

Development Management Committee – 21st September 2026

Application Number: 23/00258/FUL

Proposal: Installation of a solar photovoltaic (PV) park generating up to 35 MW, comprising ground-mounted solar arrays, substations, internal access tracks, security fencing, and associated infrastructure.

Location: Land North of Vicarage Lane, Diddington

Applicant: Cell Energy Limited

Agent: Tom Pike - Lanpro

Case Officer: Hannah Guy

Parish: Southoe and Midloe

Reason for Referral: Officer recommendation contrary to Parish Council comments

Committee Date: 21st September 2026

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS AND RECOMMENDATION

RECOMMENDATION: TO DELEGATE POWERS TO THE HEAD OF PLANNING, INFRASTRUCTURE & PUBLIC PROTECTION TO;

GRANT PERMISSION FOR THE DEVELOPMENT SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS

OR

REFUSE PERMISSION IN THE EVENT THE S106 AGREEMENT HAS NOT BEEN COMPLETED AND THE APPLICANT IS UNWILLING TO AGREE AN EXTENDED PERIOD FOR DETERMINATION, OR THAT THE APPLICANT IS UNWILLING TO COMPLETE THE OBLIGATION NECESSARY TO MAKE THE DEVELOPMENT ACCEPTABLE.

Proposal

Installation of a solar photovoltaic (PV) park generating up to 35 MW, comprising ground-mounted solar arrays, substations, internal access tracks, security fencing, and associated infrastructure.

Consultations

The following consultees have raised **objections** to the application:

- Buckden Parish Council, HDC Conservation and Southoe and Midloe Parish Council

The following consultees have raised **no objections** to the application:

- HDC Arboricultural Officer, Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) Archaeology, HDC Landscape and Biodiversity, CCC Public Rights of Way, CCC Highways, Police, National Highways, CCC as Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA), HDC Economic Development, Historic England, Environmental Health, Active Travel, Natural England, British Horse Society, Cadent Gas and Wildlife trust,

No letters of objection or support have been received at the time of writing.

Conclusion

The application has been assessed against the relevant policies in the NPPF, the adopted Local Plan and other relevant guidance as listed in detail at Section 8 of the report.

The key issues arising from the application details are:

- Principle of Development
- Landscape and Countryside Character
- Highway and Transport Impacts, including Public Rights of Way
- Ecology and Biodiversity
- Drainage and Flood Risk
- Heritage Impacts
- Impacts to Neighbouring Amenity
- Land Contamination and Air Quality
- Contamination Risks and Pollution

The report looks into the key planning issues in detail, and Officers conclude that the proposal is acceptable subject to conditions

Members are advised that the above is a summary of the proposals and key issues contained in the main report below which provides full details of all consultation responses, planning policies, the Officer's assessment and recommendations, and Members are advised that this summary should be read in conjunction with the detailed report.

MAIN REPORT

1 APPLICATION SITE AND LOCALITY

- 1.1 The application site comprises land to the north of Vicarage Lane, immediately west of the village of Diddington. The site occupies a sloping valley on the southern side of Diddington Brook, falling from approximately 44 m AOD in the south-west to around 19 m AOD in the north-east. It is currently in arable use and consists of three large agricultural fields and one smaller field, defined by a network of established hedgerows and mature boundary trees. The eastern boundary of the site is strongly influenced by the A1 Great North Road, which runs on embankment above the adjoining land. Vicarage Lane defines the southern boundary and is characterised by a rural lane environment with residential properties at its eastern and western ends.
- 1.2 To the north and west are significant woodland blocks, including Diddington Wood and Coronation Wood, with areas of long-established woodland, mature hedgerows and field boundary trees closely associated with Diddington Brook. Grafham Water Reservoir and its associated SSSI lie approximately 1 km to the west, and the surrounding landscape is influenced by recreational movements to and from the reservoir.
- 1.3 The wider landscape falls within the Southern Wolds Landscape Character Area as defined by the HDC Landscape and Townscape SPD (2022). This is characterised by gentle topography, a well-wooded and hedged agricultural landscape, scattered villages, and the presence of modern infrastructure such as the A1 corridor and water-related development associated with Grafham Water.

2 DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 2.1 The proposed Development covers an area of approximately 45.62 hectares (ha).
- 2.2 The Development includes the installation of a solar photovoltaic (PV) park generating up to 35 MW of electricity to the land west of the Great North Road (A1), Diddington, Cambridgeshire. The Development comprises the following:
 - Ground-mounted PV arrays, comprising of a series of Photovoltaic (PV) panels;
 - Inverters/transformer stations;
 - Distribution Network Operator (DNO) Substation;
 - Customer substation/switchgear and meter kiosk;
 - Internal buried cabling and grid connection cables including private wire cable to Anglian Water facility;

- Internal access tracks;
 - Security fencing and gates;
 - CCTV cameras;
 - Upgraded existing site access;
 - Other ancillary infrastructure;
 - Landscaping; and
 - Biodiversity enhancements.
- 2.3 The ground-mounted PV arrays comprise of a series of Photovoltaic (PV) panels, on a supporting structure of galvanized steel columns (solar array). The panels would be situated approximately 3m high and south facing. The rows would be spaced approximately 5m apart and set back from the Site boundaries.
- 2.4 The Site would be enclosed by a 2.5 metre (m) high post and wire security fence with intermittent CCTV cameras set around the boundary on 3m high poles, facing into the Site.
- 2.5 The construction period of the Development is anticipated to be approximately 9 months. The operational period of the Development would be 40 years, with an anticipated output of up to 35 megawatts.

3 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

3.1 21/70114/SCRE - Land North of Vicarage Lane Diddington

Description: Screening Opinion for Installation of ground mounted solar PV array, substations, transformers, and associated security (perimeter fencing and CCTV) on land off Vicarage Lane, Diddington, Cambridgeshire

4 RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

4.1 Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 (Adopted 15th May 2019)

- LP1 Amount of Development
- LP2 Strategy for Development
- LP3 Green Infrastructure
- LP4 Contributing to Infrastructure Delivery
- LP5 Flood risk
- LP10 The Countryside
- LP14 Amenity
- LP15 Surface Water
- LP16 Sustainable Travel
- LP17 Parking Provision and Vehicle Movement

- LP19 Rural Economy
- LP30 Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- LP31 Trees, Woodland, Hedges and Hedgerows
- LP32 Protection of Open Space
- LP34 Heritage Assets and their Settings
- LP35 Renewable and Low Carbon Energy
- LP36 Air Quality
- LP37 Ground Contamination and Groundwater Pollution
- LP38 Water Related Development

4.2 Buckden Neighbourhood Plan May 2021

The Buckden Neighbourhood Plan area does not include the site as proposed in this application. The Neighbourhood Plan Area is adjacent to the site, at the northern boundary with Diddington Brook.

4.3 Supplementary Planning Documents

- Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment – Adopted 2022
- Huntingdonshire Design Guide – Adopted 2017
- Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD – Adopted 2017
- Development Contributions – Adopted 2011 (costs updated annually)

4.4 National Planning Policy and Guidance

- National Planning Policy Framework 2026 (NPPF)
- National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)
- National Design Guide 2019 (NDG)
- Noise Policy Statement for England (NPSE)

4.5 The National Planning Policy Framework (2026) sets out the three objectives - economic, social and environmental - of the planning system to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.

4.6 The NPPF 2026 sets out National Decision-Making Policies (NDMPs) which are a material consideration of critical importance.

The following NDMPs are considered to be of particular relevance to the current proposals:

- S3: Presumption in favour of sustainable development
- S5: Development Outside of Settlements
- CC2: Mitigation for Climate Change
- CC3: Adaption to Climate Change
- W3: Renewable and low carbon energy development and electricity network Infrastructure.
- F4: Assessing flood risk for decision-making
- F8: Sustainable drainage systems and watercourses

- N2: Improving the natural environment
- P3: Living conditions and pollution
- TR3: Locating development in sustainable locations
- HE5: Assessing effects on heritage assets

Statutory Duties and Relevant Legislation

- 4.7 Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

For full details visit the government website National Guidance.

- 4.8 Relevant Legislation;

- Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004
- Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)
- Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990
- Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979

5 RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION

- 5.1 Below is a summary of the consultation responses received at the time of writing this report. Responses are available to view in full on the Council's website.
- 5.2 Part d of Policy DM3 in the NPPF states that statutory or internal consultees should only be consulted where it is necessary to do so, advising "Decisions on development proposals should not be delayed in order to secure advice from a statutory or internal consultee beyond their statutory deadlines unless there is insufficient information to make the decision, there are public safety risks from proceeding without advice, or more detailed advice may enable an approval rather than a refusal".

Consultee	Position	Comment
Buckden Parish Council	Object	
Conservation	Object	
Southoe and Midloe Parish Council	Object	
Tree Officer	No objection	Subject to planning conditions
Archaeology	No objection	Subject to planning conditions
Landscape and Biodiversity	No objection	Subject to planning conditions

Public Rights of Way	No objection	Subject to planning conditions
National Highways	No objection	No Comments
Police	No objection	Comments
Environmental Health	No objection	Subject to planning conditions
Wildlife Trust	No objection	Subject to planning conditions
Historic England	No objection	
Economic Development	No objection	
Highways	No objection	Subject to planning conditions
LLFA	No objection	Subject to planning conditions
Active Travel	No objection	Comments
Natural England	No objection	Comments
British Horse Society	No objection	Comments
Cadent Gas	No objection	Comments
HDC Tree Officer	No objection	Following a site visit – no objection subject to planning conditions relating to tree's

6 RESPONSE TO PUBLICITY

Below is a summary of the third party and neighbour responses received at the time of writing this report. Site notices were placed around the site and a notification in the local press.

- 6.1 No representations have been received in relation to the application.

7 APPRAISAL

Principle of Development

- 7.1 This section is concerned with the broad principle of development for a renewable or low carbon energy generating scheme in the open countryside. More detailed, site-specific matters are considered elsewhere in the report.
- 7.2 The application site is located outside the built-up area and is therefore considered to be within the countryside for planning purposes. In such a location development is restricted under policy LP10 to those that are provided for in other policies within the Local Plan. The supporting text to that policy notes that this is in order to balance support for a thriving rural economy and land-based business, while protecting the character and beauty of the countryside.
- 7.3 Of particular relevance in this instance is policy LP35 which states that “a proposal for a renewable or low carbon energy generating scheme, other than wind energy, will be supported where it is demonstrated that all potential adverse impacts including cumulative impacts are or can be made acceptable”.

