



**APPLICATION FOR PLANNING PERMISSION**

For

**CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION OF A SOLAR FARM AND BATTERY ENERGY STORAGE  
SYSTEM, TOGETHER WITH ALL ASSOCIATED WORKS, EQUIPMENT, NECESSARY  
INFRASTRUCTURE AND LANDSCAPING**

on

**LAND ADJACENT TO THE A614  
WORKSOP  
S80 3PA**

on behalf of

**ONE PLANET DEVELOPMENTS LIMITED**

**DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT**



## **1 Introduction**

1.1 This Design and Access Statement (DAS) has been prepared in support of the planning application for the construction and operation of a solar farm and battery energy storage system (BESS), together with all associated works, equipment, necessary infrastructure and landscaping, on land adjacent to the A614, Worksop.

1.2 In accordance with the requirements of Regulation 9 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedures) (England) Regulations 2015, this Statement:

- explains the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the development;
- demonstrates the steps taken to appraise the context of the development and how the design of the development takes that context into account;
- explains the policy adopted as to access, and how policies relating to access in relevant local development documents have been taken into account;
- states what, if any, consultation has been undertaken on issues relating to access to the development and what account has been taken of the outcome of any such consultation; and
- explains how any specific issues which might affect access to the development have been addressed.

1.3 The Statement demonstrates that due attention has been given to design and access issues in the preparation of the planning application, with the proposed design solution taking account of the application site context, relevant policy requirements, and the responsibilities of developers in terms of ensuring any access related issues are addressed. That being the case, the application complies with relevant design and access policies, and should therefore be supported in terms of those.

## **2 Design principles and concepts**

2.1 The primary principle which underpins the application is the need for development of this nature to facilitate the decarbonisation of the UK's energy system in accordance with Government policy in this respect (for further details on which, see the Planning Statement submitted with the application).



2.2 The design principles which informed the siting and layout were then largely technical, but detailed consideration was also given to environmental issues, and to key criteria set out in:

- the **National Policy Statement for renewable energy infrastructure (EN-3)**;
- **Policy DM4: Design & Character** of the Core Strategy & Development Management Policies Development Plan Document of the Bassetlaw District Council – Local Development Framework (adopted December 2011) (LDF); and
- **Policy ST35: Design Quality** of the Proposed Bassetlaw Local Plan (as submitted for examination on 18 July 2022 and modified per Inspector’s Report published 21 February 2024) (PBLP)

2.3 The relevance of each of the above to the determination of the application is set out in the Planning Statement.

2.4 Notably, as set out in the Planning Statement, the design criteria included in the LDF are 13 years old and, as the National Planning Policy Framework generally requires policies in development plans to be reviewed at least once every 5 years, are not up-to-date in this respect. However, the same underlying principles are in any event now reflected in the equivalent requirements of the PBLP such that, if the relevant provisions of the PBLP are satisfied, so are equivalent requirements the LDF. In terms of which, the key design principles which all developments are expected to demonstrate are set out in **Policy ST35: Design Quality** of the PBLP, with the proposed development designed to satisfy those (with full details of how the design solution complies with all relevant requirements of this set out in the Planning Statement).

2.5 Likewise, many factors identified in National Policy Statement (EN-3) are also reflected in Policy ST35: Design Quality, with these having informed not only the final design solution, but also the initial site selection process, as set out in this Statement.

### **3 Appraisal of site context**

3.1 In terms of the immediate context, the application comprises five fields bordered by mature woodland, with the A614 Blyth Road and the Clumber Park Hotel to the west, West Drayton Avenue (part of the Robin Hood Way) to the south, and the River Poulter to the north and east (with the Robin Hood Way and land around the River Poulter identified as ‘minor green corridors’ in the PBLP, as set out in the Planning Statement).



