

### **Horsham District Council Screening Assessment**

**HDC Reference:** EIA/25/0003

**Site:** Land at Pothill Farm, Honeybridge, Dial Post, West Sussex, RH13 8NX

**Development Proposal:** Solar Farm installation (no details provided on MW to be generated) and a BESS (no details provided on storage capacity), covering a site of just under 16ha.

<b>EIA Regulations</b>	
Is the proposed development listed in Schedule 1?	<b>No</b>
Is the proposed development listed in Schedule 2?	<b>Yes.</b> – Item 3 (a) industrial installations for the production of electricity, steam and hot water. The site extends to approximately 16ha, exceeding 0.5ha threshold set under 2017 EIA Regulations. This means the proposal could constitute Schedule 2 development subject to the selection criteria as identified in Schedule 3 of the Regulations.
Is the proposed development within or adjacent to a sensitive area as defined in Regulation 2 (SSSI, National Park, property on World Heritage List, Scheduled Ancient Monuments, AONB, SPA or SAC)	No

### **Schedule 3 EIA Regs 2017 – Selection Criteria for Screening Schedule 2 Development**

<b>1. Characteristics of Development</b>	<b>Description (include permanent / temporary impacts, positive and / or negative impacts / likelihood of impact as applicable)</b>	<b>Significance (direct and indirect)</b>
a) <b>Size and design of development</b> (e.g. site area, scale)	<p>There are various land parcels (5) which make up the entirety of the 16ha site area, which is all currently undeveloped in nature and in use for agriculture. The site lies north of Honeybridge Lane, and adjoins a pre-existing Solar Farm site which lies to the south and south-east. Additionally, there are a number of residential and farming properties adjacent to the site boundaries.</p> <p>Honeybridge Lane is a rural road, with restricted width in places, connecting the A24 in the west to the village of Ashurst in the east.</p> <p>The panels would be mounted in fixed linear rows throughout the site, orientated with their highest sides to the north, indicated at some 3m in height.</p> <p>In addition to the panels, the site area would include associated infrastructure, including a transformer / stations switchgear kiosk, DNO substation and a general storage unit, access tracks and a BESS compound (Battery Energy Storage System) indicated to the eastern side</p>	<p>Residual environmental impacts anticipated.</p> <p>To be assessed as part of Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA), Heritage Assessment, Arboricultural Impact Assessment.</p> <p>Imposition of</p>

	<p>of the site with PRoW running to the north and west side of the BESS. The entire site would be defined by a perimeter fence (2.4m) and CCTV cameras.</p> <p>One Vehicular access point off Honeybridge Lane is indicated, with the BESS accessed from the internal access tracks of the wider Solar parcels.</p> <p>New BNG and landscape mitigation areas are not currently shown on the indicative plan, with no details on how the proposed development could provide buffers along exposed edges of the site, or to filter views.</p> <p>The solar farm and BESS are envisaged for a duration of 40 years, after which they would be decommissioned and removed from site, meaning that the infrastructure to support the development is ultimately temporary in nature with some of the effects on the landscape reversible. However, 40 years is a significant period of time in human terms.</p>	<p>appropriate conditions may be required to control and mitigate against any impacts arising from the development.</p>
<p><b>b) accumulation with other existing or approved development</b></p>	<p>Other solar / renewable energy developments within a 5km radius of the site comprise the following built-out schemes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DC/13/2381 – Priors Byne Solar Farm</li> <li>• DC/13/2310 – Ford Solar Farm</li> </ul> <p>The following BESS has been permitted, within 5km of the site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DC/24/1289 – Land South of Hartsgravel Wood</li> </ul> <p>Cowfold lies some 6.3km to the north-east of the application site, where a number of renewable developments benefit from extant permission (Cobwood – DC/23/2172, permitted May 2024) and the substation for the Rampion 2 offshore wind farm, NSIP development (permitted April 2025) located further to the east of Cowfold village, close to an existing substation at Bolney and other renewable developments and permissions at Wineham Lane (the latter falling within Mid Sussex District Council).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The development of a BESS site immediately to the south of the Bolney Substation, with a capacity of up to 200MW of energy storage on a 7.2ha site (DM/21/2276, permitted Sept 2024).</li> <li>• The development of a BESS site to the east of the Bolney Substation, with a capacity of up to 100MW of energy storage on 1ha site (DM/23/1184, permitted Jan 2025).</li> <li>• The development of a BESS site to the north-east of the Bolney Substation, with a capacity of up to 350MW of energy storage on 4ha site (DM/23/0769, permitted Oct 2024).</li> </ul>	<p>Residual environmental impacts anticipated.</p> <p>Additional sites required to be included within the cumulative effects assessment.</p> <p>To be assessed as part of Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.</p> <p>Imposition of appropriate conditions may be required to control and mitigate against any impacts arising from the development.</p>