- 7.4 As stated above, LP35 provides support in principle for renewable and low carbon energy generation and is therefore considered by Officers to be one of the specific opportunities for development in the countryside supported in the local plan, subject to a detailed assessment of the proposal and its impacts. In terms of the countryside location, and notwithstanding further assessment in respect of the use of agricultural land, it is therefore considered there is an in-principle policy support for the proposal in this location.
- 7.5 As demonstrated by the Climate Change Act 2008 (as amended 2019), associated Carbon Budget and British Energy Security Strategy 2022, it is clear that solar energy is a key component of the government's legally binding commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050.
- 7.6 NPPF 2026 Policy S3 makes a general presumption in favour of sustainable development, outside settlements as in the case of this development proposal, Policy S5 will apply. This (at para1 point a) supports engineering operations and infrastructure associated with energy.
- 7.7 The NPPF 2026 at Para 2 of Policy CC2 'Mitigation of climate change' states that "Substantial weight should be given to the benefits of improving the energy efficiency of existing buildings and/or drawing energy from district heat networks, renewable and low carbon sources (including through the installation of heat pumps and solar panels where these do not already benefit from permitted development rights) where this would be achieved through proposals for development.
- 7.8 The guidance continues at NDMP W3, Para 2 that that LPAs "should not require applicants to demonstrate the need for renewable or low carbon energy development and electricity network infrastructure. Where proposals for this form of development come forward outside areas which have been identified as suitable for them in the development plan, their acceptability should be assessed against the national decision-making policies in this Framework."
- 7.9 The British Energy Security Strategy states that the government expects a five-fold increase in combined ground and rooftop solar deployment by 2035. The government expects solar, together with wind, to be the predominant source of energy generation by 2050.
- 7.10 The delivery of this proposed scheme would generate up to 35 MW and would contribute towards government targets for renewable energy and Huntingdonshire's Climate Strategy.

- 7.11 The applicant has confirmed that a connection to the national grid has been secured with UK Power Networks and it is anticipated that the solar farm would be constructed and connected to the grid by Autumn 2027. The proposal will therefore make a significant and early contribution towards the delivery of additional solar generated electricity nationally.
- 7.12 With respect to use, the application site currently comprises approximately 45.62ha of agricultural land. Policy LP10, (reflecting part b of Policy N2 of the NPPF 2026), which seeks to protect best and most versatile (BMV) agricultural land, classified as Grades 1, 2 and 3a and use areas of poorer quality land where possible;
- 7.13 Natural England has raised no objections to the proposal, and Officers consider that, subject to conditions requiring details of decommissioning and safeguarding of the land quality, there would be no loss of BMV land.
- 7.14 Objections have been received from Buckden Parish Council and, Southoe and Midloe Parish Council namely on the basis that existing buildings and brownfield sites should be utilised fully first. That solar panels should not be even considered on greenfield sites. The Parish Council strongly oppose any application for them on food producing land.
- 7.15 Southoe and Midloe and Buckden Parish Councillors all recognise the need and principle of green energy from all forms of generation media. But genuinely believe that there should be no more solar farms considered on any agricultural land until other sites have been fully utilised.
- 7.16 Buckden Parish Council also comment that the proposed development does not accord with their Solar Panels Policy – which specifically states that:
- “1. Overall, the district strategy for renewable energy should result in a mix of wind, hydro and solar.
 2. Any installation must have a minimal impact on the environment and not be overly visually intrusive.
 3. Any installation should not be adjacent to or immediately visible to residential properties unless it is on existing roofs.
 4. Solar panels should be constructed on existing buildings and brownfield sites.
 5. Solar panels should not be installed on greenfield sites and the Parish Council will strongly oppose any application for them on agricultural land of Grade 3 or better.
 6. The Parish Council will seek support from Principal Councils and its local MP to make the installation of solar panels on roofs of new properties to be a planning condition.

7. Solar panels must be sustainably sourced.
8. The impact on water run-off and drainage needs to be considered.
9. The problems of glint and glare from solar panels needs to be covered.”

7.17 This Parish Council policy is not part of the Buckden Neighbourhood Plan.

7.18 The National Planning Policy Framework defines BMV land as Grade 1-3a [inclusive] only. In the case of this Site, the Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) Grade was not known, and it was necessary to determine this through examination.

7.19 The submitted Planning Statement shows a plan and states that:

“The majority of the Site is classified as subgrade 3 good to moderate (not quantified in a or b grade) and a very small area of Grade 2 (2%), so some of the land would fall within the category of BMV Land.”

7.20 While the quality of land at the Site appears important in a national context, it is not significant at local level as subgrade 3 is extremely common in Cambridgeshire. In addition, sub-grade 3 constitutes some of the lesser fertile land in the county, where as Grade 1 and Grade 2 land are predominant. It is therefore recognised and acknowledged that some development will necessarily need to occur on BMV land in the region.

7.21 The proposed location of the development is therefore consistent with the key policy objective, in that it represents an efficient use of some of the poorer, less versatile, and less resilient land in the region. (Grade 3).

7.22 The proposed development also has the potential to deliver some significant wider environmental benefits, such as improvements to soil structure and health, carbon sequestration and strengthened landscaping with habitat and biodiversity enhancements.

7.23 The leasing of agricultural land for non-agricultural purposes is recognised as an important form of income diversification for the farm business which will support the agricultural activities on the rest of the farm, thereby helping to mitigate the risks associated with volatile commodity prices, weather patterns and the pressures associated with the changes to the EU and UK agricultural support regime.

7.24 The use of Grade 3 (b) land (which is not BMV land) for development is supported under policy LP10. Policy LP10 is clear that development should seek to avoid irreversible loss of BMV land but does not restrict use of it.

- 7.25 The proposed development that covers this land includes an access track, fencing, solar panels and inverter/transformer cabins. Of these elements and having regard to a potential 'worst-case' scenario, the access track and the inverter/transformer cabins would require some hardstanding and are likely to be more permanent fixtures, though the access track is of limited depth and Officers consider it highly likely this could be removed without any notable permanent impact. The fencing and solar panels are either relatively straightforward earthworks or temporary ground mounted structures that could be readily removed from the site once their use has ceased.
- 7.26 The access track and inverter/transformer cabin hardstanding, would be minor in their scale at approximately 0.1ha, limited to the periphery of the fields. A condition is recommended in accordance with LP35 that, prior to decommissioning, a plan is submitted to the LPA that sets out the approach for removal of the equipment, and that seeks to revert the land to its former status in accordance with that agreed plan. As well as this, a condition will also be required that imposes a temporary time limit on the development. Subject to those conditions, it is considered there would not be any permanent material loss of best and most versatile agricultural land. The development is therefore considered not to represent the irreversible or permanent loss of BMV land
- 7.27 It is therefore considered, subject to the conditions identified above, that the principle of the development is acceptable. In terms of use and location, Officers are satisfied that the development is in accordance with NPPF 2026 Policies S5 and CC2, and Policies LP10 and LP35 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan.

Landscape and Countryside Character

- 7.28 The wider landscape around the site, falls within the Southern Wolds Landscape Character Area as defined by the HDC Landscape and Townscape SPD (2022). This is characterised by gentle topography, a well-wooded and hedged agricultural landscape, scattered villages, and the presence of modern infrastructure such as the A1 corridor and water-related development at Graffam Water.
- 7.29 The HDC Landscape Officer has been extensively involved in the negotiation of the development and has made a number of consultation responses. They mainly centred around the sensitivity of the site and its immediate surroundings that had been undervalued, given the historic field patterns, tree groups associated with watercourses, and the recreational use of nearby routes linking to Grafham Water. Through the submission of amended landscaping plans and further work on updating the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA), those concerns have now been addressed and the proposals as submitted, are

considered appropriate. The development has been amended quite significantly to allow for the landscaping impact to be mitigated and proposed planning conditions will further strengthen that position.

- 7.30 Having regard to some concerns raised by HDC Tree Officer, a site visit was conducted to inspect Veteran trees. Following the site visit, it is now concluded that the submission of revised plans and further clarification on site, the Tree Consultant for HDC confirms that “it is not considered that the proposed development would result in material harm to Veteran Tree’s, ancient woodland or the wider tree stock on or adjacent the site. Planning conditions are recommended.”
- 7.31 The development in terms of Landscaping, impact on the character of the countryside and trees is now considered to be acceptable and subject of the imposition of planning conditions, it is in accordance with Policy N2 NPPF 2026 and Policies LP30 and LP31 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan.

Transport Impacts and Highway Safety

- 7.32 The proposed solar farm is located on green fields to the north of Lodge Farm, Diddington. The site is bordered by A1 Great North Road to the east, Diddington Brook to the north, Vicarage Lane to the south and farmland to the west. Further north and west of the site is Perry Road (the B661) providing connection between the A1 and Perry (including access to Grafham Water). Vicarage Lane and B661 Perry Road are the responsibility of Cambridgeshire County Council, as local highway authority. The A1 Great North Road lies within the highway authority of National Highways. All other tracks/accesses routes in the immediate vicinity of the site, or within the site boundary, are private.
- 7.33 The construction phase access (catering for HGV’s) will be formed from the existing B661 Perry Road junction and a new access track to link to Vicarage Road. The Large Goods Vehicle (LGV) access is from the A1 into Vicarage Road and the site access.
- 7.34 Both access routes have been vehicle tracked and swept path analysis has been submitted. These plans show satisfactory use of the highways and that all types of vehicles can be accommodated.
- 7.35 The Local Highway Authority have reviewed the submitted information and raised no objections in principle, subject to conditions relating to the construction and maintenance of the site access, and appropriate control of construction traffic, via a Construction Traffic Management Plan.
- 7.36 On the whole, and subject to conditions, the development is therefore considered not to represent an adverse impact to highway safety or the capacity

of the transport network and would therefore accord with policies LP16 and LP17 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan and Policies TR3 of the NPPF 2026.

