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Planning Services
Horsham District Council
Parkside, Chart Way
Horsham,
West Sussex
RH12 1RL

27 January 2026

Dear Sir/Madam

Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (as amended) Regulation 6 (1) Request for a Screening Opinion in Relation to the installation and operation of a ground mounted solar farm with all associated works, equipment and infrastructure on land at Ewhurst Manor Farm, Shermanbury, West Sussex RH13 8HG

ILOS New Energy UK Ltd (“the applicant”) requests an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening Opinion from Horsham District Council for the provision of a ground-mounted solar farm of circa 16.5MW (final output to be confirmed) occupying approximately 20.84 hectares (ha) on land at Ewhurst Manor Farm, Shermanbury, West Sussex, RH13 8HG.

1. Background

This Screening Opinion request is made under Regulation 6 (1) of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (as amended). The Information contained in this letter is in accordance with Regulation 6(2) which states that a request for a screening opinion shall be accompanied by:

- (a) a plan sufficient to identify the land;
- (b) a description of the development, including in particular—
 - (i) a description of the physical characteristics of the development and, where relevant, of demolition works;
 - (ii) a description of the location of the development, with particular regard to the environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected;

- (c) a description of the aspects of the environment likely to be significantly affected by the development;
- (d) to the extent the information is available, a description of any likely significant effects of the proposed development on the environment resulting from –
 - (i) the expected residues and emissions and the production of waste, where relevant; and
 - (ii) the use of natural resources, in particular soil, land, water and biodiversity; and
- (e) such other information or representations as the person making the request may wish to provide or make, including any features of the proposed development or any measures envisaged to avoid or prevent what might otherwise have been significant adverse effects on the environment.

The remainder of this letter is split into the following sections:

- Section 2: The Development Site
- Section 3: The Development Proposal
- Section 4: EIA Assessment
- Section 5: Conclusions

This screening opinion request is also supported by the following:

- Enclosure 1: Draft Indicative Site Layout Plan
- Enclosure 2: EIA Screening Matrix

The Screening Matrix (Enclosure 2) is provided to assist Horsham District Council in providing a response to this Screening Request.

2. The Development Site, Proposal and Overview of Environmental Constraints

2.1 Description of Development Site

The proposed development site (see Enclosure 1 and Figures 1 and 2 below) comprises four parcels of agricultural land that extends to approximately 20.84 ha, 170m northeast of the village of Shermanbury. The site is well defined by the existing field pattern, with dense vegetation and trees along much of the boundaries. The proposed main access point to the site will be located at the lower left parcel, as per the site plan, along Brighton Road.

The site gently slopes from the north towards the southern boundary of the site.



Figure 1: Location Plan

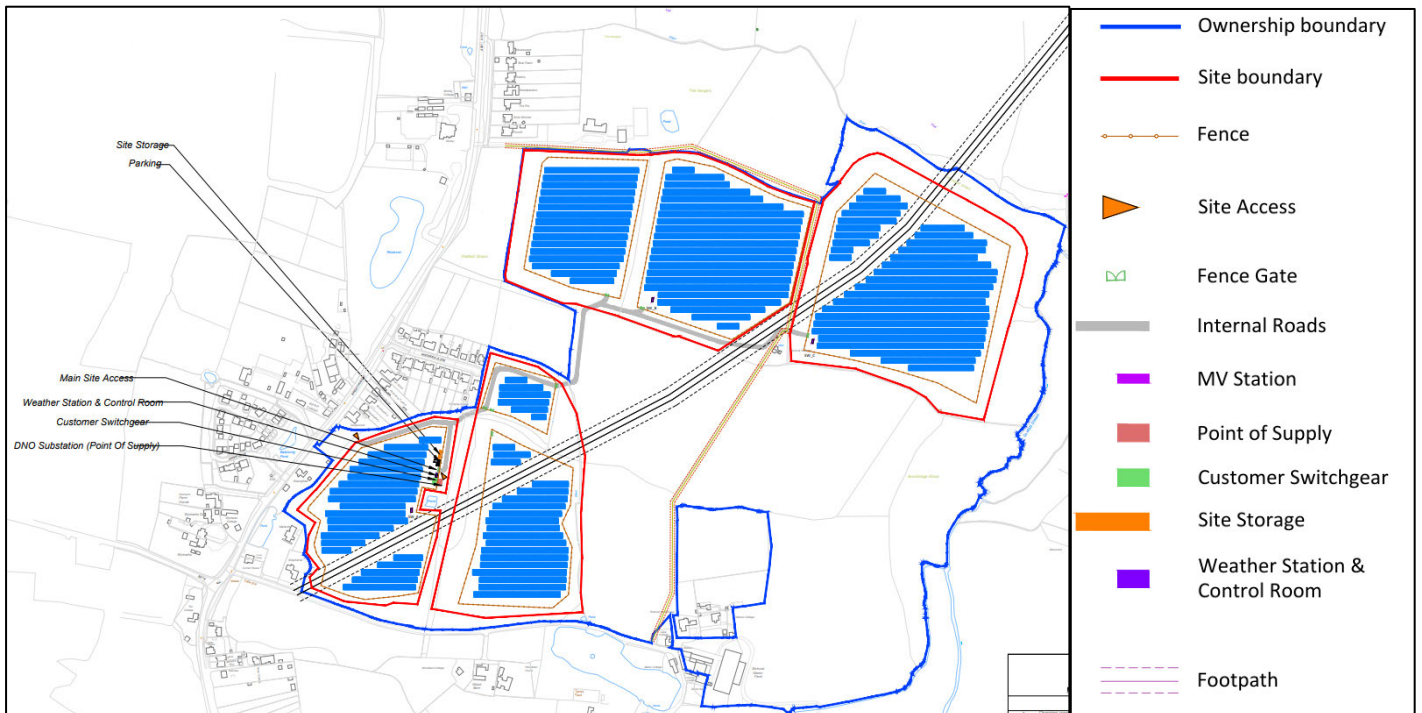


Figure 2: Indicative Proposed Site Plan



To the west of the site, along Brighton Road and in Woodside Close, there are a number of residential dwellings. However, dense tree cover and vegetation limit direct views of the proposed solar array. To the east of the site, Cowfold Stream can be found. There are several ponds, which vary in size, in the area around the site. A large fishpond is located 35m southeast of the site, and a small pond is located 5m adjacent to the red line boundary of one of the parcels. There are also two other ponds and a reservoir located off Brighton Road.