	<p>Other large-scale renewables developments which have been permitted but which have not yet been built out are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small Dole (DC/24/0374)</li> <li>• Huddleston Farm (DC/22/0100)</li> </ul> <p>Some cumulative landscape effects are anticipated given the proximity of the development to other permissions already implemented, as well as those within the vicinity which benefit from extant permission, and given the long-range elevated views which are available from the South Downs Way and other public access paths.</p> <p>Cumulative visual effects are therefore likely to be experienced but the significance of these will be subject to mitigation and distance. Without the full assessment of this aspect of the proposal, it is not certain if adverse impacts can be mitigated or addressed, or what the assessed magnitude of the impact is. Whilst it is considered that sufficient landscape features, topography and distance would create adequate separation so as to not read the combined cumulative developments within one view, receptors travelling through the area may still experience sequential cumulative effects, particularly given the connectivity of the PRow at / near the site.</p> <p>In relation to the potential sensitive receptors in close proximity to the site the indicative site layout shows the panels located away from most boundaries and/ or separated by intervening landscape blocks. The most immediate impact is likely to be experienced at Dalesdown (a residential conference and activity centre) and the Wardens Chalet at Dalesdown, which are a few meters away from the proposed perimeter fence of the application site.</p>	
<p><b>c) use of natural resources, in particular soil, water and biodiversity</b> (e.g. land, water, materials, energy – non renewable or in short supply?)</p>	<p>The proposed installation of the solar farm would involve limited on-site works, and the inverter/ substation units likely placed on concrete plinths little larger than the units themselves. The operational phase of the proposed solar development would then generate renewable energy for a 40-year lifespan, and removable thereafter, along with land restoration.</p> <p>The likely installation process involved in the BESS usually involves transportation to site of the pre-fabricated BESS containers, housing the individual batteries on racks, placed on a stable sub-base of concrete.</p> <p>The operational phase of the proposed BESS development would then enable the storage of renewable energy on site before being released to the National Grid when needed, also for a</p>	<p>No significant and/or residual environmental impacts anticipated.</p> <p>Clarification on the Agricultural Land Grade prior to submission will determine the extent of the land to be used.</p> <p>Water Neutrality</p>

