of 140m. The data are given in Table 1. The site is cool and moderately dry with moderate crop moisture deficits. The number of Field Capacity Days is smaller than is typical for lowland England and is considered to be favourable for providing opportunities for agricultural field work.

Table 1: Local climatic factors

Average Annual Rainfall	643mm
Accumulated Temperature >0°C	1312 day°
Field Capacity Days	137 days
Average Moisture Deficit, wheat	100mm
Average Moisture Deficit, potatoes	88mm

2.3 Soil Parent Material and Soil Type

2.3.1 The principal underlying geology is that of the Lower Lincolnshire Limestone Member, comprising limestones and commonly including sandy limestones or calcareous sandstones.

2.3.2 Forming an arc around the south-west of the site is mudstone and siltstone of the Whitby Mudstone Formation, in which limestone nodules can be very common.

2.3.3 Both bedrock units are overlain by unsorted or poorly sorted deposits of glacial till, principally chalky boulder clay, which forms the soil parent material.

2.3.1 The Soil Survey of England and Wales soil association map (1:250,000 scale) shows the Hanslope association at this site. Hanslope soils typically develop in chalky till and are characterised by clayey profiles with poorly permeable subsurface horizons. Irrespective of the poor permeability, Hanslope soils are seldom seriously waterlogged, often of Wetness Class (WC) III where undrained, or WC II with appropriate drainage treatment.

3. Agricultural Land Quality

3.1 Soil Survey Methods

3.1.1 A total of 76 soil profiles were examined using an Edelman (Dutch) auger at an observation density of approximately 1 per 2 hectares. An observation pit was also excavated with a spade to examine subsoil structures. The locations of observations are indicated on Figure RAC6215-1. At each observation point the following characteristics were assessed for each soil horizon up to a maximum of 120cm or any impenetrable layer:

- soil texture;
- significant stoniness;
- colour (including local gley and mottle colours);

- consistency;
- structural condition;
- free carbonate; and
- depth.

3.1.2 Four soil samples were submitted for laboratory determination of particle size distribution, pH, organic matter content and nutrient contents (P, K, Mg). Results are given in Appendix 1. Soil Wetness Class (WC) was inferred from the matrix colour, presence or absence of, and depth to, greyish and ochreous gley mottling and/or poorly permeable subsoil layers at least 15cm thick.

3.1.3 Soil droughtiness was investigated by the calculation of moisture balance equations (examples are given in Appendix 2). Crop-adjusted Available Profile Water (AP) is estimated from texture, stoniness and depth, and then compared to a calculated moisture deficit (MD) for the standard crops wheat and potatoes. The MD is a function of potential evapotranspiration and rainfall. Grading of the land can be affected if the AP is insufficient to balance the MD and droughtiness occurs. When a profile is found with significant stoniness, sufficient to prevent penetration of a hand auger, then it is assumed, for the purposes of calculating droughtiness, that similar levels of stoniness continues to the full 1.2 m depth considered.

3.2 Agricultural Land Classification and Site Limitations

3.2.1 Assessment of quality has been carried out according to the MAFF revised guidelines (1988¹). Soil profiles have been described according to Hodgson (1997²).

3.2.2 The main factor limiting land quality at RAF Desborough is soil wetness which limits all of the site to Subgrade 3b.

3.2.3 There are two distinct soil types present. The predominant soil type comprises deep clayey profiles. Topsoil is typically of dark brown or dark greyish brown (10YR3/3 or 10YR4/2), heavy clay loam or clay with an average thickness of around 28cm.

3.2.4 Topsoil has a well developed structure, with medium and fine subangular blocky peds. This structure results in ample pore space, promoting good drainage and crop root growth.

¹ **MAFF (1988)** *Agricultural Land Classification of England and Wales. Revised guidelines and criteria for grading the quality of agricultural land.* MAFF Publications.

² **Hodgson, J. M. (Ed.) (1997).** *Soil survey field handbook.* Soil Survey Technical Monograph No. 5, Silsoe.

- 3.2.5 Subsoil comprises brown or reddish brown (10YR5/3 or 2.5YR4/3) clay. The clay also displays ochreous mottles and is gleyed throughout. Across much of the site, upper and lower subsoil horizons are distinguishable by structure, with upper subsoil being permeable and rooted. The lower subsoil in these profiles and the subsoil in profiles in which there are no distinguishable upper and lower horizons, comprises poorly permeable clay with a weakly developed, coarse angular blocky structure. Drainage is impeded resulting in profiles of WC III where the poorly permeable clay layer is at depth, or WC IV where the clay is poorly permeable immediately below the topsoil.
- 3.2.6 In accordance with the ALC guidelines and under the climatic conditions of the site, soils of WC III or WC IV with clay or heavy clay loam topsoils are limited by wetness and workability to no better than Subgrade 3b.
- 3.2.7 The subordinate soil type at the site also comprises heavy clay loam or clay topsoils and clay subsoil as in the dominant soil type, but the profiles are shallow. Average total profile depth is 47cm, although this ranges from 25cm to 90cm.
- 3.2.8 Most of the profiles with restricted depth are found in the south of the site, although many are also found along the eastern edge. The clay subsoil in many of these profiles is also poorly permeable resulting in WC IV and a limitation to Subgrade 3b. Occasionally the subsoil is permeable and these profiles are of WC II, although with clay topsoil remain to be of Subgrade 3b due to wetness.
- 3.2.9 Isolated profiles of WC II with heavy clay loam topsoils were found and are of Subgrade 3a, but these have been incorporated into wider swathes of Subgrade 3b as there are no opportunities for farming such small areas according to the higher quality.
- 3.2.10 The distribution of ALC grades across the site are shown in Figure RAC6215-2 and are given below in Table 2.

Table 2: ALC Areas

Grade	Description	Area (ha)	Area (%. of agric. land)
3b	Moderate quality	114.2	100
	Total Agricultural	114.2	100
	Non-Agricultural	15.8	-

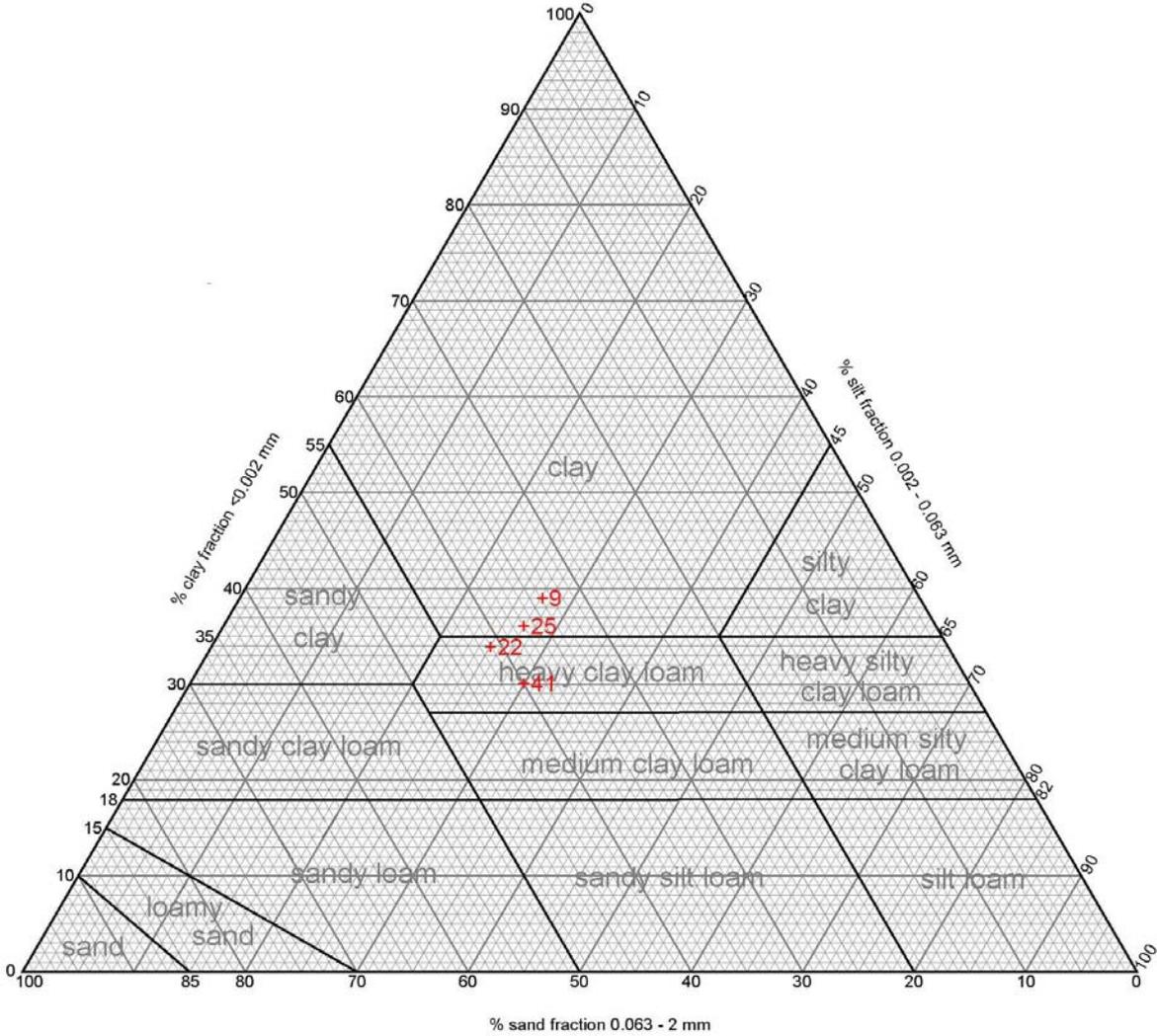
Appendix 1: Laboratory Data

Determinand		Site 9	Site 22	Site 41	Site 25	Units
Sand	2.00-0.063 mm	34	41	40	37	% w/w
Silt	0.063-0.002 mm	27	25	30	27	%w/w
Clay	<0.002 mm	39	34	30	36	% w/w
Organic Matter	WB	5.9	6.2	5.2	7.3	% w/w
Texture		Clay	Clay Loam	Clay Loam	Clay	% w/w

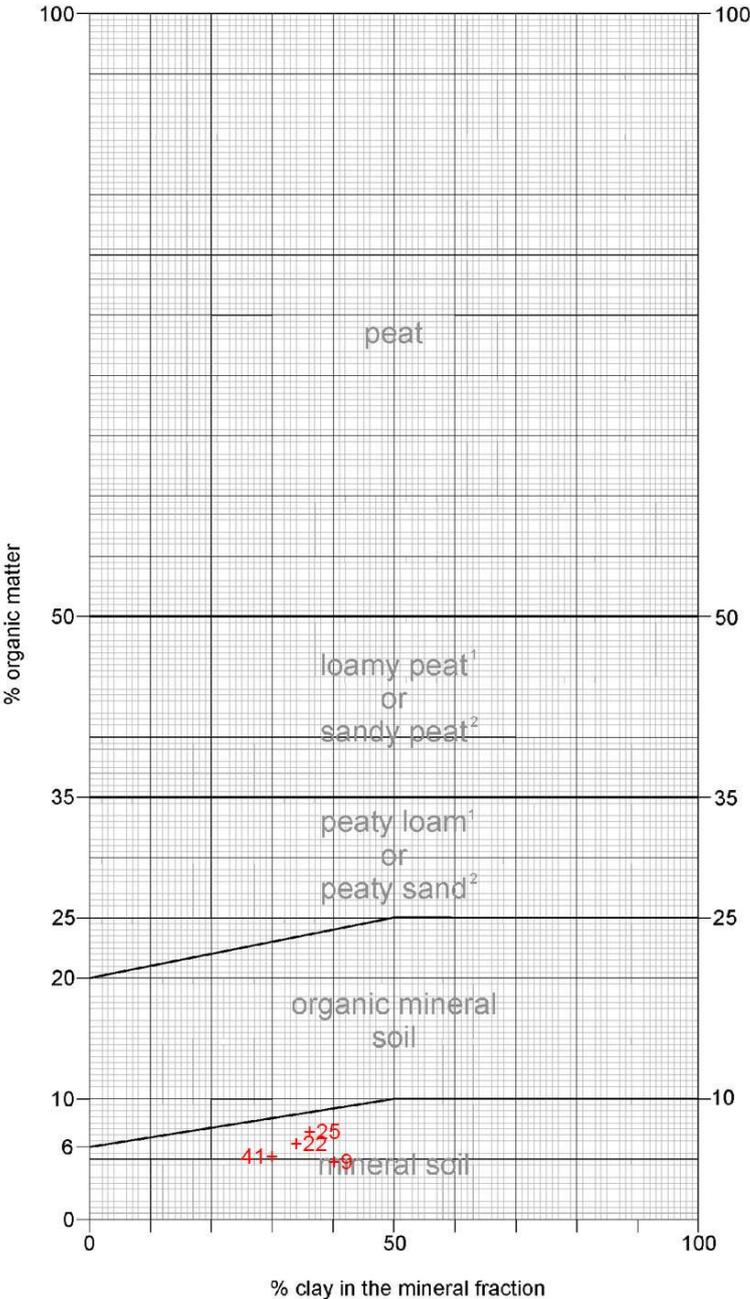
Determinand		Site 9	Site 22	Site 41	Site 25	Units
Soil pH		8.0	8.1	6.6	8.1	
Phosphorus (P)		18	16	24	17	mg/l (av)
Potassium (K)		136	146	197	226	mg/l (av)
Magnesium (Mg)		118	70	171	84	mg/l (av)

Determinand		Site 9	Site 22	Site 41	Site 25	Units
Phosphorus (P)		2	2	2	2	ADAS Index
Potassium (K)		2-	2-	2+	2+	ADAS Index
Magnesium (Mg)		3	2	3	2	ADAS Index

Soil Texture by Particle Size Distribution



Organic Matter Class



¹ Less than 50% sand in the mineral fraction

² 50% sand or more in the mineral fraction

Appendix 2: Example Soil Profile Summaries and Droughtiness Calculations

Droughtiness calculations are made according to the methodology given in Appendix 4 of the ALC guidelines, MAFF 1988.
The following grades represent the extent of the limitation posed by droughtiness only. **Other factors will also influence the final grading.**

MDw= 100 MDp= 88

Site No.	Depth (cm)		Texture	stones %	TAv or EAv (stones) %	TAv or EAv (soil) %	Wheat Calculation		Potato Calculation		
							AP (wheat) mm	TAv (stones) %	TAv (soil) %	AP (potatoes) mm	
1	0	25	HZCL	0	1	19	47.5	1	19	47.5	
	25	50	HCL	5	0.5	16	38.1	0.5	16	38.1	
	50	60	HCL	5	0.5	10	9.5	0.5	16	15.2	
	60	70	HCL	5	0.5	10	9.5	0.5	16	15.2	
	60	120	HCL	5	0.5	10	57.2				
							Total (mm) =	161.8	Total (mm) =	116.0	
							MBw=	61.8	MBp=	28.0	
							Grade =	1	Grade =	1	

Site No.	Depth (cm)		Texture	stones %	TAv or EAv (stones) %	TAv or EAv (soil) %	Wheat Calculation		Potato Calculation	
							AP (wheat) mm	TAv (stones) %	TAv (soil) %	AP (potatoes) mm
2	0	30	HCL	0	1	18	54.0	1	18	54.0
	30	50	C	5	0.5	13	24.8	0.5	13	24.8
	50	<u>70</u>	C	5	0.5	7	13.4	0.5	13	24.8
							Total (mm) =	92.1	Total (mm) =	103.5

6215 RAF Desborough, Northamptonshire

MBw= -7.9 MBp= 15.5
Grade = 3a Grade = 1

Wheat Calculation Potato Calculation

Site No.	Depth (cm)		Texture	stones %	TAv or EAv (stones) %	TAv or EAv (soil) %	AP (wheat) mm	TAv (stones) %	TAv (soil) %	AP (potatoes) mm
3	0	25	C	0	1	17	42.5	1	17	42.5
	25	50	C	5	7	13	31.8	7	13	31.8
	50	70	C	5	7	7	14.0	7	13	25.4
	70	120	C	5	7	7	35.0			
Total (mm) =							123.3	Total (mm) =		99.7
MBw=							23.3	MBp=		11.7
Grade =							2	Grade =		1

Wheat Calculation Potato Calculation

Site No.	Depth (cm)		Texture	stones %	TAv or EAv (stones) %	TAv or EAv (soil) %	AP (wheat) mm	TAv (stones) %	TAv (soil) %	AP (potatoes) mm
4	0	25	C	0	1	17	42.5	1	17	42.5
	25	50	C	5	7	13	31.8	7	13	31.8
	50	70	C	5	7	7	14.0	7	13	25.4
	70	120	C	5	7	7	35.0			
Total (mm) =							123.3	Total (mm) =		99.7
MBw=							23.3	MBp=		11.7

6215 RAF Desborough, Northamptonshire

				Grade = 2			Grade = 1				
				Wheat Calculation			Potato Calculation				
Site No.	Depth (cm)		Texture	stones %	TAv or EAv (stones) %	TAv or EAv (soil) %	AP (wheat) mm	TAv (stones) %	TAv (soil) %	AP (potatoes) mm	
9	0	20	C	10	1	17	30.8	1	17	30.8	
	30	50	C	5	7	13	25.4	7	13	25.4	
	50	70	C	5	7	7	14.0	7	13	25.4	
	70	120	C	5	7	7	35.0				
							Total (mm) =	105.2	Total (mm) =	81.6	
							MBw=	5.2	MBp=	-6.4	
							Grade =	2	Grade =	2	

				Wheat Calculation			Potato Calculation				
Site No.	Depth (cm)		Texture	stones %	TAv or EAv (stones) %	TAv or EAv (soil) %	AP (wheat) mm	TAv (stones) %	TAv (soil) %	AP (potatoes) mm	
10	0	25	HCL	10	1	18	40.8	1	18	40.8	
	25	50	C	5	0.5	13	30.9	7	13	31.8	
	50	70	C	5	0.5	7	13.4	7	13	25.4	
	70	120	C	5	0.5	7	33.4				
							Total (mm) =	118.4	Total (mm) =	97.9	
							MBw=	18.4	MBp=	9.9	
							Grade =	2	Grade =	2	

6215 RAF Desborough, Northamptonshire

				Wheat Calculation				Potato Calculation		
Site No.	Depth (cm)		Texture	stones %	TAv or EAv (stones) %	TAv or EAv (soil) %	AP (wheat) mm	TAv (stones) %	TAv (soil) %	AP (potatoes) mm
11	0	25	HCL	10	1	18	40.8	1	18	40.8
	25	<u>40</u>	C	5	7	16	23.3	7	16	23.3
							Total (mm) =	64.1	Total (mm) =	64.1
							MBw=	-35.9	MBp=	-23.9
							Grade =	3b	Grade =	3a
				Wheat Calculation				Potato Calculation		
Site No.	Depth (cm)		Texture	stones %	TAv or EAv (stones) %	TAv or EAv (soil) %	AP (wheat) mm	TAv (stones) %	TAv (soil) %	AP (potatoes) mm
17	0	30	HCL	5	1	17	48.6	1	17	48.6
	30	50	C	5	7	16	31.1	7	16	31.1
	50	70	C	5	7	7	14.0	7	13	25.4
	70	120	C	5	7	7	35.0			
							Total (mm) =	128.7	Total (mm) =	105.1
							MBw=	28.7	MBp=	17.1
							Grade =	2	Grade =	1
				Wheat Calculation				Potato Calculation		
Site No.	Depth (cm)		Texture	stones %	TAv or EAv (stones) %	TAv or EAv (soil) %	AP (wheat) mm	TAv (stones) %	TAv (soil) %	AP (potatoes) mm
18	0	30	C	5	1	17	48.6	1	17	48.6

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30	50	C	5	7	13	25.4	7	7	14.0
50	70	C	5	7	7	14.0	7	7	14.0
70	120	C	5	7	7	35.0			

Total (mm) =	123.0	Total (mm) =	76.6
MBw=	23.0	MBp=	-11.4
Grade =	2	Grade =	3a

Wheat Calculation

Potato Calculation

Site No.	Depth (cm)	Texture	stones %	TAv or EAv (stones) %	TAv or EAv (soil) %	AP (wheat) mm	TAv (stones) %	TAv (soil) %	AP (potatoes) mm	
19	0	30	C	5	1	17	48.6	1	17	48.6
	30	<u>45</u>	C	5	7	16	23.3	7	16	23.3
						Total (mm) =	71.9	Total (mm) =	71.9	
						MBw=	-28.1	MBp=	-16.1	
						Grade =	3b	Grade =	3a	

Wheat Calculation

Potato Calculation

Site No.	Depth (cm)	Texture	stones %	TAv or EAv (stones) %	TAv or EAv (soil) %	AP (wheat) mm	TAv (stones) %	TAv (soil) %	AP (potatoes) mm	
22	0	30	HCL	0	1	18	54.0	1	18	54.0
	30	50	C	5	7	13	25.4	7	13	25.4
	50	70	C	5	7	7	14.0	7	13	25.4
	70	120	C	5	7	7	35.0			

6215 RAF Desborough, Northamptonshire

Total (mm) =	128.4	Total (mm) =	104.8
MBw=	28.4	MBp=	16.8
Grade =	2	Grade =	1

Wheat Calculation

Potato Calculation

Site No.	Depth (cm)		Texture	stones %	TAv or EAv (stones) %	TAv or EAv (soil) %	AP (wheat) mm	TAv (stones) %	TAv (soil) %	AP (potatoes) mm
23	0	20	C	0	1	17	34.0	1	17	34.0
	20	50	C	5	7	13	38.1	7	13	38.1
	50	70	C	5	7	7	14.0	7	13	25.4
	70	120	C	5	7	7	35.0			

Total (mm) =	121.1	Total (mm) =	97.5
MBw=	21.1	MBp=	9.5
Grade =	2	Grade =	2

Wheat Calculation

Potato Calculation

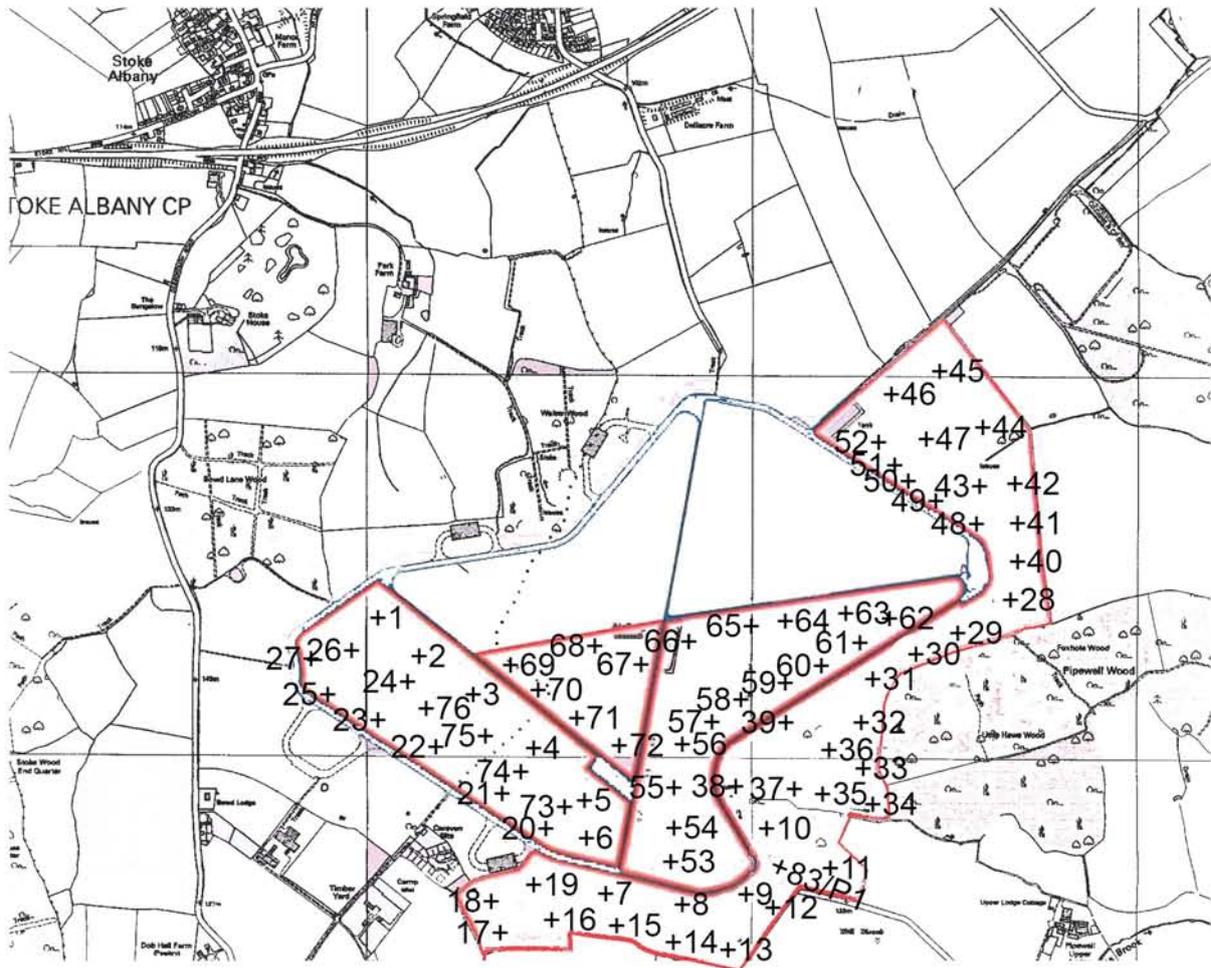
Site No.	Depth (cm)		Texture	stones %	TAv or EAv (stones) %	TAv or EAv (soil) %	AP (wheat) mm	TAv (stones) %	TAv (soil) %	AP (potatoes) mm
40	0	<u>30</u>	HCL	0	1	18	54.0	1	18	54.0

Total (mm) =	54.0	Total (mm) =	54.0
MBw=	-46.0	MBp=	-34.0
Grade =	3b	Grade =	3b

6215 RAF Desborough, Northamptonshire

				Wheat Calculation				Potato Calculation		
Site No.	Depth (cm)		Texture	stones %	TAv or EAv (stones) %	TAv or EAv (soil) %	AP (wheat) mm	TAv (stones) %	TAv (soil) %	AP (potatoes) mm
41	0	25	HCL	0	1	18	45.0	1	18	45.0
	25	<u>50</u>	C	5	7	13	31.8	7	13	31.8
							Total (mm) =		Total (mm) =	
							MBw=	-23.3	MBp=	-11.3
							Grade =	3b	Grade =	3a

				Wheat Calculation				Potato Calculation		
Site No.	Depth (cm)		Texture	stones %	TAv or EAv (stones) %	TAv or EAv (soil) %	AP (wheat) mm	TAv (stones) %	TAv (soil) %	AP (potatoes) mm
42	0	30	HCL	0	1	18	54.0	1	18	54.0
	30	<u>50</u>	C	5	7	16	31.1	7	16	31.1
							Total (mm) =		Total (mm) =	
							MBw=	-14.9	MBp=	-2.9
							Grade =	3a	Grade =	2



- Survey Area
- .1 Auger Observation
- .P1 Pit Observation

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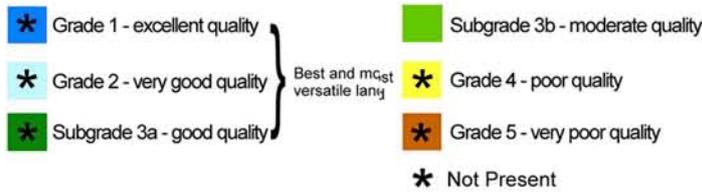
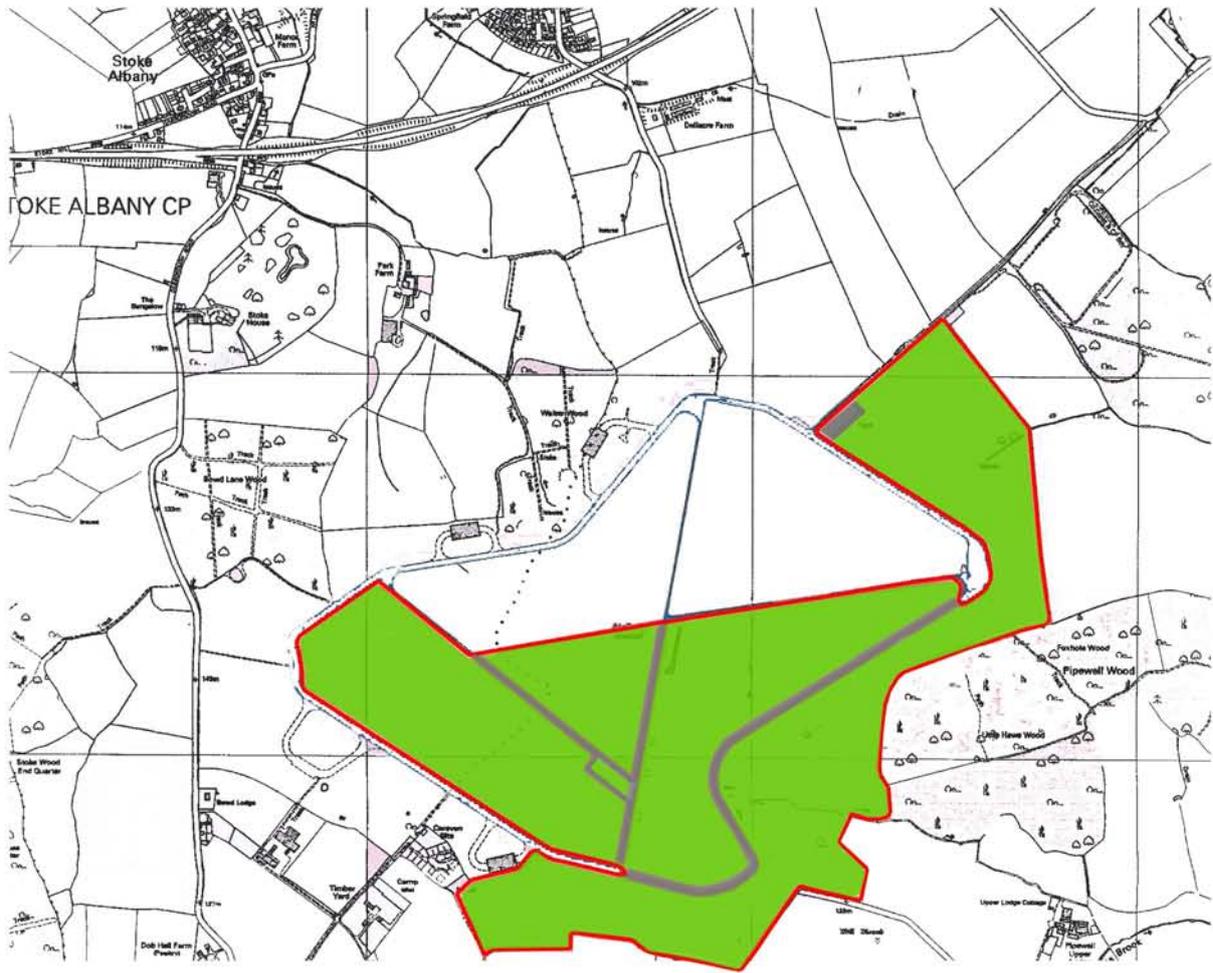
Figure RAC6215-1:Observations

Site: RAF Desborough

Client: NF RAF Desb' Limited



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Figure RAC6215-2: Agricultural Land Classification

Site: RAF Desborough

Client: NF RAF Desb' Limited



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Appendix A.3 EIA Screening Opinion Request



Your ref:

Our ref: 31549/BRI/SB/ES/JB

3 October 2014

Planning Department
Kettering Borough Council
Municipal Offices
Bowling Green Road
Kettering
NN15 7QX

FAO: Rebecca Collins

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Dear Rebecca

RE: PROPOSED 49MW SOLAR PHOTOVOLTAIC FARM AND ANCILLARY CONTROL AND TRANSFORMER BUILDING AT FORMER RAF DESBOROUGH AIRFIELD – REQUEST FOR A SCREENING OPINION UNDER REGULATION 5 OF THE TOWN & COUNTRY PLANNING (ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT) REGULATIONS 2011

NF RAF Desb' Ltd intends to submit a full planning application for a solar photovoltaic (PV) farm up to 49 megawatts at the former RAF Desborough airfield.

The design of the proposed development has been informed by a range of technical studies to ensure that the environmental effects of the development are minimised.

This Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening Opinion Request has been prepared to determine whether the proposed development constitutes EIA development in the context of the Town and Country Planning (EIA Regulations) 2011, the "TCP EIA Regulations". In accordance with the TCP EIA Regulations this request provides:

- a) a plan sufficient to identify the proposed development site (attached);
- b) a brief description of the nature and purpose of the proposed development and of its possible effects on the environment; and
- c) such other information or representations as the person making the request may wish to provide or make.

The Site of the Proposed Development

An indicative site location plan is enclosed. This also highlights the potential electrical connection and site access route.

The proposed site is located at the former RAF Desborough airfield, which is 2km to the north of Desborough and 4km to the west of Corby at Grid reference 481920 286320. The settlements of Wilbarston and Stoke Albany lie 1.2 km to the north and 1.5km to the north-northwest respectively.

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Roger Tym & Partners is part of Peter Brett Associates LLP.

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The site comprises approximately 112.8 hectares of grade 3b agricultural land, mature hedgerows and hard standing relating to the former airfield use, as shown on the enclosed indicative site location plan.

The airfield, associated buildings and areas of hard standing were used by the Ministry of Defence during World War Two for the operational training of Wellington bomber crews between 1943 and 1945. After the end of the war, the airfield remained in operational use in a civilian capacity until it was purchased by the Rockingham Estate in the 1960s, at which time the airfield was closed. This land falls under the National Planning Policy Guidance definition of previously developed land i.e. *'land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land and any associated fixed surface infrastructure'*.

The site is bounded by gently undulating agricultural land, subject to a number of plantations or hedgerows, including ancient woodland to the northeast and southwest. The ancient woodlands, which are designated SSSIs (Bowd Wood and Pipewell Wood), and agricultural land bordering the site are owned and managed by the Rockingham Estate and its tenants.

Original hangar buildings associated with the airfield are still in use by skid control and fencing businesses.

Proposed Development

The proposal is to install a free standing solar PV array of up to, but not exceeding, 49MW at the Former RAF Desborough airfield and its associated electrical connection.

Solar Array

The array will comprise rows of solar panels, inverters, transformers, and a control building. The fixed solar panels will be mounted on metal frames and positioned at least 0.5 metres above ground level. The metal frames are likely to be set into the ground up to a depth of approximately 1.5 metres. To achieve optimum solar gain the panels will be laid out in east-west rows facing south, with a space of around 5 to 7 metres between each row to avoid shading. Each individual panel will be non-reflective and angled at approximately 20-30 degrees to the horizontal with a maximum overall height of approximately 3 metres. The inverters are likely to be lifted into place, while the control building is likely to be constructed on site. A security fence is to be erected around the perimeter of the site with associated landscaping, whilst CCTV will also be included at intervals along the fencing and on individual security poles.

The proposed layout of the array has been informed by seeking to minimise or eliminate views from settlements such as Wilbarston and Stoke Albany, and responding to the Rockingham Estate's experience of crop productivity in different areas of the site. An agricultural land survey indicates that the soil is Grade 3b, which confirmed the Estate's experience that the site is less productive than the wider estate. Furthermore a number of changes to the layout have already been made to accommodate the outcomes of ecological surveys that have been completed on site and to ensure a buffer between the development and the SSSI.

Although a detailed landscape and visual impact assessment has yet to be carried out, it is considered that the topography of the site and its surrounds, intervening woodland, as well as the

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mature hedgerows that criss-cross the site, would effectively screen the solar PV array from Wilbarston and Stoke Albany, to the north, and Desborough to the south.

Once operational, the development will use a renewable source to create electricity, which will be supplied to domestic and commercial consumers via a connection to the local electricity distribution network operated by Western Power Distribution.

The site would be accessed via an established access road. This road is already in use by HGVs and large agricultural vehicles associated with existing uses on the former airfield perimeter.