2.2 Description of the Development Proposal

The proposal is for the construction, operation, maintenance and decommissioning of a ground mounted solar farm with an export capacity of circa 16.5MW, complete with landscaping, associated infrastructure, and the provision of access and operational access tracks.

An indicative Site Layout Plan is provided at Figure 2 and Enclosure 1.

As a general design principle, the solar panels would follow a linear layout. The distance between the panels would respond to the topography. It is not yet determined whether fixed panels (orientated east to west across the site) or tracking panels (orientated north to south) would be used. The indicative layout at Enclosure 2 shows a fixed panel arrangement. Typically fixed solar panels are no higher than 3.5 metres above ground level at the highest point. The arrays would be set within a 2.0m high stock-proof fence.

The proposal would also include a package of landscape and biodiversity benefits that could include the installation of barn owl boxes, bird breeding boxes, beehives, log piles, and other hibernacula such as small, buried rubble piles suitable for reptile species, amphibians, and insect life. Land between and beneath the panels could be used for biodiversity enhancements and seasonal grazing. Existing vegetation surrounding the Site will be managed appropriately and would continue to deliver biodiversity enhancements by providing green ecological corridors. The extent of the additional planting will be set out in a Landscape and Ecological Strategy Plan that will accompany any future planning application.

The proposed development would typically have a life of up to 40 years at the end of which the modules would be decommissioned and removed from the site.

2.3 Renewable Energy and Carbon Displacement

Horsham District Council declared a formal Climate and Ecological Emergency Declaration in June 2023. The declaration of a Climate and Ecological Emergency will strengthen and further enable the Council to move forward with its carbon neutral agenda, enabling it to achieve its own carbon neutral target for 2030 and the Horsham District carbon neutral target for 2050.

It is acknowledged that construction of the Proposed Development will result in the release of carbon as well as other emissions associated with the use of HGV vehicles and other plant/machinery. However, considering the temporary nature of the development and the low level of physical construction work required, it is considered that these emissions are unlikely to be complex or significant.

Once operational the facility will be supporting 'green' energy from renewable sources, by providing 'clean' energy to the grid as well as a backup source during periods of high demand and when less renewable energy is being generated elsewhere. Therefore, the development will contribute positively to the climate through reducing the reliance on fossil fuel-based energy production facilities and helping to support carbon sequestration.

The proposal would provide a clean, renewable, and sustainable form of electricity. It would make a valuable contribution to the generation of electricity at a local level.

2.2 Flood Risk and Drainage

As highlighted in Figure 3 below, to the east of the site, the site is within flood zone 1 and is at low risk of flooding from rivers or the sea. Figure 4 indicates that the majority of the site is at low risk of surface water flooding, with the exception of some high-risk areas in the two southern parcels. Surface water run-off will be managed on-

site during the construction and operational phases, although it is generally accepted that ground-mounted solar projects do not exacerbate surface water run-off. A surface water drainage strategy will be developed for the site, with areas in the Site to be identified for sustainable drainage systems (SuDs), if required.

National planning policy requires all planning applications above 1 hectare in size and all development in Flood Zones 2 and 3 to include a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA), including mitigation in the form of a drainage strategy. A Flood Risk Assessment and drainage strategy will be provided as part of a planning application.



Figure 3 - River and Sea Flooding Map (UK Government Flood Risk Service)

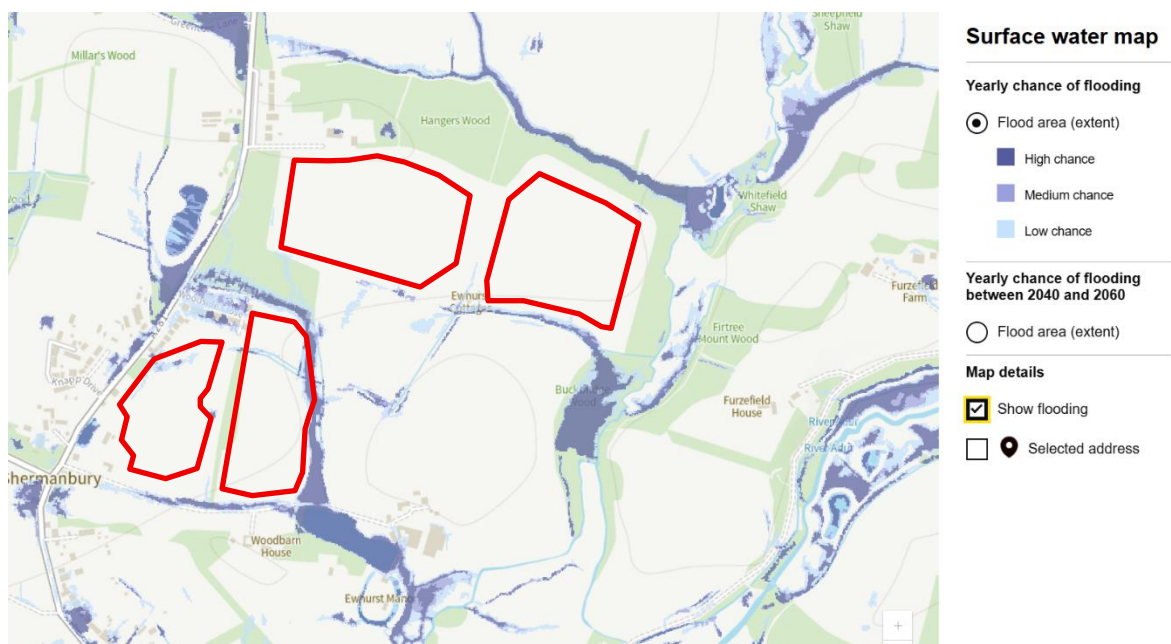


Figure 4 - Surface water flooding maps (UK Government Flood Risk Service)

2.3 Environmental Designations and Ecological Sensitivities

The site itself is not subject to any statutory or non-statutory nature conservation designations.