- 3.2 In total, the site covers an area of 88.31ha, and is served by an existing access from the A614 Blyth Road.
- 3.3 Importantly for the purposes of this application, the majority of the site does not comprise Best and Most Versatile (BMV) Agricultural Land (per the Agricultural Land Classification Report submitted with the application). And, while a small part of the site is BMV land, this is generally very sandy, and thus requires irrigation to farm successfully, with the agricultural use of the site as a whole also constrained by existing pylons (further details on which are provided below).
- 3.4 The site is also not subject to any other natural, cultural heritage or landscape related designations, with the Council having issued an EIA Screening Opinion (20/01546/SCR) in which no specific natural or built environment constraints were identified. And, while small areas of the western part of the site have been identified as being at risk of surface water flooding, as set out in the Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Statement (FRA/DS) submitted with the application, this is not at a level that precludes this being used for a solar farm and BESS (as also confirmed in that).
- 3.5 It is though recognised that there are designated sites in close proximity to the application site, along with receptors that could be sensitive to any noise, glint or visual impacts generated by the proposed development (in addition to occupants of the Clumber Park Hotel, users of the adjoining roads, and the minor green corridors to the north and south), namely:
- the Clumber Park Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Clumber Park Local Wildlife Site (LWS) to the west, on the opposite side of the A614 Blyth Road;
  - the Poulter Valley Plantation (West) LWS to the east of the site;
  - Clumber Park Registered Park and Garden, also located to the west, on the opposite side of the A614 Blyth Road;
  - Reford (Gamston) Airport, located approximately 2.8km to the northeast of the site at its closest point; and
  - a small number of individual houses to the north and south, albeit any houses within 1km are separated from the site by intervening woodland.
- 3.6 Potential impacts on the above sites and receptors have therefore been assessed in detail in the documentation submitted with the application, along with any potential



impacts on any other relevant sites and receptors identified in the course of doing so. None of these are considered to constrain the proposed development for the reasons given in documents and summarised in the Planning Statement (subject to solar panels being orientated to avoid glint affecting Reford (Gamston) Airport), as set out in the Glint Assessment).

3.7 Most importantly for the purposes of the proposed development though is that two lines of pylons cross the eastern part of the site, supporting existing 132kV and 400kV overhead cables.

3.8 Key considerations, including the potential impacts identified in EN-3, that have been taken into account when preparing the application thus include:

- **irradiance and site topography**, with suitable irradiance and topography essential for solar farm development to be viable - in terms of which, the application site was identified as having a favourable relatively level topography;
- **network connection**, which should be available in close proximity – which is provided by the existing overhead cables crossing the eastern part of the site, with grid connection having been agreed;
- **existing land use**, in terms of which, it is recognised that BMV Land should be avoided where possible (albeit it is noted in EN-3 that developments of this nature are likely to use at least some agricultural land, with scope for this to be on BMV land or other designated sites, if this can be justified) – with the existing use in this case being agricultural, but with the site being of limited agricultural value, as noted above and set out in more detail in the Planning Statement, and generally free from constraints;
- **proximity to dwellings (and other sensitive receptors)**, with proposed development to be located where it will not have any negative visual or glint and glare impacts on existing residents or other nearby development – the only building in the immediate vicinity of is the Clumber Park Hotel, with existing tree cover between this and the site providing substantial screening, while any residential properties within 1km are screened by intervening woodland as well;
- **accessibility**, including making sure that proposed access arrangements are suitable for the construction phase, as well as once the proposed development is operational – with the existing access being suitable for use during both the



construction and operation of the proposed development, as confirmed by the Transport Statement submitted with the application;