The routes of the existing public footpaths/bridleways on site would not be altered by the proposal. Retaining the footpath through the array will preserve access to the woodland to the southeast.

Once operational it is proposed that the land between the panels will be grazed by sheep which is a common and established practice in UK solar parks.

Electrical connection

The existing distribution network, capable of supporting the scale of generation achievable at RAF Desborough, lies approximately 1.8km north-northeast of the site control building and substation location.

For reasons set out in its pre-application advice request, the applicant has advised that it is seeking to use an overhead line to connect the solar park to the existing electricity network. With respect to the form of the overhead line the applicant has confirmed that it will not use steel lattice pylons to carry the overhead line. Only wood pole supports to the arms and conductors which carry the lines are proposed. Wood pole supports are commonly used in rural areas for lower voltages and may be used for higher voltages where the carrying capacity does not require the number of circuits that result in steel lattice pylons. At this stage it is assumed that double wood pole supports will be required. However, the applicant will seek to agree with Western Power Distribution whether a single wood pole design can be used along straight sections of the route. This decision will be affected by strict safety and electrical considerations.

The route is likely to be approximately 1.8km in length. Poles will average 15m in height to the line support arms. The typical span between poles will be affected by local topography and the heights of the poles themselves, but is likely to be around 100-120m. Therefore, subject to further consideration of route alignment, topography and detailed engineering design, the connection would be expected to comprise approximately 15-18 twin or single wood poles.

A small switchgear compound is likely to be required adjacent to the existing 132kV steel lattice pylon to which the electrical connection will be made.

Applications for new overhead lines are not made to the Local Planning Authority (LPA), but are made to the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) for overhead lines shorter than 2km and to the Planning Inspectorate (National Infrastructure Directorate) for connections 2km or more in length. It is therefore the applicant's expectation that in this case the application will be made to DECC under Section 37 of the Electricity Act, which also allows for deemed planning to be granted under the Town and Country Planning Act. Furthermore ancillary consents can also be included under Section 37 and it is expected that approval for the aforementioned compound at the point of connection would be sought via this route.



Information on the electrical connection is therefore provided by way of context and the electrical connection does not form part of the development for which an EIA Screening Opinion is sought from KBC under The TCP EIA Regulations. However the Guidance on The Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulations 2000 advise that *'It is important to note that the developer himself can approach the LPA and obtain its views on the need for EIA before he asks the Secretary of State for an opinion.'* On this basis we are also seeking a formal position from the Council, to subsequently inform DECC, as to whether the Council considers that the electrical connection would constitute EIA development.

Characteristics of Potential Effects

The proposed development, which comprises both the solar park and electrical connection, may give rise to environmental effects, which have received, and continue to receive, careful consideration through the design process to ensure that significant environmental effects are avoided or mitigated. The following section sets out the environmental effects that are anticipated to occur during construction and operation of the proposed development, how these are being assessed and managed through the design process and the technical reports that we propose to submit with the planning application.

Topic	Potential Effects	Proposed Approach
Landscape & Visual	Potential effect on the local landscape character and local views.	<p>The proposed solar development has been designed to respond to the local context to avoid significant effects on local views, while the panel design seeks to minimise glare.</p> <p>The visual and landscape context has been considered in an initial assessment that confirmed that the proposed alignment of the electrical connection is expected to be satisfactory.</p> <p>A Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisal will be undertaken by PBA in support of both the solar and electrical connection applications. The appraisal will be carried out by Chartered Members of the Landscape Institute (CMLI), and they follow the principles set out in the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition', (GLVIA3).</p> <p>As part of our appraisal work, we will identify landscape and visual opportunities and constraints, leading to a sustainable landscape strategy for the site and acceptable routing of the electrical connection.</p> <p>The Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisal will be submitted with each relevant planning application.</p>
Ecology	Loss of habitats as a result of the proposed development.	An ecological assessment has already been undertaken by FPCR Environment and Design Ltd. This has been based on the following survey work:



Topic	Potential Effects	Proposed Approach
	<p>Effect on protected/notable species at the site and in the local area.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Desk study - MAGIC website, Northamptonshire Badger Group, Northamptonshire Bat Group, County Bird Recorder & Northamptonshire Biodiversity Records Centre ▪ Extended Phase-1 Survey – March & September 2014; survey according to the Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey - a Technique for Environmental Audit (Joint Nature Conservation Committee 2010). & Guidelines for Baseline Ecological Assessment (Institute of Environmental Assessment 1995). ▪ Badger Survey – March 2014; survey according to Harris S et al (1989) Surveying Badgers ▪ Bat Activity Surveys – August (summer) 2014; transect survey and static monitoring in accordance with Bat Surveys – Good Practice Guidance, 2nd Edition (Bat Conservation Trust 2012) ▪ Breeding Bird Surveys – April, May & June 2014; surveys based upon the methods described by Bird Census Techniques, 2nd Edition (Bibby et al 2000). ▪ Great Crested Newt (GCN) Survey – April – June 2014; survey according to the Great Crested Newt Mitigation Guidelines (English Nature 2001) on the solar site. <p>The proposed solar development has been designed around the findings of the surveys to ensure no significant ecological effects. The proposals will not directly affect the adjacent SSSIs. Design has ensured that the solar development will avoid the loss of any woodland, matures trees or hedgerows that may be considered supporting habitat of the SSSI. Measures will also be put in place to ensure that the existing greenfield rates and characteristics of run-off are maintained to support the hydrological conditions of the wet ash-maple woodland. Therefore, it is also considered unlikely that the solar proposals will result in any significant indirect impacts to the interest features of the adjacent SSSIs.</p> <p>Best practice measures, including the adoption of BS5837 Trees in relation to construction, will be put in place to ensure the adequate protection of all retained habitats during construction.</p>



Topic	Potential Effects	Proposed Approach
		<p>Mitigation will be put in place to ensure the protection of badgers, including precautionary working methods, the avoidance of sensitive periods and, where necessary, the adoption of Natural England licences.</p> <p>Any necessary clearance of suitable nesting habitat will be avoided during bird breeding season (March – August, inclusive). Where removal is required in this period it will be preceded by nesting checks and, where necessary, the use of appropriate stand-off zones to avoid the disturbance of nests.</p> <p>A strategy will be put in place to ensure that the development maintains and enhances the Favourable Conservation Status of GCN. No GCN breeding ponds will be lost as a result of the development, with translocation being used from affected habitats as required and under a Natural England GCN European Protected Species Licence.</p>
<p>Flood Risk & Drainage</p>	<p>Solar PV arrays typically do not have a permanent manned presence and are classified as low vulnerability with regard to flooding; however the site layout should be developed with regard to local flood issues.</p> <p>Flood risk is only likely to be relevant to the electrical connection with respect to any substation, inverter or control building located on the solar site or at the point of connection. However, as the whole site is located outside Flood Zone 2 and 3 areas, flood risk should not arise as a concern at the site.</p> <p>A large proportion of the site, being the space between panels, will remain unaltered and hence the drainage regime will be unaffected.</p>	<p>Due to the plan area of the site, a full Flood Risk Assessment will be required to demonstrate the proposals are safe from flooding, and that flood risk is not increased downstream.</p> <p>PBA will issue information requests to relevant authorities (local council, county council, Environment Agency) to determine any flooding issues on or around the site and to agree parameters for the Flood Risk Assessment.</p> <p>Appropriate mitigation measures will be identified to address any residual flood risk issues to address flood risk at the site and to avoid increasing flood risk in the local area.</p> <p>A surface water drainage strategy, including sustainable drainage measures where appropriate, will be prepared to manage surface water at the site ensuring no increase in flood risk as a result of the development.</p> <p>The Flood Risk Assessment will be submitted with the planning application to document the flood risk at the site, how this has been mitigated through the design of the development and the surface water drainage strategy.</p>



Topic	Potential Effects	Proposed Approach
Transport	<p>The proposed development will generate traffic during construction, with only occasional maintenance during operation</p> <p>The site is accessible from the A427 via the existing single track road which is already used by HGVs and agricultural vehicles.</p>	<p>A Transport Statement will be prepared. This will focus on the traffic that will be generated during the construction phase of the solar farm and electrical connection and set out how it will be managed.</p> <p>The scope of the Transport Statement will be to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Describe the access arrangements that are proposed for the period of construction; ▪ Identify and provide a safe route for construction traffic to access and depart from the site; ▪ Identify the traffic management measures to control and minimise the effects of construction traffic on the surrounding highway network; ▪ Ensure safe operation of the site in respect of access and egress to and from the site; ▪ Manage the loading and unloading of construction materials on site; and ▪ Identify the likely level of vehicle generation to and from the site on a daily basis during the various construction stages.
Noise & Vibration	<p>Once installed the solar panels will operate silently. The only potential noise arising from the solar development will be associated with the inverters and sub-station. The level of noise will be low, furthermore, the location of the inverters and sub-station has been selected to ensure it is located away from sensitive receptors.</p>	<p>PBA will conduct a noise assessment should it be requested by the Council. Any assessment of noise from plant at the site would be assessed at relevant nearby noise sensitive receptors against British Standard 4142 noise standards.</p> <p>The methodology for any assessment would be agreed with the environmental health officer.</p> <p>The assessment will document the potential impacts on the existing conditions at local sensitive receptors arising from potential noise and vibration generated as a consequence of the construction and operation phases of the proposed solar development, including overhead line noise.</p> <p>Mitigation measures will be identified where appropriate.</p>
Archaeology and heritage	<p>There is the potential for development to affect archaeological remains that may be present at the solar site and at discrete overhead pole locations.</p>	<p>An Archaeological Desk Based Assessment (DBA) will be undertaken and submitted with the planning application. The DBA will be based on a review of available heritage records and a site walkover. The assessment will consider the archaeological potential of the site and the requirement for further evaluation and/or mitigation.</p>



Topic	Potential Effects	Proposed Approach
Agricultural land classification	Potential effect on good quality agricultural land	<p>Reading Agricultural Consultants Ltd has undertaken an agricultural land classification (ALC) and soil resources assessment of the solar site. This assessment was carried out in accordance with the MAFF Revised Guidance (1988) and comprised an appraisal of soil samples collected using an auger at an observation density of approximately 1 per hectare.</p> <p>The results show that the whole of the solar PV site is classified as Grade 3b (moderate quality). Furthermore, the existing soil structure will not be impacted on by the rows of panels and the land will continue to be farmed for the grazing of sheep throughout the lifetime of the solar park.</p> <p>The ALC report will be submitted with the planning application.</p>
Air Quality	Unlike fossil fuels which create harmful air pollution and global warming, solar PV parks do not emit any greenhouse gases when producing electricity. Traffic generated by the proposed development is likely to be very limited	As no air pollution will result from the development once it is operational we consider that an Air Quality Assessment is not required in support of the planning application.
Socio-economics	The development will utilise an area of previously developed land for a renewable energy scheme that will contribute to the UK's energy requirements. There will also be benefits to the local economy during the construction phase related to the provision of accommodation, services and supplies for a temporary workforce. During the operation phase some jobs, related to maintenance, will be supported and the land will be available for sheep farming.	The socio-economic effects will largely be temporary and positive, although the schemes contribution towards the UK's energy targets will be very important. It is not considered that an assessment is required, although the effects will be highlighted in the Planning Statement accompanying the planning application.



Topic	Potential Effects	Proposed Approach
Ground conditions	The site is a former airfield comprising hard standing areas and agricultural land. The implementation of the solar development is unlikely to lead to significant contamination pathways being established and the development itself is not especially sensitive.	Given the nature of the site and proposed solar development the potential for significant issues in relation to ground conditions is considered to be limited and detailed assessment is not required.
Electric and Magnetic Fields (EMF)	Power frequency Electric and Magnetic Fields (EMFs) arise from generation, transmission, distribution and use of electricity and occur around overhead power lines and underground electric cables and around domestic, office or industrial equipment that uses electricity.	Compliance with the requirements of the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection recommendations will be evidenced in the application to DECC.

Requirement for Solar Park EIA

Schedule 1 of the TCP EIA Regulations sets out those developments for which an Environmental Impact Assessment will be mandatory. The proposed solar PV array does not fall into any development heading in this Schedule.

Schedule 2 to those Regulations relates to developments which may require an EIA depending on type of development (listed in Column 1 of Schedule 2) and thresholds/criteria that might apply (listed in Column 2 of Schedule 2). A solar PV array does not naturally fall under any of the Schedule 2 developments, but best practice is for the requirement for EIA to be screened against '3 *Energy Industry (a) – industrial installations for the production of electricity, steam and hot water (unless included in Schedule 1)*' where the threshold is for developments over 0.5 hectares in size.

Schedule 3 sets out the criteria to consider when determining whether an EIA would be required. The main criteria for assessment are as follows (and against which we review the proposed development):

- The characteristics of the proposed development – the proposed development utilises an established technology that does not lead to significant waste, pollution, noise etc;
- The environmental sensitivity of the site – the site is previously developed and is not especially environmentally sensitive; the development has also been set back from the SSSI and avoids the most sensitive areas of the wider estate in relation to visual effects and agricultural land; and
- The characteristics of the potential impacts – the impacts are not particularly hazardous and complex; are localised; are unlikely to be significant; and are being addressed through careful design. Furthermore, the proposed scheme falls under the 50MW threshold for which EIAs are



more likely to be required for Schedule 2 developments, as identified in the Planning Practice Guidance.

Our view is that the proposed solar PV array will be of no more than local importance and it would have limited impact on the local landscape. Due to intervening landscaping, the site will have little perceptible visual impact on the local area and the impacts on local settlements will be minimal due to distance, topography and existing woodland and mature hedgerow screening.

Although the land is adjacent to ancient woodland SSSIs, the development has been set back from the SSSIs to avoid any potential direct or indirect effects on these sites and the habitats and species that they contain. The ecology surveys have also established that the ecological value of the site is limited and key ecological features (such as the badger sett) are to be retained as part of the development.

The characteristics of potential impacts identified indicate that the extent of the impact should be contained to the local geographical area; the effects should not be significant and can be effectively mitigated.

The proposed development does not involve any unusual or complex process or potential effects, and there will be no direct emission to the air as a consequence of development. As such we consider that an EIA is not required.

In order to ensure that the Council is properly informed about the current environmental baseline of the site and that the environmental effects of the proposed development are fully considered and addressed, a suite of technical reports will be submitted with the solar park planning application. These will include:

- Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisal;
- Ecology Assessment;
- Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy;
- Archaeological Desk Based Assessment;
- Transport Statement;
- Agricultural Land Classification;
- Planning Statement;
- Statement of Community Involvement; and
- Design and Access Statement.

We therefore request the Council's EIA Screening Opinion with respect to the solar park. We also welcome your comments on the scope of the environmental reports that we propose to submit with the planning application.

Requirement for Electrical Connection EIA

Schedule 1 of The Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulations 2000 sets out those developments for which an Environmental Impact Assessment will be mandatory. The proposed electrical connection does not fall into any development heading in this Schedule.

The development does fall under Schedule 2 to those Regulations, which relates to developments which may require an EIA depending on whether the development *'is likely to have significant effects on the environment by virtue of factors such as its nature, size or location'*, against which we review the proposed development.



The recent (July 2014) DECC Guidance Note: *The Statutory Consents Regime For Overhead Power Lines In England And Wales Under Section 37 Of The Electricity Act 1989* states at 3.10 that ‘*In the opinion of the Secretary of State overhead lines are unlikely to require an environmental statement if their nominal voltage is less than 132 kV or if they are less than two kilometres in length. Proposals that exceed these parameters should apply to the Secretary of State for a screening opinion.*’

The proposed electrical connection falls within this opinion by virtue of being less than 2km in length. Furthermore, it is the applicant’s assumption that, in contemplating this opinion, the Secretary of State would have been considering the potential development of steel lattice pylon supports for lines at 132kV or above, but less than 2km in length. The applicant has confirmed that it will not utilise steel lattice pylons and will seek to use twin wooden pole supports of typically 15m in height to the line supports. Such supports are likely to have a limited landscape and visual impact in the rural and open landscape context to the north of RAF Desborough.

On the basis of the above we have considered the relevant factors under Regulation 3(3)(b), which we consider should primarily be focussed on potential visual and landscape impact:

- Nature of the proposed development – The development will likely comprise 13-18 twin pole supports of average 15m height to the arms supporting the overhead lines, and up to a maximum of 20m. Single and occasional twin wooden poles, typically of approximately 8m height, are very common in rural areas and this vicinity. The proposed supports are of significantly reduced potential impact to taller steel lattice pylons into which the connection will be made. A small ground level compound adjacent to the point of connection will be of limited scale in the context of the surrounding landscape while opportunities for screening will be considered;
- Size of the development – the development is expected to be 1.8km in length and therefore is of a size which the Guidance indicates would not normally be EIA development; and
- Location of the development – The connection crosses arable land to the northeast of the solar park, with limited potential receptors. The connection will be closest to receptors close to the crossing of the A427, which helps to mitigate any adverse effects. There are no designations covering the area crossed by the electrical connection.

We do not consider that EIA will be required due to the nature of the wooden pole connection and as a result of the scheme having limited ground level disturbance, except for access for construction, within arable fields in a rural setting.

In order to ensure that the Council (in responding to a future ‘Form B’ which allows the Council to adopt a position in respect of a proposed Section 37 application to DECC) is properly informed about the current environmental baseline of the site and that the environmental effects of the proposed development are fully considered and addressed, the following technical reports will be submitted with the electrical connection application to the local authority at a similar time as the solar park application. These will include:

- Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisal;
- Ecology Assessment;
- Archaeological Desk Based Assessment;
- Transport Statement;
- Planning Statement;
- Statement of Community Involvement; and
- Compliance report with respect to EMF.



With respect to the above request under the TCP EIA Regulations we look forward to receiving your opinion within three weeks, as stipulated in the EIA Regulations. We also trust that you will be able to form an opinion with respect to the electrical connection in the same period.

If you require further information please do not hesitate to contact me.

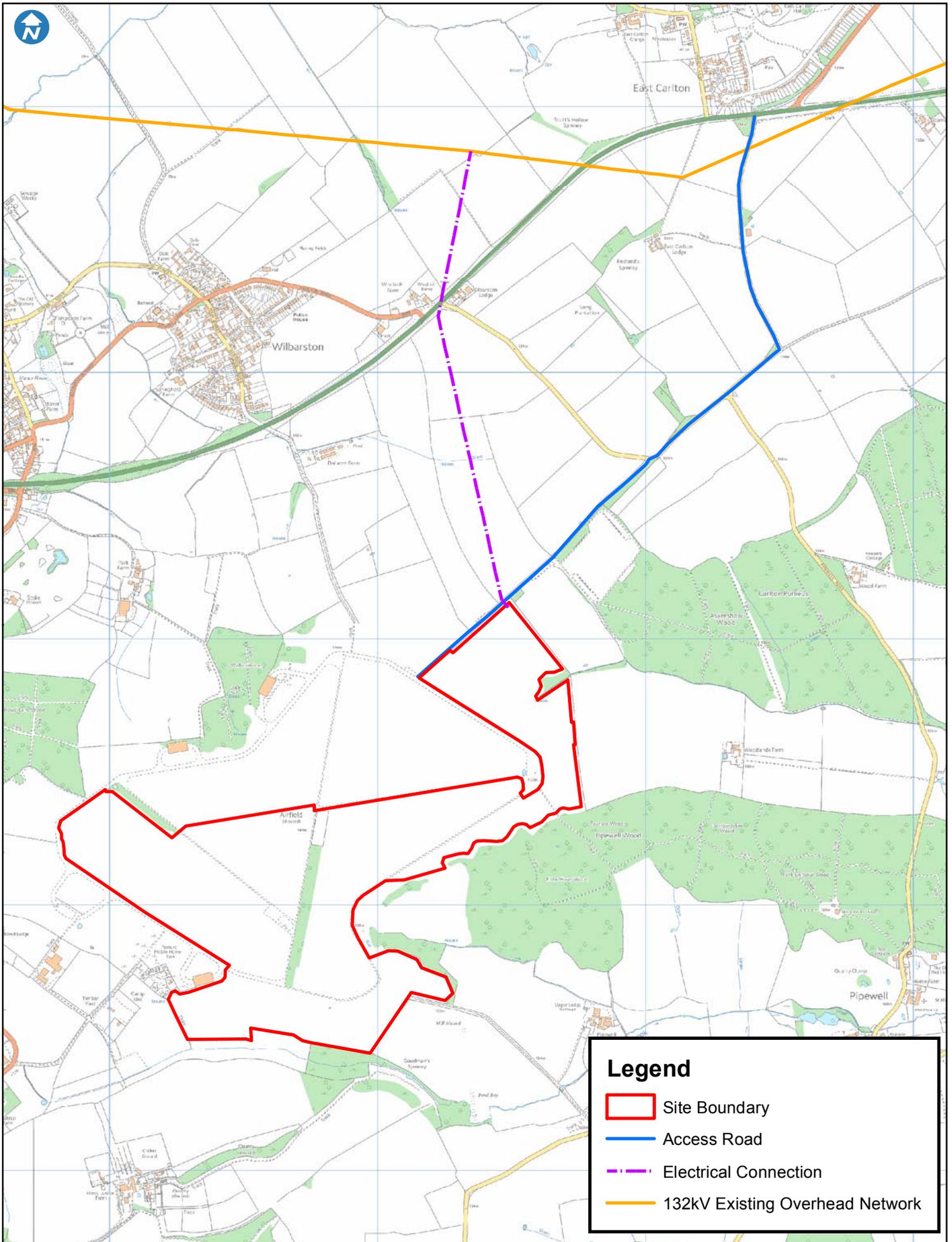
Thank you in anticipation.

Yours sincerely

Stefan Boss
Senior Associate
For and on Behalf of PETER BRETT ASSOCIATES LLP

Encl: Indicative Site Location Plan

Cc: Rob Gully (Insight Development and Planning Ltd)
Mary Crew (PBA)



Legend

- Site Boundary
- Access Road
- Electrical Connection
- 132kV Existing Overhead Network

Appendix A.4 EIA Screening Opinion

**FORMAL SCREENING
OPINION UNDER
REGULATION 4(2)(b)
OF THE TOWN AND
COUNTRY PLANNING
(ENVIRONMENT
IMPACT ASSESSMENT)
REGULATIONS 2011
AND
EUROPEAN
ENVIRONMENTAL
IMPACT ASSESSMENT
(EIA) DIRECTIVE
85/337/EEC (AS
AMENDED)**

Adopted by:

**KETTERING BOROUGH
COUNCIL**

Ref: KET/2014/0685

Date: 17/10/2014

APPENDIX 1

1	Case Details				
a	Applicant Case reference 				
b	LPA case reference KET/2014/0685				
c	SoS case reference 				
d	Site Address Former Desborough Airfield, Stoke Albany Road, Stoke Albany/Wilbarston				
e	Brief description of development Solar photovoltaic farm				
f	Approval of reserved matters? <table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Yes</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">No</td> <td style="text-align: center;">X</td> </tr> </table>	Yes		No	X
Yes					
No	X				
f	Approval of conditions? <table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Yes</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">No</td> <td style="text-align: center;">X</td> </tr> </table>	Yes		No	X
Yes					
No	X				
f	If Yes, enter the description of development subject of the related planning permission 				
g	Area of development/works/new floor space (as appropriate) Approximately 112.8 hectares of Grade 3b agricultural land.				
2	EIA details				
A	Schedule 1				
(i)	Is the proposed development Schedule 1 development as described in Schedule 1 of the EIA Regulations? <table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Yes</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">No</td> <td style="text-align: center;">X</td> </tr> </table>	Yes		No	X
Yes					
No	X				
(ii)	If YES, under which description of development i.e. Nos. 1-21? 				
B	Schedule 2				
(i)	Is the proposed development Schedule 2 development as described				

(ii)	in Column 1 of Schedule 2 of the EIA Regulations?	
	Yes	X
	No	
	If YES, under which description of development in Column 1 i.e. Nos. 1-13?	
Section 3 (a) of Schedule 2 - Industrial installation for the production of electricity, steam and hot water.		
(iii)	Is the development within, partly within, or near a 'sensitive area' as defined by Regulation 2 of the EIA Regulations?	
	Yes	X
	No	
(iv)	If YES, which area?	
	Three SSSI's including Pipewell Woods to the east and Stoke & Bowd Lane Woods to the west.	
	Three Schedule Ancient Monuments to the south – round barrow west of Pipewell Upper Lodge and west of the application site – Cistercian abbey and medieval settlement at Pipewell and one within the village of Stoke Albany – Stoke Albany Manorial fishponds and moat.	
(v)	Are the applicable thresholds/criteria in Column 2 exceeded/met?	
	Yes	X
	No	
(vi)	If yes, which applicable threshold/criteria?	
	Development over 0.5 hectares	
3	LPA/SOS Screening	
	All applications inc reserved matters/conditions	
(i)	Has the LPA issued a Screening Opinion (SO)?	
	Yes	
	No	X
(ii)	Has the SoS (GO) issued a Screening Direction (SD)?	
	Yes	
	No	X
(iii)	If yes, is a copy of the SO/SD on the file?	
	Yes	
	No	
(iv)	If yes, is the SO/SD positive?	
	Yes	

	No	
Reserved matters/conditions applications only		
(i)	Was original PP subject to EIA screening?	
	Yes	
	No	
(ii)	Was a SO/SD issued for the original PP?	
	Yes	
	No	
(iii)	If yes, is a copy of the SO/SD for the original PP on file?	
	Yes	
	No	
4	Environmental Statement (ES)	
	Has the applicant supplied an ES for the current or previous (if reserved matters or conditions) application?	
	Yes	
	No	X
Name	Rebecca Collins	
Date	22.10.2014	

Screening Opinion for KET/2014/0215

A. CHECKLIST			
Questions to be considered		Likely/Unlikely – briefly describe	Is this likely to result in a Significant effect?
			Yes/No - why?
1	Will construction, operation or decommissioning of the Project involve actions which will cause physical changes in the locality (topography, land use, changes in waterbodies, etc)?	Yes. The construction of such a large area (112ha) of solar panels will alter the character of the land in this location through its appearance in colour and use and through the presence of equipment associated with the solar panels i.e. substation(s), overhead line, invertors, fencing and other security equipment.	Yes. To protect the rural/agricultural character of the land grazing could take place underneath the solar panels and given their limited projection off the ground, it is not considered that the grounds levels will be significantly altered, especially as the panels can follow the contours of the land and are for a temporary period of 25 years. However, given the scale of the solar farm proposed it is considered that there is potential for significant environmental effects through the loss of agricultural land, changes to the appearance of the landscape and the open nature of the site. Therefore, a full EIA is required to assess these significant impacts.
2	Will construction or operation of the Project use natural resources such as land, water, materials or energy, especially any resources which are non-renewable or in short supply?	Yes. The land is Grade 3b agricultural land.	No. Despite the proposal resulting in the significant loss of 112.8ha of agricultural land, the site is Grade 3b land, which is not the most versatile agricultural land. The land could be grazed or set aside as a wildflower meadow for the period of the permission, which would improve the quality of the soil. Also, the installation of solar panels on this site will create renewable energy resulting in less necessity for non-renewable resources to be consumed, to the benefit of

			the local environment.
3	Will the Project involve use, storage, transport, handling or production of substances or materials which could be harmful to human health or the environment or raise concerns about actual or perceived risks to human health?	No.	No.
4	Will the Project produce solid wastes during construction or operation or decommissioning?	Yes. Waste from the construction of the panels including from the foundations for the panels and associated equipment.	No. Any waste production from installation of panels, associated fencing, roads, substation or other infrastructure is likely to be minimal and could potentially be re-used within the wider site.
5	Will the Project release pollutants or any hazardous, toxic or noxious substances to air?	No.	No.
6	Will the Project cause noise and vibration or release of light, heat energy or electromagnetic radiation?	Yes. There is potential for glint and glare off the faces of the solar panels. Also, heat at the invertors generated by the renewable electricity production.	No. The panels will 'face away' from properties in Stoke Albany and Wilbarston and will 'face' the Town of Desborough, which is due south from the panels. However, the proposal is a significant distance from the nearest properties in Desborough (over 1000m) and can be finished with an anti-glare finish. The invertors can be fitted with fans to cool the equipment. The proposal is therefore unlikely to have significant environment effects in terms of glint and glare and heat generated by the equipment.
7	Will the Project lead to risks of contamination of land or water from releases of pollutants onto the ground or into surface	No. There is a marginal risk of pollutants from vehicles accessing the site during the construction.	No. The risks are low and likely to be minimal and can be controlled through the conditioning of a construction

	waters, groundwater, coastal waters or the sea?		management plan. Therefore, the project is unlikely to have a long-term effect on the quality of the land.
8	Are there any areas on or around the location which are already subject to pollution or environmental damage e.g. where existing legal environmental standards are exceeded, which could be affected by the project?	No. However, the site is a former airfield where it is possible pollutants in terms of fuel and arms were stored/used. Also, Northamptonshire lies in area of naturally occurring radon.	No. Given the length of time since the site was used as an airfield and that the panels and associated equipment only have limited depth foundations, so the proposal is unlikely to result in significant disruption to the soil, which could be controlled via condition or through the use of floating foundations. The proposal is not considered to have a significant environmental impact to warrant a full EIA on this basis.
9	Will there be any risk of accidents during construction or operation of the Project which could affect human health or the environment?	Yes, slight risk of construction injury/accidents during installation.	No. These risks can be mitigated through the following of good health and safety practices on site and the use of appropriate safety equipment. These impacts are unlikely to be significant.
10	Will the Project result in social changes, for example, in demography, traditional lifestyles, employment?	Yes. The development could provide an opportunity for local people to learn about renewable solar energy and benefit from lower energy bills and a consistent energy supply in the future.	No. The impacts from the solar panels in this regard are likely to be beneficial to local people.
11	Are there any areas on or around the location which are protected under international or national or local legislation for their ecological, landscape, cultural or other value, which could be affected by the project?	Yes. Three SSSI's including Pipewell Woods to the east and Stoke & Bowd Lane Woods to the west. Three Schedule Ancient Monuments to the south – round barrow west of Pipewell Upper Lodge and west of the application site – Cistercian abbey and medieval settlement at Pipewell and one within the	Yes. The solar panels are a temporary feature which within 25 years would be removed allowing the same views and vistas as exist currently. Given the low lying level of the panels expected and that they follow the contours of the land, the impacts to Conservation Area's and Listed Building are unlikely to be significantly

		<p>village of Stoke Albany – Stoke Albany Manorial fishponds and moat.</p> <p>Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings in surrounding settlements including Stoke Albany, Wilbarston and Desborough.</p> <p>Local/County Wildlife Sites at - Brampton Wood (west), Askershaw Wood (east), Walter Wood (north), Goodmans Spinney (south) and West Lodge Quarry and 11 Acre Spinney (south).</p>	<p>detrimental. However, given the scale of the proposal and its proximity to Schedule Ancient Monuments and other local historic assets there is potential for significant historic impacts which should be considered through a full EIA.</p> <p>The proposal is located close to three SSSI's. Given the scale of the proposal and its proximity to these features and other local wildlife sites there is potential for significant environmental impacts to warrant the requirement for a full EIA on this basis.</p>
1 2	Are there any other areas on or around the location which are important or sensitive for reasons of their ecology e.g. wetlands, watercourses or other waterbodies, the coastal zone, mountains, forests or woodlands, which could be affected by the project?	<p>Yes. Three SSSI's including Pipewell Woods to the east and Stoke & Bowd Lane Woods to the west.</p> <p>Local/County Wildlife Sites at - Brampton Wood (west), Askershaw Wood (east), Walter Wood (north), Goodmans Spinney (south) and West Lodge Quarry and 11 Acre Spinney (south).</p>	<p>Yes. The proposal is located close to three SSSI's. Given the scale of the proposal and its proximity to these features and other local wildlife sites there is potential for significant environmental impacts to warrant the requirement for a full EIA on this basis.</p>
1 3	Are there any areas on or around the location which are used by protected, important or sensitive species of fauna or flora e.g. for breeding, nesting, foraging, resting, overwintering, migration, which could be affected by the project?	<p>Yes. Three SSSI's including Pipewell Woods to the east and Stoke & Bowd Lane Woods to the west.</p> <p>Local/County Wildlife Sites at - Brampton Wood (west), Askershaw Wood (east), Walter Wood (north), Goodmans Spinney (south) and West Lodge Quarry and 11 Acre Spinney (south).</p>	<p>Yes. The proposal is located close to three SSSI's. Given the scale of the proposal and its proximity to these features and other local wildlife sites there is potential for significant environmental impacts to warrant the requirement for a full EIA on this basis.</p>
1 4	Are there any inland, coastal, marine or underground waters on or around the location which	No.	No.

	could be affected by the project?		
1 5	Are there any areas or features of high landscape or scenic value on or around the location which could be affected by the project?	<p>No. The site does not lie within land designated for its landscape value. However, this is large, open site which has the potential to be visible from the surrounding area.</p> <p>The ground levels within the application site are reasonably consistent, with grounds levels starting to slope away at the far southern parts of the site. Generally ground levels in this location rise to the north towards Stoke Albany and Wilbarston and gradually increase on the opposite side of the bank of the river to the south towards Desborough.</p>	Yes. Given the scale of the proposal and its proximity to local historic assets, SSSI's and local wildlife sites the proposal has the potential to have significant landscape impact which should be further investigated through a full EIA.
1 6	Is the project in a location where it is likely to be highly visible to many people?	Yes. This is large, open site which has the potential to be visible from the surrounding area and neighbouring villages including Stoke Albany, Wilbarston and Desborough as well as the potential for views from Dingley, Braybrooke, Rushton, Cottingham and Great Oakley and other surrounding properties and areas.	Yes. Despite the panels being likely to follow the contours of the land and would have limited projection from ground floor level. The scale of the proposal and that the site has the potential to be visible from surrounding settlements, Stoke Albany, Wilbarston and Desborough, as well as having the potential to be viewed from other surrounding properties and areas. The proposal therefore has the potential to have significant visual environmental impacts on local people, which should be further investigated through an EIA.
1 7	Are there any routes on or around the location which are used by the public for access to recreation or other facilities, which could be affected by the project?	Yes. There are public footpaths running along the eastern and western boundaries of the application site as well as a public footpath to the north of the site.	No. Although it is likely that users of these public footpaths would have clear views to parts of the application site, depending on available existing screening, this would not prevent the

			<p>long term use of these footpaths. Footpaths could even be enhanced as part of the application and information boards could be erected to provide local information about the panels to the benefit of its users. In addition, this is a temporary proposal, following ceasing of the use of the panels they would be permanently removed from the application site and it would return to its previous use/condition.</p>
1 8	<p>Are there any transport routes on or around the location which are susceptible to congestion or which cause environmental problems, which could be affected by the project?</p>	<p>Yes. Highways include A6 and A6003, as well as other local highways surrounding the application site.</p>	<p>No. Despite the site being a large site with lots of equipment to be transported to the site, the proposal is likely to be brought in on a relatively small scale transportation without the requirement for over-sized vehicles. Although, initially a large number of vehicle movements will be necessary to bring equipment to the application site, following construction the number of vehicles movements are likely to be limited and not have a significant impact on the surrounding highway network. Conditions with regards to required transportation routes and scheduling can be added to any subsequent permission to prevent any unacceptable congestion impacts on the local highway network.</p> <p>Similar impacts from construction may occur at decommissioning but as with construction this is likely to be for a limited time period only and can be adequately controlled via conditions.</p>

1 9	Are there any areas or features of historic or cultural importance on or around the location which could be affected by the project?	Yes. Three Schedule Ancient Monuments to the south – round barrow west of Pipewell Upper Lodge and west of the application site – Cistercian abbey and medieval settlement at Pipewell and one within the village of Stoke Albany – Stoke Albany Manorial fishponds and moat. Conservation Area's, Listed Buildings in Stoke Albany, Wilbarston and Desborough.	Yes. The solar panels are a temporary feature which within 25 years would be removed from the site, allowing the same views and vistas as exist currently. Given the low lying level of the panels expected and that they follow the contours of the land, the impacts to Conservation Area's and Listed Building are unlikely to be significantly detrimental. However, given the scale and proximity of the proposal to schedule ancient monuments and the local historic assets it is considered that an EIA is required to assess the impacts of such a large area of panels on local historic features.
2 0	Is the project located in a previously undeveloped area where there will be loss of greenfield land?	Yes. Agricultural land.	No. The solar panels are a temporary feature which after 25 years would be removed allowing the same agricultural practices to continue on land. The land would have been set aside for a significant period of time, which would ultimately improve the quality of this land for farming. Also, there is potential for other farm practices to continue under the panels such as grazing with arable farming continuing on other remaining farmland around the panels.
2 1	Are there existing land uses on or around the location e.g. homes, gardens, other private property, industry, commerce, recreation, public open space, community facilities, agriculture, forestry, tourism, mining or quarrying which could be affected by the project?	Yes. Homes and gardens in surrounding settlements and some scattered development in the open countryside. There are Churches, community facilities, parks and open spaces within surrounding towns and villages. Industry is found located to the north of Desborough. The surrounding	No. Although the site is likely to be visible from surrounding settlements, the proposal is for a temporary development which will be removed from the application site after a period of 25 years. The application may alter the appearance of the land and its current use but it would not

		area is largely characterised by traditional farming practices.	affect the long-term use of local community facilities and could actually contribute to their use through the provision of a community fund for local renewable energy projects and a consistent supply of electricity.
2 2	Are there any areas on or around the location which are densely populated or built-up, which could be affected by the project?	Yes. This is large, open site which has the potential to be visible from the surrounding area and neighbouring villages including Stoke Albany, Wilbarston and Desborough. Other views to the site may be possible from Dingley, Braybrooke, Rushton, Cottingham and Great Oakley. There is also potential for views to the site from other surrounding properties.	Yes. Despite the panels being likely to follow the contours of the land and would have limited projection from ground floor level, given the scale of the proposal, the site has the potential to be visible from surrounding settlements, Stoke Albany, Wilbarston and Desborough. As well as from other surrounding properties and areas. The proposal therefore has the potential to have significant visual environmental impacts on local people, which should be further investigated through an EIA.
2 3	Are there any areas on, or around, the location which are occupied by sensitive land uses e.g. hospitals, schools, places of worship, community facilities, which could be affected by the project?	Yes. Churches, school and community facilities in local settlements.	No. Although, the site is likely to be visible from parts of the surrounding settlements, the proposal is for a temporary development which will be removed from the application site following a period of 25 years. The application may alter the appearance of the land and its current use but it would not affect the long-term use of local community facilities and could actually contribute to their use through the provision of a community fund for local renewable energy projects and a consistent supply of electricity.