Statutory and Other Designated Sites

There are no statutory environmental designations impacting the site. The site is within an SSSI impact zone however the closest environmental designation is Horton Clay Pit SSSI, which is located 6.4km south of the site as such impacts are considered unlikely. Other designations in the wider area include the following:

- Horton Clay Pit SSSI (6.4km away)
- Wolstonbury Hill SSSI (8.4km away)
- Beeding Hill to Newtimber Hill SSSI (8.5km away)
- Chanctonbury Hill SSSI (9.8km away)
- St. Leonard's Forest SSSI (10.1km away)
- Ditchling Common SSSI (11.8km away)
- Sullington Warren SSSI (12.3km away)
- Chantry Mill SSSI (12.8km away)

Figure 5 below identifies the relationship between the site and the environmental designations.

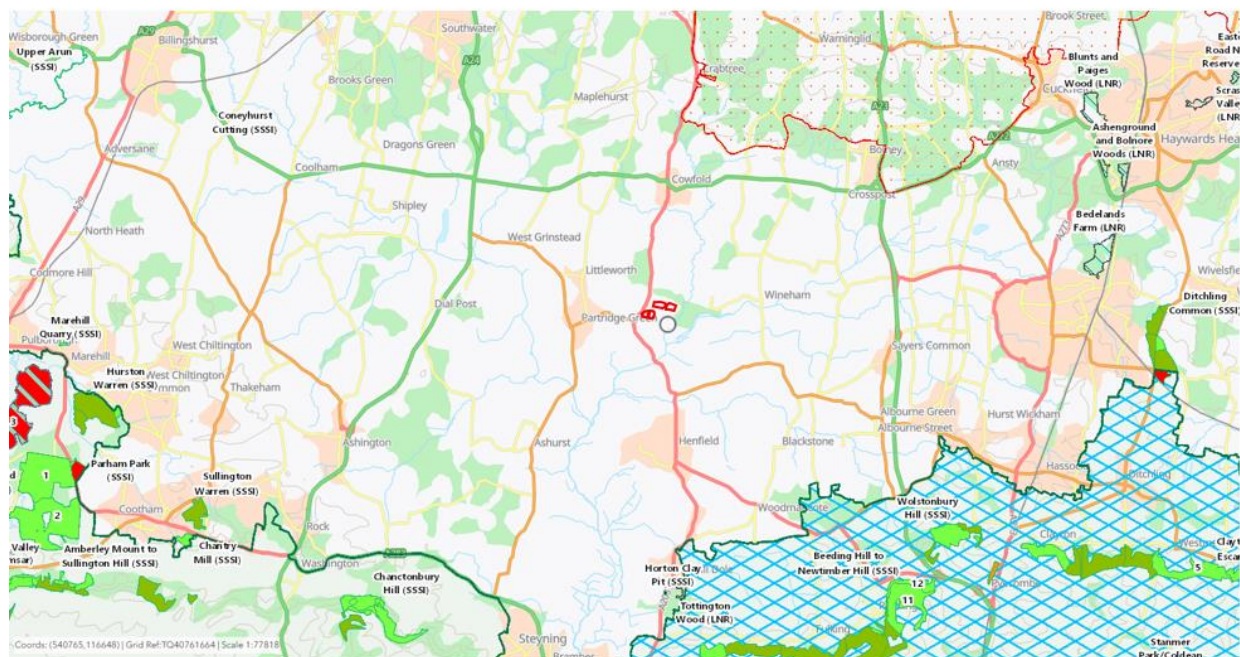


Figure 5: Location of statutory ecological designations (source: Magic Map)

No other non-statutory ecological designations are identified in the local area.

The applicant intends to undertake a preliminary ecological appraisal to fully assess the presence of protected species and habitats on site. It is noted through the local plan mapping that great crested newts may be present in the local area which will be investigated.

Given the rural nature of the site, opportunities exist for habitat retention, creation and enhancement to ensure the development provides at least 10% BNG. Through the implementation of appropriate mitigation measures during construction, the potential effects from the development can be managed and are unlikely to be significant.

Other Sites of Ecological & Biodiversity Interest

Figure 6 identifies the location of the site and nearby areas of woodland of ecological/biodiversity interest, including Ancient Woodland and woodland included within the Priority Habitat Inventory. There is ancient woodland to the north of the site including Parkminster Wood located circa 275m from the northwest of the site and a small section of woodland at Hangers Wood is approximately 70m from the north/northeastern boundary of the proposed solar array. The proposed access would pass through Deciduous Woodland, under the Priority Habitat Inventory and the two parcels in the north are also adjacent to similar priority habitats. From Google Maps, there is also vegetation and trees located on the site although this is not protected woodland. There are no Tree Preservation Orders (TPO's) on the site; however, there are TPO's that run adjacent to the southern boundary of the site which will require consideration to ensure sufficient development buffers. An arboricultural impact assessment would be submitted with any future planning application to ensure that any damage to trees/vegetation is avoided and mitigated against, as required.



Figure 6: Ancient Woodland and Priority Habitat Inventory sites (source: MagicMap)

2.4 Heritage Assets

There are no cultural heritage assets identified within the study site. However, close to the site, there are various listed buildings, the majority of which are grade II. There is one grade I listed building: The Gateway and Porters Lodge (Historic England Ref 1194178) located approximately 210m southeast of the southern solar array. At this location, there is also a Scheduled Monument, 'Moated site at Ewhurst Manor' (Historic England Ref 1009868).