	<p>40-year lifespan, with no operational waste or emissions anticipated.</p> <p>It is stated in the covering letter that the application land comprises Grade 3 (good-moderate quality) land, and Grade 4 (poor quality) land. For the purposes of the ALC designation, Grade 3 land is not split into 3a (good) and 3b (moderate), and it is acknowledged that the submission does not assess the land quality in any greater detail. Therefore, it is anticipated that further assessment will be required as part an application to provide further clarification on the exact land quality and designation and distinction between Grade 3a and 3b to ensure that the proposal would not adversely affect productive farming land.</p> <p>The proposal would make use of sunlight as a renewable resource to generate electricity rather than fossil fuels, and enable the storage of any energy generated at source. The agricultural land between the solar array panels could still be used for grazing during the life of the solar farm and the land is capable of reversion to its wholly original use as agricultural land after the 40-year proposed period of use and de-commissioning of the solar farm on site. For the BESS site, the land would be taken out of agricultural se throughout its envisioned life span. Although no details are available, it is likely that the concrete bases could be taken up after decommissioning, and the land restored, although it is unlikely that it would be to the same agricultural quality as the existing site pre-development. The use of natural resources at the development site, should not be significant and would not result in the use of resources which are considered to be in short supply.</p> <p>The site lies within an area identified by West Sussex County Council for the potential of Horsham Stone and Brick Clay extraction, requiring the submission of a Minerals Assessment Report in order to consider whether the proposal would lead to the sterilisation of the identified minerals.</p> <p>The Natural England Position Statement dated 14 September 2021 declaring that water abstraction for drinking water supplies is having a negative impact on the wildlife sites in the Arun Valley. Therefore, all development sites are expected to demonstrate a water neutral position.</p> <p>Whilst no operatives are to be stationed at the site on a permanent basis, with regular maintenance visits carried out each month, it is expected that the solar panels would normally involve a programme of washing to ensure optimum efficiency of the array. Water sources for this cleaning regime should be clarified in the event that a mains connection is required.</p> <p>In relation to the BESS, details of the stored water required for a continuous period of fire fighting, would need to demonstrate the origins of the stored water, particularly given the</p>	<p>Statement to set out any increased water use over and above existing baseline.</p> <p>Submission of a Minerals Assessment Report to set out potential for the development to prevent future extraction of the identified mineral.</p> <p>Indicative details are advised to be submitted with any application to demonstrate the decommissioning works, particularly to the proposed BESS considering the nature of ground works required to form this part of the development and to ensure adequate fire and rescue measures can be incorporated into the proposal.</p>
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	quantities required.	
d) <b>production of waste</b> (e.g. demolition, construction, operation and decommissioning?)	<p>The site is on green field land and there are no built structures requiring demolition. As with nearly all construction, the proposed development will result in some generation of waste materials from the preparation and undertaking of works, albeit expected to be limited.</p> <p>Works associated with the BESS development are likely to require additional land levelling, topsoil removal and the creation of impermeable bunds to retain waste water run-off in the event of an emergency, on account of the potential for contaminated water run-off.</p> <p>The applicant will be encouraged to ensure that construction waste is reused and recycled where possible. Construction waste would be managed in accordance with all applicable legislation and disposed of in line with best practice. Operational waste would be disposed of in line with HDC requirements and managed in accordance with all applicable legislation.</p>	<p>No significant and/or residual environmental impacts anticipated.</p> <p>Further details required with application: Site Waste Management Plan may be required</p>
e) <b>pollution and nuisances</b> (e.g. potential for noise, dust, vibration, light, odours, production of substances / emissions which may damage environment -construction, operation and decommissioning)	<p>During the construction phase there is likely potential for effects to arise from installation works, in terms of noise and vibration, traffic disturbance and any dust from site preparation/ground works. Any impact will be local to the site area and its immediately locality. Any impact will be short-term and temporary, and can be mitigated through adherence to a Construction Management Plan providing for noise and dust suppression measures, and a plan to identify the access route (the submission, approval and implementation of which can be secured by a planning condition). It is anticipated that construction vehicles would reach the site from the west from the A24 and then turning onto Honeybridge Lane.</p> <p>The size of the site means that the site layout for construction works has the capacity to be arranged to ensure that machinery and dust causing activities are located as far away from sensitive receptors as possible.</p> <p>A CEMP, to be agreed with HDC and the Local Highways Authority, and secured through a suitable planning condition, can be submitted in support of the planning application to ensure construction contractors use best practice measures to prevent land and water contamination, as well as effects on construction workers and nearby residents.</p> <p>There would also be minimal emissions associated with the operational phase of the proposed development, by way of regular maintenance visits, estimated to be around 1-2 visits each month. On account of the nature of the proposal, the associated ongoing vehicular movements are anticipated to be minimal.</p>	<p>No significant and/or residual environmental impacts anticipated, subject to assessment of submitted noise assessments.</p> <p>Imposition of appropriate conditions may be required to control and mitigate against any impacts arising from the development.</p> <p>Further details required with application Noise Report Transport Assessment Environmental Risk Assessments Phase 1 (desktop study) Phase 2 (Intrusive</p>

	<p>Ongoing noise impacts within a quiet rural environment, particularly during the night-time hours, arising from the transformer stations, and subject to noise impact assessments.</p> <p>Noise impacts from BESS installations arise from the need for near-continuous cooling of the battery storage units to ensure they remain at a stable temperature (depending on the type of batteries used). Again, these likely impacts would be dealt with through the supporting planning application material ensuring that appropriate mitigation is included.</p>	Investigation) contaminated land reports Construction Management Plan Air and dust pollution Assessment Noise and Vibration Assessment
<p><b>f) the risk of major accidents and/or disasters</b> <i>(including those caused by climate change)</i></p>	<p>During the construction phase, the contractor(s) would implement measures in accordance with Health and Safety legislation/requirements, and best practice to minimise the risks of accidents that would have effects on people or the environment. All such measures would form part of the CEMP. There are no anticipated significant risks of major accidents and/or disasters, including those caused by climate change, during the operation of the development. The development would adhere to highway safety standards.</p> <p>The solar farm is not anticipated to lead to an increased risk of major accidents or disasters, on account of the nature of the proposed development.</p> <p>BESS installations, however, can present ongoing risks in association with the use of Lithium-Ion batteries used for the storage of energy. The compounds used in Lithium-Ion batteries can be particularly volatile if exposed to heat, and can lead to toxic plumes. Furthermore, any waste-water used in fire-fighting can be highly contaminated and cause harmful pollution if reaching rivers or other water sources, including boreholes used for water abstraction.</p> <p>Appropriate fire-fighting accesses should therefore be available providing access from at least two directions, along with an adequate on-site supply of water for sustained fire-fighting, and a contained water catchment that prevents the spread of contaminated water beyond the site and into nearby water sources.</p> <p>The identified surface water flood risk and river flooding, affects the access between the northern and southern parts of the proposal, thus triggering the need for a Sequential Test for flooding.</p>	<p>Although no significant and/or residual environmental impacts anticipated, the BESS installation will need a robust fire prevention and management plan to be submitted which sets out how any emergencies at the BESS site will be monitored, responded to and contained.</p> <p>Details of the type of batteries to be used for the BESS should be provided, as the fire strategy will need to be adapted accordingly.</p>
<p><b>g) The risks to human health</b> <i>(e.g. due to water contamination or air pollution)</i></p>	<p>Any associated risks to human health arising from the proposed solar farm would be dealt with through the supporting planning application material ensuring that appropriate mitigation is included within the proposed development.</p> <p>Appropriate measures, in accordance with all relevant legislation, should be used to prevent accidental spillages of contaminants during the construction of the BESS development and</p>	<p>No significant and/or residual environmental impacts anticipated.</p> <p>Noise Impact Assessments</p>