2 4	Are there any areas on or around the location which contain important, high quality or scarce resources e.g. groundwater, surface waters, forestry, agriculture, fisheries, tourism, minerals, which could be affected by the project?	No.	No.
2 5	Is the project location susceptible to earthquakes, subsidence, landslides, erosion, flooding or extreme or adverse climatic conditions e.g. temperature inversions, fogs, severe winds, which could cause the project to present environmental problems?	No.	No.
2 6	Are there any plans for future land uses on or around the location which could be affected by the project?	No.	No.
2 7	Are there any other factors which should be considered, such as consequential development which could lead to environmental effects, or the potential for cumulative impacts with other existing or planned activities in the locality?	No.	No.

B. CONCLUSIONS	
(i)	Schedule and category of development
	Section 3 (a) of Schedule 2 - Industrial installation for the production of electricity, steam and hot water.
(ii)	Summary of features of project and of its location
	a Characteristics of development
	<p>The site extends 112.8 hectares and consists of agricultural farmland as well as areas of hard standing and 'hangers' associated with its previous use as an airfield. The proposal is to install a free standing solar PV array of up to 49MW. The array will comprise of solar panels, invertors and transformers. Each panel is likely to be positioned 0.5 above ground level with an overall height of no more than 3 metres.</p> <p>The site will be accessed via the already existing eastern access road, off the Pipewell Road. The routes of existing footpaths and bridleways in and around the site will not be altered and once operational it is proposed that the land between the panels will be grazed by sheep.</p>
	b Location of development
	<p>The proposed site is located at the former RAF Desborough airfield which is 2km to the north of Desborough and 4km to the west of Corby. These are the two closest towns to the development. The village settlements of Wilbarston and Stoke Albany lie to the north and the north-northwest respectively, between 1200m and 1500m away from the northern boundary of the proposed site. The site is currently agricultural land.</p>
c Characteristics of the potential impact	
	<p>A full EIA is required given the likely significant effects identified in the above screening matrix. Given the scale of the proposal at 112.8 hectares it is considered that it has the potential for significant environment visual impacts on the surrounding area including local settlements and the local landscape. Also, there is potential for impacts on the adjacent three SSSI's and Local/County Wildlife Sites affecting local habitat and ecology. Finally the development has the potential for impact on local historic assets including Scheduled Ancient Monuments and local Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas. Through any future EIA the potential for cumulative impacts should also be considered taking into consideration the potential for other Solar Farms at Desborough (Gaultney Farm and Eckland Lodge), Braybrooke (off A6) and the New Albion Wind Farm at Rushton. Also, consideration should be given to the potential for an Energy Park at Burton Wold, which currently includes permitted wind turbines and solar panels.</p>
(iii)	If a SO/SD has been provided do you agree with it?
	Yes No
(iv)	Is it necessary to issue a SO/SD?
	Yes No
(v)	Is an ES required?
	Yes No

C. SCREENING DECISION (Indicate below which assessment applies)					
Assessment		Action (produce model letter 'x')	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Response due from	Date response due
Sch 1 development	ES required	Issue positive or negative SO/SD	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Sch 2 development – threshold exceeded/criterion met/sensitive area and likely to have significant effects on the environment	ES required	Issue positive or negative SO/SD	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Sch 2 development – not likely to have significant effects on the environment	ES not required	Issue positive or negative SO/SD	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Sch 2 development but effects not clear at this stage – file to be reviewed at a later stage	N/K	Review when appropriate – new info/case progresses	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Sch 2 but not EIA development – negative screening opinion - SoS agrees	ES not required	No action required	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Sch 2 but not EIA development – positive screening opinion - SoS disagrees	ES not required	Issue negative SO/SD	<input type="checkbox"/>		

Name	Rebecca Collins
Date	23.10.2014

Rebecca Collins (Planning)

From: Lesley-Ann Mather [LMather@northamptonshire.gov.uk]
Sent: 13 October 2014 14:53
To: Rebecca Collins (Planning)
Subject: PRE/2014/0212 Desborough Airfield, Desborough Road, Stoke Albany
Attachments: PRE-2014-0121 Desborough Airfield, Desborough Road, Stoke Albany.pdf

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Northamptonshire County Council. <http://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk>



Northamptonshire County Council

Rebecca Collins
Development Services
Kettering Borough Council
Municipal Offices
Bowling Green Road
Kettering
NN15 7QX

Please ask for: Lesley-Ann Mather
Tel: 01604 367909
Our ref:
Your ref: PRE/2014/0121
Date: 13th October 2014

Dear Ms Collins

Applicant: Mr Gully Insight Development & Planning Ltd

Proposal: Pre application advice: Solar Photovoltaic Park

Location: Desborough Airfield, Desborough Road, Stoke Albany

Thank you for your consultation regarding the implications with regard to the historic environment.

The pre application advice request has identified within Section 2.6 Heritage and Archaeology that the proposed development area has known archaeological activity. In light of the known potential the next stage would be to provide an assessment of the archaeology both above and below ground bearing in mind that the development is within a former WWII airfield. This document would take the form of a heritage assessment. I would also advise that further survey in the form of geophysical survey and targeted trial trenching may also be required to assess the extent, preservation and significance of any remains within the proposed development area. I would advise that further information with regard to the archaeological potential is required in advance of determination

I appreciate that the site has been partially developed however in the case of other airfields this tends to be very localised. This approach will provide robust evidence with regard to archaeological potential and will be in accordance within the guidance within the NPPF.

Yours sincerely

Lesley-Ann Mather

Planning Services
County Hall
Guildhall Road
Northampton, NN1 1DN
W www.northamptonshire.gov.uk
t. 01604 367909

e. lmather@northamptonshire.gov.uk



County Archaeological Advisor
Planning Services

Serena Penny

From: Holdgate, Ross (NE) [Ross.Holdgate@naturalengland.org.uk]
Sent: 14 October 2014 12:52
To: Planning
Subject: PRE/2014/0121 FAO Rebecca Collins
Attachments: 133339 Desborough Airfield solar.pdf

<<133339 Desborough Airfield solar.pdf>>

Dear Rebecca

Please find attached our response to your recent consultaiton.

Kind regards, Ross

Ross Holdgate

Lead Planning and Conservation Adviser

Essex, Herts, Beds, Cambs & Northants Area Team

Eastbrook, Shaftsbury Road, Cambridge, CB2 8DR

Tel: 0300 060 4657

Please note I do not usually work on Mondays

www.naturalengland.org.uk

We are here to secure a healthy natural environment for people to enjoy, where wildlife is protected and England's traditional landscapes are safeguarded for future generations.

In an effort to reduce Natural England's carbon footprint, I will, wherever possible, avoid travelling to meetings and attend via audio, video or web conferencing.

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Date: 14 October 2014
Our ref: 133339
Your ref: PRE/2014/0121



Rebecca Collins
Kettering Borough Council

BY EMAIL ONLY

Customer Services
Hornbeam House
Crewe Business Park
Electra Way
Crewe
Cheshire
CW1 6GJ

T 0300 060 3900

Dear Rebecca

Planning consultation: Pre-application advice: Solar Photovoltaic Park
Location: Desborough Airfield, Desborough Road, Stoke Albany

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 29 September 2014.

Natural England is a non-departmental public body. Our statutory purpose is to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced, and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development.

Statutory Sites

The proposed development is adjacent to two Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs); Pipewell Woods SSSI and Stoke and Bowd Lane Woods SSSI. The proposed site layout appears to show a stand-off of 25 metres from each SSSI. Provided that no development or construction activity takes place within this zone Natural England would advise that the proposed development is unlikely to impact on the features that these SSSIs have been designated for.

Landscape Assessment

We note that a landscape and visual impact assessment will be carried out. We would advise that potential impacts to Inheritance Tax Exempt land at Kelmarsh Hall Rockingham Castle are considered as part of this assessment.

Soil and Agricultural Land Quality

We note that a an agricultural land classification and soil survey of the land has been undertaken, Natural England will be able to provide further advice at the application stage when full details of this work are available.

Other advice

We would expect the Local Planning Authority (LPA) to assess and consider possible impacts resulting from this proposal on the following when determining this application:

- local sites (biodiversity and geodiversity)
- local landscape character
- Protected Species
- local or national biodiversity priority habitats and species.

Natural England does not hold locally specific information relating to the above. These remain material considerations in the determination of this planning application and we recommend that you seek further information from the appropriate bodies (which may include the local records centre, your local wildlife trust, local geoconservation group or other recording society and a local

landscape characterisation document) in order to ensure the LPA has sufficient information to fully understand the impact of the proposal before it determines the application. A more comprehensive list of local groups can be found at [Wildlife and Countryside link](#).

If the LPA is aware of, or representations from other parties highlight the possible presence of a protected or priority species on the site, the authority should request survey information from the applicant before determining the application. The Government has provided advice¹ on priority and protected species and their consideration in the planning system.

[Natural England Standing Advice for Protected Species](#) is available on our website to help local planning authorities better understand the impact of development on protected or priority species should they be identified as an issue at particular developments.

Biodiversity enhancements

Solar farm developments offer excellent opportunities to create new habitats, and especially “priority habitats” listed under [s41 of the NERC Act 2006](#). In particular, solar farms are ideally suited to creating new grassland habitats, which can be created among the rows of solar panels. Natural England would encourage the creation of species rich lowland meadows as part of the development. Should the development be approved we would recommend that a habitat creation and management plan be produced by way of a planning condition to ensure opportunities for habitat creation are taken.

The creation of priority habitats in this way contributes towards the Government’s nature conservation vision, set out within “[Biodiversity 2020](#)”, a strategy for England’s wildlife and ecosystem services. The [NPPF](#) promotes net gains in biodiversity (paragraph 109), and [s40 of the NERC Act](#) requires public bodies to have regard to biodiversity in carrying out their functions.

For any queries relating to the specific advice in this letter only please contact Ross Holdgate on 0300 060 4657. For any new consultations, or to provide further information on this consultation please send your correspondences to consultations@naturalengland.org.uk.

Yours sincerely

Ross Holdgate
Land Use Operations

¹ Paragraph 98 and 99 of ODPM Circular 06/2005

Rebecca Collins (Planning)

From: Dunderdale, Clare [CDunderdale@mgwsp.co.uk]
Sent: 13 October 2014 10:04
To: Rebecca Collins (Planning); Planning
Subject: PRE.2014.0121 - Highways response
Attachments: PRE.2014.0121 - Stoke Albany, Desborough Airfield.pdf

PRE.2014.0121 - Desborough airfield

Please find attached our comments.

Regards,
Clare Dunderdale
Development Management Engineer
Northamptonshire Highways
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**Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (As Amended)
Local Highway Authority Response**

Planning Authority	Kettering Borough Council
Application Reference	PRE/2014/0121
Highway Authority Reference	
Proposal	Solar Photovoltaic Park
Location	Desborough Airfield, Desborough Rd, Stoke Albany
Date:	9 October 2014

Case Officer: Rebecca Collins

Observations.

The access is mentioned as the A427 to Stoke Albany followed by the Pipewell Road south to the metalled track that runs west to the edge of the old airfield's perimeter track.

The junction of the A427 with the Pipewell Road appears to have good visibility and a ghost island to assist in right turns from the west.

Pipewell Road is rural and narrow with no passing bays and one notable bend to negotiate.

The gated track that leads off this is also a public footpath.

The airfield's Perimeter tracks have Public Rights of Way (PROWs) over them. PROW HH25 runs along the metalled gated track from the junction with Pipewell Road to the Peri track where it joins HH18 which follows the peri track south to a point just south of the east-west runway apron where it turns south as an agricultural field track to Pipewell Wood. PROW HA2 runs along the western Peri track and will also be affected. It must, therefore, be ensured that the routes are kept clear, unobstructed, safe for users and that no structures or stores are placed within them or provisions to temporarily divert the routes are made. It is a legal offence to obstruct the PROW under Section 137 of the Highway Act 1980 and so diversions must be carried out through the appropriate legal procedures. The surface must also be maintained and any damage caused by the developer must be made good, specifications for repair and/or surfacing must be approved by this office under S131 HA 1980. Should the PROW need to be closed a temporary traffic regulation order will be required, these can be applied for, with a fee, on the Northamptonshire County Council website. Advice should be sought from the Definitive Map team. The PROW must remain un-gated.

Mention is made of a new overhead cable run. Overhead routeing must be kept to a minimum and only used where underground cannot. Routeing will be subject to LPA permission.

Recommendations.

Details required by the Highway Authority to be able to assess the scheme towards planning permission are;

- A full CTMP covering:-
- Access routeing through the County.
- A breakdown of vehicles expected to site by size and number and time period (average daily, weekly and in total) highlighting abnormal loads.
- Tracking onto Pipewell Road from A427 and through the sharp bend on Pipewell Road as well as the possible necessity for passing bays due to length, visibility and width requirements.
- Details of vehicular cleansing prior to accessing Pipewell Road including wheel washing and sheeting/sealing of loads as well as road cleansing to avoid deleterious material entering the highway from the site.
- Details of dust management on site roads and stores.

The views, observations, comments and recommendations contained in this response represent those of Northamptonshire Highways on behalf of Northamptonshire County Council as Local Highway Authority and in no other function or authority
May Gurney Ltd, Registered Office: Trowse, Norwich, Norfolk NR14 8SZ Registered Number 00873179 England
WSP Management Services Limited Registered Office: WSP House, 70 Chancery Lane, London WC2A 1AF
Registered Number 02454665 England

- Details of the lighting scheme to be employed as well as methods utilised to avoid dazzle to vehicle operators.
- Details of the cabling routes, especially where overhead lines are proposed.
- Details of works to protect the PROWs and their users as well as remediation works to them post solar farm construction.
- Details of on-site drainage to prevent private water entering the highway.
- Details of decommission process or details to show that this has been assessed with outline process details.

To be noted;

- The access off the highway must be no less than 4.5m in width, surfaced with a hard bound material, no steeper than 1 in 15 and perpendicular to the highway for the first 15m from the carriageway edge.
- Gates should be no nearer than 15m to the carriageway edge.
- No works may be carried out within the highway without the written permission of the Highway
- Public Rights of Way shall remain un-gated, for pedestrian use and access of the designated routes.
- No works, closures or diversions are to commence on the PROW without written permission from the Highway Authorities Rights of Way Officer and may require completion of a legal agreement under the HA 1980.

The application site is affected by Public Rights of Way HH25, HH18 & HA2.

Signed..... *C Dunderdale*.....

Development Management Engineer

For Assistant Director – Highways Transport and Infrastructure Northamptonshire Highways Riverside House
Riverside Way Northampton NN1 5NX

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Web www.mgwsp.co.uk

Email cdunderdale@mgwsp.co.uk

Rebecca Collins (Planning)

From: Derek Chamberlain on behalf of Planning
Sent: 30 September 2014 13:24
To: Rebecca Collins (Planning)
Subject: FW: PRE/2014/0121 - Desborough Airfield, Desborough Road, Stoke Albany - Solar Park
Attachments: Charging for planning advice leaflet.pdf; Standard terms and conditions.pdf; Pre-Application Enquiry Form (Preliminary Opinion).docx

FYI

From: Nolan, Sharon [mailto:Sharon.Nolan@environment-agency.gov.uk]
Sent: 30 September 2014 09:31
To: Planning
Subject: RE: PRE/2014/0121 - Desborough Airfield, Desborough Road, Stoke Albany - Solar Park

Dear Sir/Madam

As you may be aware, on 03 February 2014 the Environment Agency introduced a charged service for planning advice in the Anglian Region.

Following on from this date we will no longer respond to any pre-application enquiries that we receive direct from local planning authorities. In order to obtain the Environment Agency's preliminary opinion, or further bespoke advice, we request that you advise any applicant(s) to contact us directly.

Developers can still receive a free service from us, in the form of a preliminary opinion. As part of this preliminary opinion we will outline our position and highlight any environmental issues we may be concerned about as a statutory consultee. The applicant can then receive further bespoke advice, if required, at a chargeable rate. This could include the review of technical documents, meetings or site visits.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me on the number below.

Kind regards

Sharon Nolan
Planning Advisor

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moved to...



Feedback is important to us and so I would be grateful if you would respond via this email to these questions:

Did you understand the information?

Was the information accurate/appropriate for your needs?

Were you satisfied with the information you received? (if no, why)

Were you happy with the way I dealt with your query today?

From: Liz Wright [mailto:LizWright@kettering.gov.uk]

Sent: 29 September 2014 11:15

To: Planning Kettering

Subject: PRE/2014/0121 - Desborough Airfield, Desborough Road, Stoke Albany - Solar Park

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Appendix A.5 EIA Scoping Opinion Request and Report



Your ref:

Our ref: 31549/BRI/BRE/SB/SW/TB

23rd December 2014

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Planning Department
Kettering Borough Council
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Bowling Green Road
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NN15 7QX

Attn: Rebecca Collins

Dear Rebecca

RE: PROPOSED 49MW SOLAR PHOTOVOLTAIC FARM AND ANCILLARY CONTROL AND TRANSFORMER BUILDING AT FORMER RAF DESBOROUGH AIRFIELD – REQUEST FOR A SCOPING OPINION UNDER REGULATION 13 OF THE TOWN & COUNTRY PLANNING (ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT) REGULATIONS 2011

NF RAF Desb' Ltd intends to submit a full planning application for a solar photovoltaic (PV) farm of up to 49 megawatts at the former RAF Desborough airfield.

Kettering Borough Council has provided a Screening Opinion identifying that the development constitutes Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) development requiring an Environmental Statement (ES) to be submitted with the planning application.

NF RAF Desb' Ltd therefore requests the Council's Scoping Opinion to identify the information that needs to be included in the ES. The enclosed Scoping Report has been prepared to provide the Council with the necessary information to enable you to form your Scoping Opinion.

We trust that the Scoping Report provides you all the information that need but if you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact me. We look forward to receiving your Scoping Opinion within five weeks, as required by the Regulations.

Thank you in anticipation.

Yours sincerely

Stefan Boss
Senior Associate
For and on Behalf of PETER BRETT ASSOCIATES LLP

Encl: EIA Scoping Report

Cc: Rob Gully (Insight Development and Planning Ltd)
Mary Crew (PBA)



Proposed Solar Photovoltaic Park at the Former RAF Desborough Airfield and Associated Electrical Connection

EIA Scoping Report

On behalf of **NF RAF Desb' Ltd**

Project Ref: 31549 | Rev: AA | Date: December 2014

Office Address: 10 Queen Square, Bristol, BS1 4NT
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Document Control Sheet

Project Name: Proposed Solar Photovoltaic Park, Former RAF Desborough Airfield
Project Ref: 31549
Report Title: EIA Scoping Report
Date: December 2014

	Name	Position	Signature	Date
Prepared by:	Various	Various	Various	23/12/2014
Reviewed by:	Stefan Boss	Senior Associate		23/12/14
Approved by:	Dermot Scanlon	LLP Director		23/12/14
For and on behalf of Peter Brett Associates LLP				

Revision	Date	Description	Prepared	Reviewed	Approved
00	23/12/14	Final		SB	DS

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Appendix A Indicative Site Location Plan

1 Introduction

1.1 Project Background

- 1.1.1 NF RAF Desb' Ltd, a Northfield UK Solar Limited company, intends to submit a full planning application for a solar photovoltaic (PV) park up to 49 megawatts at the former RAF Desborough airfield.
- 1.1.2 An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening Opinion Request was submitted to Kettering Borough Council (KBC) to determine whether the proposed solar development constitutes EIA development in the context of the Town and Country Planning (EIA Regulations) 2011, the "TCP EIA Regulations"¹. KBC provided their EIA Screening Opinion identifying the proposed solar park constituted EIA development, therefore requiring an Environmental Statement (ES) to be submitted with the planning application.

1.2 Purpose of this Report

- 1.2.1 Understanding the likely significant effects of development on the environment is an integral part of the design process currently underway. In light of the conclusion regarding the need for an EIA, this report documents the scoping exercise that has been undertaken to identify the nature and extent of the likely significant environmental effects of the proposed development (for clarity, for the purposes of the EIA the proposal constitutes the solar park and associated electrical connection). Accordingly this report details how the environmental issues are being examined and how it is proposed that they are progressed as part of the EIA of the development. The aim is to ensure that the development has due regard for the environment, minimises likely significant adverse environmental effects and takes advantage of opportunities for environmental enhancement.
- 1.2.2 This report provides information to consultees regarding the proposals and sets out the intended scope of the EIA pursuant to Regulation 13 (2) (9) of the TCP EIA Regulations. The report has also been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulations, as amended. The reasons for this approach are explain in paras 3.2.3-4.
- 1.2.3 On the basis of this report, Northfield UK Solar therefore requests KBC's EIA Scoping Opinion.
- 1.2.4 A plan showing the extent of the proposed planning application boundary for the Solar Park and electrical connection is provided at Appendix A.

1.3 Structure of this Report

- 1.3.1 This report continues with the following:
- **Chapter 2** Environmental Setting;
 - **Chapter 3** The Proposed Development;
 - **Chapter 4** Planning Policy Context;

¹ Note that the formal EIA Screening request did not include the electrical connection, as only overhead line proposals were in contemplation at that time; as such an EIA Screening request for an overhead line would be sought from the Department of Energy and Climate Change under The Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulations 2000 rather than the Local Planning Authority under the TCP EIA Regulations.

- **Chapter 5** Description of the EIA Process;
- **Chapter 6** Proposed Scope of the EIA
- **Chapter 7** Topics Included in EIA Scope;
- **Chapter 8** Topics Not Included in EIA Scope; and
- **Chapter 9** Summary and Next Steps.

2 Environmental Setting

2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 An indicative site location plan is enclosed in Appendix A. This shows the anticipated solar park site, along with a wider area to provide flexibility in the ongoing consideration of the most suitable routes for the electrical connection (which will be determined as part of the EIA process).

2.2 Solar Park Site

- 2.2.1 The proposed site is located at the former RAF Desborough airfield, which is 2km to the north of Desborough and 4km to the west of Corby, approximately at grid reference 481920 286320. The settlements of Wilbarston and Stoke Albany lie 1.2 km to the north and 1.5km to the north-northwest respectively.
- 2.2.2 The solar park site comprises approximately 112.8 hectares of grade 3b agricultural land, mature hedgerows and hard standing relating to the former airfield use, as shown on the enclosed indicative site location plan.
- 2.2.3 The airfield, associated buildings and areas of hard standing were used by the Ministry of Defence during World War Two for the operational training of Wellington bomber crews between 1943 and 1945. After the end of the war, the airfield remained in operational use in a civilian capacity until it was purchased by the Rockingham Estate in the 1960s, at which time the airfield was closed. This land falls under the National Planning Policy Guidance definition of previously developed land i.e. *'land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land and any associated fixed surface infrastructure'*.
- 2.2.4 The site is bounded by gently undulating agricultural land, with extensive blocks of woodland, including ancient woodland to the northeast and southwest. Pipewell Woods SSSI is immediately adjacent to the southern boundary, and Bowd Lane Woods (part of Stoke and Bowd Lane Woods SSSI) is immediately adjacent to the north-west boundary of the site. Agricultural land bordering the site is owned and managed by the Rockingham Estate and its tenants.
- 2.2.5 Original hangar buildings associated with the airfield are still in use by skid control and fencing businesses.

2.3 Electrical Connection

- 2.3.1 A number of options relating to possible electrical connection routes are currently being assessed, as set out in Chapter 3. For the purposes of this Scoping Report, the plan provided in Appendix A has been drawn sufficiently wide so as to cover all the options under consideration at this stage.
- 2.3.2 The area being considered for the electrical connection route predominantly comprises gently undulating agricultural land broken by hedgerows and roads. The northern part of this area includes an existing 132kV overhead line, supported by steel lattice pylons, which runs north northwest to south southeast and is the network to which the new connection will be made.

3 Proposed Development

3.1 Solar Park

- 3.1.1 The array will comprise rows of solar panels, inverters, transformers, and a control building. The fixed solar panels will be mounted on metal frames and positioned at least 0.5 metres above ground level. The metal frames are likely to be set into the ground up to a depth of approximately 1.5 metres. To achieve optimum solar gain the panels will be laid out in east-west rows facing south, with a space of around 5 to 7 metres between each row to avoid shading.
- 3.1.2 Each individual panel will be non-reflective and angled at approximately 20-30 degrees to the horizontal with a maximum overall height of approximately 2.5 metres. The inverters are likely to be lifted into place, while the control building and substation is likely to be constructed on site.
- 3.1.3 The proposed layout of the array has been informed by seeking to minimise or eliminate views from settlements such as Wilbarston and Stoke Albany, and responding to the Rockingham Estate's experience of crop productivity in different areas of the site. An agricultural land survey indicates that the soil is Grade 3b, which confirmed the Estate's experience that the site is less productive than the wider estate. Furthermore a number of changes to the layout have already been made to accommodate the outcomes of ecological surveys that have been completed on site and to ensure a buffer between the development and the SSSI.
- 3.1.4 Although a detailed landscape and visual impact assessment has yet to be carried out, it is likely that, given the siting of the proposed development, the topography of the site and its surroundings, extensive intervening woodland, as well as the tree belts that criss-cross the site, would largely mitigate the potential visual effects of the solar PV array from Wilbarston and Stoke Albany to the north, and Desborough to the south.
- 3.1.5 Once operational, the development will use a renewable source to create electricity, which will be supplied to domestic and commercial consumers via a connection to the local electricity distribution network operated by Western Power Distribution.
- 3.1.6 The site would be accessed via an established access road. This road is already in use by HGVs and large agricultural vehicles associated with existing uses on the former airfield perimeter road.
- 3.1.7 The routes of the existing public footpaths/bridleways on site would not be altered by the proposal. Retaining the footpath through the array will preserve access to the woodland to the southeast.
- 3.1.8 Once operational it is proposed that the land between the panels will be grazed by sheep which is a common and established practice in UK solar parks.

3.2 Electrical Connection Options

- 3.2.1 The existing distribution network, capable of supporting the scale of generation achievable at RAF Desborough, lies approximately 1.8km north-northeast of the solar park site.
- 3.2.2 The applicant is currently assessing a number of options in terms of the route of the electrical connection. This includes both the precise connection point to the distribution network and whether the electrical connection should be made overhead or underground. These options will be assessed through the EIA process and further refined as an element of the community consultation which is to be carried out during the assessment and design process, prior to submission of the planning application.

- 3.2.3 Whether the connection is made overhead or underground affects how the connection is consented and therefore how the scope of an EIA would be agreed. An application for an overhead line would be made to DECC, meaning that a request for a Scoping Opinion for an overhead line would need to be made to DECC under the Electricity Works (EIA Regulations) 2000.
- 3.2.4 For clarity, this Scoping Report addresses both overhead and underground assets. KBC's opinion will apply in respect of the solar site and any underground connection to the existing network. In the event that the applicant chooses to proceed with an overhead connection, this area would be removed from the application boundary and submitted separately to DECC, accommodating any response on their part with respect to Scoping.

Overhead Connection Option

- 3.2.5 Should an overhead line be proposed, the applicant has confirmed that it does not intend to use steel lattice pylons to carry the overhead line. Wood pole supports are the preferred option and such supports are commonly used in rural areas for lower voltages and may be used for higher voltages where the carrying capacity does not require the number of circuits that result in steel lattice pylons. At this stage it is anticipated that double wood pole supports would be required. However, the applicant will seek to agree with Western Power Distribution whether a single wood pole design can be used along straight sections of the route. This decision will be affected by strict safety and technical electrical connection considerations.
- 3.2.6 Poles would average 15m in height to the line support arms. The typical span between poles would be influenced by local topography and the heights of the poles themselves, but would be likely to be around 100-120m. Therefore, subject to further consideration of route alignment, topography and detailed engineering design, an overhead connection would be expected to comprise approximately 15-18 twin or single wood poles.
- 3.2.7 A switchgear compound occupying an area of approximately 0.1ha would be required adjacent to the existing 132kV steel lattice pylon to which the electrical connection is made.
- 3.2.8 An overhead connection would require a distribution network compound and substation with 132/33kV transformers to be located at the entry point to the solar park site, occupying an area of approximately 0.2ha, over and above that set out in Section 3.1.
- 3.2.9 Should an overhead line be proposed it would need to be approved by the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) under Section 37 of the Electricity Act, with KBC being a statutory consultee to that process.

Underground Connection Option

- 3.2.10 The applicant is currently assessing the commercial viability of utilising an underground connection. An application for an underground connection would be determined entirely by KBC as part of one application including the solar site.
- 3.2.11 An underground connection would entail the excavation of a shallow trench to accommodate up to 6 electricity cables. The connection route is being informed by ongoing assessment work but will avoid designated and sensitive features. The trench would then be made good and the affected land reinstated to its previous use (subject to restrictions on depth of working and construction over), with the exception of access points. The cable route would likely require a permanent width of 5m, with a required working width during construction of approximately 15m.
- 3.2.12 An underground connection would require a distribution network compound and substation with 132/33kV transformers occupying an area of approximately 0.2ha to be located adjacent to the existing 132kV steel lattice pylon to which the electrical connection is made.

3.2.13 No additional substation would be required at the solar site over and above that set out in Section 3.1.

4 Planning Policy Context

4.1 National Planning Policy Framework

- 4.1.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the national planning policy context for renewable energy. This framework supports a transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate and encourages the use of renewable energy.
- 4.1.2 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. The NPPF requires local planning authorities to have a positive strategy to promote renewable or low carbon sources.

4.2 North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy, 2008

- 4.2.1 The Core Strategy sets out in its vision a 'green living' approach and recognises Government targets in relation to renewable energy. Policy 13: General Sustainable Development Principles reflects the commitment to sustainable development and Policy 14: Energy Efficiency and Sustainable Construction provides broad support for renewable energy developments.

5 EIA Process

5.1 Screening

- 5.1.1 As stated in **Chapter 1**, an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening Opinion Request was submitted to KBC to determine whether the solar park constitutes EIA development in the context of the TCP EIA Regulations. KBC provided their EIA Screening Opinion identifying that the proposed solar park constitutes EIA development.
- 5.1.2 Although the Guidance on The Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulations 2000 suggests that an overhead electrical connection of the form proposed would be unlikely to require EIA, the applicant proposes to undertake an EIA that covers the solar park and electrical connection regardless of its form, such that KBC, DECC (as required) and stakeholders can understand the environmental effects of the overall development.

5.2 Scoping

- 5.2.1 The purpose of scoping is to identify the principal issues relating to the proposed development – policy, economic and social as well as environmental - and to ensure that they are subject to the appropriate level of assessment, thereby providing a focus for the EIA. It also gives relevant stakeholders an opportunity to express their views on the proposed development and the scope of the EIA.
- 5.2.2 It should be noted that this EIA Scoping Report encompasses the likely significant environmental effects of the construction, operation and de-commissioning of the proposed development as well as the likely significant effects and interactions with existing and committed development. The assessment process should be of sufficient depth to enable an adequate appreciation of how each of the issues listed may be affected by the development, although some topics will be more important than others.

5.3 Assessment

- 5.3.1 In general terms the main stages in the EIA are as follows:
- Data Review – draw together and review available data;
 - Scoping – identify significant issues, determine scope of EIA;
 - Baseline Surveys – undertake baseline surveys and monitoring;
 - Assessment and iteration – assess likely significant effects of development drawing on input from consultees, evaluate alternatives, provide feedback to design team on adverse effects, incorporate any necessary mitigation, assess effects of mitigated development; and
 - Preparation of the ES.

5.4 Mitigation

- 5.4.1 One of the most important roles of the EIA is to identify ways to mitigate significant adverse environmental effects and enhance opportunities which the scheme presents for environmental improvements.

- 5.4.2 A hierarchy of methods for mitigating significant adverse effects will be followed; these are, in order of preference:
- Enhancement, e.g. provision of new habitats;
 - Avoidance, e.g. sensitive design to avoid effects on ecological receptors;
 - Reduction, e.g. limitation of effects on receptors through design changes; and
 - Compensation, e.g. community benefits.
- 5.4.3 Significant environmental effects remaining after mitigation measures have been incorporated are termed residual effects and these will be fully described in the ES.
- 5.4.4 Where necessary, the ES will describe measures that will be taken to monitor the effectiveness of controls, compensation, mitigation, enhancement and remediation. Monitoring will enable any shortfall in expectations directly attributable to the development to be addressed.

5.5 Environmental Statement

- 5.5.1 The ES provides the documentation of the EIA process. The ES will describe the proposed development, EIA methodology, policy context, the main alternatives considered, assessment of likely significant environmental effects (including cumulative effects and impact interactions), as well as providing supporting graphics, technical appendices and a Non-Technical Summary.

6 Proposed Scope of the EIA

6.1 Technical Scope

6.1.1 The technical scope describes the environmental topics that should be addressed by an EIA, in line with the requirements of Schedule 4 of the TCP EIA Regulations. The aspects of the environment which are likely to be significantly affected by the development and have been considered through the scoping process based on Schedule 4 of the EIA Regulations are:

- Population (see Section 8.6 and 8.8);
- Fauna (see Section 7.3);
- Flora (see Section 7.3);
- Soil (see Section 8.4);
- Water (see Section 8.3);
- Air (see Section 8.7);
- Climatic factors (see Section 8.7);
- Material assets including architectural heritage and the historic environment (see Section 7.4);
- Landscape (see Section 7.2); and
- The inter-relationship between the above factors (see Section 6.4).

6.1.2 This requirement and the broad categories set out above, along with transport and access, have to be interpreted and applied in the context of the proposed development. **Chapter 7** provides a detailed analysis of the resultant proposed technical scope of the EIA, while **Chapter 8** identifies those topics which it is proposed to scope out of the EIA as significant environmental effects are unlikely to occur.

6.1.3 The following therefore sets out the principles that will be applied to the EIA and the assessment of the likely significant environmental effects identified in **Chapter 7**.