- 7.37 The County Rights of Way Team raised some concerns as set out below:
- 7.38 The applicant has updated plans to show the full alignments of the Public Rights of Way on “Amended Site Location Plan 1005-B Rev 17P”, sections of Public Bridleway No. 8, Southoe and Midloe and Public Bridleway No. 15, Diddington are now clearly defined, as requested.
- 7.39 The construction route as submitted, includes sections along public bridleways (Public Bridleway No. 8, Southoe and Midloe and Public Bridleway No. 15, Diddington) these have soft surfaces and may not be suitable for HGV / LGV access.
- 7.40 The applicant responded and commented that “along sections with soft surfaces, it is proposed to lay a temporary heavy duty trackway surface. Trackway can support HGV / LGV access and is temporary in nature and therefore can be removed post construction. The construction period will last circa 12 months and the requirement for the trackway surface would only require a small section of the PRoW route.”
- 7.41 Officers have considered all of the concerns raised and the applicants’ responses and conclude that the surfacing and protection of the PRoW can be satisfactory conditioned with emphasis on landscaping, signage and enclosure.
- 7.42 The BHS has commented that should this application be successful, there is an excellent opportunity to enhance the local public rights of way network by creating a peripheral public right of way of at least bridleway standard but preferably a restricted byway standard.
- 7.43 Officers have taken this suggestion into consideration and conclude that given the sufficient public access in this area already and the improvements that the applicant has already agreed with CCC PRoW Officers – the request for an additional new periphery Byway, is excessive and has not been substantiated by CCC PRoW team.
- 7.44 As no formal PRoW’s would be lost through the proposal, and the development would result in some minor landscaping improvements to the PRoW network, Officers consider that, subject to conditions identified, the proposal would accord with Policy LP16 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan and Policy TR8 of the NPPF 2026.

Ecology and Biodiversity

- 7.45 The application has been accompanied by Ecological Reports, a Landscape and Biodiversity Management Plan and detailed calculations of Biodiversity Net Gain. These set out the potential areas of ecological value within the site and its surroundings that may be of ecological significance and considers the potential mitigation and enhancement proposals to ensure the development does not result in adverse impacts to ecology and biodiversity.
- 7.46 The Wildlife Trust has reviewed these details and following amendments and clarification, raise no objection. They have noted the reports follow best practice and consider these have established an accurate representation of baseline of the site. They note that the submitted Net Gain Calculations appear to be optimistic in respect of the proposed wildflower grassland, but that even if elements were considered to provide a low overall increase in biodiversity units the development would still deliver a significant increase in habitat units and therefore a high level of net gain. (+46.3 = 40% for Habitats and +2.9 = 10% for Hedgerows)
- 7.47 Wildlife Trust Officers have reviewed the additional information submitted by the applicant, including the updated Ecological Appraisal report and BNG report. WT Officers responded that “The additions and changes made to all these documents fully address the issues we raised in our original response and provide a suitable basis for the determination of the application.” They suggest planning condition mitigation/recommendations for species such as skylarks as contained in the Ecological Report by Baker Consultants, dated September 2025. This development is exempt from the 2024 BNG legislation due to the transitional arrangements and the application being submitted prior to February 2024.
- 7.48 On the whole, therefore, and subject to conditions identified above, as well as a condition requiring a finalised landscape management plan, Officers consider the proposal would protect existing ecological and landscape features and achieve a measurable 10% enhancement in biodiversity terms. The proposal is therefore considered to accord with policies LP30 and LP31 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan and Policy N2 of the NPPF 2026.

Drainage and Flood Risk

- 7.49 The application site is located within Flood Zone 1, at the lowest risk of flooding.
- 7.50 No objections have been received from the LLFA as the statutory consultee for surface water. They have recommended standard conditions seeking the

detailed design be submitted if the application is approved, details of its long-term management and details of how surface water will be managed during the construction process. Similarly, no objections have been received from the Environment Agency in respect of flood risk from river sources, subject to securing the mitigation in the submitted Flood Risk Assessment (FRA).

- 7.51 The application proposes to manage surface flows predominantly through a mix permeable paving, swales and filter strips. This would both control the rate of discharge and provide water quality treatment. The LLFA have confirmed that the submitted documents demonstrate that surface water from the proposed development can be managed through swales, filter drains and scrapes as well as vegetation to mimic natural ground conditions as far as possible.
- 7.52 While the solar panels themselves are not permeable, the development does not create substantial levels of hardstanding compared to, for example, a residential development. Water would reach the ground, and there would be some level of infiltration drainage naturally occurring, though as this is likely to be more focused into runs, the profile of how water runs along the ground is likely to change.
- 7.53 Officers note the relevant test in this instance would be that the situation is not materially worse than present. While the fully detailed design would be submitted at a later stage, the level of restriction indicated and the proposed mitigation measures that have been suitably demonstrated to be achievable are sufficient for Officers to consider an acceptable drainage arrangement would be readily achievable.
- 7.54 In terms of flooding from river sources, the whole site is located in Flood Zone 1, at the lowest risk of flooding. As a solar farm, the development is classified as “Essential Infrastructure” in accordance with Annex F of the NPPF 2026 which is considered compatible in Flood Zones 1 and 2.
- 7.55 Subject to conditions, therefore, Officers consider the proposal would not give rise to any adverse impacts with regards to drainage through surface water or river sources. The proposal would therefore accord with Policies F4 and F8 of NPPF 2026, and policies LP5 and LP15 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan.

Heritage Impacts

- 7.56 Sections 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 require that special regard is had to the desirability of preserving particular features of Listed Buildings and Conservations Areas and great weight should be afforded to the assets conservation. The Ancient Monuments

and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 protects the archaeological heritage of Great Britain by making provision for the investigation, preservation and recording of matters of archaeological or historical interest.

- 7.57 The NPPF 2026 states that “Heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource.....These assets should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations.”
- 7.58 The NPPF also comments that in assessing development proposals on a Heritage Asset, LPA’s must assess the likely impact on the *significance* of the asset rather than the scale of the development. (Policy HE5 (3)).
- 7.59 HDC’s Conservation Officer has recommended ‘no support of the proposal’ on the grounds that there is less than substantial harm to the surrounding heritage assets. These assets are summarised in order of proximity: the Church of St Lawrence, Diddington, Lodge Farmhouse (Grade II), Barn North of Lodge Farmhouse (Grade II), Gates and Gate Piers to former Diddington Hall (Grade II), Former Stables and Coach House to Diddington Hall (Grade II), The Gardens, Diddington (Grade II)
- 7.60 North Lodge, Great North Road (Grade II), Buckden and Stirtloe Conservation areas.
- 7.61 In the summary response from the Conservation Officer, the impact on all of the local Heritage assets in the area is considered *less than substantial*.
- 7.62 On balance, and in the face of no loss of any heritage assets, it is Officers opinion that there would be no resultant harm or *loss of significance* to any local heritage asset, as summarised above. Officers are satisfied that the submitted assessments accurately reflect the impacts on the local heritage assets that could be caused by development proposals.
- 7.63 Given that there is no loss of significance of a heritage asset by the proposed development, it is considered that the proposals accord with Policy NE5 of the NPPF 2026 and LP 34 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan.
- 7.64 The County Historic Environment Team (CHET) have also raised no objections following extensive consultation and reduction in the number of solar panels and the areas they cover. CHET now consider that the development would not impact any archaeological deposits so recommend approval, subject to the imposition of a number of planning conditions regarding the submission of a

Written Scheme of Investigation for the cable route and an Archaeological Management Plan (AMP) for recording any in-situ finds.

- 7.65 The proposed development is therefore considered to accord with policy LP34 of Huntingdonshire Local Plan and the policy provisions of the NPPF 2026 Policy HE5 in respect of impacts on heritage assets.

Impacts of Neighbouring Amenity

- 7.66 While the site is distant from the majority of residential dwellings in the area, Officers note a small number are in close proximity. The closest being The Gamekeepers Cottage to the west, Lodge Farm to the south west. The Vicarage lies to the south of the site adjacent to the A1 and North Lodge, accessed via the A1, is to the north of the site. The distances are considered sufficient to protect the amenity of surrounding occupants from overshadowing or overbearing impacts, notwithstanding that the solar panels and associated structures are not of such a height that they would be considered likely to give rise to harmful levels of overbearing or overshadowing. The landscaping strategy has been carefully considered and assessed, to take these amenities into account.
- 7.67 On the whole, and subject to the conditions identified, Officers consider the proposal would accord with policy LP14 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan and P3 of the NPPF 2026.

Land Contamination and Air Quality

- 7.68 The Council's Environmental Health Officer has raised no objection on the basis of contamination risks or air pollution. Natural England have raised no concerns subject to conditions to ensure that there would be no ground contamination, and the LLFA have noted the proposed drainage mitigation measures are acceptable.
- 7.69 In terms of existing contamination, Officers consider it likely that the active agricultural use of the site would have required some form of chemical use that could result in contamination, though it is not considered highly likely there would be any contaminants within the site. There are no notable brownfield uses within or surrounding the site that would give rise to concerns in terms of contamination. Nor is there any substantial evidence of past agricultural uses that would indicate previous noteworthy contaminative uses on or adjoining the site.
- 7.70 As a solar farm, the development's operational aspect would not give rise to emissions that would result in materially adverse impacts to air quality. While

there would be some level of emissions during construction, the short length of the construction time (approx. 30 weeks) is such that it is considered these would be marginal, and not at a level that would be considered harmful.

- 7.71 While Officers consider there is likely to be some chemical use as part of regular maintenance of the site, both in cleaning solar panels as needed and as part of biodiversity management to limit the possible impact of inappropriate plant species, the level of use is considered likely to be low, having regard to the amount of maintenance visits likely to be carried out throughout the lifetime of the development. It is noted that any consideration should be made against a likely starting point, that some chemical use would form part of standard agricultural practice use of the site, albeit in a materially different context.
- 7.72 Overall, and particularly having regard to the mitigation that will form part of the drainage scheme, Officers consider the proposed development is unlikely to lead to any materially harmful impact to water sources within and surrounding the site.
- 7.73 In respect to ground contamination, it is noted that no concerns have been raised by the Environmental Health Officer. The application has set out the aspects of the development that could 'potentially' give rise to ground contamination and the Construction Method Statement (to be secured by condition) will control the appropriate form of storage, as well as actions in the event of a spill.
- 7.74 There are no other sources likely to result in ground contamination particularly arising as a result of the development, the development is considered sufficiently remediated through the drainage proposals, it is considered this is sufficient to limit the impact of any possible chemical use.
- 7.75 On the whole, the proposal is considered to accord with policies LP36 and LP37 in respect to ground and water pollution and air quality and Policy PE3 of the NPPF 2026.