	<p>throughout the ongoing operational phase.</p> <p>This should include appropriate drainage design and bunds to prevent contaminants entering waterbodies in the event of emergency fire-fighting at the BESS compound.</p> <p>A CEMP can be submitted in support of the planning application to ensure construction contractors use best practice measures to prevent land and water contamination, as well as effects on construction workers. The site layout for construction works has the capacity to be arranged to ensure that machinery and dust causing activities are located as far away from sensitive receptors as possible.</p> <p>The nature of BESS installations can present potential health risks to humans in the event of a major fire by way of a toxic plume and contaminated run-off entering the local or nearby water supply/ boreholes. Appropriate emergency mitigations and management plans should be submitted as part of any planning application.</p>	expected as part of anu submission.
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<b>2. Location of Development:</b> the environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected by development must be considered having regard, in particular to:	<b>Description</b> (include permanent / temporary impacts, positive and / or negative impacts / likelihood of impact as applicable)	<b>Significance</b>
a) <b>the existing and approved land use</b>	<p>The principal land use will change from undeveloped agricultural land, largely designated by Natural England as Grade 3 and 4 Agricultural Land (good to moderate quality, and poor quality), to land used for solar energy generation. There would be changes to the site during the construction phase by way of the solar panel frames, deer-proof fencing up to 2.4m in height and associated CCTV, which form a near-permanent enclosure of the various parcels, all of which would endure for the envisaged 40-year lifespan. It may be that incidental grazing between the panels would assist with land management and retain an agricultural element of use within the solar farm, though not within the BESS compound. It is not currently known what extent of the overall land holding the proposed development would occupy, and how this might impact on the viability of the ongoing farming business. Allowing the land to lie fallow for the duration of the solar installation can provide beneficial impacts to soil quality and future productivity of the land.</p> <p>A block of Ancient Woodland adjoins northern solar fields (Soil Gill). Furthermore, the parcels appear to include a number of mature specimen trees which are likely to be remnants of former historic field boundaries, and lines of hedgerows crossing through.</p>	<p>Residual environmental impacts anticipated.</p> <p>Further information required with application: Landscape Impact Assessment, Landscape Mitigation, Preliminary Ecological (PEA) and clarification / justification of the land quality in respect of the Grade 3 land, Minerals Assessment</p>
b) <b>the relative abundance, availability, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources in the area and its underground</b> ( <i>common land use? Quality of land / designations / protected species – would development lead to irreversible loss of key qualities or resources in the area?</i> )		
c) <b>the absorption capacity of the natural environment.</b>		