6.2 Temporal Scope

Environmental Baseline

6.2.1 As a general principle, likely significant environmental effects will be assessed by comparing the predicted state of the environment without the development with current conditions at the site. This approach is considered appropriate given the short build out time typically applied when implementing solar parks.

6.2.2 The EIA will take into account major extant planning permissions and committed developments that are likely to come forward during the construction of the project. Where appropriate, these will be factored into the definition of the baseline or identified as receptors at the relevant points in time.

6.2.3 The EIA will consider whether significant cumulative effects are likely as a result of the following developments and undertake an appropriate level of assessment relative to the likelihood of significant cumulative effects:

- KET/2014/0540 - Burton Wold Solar Farm
- KET/2014/0655 - Eckland Lodge Solar Farm
- KET/2014/0391 - Gaultney Farm Solar Farm
- KET/2014/0281 - A6 Braybrooke Solar Farm
- KET/2014/0479 - Burton Wold Southern Extension
- KET/2012/0556 - Burton Wold Northern Extension
- KET/2009/0549 - New Albion Wind Farm
- KE/03/0228 - Burton Wold Wind Farm

6.2.4 These developments have been drawn from a list provided by KBC during pre-application consultation. The Council's opinion on the sufficiency of this list is welcomed.

Duration of Effects

6.2.5 Environmental effects will be classified as either permanent or temporary, where appropriate. Permanent changes are those which are irreversible (e.g. permanent landtake) or will last for the foreseeable future (e.g. emissions from road traffic generated during the life of a development).

6.2.6 Where environmental effects will be infrequent or intermittent (such as effects related to activities that will not be continuous during construction) this will be noted in the ES.

Phases of the Scheme

Construction

6.2.7 Certain environmental effects will only occur during construction of the proposed development and will cease once construction activities have completed. These will typically be the temporary effects of the scheme. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Construction traffic;
- Risk of pollution during construction; and
- Noise from construction activities.

Operation

6.2.8 Environmental effects that occur during the operation of a development will typically be permanent. Examples of effects which might occur during the operation of the scheme are:

- Changes to important viewpoints;
- Changes to habitats and species; and
- Noise from operating plant.

Decommissioning

- 6.2.9 It is anticipated that the solar farm will have an operational life of approximately 25 years. The EIA will therefore consider, as far as is practicable given the timescales and how far off decommissioning is, the likely significant effects of decommissioning.

6.3 Spatial Scope

- 6.3.1 The spatial extent of each of the technical assessments will vary; in some instances the environmental effects will extend no further than the site boundary and in most cases their extent will not exceed 400m beyond the proposed site boundary. Exceptions are likely to be:

- Visual amenity – determined by the visual envelope; and
- Transport and related effects– scope will include effects on the local road network where significant changes are expected.

- 6.3.2 The spatial extent of each technical assessment will be described in the ES.

6.4 Assessment of Effects

Assessment Scenarios

- 6.4.1 In order to provide a robust and realistic assessment, the EIA will assess the environmental effects of the proposed development during construction, operation and decommissioning (i.e. upon completion of the proposed development).
- 6.4.2 Consideration will also be given to landscape and visual effects once any landscaping proposed as part of the landscape strategy has had time to mature. The operational effects of the development would also therefore be assessed fifteen years post completion of the development, in accordance with guidance for undertaking landscape and visual impact assessment.

Types of Effects

- 6.4.3 In assessing the significance of potential effects identified during the EIA, account will be taken as appropriate as to whether effects are:
- Beneficial Effects – effects that have a positive influence on the environment;
 - Adverse Effects – effects that have a negative influence on the environment;
 - Direct Effects – effects that are caused by activities which are an integral part of the scheme;
 - Indirect Effects – effects that are due to activities that are not part of the scheme, e.g. regeneration benefits attributable to the scheme;
 - Cumulative Effects – many effects that in isolation are not significant, but when assessed together may be significant and also the cumulative effects of the proposed development and other major local developments; and
 - Residual Effects – effects that remain after the positive influence of mitigation measures are taken into account.

- 6.4.4 For clarity within the assessment, 'impact' will be used in relation to the outcome of the project (e.g. the removal of habitat), while the 'effect' will be the consequent implication in environmental terms (continuing the above example, e.g. the loss of a potential bird breeding site).

Residual Effects

- 6.4.5 The incorporation of mitigation measures, primarily as part of the scheme design and construction phase, will be reported where appropriate and likely significant residual effects that remain will be described and assessed according to the significance criteria set out below.

Cumulative Effects & Impact Interactions

- 6.4.6 The EIA will consider as appropriate:
- The likely significant cumulative effects of the proposed development and the major local developments as discussed in **Section 6.2**; and
 - The potential for impact interactions leading to in-combination environmental effect on a receptor being greater than each of the individual effects that have been identified (e.g. local people being affected by noise, visual amenity and increased traffic levels during the construction of a development).

Assessing Significance

- 6.4.7 As noted above, the TCP EIA Regulations require that the ES describes likely significant effects of the proposed development. However, there is no applicable definition of significance and interpretations differ. In accordance with the European Commission's Guidance on Scoping, the EIA will highlight those effects that will influence decision-making or those where there is uncertainty about their magnitude. This approach is consistent with best practice for EIA in the UK.
- 6.4.8 The significance of an effect is typically the product of two factors, the value of the environmental resource affected and the magnitude of the impact, while consideration may also need to be given to the likelihood of an effect occurring. A significant effect may arise as a result of a slight impact on a resource of national value or a severe impact on a resource of local value. In addition, the accumulation of many non-significant effects on similar local resources geographically spread throughout the scheme may give rise to an overall significant effect. An example of this might be the loss of ecological habitat of low value at multiple locations.
- 6.4.9 This approach to assessing and assigning significance to an environmental effect will rely upon such factors as legislative requirements, guidelines, standards and codes of practice, consideration of the TCP EIA Regulations, the advice and views of statutory consultees and other interested parties and expert judgement. The following questions are relevant in evaluating the significance of likely environmental effects:
- Which risk groups are affected and in what way?
 - Is the effect reversible or irreversible?
 - Does the effect occur over the short, medium or long term?
 - Is the effect continuous or temporary? Does it increase or decrease with time? Is it of local, regional, national or international importance?
 - Are health standards or environmental objectives threatened?

6.4.10 Specific significance criteria will be prepared for each specialist topic, based on the above and the generic criteria set out in **Table 6.1**.

Table 6.1: Significance Criteria

Significance Level	Criteria
Severe	Only adverse effects are assigned this level of significance as they represent key factors in the decision-making process. These effects are generally, but not exclusively, associated with sites and features of national or regional importance. A change at a district scale site or feature may also enter this category.
Major	These effects are likely to be important considerations at a local or district scale but, if adverse, are potential concerns to the project and may become key factors in the decision-making process.
Moderate	These effects, if adverse, while important at a local scale, are not likely to be key decision-making issues. Nevertheless, the cumulative effect of such issues may lead to an increase in the overall effects on a particular area or on a particular resource.
Minor	These effects may be raised as local issues but are unlikely to be of importance in the decision-making process. Nevertheless they are of relevance in enhancing the subsequent design of the project and consideration of mitigation or compensation measures.
Not Significant	Either no effect or an effect which is beneath the level of perception, within normal bounds of variation or within the margin of forecasting error. Such effects should not be considered by the decision-maker.

6.4.11 Within the framework above, the project team will set significance thresholds for each environmental topic. To ensure a balanced approach, the significance threshold for one topic will be equivalent to the significance threshold of any other topic, as far as is possible.

Uncertainty

6.4.12 The prediction of future effects inevitably involves a degree of uncertainty. Where necessary, the ES will describe the principal factors giving rise to uncertainty in the prediction of environmental effects and the degree of the uncertainty.

6.4.13 Confidence in predictions will be engendered by employing accepted assessment methodologies, e.g. Guidance for Ecological Impact Assessment by the Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management. Uncertainty inherent within the prediction will be described.

6.4.14 Uncertainty also applies to the success or otherwise of measures to mitigate negative environmental effects. Where the success of a mitigation measure is uncertain, the extent of the uncertainty will be identified in the ES.

Difficulties in Undertaking the Assessment

6.4.15 The ES will identify, in accordance with the TCP EIA Regulations, any difficulties that have been encountered in undertaking the assessment. This may include the collection of baseline data, the prediction of future conditions, data not being available, etc. It remains the intention of the project team however to ensure that the ES provides a robust assessment of the likely significant environmental effects of the proposed development and that sufficient information

is provided to inform decision makers of environmental effects and the requirements for mitigation.

Consideration of Alternatives

- 6.4.16 The TCP EIA Regulations require an ES to include an outline of the main alternatives considered by the applicant, indicating the main reasons for the choice made, taking into account the environmental effects.
- 6.4.17 The ES will fulfil the requirements of the TCP EIA Regulations through identifying the main alternatives considered by the applicant and explain the main reasons for the choices made. It is anticipated that such reasons for choosing between main alternatives may include: planning policy, viability, land availability, design quality, market requirements, site constraints and opportunities and environmental effects. The consideration of alternatives will give particular consideration to the choice of electrical connection.

7 Topics Included in EIA Scope

7.1 Introduction

- 7.1.1 This chapter identifies the environmental topics that it is proposed should be scoped into the EIA, and the likely significant effects and the methodologies proposed to undertake the assessments. This is based on environmental information collected at the site (including the collection of desk study data, site walkovers and ecology surveys) which is informing the emerging design of the proposed development.

7.2 Landscape & Visual

Introduction

- 7.2.1 A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) will identify and assess the adverse and beneficial effects and significance of change arising from the proposed development on the landscape as an environmental resource in its own right and on people's views and visual amenity.
- 7.2.2 The Landscape Institute / Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment', (3rd Edition, 2013) notes in paragraph 1.17, page 9, in reference to the European Union Directive 2011/92/EU:

*'The Directive is clear that the emphasis is on the identification of **likely significant** environmental effects. This should embrace all types of effect and includes, for example, those that are positive/beneficial and negative/adverse, direct and indirect, and long and short term, as well as cumulative effects. Identifying significant effects stresses the need for an approach that is in proportion to the scale of the project that is being assessed and the nature of its likely effects. Judgement needs to be exercised at all stages in terms of the scale of investigation that is appropriate and proportional. This does not mean that effects should be ignored or their importance minimised but that the assessment should be tailored to the particular circumstances in each case.'*

- 7.2.3 The LVIA will be carried out by chartered landscape architects at Peter Brett Associates LLP, a registered practice with the Landscape Institute and a member of the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment.

Potential Effects

- 7.2.4 Potential landscape and visual effects arising from the proposed development are those upon:
- Landscape features;
 - Landscape character; and
 - People's views and visual amenity.

Landscape Features

- 7.2.5 Features within the site which will be affected will be limited to the arable land on which the development will be sited and the setting of the public right of way crossing the site. It is possible that it may be necessary to create small gaps in hedges if underground connections are used. The effects are unlikely to be significant.

Landscape Character

- 7.2.6 In the Current Landscape Character Assessment: Strategic Framework Study (November 2006) the site is within the broad Wooded Clay Plateau Landscape Type, and specifically Character Area 7a Geddington Chase. To the north lies Character Area 13e Stoke Albany and Ashley character area within the Undulating Hills and Valleys type.
- 7.2.7 The most likely significant landscape effect would be the change from arable land to a solar park.

People's Views and Visual Amenity

- 7.2.8 A preliminary computer-generated Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) has been created to establish the theoretical extent to which the proposed development is likely to be visible in the surrounding area. The preliminary ZTV will be used to guide the initial selection of representative viewpoints to be included within the visual impact assessment.
- 7.2.9 The visual effects most likely to occur from the solar photovoltaic park and which are likely to be significant, and the main receptors affected, would be adverse effects on users of public footpaths adjacent to and across the site. There may be adverse effects from residential properties to the south and east, but they are unlikely to be significant owing to distance and intervening vegetation.
- 7.2.10 The corridor for the proposed connection is across more open countryside but the nature of the proposals, either cables on timber poles or underground routes with the associated provision of a substation, are unlikely to lead to significant visual effects.
- 7.2.11 The selection of viewpoints will be made on the basis of the following types of publicly accessible viewpoints:
- representative viewpoints (for example, representing views of users of a particular footpath);
 - specific viewpoints (for example, a key view from a specific visitor attraction);
 - illustrative viewpoints (chosen to demonstrate a particular effect/specific issue); and
 - any important sequential views (for example, along key transport routes).

Methodology

- 7.2.12 The methodology for LVIA is based on professional experience, the Landscape Institute / Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment 'Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment' (3rd Edition, 2013).
- 7.2.13 The assessment of landscape and visual effects aims to be as objective as possible, however professional judgements are required to be made, as the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (3rd Edition, 2013) explains in paragraph 2.23, page 21:

'Professional judgement is a very important part of LVIA. Whilst there is some scope for quantitative measurement of some relatively objective matters, for example the number of trees lost to construction... much of the assessment must rely on qualitative judgements, for example about what effect the introduction of a new development of land use change may have on visual amenity, or about the significance of change in the character in the landscape and whether it is positive or negative.'

- 7.2.14 The LVIA will consider the effects on landscape (including landscape character) and people's views / visual amenity as separate assessment components.
- 7.2.15 The assessment of landscape and visual effects will make comparison with the baseline year of 2014, and will include assessment during the construction period, on completion of the development and 15 years after completion of the development when new planting is assumed to have successfully established and grown to provide effective mitigation.
- 7.2.16 A ZTV plan will be created, based upon the final development proposals. This will be generated by selecting spot locations to simulate the outer limits of the proposed development footprint and assigning maximum heights of the proposed development to those spot locations. The ZTV computer software processes landform data and other selected features influencing the extent of visibility (visual barriers), for example, woodland and settlements, in order to identify the theoretical extent of the area from which the proposed development is likely to be visible. It is important to note that the ZTV will illustrate the worst-case scenario, in that it will only take into account the landform and principal areas of woodland. In reality other features, such as hedgerows or street trees, are likely to provide additional filtering of views.

Baseline Data for the Landscape and Visual Assessment

- 7.2.17 A data trawl will be undertaken to establish the baseline landscape and landscape character information, including topography, landscape planning designations and published sources of landscape character or, where relevant, landscape character.
- 7.2.18 Sources of information for the data trawl include:
- a. Ordnance Survey OpenData for mapping;
 - b. Google Earth Pro for aerial photography; and
 - c. nrnpenvironmentalcharacter.org.uk

Site Appraisal and Photographic Record

- 7.2.19 The site and surrounding area will be visited and a photographic record to represent views of the selected assessment viewpoints will be undertaken, in order to:
- a. Determine the extent of visibility of existing built structures;
 - b. Determine the visibility of the proposed development, utilising the results from the ZTV plan to guide the field work;
 - c. Gain further understanding of the urban components which create the landscape character; and
 - d. Carry out the assessment of landscape and visual effects.

Assessment Stages

- 7.2.20 A three-stage assessment process will be adopted for the LVIA, in accordance with the Landscape Institute/Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment guidelines. Firstly, the nature of receptors (sensitivity) will be assessed. Secondly the nature of effects (magnitude) likely to result from the proposed development will be assessed. Lastly, the significance of the identified landscape and visual effects on receptors will be assessed, as required by the European Union Directive 2011/92/EU and UK Country Regulations.

Duration of Effects

7.2.21 Effects may be temporary, permanent or reversible over time. The following terminology will be used to describe the duration of landscape and visual effects arising as a result of the development proposals:

- a. Short term: less than 1 year;
- b. Medium term: 1-15 years; and
- c. Long term: longer than 15 years.

Nature of Effects

7.2.22 The nature of effects may be positive (beneficial) or negative (adverse) and direct or indirect.

Assessment of Landscape Effects

7.2.23 This will assess how the proposed development will affect the components of the landscape (the 'landscape fabric', for example land use, scale, street trees, street pattern and layout, urban grain and massing, legibility, public realm and appearance), and the key characteristics which contribute to its distinctive character (the 'landscape character').

7.2.24 A methodical consideration of each effect upon each identified landscape receptor will be undertaken, in order to determine the significance of effects, in terms of:

- a. Value and susceptibility to change (sensitivity of the landscape receptor); and
- b. Size / scale, extent, duration and reversibility (magnitude of the landscape effect).

Sensitivity of Landscape Receptors

7.2.25 The assessment of landscape receptor sensitivity will combine judgements on the value attributed to the landscape receptor and the 'susceptibility to change' of the receptor to the specific type of development proposed.

7.2.26 The value of potentially affected landscape receptors will be assessed, including landscape character and the individual elements or features which contribute to that landscape character. Landscapes may be valued at community, local, national or international levels. Existing landscape designations will be taken as the starting point for the assessment, and the value of undesignated landscapes will also be assessed.

7.2.27 **Table 7.1** sets out the relative importance of generic landscape designations and descriptions, identifying those designations applicable to the site and study area in the third column:

Table 7.1: Landscape Designations

Typical Designation	Description	Importance (Value)	Actual Designation Applicable to the Site and Surrounding Area
World Heritage Site	Unique sites, features or areas of international importance with settings of very high quality.	International (High)	N/A
National Park, AONB, Conservation Area, curtilage of Grade I, II and II* Listed Buildings, Registered Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest, Scheduled Monuments, Ancient Woodland	Sites, features or areas of national importance with settings of high quality.	National (High)	Conservation Areas; Ancient Woodlands; Listed Buildings
Special Landscape Areas, Areas of Great Landscape Value, Long distance footpaths	Sites, features or areas of regional importance with intact character.	Regional (High/ Medium)	Special Landscape Area to the north and west; Jurassic Way long distance footpath.
Areas of Local Landscape Importance, Designated Public Open Space, Tree Preservation Orders (TPO)	Sites, features or areas of district importance.	District (Medium or Low)	N/A
Probably no designation, local public right of way	General countryside area valued at the local level.	Local (Medium/ or Low)	General Countryside; local public rights of way adjacent to and across site.

7.2.28 Other factors which may influence landscape value are set out in Table 7.2, below:

Table 7.2: Factors Which Influence Landscape Value

Attribute	Criteria
Landscape Quality	Intactness or physical condition of the landscape or of the individual elements which contribute to landscape character.
Sense of Place	Aesthetic and perceptual qualities which create distinctiveness.
Scenic Quality	General appeal of the landscape to the senses.
Rarity	Rarity of landscape character areas, types or features.
Representativeness	Particular characteristic/feature/element considered an important example.
Cultural Interest	The presence of wildlife or cultural heritage interest which contributes positively to the landscape.
Recreation Value	Evidence that the landscape experience forms an important part of recreational activity, e.g. as established in guidebooks.
Associations	Relevant associations with notable figures, such as writers or artists, or events in history that contribute to landscape value.

7.2.29 Where appropriate, key individual components of the landscape, including particular features, notable aesthetic and perceptual qualities, will be considered in terms of importance in their

own right, including whether or not they can realistically be replaced. They will also be judged on their contribution to the overall character and value of the wider landscape. For example, an intact landscape in good condition, where scenic quality, tranquillity, and/or cultural heritage features make a particular contribution to the landscape, or where there are important historical associations, is likely to be highly valued. Conversely, a degraded landscape in poor condition, with no particular scenic qualities or cultural interest is likely to be considered as low landscape value.

7.2.30 Susceptibility of landscape receptors to change arising from the proposed development will be based upon the following criteria:

Table 7.3: Landscape Receptor Susceptibility to Change

Susceptibility	Criteria
High	Little ability to accommodate the proposed development without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline landscape and/or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies.
Medium	Some ability to accommodate the proposed development without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline landscape and/or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies.
Low	Substantial ability to accommodate the proposed development without undue consequences for the maintenance of the baseline landscape and/or the achievement of landscape planning policies and strategies.

7.2.31 An overall assessment of sensitivity will be made for each landscape receptor, based on a combined judgement of the above criteria, using following typical scales:

Table 7.4: Landscape Sensitivity

Landscape Sensitivity	Description
High	<p>An area possessing a particularly distinctive sense of place and character, and / or attributes which make a particular contribution to the landscape or landscape character, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in good condition; • highly valued for its scenic quality; • highly valued for its landscape character; • an area with a low tolerance to change of the type proposed; • cultural heritage features or walks with cultural associations; • valued for contribution to recreational activity; • important cultural or historic associations; • irreplaceable landscape features or character; • part of a long distance footpath.
Medium	<p>An area with a clearly defined sense of place and character, and / or attributes which contribute to the landscape or landscape character, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in moderate condition; • some scenic quality valued at a local or regional level; • landscape character intact and valued at a local or regional level; • an area with partial tolerance to change of the type proposed;

Landscape Sensitivity	Description
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • may be undesignated landscape.
Low	<p>An area with a weak sense of place or poorly defined character, and / or attributes which make a contribution to the landscape or landscape character, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in poor condition; • no particular scenic qualities; • disjointed or weak landscape character; • contains a high level of discordant or detracting features; • no cultural interest; • an area that is tolerant of substantial change of the type proposed; • undesignated landscape; • a degraded landscape; • strongly influenced by detracting land uses and buildings.

Magnitude of Landscape Effects

- 7.2.32 Development proposals can create either beneficial or adverse effects upon the landscape. However, the evaluation of the appearance of structures is a subjective issue, and one which does not form part of the LVIA. The assessment of landscape and visual effects will be based on the scale and massing of proposed development and the consequential effects upon landscape, landscape character and people's views and visual amenity.
- 7.2.33 The magnitude of a landscape effect will be assessed in terms of its size or scale, the geographical extent of the area influenced and its duration and degree of reversibility.
- 7.2.34 The size or scale of change in the landscape relates to the loss or addition of features in the landscape which are likely to result from the proposed development, and takes into account:
- a. The extent/proportion of landscape elements that are lost or added;
 - b. The contribution of those elements to landscape character and the degree to which aesthetic/perceptual aspects are altered; and
 - c. Whether the effect is likely to change the key characteristics of the landscape, which are critical to its distinctive character.
- 7.2.35 The following criteria, in Table 7.5, will be used to assess the size and scale of landscape effects, based on the degree of change that will occur as a result of the proposed development:

Table 7.5: Landscape Effects: Size/Scale of Change

Category	Criteria
Major adverse landscape effect	The proposals will result in a total change in the key characteristics of landscape character; will introduce elements totally uncharacteristic to the attributes of the receiving landscape such as its massing, scale, pattern and features; and/or will destroy or permanently degrade the integrity of landscape character; or is in total conflict with established planning objectives for landscape and visual elements of regeneration and enhancement of the landscape; and/or result in a substantial or total loss, or alteration of key elements/features/characteristics.
Moderate adverse landscape effect	The proposals will result in a partial change in the key characteristics of landscape character; will introduce elements uncharacteristic to, out of scale or at odds with the attributes of the receiving landscape, such as its massing, scale, pattern and features; and/or will result in partial loss, or alteration of key elements/features/characteristics; or is in conflict with established planning objectives for landscape and visual elements of regeneration and enhancement of the landscape.
Minor adverse landscape effect	The proposals will result in little change in the key characteristics of landscape character and will introduce elements that do not quite fit with the attributes of the receiving landscape such as its massing, scale, pattern and features; and/or will result in a minor loss or alteration of elements/features/characteristics; and/or contribute to degrading the landscape character.
Negligible adverse landscape effect	The proposals will result in a just discernible change to landscape character/elements/features/characteristics, which is not quite in keeping with the existing landscape and landscape character.
No change	The proposals will not cause any change to the landscape character/elements/features/characteristics.
Neutral effect	As a result of the proposals, there will be a change to the landscape elements/features/characteristics, but the change will be in keeping with, and complement, the existing landscape character such that the existing character is maintained and does not cause degradation or enhancement of the character.
Negligible landscape benefit	The proposals will result in a just discernible improvement to the landscape character/elements/characteristics, such as massing, scale, pattern or features.
Minor landscape benefit	The proposals will achieve a degree of fit with the landscape character/elements/features/characteristics and provides some enhancement to the condition or character of the landscape.
Moderate landscape benefit	The proposals will achieve a good fit with the landscape character/elements/features/characteristics, such as massing, scale, and pattern; or would noticeably improve the condition or character of the landscape and enhance characteristic features through the use of local materials; and/or support established planning objectives for landscape and visual elements of regeneration and enhancement of the landscape.
Major landscape benefit	The proposals will totally accord with the landscape character/elements/features/characteristics, including scale, pattern, massing; or would restore, recreate or permanently enhance the condition or character of the landscape and enhance characteristic features through the use of local materials; and/or delivers established planning objectives for landscape and visual elements of regeneration and enhancement of the landscape.

Assessment of Effects on Views and Visual Amenity

7.2.36 This will assess how the proposed development will affect the views available to people and their visual amenity. A methodical consideration of each visual effect upon each identified visual receptor will be undertaken, in order to determine the significance of effects, in terms of:

- a. Value and susceptibility to change (sensitivity of the visual receptor, or viewer); and
- b. Size / scale, extent, composition, duration and reversibility (magnitude of the visual effect).

- 7.2.37 Visual receptors generally comprise users of public rights of way, public open spaces, public realm or other outdoor recreational facilities, and also travellers in vehicles who may be visiting, living or working within the study area, and their views at particular places.
- 7.2.38 The following terminology will be used to describe the approximate distance between the representative viewpoint and the proposed development:
- a. Local: under 0.5km;
 - b. Medium distance: 0.5km – 2km;
 - c. Long distance: beyond 2km.
- 7.2.39 The type of view, and the number of viewers likely to experience the view, will be described in the following terms:
- a. Glimpsed (i.e. in passing) / Filtered / Oblique / Framed / Open Views; and
 - b. Few / Moderate / Many Viewers.
- 7.2.40 No private viewpoints will be assessed. However, where appropriate, representative viewpoints will be selected from publicly accessible locations within or on the edge of main settlements, property groupings or other buildings likely to be significantly affected by the proposed development.

Sensitivity of Visual Receptors

- 7.2.41 The assessment of visual receptor sensitivity will combine judgements on the value attributed to the visual receptor and the 'susceptibility to change' of the receptor to the specific type of development proposed.
- 7.2.42 The value assigned to views will have regard to a number of factors, including:
- a. Recognition through planning or heritage assets; and
 - b. The popularity of the viewpoint, its appearance in guidebooks, literature or art, on tourist maps, and the facilities provided to enable enjoyment of the view.
- 7.2.43 The criteria for the assessment of the value of views is summarised in the table below; note that these are provided for guidance and are not intended to be absolute.

Table 7.6: Value of Views

Value	Criteria
High	Views from landscapes/viewpoints of national importance, or highly popular visitor attractions where the view forms an important part of the experience, or with important cultural associations.
Medium	Views from landscapes/viewpoints of regional/district importance or moderately popular visitor attractions where the view forms part of the experience, or with local cultural associations.
Low	Views from landscapes/viewpoints with no designations, not particularly popular as a viewpoint and with minimal or no cultural associations.

- 7.2.44 The susceptibility of people to changes in views is a function of:
- a. The occupation or activity of the viewer at a given location; and

- b. The extent to which a person's attention or interest may therefore be focussed on a particular view and the visual amenity experienced.

7.2.45 For the purposes of the visual impact assessment, visual receptors' susceptibility to change will be based upon the following table (Table 7.7).

Table 7.7: Visual Receptor Susceptibility to Change

Susceptibility	Type of Receptor
High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Residents; - People engaged in outdoor recreation, including users of public rights of way, whose attention is likely to be focussed on the visual environment of the landscape and on particular views; - Visitors to heritage assets, landmarks or other attractions where views of the surroundings are an important part of the experience; - Communities where views contribute to the landscape setting enjoyed by residents; and - Travellers on scenic routes.
Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Travellers on road, rail or other transport routes, where the view is moderately important to the quality of the journey; - People using local parks, open spaces, public realm, or walking on streets or local public rights of way, with moderate interest in their visual environment.
Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - People engaged in outdoor sport or recreation, which does not involve appreciation of, or focus upon, views; - People at their place of work, where the landscape setting is not important to the quality of working life; and - Travellers, where the view is fleeting and incidental to the journey.

Magnitude of Visual Effects

- 7.2.46 The magnitude of a visual effect will be assessed in terms of its size or scale, the geographical extent of the area influenced and its duration and degree of reversibility.
- 7.2.47 The size or scale of change in the view relates to the degree of contrast to, or integration with, the visual composition, which is likely to result from the proposed development; and is influenced by the relative time over which a view is experienced and whether it is a full, partial or glimpsed view.
- 7.2.48 The following criteria (Table 7.8) will be used to assess the size and scale of visual effects, based on the degree of change to the view or composition:

Table 7.8: Visual Effects: Size/Scale of Change

Category	Criteria
Major adverse or beneficial visual effect	The proposals will cause a dominant or complete change or contrast to the view, resulting from the loss or addition of features in the view and will substantially alter (degrade or enhance) the appreciation or composition of the view.
Moderate adverse or beneficial visual effect	The proposals will cause a clearly noticeable change or contrast to the view, which would have some effect on the composition, resulting from the loss or addition of features in the view and will noticeably alter (degrade or enhance) the appreciation of the view.
Minor adverse or beneficial visual effect	The proposals will cause a perceptible change or contrast to the view, but which would not materially affect the composition or the appreciation of the view.
Negligible adverse or beneficial visual effect	The proposals will cause a barely perceptible change or contrast to the view, which would not affect the composition or the appreciation of the view.
No change	The proposals will maintain the existing view and cause no change to the view.

Category	Criteria
Neutral	There will be a change to the composition of the view, but the change will be entirely in keeping with the existing elements of the view and maintain the composition of the existing view.

Landscape and Visual Mitigation Measures

7.2.49 Measures proposed for preventing/avoiding, reducing or, where possible, offsetting or compensating for significant adverse landscape or visual effects will be described. Mitigation measures comprise:

- a. Primary measures – developed through the iterative design process, and which have become integrated or embedded into the project/scheme design, such as site layout, retention of existing trees, use of vernacular materials or appropriate form, detailed design, colours and finishes, new street tree planting or incorporation of key views and vistas;
- b. Standard construction and operational management practices – for avoiding and reducing environmental effects, such as hoardings around buildings or tree protection fencing; and
- c. Secondary measures – proposals to address residual adverse effects which remain after primary measures and standard construction practices have been incorporated into the scheme.

7.2.50 Primary mitigation measures and standard construction and operational management practices will be described in the project description.

7.2.51 Secondary mitigation measures, if required, will be described in the LVIA.

Assessment of Significance of Landscape and Visual Effects

7.2.52 Significance of landscape and visual effects vary with the location, landscape context and type of proposed development.

7.2.53 The significance of landscape and visual effects will be determined from a combination of the receptor sensitivity and the magnitude of effects, as set out in the following table (Table 7.9).

Table 7.9: Assessment of Significance of Landscape and Visual Effects

Sensitivity of Receptor	Major Effect	Moderate Effect	Minor Effect	Negligible Effect	Neutral Effect
High	Significant	Significant	Moderately Significant	Not Significant	Not Significant
Medium	Moderately Significant	Moderately Significant	Not Significant	Not Significant	Not Significant
Low	Moderately Significant	Not Significant	Not Significant	Not Significant	Not Significant

7.2.54 The above table has regard to guidance in the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, (3rd Edition, 2013), at paragraph 5.56, page 92 (significance of landscape effects) and paragraph 6.44, page 116 (significance of visual effects).

7.2.55 For the purposes of the LVIA, 'Moderately Significant' effects will also be considered as significant, but to a lesser degree than (wholly) 'Significant' effects.

7.3 Ecology

7.3.1 This chapter of the ES will consider likely significant impacts and effects on ecological receptors associated with the proposed solar park (main site) and associated electrical connection (cable/overhead route). In addition, the mitigation and/or compensation required to ameliorate any effects to ensure that the proposed development will be in accordance with legislation and planning policy will be identified.

7.3.2 Ecological work undertaken to date includes a desk study reviewing the existing ecological information pertaining to the site and its surrounds. The desk study information was used to support a Phase 1 habitat survey undertaken in 2014, by FPRC Environment and Design Ltd, which recorded the habitats present within the site and was extended to include consideration of the potential for the site and its habitats to support protected, priority² or invasive³ species.

Baseline

Designated Sites

7.3.3 The desk study confirmed there are no sites designated in accordance with the European Habitats and Birds Directives within 10 km of the site. However, the following three sites are located within 2km of the main site:

- Pipewell Woods SSSI – immediately adjacent to the southern boundary (SP 833 862). This site comprises 81ha of ancient coppice that is representative of wet ash-maple woodland.
- Stoke and Bowd Lane Woods SSSI – Bowd Lane Wood is immediately adjacent to the north-west boundary (SP807 867); Stoke Wood is 630m to the west (SP800 862). These two blocks of ancient and semi-natural oak woodland are 36.6ha, representative of wet ash-maple woodland.
- Alder Wood & Meadow SSSI – 1.54km south-west (SP 837847). 13ha of ancient woodland and associated unimproved meadow.

7.3.4 Six non-statutory protected areas of nature conservation interest, referred to in Northamptonshire as Local Wildlife Sites (LWS), are present within 1 km of the solar farm site. These are:

- Goodman's Spinney LWS – immediately adjacent to the southern boundary (SP 820 854), and is designated for the old osier bed and marsh habitats it supports.
- Walter Wood LWS – 250m north (SP825 868), is designated for the semi-natural sycamore and ash woodland it supports.
- Askershaw Wood LWS – 210m to the east (SP835 870), comprises an area of oak-ash ancient woodland supporting derelict coppice.

² Priority species are defined for the purposes of this scoping report as those species listed in accordance with the requirements of Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act, 2006 which are of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England.

³ Invasive species are defined for the purposes of this scoping report as those plant species listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended).

- 11 Acre Spinney – 700m to the south (SP 816 846), is a broad-leaved woodland with notable ground flora and grassy rides.
- West Lodge Quarry – 715m to the south (SP813 844), is a former quarry designated for the mosaic of habitats including species-rich grassland which it supports, along with a notable invertebrate fauna.
- Brampton Wood LWS - 800m to the west, comprises over 50ha of ancient semi-natural and re-planted woodland.

Habitats

- 7.3.5 The extended Phase 1 habitat survey confirmed that the majority of the solar farm site was dominated by arable fields, bounded by species-poor hedgerows, with small areas of semi-natural grassland and semi-natural and plantation woodland. Areas of hardstanding associated with the access roads, runways and operational areas of the former airfield remained, along with old air raid shelter buildings and a roofless brick structure. In addition, three ponds were located within or directly adjacent to the main site, with two ponds located within the cable/ overhead route a total of 17 ponds within 250m of the site boundary and cable/ overhead route.
- 7.3.6 The cable/overhead route, to the north of the main site comprised arable farmland bounded by species-poor hedgerows, which supported a number of mature ash and alder trees. The surrounding landscape largely comprised arable fields bounded by managed hedgerows, interspersed with blocks of woodland.
- 7.3.7 The arable fields and areas of hardstanding dominating the site are common and widespread habitats, of negligible inherent nature conservation value. Despite the majority of the hedgerows being species-poor and/or defunct, a number of the hedgerows supported a mix of species and the network across the site as a whole is considered to be of some ecological value; hedgerows qualify as a Habitat of Principal Importance under Section 41 of the NERC Act (2006). In addition, one species-rich hedgerow, to the north-east of the site, was considered to be 'important' under the Hedgerow Regulations (1997), due to the number of woody species it supported and its associated features, adjacent to a Public Byway.
- 7.3.8 The most valuable habitat within the solar park site is considered to be the areas of semi-natural deciduous woodland. Although limited in extent, they constitute a Habitat of Principal Importance and are a Priority Habitat within the Northamptonshire Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP). However, all of the woodland areas (including areas of planted woodland) will be retained within the proposed layout.
- 7.3.9 No invasive plant species, listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) as amended, were recorded during any of the surveys.

Species

- 7.3.10 The presence of great crested newts has been confirmed in ponds across the survey area, including both 'medium' and 'low' populations. The most suitable terrestrial habitat for great crested newts, including areas of woodland, scrub and grassy areas will not be affected by the scheme. However, the potential exists for some suitable terrestrial habitat for great crested newts to be affected in the vicinity of the confirmed breeding ponds.
- 7.3.11 The majority of habitats dominating the site were considered to offer very few opportunities for reptiles and it is therefore highly unlikely that significant populations of reptiles are present. However, grassland to the north of the planted woodland within the site provided habitat suitable for foraging, shelter and basking; these areas will not be affected by the proposed scheme.