- **public rights of way**, with siting and designing development to ensure continued use of public rights of way during both construction and operation, wherever possible - there being no existing public rights of way through the application site, although West Drayton Avenue to the south of the site is part of the Robin Hood Way, and this has been taken into account when preparing the proposed site layout;
- **security and lighting**, with it being necessary to take proposed security and lighting measures into account when assessing visual impact, and to seek to minimise any visual impacts associated with these - the Ecological Impact Assessment and Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment highlights the potential for lighting to disturb bats, and the need for an appropriate lighting strategy to avoid any such disturbance occurring;
- **site capacity**, recognising that AC installed export capacity should not be seen as an appropriate tool to constrain the impacts of a solar farm, and that applicants should use other measurements (such as panel size, total area and percentage of ground cover) to set the maximum extent of development when determining the planning impacts of an application - the site is of a sufficient size to accommodate a viable scale of solar farm, together with BESS capable of storing sufficient electricity to support the function of the grid, without having any unacceptable impacts on the surrounding area. Notably, the site provides scope for landscape planting to both screen the development and provide biodiversity enhancements, and there is no existing infrastructure on the site that might be affected by the proposed development and limit its capacity as a result;
- **site layout design, and appearance**, including arranging the arrays to maximise potential power output, while also mitigating any impacts – with this having evolved during the process of preparing the application due to the need orientate the proposed solar panels in a way that would both maximise power output and avoid any potential glint issues (as set out in the Glint Assessment), while also providing space for new and enhanced planting around the proposed infrastructure to provide landscape and biodiversity benefits;
- **project lifetime**, with an upper limit of 40 years being typical, although applicants may seek consent without a time-period or for differing time-periods of operation – it is envisaged that the proposed development would have a lifetime of 40 years;



- **decommissioning**, with it being necessary to consider what will happen at the end of the proposed development's operational life - this has been taken into account when selecting the proposed infrastructure, to ensure it can be readily removed from the site at the end of the project lifetime, and the site restored, as set out in the Decommissioning Statement submitted with the application; and
- **flexibility**, in terms of whether any elements may be subject to change - with the incorporation of storage containers into the layout allowing for storage for spare panels to be used if needed.

3.9 In turn, in arriving at the proposed design solution, the site context has informed the:

- **nature of the proposed development** – with the site's level topography, limited agricultural value, and the location of the existing overhead cables and access all meaning that this has been identified as being ideally suited to a solar farm development;
- **scale of proposed development** – as the number and size of solar panels, BESS units and associated infrastructure proposed is intended to be comfortably contained within the existing boundaries to the east, north and west, while maintaining an appropriate buffer between the proposed development and the Clumber Park Hotel, the Robin Hood Way and the River Poulter, thus ensuring that this would be acceptable in the context of the landscape setting of the site (as demonstrated by the LVIA);
- **site layout** – which has been informed by the site's topography, the location of the existing overhead cables and access, and a commitment to maintaining appropriate buffers between the proposed development and neighbouring land uses (including the identified minor green corridors, in accordance with relevant policy requirements in respect of these, as set out in the Planning Statement), as well as by technical requirements. In particular, as highlighted above, the panel layout has been informed by the Glint Assessment, with this having evolved during the preparation of the application in order to avoid unnecessary impacts on flight circuits associated with Retford (Gamston) Airport. Also importantly, the height of the proposed panels has been selected to ensure that these would not be affected by any potential surface water flooding (as confirmed in the FRA/DS), while the layout allows for planting between and under these, which would in turn allow the site to continue to be used by ground nesting birds and hares in particular, while also enhancing the biodiversity value of the site generally;



- **proposed access arrangements** – in terms of which it is proposed to use the existing access, thereby avoiding any potential additional impacts that might arise if a new access had to be created;
- **proposed lighting** – in accordance with the recommendations of the Ecological Impact Assessment and Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment, the applicant is committed to submitting an appropriate lighting strategy for approval prior to development commencing, and it is envisaged that planning permission could be granted subject to a condition to this effect. Meanwhile, while specific lighting proposals would be confirmed in that strategy, it should be noted that no site lighting is required during normal operations, but motion activated downward facing lighting (for emergency out of hours maintenance visits only) may be provided;
- **proposed landscaping** – the location and nature of which seeks to ensure that no adverse landscape or visual impacts arise (as confirmed by the LVIA), while also providing biodiversity benefits.

3.10 More specifically, the proposed solar farm comprises solar photovoltaic panels measuring 2.38m x 1.3m, each of which would be fixed to aluminium or steel mounting frames set at approximately 25 degrees, with the height at the front being 0.91m above ground level, and the maximum height at the back being 3m. The solar farm will have an export capacity of up to 40 MVA, providing an annual electricity output of 54.5 GW/h—sufficient to meet the energy needs of nearly 15,500 homes (based on the mean domestic electricity consumption in the East Midlands in 2021 of 3,534 kWh per annum)) and delivering a saving of over 20,150 tonnes per annum of CO<sub>2</sub> compared to the use of a gas-combined cycle (370g CO<sub>2</sub>eq/kWh for gas-combined cycle generated electricity).