	<p>As such, it would be expected that a comprehensive Tree Survey, hedgerow survey, and Arboricultural Report would be submitted with a future planning application. A landscape and visual impact assessment (LVIA) would also be required to be submitted with a planning application.</p> <p>Green (low risk), and Amber (suitable habitat) areas of Great Crested Newt Impact Risk Zones cover the site, which would need to be covered by way of surveys or an application to NatureSpace, who operate the District Licensing Scheme in Horsham.</p> <p>The site lies within an area the identified by West Sussex County Council for the potential of Brick Clay extraction, requiring the submission of a Minerals Assessment Report in order to consider whether the proposal would lead to the sterilisation of the identified minerals.</p> <p>During construction, potential adverse effects to the roads and air (including airborne noise) can be minimised through the implementation of the CEMP. Such effects will be temporary.</p> <p>Further details of new, mitigatory and compensatory planting and landscaping can be included in the landscape strategy to be submitted with a future planning application. The Landscape Strategy/Green Infrastructure Strategy document should set the overarching principles proposed as part of the scheme. This should include detail on mitigation measures (highlighted in the LVIA), retained landscape features, landscape enhancements and demonstrate how new green infrastructure links to existing GI/habitat corridors. This should be accompanied by a detailed plan for long term management that details vegetation management techniques such as grazing, mowing and strimming.</p> <p>At the end of the envisaged 40-year lifespan of the development, all equipment and infrastructure would be removed and the land can be returned to its former agricultural purposes, details of which (decommissioning and restauration proposals) will be submitted with a future planning application. The proposed development is therefore considered to be reversible at the end of its lifespan, even with the removal of the concrete sub-bases, and the gravel access tracks, although the resulting land quality may not be the same as the pre-development agricultural land. However, it is noted that the BESS would require a larger area of hard-standing to form a stable base for the containers, thus leading to additional ground works for the removal of the bases and subsequent remediation.</p> <p>Any land remediation would be subject to planning conditions.</p>	<p>Report, Tree reports.</p> <p>Evidence of joining the District Licensing Scheme or surveys in relation to the presence of Great Crested Newts will be required.</p> <p>Imposition of appropriate conditions may be required to control and mitigate against any impacts arising from the development.</p>
i) <b>wetlands, riparian areas, river</b>	No identified areas at risk of fluvial flooding (Flood Zones 2 or 3) within the site.	Subject to appropriate

<b>mouths</b> (e.g. floodplains, impacts on drainage, aquifers)	<p>Surface water flooding identified within the site area based on the EA flood mapping within the access lane and within a flow path separating the northern and southern parcels of the site.</p> <p>A Sequential Test (for flooding) would be required, and if passed, a Flood Risk Assessment to accompany any application.</p>	mitigation, no significant and/or residual environmental impacts anticipated.
ii) <b>coastal zones and marine environments</b> (any potential for the scheme to impact on coastal areas e.g. runoff etc)	N/A	N/A
iii) <b>mountain and forest areas</b> (impacts on wooded areas, including any designated areas of ancient woodland / TPOs).	<p>There are a number of trees within the site itself. Wooded areas adjoin the site boundaries and further hedgerows and other vegetation is present within the site parcels and along the site boundaries. There are areas of ancient woodland within close proximity to the site.</p> <p>A Tree Survey and Arboricultural Report would be expected to be submitted with a future planning application. In addition, the proposed development is likely to include areas of new landscape planting, including native shrubs. A landscape strategy can be submitted with a future planning application.</p>	<p>Subject to appropriate mitigation, no significant and/or residual environmental impacts anticipated.</p> <p>Imposition of appropriate conditions may be required to control and mitigate against any impacts arising from the development: Further information required with application: Arboricultural Impact Assessment</p>
iv) <b>nature reserves and parks</b> (e.g. any impacts on designated nature conservation sites / other areas of nature conservation importance?)	<p>The site does not adjoin a designated National Landscape or its setting, but the site does lie some 4.5km north of the South Downs National Park, and will need to evidence any likely impact on the setting of this designated Landscape.</p> <p>A number of Local Wildlife Sites lie within 5km of the application site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Walden Close meadows</i></li> <li>- <i>Horsham Common, Alder Coopse, Coate's Furzefield &amp; Constable's Furze</i></li> <li>- <i>St. Cuthman's Pond</i></li> <li>- <i>Kneppmill Pond, the River Adur &amp; Lancing Brook</i></li> <li>- <i>Bines Green</i></li> </ul>	<p>Some residual environmental impacts anticipated.</p> <p>Assessment of this aspect of the proposal, will determine the extent of mitigations required to address potential residual harm</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Capite Wood</li> <li>- America &amp; Gratwicke's Wood</li> <li>- Hooklands Farm Meadow</li> <li>- The Downs Link, Nutham Wood &amp; Greatsteeds Farm Meadow</li> <li>- Cattlestone Farm</li> <li>- River Adur Water Meadows &amp; Wyckham Wood</li> </ul>	to National Park setting.
<p>v) <b>European sites and other areas classified or protected under national legislation</b> (<i>this includes areas designated pursuant to <u>Directive 79/409/EEC</u> (conservation of wild birds) and <u>Directive 92/43/EEC</u> (conservation of habitats and fauna and SSSI's) (In particular the Arun valley SPA and The Mens -Barbastelle bat flightlines are a key consideration here. Any other European protected species present that can be affected?)</i>)</p>	<p>The application site itself does not constitute a 'sensitive area' as defined by the EIA Regulations.</p> <p>The site is located outside any designated Bat Sustenance Zones. A Phase 1 Habitat Survey should be submitted with the planning application. Best practice ecological mitigation measures can be implemented to include using tree protection during construction and undertaking scrub/vegetation removal outside of the bird breeding season to avoid the potential for damaging bird nests.</p> <p>Species surveys for other protected species including Dormice, Badgers, Breeding Birds, Reptiles, and Hedgehogs will also be required and relevant mitigation is expected to be proposed to ensure the development will avoid significant impact on protected or priority species.</p> <p>In relation to Great Crested Newts, the site straddles red and amber zones indicated high and good suitability for GCN habitat (District licensing Scheme).</p> <p>Horsham District is supplied with water by Southern Water from its Sussex North Water Resource Zone. This supply is sourced from abstraction points in the Arun Valley, which includes locations such as Amberley Wild Brooks Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Pulborough Brooks SSSI and Arun Valley Special Protection Area/Special Area of Conservation and Ramsar site. Details relating to potential water use would therefore be required to demonstrate that the operational phase of the solar farm and BESS would not lead to increased water abstraction over and above the site's existing baseline (Water Neutrality Statement).</p>	<p>Subject to mitigation (including a demonstration of water neutrality), no significant and/or residual environmental impacts anticipated.</p> <p>The proposal will require separate consultation with NatureSpace in relation to Great Crested Newts.</p>
<p>vi) areas in which there has already been a failure to meet environmental quality standards laid down in Union legislation or in which it is considered that there is such a failure (any areas</p>	<p>Any dust generation during the construction phase would be managed in accordance with standard best practice measures, enforced through a CEMP and is not anticipated to generate significant adverse effects. The site layout has the capacity for construction works will be arranged to ensure that machinery and dust causing activities are located as far away from sensitive receptors as possible.</p>	<p>No significant and/or residual environmental impacts anticipated</p>