- 7.3.12 The arable fields in particular, were found to support a diverse assemblage of breeding birds, typical of farmland habitats, including turtle dove (*Streptopelia turtur*) with moderate numbers of reed bunting (*Emberiza schoeniclus*), skylark (*Alauda arvensis*) and yellowhammer (*Emberiza citrinella*) recorded. In addition, the network of hedgerows, areas of deciduous and planted woodland and scrub within the site are likely to be used by nesting birds. The desk study confirmed that the former RAF Desborough Airfield has also historically supported a diverse assemblage of over-wintering birds. Surveys are currently ongoing to assess the value of the site for over-wintering birds.
- 7.3.13 The extended Phase 1 survey confirmed that the buildings within the site were of negligible value to roosting bats. A number of mature trees were considered suitable for use by roosting bats, but none of these trees will be affected by the proposals. Relatively low levels of bat activity were revealed during the activity and static bat detector surveys, and common and widespread species were recorded, including common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*), Myotis spp. and noctule (*Nyctalus noctula*). No particular foraging areas or commuting routes were identified, although bats were found to be using the boundary features and woodland edge for both of these activities.
- 7.3.14 Desk study records for dormice occur within Stoke & Bowd Lane Wood SSSI, approximately 790m to the west of the main site. In addition, the areas of deciduous woodland and the more overgrown hedgerows, particularly along the eastern boundary of the main site constituted suitable habitat for use by dormice. None of these habitats would be directly affected by the proposals. The majority of the hedgerows which might be affected by the electrical connection were either species-poor or defunct and intensively managed, and therefore unlikely to support dormice; dormice are considered to be absent.
- 7.3.15 The majority of ditches within the main site were considered unsuitable for use by water voles. The exception to this is a ditch in the north-east corner of the site; although considered suitable habitat, no water vole field signs were recorded during the survey. In any event, this feature will not be affected by the proposed layout. The absence of water voles has been confirmed from the ditches within electrical connection route.
- 7.3.16 Signs of badger activity were found across the site, and several active setts were recorded. None of the setts would be directly affected as a result of the proposals.

Potential Effects

- 7.3.17 There will be no direct impacts on any statutory designated sites as a result of the proposals. However, the potential for indirect effects on the adjacent Pipewell Woods SSSI and Stoke and Bowd Lane Woods SSSI during the construction phase exist, as a result of potential changes in hydrology, pollution effects, damage to trees and loss of connected habitats. An appropriate buffer zone will be retained within the layout, and the adoption of best practice construction methodology will seek to ensure significant adverse effects are avoided; these will be identified in the Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) for the scheme. Similarly, an appropriate buffer zone will be retained adjacent to Goodman's Spinney LWS to avoid indirect effects on this site of county importance for nature conservation.
- 7.3.18 The proposed solar park will result in the loss of arable fields, considered to be of inherent negligible nature conservation value. Nevertheless, there will be a loss of suitable habitat for use by breeding birds, which will be displaced into surrounding farmland. The more valuable areas of deciduous (and planted) woodland will be retained, as will the mature trees, areas of scrub and semi-improved grassland. Similarly, arable fields will be affected by the electrical connection route, and there may be the loss of short sections of hedgerows and ditches, depending upon the final alignment and whether the connection is overhead or underground, with the potential for effects on nesting birds, and common species of reptiles.

- 7.3.19 No ponds will be directly affected by development on either the solar park site or the electrical connection route; however, the potential exists for terrestrial habitat used by great crested newts to be affected by the proposals, depending upon the final alignment of the electrical connection. This could result in localised effects on the local great crested newt population, and a licence may be required from Natural England for the works to proceed.
- 7.3.20 The potential exists for disturbance effects on any badgers using the retained setts during the construction phase. An appropriate buffer will therefore be retained around the setts, to minimise disturbance and works will be timed accordingly; where disturbance cannot be avoided the temporary exclusion of badger sett(s) may be required.
- 7.3.21 Mitigation measures will be incorporated into the proposed development to reduce the scale of any effect and on the basis of the legal protection that these species/ species group receive. In addition, opportunities for habitat creation and enhancement will be sought within the layout to enhance the biodiversity value of the site.

Methodology

- 7.3.22 The ecological survey and desk study work undertaken to date has been carried out in accordance with established best practice guidance and therefore is a sound basis for the production of this Scoping Report. Consultation will be undertaken with KBC to identify any issues of particular concern, and to agree the approach outlined below for completing the ecological assessment.
- 7.3.23 The ecological impact assessment will be undertaken in accordance with current best practice guidance as set out by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management⁴. The scope and rationale for the assessment will be reported in the ES chapter, underpinned by the baseline reporting and assessment provided in the Ecological Appraisal Report.
- 7.3.24 The value of ecological features within the site and its surrounds will be determined within their geographical frame of reference in the wider landscape, using the following: International; National; Regional; County; District/Borough; and Parish/Neighbourhood. In order to determine the likelihood of a significant ecological effect, it will be necessary to identify whether a receptor is sufficiently valuable for a significant effect upon it to be material in decision-making. Only those receptors that it is considered could experience significant effects (i.e. impacts that could adversely affect the integrity of the habitat or the favourable conservation status of a species' local population), and which are identified as being of sufficient value to be material to decision-making (i.e. of 'District' level importance or above), will be classified as being 'Key Ecological Receptors'. It is these receptors that will be considered in the detailed assessment.
- 7.3.25 Given the findings of the desk study and survey work undertaken to date set out in the introduction, and the potential effects identified, the Ecology chapter of the ES will focus on the following 'Key Ecological Receptors':
- Pipewell Wood and Stoke and Browd Lane Wood SSSIs;
 - Goodman's Spinney LWS; and
 - Breeding bird assemblage.
- 7.3.26 Depending upon the outcome of ongoing wintering bird surveys, the wintering bird assemblage may also be included as a 'Key Ecological Receptor'.

⁴ Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2006) Guidelines for ecological impact assessment in the United Kingdom. IEEM, Winchester

- 7.3.27 Potential impacts on these ecological features will be identified along with the mitigation required to prevent, reduce or offset any significant adverse effects. The chapter will set out any likely residual likely significant effects of the proposed development, following mitigation. The chapter will also determine, given the identified residual impacts, whether cumulative ecological impacts are likely in combination with other proposed developments in the area (as agreed with KBC).
- 7.3.28 It will also be necessary to include within the ES chapter appropriate measures to address the legislative protection of those ecological receptors which are considered to be of insufficient value to trigger the detailed assessment; this includes species groups such as common species of reptiles and badgers, which are not considered to be of 'district' (or above) value for nature conservation. They will be considered as an 'other receptor requiring appropriate management for legislative purposes' in the ES chapter.
- 7.3.29 The great crested newt population is considered to be of 'local' value, as none of the populations are of sufficient size to meet Northamptonshire LWS selection criteria and great crested newts are also widespread in Northamptonshire (Northamptonshire Biodiversity Partnership 2009). For this reason, they will not be considered within the detailed assessment. Nevertheless, due to their protection under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended), it will be necessary to devise and implement appropriate mitigation to ensure that the favourable conservation status of the local great crested newt population is maintained. This strategy will be outlined in the section headed 'other receptor requiring appropriate management for legislative purposes'.

7.4 Cultural Heritage

Introduction

- 7.4.1 A range of sources has been used to gain a preliminary understanding of sensitive / key receptors. This included:
- Examination of the Northamptonshire County Council Interactive Mapping with heritage related layers;
 - Review of online sources in the form of Heritage Gateway, Magic.gov.uk, and the English Heritage National Heritage List For England; and
 - Advance consultation discussions with the Northamptonshire County Archaeological Advisor and the English Heritage Advisor for the East Midlands.

Proposed Study Area

- 7.4.2 Variable study areas have been identified to examine the cultural heritage resource, these include:
- Site – which will be used to examine known features within the limits of proposed development;
 - 500m Study Area from the application boundary – a buffer zone extending 500m from the application boundary in which both statutory and non-statutory archaeological and heritage receptors will be identified during the production of the Cultural Heritage ES; and
 - 5km Study Area from the centre point of the site – an area where all statutorily designated archaeological and heritage features (i.e. Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, and Scheduled Ancient Monuments) will be identified during the production of the Cultural Heritage ES.

Baseline

- 7.4.3 Preliminary desk-based research has identified a number of heritage environment records within the 500m study area, this includes six undesignated features within the site.
- 7.4.4 Of those features recorded within the limits of site, apart from the Second World War RAF Airfield (Monument UID MNN14535), which forms part of the recent use of the site, the other five heritage features within the site relate mainly to Prehistoric and Roman activity (Monument UIDs: MNN5786-7, MNN14535, MNN135331, MNN136153 & MNN5787).
- 7.4.5 An examination of the heritage features in the wider 500m area also include a number of features related to the Medieval and Post Medieval history of the area, including ancient woodland (encompassing nearby SSSIs), parkland, buildings, and industrial sites.
- 7.4.6 The early review of statutorily designated assets within the 5km study area showed a large number of features, with approximately 230 designated features recorded. Designated features in close proximity to the Project site include the Scheduled Ancient Monument of a Prehistoric Round Barrow (Designation UID: DNN6533), to the south-east of the Project Boundary, and the Grade I Listed Church of St Peter (Designation UID: DNN2350) in East Carlton, to the north-east of the Project boundary. The remainder primarily consist of Listed Buildings, with noticeable clusters in and around the settlements within the 5km study area, including Stoke Albany; East Carlton; Wilbarston and Cottingham. Conservation Areas within close proximity to the Project boundary are at Stoke Albany and Wilbarston to the north of the Project boundary (Designation UIDs: DNN12368 and DNN12389), Brampton Ash to the west, (Designation UID: DNN12248) and one at Pipewell to the east (Designation UID: DNN12368), which contains the Scheduled Ancient Monument of Pipewell Cistercian Abbey and Medieval Settlement (Designation UID: DNN4500).

Consultation

- 7.4.7 In consultation with the Senior Development Officer at KBC on the 13th of October 2014, the County Archaeological Advisor at Northamptonshire County Council identified the need for a heritage assessment of above and below ground archaeological features, taking into account the position of the site upon the Second World War RAF Airfield. The County Archaeological Advisor also advised that additional survey in the form of geophysical survey and targeted trial trenching may also be required to assess the extent, preservation, and significance of any remains within the site.

Potential Effects

- 7.4.8 Based on the initial identification of known archaeology and cultural heritage features within the study areas listed above (para 7.4.2), and the potential for unknown archaeological remains, it is concluded that there is the potential for impacts to the direct and indirect effects study areas during the construction and operation of the proposed development.
- 7.4.9 These features could be subject to varying forms of impact associated with the proposed development during construction, including the partial or complete removal of such features where there is a direct impact from groundworks, or resulting in a change to the stability/survival of the feature through indirect impact.
- 7.4.10 There may also be an impact (indirect) during the operation of the proposed development on the setting of surrounding designated built heritage assets, depending on the final form, scale and extent of the proposed development; however, the magnitude of impact on some of these features may be limited by shielding from intermediary features and structures.

Methodology

7.4.11 An Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment (DBA) will be undertaken to define the precise baseline and establish the scope of further archaeological works, where appropriate.

7.4.12 The following section defines the proposed methodology for cultural heritage works:

Archaeological Desk Based Assessment

7.4.13 The Archaeological DBA will compile a gazetteer of the known cultural heritage and archaeological assets within the site and surrounding study areas. Alongside documentary and online research, combined with a site walkover, this will develop a greater understanding of the baseline resource and history of the site and surrounding area.

7.4.14 The DBA will be undertaken in accordance with the Institute for Archaeologists' Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment (2012). This will include the following:

- The identification of all statutory and non-statutory designated sites of cultural heritage interest within the 500m study area;
- The identification of all statutory designations within the 5km Study Area;
- Detailed consultation with the Planning Archaeologist and relevant Conservation Officer;
- Examination of readily accessible pre-Ordnance Survey Maps, documentary sources and historic aerial photographs covering the site, at the County Record Office;
- On-line research (e.g. A2A and Heritage Gateway);
- A site walkover to understand key cultural heritage issues of the site and surrounding study area, including information on areas of past truncation and the identification of any previously unknown remains within the footprint of proposed development;
- An examination of historic aerial photographs held by the National Monuments Record (Swindon) covering the site; and
- A review of policies and guidance relevant to the historic environment.

7.4.15 Based on the development of a full and detailed baseline of known and potential cultural heritage assets, an outline impact assessment will be undertaken, which will guide early EIA design works, as well as the need for and scope of further archaeological works. It is noted that such future works, based on a response from the Northamptonshire County Archaeological Advisor, may entail geophysical survey and/or evaluation trenching.

7.4.16 Any requirement for pre-construction archaeological investigation works, such as geophysics and trial trenching, and the timing of these surveys, would be discussed in advance with relevant consultees during the EIA process and an appropriate and proportionate strategy agreed.

Cultural Heritage Environmental Statement Chapter

7.4.17 Based on information contained in the baseline assessment (Archaeological DBA), and the results of any other archaeological works undertaken as a result of this work, a Cultural Heritage ES chapter would be produced that summarises the results of such work and provides a detailed impact assessment. This would result in development of a suitable mitigation strategy, where required.

7.4.18 The following details an outline methodology for production of the ES chapter:

Establishing Cultural Value

7.4.19 The rating of archaeological and architectural heritage value of the cultural heritage features within the site would be guided by criteria used by English Heritage for scheduling ancient monuments and classifying listed buildings.

Impact Assessment

7.4.20 Having established the heritage baseline, an assessment of the potential direct and indirect impacts of the proposed development on cultural heritage assets will be undertaken.

7.4.21 The approach to the assessment will involve establishing the value of the heritage receptor and then assessing the sensitivity of the asset to change and the magnitude of the impact that may be experienced.

7.4.22 There is currently no standard adopted statutory or government guidance for assessing the importance of an archaeological feature and this is instead judged upon factors such as statutory and non-statutory designations, architectural, archaeological or historical significance, and the contribution to local research agendas.

7.4.23 Potential impacts on known or unknown buried archaeological remains relate to the possibility of disturbing, removing or destroying in-situ remains and artefacts during ground-breaking works (including excavation, construction and other works associated with the proposed development) on the site.

7.4.24 The predicted significance of impact upon the various assets will be determined by considering its sensitivity, in conjunction with the magnitude of impact predicted on it.

7.4.25 An assessment of the significance of visual impact upon the settings of Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Listed Buildings and other designated assets of national importance will be determined in accordance with English Heritage's publication 'The Setting of Heritage Assets 2011'.

7.4.26 The cultural heritage settings assessment will be undertaken with reference to the LVIA to ensure consistency in the assessment of visual impact on cultural heritage receptors.

7.4.27 In the event that likely significant direct or indirect effects are identified, an appropriate mitigation strategy will be developed in consultation with relevant consultees in order to reduce or remove significant effects.

7.4.28 Mitigation may consist of avoidance by design, leading to preservation in situ. Where avoidance is not possible, consideration will be given to securing the implementation of a programme of archaeological work leading to preservation by record

7.5 Noise

Introduction

7.5.1 Noise emitted from the development could impact on existing noise sensitive receptors (i.e. dwellings). Therefore, a noise assessment will be undertaken to consider the likely significant noise impacts and effects caused by the construction and operation of the development on noise sensitive receptors (NSRs) in and around the vicinity of the site. The potential of operational vibration impact will not be assessed as this is not deemed to be significant.

Potential Effects

- 7.5.2 The main noise impacts during the operational phase are likely to be due to plant noise emissions. Items of plant include the transformers, inverters and additional mechanical/electrical plant.
- 7.5.3 In addition there could also be a noise impact due to any overhead lines as part of the electrical connection due to corona discharge.

Methodology

- 7.5.4 The assessment methodology will be agreed with the Environmental Health Officers at KBC.
- 7.5.5 Operational noise will be assessed using methodologies based on guidance through a combination of advice within BS 4142:2014 Methods for rating and assessing industrial and commercial sound, BS 8233:2014 Guidance on sound insulation and noise reduction for buildings, National Grid's TR(T)94 –A method for assessing the community response to overhead line noise and the World Health Organization (WHO) Guidelines for Community Noise. It should be noted that BS4142:2014 will primarily be used to determine the noise impacts since it is deemed to provide the more appropriate guidance.
- 7.5.6 It is proposed that the study area for the noise assessment of operational effects shall be defined as the region within 1 km of the site. All NSR within the study area shall be identified in the assessment.
- 7.5.7 A baseline noise survey will then be undertaken in the vicinity of the site to establish the current baseline noise levels. The locations for the baseline noise survey (i.e. locations of the nearest NSRs) will be agreed in advance with the EHO at KBC.
- 7.5.8 Following baseline noise measurements, a noise model will be produced using Soundplan software (3-dimensional noise propagation software) based on sound power levels of proposed plant (obtained from relevant suppliers). Where sound power levels for proposed plant are not available, suitable data will be substituted, although a realistic worst case scenario would always be considered if possible. The noise model will highlight the main noise sources and the associated noise levels at the NSR locations. If the model shows that there is potential for a significant effect to be experienced at any of the NSRs, the required level of noise mitigation would be specified in order to minimise the impact.
- 7.5.9 The ES chapter will be compiled using advice provided in the Institute for Environmental Management (IEMA) document "Guidelines for Environmental Noise Impact Assessment" published in October 2014.
- 7.5.10 Construction impacts will be assessed qualitatively using guidance from BS 5228 Code of practice for noise and vibration control on construction and open sites.

7.6 Cumulative Effects and Impact Interactions

- 7.6.1 The TCP EIA Regulations require consideration of the likely significant impact interactions and cumulative effects of the development.
- 7.6.2 This assessment will include the interactions of different environmental effects on the same receptor as well as the aggregated impact of the proposed redevelopment and other developments planned in the local area (as discussed in **Section 6.2**).
- 7.6.3 Potential impact interactions will be considered in a standalone chapter to draw together the assessment documented in the ES and identify the overall effect of the proposed development.

8 Topics Not Included in EIA Scope

8.1 Introduction

- 8.1.1 The following topics are those that it is proposed to scope out of the EIA as, based on the characteristics of the site and the proposed development, significant effects are not likely.

8.2 Agricultural Land

- 8.2.1 Reading Agricultural Consultants Ltd has undertaken an agricultural land classification (ALC) and soil resources assessment of the solar park site. This assessment was carried out in accordance with the MAFF Revised Guidance (1988). The ALC report identifies that the soil at the solar park site is Grade 3b, which is not best and most versatile quality. This is confirmed by the Estate's experience that the solar park site is less productive than the wider agricultural estate.
- 8.2.2 In constructing the site the metal frames of the solar panels are likely to be set into the ground up to a depth of approximately 1.5 metres and this will not impact on the existing soil structure. Each panel will sit several metres above ground. This means the site can continue to be used for grazing of small livestock, such as sheep, alternatively it can be left as grassland meadow that will help improve soil quality. This is common practice on solar parks and therefore the site still has potential for agricultural productivity.
- 8.2.3 The solar panels are a temporary feature, which after 25 years of operation would be decommissioned allowing the site's former agricultural use to be restored, with no likely significant lasting adverse impacts on the quality of the soil.
- 8.2.4 If an underground connection is proposed a Soil Management Strategy will be put in place to help maintain the topsoil in these locations during excavation and reinstatement. Agricultural activities could be re-commenced following the completion of construction.
- 8.2.5 The solar park site has been shown to have limited agricultural soil quality and the proposed development is not likely to have a lasting significant impact on the soil quality and structure. An ALC report will be submitted to support the planning application. Furthermore, it will be possible to continue to use the site, once the solar array is in place, for agricultural grazing. This means that there is not likely to be any significant effect on agricultural land.
- 8.2.6 Therefore, it is proposed to scope this topic out of the EIA.

8.3 Flood Risk and Drainage

- 8.3.1 The site is within Flood Zone 1, which is the flood zone with the lowest probability of flooding having a less than 1 in 1,000 annual probability of river or sea flooding (<0.1%). However, due to the size of the site a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) will be prepared in line with the requirements of the NPPF and the associated Planning Practice Guidance.
- 8.3.2 The proposed development is unlikely to cause any significant reduction to the permeable areas of the site. However, consideration will need to be given to any changes and site layout that, without mitigation, could increase runoff rates and the risk of flooding in the local area.
- 8.3.3 The FRA will be informed by liaison with the Environment Agency, KBC and the relevant water company. This will consider the risk to life and property by all potential sources of flooding, including consideration of climate change effects. However, the solar array will not require permanent staffing and therefore the solar park would be classified as low vulnerability with regard to flooding. To assess flood risk, data will be obtained from relevant stakeholders to

confirm the low risk of fluvial flooding at the site and to identify any significant local issues relating to flooding from other sources or to surface water drainage.

- 8.3.4 A conceptual surface water drainage strategy, including sustainable drainage measures where required, will be prepared, in consultation with the Environment Agency. This will ensure that drainage rates and volumes are in keeping with those required by the Environment Agency. The surface water drainage strategy and any further necessary mitigation will be documented in the FRA, to be submitted with the planning application.

Likely significant effects

- 8.3.5 The site is an area at low risk of flood and no proposed vulnerable uses are proposed on site. A Sustainable Drainage System will be designed for the site that will manage runoff rates from the site to a rate agreed with the relevant bodies to ensure that the proposed development does not increase the risk of flooding. An FRA will be prepared to document the assessment and the proposed drainage strategy. Therefore, it is proposed to scope this topic out of the EIA.

8.4 Ground Conditions

- 8.4.1 The site is a former airfield where it is possible pollutants in terms of fuel and arms were stored/used. However, given the length of time since the site was used as an airfield, and that the depth of panel and associated equipment foundations will only be up to approximately 1.5m in depth, it is therefore anticipated that limited disturbance will be caused to the soil.
- 8.4.2 Therefore, it is considered that a Ground Conditions Assessment is not required for the proposed development of the solar array or any electrical cable route.
- 8.4.3 In addition, to manage the risks of pollution incidents during construction, relevant control measures and working practices will be outlined in a construction management plan for the site.
- 8.4.4 The operational phase of development will not result in the release of any polluting substances into the environment.

Likely significant effects

- 8.4.5 This site is previously predominantly agricultural land and the solar array and associated infrastructure are unlikely to cause substantial ground disturbance. Therefore, significant effects in relation ground conditions and contamination are unlikely.

8.5 Transport

- 8.5.1 The proposed development would generate a very small amount of operational traffic for the maintenance of solar panels (e.g. cleaning and repairs) that would not be significantly different than currently at the site.
- 8.5.2 Construction stages will require equipment to be transported to the site for erection of the solar array and associated infrastructure. However, the construction process will be straightforward with an estimated construction period of only a few months, so any increase in vehicle movements will be limited and temporary given the proximity of the site to the A427 and strategic road network. The vast majority of equipment will be brought to the site by standard HGV, while on the construction of the 132/33kV compound will require an abnormal or oversized load to deliver the transformer. Site access to the solar site would be via an established access road, which is already in use by HGVs and large agricultural vehicles, associated with the existing use. Access to the transformer compound and pylon area generally would be by dedicated access road with an appropriate entry point from the public highway.

8.5.3 A Construction Traffic Management Plan will be prepared. This will focus on the traffic that will be generated during the construction phase of the solar park and electrical connection and set how it will be managed. The scope of the Transport Statement will be to:

- Describe the access arrangements that are proposed for the period of construction;
- Identify and provide a safe route for construction traffic to access and depart from the site;
- Identify the traffic management measures to control and minimise the effects of construction traffic on the surrounding highway network;
- Ensure safe operation of the site in respect of access and egress to and from the site;
- Manage the loading and unloading of construction materials on site, including at least one abnormal load associated with the 132/33kV compound; and
- Identify the likely level of vehicle generation to and from the site on a daily basis during the various construction stages.

Likely significant effects

8.5.4 There is likely to be an increase in traffic during the construction of the development. However, given the relatively straightforward construction and installation of the array and supporting infrastructure the construction period will be of limited duration. Appropriate control measures will be incorporated to minimise the effects of construction traffic through the implementation of a Construction Traffic Management Plan. Therefore, significant environmental effects are not likely.

8.5.5 Therefore, it is proposed to scope this topic out of the EIA.

8.6 Socio-Economics

8.6.1 The development will utilise an area of previously developed land for a renewable energy scheme that will contribute to the UK's energy requirements. There may also be benefits to the local economy during the construction phase, for instance any specialist installers required on-site may require provision of accommodation, services and supplies. There is also the potential for new local jobs being created during construction.

8.6.2 During the operation phase some jobs, related to maintenance and security of the proposed solar park will be supported on the site. Furthermore, the site will continue to be used for agricultural grazing and therefore agricultural jobs will be maintained.

Likely significant effects

8.6.3 The proposed development is not likely to have any significant positive or negative socio-economic effects, as there will not be a substantial increase or decrease in employment as a result of the proposed development.

8.6.4 It is therefore proposed to scope this topic out of the ES.

8.7 Air Quality and Climate

8.7.1 The nature of the proposed development means that there will not be any likely significant effects in relation to air quality and climate, with the potential for significant dust mitigating through careful working practices and the separation of the site from sensitive receptors. However the generation of renewable energy is an important part of the UK's contribution to

reducing greenhouse gasses and reducing climate change. It is therefore proposed to scope this topic out of the ES.

8.8 Electric and Magnetic Fields

8.8.1 The UK has adopted the 1998 guidelines of The International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation (ICNIRP) in the terms of the 1999 EU Recommendation for limiting public exposure to Electric and Magnetic Fields (EMFs). This accords with the recommendation of the Health Protection Agency (now Public Health England) to the Department of Health who are responsible for implementing such measures within Government. The ICNIRP guidelines are adopted on a voluntary basis by electricity network operators.

8.8.2 Guidance in respect of Section 37 of the Electricity Act consent for overhead lines shorter than 2km in length identifies that:

'The Secretary of State is likely to regard compliance with the ICNIRP exposure guidelines and with the additional policies established in the Government's responses to two reports from the Stakeholder Advisory Group on Extremely Low Frequency Electric and Magnetic Fields (SAGE), as implemented through the voluntary Codes of Practice, and with evidence of compliance being provided in accordance within those Codes, as satisfactorily addressing any EMF concerns regarding a section 37 application.'

Likely significant effects

8.8.3 Given that the Electricity Act guidance considers that compliance with the ICNIRP exposure guidance, through the voluntary codes of practice, satisfactorily addresses any EMF concerns there are unlikely to be significant effects.

8.8.4 An underground connection would be likely to operate at 33kV, significantly below the 132kV and higher voltages envisaged for a Section 37 overhead application. This would further reduce any EMF concerns,

8.8.5 It is proposed that the planning application will demonstrate compliance with the ICNIRP guidelines and therefore it is proposed to scope this topic out of the ES.

8.9 Waste

8.9.1 There is likely to be some waste material generated during the construction of the proposed development however this is likely to be limited to packaging etc. It is anticipated that all spoil generated by the implementation of the panels, electrical connection and substation will be retained on site to ensure that waste generation is minimised.

8.9.2 The operation of the solar park will not generate significant waste, while waste arisings at decommissioning will be managed, including recycling and re-use, based on waste legislation in place at the time and the demand for materials.

8.9.3 As a result significant waste effects are not likely.

9 Summary

9.1 Summary

- 9.1.1 This document has been prepared to provide an overview of the likely significant environmental effects that have been considered in scoping the EIA for the Proposed Solar Photovoltaic Park, Former RAF Desborough Airfield.
- 9.1.2 This Scoping Report has provided information regarding the proposed development, set out the intended EIA scope and methodologies for the assessment of likely significant environmental effects.
- 9.1.3 The aim is to ensure that the proposed development has due regard for the environment, mitigates adverse environmental effects where possible and takes advantage of opportunities for environmental enhancement.
- 9.1.4 Whilst there is only a statutory framework for KBC to provide a response on an underground connection related to the solar proposal, this Scoping Report also provide details of an overhead connection for completeness. If an overhead connection is progressed, a separate Scoping opinion would be sought from DECC, to which KBC would be a consultee.

9.2 The Environmental Statement

- 9.2.1 The outcome of the EIA process is the production of an ES to accompany the planning application. An ES will be prepared that:
- Describes the proposed development;
 - Outline the main alternatives considered;
 - Describes the baseline environment;
 - Describes the likely significant effects;
 - Describes the measures to mitigate adverse effects; and
 - Includes a non-technical summary.

9.3 Next Steps

- 9.3.1 The next steps in the EIA process are as follows:
- Request Scoping Opinion from KBC (December 2014);
 - Receipt of formal Scoping Opinion (early February 2014);
 - Undertake the assessment, including consultation with stakeholders; and
 - Submission of ES with planning application (anticipated early spring 2015).

9.3.2 Comments on this report should be provided to as soon as possible in January 2015 to:

Rebecca Collins

Senior Development Officer

Development Services

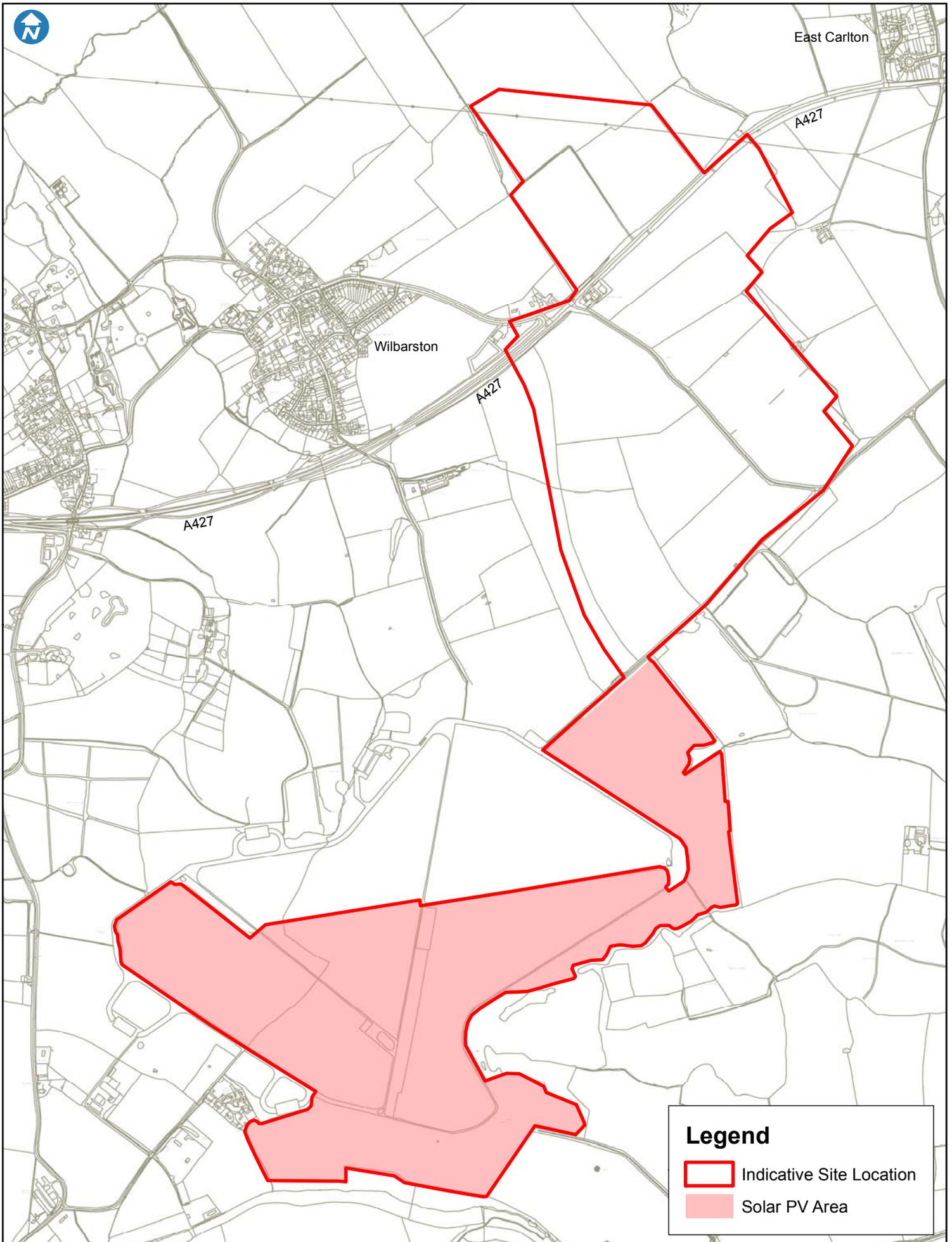
Kettering Borough Council

Municipal Offices

Bowling Green Road

NN15 7QX

Appendix A Indicative Site Location Plan



Appendix A.6 EIA Scoping Opinion

**FORMAL SCOPING
OPINION UNDER
REGULATION 13 OF
THE TOWN AND
COUNTRY PLANNING
ACT 1990
(ENVIRONMENTAL
IMPACT
ASSESSMENT)
REGULATIONS 2011
(SI 2011 NO.1824)**

**Proposed
Development:
Proposed 49MW Solar
photovoltaic farm and
associated electrical
connection**

Location:
Desborough Airfield,
Desborough Road,
Stoke Albany

Adopted by:

**KETTERING
BOROUGH COUNCIL
Ref: KET/2014/0875**

**Date: 26th January
2015**

Contents

Section	Page
1	INTRODUCTION
2	SCOPING
3	SITE DESCRIPTION
4	PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT
5	HISTORY
6	CONSULTATION
7	ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT CONTENT
8	ASSESSMENT
9	MITIGATION
10	NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

1. Introduction

This Scoping Opinion is based on information provided to Kettering Borough Council by Peter Brett Associates (“the developer”) together with the comments and opinions resulting from consultation with other statutory and non-statutory bodies. It has been prepared and issued by KBC in response to this request as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process.

This Scoping Opinion shall not preclude Kettering Borough Council from subsequently requiring the developer to submit further information in connection with any submitted development application to the Council in accordance with Regulation 22 of the 2011 Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations.

1. Scoping

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is an assessment process that attempts to ensure that any significant effects on a range of environmental issues that might result from a particular development are understood as far as possible and taken into account prior to any planning decision being taken. ‘Scoping’ forms part of the overall EIA process, and is intended to identify all of the significant environmental

effects that a development project might cause, so that those identified significant effects can be investigated in detail in the EIA.

Regulation 13 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011 (SI 2011 No. 1824) forms the basis for the scoping procedure by allowing a “*person mindful to make an EIA application*” to ask the relevant planning authority to state in writing their opinion as to the scope of investigation and information to be provided in the Environmental Statement (ES) in the form of a Scoping Opinion.

The effects/impacts of a proposed development on a range of environmental topics should be assessed in terms of their characteristics (adverse, beneficial, neutral, direct, indirect, cumulative), scale (international, national, regional, district, local) and significance (long-term, short-term, irreversible, reversible, major, minor) together with their timing (pre-construction, construction, operation/occupation, decommissioning, and remediation).

Where the potential for significant environmental effects have been identified as part of a scoping exercise, the Environmental Statement (ES) comprising part of the EIA process should propose mitigation and monitoring measures.

2. Site Description

The site extends 112.8 hectares and consists of agricultural farmland as well as areas of hard standing and ‘hangers’ associated with its previous use as an airfield. The proposed site is located at the former RAF Desborough airfield which is 2km to the north of Desborough and 4km to the west of Corby. These are the two closest towns to the development. The village settlements of Wilbarston and Stoke Albany lie to the north and the north-northwest respectively, between 1200m and 1500m away from the northern boundary of the proposed site.

The site will be accessed via the existing eastern access road, off the Pipewell Road. There is an existing footpath running east-west around the parameter of the site.

There are two SSSI's around the site, one to the east and one to the north-west and a number of Wildlife sites to the north, south and east of the site.

3. Proposed Development

Proposed 49MW Solar photovoltaic farm and ancillary control and transformer building.

4. Relevant Planning History

PRE/2014/0121 – Solar Photovoltaic Park

KET/2014/0685 – Screening Opinion – 49MW Solar Photovoltaic farm and ancillary control and transformer building

5. Consultation

During the scoping process, formal consultation was undertaken with the relevant statutory agencies and authorities and other relevant parties seen to have an interest in the proposal and/or having expertise in the environmental issues relevant to this site.