3.11 Alongside the solar panels, the proposed development includes 12 BESS containers, each measuring 12.19m x 2.5m x 2.9m, with side mounted heating, ventilation and air conditioning units.



3.12 Other associated equipment and infrastructure comprises:

Infrastructure	Number	Size
MV power stations (transformer and inverter)	17	12.21m x 2.48m x 2.91m
Spare parts containers	2	12.2m x 2.45m x 2.6m
Welfare container	1	12.2m x 2.45m x 2.6m
MV transformers	6	2.44m x 2.52m x 2.98m
Power conversion systems	12	3.7m x 2m x 2.35m
Substation compound (132kV), including DNO Control Room, transformer, and Customer Control Room	1	65.4m x 44.38m
Lattice tower	1	25m
Customer switchgear	1	12.2m x 2.45m x 2.6m
Water storage tank (250,000 Litres)	1	9.12m x 3.84m
CCTV camera and post	1 every 50m	2.9m high
Deer Fencing (Around the solar farm)		2.4m high
Palisade Fencing (around the BESS and substation)		2.4m high
New internal access track		4m wide

3.13 The proposed development also presents considerable opportunities for landscape and biodiversity enhancements as shown on the proposed planting plan with the anticipated benefits explained in the Ecological Impact Assessment and Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment.

3.14 Following construction, the site would be an unmanned facility requiring minimal maintenance (10 to 20 visits per year), and this will therefore generate minimal traffic movements or waste, and complying with all relevant policy requirements as set out below.

#### 4 Access policies

4.1 All relevant policies are addressed in the Planning Statement, in terms of which it should in particular be noted that:

- as highlighted above, there are no existing public rights away across the site;



- once operational, the proposed development would be unmanned facility, with access required only for occasional maintenance inspections (anticipated to be limited to a maintenance vehicle once or twice a week, and a DNO vehicle once or twice a month), and the Transport Statement confirms that the existing site access is suitable for the proposed use;
- the access and recreational value green corridors identified to the north and south of the site would be protected by the establishment of appropriate buffers between all elements of the proposed development and these; and
- the proposed development will in fact beneficially enhance the sense of passing through a forest landscape to those travelling past the site along the Robin Hoods Way (as opposed to the current view of arable farmland crossed by electricity pylons and transmission lines).

## 5 Public consultation

- 5.1 As set out in the Statement of Community Involvement submitted with the application, consideration was given to potential approaches that could be taken to community consultation.
- 5.2 In this case, the nature of the proposed development and the application site's location in the countryside, approximately 2.5km to the north west of Bothamsall, means that the proposed development is not considered to be likely to affect any significant number of people, with the nearest dwellinghouses being separated from the site by intervening woodland or fields, and any impact on the nearby Robin Hood Way being positive (for the reasons set out in the Planning Statement and Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment submitted with the application. As such, it was considered that there would be little merit in providing information leaflets or letters to residents.
- 5.3 However, the applicant has contacted both Elkesley Parish Council and Bothamsall Parish Council to advise them of the submission of the application and of their intention to hold a public consultation event during the consultation period for the application, and is now working with Elkesley Parish Council to facilitate an event in the Parish Hall, which it is anticipated will take place in mid-April.
- 5.4 Information on the project and the application will also be available on the applicant's [website](https://www.oneplanet.ltd/public-consultations), with members of the public invited to make comments via that (see <https://www.oneplanet.ltd/public-consultations>).



5.5 In addition, pre-application engagement with the Council was undertaken by way of the submission of a request for an EIA Screening Opinion in respect of the proposed development (20/01546/SCR), with documentation submitted with this made publicly available online.

**6 How any specific issues which might affect access have been addressed**

6.1 Given that the proposed development will be an unmanned facility, with access required only for occasional maintenance inspections, and there being no public access to the site, there are no particular access issues that require to be addressed.

**Aurora Planning Limited**  
**29 March 2024**