already subject to pollution or damage – include impact on any AQMAs).		
vii) <b>densely populated areas</b> ( <i>size of population affected, changes to demography, lifestyles, employment etc</i> )	<p>The site is located in a rural area, which exhibits a predominantly rural character although the presence of a number of adjacent and nearby residential properties are noted.</p> <p>Given the nature of the proposal, it is unlikely to result in a significant change to the lifestyle or character of people living in the wider vicinity.</p>	No significant and/or residual environmental impacts anticipated
viii) <b>landscapes of historical, cultural or archaeological significance</b>	<p>Most notably, there are two listed buildings close to the application site:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Sands Farm, some 200m to the west of the northern part</li> <li>2) Postbrook's Cottage, some 400m to the east of the southern part</li> </ol> <p>A traditional Orchard is located some 200m to the south-west of the southern part of the site (The Capite), with three other Traditional orchards identified about 1km to the north-east at Chauffeurs Cottage, and Lock House.</p> <p>A Heritage Statement should be submitted to assess the likely impact on designated heritage assets occurring as a result of the proposal.</p>	<p>Some residual environmental impacts anticipated.</p> <p>Further information required with application: Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment; ZTV assessments; Glint and Glare Assessments; Arboricultural Survey &amp; Report, Planting Plan, Biodiversity Net Gain measures, Heritage Statement.</p> <p>Assessment will determine the extent of mitigations required to address potential residual harm.</p>
<b>3. Types and Characteristics of the potential impact:</b> The potential significant effects of development must be considered in relation to criteria set out under 1 & 2, having particular regard to:	<b>Description</b>	<b>Significance</b>