In accordance with the EIA Regulations, the following bodies were consulted:- (copies of the responses received are contained within Appendix 1).

- The Environment Agency
- English Heritage
- Anglian Water Services Ltd
- Natural England
- The Wildlife Trust
- Northamptonshire County Council (Archaeology)
- Northamptonshire County Council (Minerals and Waste)
- Northamptonshire County Council (Highways Authority)
- Northamptonshire Police (Crime Prevention)
- Town/Parish Councils – Stoke Albany, Wilbarston, Desborough and East Carlton
- Kettering Borough Council – Environmental Health
- Sport England

6. Environmental Statement (ES) content

Reference should be made to Appendix 5 of '*Environmental Impact Assessment: A guide to procedures*' (DCLG, 2000) which includes a 'checklist' of matters to be considered for inclusion in an Environmental Statement and sets out a basic format for the preparation of the ES as follows:-

- ES SECTION 1 - information describing the project
- ES SECTION 2 - information describing the site and its environment
- ES SECTION 3 - assessment of effects
- ES SECTION 4 - mitigating measures
- ES SECTION 5 - risk of accidents and hazardous development (if relevant)

It should be noted that the format for the ES is not defined and not all topics will be applicable to the proposal site.

Having considered the consultation responses the Council concluded that the following topics should be included as chapters within the ES:-

- EIA legislation and assessment methodology(ies)
- Alternative designs/layout/evolution of design
- Landscape and visual impact
- Ecology and environmental impact (including the impact on local Wildlife, sites and SSSI's)

- Impact on the historic environment
- The ES should also include a glossary of technical terms and acronyms

The methodologies and approach to assessment shall be undertaken broadly in accordance with that set in the submitted EIA Scoping Report dated December 2014, subject to due consideration being given to the advice and considerations as outlined in consultee letters attached to this letter. (Please note a formal response from English Heritage is to follow).

Reference should also be made to Appendix 4 of *'Environmental Impact Assessment: A guide to procedures'* (DCLG, 2000) which sets out the minimum statutory provisions with respect to the content of environmental statements, as set out in Parts I and II of Schedule 4 to the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011.

7. Assessment

Determining the significance of any impact can be contentious as it may involve value judgements and expert interpretation. It is therefore prudent that significance is established using transparent methodologies based on defined, up to date and recognised standards, legislation, policy and expert opinion. The ES should therefore be explicit and specifically include reference to:-

- Methodologies utilised (for example by reference to established standards such as ISO, BS)
- Assumptions and underlying rationale
- Fact, interpretation of facts, opinions, judgements based on facts
- Characteristics and dimensions of the impacts – i.e.: nature, magnitude, extent, timing, duration, reversibility, likelihood and significance.
- Confidence limits associated with predictions

Environmental Baseline

The ES will need to establish accurate baseline information and provide an analysis of impacts for the life-cycle of the project from construction, through operation, (to de-commissioning if a finite life cycle is envisaged). This should include a comparison to the 'do-nothing' option. The environmental baseline should be established through consultation by the applicant with the relevant statutory and non-statutory bodies.

Cumulative Effects

Assessment needs to consider cumulative effects of impacts. Under EU and UK procedures, references to cumulative effects can be found in Annex IV of the amending EIA Directive and Part 1 of Schedule 4(4) of the EIA Regulations.

For the purposes of investigation, assessment and production of an ES it should therefore be noted that consideration of two types of cumulative impact will be required:-

- combined effects of different types of impacts, for example, noise, lighting and visual impacts on a particular receptor, and
- impacts from several developments which individually might be insignificant, but when considered together, could amount to a significant cumulative impact.

8. Mitigation

Mitigation measures proposed within the ES should be detailed within a schedule of environmental commitments that could assist in drafting planning conditions and/or S106 agreements. It is advised that a hierarchical approach is adopted in the consideration and development of mitigation measures in the following order:-

- (a) avoiding adverse impacts, then
- (b) minimizing or reducing impacts to as low as possible, then
- (c) remedy or compensate adverse impacts that are unavoidable

9. Non-Technical Summary

A credible ES needs to demonstrate that it is well written, well structured, objective, transparent and scientifically rigorous. The non-technical summary should provide sufficient information for the non-specialist reader to understand the main environmental impacts of the proposal without reference to the main ES. The non-technical summary should be a separate stand-alone document which includes a summary of the description of the development, the main alternatives considered, the aspects of the environment likely to be significantly affected by the development, the likely significant impacts and the mitigation measures to be implemented. It should include or make appropriate reference to maps and diagrams which, at a minimum, illustrate the location of the application site, the footprint of the proposed development, and the location of relevant key features.

APPENDIX 1

ESCO
RAC
can 2
26/6/15

Serena Penny

From: James McKechnie [clerk@desboroughtowncouncil.gov.uk]
Sent: 26 January 2015 12:01
To: Planning
Subject: KET/2014/0875
Attachments: Planning Observations 0875 - 2014.doc

Good morning,
Please find attached Desborough Town Councils additional observations on Planning Application KET/2014/0875.

Kindest regards
James

Mr James McKechnie
Clerk to Desborough Town Council
47 Station Road
Desborough
Northants
NN14 2RS

Email: clerk@desboroughtowncouncil.gov.uk
Tel: 01536 628816

OBSERVATIONS FROM - Desborough Town Council

Application No: KET/2014/0875
 Applicant: Mr Boss Peter Btett Associates
 Description: Proposed 49MW Solar photovoltaic farm and ancillary control and transformer building
 Location: Desborough Airfield, Desborough Road, Stock Albany
 Application Type: Environmental Statement Scoping Opinion
 Case Officer: Rebecca Collins

	Tick	
1. Support		Please give reasons
2. No Objection		
3. Subject to the following amendment* / conditions*, then no objection.	X	Amendment / Conditions Potentially a massive Solar Farm on 112.8 Hectares (279 Acres) of grade 3(B) Farmland. Do we need another Solar Farm so close to Gaultney Farm (95 Acres)? Can the National Grid cope with this extra capacity? Scope of required EIA noted any Application should include for Power Storage. If this helps with Energy Supply, no objection.
4. Objection		For the following reasons:
5. Other comments		

Date: 26/01/15

Signature: _____

On behalf of the Town Council

ESCO
RAE
can?
22/01/15

Hazel White

From: Nolan, Sharon [Sharon.Nolan@environment-agency.gov.uk]
Sent: 22 January 2015 09:42
To: Planning
Subject: KET/2014/0875 Desborough Airfield, Desborough Road, Stoke Albany
Attachments: AN.2015.120909.01-L01.pdf

Dear Sir/Madam

Please find attached a copy of the Environment Agency's response to the above application.

If I can be of any further assistance please do not hesitate to contact me on the number below.

Kind regards,

Sharon Nolan
Planning Advisor

Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire Area
Environment Agency
Nene House, Pytchley Lodge Road, Kettering, NN15 6JQ
750 5229 (internal)
01536 385229 (external)
sharon.nolan@environment-agency.gov.uk
www.gov.uk/environment-agency

Follow us on Twitter@LincOpsEA



Awarded to Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire Area.



Feedback is important to us and so I would be grateful if you would respond via this email to these questions:

- Did you understand the information?
- Was the information accurate/appropriate for your needs?
- Were you satisfied with the information you received? (if no, why)
- Were you happy with the way I dealt with your query today?

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We have checked this email and its attachments for viruses. But you should still check any attachment before opening it.

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someone other than the sender or recipient, for business purposes.

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Ms Rebecca Collins
Kettering Borough Council
Planning (Development Control)
Council Offices Bowling Green Road
Kettering
Northamptonshire
NN15 7QX

Our ref: AN/2015/120909/01-L01
Your ref: KET/2014/0875
Date: 22 January 2015

Dear Ms Collins

**Environmental Statement Scoping Opinion: Proposed 49MW Solar photovoltaic farm and ancillary control and transformer building
Desborough Airfield, Desborough Road, Stoke Albany**

Thank you for referring the above application, which was received on 06 January 2015.

The Scoping Report excludes flood risk and drainage outside the scope of the Environmental Impact Assessment; however, it does acknowledge that a flood risk assessment (FRA) is required.

We can provide the following advice and guidance to assist in the completion of the FRA:

Any FRA must demonstrate that surface water run-off can be managed up to and including the 1% (1 in 100 probability of occurring in any one year) with climate change storm event without increasing flood risk to the site, surrounding area and third parties. Post development run-off should not exceed pre-development run-off up to and attenuation should be provided, if required. The maintenance and/or adoption proposals for the surface water drainage system should be confirmed for the lifetime of the development and the residual risk of flooding addressed.

The drainage scheme proposed should provide a sustainable drainage strategy to include SuDS elements as detailed in the CIRIA SuDS Manual (C697). The hierarchy for surface water disposal encourages an infiltration approach to surface water drainage. Only if infiltration drainage is not possible, should discharge to watercourse be considered with the final option being discharge to sewers. Infiltration testing should be carried out in accordance with BRE Digest 365 (or CIRIA Report 156). The variety of SuDS techniques available means that virtually any development should be able to include a scheme based around these principles.

Environment Agency
Nene House (Pytchley Lodge Industrial Estate),
Pytchley Lodge Road, Kettering, Northants, NN15 6JQ
Email: planningkettering@environment-agency.gov.uk
www.gov.uk/environment-agency

*Customer services line: 03708 506 506
Calls to 03 numbers cost the same as calls to standard
geographic numbers (i.e. numbers beginning with 01 or 02).*

Cont/d..

The arrays have the potential to concentrate run-off in localised areas and this should be considered further as part of the FRA. For example, surface water draining off and around the both, the panels individually and whole rows will drip off the lower edge of the panels and through the gaps between each individual panel. This has the potential to concentrate run-off in the areas directly below the edge of the panels, which may depending on ground conditions lead to localised areas where the infiltration capacity of the ground is exceeded leading to overland flow rather than infiltration into the ground. Please note that cut-off swales or French drains may be required to intercept overland flows to ensure that flood risk is not increased to the surrounding area and third parties.

The FRA should also consider the possibility that the surface water system may fail / become blocked and overland flood flow routes. Overland flood flows should be routed away from vulnerable areas and should be contained on site. For acceptable depths and rates of flow, please refer to Environment Agency and Defra document FD2320/TR2 "Flood Risk Assessment Guidance for New Development Phase 2". Further consideration should be given to safe access and egress for emergency services when site is flooded.

Should you require any additional information, or wish to discuss these matters further, please do not hesitate to contact me on the number below.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Sharon Nolan
Sustainable Places Planning Advisor

Direct dial 01536 385229

Direct fax 01536 411354

Direct e-mail sharon.nolan@environment-agency.gov.uk



Awarded to Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire Area.

Hazel White

ESCO
LAC
CovA
22/01/15

From: McDermott Kelly [Kelly.McDermott@northants.pnn.police.uk]
Sent: 22 January 2015 07:09
To: Planning
Cc: Fletcher Susan
Subject: KET/2014/0875 Desborough Airfielf, Desborough Road, Stoke Albany FAO Rebecca

Dear Rebecca,

Northamptonshire Police suggest that the following informative are included, which if implemented will reduce the likelihood of crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour occurring. This is in the interest of the security and quality life of future occupants of the development in accordance with policy 13 of the North Northamptonshire core spatial strategy.

- The applicant should follow security guidance as per BRE Planning Guidance for the development of large scale ground mounted solar PV systems: Part H

If you or the developer would like to discuss this please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind Regards
Kelly McDermott

C0733| Northamptonshire Police|Prevention and Community Protection Department|Crime Prevention Design Advisor|Kelly.mcdermott@northants.pnn.police.uk
Tel 101|Ext 344912|Mobex 776413|Mobile|07557776113|Wellingborough Police Station, Midland Road, Wellingborough. NN8 1HF
In my absence please contact extension 8422. If calling from outside Northamptonshire, please call 03000 111 222 or Email CPDA@northants.pnn.police.uk
Northamptonshire Police: Putting Communities First *My usual hours of work are 0700-1500 Wednesday, Thursday and Friday*

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE POLICE - Visit us at <http://www.northants.police.uk>

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ESCO
LAC
NBLZ
22/01/15

Hazel White

From: wil.cts@outlook.com
Sent: 21 January 2015 20:03
To: Website Queries
Subject: www.kettering.gov.uk feedback enclosed.

Please find here some feedback from the www.kettering.gov.uk website.

CONTACT DETAILS

Provided by: Mr David Wilson
Location: Wilbarston, LE168QQ
Email: wil.cts@outlook.com

COMMENTS

I have read the submission documents. I object to the proposed area for establishing the initial phase of the solar farm. In my opinion the solar farm will have significant visual impact when travelling along roads in the vicinity of Wilbarston. I do not believe that solar farms help the UK in any way as they cannot be classified as base electrical load provision. When the sun is obscured solar electric efficiency falls dramatically so the UK will continue to need base load nuclear, gas, coal and possibly tidal generation.

 I will comment further if this initial application progresses to a full application

Derek Chamberlain

ESCO
RAC
CONZ
19/01/15

From: Nick Richards [bramhallnick@yahoo.co.uk]
Sent: 16 January 2015 14:24
To: Planning
Subject: KET/2014/0875

For the attention of Rebecca Collins

Dear Rebecca

KET/2014/0875 Scoping Report

Wilbarston Parish Council has considered this document and has the following comments to make:

Settlements. Reference is made under various headings to settlements, including Wilbarston and Stoke Albany to the north and Desborough to the south but no mention is made of The Pastures Mobile Home Park. This site is immediately adjacent to the suggested area of the array. Although a gypsy and traveller location it is not a transit site. The 15 plots at The Pastures are effectively settled and 7 more are currently being occupied on the adjacent 'Laurels' site. These are family units so there are 50/100 residents living adjacent to the subject location and we recommend that this should be regarded as a settlement in all aspects of the application.

Access Road. The report refers to the existing access road already being used by agricultural vehicles and other HGV's. The applicants should be aware that in the case of non-agricultural use this has caused problems from time to time due to breaches of restrictions preventing heavy vehicles from travelling south through Pipewell or directly north to Wilbarston - the only permitted route is to the A427 at East Carlton. We should like to see this specifically addressed, particularly in relation to the construction phase, in the environmental assessment.

Wintering Birds. We note that the value of the site to over-wintering birds is still being assessed. Advice we have received from time to time is that it is of significant value and this can no doubt be confirmed by specialist organisations such as The Wildlife Trust.

Security - Lighting. We assume proposals in this respect will be included in later detail but this is certainly an aspect which should be considered in relation to The Pastures and various dispersed dwellings close to the site.

Security - Boundary. Again this is detail which will no doubt emerge later but we assume that there will be a buffer zone to nationally agreed guidelines within the perimeter fence.

Public Access. We note that the public rights of way across the site are to be retained, possibly with some re-routing. However for a number of decades it has been the custom for people to exercise on the old runway and service road locations and we recommend that some provision remains for a circular route on the airfield site accessible by the public.

The above views were agreed on 15 January 2015.

Regards

Nick Richards

**Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (As Amended)
Local Highway Authority (LHA) Response**

Application Reference	KET/2014/0875
LHA Reference	PL 764/4
Proposal	Solar voltaic farm and ancillary control with transformer building
Location	Desborough Airfield, Desborough Road, Stoke Albany
Date	15/01/2015

Case Officer: Rebecca Collins

Observations:

The documentation supporting this application states that the access roads are already in use by HGVs and agricultural traffic and that the PRoWS (Public Rights of Way) will not be altered.

Abnormal loads will be required to deliver components for the compound.

A Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) is to be created.

Recommendations:

The applicant will need to supply;

- Details of the access route including tracking, passing bays and a detailed drawing of the access onto the A423 depicting visibility splays.
- Details of the PRoW locations, interaction with construction traffic and methods to protect those using them.
- Details of mud control measures including wheel washing, sheeting, sealing, dust management and road cleansing.
- Details of traffic generation and impacts on junctions across the route.
- Details of the construction compound including vehicle parking for deliveries and staff as well as turning.

The application site is affected by Public Rights of Way HH25, HH18 & HA2.

Signed..... *C Dunderdale*.....

Clare Dunderdale (Mrs)
Development Management Engineer

For Assistant Director – Highways Transport and Infrastructure
Northamptonshire Highways
Riverside House, Riverside Way, Northampton NN1 5NX

DDI +44(0)1604 367146
Web www.kierwsp.co.uk
Email cdunderdale@kierwsp.co.uk



Northamptonshire County Council

Rebecca Collins
Development Services
Kettering Borough Council
Municipal Offices
Bowling Green Road
Kettering
NN15 7QX

Please ask for: Lesley-Ann Mather
Tel: 01604 367909
Our ref:
Your ref: KET/2014/0875
Date: 14th January 2015

Dear Ms Collins

Proposal: Environmental Statement Scoping Opinion: Proposed 49MW Solar photovoltaic farm and ancillary control and transformer building

Location: Desborough Airfield, Desborough Road, Stoke Albany

Case Officer: Rebecca Collins

Thank you for your letter of the 6th January requesting comments with regard to the proposals for archaeological assessment for inclusion within any forthcoming EIA.

In the EIA Scoping Report Section 7.4 Cultural Heritage; the applicant proposes that it will include an assessment of the cultural heritage resources of the site comprising of archaeological remains, built heritage and historic landscape. The text within Section 7.4.7 is a fair reflection of my thoughts with regard to the type of assessment I would expect to be contained within the Environmental Statement. This consist of a desk based assessment (DBA) followed by non and intrusive archaeological survey.

The submission of a desk based assessment alone; would not in my opinion provide sufficient information with regard to the archaeological potential of the development area. The HER contains only the presently identified archaeological resources and as such its use, whilst helpful, does not provide a definitive answer as to the possibility of the presence of hitherto unidentified archaeological deposits.

In addition to the DBA, detailed in 7.4.13-7.4.14; evaluation as mentioned in Section 7.4.15 in the form of initially geophysical survey and targeted trial trenching in appropriate areas will need to be undertaken in advance. The results of the evaluation would provide sufficient information to allow an informed assessment of the impact of the development on the heritage resource.

Planning Services
County Hall
Guildhall Road
Northampton, NN1 1AX
W www.northamptonshire.gov.uk
t. 01604 237909.

e. lmather@northamptonshire.gov.uk



ESCO
RAC
CON2
15/01/15

Yours Sincerely,

L Mather

Lesley-Ann Mather
County Archaeological Advisor
Planning Services

ESD
RBC
CenL
12/Jan/15

Kettering Borough Council

Environmental Health

Internal Memorandum

To: Rebecca Collins
Copy to: Planning
Your ref: KET/2014/0875
Date: 12 January 2015

From: Mrs Sue Latham
Environmental Protection Officer
Our ref: 150004
Ext: 01536 534357

Applicant: Mr Boss Peter Brett Associates
Location: Desborough Airfield, Stoke Albany Road, Desborough, Northants
Proposal: Full Application - EIA Scoping Opinion Consultation - Environmental Statement Scoping

Thank you for consulting me on this application. I have no comment or objection to make.

Regards

Mrs Sue Latham
Environmental Protection Officer

Date: 27 January 2015
Our ref: 141805
Your ref: KET/2014/0875

ESCO
CONZESCO
RAC
28/01/2015



Rebecca Collins
Kettering Borough Council
BY EMAIL ONLY

Customer Services
Hornbeam House
Crewe Business Park
Electra Way
Crewe
Cheshire
CW1 6GJ

T 0300 060 3900

Dear Rebecca

Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping consultation (Regulation 15 (3) (i) of the EIA Regulations 2011): Proposed 49MW Solar photovoltaic farm and ancillary control and transformer building

Location: Desborough Airfield, Desborough Road, Stoke Albany

Thank you for seeking our advice on the scope of the Environmental Statement (ES) in your consultation dated 06 January 2014.

Natural England is a non-departmental public body. Our statutory purpose is to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced, and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development.

Case law¹ and guidance² has stressed the need for a full set of environmental information to be available for consideration prior to a decision being taken on whether or not to grant planning permission. Annex A to this letter provides Natural England's advice on the scope of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for this development.

Should the proposal be amended in a way which significantly affects its impact on the natural environment then, in accordance with Section 4 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, Natural England should be consulted again.

We would be happy to comment further should the need arise but if in the meantime you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact us. For any queries relating to the specific advice in this letter only please contact Ross Holdgate on 0300 060 4657. For any new consultations, or to provide further information on this consultation please send your correspondences to consultations@naturalengland.org.uk.

Yours sincerely

Ross Holdgate
Essex, Herts, Beds, Cambs and Northants Area Team

¹ Harrison, J in *R. v. Cornwall County Council ex parte Hardy* (2001)

² *Note on Environmental Impact Assessment Directive for Local Planning Authorities* Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (April 2004) available from

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.communities.gov.uk/planningandbuilding/planning/sustainableenvironmental/environmentalimpactassessment/noteenvironmental/>



Annex A – Advice related to EIA Scoping Requirements

1. General Principles

Schedule 4 of the Town & Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011, sets out the necessary information to assess impacts on the natural environment to be included in an ES, specifically:

- A description of the development – including physical characteristics and the full land use requirements of the site during construction and operational phases.
- Expected residues and emissions (water, air and soil pollution, noise, vibration, light, heat, radiation, etc.) resulting from the operation of the proposed development.
- An assessment of alternatives and clear reasoning as to why the preferred option has been chosen.
- A description of the aspects of the environment likely to be significantly affected by the development, including, in particular, population, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, including the architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors.
- A description of the likely significant effects of the development on the environment – this should cover direct effects but also any indirect, secondary, cumulative, short, medium and long term, permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects. Effects should relate to the existence of the development, the use of natural resources and the emissions from pollutants. This should also include a description of the forecasting methods to predict the likely effects on the environment.
- A description of the measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and where possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment.
- A non-technical summary of the information.
- An indication of any difficulties (technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered by the applicant in compiling the required information.

It will be important for any assessment to consider the potential cumulative effects of this proposal, including all supporting infrastructure, with other similar proposals and a thorough assessment of the 'in combination' effects of the proposed development with any existing developments and current applications. A full consideration of the implications of the whole scheme should be included in the ES. All supporting infrastructure should be included within the assessment.

2. Biodiversity and Geology

2.1 Ecological Aspects of an Environmental Statement

Natural England advises that the potential impact of the proposal upon features of nature conservation interest and opportunities for habitat creation/enhancement should be included within this assessment in accordance with appropriate guidance on such matters. Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) have been developed by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) and are available on their website.

EclA is the process of identifying, quantifying and evaluating the potential impacts of defined actions on ecosystems or their components. EclA may be carried out as part of the EIA process or to support other forms of environmental assessment or appraisal.

The National Planning Policy Framework sets out guidance in S.118 on how to take account of biodiversity interests in planning decisions and the framework that local authorities should provide to assist developers.

2.2 Internationally and Nationally Designated Sites

The ES should thoroughly assess the potential for the proposal to affect designated sites. European sites (eg designated Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas) fall

within the scope of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. In addition paragraph 118 of the National Planning Policy Framework requires that potential Special Protection Areas, possible Special Areas of Conservation, listed or proposed Ramsar sites, and any site identified as being necessary to compensate for adverse impacts on classified, potential or possible SPAs, SACs and Ramsar sites be treated in the same way as classified sites.

Under Regulation 61 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 an appropriate assessment needs to be undertaken in respect of any plan or project which is (a) likely to have a significant effect on a European site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) and (b) not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site.

Should a Likely Significant Effect on a European/Internationally designated site be identified or be uncertain, the competent authority (in this case the Local Planning Authority) may need to prepare an Appropriate Assessment, in addition to consideration of impacts through the EIA process.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and sites of European or international importance (Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas and Ramsar sites)

The development site is adjacent to the following designated nature conservation sites:

- Pipewell Woods SSSI
- Stoke and Bowd Lane Woods SSSI
- Further information on these SSSIs and their special interest features can be found at www.magic.gov. The Environmental Statement should include a full assessment of the direct and indirect effects of the development on the features of special interest within these sites and should identify such mitigation measures as may be required in order to avoid, minimise or reduce any adverse significant effects.
- Natura 2000 network site conservation objectives are available on our internet site <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/category/6490068894089216>

2.3 Regionally and Locally Important Sites

The EIA will need to consider any impacts upon local wildlife and geological sites. Local Sites are identified by the local wildlife trust, geoconservation group or a local forum established for the purposes of identifying and selecting local sites. They are of county importance for wildlife or geodiversity. The Environmental Statement should therefore include an assessment of the likely impacts on the wildlife and geodiversity interests of such sites. The assessment should include proposals for mitigation of any impacts and if appropriate, compensation measures. Contact the local wildlife trust, geoconservation group or local sites body in this area for further information.

2.4 Protected Species - Species protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010

The ES should assess the impact of all phases of the proposal on protected species (including, for example, great crested newts, reptiles, birds, water voles, badgers and bats). Natural England does not hold comprehensive information regarding the locations of species protected by law, but advises on the procedures and legislation relevant to such species. Records of protected species should be sought from appropriate local biological record centres, nature conservation organisations, groups and individuals; and consideration should be given to the wider context of the site for example in terms of habitat linkages and protected species populations in the wider area, to assist in the impact assessment.

The conservation of species protected by law is explained in Part IV and Annex A of Government Circular 06/2005 *Biodiversity and Geological Conservation: Statutory Obligations and their Impact*

within the Planning System. The area likely to be affected by the proposal should be thoroughly surveyed by competent ecologists at appropriate times of year for relevant species and the survey results, impact assessments and appropriate accompanying mitigation strategies included as part of the ES.

In order to provide this information there may be a requirement for a survey at a particular time of year. Surveys should always be carried out in optimal survey time periods and to current guidance by suitably qualified and where necessary, licensed, consultants. Natural England has adopted standing advice for protected species which includes links to guidance on survey and mitigation. <https://www.gov.uk/protected-species-and-sites-how-to-review-planning-proposals#standing-advice-for-protected-species>

2.5 Habitats and Species of Principal Importance

The ES should thoroughly assess the impact of the proposals on habitats and/or species listed as 'Habitats and Species of Principal Importance' within the England Biodiversity List, published under the requirements of S41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006. Section 40 of the NERC Act 2006 places a general duty on all public authorities, including local planning authorities, to conserve and enhance biodiversity. Further information on this duty is available in the Defra publication '[Guidance for Local Authorities on Implementing the Biodiversity Duty](#)'.

Government Circular 06/2005 states that Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) species and habitats, 'are capable of being a material consideration...in the making of planning decisions'. Natural England therefore advises that survey, impact assessment and mitigation proposals for Habitats and Species of Principal Importance should be included in the ES. Consideration should also be given to those species and habitats included in the relevant Local BAP.

Natural England advises that a habitat survey (equivalent to Phase 2) is carried out on the site, in order to identify any important habitats present. In addition, ornithological, botanical and invertebrate surveys should be carried out at appropriate times in the year, to establish whether any scarce or priority species are present. The Environmental Statement should include details of:

- Any historical data for the site affected by the proposal (eg from previous surveys);
- Additional surveys carried out as part of this proposal;
- The habitats and species present;
- The status of these habitats and species (eg whether priority species or habitat);
- The direct and indirect effects of the development upon those habitats and species;
- Full details of any mitigation or compensation that might be required.

The development should seek if possible to avoid adverse impact on sensitive areas for wildlife within the site, and if possible provide opportunities for overall wildlife gain.

The record centre for the relevant Local Authorities should be able to provide the relevant information on the location and type of priority habitat for the area under consideration.

2.6 Contacts for Local Records

Natural England does not hold local information on local sites, local landscape character and local or national biodiversity priority habitats and species. We recommend that you seek further information from the appropriate bodies (which may include the local records centre, the local wildlife trust, local geoconservation group or other recording society and a local landscape characterisation document).

3. Designated Landscapes and Landscape Character

Landscape and visual impacts

Natural England would wish to see details of local landscape character areas mapped at a scale appropriate to the development site as well as any relevant management plans or strategies pertaining to the area. The EIA should include assessments of visual effects on the surrounding area and landscape together with any physical effects of the development, such as changes in topography. The European Landscape Convention places a duty on Local Planning Authorities to consider the impacts of landscape when exercising their functions.

The EIA should include a full assessment of the potential impacts of the development on local landscape character using landscape assessment methodologies. We encourage the use of Landscape Character Assessment (LCA), based on the good practice guidelines produced jointly by the Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Assessment in 2013. LCA provides a sound basis for guiding, informing and understanding the ability of any location to accommodate change and to make positive proposals for conserving, enhancing or regenerating character, as detailed proposals are developed.

Natural England supports the publication *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*, produced by the Landscape Institute and the Institute of Environmental Assessment and Management in 2013 (3rd edition). The methodology set out is almost universally used for landscape and visual impact assessment.

In order to foster high quality development that respects, maintains, or enhances, local landscape character and distinctiveness, Natural England encourages all new development to consider the character and distinctiveness of the area, with the siting and design of the proposed development reflecting local design characteristics and, wherever possible, using local materials. The Environmental Impact Assessment process should detail the measures to be taken to ensure the building design will be of a high standard, as well as detail of layout alternatives together with justification of the selected option in terms of landscape impact and benefit.

The assessment should also include the cumulative effect of the development with other relevant existing or proposed developments in the area. In this context Natural England advises that the cumulative impact assessment should include other proposals currently at Scoping stage. Due to the overlapping timescale of their progress through the planning system, cumulative impact of the proposed development with those proposals currently at Scoping stage would be likely to be a material consideration at the time of determination of the planning application.

The assessment should refer to the relevant [National Character Areas](#) which can be found on our website. Links for Landscape Character Assessment at a local level are also available on the same page.

Heritage Landscapes

You should consider whether there is land in the area affected by the development which qualifies for conditional exemption from capital taxes on the grounds of outstanding scenic, scientific or historic interest. An up-to-date list may be obtained at www.hmrc.gov.uk/heritage/lbsearch.htm and further information can be found on Natural England's landscape pages [here](#).

4. Access and Recreation

Natural England encourages any proposal to incorporate measures to help encourage people to access the countryside for quiet enjoyment. Measures such as reinstating existing footpaths together with the creation of new footpaths and bridleways are to be encouraged. Links to other green networks and, where appropriate, urban fringe areas should also be explored to help promote the creation of wider green infrastructure. Relevant aspects of local authority green infrastructure strategies should be incorporated where appropriate.

Rights of Way, Access land, Coastal access and National Trails

The EIA should consider potential impacts on access land, public open land, rights of way and

coastal access routes in the vicinity of the development. Consideration should also be given to the potential impacts on the adjacent/nearby [Click here to enter text](#). National Trail. The National Trails website www.nationaltrail.co.uk provides information including contact details for the National Trail Officer. Appropriate mitigation measures should be incorporated for any adverse impacts. We also recommend reference to the relevant Right of Way Improvement Plans (ROWIP) to identify public rights of way within or adjacent to the proposed site that should be maintained or enhanced.

5. Soil and Agricultural Land Quality

We note the proposal to scope out Agricultural Land from the EIA. Natural England has not seen the Agricultural Land Classification and Soil Resources Survey referred to so we cannot comment on the results of this as a reason to exclude Agricultural Land from the EIA. However we agree with the comments that solar panels can usually be installed, operated and later removed from a site without adversely affecting soil structure and the long term agricultural potential of a site. Any soil damage is likely to be limited to small areas affected by features such as sub stations, access tracks and construction compounds and Natural England would therefore class the proposals as posing a low risk to agricultural land.

Impacts from the development should be considered in light of the Government's policy for the protection of the best and most versatile (BMV) agricultural land as set out in paragraph 112 of the NPPF. Your authority will need to consider how potential small scale or temporary losses of agricultural land should be assessed through the planning application.

6. Climate Change Adaptation

The [England Biodiversity Strategy](#) published by Defra establishes principles for the consideration of biodiversity and the effects of climate change. The ES should reflect these principles and identify how the development's effects on the natural environment will be influenced by climate change, and how ecological networks will be maintained. The NPPF requires that the planning system should contribute to the enhancement of the natural environment 'by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures' ([NPPF](#) Para 109), which should be demonstrated through the ES.

7. Cumulative and in-combination effects

A full consideration of the implications of the whole scheme should be included in the ES. All supporting infrastructure should be included within the assessment.

The ES should include an impact assessment to identify, describe and evaluate the effects that are likely to result from the project in combination with other projects and activities that are being, have been or will be carried out. The following types of projects should be included in such an assessment, (subject to available information):

- a. existing completed projects;
- b. approved but uncompleted projects;
- c. ongoing activities;
- d. plans or projects for which an application has been made and which are under consideration by the consenting authorities; and
- e. plans and projects which are reasonably foreseeable, ie projects for which an application has not yet been submitted, but which are likely to progress before completion of the development and for which sufficient information is available to assess the likelihood of cumulative and in-combination effects.

Rebecca Collins (Planning)

From: Dunderdale, Clare [CDunderdale@kierwsp.co.uk] on behalf of NCC - Highways SDC Kettering [highwaysdckettering@kierwsp.co.uk]
Sent: 02 February 2015 15:10
To: Craig Mason; Rebecca Collins (Planning)
Cc: Jon Berry
Subject: RE: PRE.2014.0121: Desborough Airfield, Stoke Albany - Proposed Solar Park

Craig

Thank you for your enquiry.

It feels more sensible on these rural roads to instigate a one-way system for traffic. It must be ensured that each junction has the correct visibility, tracking and signage – including the Pipewell Road junction heading South that enters Pipewell village.

The weight restriction will need to be investigated further – there may be historic waterways/culverts that have secured this restriction-, however if it is viable then a Traffic Regulation Order will be required. We will also require pre and post works surveys of the routes carrying out with rectification attributed to the application carried out at the applicants expense to the Highway Authorities standards.

Regards,

Clare Dunderdale

Development Management Engineer

Northamptonshire Highways

Riverside House, Riverside Way, Northampton, NN1 5NX

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www.wspgroup.com

From: Craig Mason [mailto:cmason@peterbrett.com]

Sent: 23 January 2015 12:45

To: Dunderdale, Clare

Cc: Jon Berry

Subject: RE: PRE.2014.0121: Desborough Airfield, Stoke Albany - Proposed Solar Park

Hi Claire

You may recall from our pre-app submission that we originally proposed to route all construction vehicles via the B670 / Pipewell Road priority junction, and you raised the point that there might not be sufficient width and visibility for vehicles to pass each other along Pipewell Road. We have been considering the access route for construction vehicles in further detail since you provided your pre-app response and have a new proposal which we would like you to consider. We are looking to agree the principle of the strategy at this stage, and would look to follow this up with an Autotrack assessment of the whole route.

We are proposing to introduce a temporary one-way system for all construction vehicles that would involve them travelling inbound to the site via the A427 / Pipewell Road priority junction and the westernmost section of Pipewell Road, then outbound via the eastern section of Pipewell Road and then the B670 / Pipewell Road priority junction. We are advised that the construction period for the solar site will most likely be fairly short at around 16 weeks, and we are currently working to establish the likely traffic generation during this phase (this information can be provided in due course).

We understand that the 'inbound' section of Pipewell Road between the A427 junction and the site is signed as being unsuitable for HGV's and has a '3T limit except for access' restriction, however our initial investigations suggest that this is unlikely to be for structural reasons. Our proposal would therefore presumably require a temporary relaxation of this restriction throughout the construction phase so that it can operate one-way for inbound construction vehicles. If an HGV travelling along this section were to meet another vehicle travelling in the opposite direction, it would only be a car or LGV and hence it could pass them fairly easily using gateways or existing areas of localised widening. This proposal is also illustrated in the attachment and identifies that new signage would be required to ensure that drivers are aware of the one-way system.

We are of the view that this would provide a better overall solution than trying to make the route that we originally proposed work effectively two-way by creating passing places (which would only be required throughout the short construction period). In the event that the proposal is acceptable, we envisage that this could be conditioned as part of any planning consent via the Construction Traffic Management Plan.

We look forward to your response at your earliest convenience.

Kind regards

Craig.

From: Dunderdale, Clare [<mailto:CDunderdale@kierwsp.co.uk>] **On Behalf Of** NCC - Highways SDC Kettering

Sent: 13 January 2015 15:22

To: Craig Mason; NCC - Highways SDC Kettering

Subject: RE: PRE.2014.0121: Desborough Airfield, Stoke Albany - Proposed Solar Park

Hi Craig

I'm afraid that I've been informed that we no longer have these. Sorry.