Other Matters

Public Sector Equalities Duties

- 7.76 The Equality Act 2010 provides protection from discrimination in respect of certain protected characteristics, namely: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or beliefs and sex and sexual orientation. It places the Council under a legal duty to have due regard to the advancement of equality in the exercise of its powers including planning powers.

7.77 The Committee must be mindful of this duty *inter alia* when determining all planning applications. In particular, the Committee must pay due regard to the need to:

- (1) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act;
- (2) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
- (3) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

7.78 Due consideration has been made to The Equality Act 2010 during the assessment of the planning application, no conflicts are raised.

Human Rights

7.79 Due consideration has been made to The Equality Act 2010 during the assessment of the planning application, no conflicts are raised. There may be implications under Article 1 (protection of property) and Article 8 (right to respect for private and family life) of the First Protocol regarding the right of respect for a person's private and family life and home, and to the peaceful enjoyment of possessions; however, these issues have been taken into account in the determination of this application.

8 PLANNING BALANCE AND CONCLUSION

8.1 The application must be considered in accordance with the statutory tests in s.38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, namely, in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

8.2 Officers have reviewed the detail submitted, along with representations from the Parish Councils, and technical and non-technical consultee responses. It has been identified that the proposed development would accord with national and local policy, having regard to the controls that are available to the Local Planning Authority, particularly conditions as set out in the recommendation below. While it is noted that there will be some immediate impacts, particularly in relation to landscape and highways, these are not considered to be materially harmful in the context of the development as a whole, having regard to the timescales of such impacts throughout the lifetime of the development. In any event these limited adverse impacts are considered to be substantially outweighed by the significant material benefits of renewable energy generation and biodiversity net gain that would arise from the development.

- 8.3 On balance and subject to appropriate conditions, it is considered the proposal accords with adopted national and local policy, and no material considerations have been identified that would indicate the application should otherwise be refused contrary to that policy.

9 RECOMMENDATION/CONDITIONS AND REASONS

- 9.1 Grant permission subject to conditions as set out below with delegated authority to the Head of Planning, Infrastructure & Public Protection to approve any amendments to conditions as deemed necessary.

Conditions (full wording)

1. Condition.

The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as amended.

2. Condition.

The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans listed in the table above unless otherwise updated by the approval of details pursuant to the conditions of this permission.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt to ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans.

3. Condition.

The permission hereby granted shall expire no later than 40 years from the date when electrical power is first exported from any of the solar panels to the electricity grid network (first Export Date). First Export Date excludes electricity exported during initial testing and commissioning. Written confirmation of the First Export Date shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority no later than 28 days after the event.

In the event the Solar PV facility, or a material part of it, fails to produce electricity for supply to the grid for a continuous period of 12 months, a scheme shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for its written approval within 3 months of the end of that 12 month period for the repair, replacement or removal of the relevant solar PV equipment. Where repairs or replacements are required the scheme shall include a proposed programme of remedial works. Where removal of the relevant panels is required the scheme shall include a timetable for the dismantling and removal of the relevant panels and associated above ground works and timetable for any necessary

restoration works following removal of the panels. The relevant scheme shall thereafter be implemented in accordance with the approved details and timetable.

In the event of full decommissioning before the end of the approved 40 year period, the requirements of Condition 4 must be complied with.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity in recognition of the temporary lifespan of the structures.

4. Condition.

At least 6 months prior to the expiry of the date 40 years from the First Export Date a scheme shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority for the decommissioning of the solar farm and the restoration of the site. The scheme shall include, but not be limited to, the following;

- a) Details of the removal of the solar panels, associated above and below ground equipment, including underground ducting and cable and hardstanding.
- b) A plan for the investigation of the agricultural land quality, together with remediation proposals to restore the land to at least its current grade where any degradation has been identified.
- c) an ecological assessment report identifying ecological constraints and detailing specific ecological harm that would result from the decommissioning activities, along with any mitigation requirements.
- d) Tree Survey, Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Arboricultural Method Statement to identify all trees and hedgerow on site (including those planted as part of the approved landscape scheme) and detail any losses and protection measures required for retained trees and hedgerows
- e) Construction Management Plan detailing how (including timescales) the decommissioning activities will be undertaken, how traffic will be managed and the provision of temporary facilities clear of the public highway for the storage of materials and the parking, turning, loading and unloading of all vehicles visiting the site during the period of decommissioning;
- f) A timetable for the decommissioning works to be carried out, including the removal of all temporary facilities following completion of the decommissioning scheme.

The decommissioning of the site shall thereafter be carried out in accordance with the approved scheme.

Reason: As the application is proposed on a limited timescale due to the limited lifespan of solar panels, to safeguard the long term availability and quality of agricultural land and ensure the development does not result in a derelict site unable

to generate energy a temporary permission is required, in accordance with policy LP35 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036.

5. Condition.

The PV Panels shall not exceed a height of 3m above ground level.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity, to ensure that proposed mitigation planting is effective, to accord with the aims of Policies LP 10 and LP35 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036.

6. Condition.

No external lighting or CCTV cameras other than those shown on the approved plans shall be installed during the operation of the site as a solar PV facility without the prior written consent of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of the visual amenity of the area, to protect nocturnal species and to enable the Local Planning Authority to consider issues of light pollution and amenity of local residents at the appropriate time in accordance with Policies LP 10 and LP35 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036.

7. Condition.

Should any unexpected contamination of soil or groundwater be discovered during development of the site, the Local Planning Authority should be notified immediately. Site activities, should be temporarily suspended until such time as a procedure for addressing any such unexpected contamination, and the extent of any exclusion zone around the identified contamination, is agreed upon in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interest of human health in accordance with Policy LP 14 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036.

8. Condition.

Prior to the first use of the access by construction traffic associated with the development hereby approved, a plan shall be first submitted to, and approved by, the Local Planning Authority, to show the provision of sufficient space to be provided within the site to enable:

- a) Vehicles to enter, turn and leave the site in forward gear
- b) Vehicles to park clear of the highway
- c) On site parking, servicing and turning
- d) Loading/unloading, and
- e) Vehicles to manoeuvre.

The area shall be levelled, surfaced and drained and thereafter retained for that specific use in accordance with the approved plan.

Reason: In the interests of satisfactory development and highway safety in accordance with policy LP17 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036.

9. Condition.

Prior to the first use of the construction vehicular access where it meets the public highway, the Sustainable drainage systems and watercourses access shall be laid out and constructed in accordance with the plans to be submitted and approved in writing with Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and to ensure satisfactory development, in accordance with policy LP17 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036.

10. Condition.

No construction works shall commence on site until a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The CTMP should include:

- i. Movements and control of muck away lorries
- ii. Contractor parking,
- iii. Movements and control of all deliveries
- iv. The provision of temporary facilities clear of the public highway for the storage of materials and the parking, turning, loading and unloading of all vehicles visiting the site during the period of construction.
- v. A timetable for the removal of all temporary construction facilities, following completion of the construction works.
- vi. Control of dust, mud and debris,.
- vii. A route for all traffic associated with the construction

The development shall thereafter be undertaken in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: This is a pre-commencement condition required to ensure the safe functioning of the highway and ensure that vehicles using the site are not required to park, turn or manoeuvre in the highway in the interests of highway safety, in accordance with policy LP17 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036.

11. Condition.

Prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved, an Archaeological Management Plan (AMP) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local

Planning Authority. The AMP shall include details of precautionary measures to ensure the protection of archaeological assets identified for preservation in situ, throughout the operation of the site, including construction, repairs and decommissioning, and including details of monitoring and enforcement measures. The development shall be undertaken in accordance with the approved details.

Reason:.. This is a pre-commencement condition to ensure that, before any development commences, an appropriate archaeological investigation of the site has been submitted and thereafter implemented in accordance with that investigation, in accordance with Policy LP30 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 and the provisions of Policy HE 5 the National Planning Policy Framework.

12. Condition.

No development of the cable route hereby approved shall commence until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work within the development area in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation that has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The pre-commencement aspects of archaeological work should include:

1a) Submission of a Written Scheme of Investigation that sets out the methods and timetable for the investigation of archaeological remains in the development area, in accordance with the requirements of the Local Authority archaeological brief.

1b) Completion of mitigation fieldwork in accordance with the approved Written Scheme of Investigation.

2. The post-fieldwork sections of the archaeology programme shall be fully implemented in accordance with the timetable and provisions of the approved Written Scheme of Investigation. This stage of the programme can occur after the commencement of development:

2a) Completion of a Post-Excavation Assessment report and an Updated Project Design for the analytical work to be submitted for approval within twelve months of the completion of fieldwork, unless otherwise agreed in advance with the Local Planning Authority;

2b) Completion of the approved programme of analysis and production of an archive report; submission of a publication synopsis and preparation of a publication report to be completed within 18 months of the approval of the Updated Project Design, unless otherwise agreed in advance with the Local Planning Authority;

2c) The programme and timetable for the deposition of the physical archive in the Cambridgeshire Archaeological Archive Facility or another appropriate store approved by the Local Planning Authority and deposition of the digital archive with the Archaeology Data Service or another CoreTrustSeal certified repository within 1 year of completion of part 2b).

Reason: This is a pre-commencement condition to ensure that, before any development commences, an appropriate archaeological investigation of the site has been submitted and thereafter implemented in accordance with that investigation, in accordance with Policy LP30 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 and the provisions of Policy HE 5 the National Planning Policy Framework.

13. Condition.

Notwithstanding the plans hereby approved, no development, other than site clearance works, shall commence until full details of a soft landscaping scheme have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. These details shall include:

- a) Soft landscape works, to include planting plans (which show the relationship to all underground services and the drainage layout and the location of public rights of way), written specifications (including cultivation and other operations associated with plant, tree, hedgerow and grass establishment), schedules of plants noting species, plant sizes, proposed numbers and densities, tree pit details (where appropriate) including, but not limited to, locations, soil volume in cubic metres, cross sections and dimensions;
- b) Full details of landscape maintenance regimes, including full details of the proposed watering regime for tree and other planting;
- c) An implementation programme for the landscape works;

These works shall be carried out in full in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure the development is satisfactorily assimilated into the area and enhances biodiversity is in accordance with Policies LP11, LP12 and LP31 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036.

14. Condition.

All landscape works shall be carried out and maintained in accordance with the approved details. Notwithstanding the maintenance details secured for approval by condition 13, all planting and seeding comprised in the approved details of landscape works shall be carried out in its entirety in the first planting and seeding seasons following the practical completion of the development. Any trees or planting, which within this period die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species.