<p><b>a) the magnitude and spatial extent of the impact</b> (geographical area and size of the affected population)</p>	<p>The impacts are largely confined to the site and the land immediately adjacent, including visual receptors along the identified PRoW, and existing dwellings at the site, or close to the site.</p> <p>Residents closest to the site will be affected by the development during the construction phase, however, adverse effects would be temporary and minimised through the implementation of a CEMP.</p> <p>The public rights of way which run through and along the site boundaries are acknowledged as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Bridleway_1864</li> <li>- Footpath_1865</li> <li>- Footpath_1858_2</li> <li>- Footpath_3220</li> <li>- Footpath_1866 (at a distance)</li> </ul> <p>These paths enable users to experience the rural landscape and its setting. The proximity of these paths to the solar installation, the access tracks, the BESS and the perimeter fencing will be a fundamental consideration of any planning application.</p> <p>With regards to Landscape character, the significant impacts are likely to be primarily confined to the site itself due to the loss of openness, remoteness/ tranquillity and rural qualities. Most of the landscape elements such as trees and hedgerows appear to have the potential to be retained, but no details are provided at this stage to provide any such certainty.</p> <p>Further consideration will need to be given to the potential cumulative impact on the setting of the National Park, which lies some 4.5km to the south, from where there is a potential for elevated views of the application site.</p>	<p>Some residual environmental impacts anticipated.</p> <p>Assessment will determine the extent of mitigations required to address potential residual harm, including a Glint and Glare Assessment</p>
<p><b>b) the nature of the impact</b></p>	<p>The scale of development across the number of field parcels has the potential to lead to impacts on landscape character and visual amenity, although this is not subject to a National Landscape designation.</p> <p>The development is likely to cause a change to the existing baseline conditions and therefore likely to be of a negative nature.</p> <p>Other environmental impacts would include noise and disturbance during construction (albeit temporary), and additional noise and emissions from vehicles during the operational stage, although likely to attract only minimal vehicular movements once operational.</p>	<p>Some residual environmental impacts anticipated.</p> <p>Assessment will determine the extent of mitigations required to address potential residual harm.</p>

	<p>Impact may arise to natural habitat, particularly given the identification of the amber and red impact zones for potential Great Crested Newt habitat. Whilst the nature of the proposed solar farm development has a very small footprint and resulting ground disturbance, more impact may arise from the proposed BESS on account of the ground works needed to form a stable and level base for this part of the proposal, along with the water containment bunds to prevent any contaminated water run-off in the event of an emergency..</p> <p>Although some vegetation clearance may result, it should be possible to secure compensatory habitats through on site mitigation.</p>	<p>Further information required with application Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment; ZTV assessments; Glint and Glare Assessments</p>
<b>c) the transboundary nature of the impact</b> (any international impacts?)	<p>The effects of the scheme would contribute to achieving nationwide net zero carbon emissions by 2050 and local climate targets by 2030 and 2050. The solar farm and BESS would provide climate change benefits that extend beyond the district's boundaries, whilst wider visual impacts are acknowledged to occur at a more local level and immediate to the site.</p>	<p>N/a</p>
<b>d) the intensity and complexity of the impact</b> (e.g. overall size, scale, combination of impacts)	<p>The environmental impact of development of this site for a solar farm installation covering some 16ha of land, is likely to be felt most acutely by those in the immediate surrounds: walking the PRoW, living in adjoining and nearby properties, and farming the wider land parcels around the site. The site subject to this assessment is likely to be seen in the context of its rural undeveloped surrounds.</p> <p>Equally complex, is the combined effects of the various development of similar type in the area.</p> <p>At this stage, an assessment of the impact is difficult to judge as the applicant has not provided a full suite of supporting information (i.e. LVIA etc),</p> <p>As a whole, given its location within a rural area, the development of this site for solar energy generation is likely to significantly change the wider environmental conditions, and as such, the proposal would need to be carefully considered in its landscape context. It is likely that the scale and location of the proposal would result in a high/ moderate landscape impact which would require appropriate mitigation.</p> <p>The specific impacts will be assessed in full at planning application stage, where any necessary mitigation can be sought.</p>	<p>Some residual environmental impacts anticipated.</p> <p>Imposition of appropriate conditions may be required to control and mitigate against any impacts arising from the development: Further information required with application: Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) Transport Assessment Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment; Arboricultural Survey &amp; Report and Planting Plan</p>