Regards,

Clare Dunderdale

Development Management Engineer

Northamptonshire Highways

Riverside House, Riverside Way, Northampton, NN1 5NX

DDI: +44(0)1604) 367146

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Web: www.kierwsp.co.uk



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From: Craig Mason [<mailto:cmason@peterbrett.com>]

Sent: 12 January 2015 11:45

To: NCC - Highways SDC Kettering

Subject: RE: PRE.2014.0121: Desborough Airfield, Stoke Albany - Proposed Solar Park

Hi Clare

Please can you see if you can provide as-built drawings for the section of the A427 between Stoke Albany and East Carlton?

The NCC road strategy report states that the A427 bypasses to Stoke Albany, Wilbarston, Middleton and Cottingham were built in the 1970/80's, so we are hopeful that there is a good chance of as-builts or at least design drawings being found.

Thanks
Craig.

From: Dunderdale, Clare [<mailto:CDunderdale@kierwsp.co.uk>] **On Behalf Of** NCC - Highways SDC Kettering

Sent: 17 December 2014 10:49

To: Craig Mason; Rebecca Collins KBC; KBC Planning

Subject: PRE.2014.0121: Desborough Airfield, Stoke Albany - Proposed Solar Park

Hi Craig

The access to the sub-station would need to have visibility splays of 2.4 x 215m to both the left and right nearside carriageway edge. It would need to be a minimum of 6m wide with 10m radii kerbs and a construction to HGV standards whilst limiting trafficking of deleterious material onto the highway, therefore, dependant on CBRs we would expect to see 20mm surface course, 150mm base course and 150mm sub base to standard drawing SD/30/3/2. This access is not to be used for the construction of anything other than the substation.

Regards,
Clare Dunderdale
Development Management Engineer

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www.wspgroup.com

From: Craig Mason [<mailto:cmason@peterbrett.com>]

Sent: 12 December 2014 17:56

To: Dunderdale, Clare

Subject: Desborough Airfield, Stoke Albany - Proposed Solar Park

Hi

We are trying to progress the highway and transport elements of the proposed solar park development at Desborough Airfield and are in receipt of your pre-application comments dated 9th October 2014. The purpose of this email is to seek clarity on an issue that was not covered by your response, namely the highway design standards that you would require us to adopt for constructing a highway access on the A427. Please note that this junction would not provide access to the solar park itself, rather just the substation that is required to enable the solar park to connect into the grid.

We are advised that the substation element would generate a very limited amount of traffic movements. This would be whilst it is being constructed, and very infrequently once the solar park is up and running due to maintenance/servicing activities; it would not consistently generate traffic on a daily basis. Given that the access would be so infrequently used, we are of the view that a fully compliant DMRB junction designed to a 60mph design speed (requiring 200m visibility splays for example) would provide a significantly over-engineered access solution. The alternative approach would be to adopt design standards that are used for developing agricultural access junctions. These standards are normally less onerous than DMRB as a reflection of the fact that these junctions are infrequently used, much like the proposed substation.

We would be grateful if you could consider the information set out above and provide confirmation as to which design standards you require us to adopt in developing the substation access junction. In the event that you

consider the agricultural access standard to be appropriate, please can you provide us with a copy of the relevant guidance.

We look forward to hearing from you shortly.

Kind regards,

Craig Mason
Transportation Planner

For and on behalf of Peter Brett Associates LLP
Lakeside House, Blackbrook Business Park, Blackbrook
Park Avenue, Taunton, TA1 2PX
t 01823 445150
e cmason@peterbrett.com
w www.peterbrett.com

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28/01/2015

Derek Chamberlain

From: Leigh Parkin [stoke-albany-pc@hotmail.co.uk]
Sent: 27 January 2015 19:15
To: Planning
Subject: KET/2014/0875

Dear Sir/Madam

Please find detailed below Stoke Albany Parish Council's comments on KET/2014/0875:

"Stoke Albany Parish Council wishes at this stage to register its concern about the potential ecological impact of the proposed scheme, and reserves the right to comment further once councillors have been able to attend the consultation event in Wilbarston Village Hall on 11 February 2015".

Regards, Leigh

Mrs Leigh Parkin
Clerk to Stoke Albany Parish Council
55 Union Street
Desborough
Northants NN14 2RH
Tel: 01536 506021

Rebecca Collins (Planning)

From: Bennett, Ailsa [Ailsa.Bennett@english-heritage.org.uk]
Sent: 02 February 2015 13:48
To: Rebecca Collins (Planning)
Cc: Woodhouse, Helen; LMather@northamptonshire.gov.uk
Subject: KET/2014/0875, Desborough Airfield, Desborough Road, Stoke Albany, EH ref-PA00361448
Attachments: Desborough Airfield Request for Scoping Opinion.pdf

Dear Ms Collins,

Please find attached English Heritage's response to your request for comments on a Scoping Report regarding Desborough Airfield.

Yours sincerely,
Ailsa Bennett | Business Officer

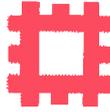
Direct Line: 01604 735447
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English Heritage
44 Derngate | Northampton | NN1 1UH

www.english-heritage.org.uk

English Heritage is changing into two organisations.

From Spring 2015, we shall become Historic England, a government service championing England's heritage and giving expert, constructive advice, and the English Heritage Trust, a charity caring for the National Heritage Collection of more than 400 historic properties and their collections.

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ENGLISH HERITAGE

EAST MIDLANDS OFFICE

Ms Rebecca Collins
Kettering Borough Council
Municipal Offices
Bowling Green Road
Kettering
Northamptonshire
NN15 7QX

Direct Dial: 01604 735400
Direct Fax: 01604 735401

Our ref: PA00361448
Your ref: KET/2014/0875

29 January 2015

Dear Ms Collins

**Request for EIA Scoping Opinion
S.I. 2011 No 1824 Town & Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment)
Regulations 2011**

DESBOROUGH AIRFIELD, DESBOROUGH ROAD, STOKE ALBANY

Thank you for your letter of 06 January 2015 requesting English Heritage's comments on the scoping report produced by the applicant for the proposed solar photovoltaic farm and ancillary control and transformer building on the site of the former RAF Desborough Airfield.

English Heritage's remit in these cases is to consider the possible effects of development on the historic environment, particularly designated heritage assets. Our specialist staff have considered the information received. English Heritage has previously provided no pre-application advice direct to the applicant in advance of receiving this consultation. We would advise that, regardless of whether as part of an EIA or not, any such planning application would require an appropriate level of assessment of the significance of any heritage assets affected, together with the contribution made by their settings and the nature of potential impacts in order to form the basis on which to avoid or mitigate potential direct and indirect impacts on assets of local, regional and national importance.

The scoping document provided by the applicant includes a proposed section on Cultural Heritage within the Environmental Statement. We would recommend that in addition to the list of sources provided in the scoping report, the County Historic Environment Record is specifically referred to in addition to the information derived from this resource which is available on the County Council's interactive mapping service website.



44 DERNGATE, NORTHAMPTON, NN1 1UH
Telephone 01604 735 400 Facsimile 01604 735 401
www.english-heritage.org.uk

English Heritage is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) and Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR). All Information held by the organisation will be accessible in response to an information request, unless one of the exemptions in the FOIA or EIR applies.

English Heritage will use the information provided by you to evaluate any applications you make for statutory or quasi-statutory consent, or for grant or other funding. Information provided by you and any information obtained from other sources will be retained in all cases in hard copy form and/or on computer for administration purposes and future consideration where applicable.



ENGLISH HERITAGE

EAST MIDLANDS OFFICE

English Heritage would recommend that the proposed impact assessment focuses on assessing the 'significance' of the heritage assets potentially affected rather than their 'value' (Section 7.4.19 & 21).

We are pleased to see that the identification of potential impacts on designated heritage assets proposed by the scoping document will account of English Heritage's published guidance on *The Setting of Heritage Assets* (2011) (Section 7.4.25-26). However, we would remind your authority that this guidance indicates that setting impacts are much more wide ranging than just visual and the Environmental Statement produced should take full account of this in the assessment rather than be restricted to this single aspect.

We are also pleased to see that the scope of the Cultural Heritage chapter provides for reference to the results of the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment chapter (Section 7.4.26).

From a brief review of our own records, it is apparent that **10 Scheduled Monuments, 362 (39 Grade I & II*) Listed Buildings, 3 (2 Grade II*) Registered Parks and Gardens and 20 Conservation Areas** are located within 5km of the full extent of the proposed development site. Since these have the potential to be key visual receptors in the area any impact upon them would need to be considered in depth.

While English Heritage broadly supports renewable energy we are aware that such developments can be challenging to the historic environment. In general terms, English Heritage advises that a number of considerations will need to be taken into account when proposals of this nature are being assessed. In order for your authority to understand the potential impacts of the proposals on the significance of both designated and non-designated heritage assets of all types, we would recommend that you ensure that the cultural heritage assessment conducted under either the EIA or statutory planning process takes the following issues into account. This includes consideration of the impact of ancillary infrastructure, such as access tracks and buildings associated with grid connections or security measures, as well as the photovoltaic panels themselves:

- The potential impact upon the landscape, especially if a site falls within an area of historic landscape;
- Direct impacts on historic/archaeological fabric (buildings, sites or areas), whether statutorily protected or not. All grades of listed buildings should be identified;
- Other impacts, particularly the *setting* of listed buildings, scheduled monuments,



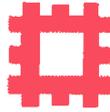
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English Heritage will use the information provided by you to evaluate any applications you make for statutory or quasi-statutory consent, or for grant or other funding. Information provided by you and any information obtained from other sources will be retained in all cases in hard copy form and/or on computer for administration purposes and future consideration where applicable.



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registered parks and gardens, conservation areas etc, including long views and any specific designed views and vistas within historic designed landscapes. In some cases, intervisibility between historic sites may be a significant issue;

- The potential for buried archaeological remains;
- Effects on landscape amenity from public and private land;
- Cumulative impacts

Such information would usually be expected to be presented as part of any planning application in a document such as an Environmental Assessment or Visual Impact Assessment, including the production of a Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) in line with the appropriate guidance.

English Heritage recommends that photomontages are produced for key viewpoints where significant heritage assets are affected which should include any views towards these heritage assets in which the development including associated infrastructure such as fencing and transformer buildings would be visible, views from the designated heritage assets, and views between contemporaneous or otherwise associated heritage assets in which both assets and the development can be seen.

We would recommend that your authority ensures that designated heritage assets are considered as individual receptors under either the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment or Cultural Heritage chapters and ensures that the list of selected viewpoints takes this into account in addition to the assessment of effects on general landscape character.

Any development which had a significant and adverse impact upon the setting of any important historic assets would not receive the support of English Heritage.

We are aware that initial discussions have taken place with the County Archaeological Advisor in regard to the presence and treatment of non-designated archaeological remains and a potential requirement for pre-determination survey and evaluation, and we would recommend that your authority is guided by that advice. We also recommend that your authority take further advice from your own specialist conservation advisors as they will have views on matters for which we will not provide site specific comments, such as the setting of Grade II listed buildings.



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The advice above is in line with our published guidance on The Setting of Heritage Assets and the National Planning Policy Framework. We urge you to consider the issues above when responding to the applicant, and look forward to receiving a copy of the Environmental Statement to accompany a planning application in due course.

Yours sincerely

Helen Woodhouse

Assistant Inspector of Ancient Monuments

E-mail: helen.woodhouse@english-heritage.org.uk

cc Lesley-Ann Mather, Northamptonshire County Council



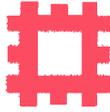
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DESBOROUGH AIRFIELD, DESBOROUGH ROAD, STOKE ALBANY

Request for EIA Scoping Opinion

S.I. 2011 No 1824 Town & Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011

Information Provided

Scoping Request from Kettering Borough Council

EIA Scoping report produced by Peter Brett Associates

Indicative Site Location Plan

Published Guidance

The Setting of Heritage Assets (English Heritage 2011)

<http://www.helm.org.uk/guidance-library/setting-heritage-assets/>



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**Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (As Amended)
Local Highway Authority (LHA) Response**

Application Reference	KET/2014/0875
LHA Reference	PL 764
Proposal	Solar farm
Location	Desborough Airfield, Desborough Road, Stoke Albany
Date	06/02/2015

Case Officer:

Rebecca Collins

Please can you include the following into the scoping opinion;

Traffic quantities and types for the construction and maintenance phases.

Routeing plan for this traffic.

Assessment of the route with reference to Weight restrictions, visibility, structures, widths and Public Rights of Way (PRoW).

Junction assessments at the A427.

Methods of protection and rectification for the routes and PRoWs.

Methods of protecting and routeing users of the PRoWs.

A Construction Traffic Management Plan if this is within the scope.

The application site is affected by Public Rights of Way.

Signed..... *C Dunderdale*.....

Clare Dunderdale (Mrs)

Development Management Engineer

For Assistant Director – Highways Transport and Infrastructure

Northamptonshire Highways

Riverside House

Riverside Way

Northampton NN1 5NX

DDI +44(0)1604 367146

Web www.kierwsp.co.uk

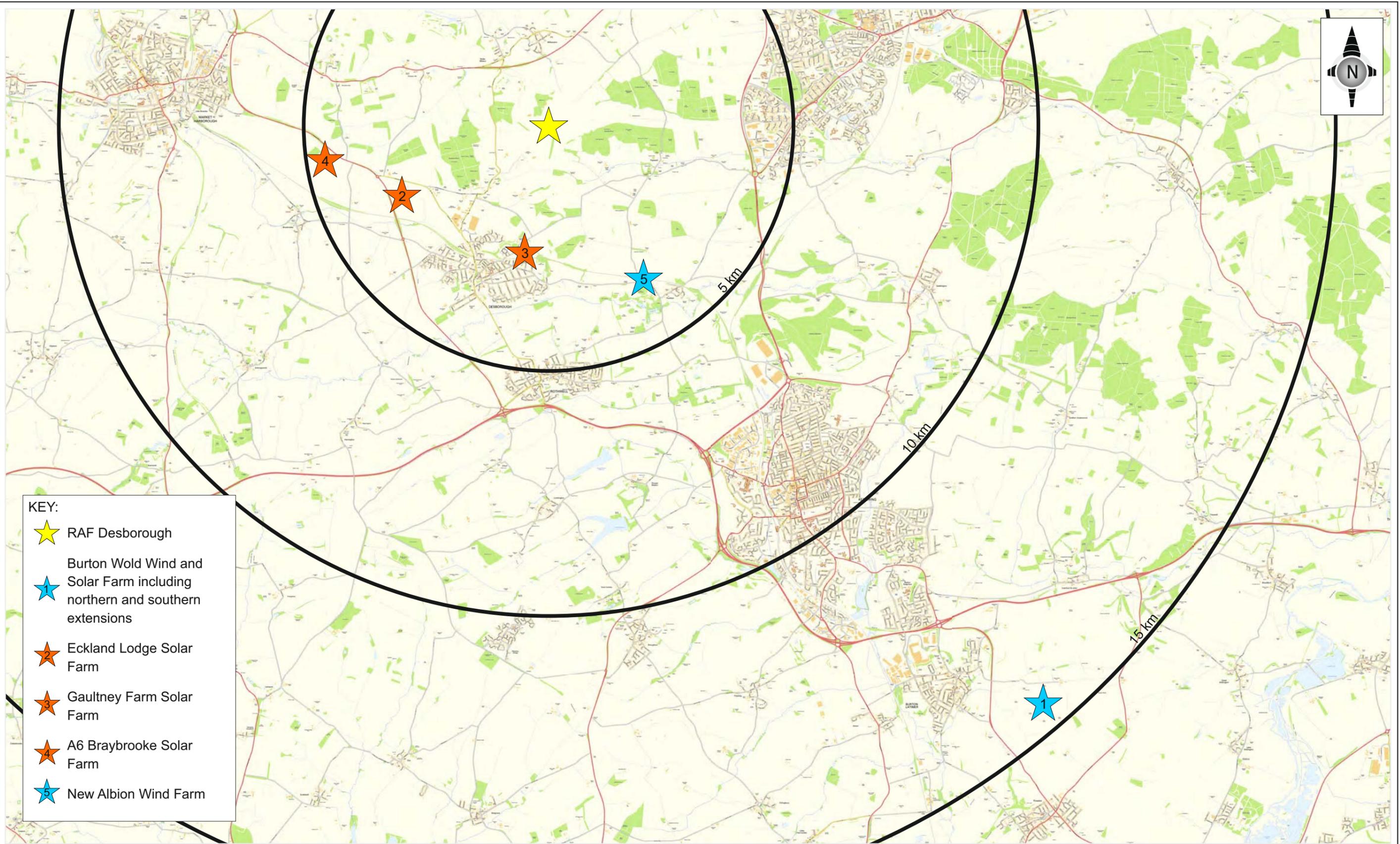
Email cdunderdale@kierwsp.co.uk

The views, observations, comments and recommendations contained in this response represent those of Northamptonshire Highways on behalf of Northamptonshire County Council as Local Highway Authority and in no other function or authority.

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Appendix A.7 Committed Developments



KEY:

- ★ RAF Desborough
- ★ Burton Wold Wind and Solar Farm including northern and southern extensions
- ★ Eckland Lodge Solar Farm
- ★ Gaultney Farm Solar Farm
- ★ A6 Braybrooke Solar Farm
- ★ New Albion Wind Farm



Client
NF RAF Desb'

Former RAF Desborough Solar Park,
Committed Developments

Mark	Revision	Drawn	Date	Chkd
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Scale	A3 NTS			
Drawn by	GN			
Checked by	MC			

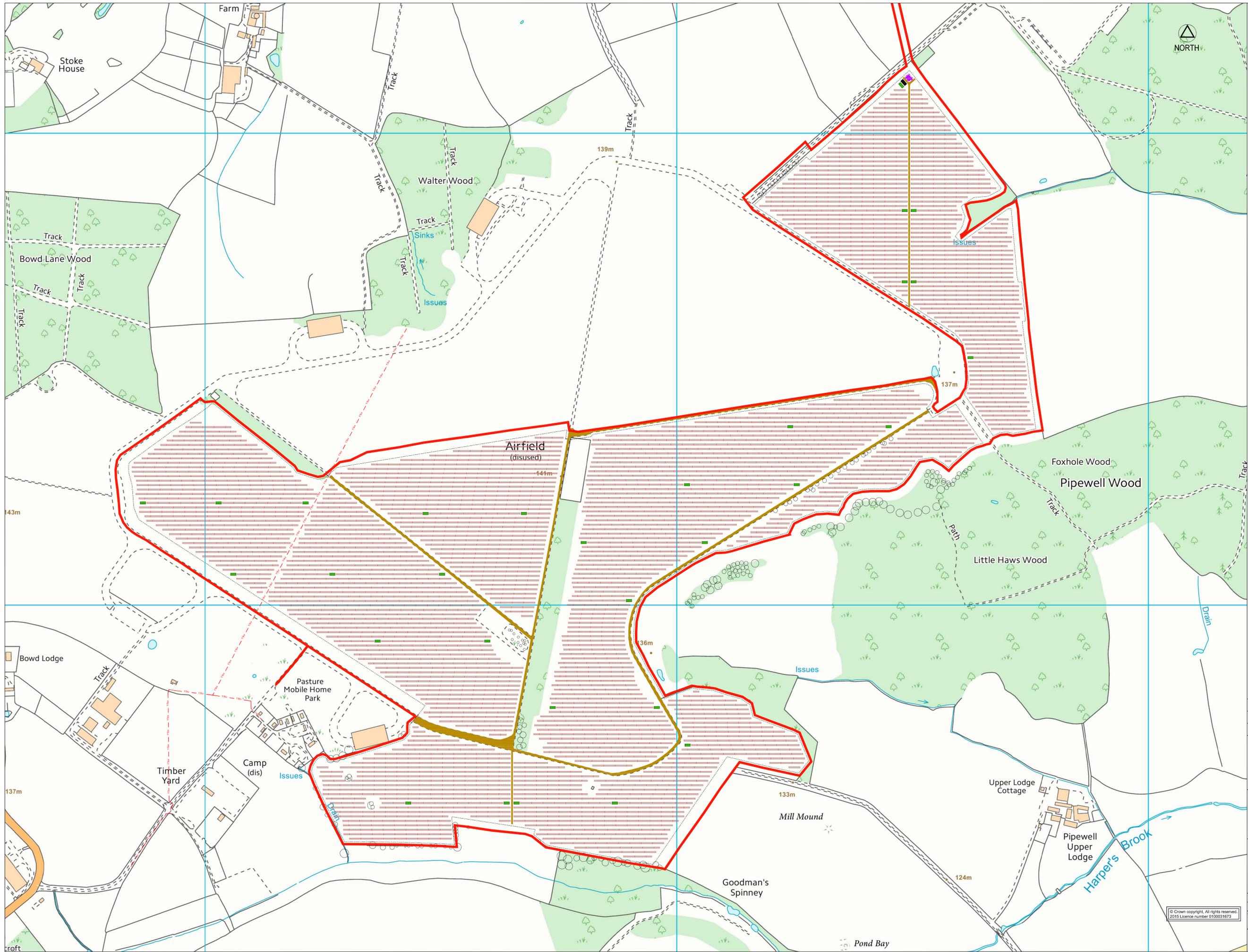
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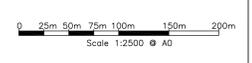
Appendix A.8 Alternatives



Appendix B Proposed Development



- KEY**
- SITE BOUNDARY
 - INTERNAL SITE ACCESS TRACKS
 - PV PANELS
 - INVERTER STATION
 - CLIENT CONTROL BUILDING
 - STORAGE CONTAINER
 - EXISTING 11kV CABLE



F1	ISSUED FOR PLANNING	PmG	AS	AS	02/04/15
Job Title					

**FORMER RAF
DESBOROUGH AIRFIELD**

Drg Title
**SOLAR PV PLANT
SITE LAYOUT**



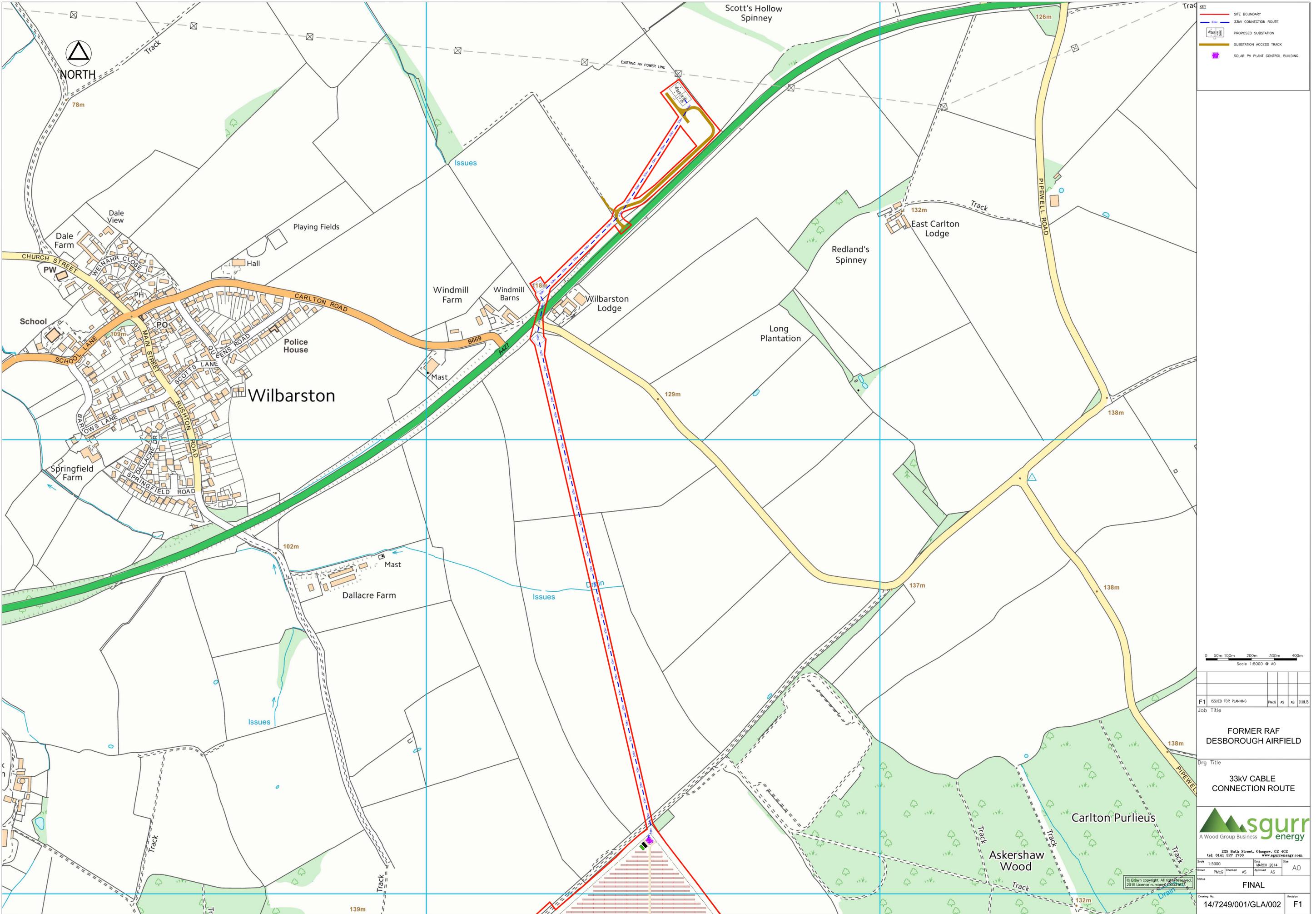
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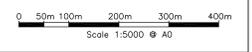
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NORTH

KEY

- SITE BOUNDARY
- 33kV CONNECTION ROUTE
- PROPOSED SUBSTATION
- SUBSTATION ACCESS TRACK
- SOLAR PV PLANT CONTROL BUILDING



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Job Title					

**FORMER RAF
DESBOROUGH AIRFIELD**

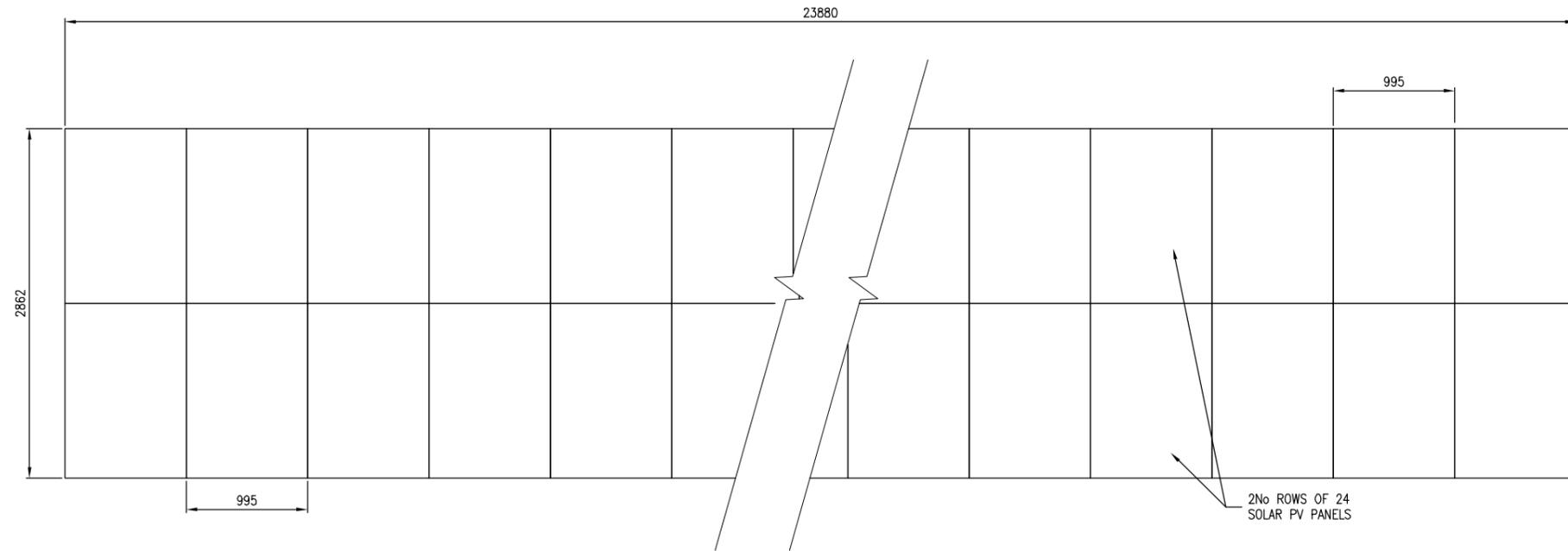
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CONNECTION ROUTE**



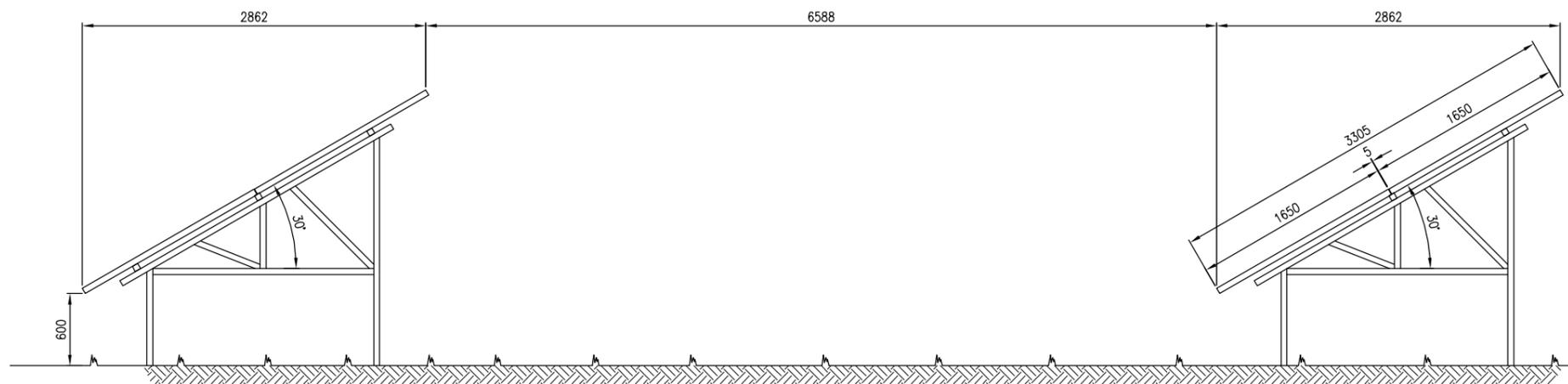
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TYPICAL PLAN OF TABLE



TYPICAL SIDE ELEVATION

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Job Title
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DESBOROUGH AIRFIELD**

Drwg Title
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PLAN & ELEVATION**

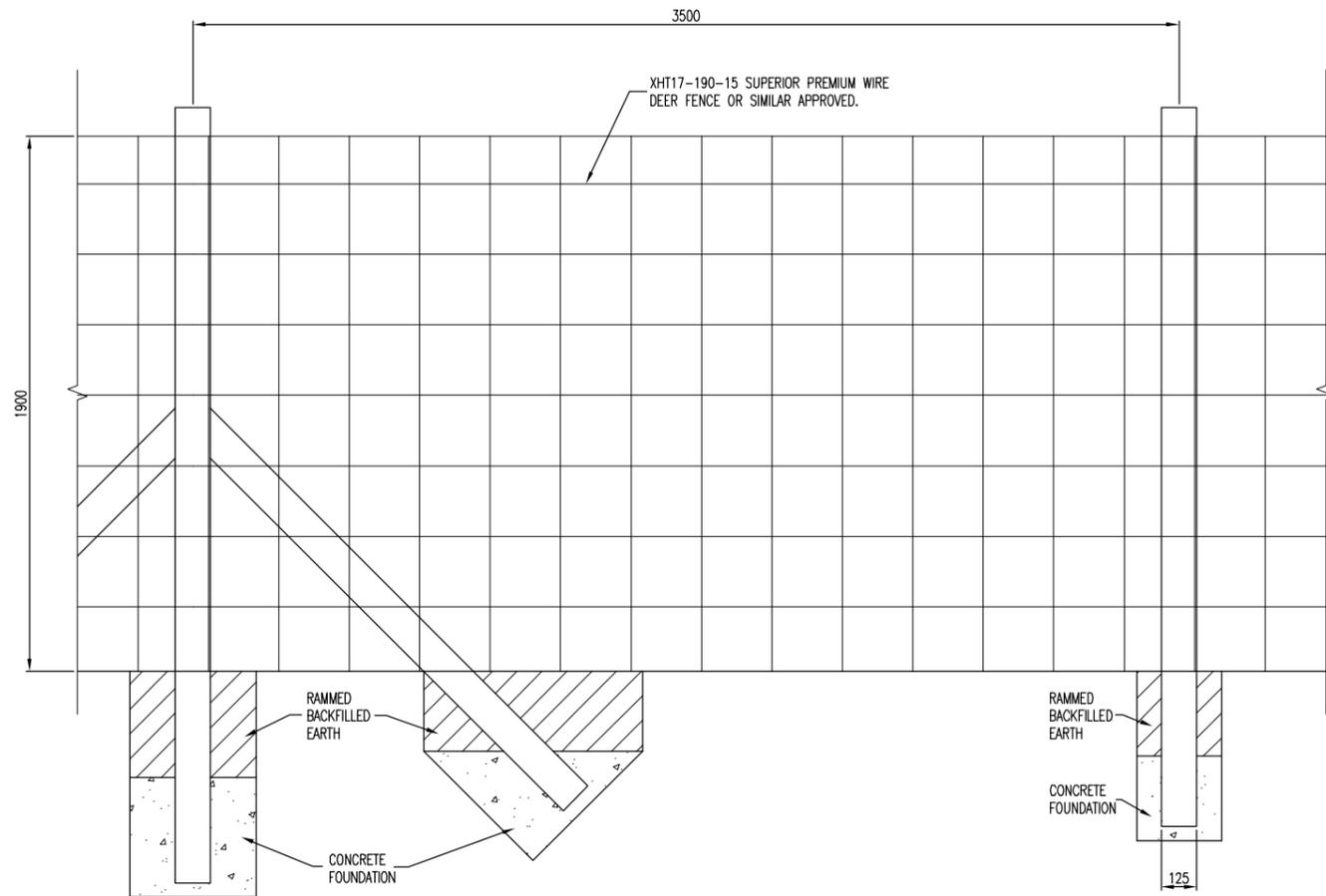


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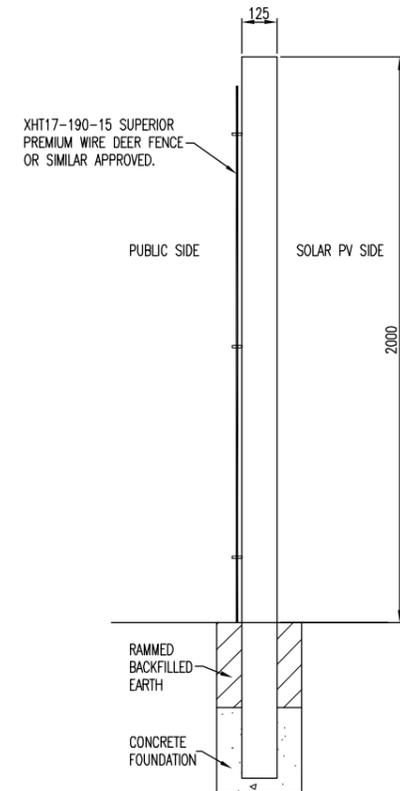
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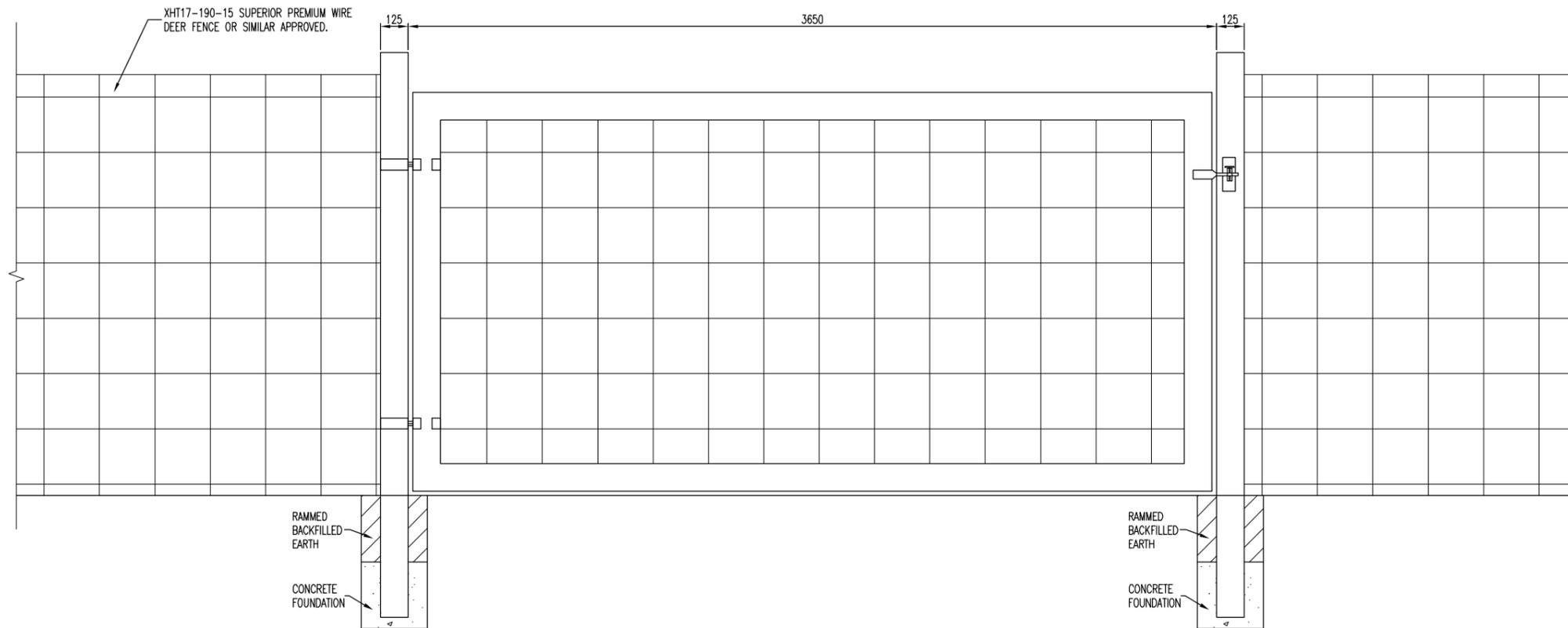
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DEER FENCE ELEVATION



DEER FENCE END ELEVATION



GATE DETAIL

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2. INTERMEDIATE POSTS TO BE PROVIDED AT INTERVALS, MEASURED CENTRE TO CENTRE OF POSTS, NOT EXCEEDING 3.5m.
3. STRUTS TO BE PROVIDED AT ALL STRAINING POSTS IN THE DIRECTION OF EACH LINE OF FENCING
4. ALL STEEL FIXINGS TO BE GALVANISED.
5. CONCRETE FOR POST FOOTINGS AND SURROUNDS TO BE TYPE C10.