Reason: To ensure the development is satisfactorily assimilated into the area and enhances biodiversity is in accordance with Policies LP11, LP12 and LP31 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036.

15. Condition.

In tandem with the details to be submitted under condition 13, notwithstanding the plans hereby approved, a public rights of way scheme, with detailed scale plans of the proposed planting in relation to all public rights of way shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

For the avoidance of doubt, this should illustrate a minimum usable width of 2m for footpaths and 4m for bridleways. No planting shall be implemented within 2m of the public rights of way and no fencing shall be erected within 0.5m of the public rights of way.

The development shall subsequently be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of the amenity and safety of the public in accordance with policy LP16 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036

16. Condition.

Prior to the commencement of the development hereby permitted details of the protective fencing between the public right of way and the access track and warning signage along the route of the construction access track shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The fencing and signage shall be erected in accordance with the approved details prior to commencement of the development and shall remain in place for the duration of the construction period.

Reason: This is a pre-commencement condition in the interests of securing the amenity and safety of the public during the construction period, in accordance with policy LP16 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036

17. Condition.

No development, clearance or preparatory operations (including excavations and archaeology), hereafter referred to as "the works", shall commence on site in connection with the development hereby approved, until a Tree Protection Plan and a programme of monitoring (tree protection) has been submitted to, and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

The approved Tree Protection Plan shall be implemented before any equipment, machinery, or materials are brought on to the site in connection with the works, be retained intact for the duration of the construction works and only be removed or altered with the prior written approval of the Local Planning Authority.

Monitoring shall be undertaken in accordance with the agreed programme for the duration of construction and associated works unless the Local Planning Authority gives written approval to any variation.

Any trees, shrubs or hedges covered by the agreed protection measures, which die or become severely damaged either from natural causes or as a result of the

construction works; during the construction works or within five years from the completion of the construction works, shall be replaced with trees, shrubs or hedge plants of similar size and species, unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. Replacement planting to be undertaken by the end of the next available planting season.

Reason: This is a pre-commencement condition to ensure that initial site operations do not harm any trees, shrubs and hedges to be retained on and adjacent to the site (and if necessary their replacement) in the interests of visual amenity, and to enhance the character and appearance of the site in accordance with Policies LP10, LP12, LP31 and LP35 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036.

18. Condition.

No development, clearance or preparatory operations (including excavations and archaeology) shall commence on site in connection with the development hereby approved until an Arboricultural Method Statement has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall thereafter be undertaken in accordance with the approved Statement.

Reason: This is a pre-commencement condition to ensure suitable protection of the trees on and adjacent to the site for the whole duration of the construction works pursuant to this permission and in the interests of visual amenity, and to enhance the character and appearance of the site, in accordance with Policies LP10, LP12, LP31 and LP35 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036.

19. Condition.

No laying of services, creation of hard surfaces, or erection of a building or solar infrastructure shall commence until a detailed design of the surface water drainage of the site has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Those elements of the surface water drainage system not adopted by a statutory undertaker shall thereafter be maintained and managed in accordance with the approved management and maintenance plan.

The scheme shall be based upon the principles within the agreed:

Flood Risk Assessment and Surface Water Drainage Strategy prepared by Plandescil Consulting Engineers Rev:0 Dated Dec 2022.

Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy – Addendum A, Plandescil Consulting Engineers, Dated Sept 2023.

And shall also include:

- a) Full details on SUDs proposal (including location, type, size, depths, sides slopes and cross sections)

- b) Detail of overland flow routes in the event of a system exceedance, with demonstration that such over flows can be appropriately managed on site without increasing flood risk to occupants;
- c) Demonstration that the surface water draining of the site is in accordance with the DEFRA non-statutory technical standards for sustainable drainage systems;
- d) Full detail of the maintenance/adoption of the surface water drainage system.

Reason: To ensure that the proposed development can be adequately drained and to ensure that there is no increased flood risk on or off site resulting from the proposed development and to ensure that the principles of sustainable drainage can be incorporated into the development and ensure the satisfactory maintenance of drainage systems that are not publicly adopted. This is in accordance with policies LP5 and LP15 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036.

20. Condition.

No development, including preparatory works shall commence on site until details of measures indicating how additional surface water run-off from the site will be avoided during the construction works, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The applicant may be required to provide collection, balancing and or settlement systems of the flows.

The approved measures will be brought in operation before any works to create building or hard surfaces commence.

Reason: This is a pre-commencement condition to ensure surface water is managed appropriately during the construction phase of the development and to ensure that there is no increase to flood risk to adjacent land/properties or occupied properties in the development, recognising that initial works to prepare the site could bring about unacceptable impacts.

21. Condition.

No development hereby permitted (including enabling works and site clearance) shall take place until a Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP), shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

The CEMP shall include, but not be limited to, the consideration of the following aspects of construction:

- a. Construction programme.
- b. Site Management
- c. Construction hours.
- d. Delivery times for construction purposes.

- e. Soil Management Strategy including a method statement for the stripping of top soil for re-use; the raising of land levels (if required); arrangements (including height and location of stockpiles) for temporary topsoil and subsoil storage to BS3882:2015 (or its subsequent revision); and a strategy for dealing with unexpected contamination.
- f. Noise monitoring method including location, duration, frequency and reporting of results to the LPA in accordance with the provisions of BS 5228-1:2009+A1:2014 Code of Practice for noise and vibration control on construction and open sites (or its subsequent revision).
- g. Maximum noise mitigation levels for construction equipment, plant and vehicles.
- h. Vibration monitoring method including location, duration, frequency and reporting of results to the LPA in accordance with the provisions of BS 5228-2:2009+A1:2014 (or its subsequent revision).
- i. Setting maximum vibration levels at sensitive receptors.
- j. Dust management and wheel washing measures to prevent the deposition of debris on the highway.
- k. Construction site lighting.
- l. Drainage control measures including the use of settling tanks, oil interceptors and bunds.
- m. Screening and hoarding details.
- n. Access and protection arrangements around the site for pedestrians, cyclists and other road users.
- o. Procedures for interference with public highways, (including public rights of way), permanent and temporary realignment, diversions and road closures.
- p. External safety and information signing and notices including who to contact in the event of a complaint.
- q. Liaison, consultation and publicity arrangements including dedicated points of contact.
- r. Consideration of sensitive receptors.
- s. Prior notice and agreement procedures for works outside agreed limits.
- t. Location of Contractors compound and method of moving materials, plant and equipment

The construction works shall be undertaken in accordance with the approved CEMP.

Reason: This is a pre-commencement condition to ensure that before any development commences, the amenity of nearby properties is protected in accordance with Policies LP14, LP17, LP36 and LP37 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036.

22 Condition.

Prior to the commencement of the development, a Skylark Mitigation Strategy, in accordance with mitigation as contained in the Ecological Report by Baker Consultants shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This shall include the provision of sufficient Skylark nest plots to deliver compensation for the loss of territories within the Site. The content of the Skylark Mitigation Strategy shall include but not be limited to the following:

- a) locations of the fields within which Skylark plots are proposed (and the required number of plots per field), by appropriate maps and/or plans;
- b) Details of how the skylark mitigation areas will be managed;
- c) Arrangements to secure the delivery of proposed measures, including a timetable of delivery; and a management and monitoring plan for a period of not less than 5 years from the date of first export of electricity to the grid.
- d) persons responsible for implementing the mitigation measure.

The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved strategy and timetable, and the mitigation measures shall be retained for the lifetime of the development. A written record demonstrating compliance with the approved monitoring plan shall be made available within one week of a written request by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: This is a pre commencement condition to provide alternative foraging and nesting opportunities for skylarks displaced from the application site in accordance with Policy LP30 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 and the advice within the National Planning Policy Framework 2026 at Policy N2.



Subject:

Buckden PC Planning Recommendations to: Planning Permission Consultation - Land North Of Vicarage Lane Diddington (ref 23/00258/FUL)

Date:

28 September 2023 12:12:33

Dear Planners,

Installation of a solar photovoltaic (PV) park generating up to 35 MW of electricity comprising of ground-mounted photovoltaic solar arrays, together with inverters/transformer stations, Distribution Network Operator (DNO) Substation, customer substation/switchgear and meter kiosk, internal buried cabling and private wire cable to Anglian Water facility, internal access tracks, security fencing and gates and CCTV cameras, upgraded existing site access, other ancillary infrastructure, landscaping and biodiversity enhancements – Site Address: Land North of Vicarage Lane Diddington Reference: 23/00258/FUL

Buckden Parish Council Recommend **Refusal** to the above consultation. We refer to our [Solar Panels Policy which states:](#)

1. Overall, the district strategy for renewable energy should result in a mix of wind, hydro and solar. BPC recommendations should reflect this.
2. Any installation must have a minimal impact on the environment and not be overly visually intrusive.
3. Any installation should not be adjacent to or immediately visible to residential properties unless it is on existing roofs.
4. Solar panels should be constructed on existing buildings and brownfield sites.
5. Solar panels should not be installed on greenfield sites and the Parish Council will strongly oppose any application for them on agricultural land of Grade 3 or better.
6. The Parish Council will seek support from Principal Councils and its local MP to make the installation of solar panels on roofs of new properties to be a planning condition.
7. solar panels must be sustainably sourced.
8. The impact on water run-off and drainage needs to be considered.
9. The problems of glint and glare from solar panels needs to be covered.

Buckden Parish Council fully support the principle of green energy from all forms generation mediums, but we believe that there should be no more solar farms on greenfield sites until all residential and commercial roof spaces and brownfield sites have been fully utilized.

If HDC is minded to approve the development the following Conditions are suggested:

- **CONDITION:** That no construction traffic enters or travels through any part of Buckden east of the A1

REASON: to avoid damage to buildings in the Conservation Area and to reduce issues with large vehicles in the narrow roads and accessing the Buckden roundabout from the village High Street

- **CONDITION:** That hours of operation during the construction phase are limited to 9am to 7pm M-F excluding Bank holidays, 9am to 1pm on Saturdays and nothing on Sundays.

REASON - to limit impact on traffic to the recreational facilities at Grafham Water

- **CONDITION:** That all panels installed on this site have non-reflective surfaces

REASON: to mitigate risk to vehicles, drivers and other road users particularly those travelling north-bound on the A1 and to reduce impact on adjacent properties

- **CONDITION:** That trees identified in the applicant's Glint & Glare Report as the current sole mitigation to protect users of the A1 and identified houses in Southoe & Midloe are made subject by HDC to a Tree Protection Order

REASON: to prevent work on these trees without HDC prior approval and so protect users of the A1 and home owners in Southoe & Midloe from glint & glare.