<p><b>e) the probability of the impact</b> (e.g. overall probability of impacts identified above)</p>	<p>Loss of greenfield land and associated landscape impacts are highly probable in the event that development takes place.</p> <p>During the operational and decommissioning phases, lighting and noise impacts are possible, as well as air and dust pollution. It is not known how long construction activities would take, or how vehicles would access the site. It is advised that a Construction Traffic Management Plan setting out the effect of the construction phase on the highway network, noting the narrowness of Honeybridge Lane, and other relevant information to allow further consideration of any future application, will be submitted with any forthcoming application. Details of the cable run should also be provided, as this section of the work is likely to affect a significant stretch of narrow rural lanes that serve many residential properties and land holdings.</p> <p>Cumulative impacts from traffic generation are also highly likely during construction works using the narrow rural lanes. Other impacts such as impacts on protected species and noise levels experienced at sensitive receptors during quiet night-time periods, will be advised by relevant surveys and assessments, and may be managed through appropriate controls exercised through the imposition of conditions as required.</p> <p>Mitigation measures at planning application stage may be used to appropriately manage impacts arising from the development (plus any cumulative impact that may arise owing to the adjacent strategic development).</p>	<p>Some residual environmental impacts anticipated.</p> <p>Assessment will determine the extent of mitigations required to address potential residual harm.</p> <p>Further information required with application: Transport Assessment Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment; Arboricultural Survey &amp; Report and Planting Plan Air &amp; Dust Pollution Assessment Noise and vibration Assessment</p>
<p><b>f) the expected onset, duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact</b> (demolition, construction, operation and decommissioning)</p>	<p>Construction effects would be temporary and short term in duration, and the operational effects would be limited to the envisaged 40 year lifespan of the installation, following which, the land can be reverted back to its former agricultural use.</p> <p>Temporary impacts of noise and disruption would be likely during the construction and decommissioning time, on account of vehicular movements and other on-site activities. Once operational there would be limited vehicle visits each month by a transit style van accessing the site from Honeybridge Lane.</p> <p>It is advised that a LEMP would be submitted with any application to demonstrate how the land would be managed throughout the operational phase of the development, in a way that would deliver significant biodiversity net gains.</p> <p>Other impacts such as potential impacts on protected species in the surrounding habitats are unknown and still require further investigation.</p>	<p>No significant and/or residual environmental impacts anticipated.</p> <p>Imposition of appropriate conditions may be required to control and mitigate against any impacts arising from the development.</p> <p>Further information required with application: Noise Report Construction</p>

		Management Plan Transport Assessment Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment; Arboricultural Survey & Report and Planting Plan Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) Air & Dust Pollution Assessment Noise and vibration Assessment
<b>g) the accumulation of the impact with the impact of other existing and/or approved development</b>	<p>The main consideration with regard to cumulative environmental impact of this development is on landscape impact arising from other implemented and consented renewable energy developments, of which there are a number that have been granted planning permission and which remain extant at the current time.</p> <p>It is recognised that a cluster of other built-out renewable energy developments are located within the immediate context of the application site, which would visually interact with the proposed solar development and BESS proposal developments.</p> <p>There are no allocated sites for housing development contained within the made neighbourhood plan in proximity to the site.</p>	No significant and/or residual environmental impacts anticipated
<b>h) the possibility of effectively reducing the impact</b>	<p>There is potential for the impact of this proposal to be reduced through a number of means. This includes environmental / construction controls during the construction phase, together with measures to control the hours of operation / lighting etc</p> <p>Various studies and statements, such as BNG, Water Neutrality Statement, Arboricultural Impact Assessment, land levels / topographical surveys, Ecology Assessment and appropriate species surveys, including considerations of Great Crested Newt / District Licensing Scheme, are expected to be submitted with a future planning application to ensure the provision of appropriate mitigations on site in view of a number of consideration such as biodiversity, noise, environmental hazards, flood risk, land levels.</p> <p>The assessment of the impact and any mitigation measures on the landscape character and visual amenity of the area as well as the setting of the rural area, will need to be assessed through a LVIA.</p>	No significant and/or residual environmental impacts anticipated

Results of any relevant EU environmental assessment that is reasonably available	None applicable	
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## Conclusion

<b>EIA Required?</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Statement of reasons</b>	<p>The threshold outlined in Schedule 2 of the EIA regs. (2017) for overall site area is exceeded by the proposal (0.5ha); but it is considered that the site is not located within an area of particular environmental sensitivity. On account of the nature and scale of the proposal, and the potential cumulative impact arising from adjacent renewables development, there are likely to be significant effects on the landscape character, visual amenity, and setting, noting a number of PRoW through and close to the site. The significance of these would be a matter for consideration at application stage by way of an Environmental Statement, whereby effects would be assessed, and the suitability and effectiveness of proposed mitigation would be judged.</p> <p>The screening assessment for this proposal has identified that other impacts on the environment could be satisfactorily addressed with mitigation measures incorporated within the design of the proposed development, and that significant effects are not considered likely, either alone or in combination with other development.</p> <p>Therefore, it is judged that the scale and nature of the proposed development, would not lead to this proposal constituting EIA development as defined by the EIA Regulations, such that an EIA would be required as a result.</p>
<b>Date</b>	<b>Nic Pettifer</b> 26 <sup>th</sup> August 2025