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Job Title
**FORMER RAF
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Job Title
**DEER FENCE & GATE
ELEVATIONS**

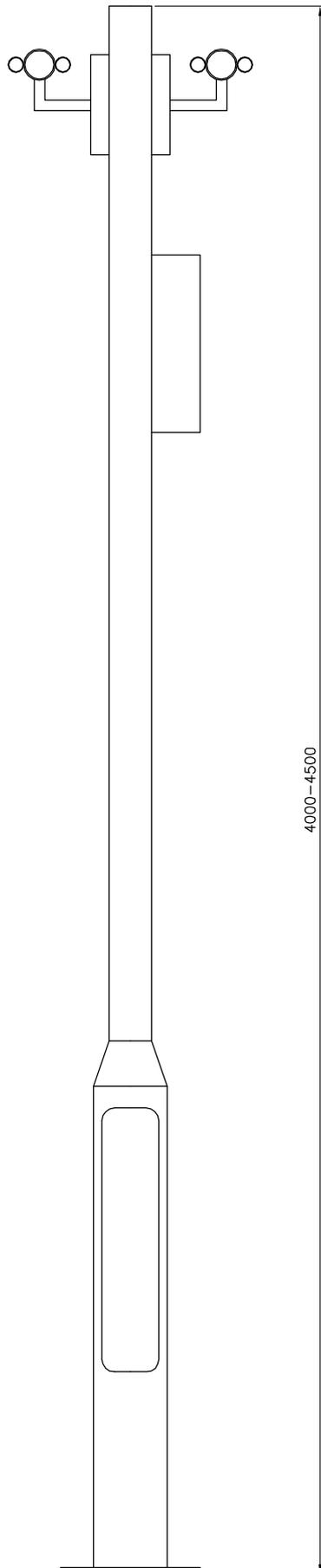


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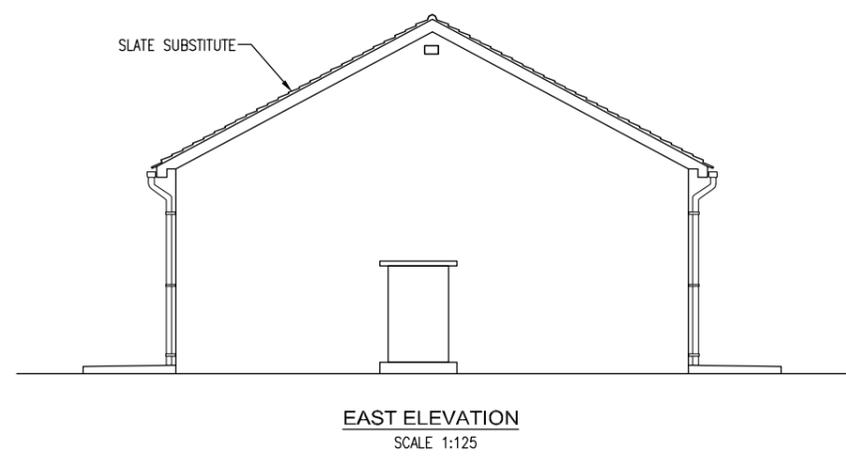
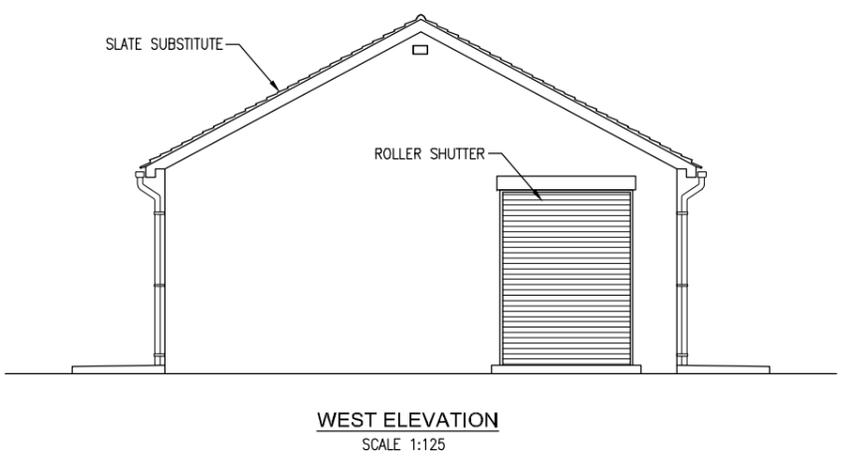
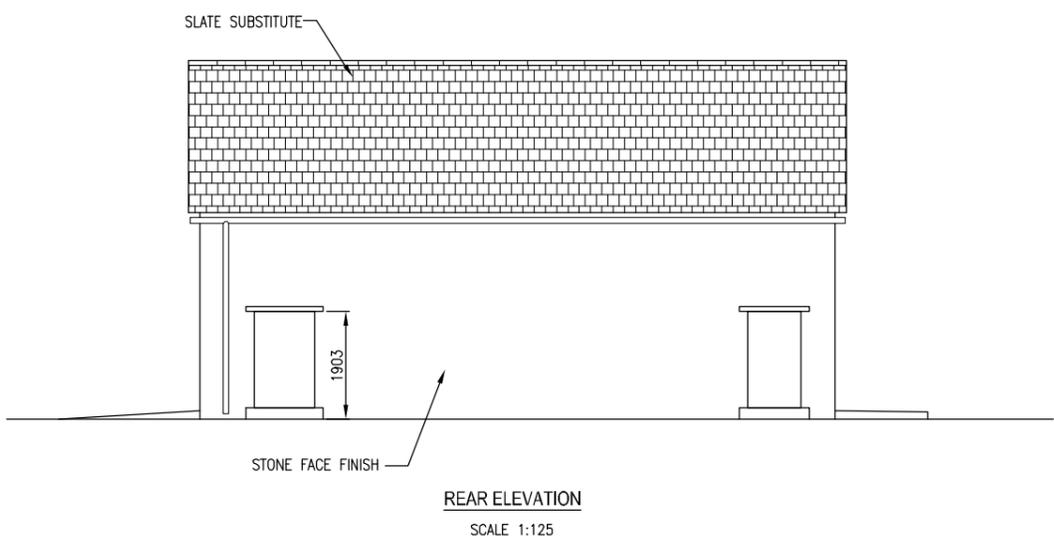
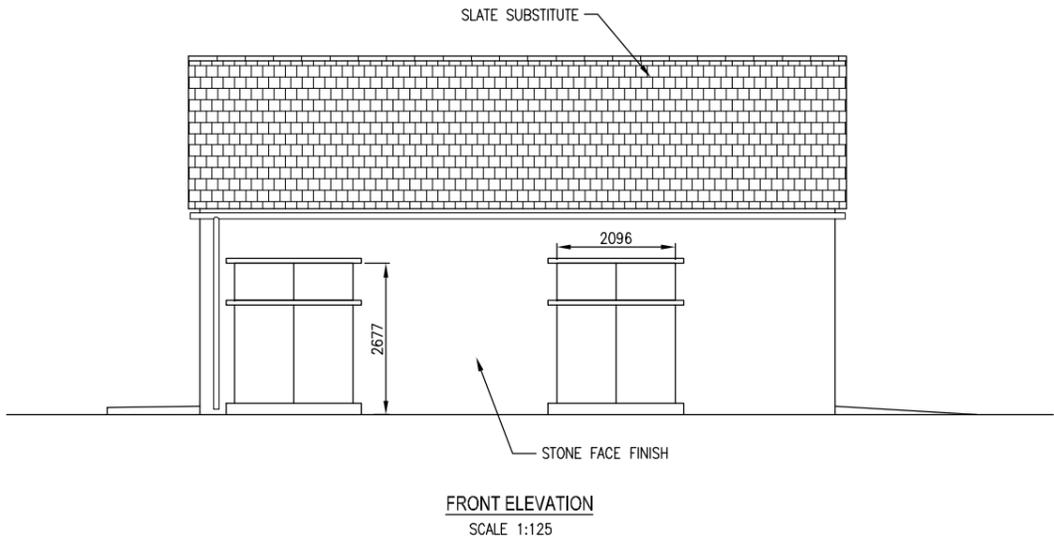
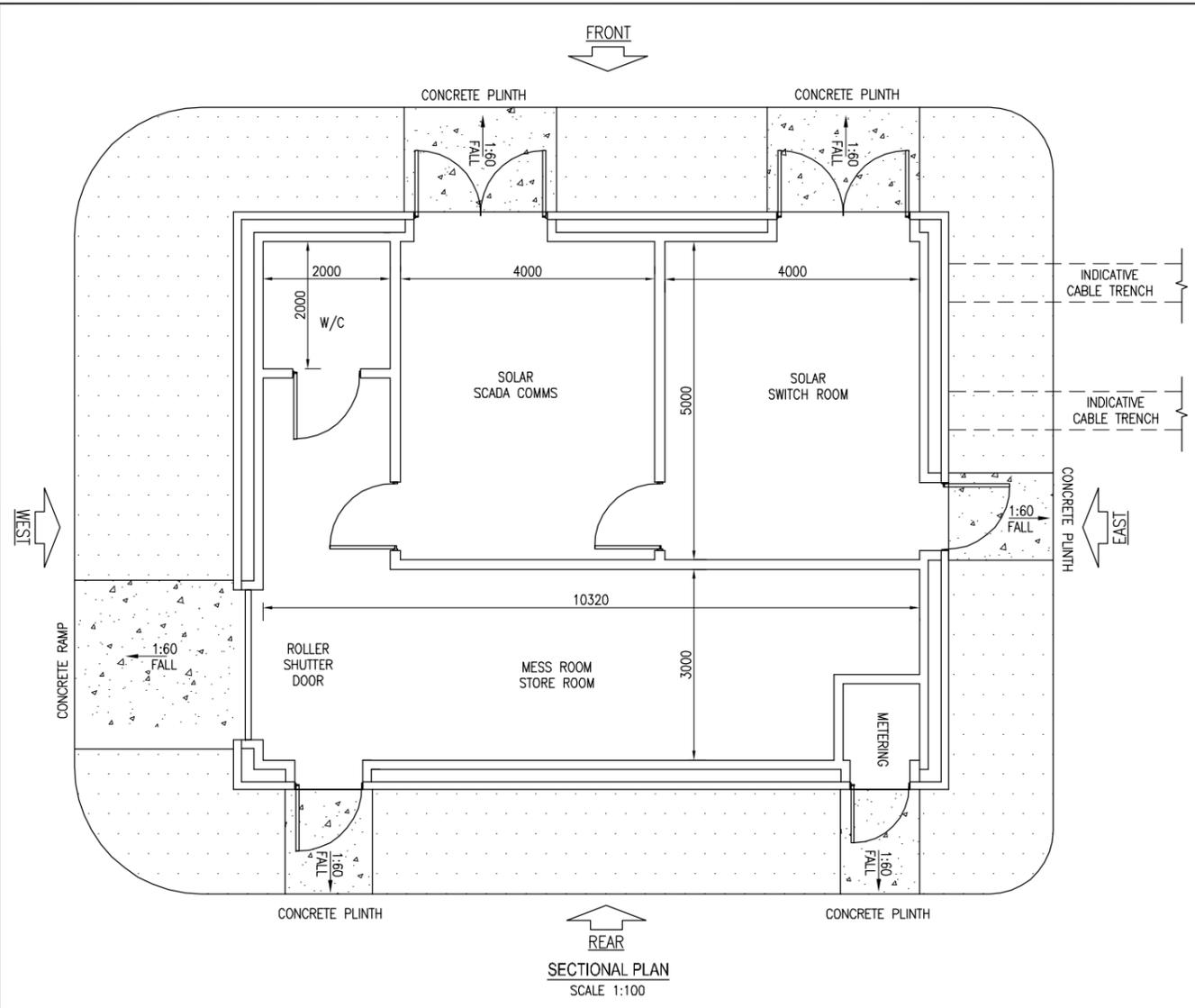
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Job Title
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 DESBOROUGH AIRFIELD**

Drwg Title
**CONTROL BUILDING
 PLAN & ELEVATIONS**

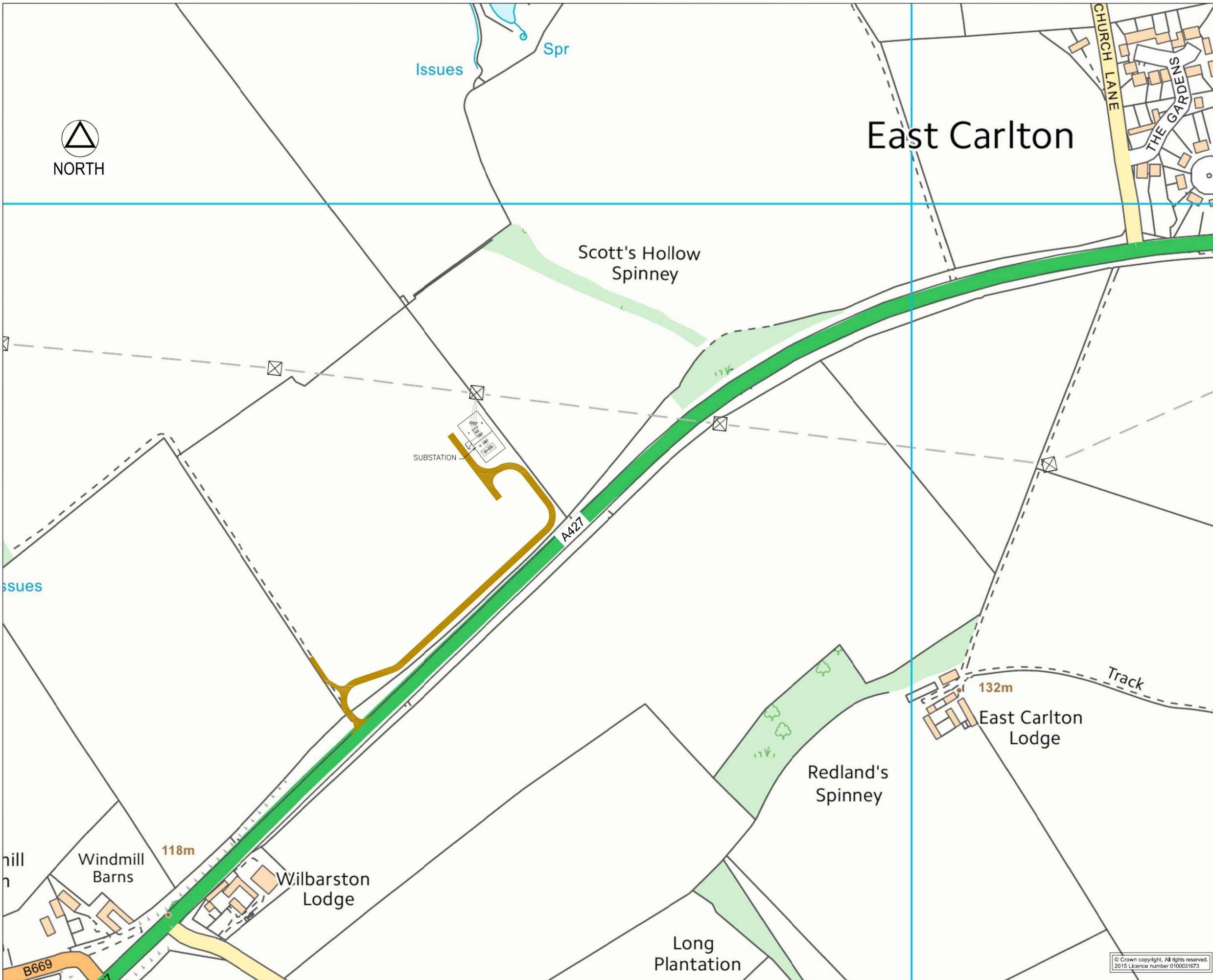


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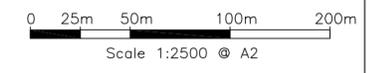
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KEY

- ACCESS TRACK
- PROPOSED SUBSTATION



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Job Title
FORMER RAF DESBOROUGH AIRFIELD

Org Title
SUBSTATION LOCATION PLAN



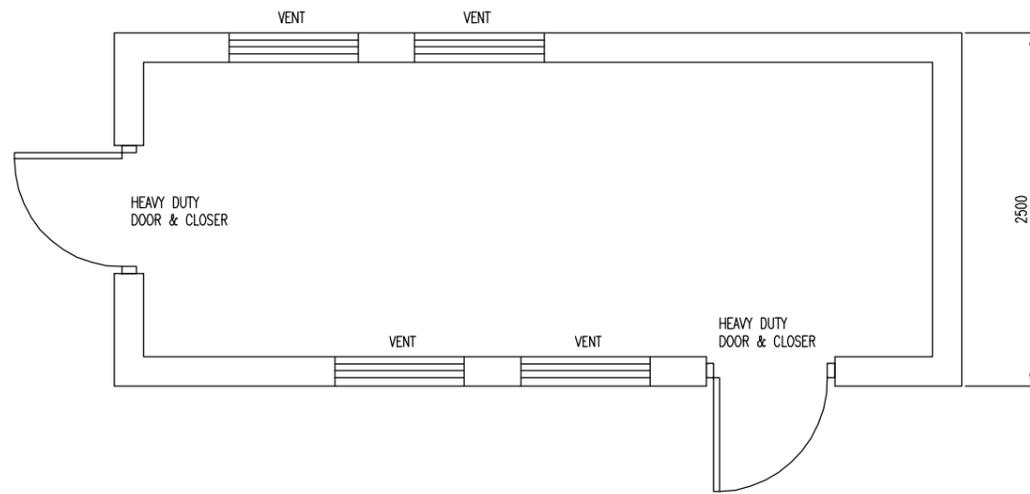
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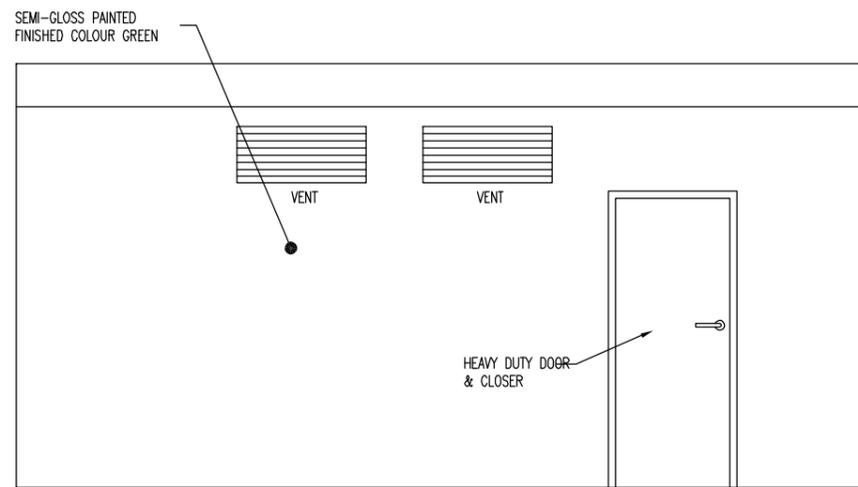
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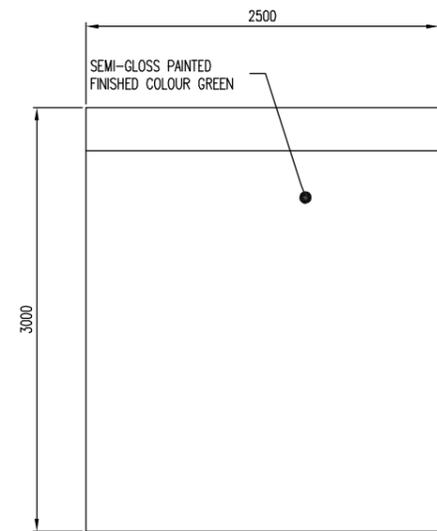
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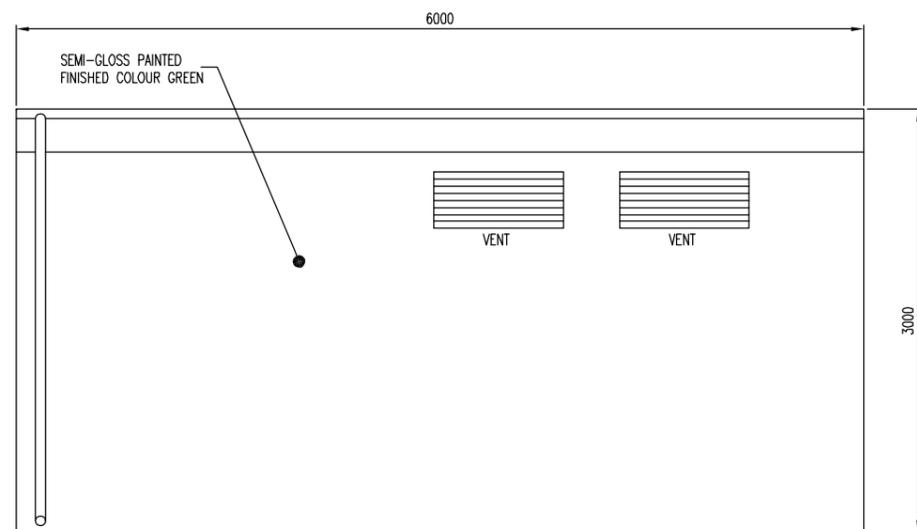
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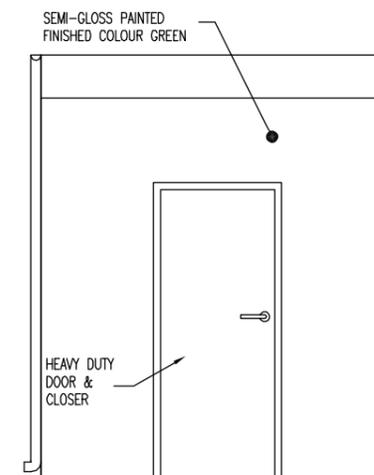
FRONT ELEVATION



EAST ELEVATION



REAR ELEVATION



WEST ELEVATION

NOTES
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Job Title
**FORMER RAF
DESBOROUGH AIRFIELD**

Drwg Title
**INVERTER COMPOUND
PLAN & ELEVATIONS**

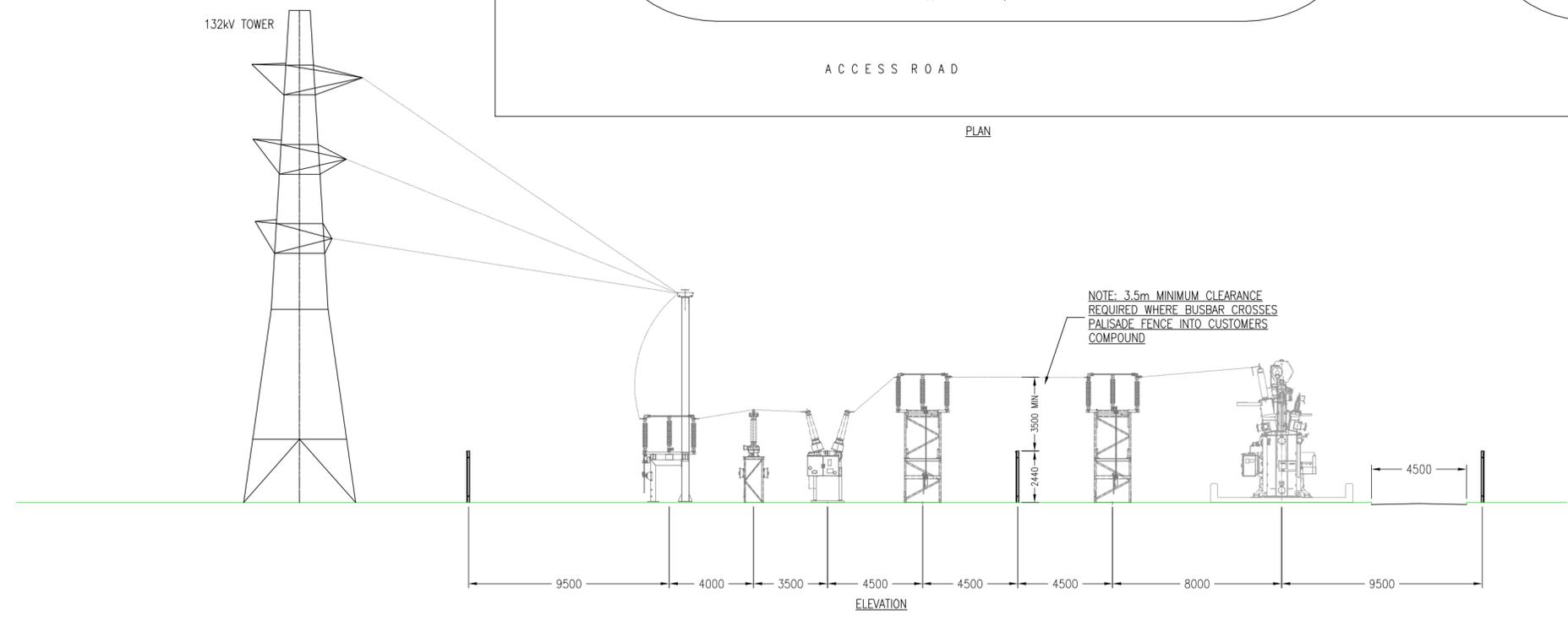
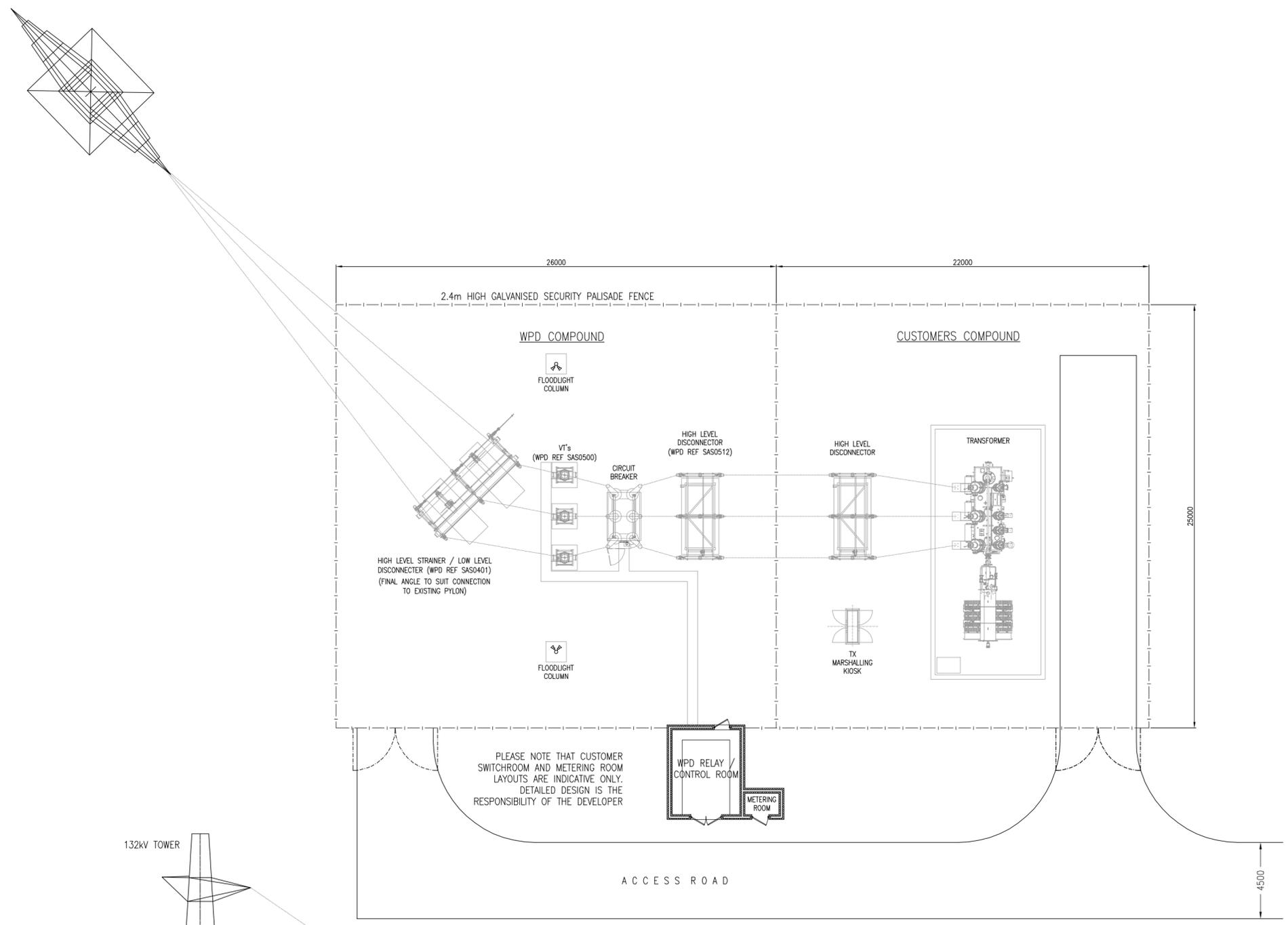


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Job Title

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Org Title

**SUBSTATION
LAYOUT PLAN**



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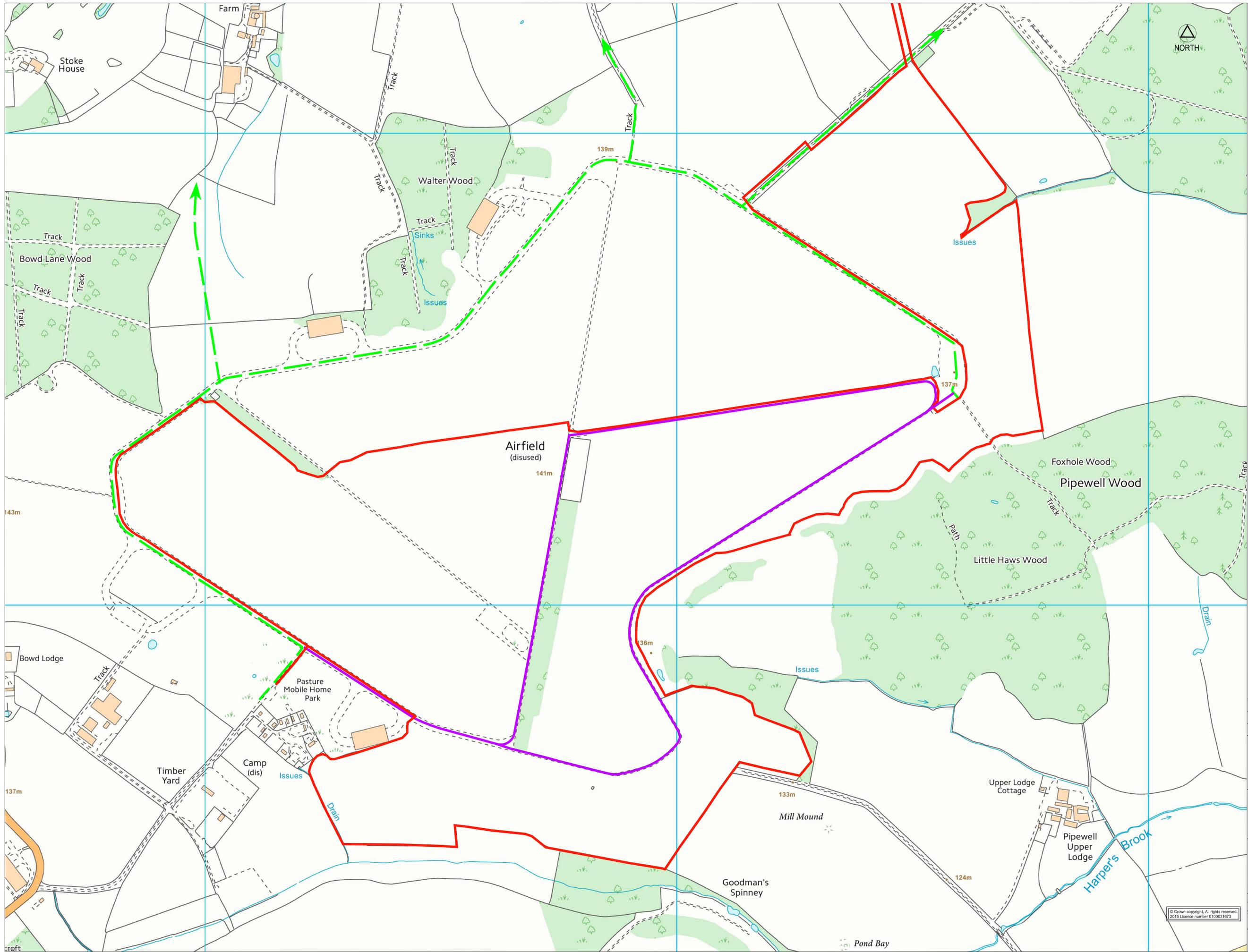
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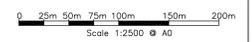
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Revision: F1



KEY
 SITE BOUNDARY
 PERMISSIVE PATHS
 EXISTING PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY



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Job Title					

**FORMER RAF
 DESBOROUGH AIRFIELD**

**PERMISSIVE
 ACCESS PATHS**



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