Many thanks

[REDACTED]

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<https://buckdenpc.org.uk/>

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<https://www.facebook.com/Buckden-Parish-Council-101476219095385>

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] *Buckden Parish Council*

Buckden Village Hall

Burberry Road

Buckden

St Neots

Cambridgeshire

PE19 5UY

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Website: <https://buckdenpc.org.uk/>

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From: Dmadmin@huntingdonshire.gov.uk <Dmadmin@huntingdonshire.gov.uk>

Sent: Tuesday, August 8, 2023 7:40 AM

[REDACTED]

Subject: RE: Planning Permission Consultation - Land North Of Vicarage Lane Diddington (ref 23/00258/FUL)

Dear Parish Clerk,

Dear Planners,

Land North Of Vicarage Lane Diddington (ref 23/00258/FUL)

Buckden Parish Council (BPC) has previously recommended **Refusal**.

BPC is concerned that objections raised by statutory consultees have not been fully addressed and wishes to add these comments to its previous objections, as listed below, as it does not see any material change in the proposals. It therefore continues to recommend **Refusal**.

We refer to our Solar Panels Policy which states:

1. Overall, the district strategy for renewable energy should result in a mix of wind, hydro and solar. BPC recommendations should reflect this.
2. Any installation must have a minimal impact on the environment and not be overly visually intrusive.
3. Any installation should not be adjacent to or immediately visible to residential properties unless it is on existing roofs.
4. Solar panels should be constructed on existing buildings and brownfield sites.
5. Solar panels should not be installed on greenfield sites and the Parish Council will strongly oppose any application for them on agricultural land of Grade 3 or better.
6. The Parish Council will seek support from Principal Councils and its local MP to make the installation of solar panels on roofs of new properties to be a planning condition.
7. solar panels must be sustainably sourced.
8. The impact on water run-off and drainage needs to be considered.
9. The problems of glint and glare from solar panels needs to be covered.

Buckden Parish Council fully support the principle of green energy from all forms generation mediums, but we believe that there should be no more solar farms on greenfield sites until all residential and commercial roof spaces and brownfield sites have been fully utilized.

If HDC is minded to approve the development the following Conditions are suggested:

- **CONDITION:** That no construction traffic enters or travels through any part of Buckden east of the A1
REASON: to avoid damage to buildings in the Conservation Area and to reduce issues with large vehicles in the narrow roads and accessing the Buckden roundabout from the village High Street
- **CONDITION:** That hours of operation during the construction phase are limited to 9am to 7pm M-F excluding Bank holidays, 9am to 1pm on Saturdays and nothing on Sundays.
REASON - to limit impact on traffic to the recreational facilities at Grafham Water
- **CONDITION:** That all panels installed on this site have non-reflective surfaces
REASON: to mitigate risk to vehicles, drivers and other road users particularly those travelling north-bound on the A1 and to reduce impact on adjacent properties
- **CONDITION:** That trees identified in the applicant's Glint & Glare Report as the current sole mitigation to protect users of the A1 and identified houses in Southoe & Midloe are made subject by HDC to a Tree Protection Order
REASON: to prevent work on these trees without HDC prior approval and so protect users of the A1 and home owners in Southoe & Midloe from glint & glare.

Many thanks

Dear Planners,

Land North Of Vicarage Lane Diddington (ref 23/00258/FUL)

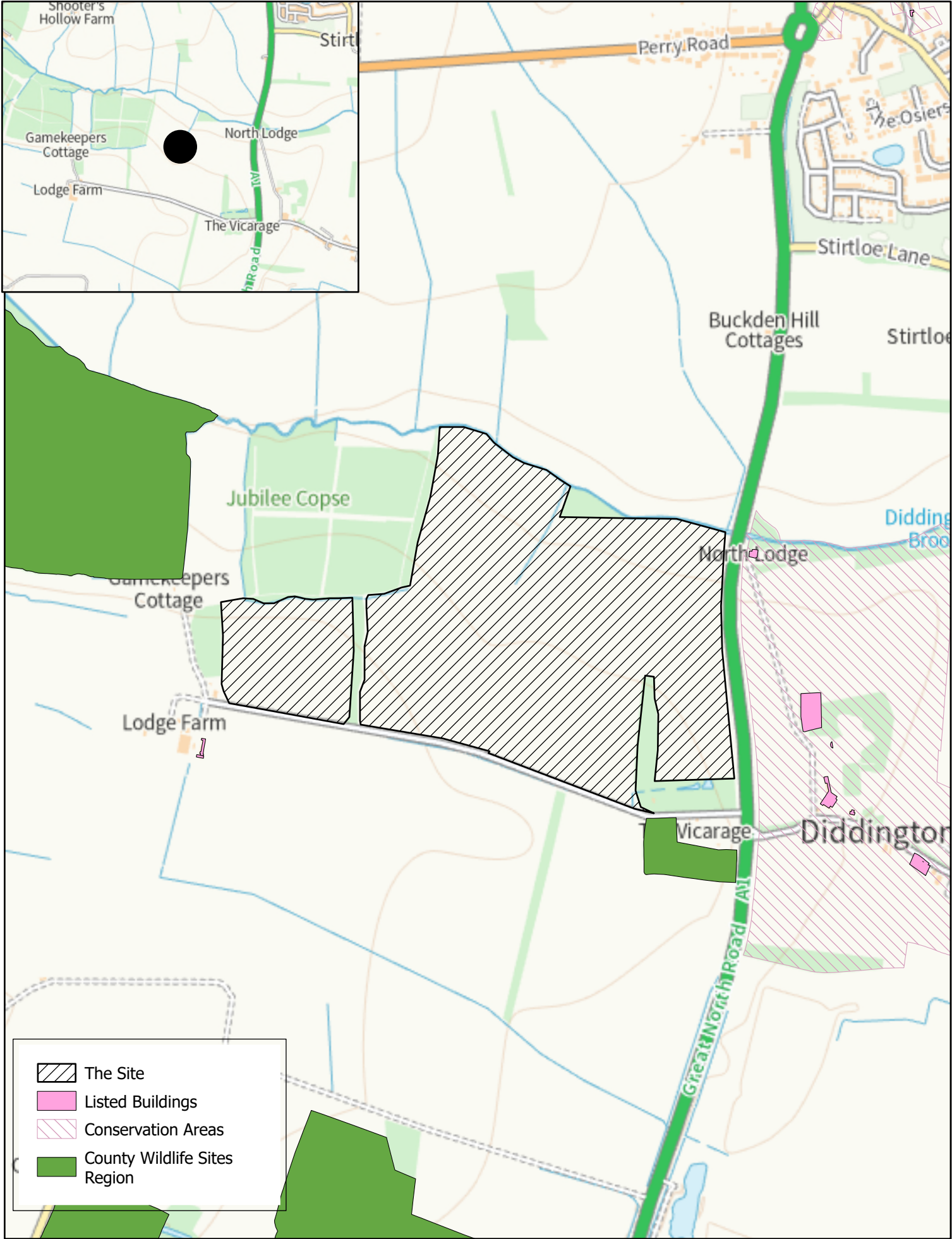
Southoe and Midloe Parish Council recommend **Refusal** on the basis existing buildings and brownfield sites should be utilised fully first. Solar panels should not be even considered on greenfield sites. The Parish Council strongly oppose any application for them on food producing land.

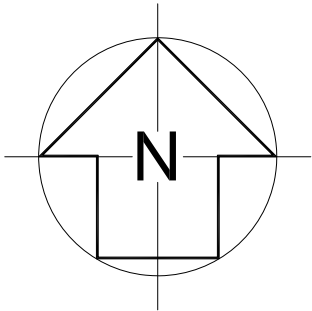
Southoe and Midloe Parish Councillors recognise the need and principle of green energy from all forms generation mediums. But we genuinely believe that there should be no more solar farms considered on any agricultural land until other sites have been fully utilised.

Many thanks

Ramune

Clerk to Southoe & Midloe Parish Council: -
Ms Ramune Mimiene
8 Bernard Road
Brampton
Huntingdon
PE28 4RW
07596 163703





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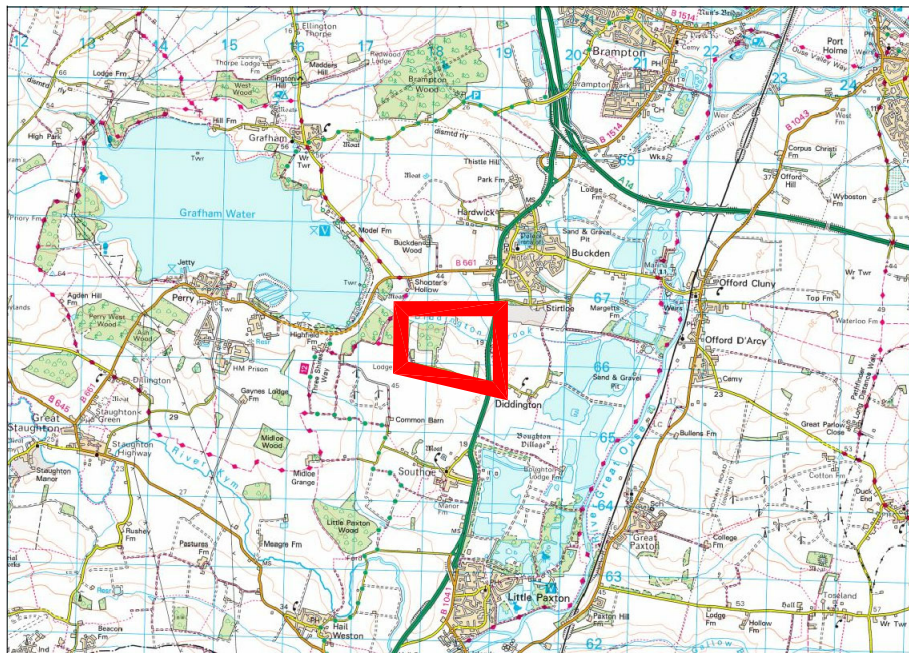
RESPONSIBILITY IS NOT ACCEPTED FOR OTHERS SCALING DIRECTLY FROM THIS DRAWING. DO NOT SCALE FROM THIS DRAWING. USE WRITTEN DIMENSIONS ONLY.