Examination of Google Maps indicates that there could be intervisibility between the listed buildings/Scheduled Monument and the site. However, the proposed layout shows the solar panels set at least 350m distance from the northern boundary of the Monument, which, alongside additional landscape buffers/screening, should address these concerns and avoid significant impacts upon the setting on the assets. Given the proximity of these assets this would be carefully considered within a heritage assessment to be submitted with any future planning application.

The closest Conservation Area, Henfield Conservation Area, is located approximately 3km away from the site. Figure 7 identifies the location and grade of listed buildings in the vicinity of the site.

It is noted through a review of the local planning history, that there may be archaeological features present in the locale, as such further assessments will be required to inform this.

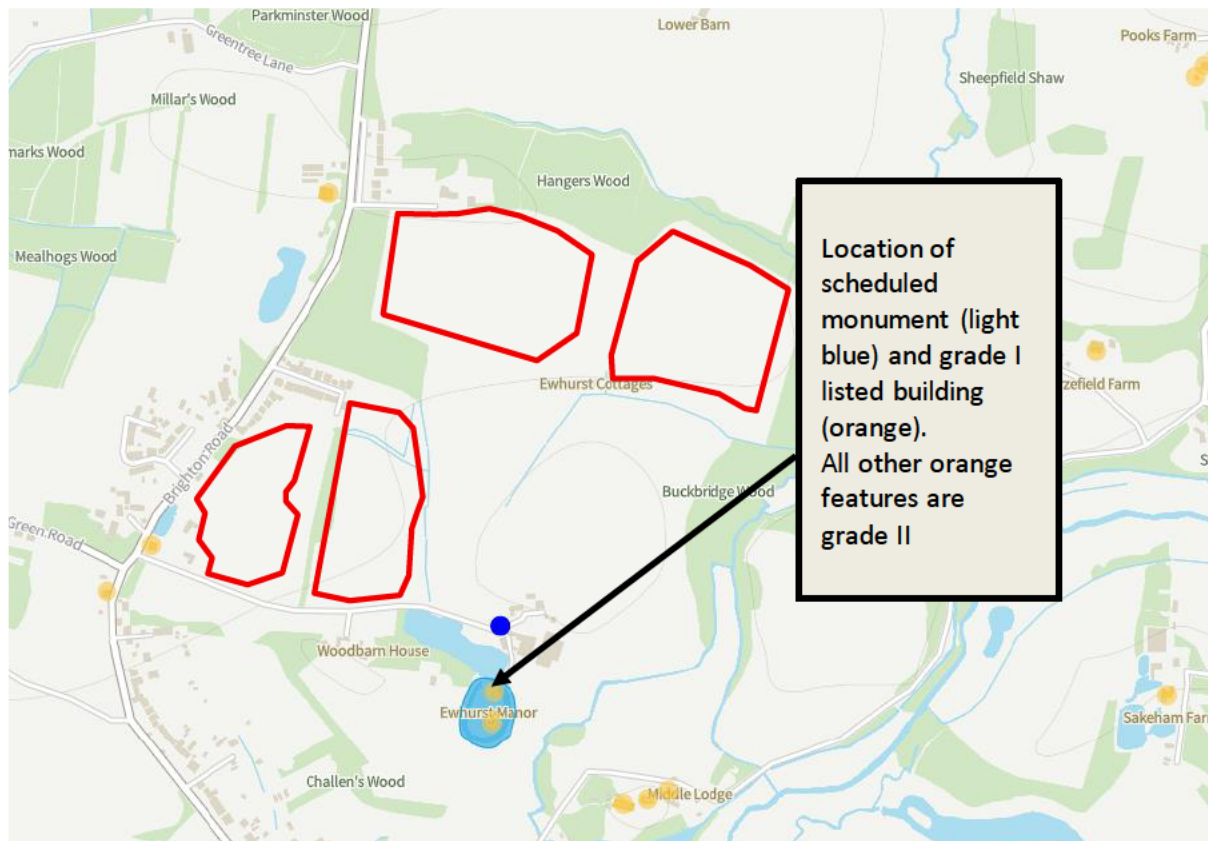


Figure 7 – Location of Listed Buildings (source: MagicMap)

2.5 Access and Public Rights of Way

As shown in Figure 8 below, two Public Rights of Way (PROWs) run adjacent to the lower boundary and between the northern two parcels: SHE-2377 and SHE-2378. The impact on these will be assessed in terms of visual impact and access. No national cycle routes are located within proximity of the site.

There may be a need for temporary diversion during construction and there may be adverse impacts on the visual amenity of users of these public footpaths. The potential impact upon users of the PROWs will require careful consideration during construction and operation of the solar farm to minimise and mitigate potential adverse impacts.

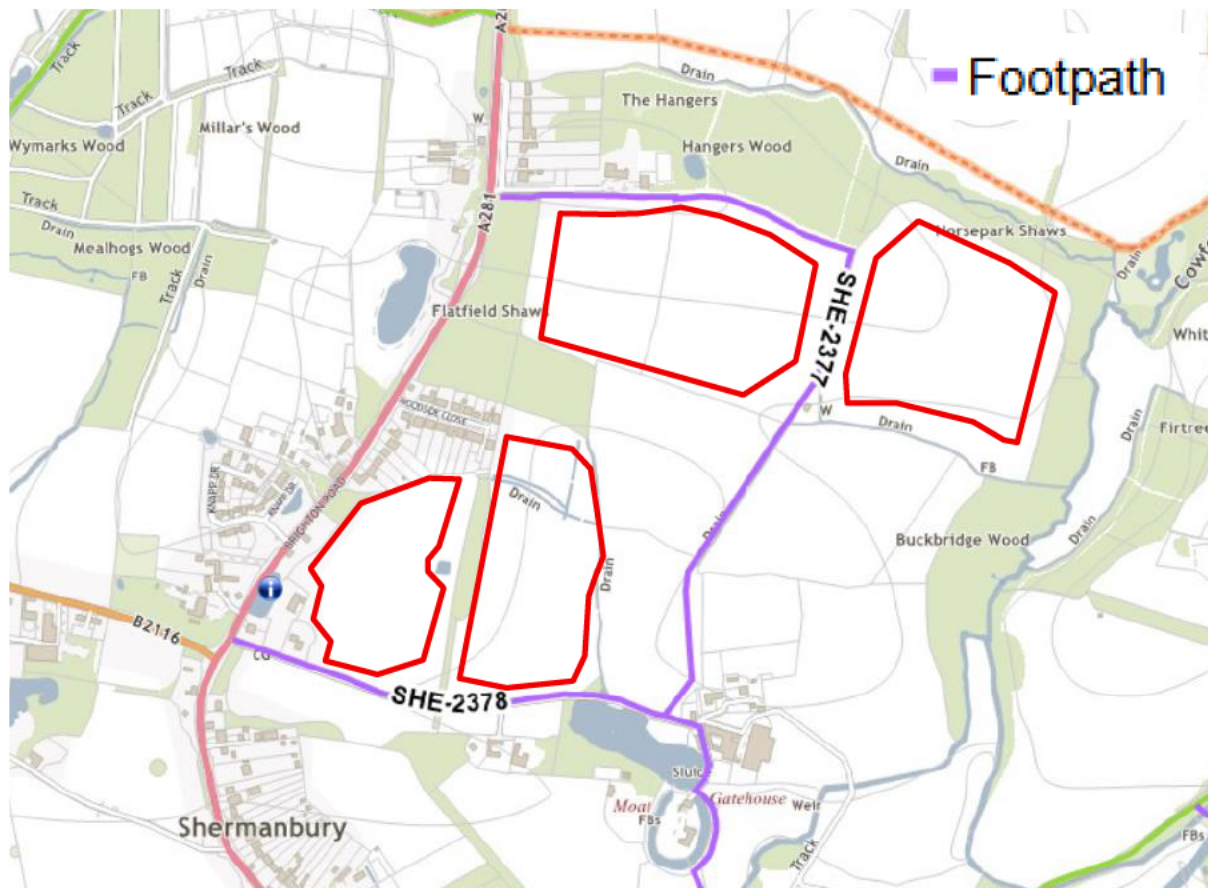


Figure 8: Public Rights of Way (source: Gloucester Online Map)

2.6 Agricultural Land Quality

The construction of the proposed development will involve the long term, but temporary, use of circa 20.8 ha of agricultural land during the operational life of the development (up to 40 years). The Provisional Agricultural Land Classification Map in Figure 9 below, shows the site to fall within an area of Grades 3 and 4 land ('Good to Moderate' and 'poor').

The National Planning Policy Framework (2023) (Para 180) requires consideration of development which affects the best and most versatile (BMV) agricultural land, i.e., ALC Grade 1, Grade 2 and Subgrade 3a (Natural England Technical Information Note 0149).

Reflecting this a detailed soil survey would be undertaken and submitted with the application with a statement to identify whether the land is BMV and an assessment that addresses the reasons for the location of this site compared to areas with poorer quality agricultural land, if required.

No Peatlands have been identified within or adjacent to the site.

The proposed development is considered to be a suitable type of development for the site, especially given its temporary nature. Once the use of the land for the solar farm has ceased, the land will be returned to agricultural use as the development is fully reversible. With the land having a period of time to rest following intensive agricultural activity, it is generally accepted that the health of the soil profile within the site will improve over the lifetime of the solar farm. A Soil Management Plan could be a condition of any planning permission.