SCALE 1/5000
0m 50m 100m 150m 200m 250m

ORIGINAL
SHEET SIZE

A1

Key Plan:



Drawing Key:

- Application Site
- Other Land Available to the Applicant
- Maximum Extent of Construction Compound
- Likely Route for Construction Vehicles
- Cable Route - Proposed
- Visibility Splays (25m in both directions, set back 2.4m from edge of highway)
- Footpath (public right of way)
- Bridleway (public right of way)

Notes:

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17	Public rights of way added Ref. consultee comments	03.10.23
16	Drawing amended as per attachment Ref. email dated 23.08.23 from Lucy Hardy	23.08.23
15	Drawing amended as per attachment Ref. email dated 01.08.23 from Lucy Hardy	01.08.23
14	Drawing amended as per attachment Ref. email dated 31.07.23 from Lucy Hardy	31.07.23
13	Construction route along vicarage road extended as per attachment email dated 13.07.23	14.07.23
12	Drawing amended Ref. email from Tom Pike of Lanpro 14.04.23 & Matt Rudling 24.04.23	30.04.23
Rev.		Date

Drawing Revisions

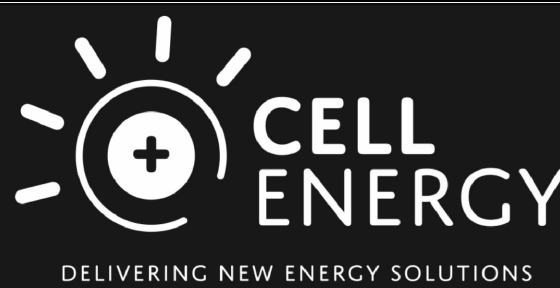
Client:

Project:

Lodge Farm Solar
Vicarage Lane, Diddington,
Huntingdonshire, PE19 5GH

Drawing:

Site Location Plan



Walpole Suite, Ketteringham Hall
Church Road, Ketteringham, Wymondham, Norfolk, NR18 9RS
t. +44 (0)1603 336101 enquiries@cell-energy.co.uk
www.cell-energy.co.uk

Drawn By:

NK

Checked By:

MR

Scales:

1:5,000 @ A1

Date:

July 2022

Ref. No.:

C_D01_21

Drg. No.:

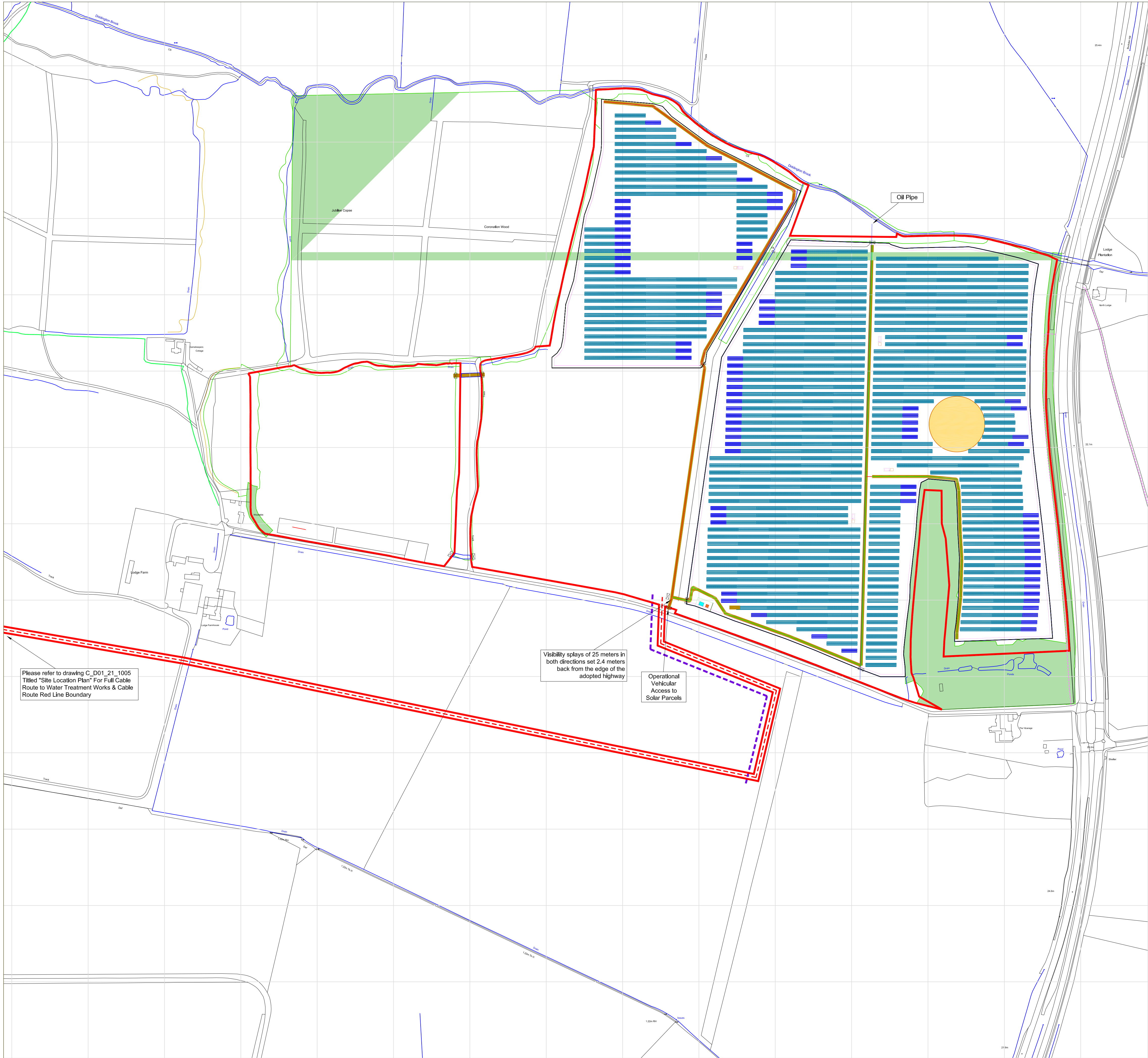
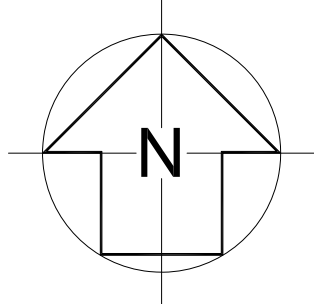
1005-B

Rev.:

17P

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SCALE 1:2500
0m 25m 50m 75m 100m 125m

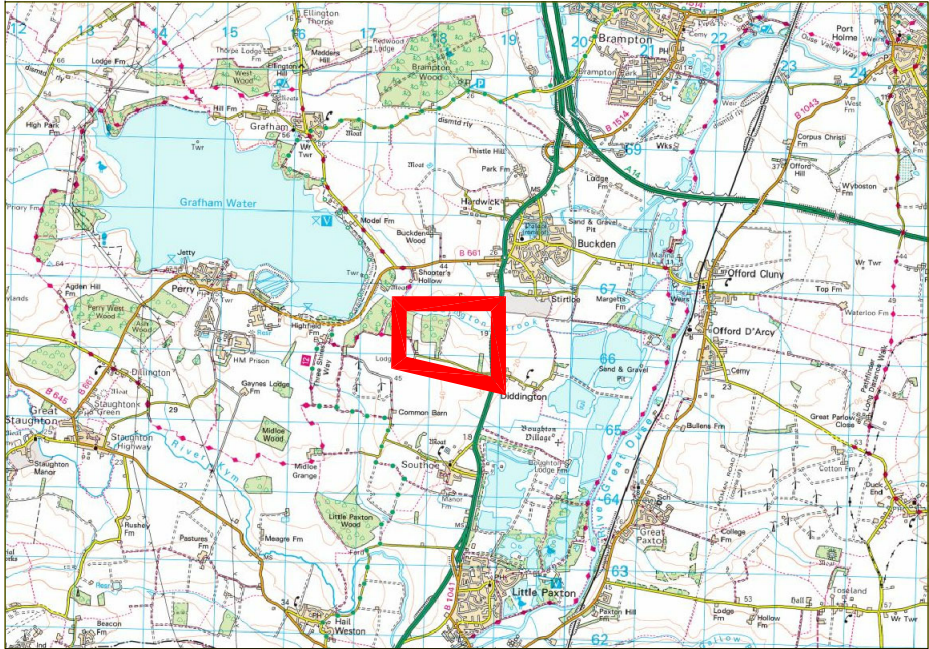
Based on Ordnance Surey data.
Subject to detailed design using topographical surveys.

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SCALE 1:2500
0m 25m 50m 75m 100m 125m

ORIGINAL
SHEET SIZE
A1

Key Plan:



- Drawing Key:
- Customer Switchgear
 - DNO Substation
 - Site Red Line Boundary
 - Access Gate
 - PV Fence
 - Route From Solar Farm to Water Treatment Works
 - UKPN 33kVA Cable Route to Grid Connection
 - Footpath (public right of way)
 - PV Panels
 - Inverter Station
 - Other Land Under Applicant's Control
 - Landscaping Parameters & Fence
 - PV Site Internal Access Track
 - Exclusion Zone Around Badger Set
 - Environmental constraints area
 - Bridleway (public right of way)

Notes:

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The materials and products specified in the construction notes or on drawing form an integral part of the design and performance of the buildings. These MUST NOT be substituted with other materials or products without reference to the Architects

CDM REGULATIONS 2015

Client Note: Health & Safety is your responsibility!

Construction works to be carried out in accordance with the Construction Design Management Regulations 2015 (CDM 2015).

The Main Contractor is to prepare a Construction Phase Plan before commencing work on site. The Contractor is to collate a Health & Safety Plan during the work, ensuring it is kept up to date until the works are complete. Alternatively the Health & Safety Plan may be carried out by the Principal Designer.

Please contact CELL ENERGY to assist.

The Main Contractor is to carry out the construction work in reference to a Design Risk Assessment.