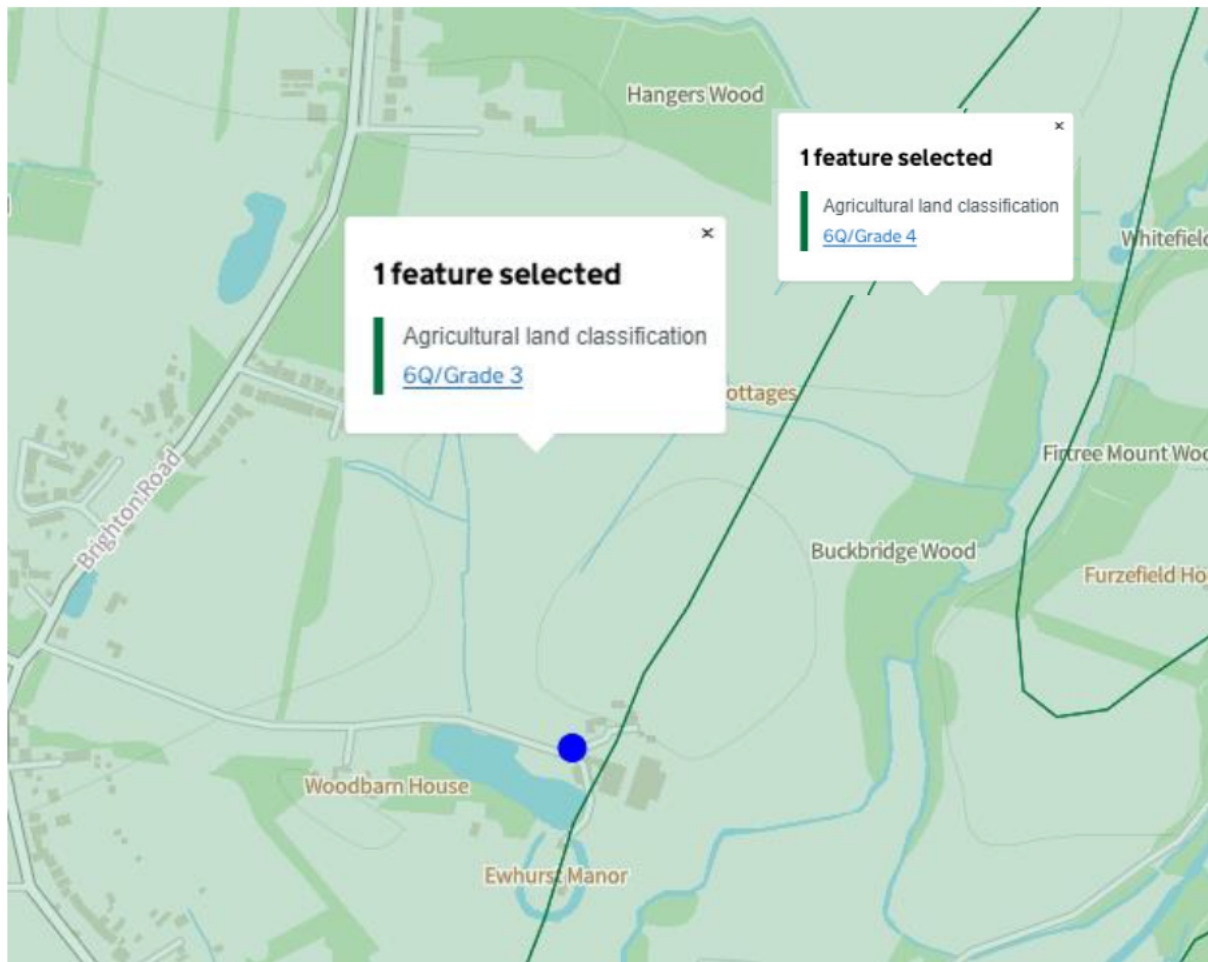


Figure 9: Agricultural Land Classification Map (Natural England)

2.7 Sensitive Residential Receptors

There are no residential properties within the site. From a desktop review, there are a number of residential dwellings within close proximity (closest within circa 50m) to the west and south of the site as outlined below:

- Grouping of properties to the northwesternmost corner of the site on Brighton Road particularly 'Fircroft' dwelling directly to the northwest of the site and the large property to the north of the site are both within circa 50m of the site.
- Circa 18 Properties along Woodside Close within close proximity to the north and west of the southern site parcels – properties 8a and 6 are particularly close to the site (circa 30m).
- Further properties further south on Brighton Road in proximity to the southern site parcels.
- Properties and businesses on unnamed road to east of Brighton Road directly south of the site including Ewhurst Manor Farm and properties at 'Wood Barn' which are within 100m of the site.

Generally, views of the site are likely to be well-screened by existing dense hedgerows and trees which define the field pattern and surround the site boundary particularly along Brighton Road. However, views to the site from Woodside Close and the private access road to Ewhurst Manor appear to have relatively open views of the site. As such there would likely be intervisibility between the solar infrastructure and the surrounding properties within proximity to the site, particularly at Woodside Close although landscaping will mitigate potential impacts. Visual impact, particularly on the properties to the west and south, will be an important consideration in any future planning application. A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment will be submitted to accompany the planning application. Appropriate buffer areas would be provided between the solar arrays and the residential properties, with screening established to be strengthened in accordance with the recommendations by landscape consultants.



A noise impact assessment will also help to manage residential amenity concerns. Noise generating equipment such as transformers and substation would be separated from residential properties with mitigation is required although noise levels from plant associated with solar arrays is normally limited and noise impacts are very unlikely to be significant.

There is also the potential for noise and disturbance impacts to residents during the temporary construction period which will be carefully addressed through the CTMP.

2.8 Arboriculture

There are existing mature trees and hedgerows along the field boundaries and on the site. This site has two areas of ancient woodlands in proximity to the proposed solar development as discussed above. There are no Tree Preservation Orders (TPO's) on the site; however, there are TPO's that run adjacent to the southern boundary of the site. The proposed site access will pass through an area of woodland and is expected to adversely affect some mature trees and dense vegetation. An arboricultural impact assessment is required to ensure that any damage to trees/vegetation is avoided and mitigated against.

2.9 Landscape and Visual

There are no statutory landscape designations located on the site itself. The site is situated approximately 4.3km away from High Weald National Landscape. It is approximately 5.6km away from South Downs National Park. There is no intervisibility between the site and either the National Park or National Landscape.

Generally, views of the site are likely to be well-screened by existing dense hedgerows and trees which define the field pattern and surround the site boundary particularly along Brighton Road. However, views to the site from Woodside Close and the access road to Ewhurst Manor have more open views of the site. As such there would likely be some intervisibility between the solar infrastructure and the surrounding properties within proximity to the site, particularly at Woodside Close, which would be addressed through landscaping mitigation.

A robust LVIA will be provided to assess any impacts upon the statutory designations, landscape character and appearance of the local area in addition to the visual impact from key viewpoints and residential properties with mitigation to reduce impacts including through the site layout, screening etc.

In addition, given the proximity of residential dwellings surrounding the site visual impacts including from Glint & Glare of nearby residents and road users, will be carefully considered. The Glint and Glare assessment will also consider potential wider impacts associated with aircraft using Gatwick Airport located ca. 20 kms to the north.

2.10 Other Constraints

In relation to other matters relevant to environmental impact:

- There are no current or historic landfill sites within the immediate surrounds of the site.
- The whole of the site and the surrounding area is identified as lying within areas of high risk for unexploded ordnance which would be assessed further within any future planning application.
- There are no airfields identified within 10km of the site although, as noted, Gatwick is located ca. 20 kms to the north.

3. The EIA Assessment

3.1 Legal Context

For the purpose of this screening request, we have considered the EIA Regulations.

The EIA Regulations, in conjunction with Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) on Environmental Impact Assessment (originally published March 2014 and most recently updated on 13 May 2020), set out a legal framework in relation to Environmental Impact Assessment. The EIA Regulations contain two development schedules

(Schedule 1 development and Schedule 2 development).

Schedule 1 contains a list of development where EIA is mandatory. The screening proposal does not fall within Schedule 1 Development.

Schedule 2 contains a list of development, coupled with development thresholds, where EIA may be considered. The Local Planning Authority must screen every planning application falling under the Schedule 2 development thresholds to determine whether or not EIA is required. When a local planning authority has to decide whether a Schedule 2 development is EIA development, Schedule 4 sets out how the LPA must take into account the information provided by the applicant; and the selection criteria set out in Schedule 3 as are relevant to the development.

Schedule 2 contains a list of development descriptions (categories) and applicable thresholds and criteria for the purpose of classifying development as Schedule 2 development. The development description pertinent to this development proposal is 'Energy Industry'.

Type	Development description	Applicable threshold and criteria
3. Energy Industry	(a) Industrial installations for the production of electricity, steam and hot water (unless included in Schedule 1).	The area of the development exceeds 0.5 hectares.

Given the site size exceeds the applicable threshold of 0.5 hectares, it is appropriate to screen the proposal with the Local Planning Authority to clarify if there are potential significant effects likely to arise from the proposed development that constitute EIA Development. The associated Planning Practice Guidance identifies that '*only a very small portion of Schedule 2 development will require an Environmental Impact Assessment*'.

Regulation 6(4) of the EIA Regulations (2017) sets out how a screening request, where relevant, must take into account the criteria set out in Schedule 3 which considers:

1. Characteristics of development,
2. Location of the development and;
3. Types and characteristics of the potential impacts.

The relevant issues are duly considered in this screening request.

To aid local planning authorities to determine whether a project is likely to have significant environmental effects, a set of indicative thresholds and criteria have been prepared by Government, and these are presented as a tabulated annex to the PPG. The relevant extract is set out below:

Development type	Indicative criteria and threshold	Applicable threshold and criteria
3. (a) Industrial installations for the production of electricity, steam and hot water	Thermal output of more than 50 MW Small stations using novel forms of generation should be considered carefully.	Level of emissions to air, arrangements for the transport of fuel and any visual impact.

For development falling under category 3(a) the indicative threshold relates to development which produces more than 50MW. The proposed solar farm scheme is below this threshold as it will have a maximum export capacity of circa 16.5 MW.

In addition, the Planning Practice Guidance provides 'key issues to consider' when screening this type of development, these are: "*level of emissions to air, arrangements for the transport of fuel and any visual impact*". These are discussed below.



3.2 Physical Scale of Development and Visual Impacts

The PPG identifies how the more environmentally sensitive the location, the more likely it would be that the effects would be significant. Paragraph 32 of the PPG goes on to identify how an EIA assessment would be more likely to be required if the project affects the features for which the sensitive area was designated. Consequently, it does not follow that all Schedule 2 development in such areas will require EIA and, as such, it will be necessary to judge the likely effects on the environment on a case-by-case basis. The site does not fall within the definition of a 'Sensitive Area' as per the EIA Regulations 2017.

There are no statutory or non-statutory landscape designations covering the site.

The land in the vicinity of the site is predominantly used for agriculture and woodland, with dispersed residential properties in the surrounding area, particularly to the west and south. The site extends to approximately 20.84ha of land, generally used for agricultural purposes and the majority of which will benefit from green infrastructure enhancements as a result of the proposal.

The proposed solar PV development would inevitably change the character of the site from gently sloping farmland to solar arrays, transformer boxes, inverter stations, security fencing and other associated infrastructure. However, the uniform layout of a solar PV development is suited this type of location which includes extensive trees and woodland which are considered capable of absorbing the scale of the proposed solar PV development.

In summary, the potential Landscape and Visual impacts will be subject to further assessment, to understand any impact upon the character and appearance of the local area. This will include reviewing the siting and height of the proposed design and layout to reduce impacts on sensitive receptors, as well as inform any mitigation required, including a robust landscaping scheme.

3.3 Cumulative and Interactive Effects

As part of any application process, a cumulative impact assessment will be undertaken to identify any major existing or approved applications within the vicinity of the site, which may give rise to significant cumulative effects. We are not aware of any unimplemented extant planning consents for solar arrays or farms within 3 kms of the proposed site. No other proposed solar or other energy projects, including Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIP), are identified within proximity to the site or the wider area at the time of writing.

The assessment of potential cumulative effects is an iterative process which we will continue to monitor, and potential effects will continue to be assessed as the planning application and design of the project continues to evolve and we welcome the Council's input into this to help inform any future assessment and planning application. This part of the site selection process would be outlined in a supporting planning statement or site selection report.

3.4 Levels of Emissions to Air and Arrangement for Transport of Fuel

The site is not within an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) and once the proposed development is in operation, it will not give rise to emissions. During construction, there could be the potential for dust and emissions from construction vehicles, plant, and machinery. Nevertheless, the anticipated traffic generation during this period is expected to be limited when compared to other development projects such as residential schemes. Therefore, it is considered unlikely that the proposals will have a significant effect on air quality during construction.

Whilst some dust might be generated during construction, this can be reduced through the use of construction management measures controlled by a CEMP.

Once operational, the only vehicle movements, typically, would be a weekly maintenance vehicle that would not give rise to a significant effect on air quality. No significant effects are therefore anticipated.



During the construction phase there could be potential for other minor pollution or nuisance consistent with construction works, i.e., lighting of external works, dust / noise from vehicles / construction processes, surface water run-off from bare earth / stockpiles, plant noise etc. However, the activities are anticipated to be short term, limited in scale and it should be emphasised that construction activities would be appropriately controlled by good practice measures. These could also be set out within a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and appropriate safety measures. Accordingly, the development is not expected to have significant effects with regards to dust or noise during its construction period. The anticipated impact for decommissioning would be similar to those for construction, as such the development is not expected to have a significant effect on population during the decommissioning phase.