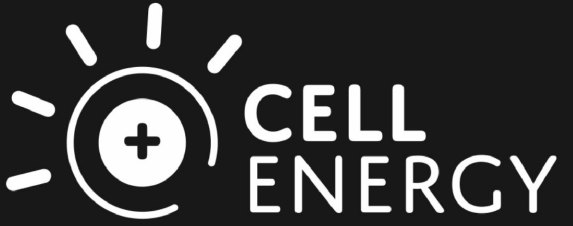
Rev.	Description	Date
11	Drawing updated showing amended panel layout as a result of archaeology & landscape planning mitigation	15.09.23
10	Text box removed Ref. Exolum as agreement reached and access track moved to run down side of pipeline	16.11.23
9	Fence removed that was added to isolated oil pipe. New access gates added at each end of oil pipe route	29.10.23
8	Public rights of way added Ref. consultee comments	03.10.23

Drawing Revisions

Client:

Project: Lodge Farm Solar
Vicarage Lane, Diddington,
Huntingdonshire, PE19 5GH

Drawing: Proposed Site Layout
Red Line Site Location Plan 1:2500

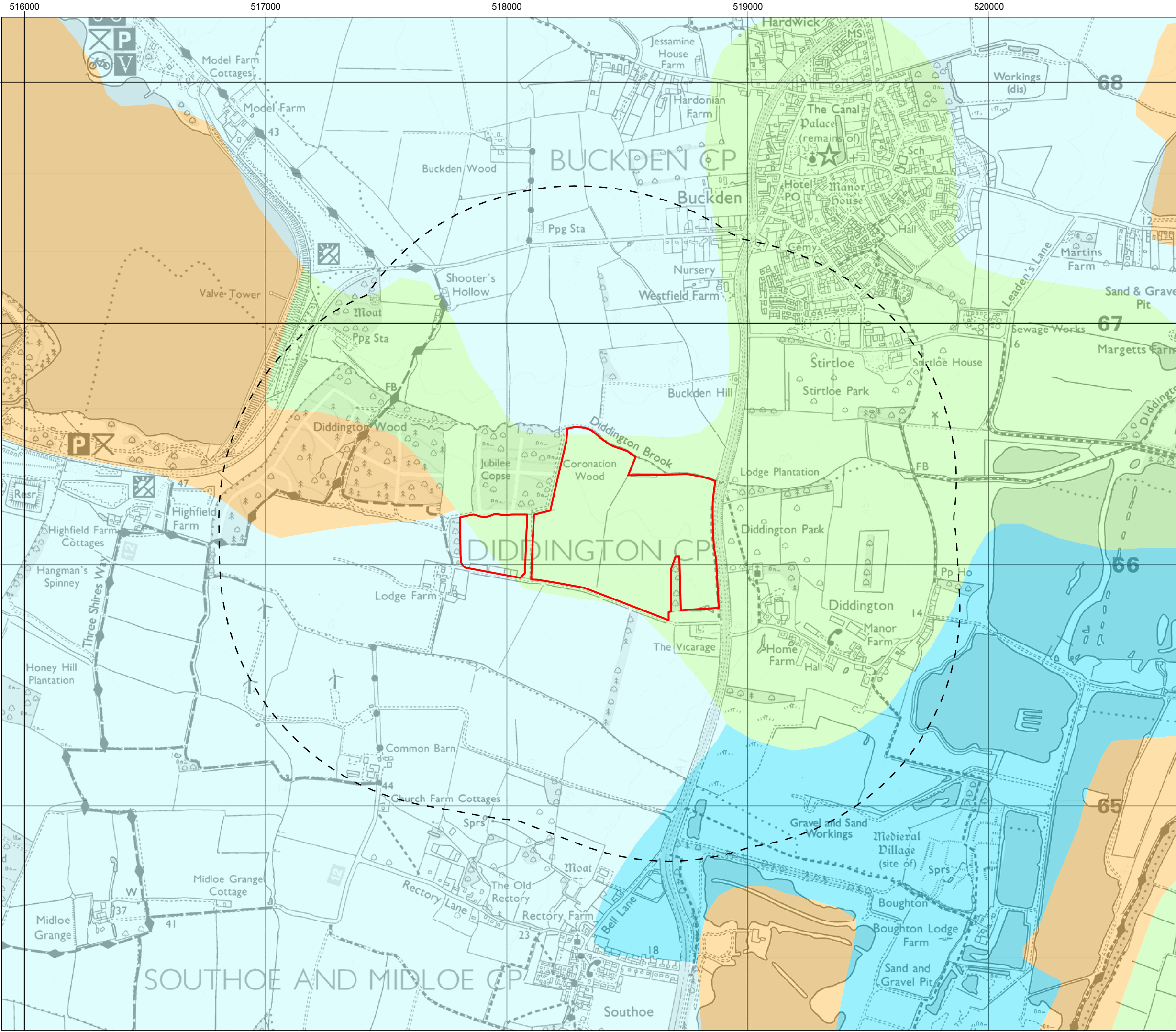


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t. +44 (0)1603 336101 enquiries@cell-energy.co.uk
www.cell-energy.co.uk

Drawn By: NK	Checked By: MR
Scales: 1:2500 @ A1	Date: November 2021

Ref. No.: C_D01_21	Drg. No.: 1002	Rev.: 11P
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Diddington Solar Farm

Title:
Figure 4 Agriculture Land Class (ALC)

Document:
Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA)

- Legend:
- Site Boundary
 - 1km Study Area
 - Provisional Agricultural Land Class (ALC)
 - Grade 1
 - Grade 2
 - Grade 3
 - Grade 4
 - Non Agricultural
 - Urban

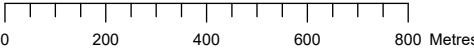
Data: Environment Agency, 2022; Cell Energy, 2022.
Base map: © Crown copyright and database rights 2023, Ordnance Survey 0100031673; Esri UK, Esri, HERE, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS



Drawing no.: P2977_LPR_ZZ_ON_DR_Z_0037

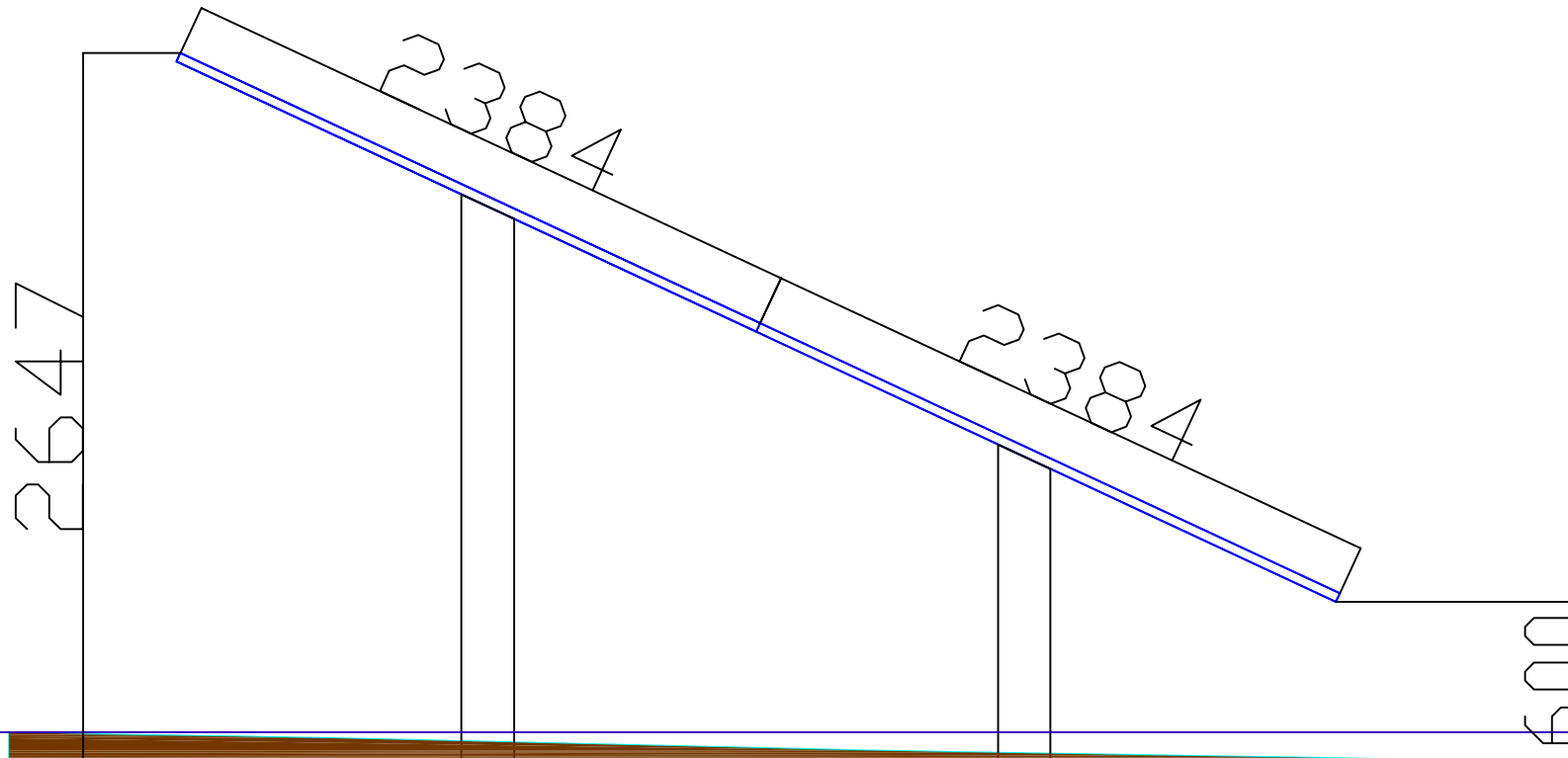
Coordinate system: British National Grid

Scale: 1:15,000 @ A3



01	19/01/2023	First issue	AZ	RT	MT
REV	DATE	STATUS	DRW	CHK	APR





Notes

Rev Description of Revision

Date

Revision History

FES Ltd.
Forth House
Forth Road
Stirling, FK8 1SW
Tel: 01786 819 600
Fax: 01786 811 456



Discipline

Electrical Services
Mechanical Services
High Voltage Services
Communications Services

☒
☐
☐
☐

Drawn

BF

Checked

RH

Scale

NTS

Date

FEB 23

Project

Diddington
Solar PV Farm
Diddington

Drawing Title

SOLAR PHOTOVOLTAIC
ELEVATION LAYOUT
SOLAR PV & FRAMING

Drawing Number

REN669-CE-D-PD-EL-PV

Revision

0

Issue Status

PLANNING INFORMATION

Sheet

A1