Based on the site's use as agricultural farming land, the existing soil profile is unlikely to have significant forms of contamination above the expected potential from historic pesticide use, if any. Once operational there will be no unusual risk to human health. The development relies on well-established modern technology and responsible operators who will utilise the Construction Quality Assurance (CQA) plans as necessary.

Appropriate Health and Safety signage will be displayed on the site boundary, to warn of potential danger from working near electrical equipment and to prevent illegal access and trespass.

Consequently, there are no unusual risks to human health and significant impacts are not anticipated.

4. Conclusions

It is considered that the proposals fall within the category of Schedule 2 (3 a) as described in the EIA Regulations 2017. Development proposals described under Schedule 2 require an EIA if they are considered likely to have significant effects on the environment by virtue of factors such as nature, size, or location. Given that the proposed development exceeds the screening threshold in Schedule 2 (3 a) of 0.5 hectares, it is appropriate to Screen the proposals with the Local Planning Authority to determine if there are significant effects likely to arise from the proposals.

The Screening process should consider the development proposals against the criteria and thresholds which are included within the EIA Regulations and accompanying PPG in determining the requirement for an Environmental Statement (ES) to accompany an application for planning permission.

Schedule 3 of the EIA Regulations provides selection criteria for Screening Schedule 2 development, which includes three broad categories for consideration: the characteristics of the development; the environmental sensitivity of the location; and the characteristics of the potential impacts.

The PPG, under the Environmental Impact Assessment section (Paragraph 057), provides further indicative criteria and thresholds, as well as key issues to consider, in the determination of likely significance of effects. For 3 (a) Energy Industry, the criteria and advice given are:

- "Indicative Criteria and Threshold – 'Thermal output more than 50MW. Small stations using novel forms of generation should be considered carefully.'"
- "Key Issues to Consider – 'Level of emissions to air, arrangements for the transport of fuel and any visual impact.'"

Importantly, the proposal falls below the indicative threshold of 50MW. Neither the character of the proposed development would result in significant adverse environmental effects, nor the location of the proposed site is considered sensitive and vulnerable to adverse impacts. The most significant matters are considered to be the following:

- Short term impacts associated with construction associated both with vehicle movements and on-site operations. Potential construction impacts can be mitigated through construction management controls.

The construction period is expected to last for less than 8 months and is therefore short term and of a temporary duration. Minor pollution or nuisance consistent with construction works could cause limited impacts, however, these can be appropriately controlled with measures set out in a CEMP and/or CTMP. Therefore, significant effects during the construction phase are not anticipated.

- Potential impact on high quality agricultural land. Further studies would be undertaken to determine whether or not this site includes best and most versatile agricultural land. The proposed use, although long-term, is temporary and will allow full restoration to agricultural use and, indeed, there is an expectation that, due to leaving the land fallow for an extended period, this will result in an overall improvement in soil quality.
- Visual impacts are anticipated to be local and will be mitigated through landscaping. The site is not located in an area identified as high-quality landscape. An LVIA will be submitted as part of the planning application to assess all of these potential visual effects.
- The SSSI impact zone although the site is separated from the SSSI by circa 6km - Further ecological surveys would be required to fully assess potential ecological impacts within the planning application.
- The proposed site access would pass through a limited area of deciduous woodland and is expected to result in the loss of a limited number of mature trees. This area is not identified as a priority habitat. Any adverse impacts will be more than compensated for through extensive Biodiversity net gain proposals which will be included as part of the proposed development.
- There are eight Grade II Listed buildings, one Grade I Listed building and a Scheduled Monument surrounding the site. The proposed solar panels would be a minimum of 350m from the northern boundary of the Scheduled Monument site and there is significant intervening features including trees and hedgerows which will minimise intervisibility. A Heritage Statement will be submitted as part of the planning application to fully consider potential impacts on the historic character of the surrounding areas and their associated heritage assets, and outline mitigation to minimise impacts.
- In terms of flooding, there are very limited areas which are subject to surface water flooding. A flood risk and drainage assessment will be submitted as part of the planning application to fully assess and mitigate these potential risks.
- The local area is identified as high-risk area for UXO sources – this would be considered further through site-specific surveys as part of the planning application.
- Impact upon users of the public rights of way within proximity to the site will be carefully considered during the construction and operation of the proposed development.
- No other potentially major environmental impacts are anticipated to arise from the proposal including ecology, air and water emission, transport, amenity and access.

In summary the site benefits from existing defined field boundaries, with opportunities for enhanced landscaping to strengthen the boundaries and reduce visual impact.

Once operational, the only vehicle movements to / from the site would be from the occasional maintenance vehicle, which would visit the site approximately once a week. Such a low level of traffic to the site would not give rise to significant effects on air quality or existing highway networks.

Whilst there are no specific indicative criteria and thresholds for screening solar farms; transport and visual impacts are generally considered to be key considerations. These impacts have already been addressed comprehensively as outlined above and mitigation measures proposed for the solar farm will be outlined in any future planning application.



Given the nature of the development proposals, it is considered that whilst there may be some impacts on the local environment as a consequence of the proposed development, none of these are considered to constitute 'significant impacts', as set out in central government guidance. Consequently, it is considered that the proposals do not constitute EIA development and would not require an Environmental Statement to be submitted with a planning application for a solar farm in this location.

Notwithstanding the above, any subsequent planning application will be accompanied by the necessary technical assessments to enable the Local Planning Authority to consider and determine the planning application on its own merits.

We look forward to receiving the Council's response to this Screening Request within the designated 3-week timeframe on receipt of this request, as stated in the EIA Regulations (Part II-6(6)).

Yours faithfully,

A black rectangular box redacting the signature of Dan Chalk.

Dan Chalk
Head of Planning

A black rectangular box redacting the contact information for Dan Chalk.