

**Received by Ashfield District Council**

**08.10.2025**



## Outline Planning Design and Access Statement

Applicant: Hamilton Solar Ltd

Date: October 2024

## Introduction

On behalf of Hamilton Solar Limited (“the applicant”), a full planning application which has been submitted to the Local Planning Authority (LPA) for a ground-mounted solar photovoltaic (PV) farm with continued agricultural use, ancillary infrastructure and security fencing, landscaping provision and ecological enhancements on parcels of land off Hamilton and Cauldwell Road, between Sutton-in-Ashfield and Mansfield, NG17 5LB.

Hamilton Solar Farm will be developed by RE Projects Development Limited (REPD), an experienced developer of renewable and low-carbon energy projects in the UK.

The purpose of the outline Planning Design and Access Statement is to inform the LPA regarding the early submission of the application and provide details of what has been submitted alongside the application at this stage. It lists out a strategy on the full technical surveys and drawings which will be submitted in due course, once a public consultation has been undertaken with the local community.

The initial application consists of the following documents:

- 2115\_01 - Location Plan
- 2115\_02 - General Layout
- 2115\_03 - Panel Elevations
- 2115\_04 - Inverter mounting details
- 2115\_05 - Transformer details
- 2115\_06 - DNO and Customer Substation
- 2115\_07 - Store Room
- 2115\_08 - Gate and Fencing details
- 2115\_09 - Access details
- 2115\_10 - CCTV detail

This early planning application has been submitted in response to the National Energy System Operator’s (NESO) new connection reform of the electricity connection process. Under this reform, projects are assessed for alignment with the Government’s Clean Power 2030 Plan<sup>1</sup>, which aims to restore Great Britain’s access to homegrown resources for electricity generation and support the broader goal of achieving net zero by 2050.

This application was submitted in line with the Government’s requirement for more renewable energy generation projects with the imminent energisation date to fulfil the renewable quota before 2030 net zero scenario outlined by the Clean Power 2030 Plan, during the application’s determination process, the applicant will undertake the necessary consultations and technical works and will submit a comprehensive submission pack in support of the application. These will include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
- Heritage Impact Assessment (including any Archaeological Surveys)
- Agricultural Land Classification Survey
- Preliminary Ecological Assessment
  - Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment and Report

---

<sup>1</sup> Clean Power 2030 - <https://www.neso.energy/publications/clean-power-2030>

- Further protected species survey (if recommended)
- Flood Risk Assessment
- Site Selection Report
- Transport and Access Statement
- Topographical Survey
- Arboricultural Impact Assessment
- Planning Design and Access Statement
- Landscape Ecology Mitigations and Enhancements (LEME) Plan

## Description of the Site and the Proposed Development

### *2.1 Site Context*

The site is located to the east of Sutton-in-Ashfield and south-west of Mansfield. Hamilton Road forms the site's northern-western boundary and would provide the site access.

The proposed development site consists of a medium sized agricultural fields with an approximate site area of 5.35 hectares (ha). Area A is divided into two smaller fields and split by an existing hedgerow. The location of the proposed development areas can be seen on the submitted location plan (2115\_01).

Sherwood Way South (A617) runs to the north of the site, Hamilton Road to the north-west, Caudwell Road to the south and Coxmoor (B6139) to the south-west of the proposed development. To the north-east of the development lie Hamilton Hill, which includes a Scheduled Monument at its summit.

The site is located on the foot of Hamilton Hill to the south is located approximately 380m from the scheduled monument at its closest point to the south-west. Hamilton Farm is located to the east of the site forms part of a cluster of residential properties.

The surrounding area consists of primarily industrial developments. Directly to the west and north-west is the Maun Valley, Industrial Park. To the north / north-east is the recently consented Summit Park office and distribution development. The closest residential properties are located on Cauldwell Road.

The site has a sloping topography that ranges between 154m AOD to 141m AOD. The boundaries comprise of mature hedgerows and some trees which will be retained to help screen the development. There are no Public Rights of Way (PROW) around or cross within the site.

The entirety of the site is within Flood Zone 1 and at low risk of flooding from all sources assessed.



Figure 1: Site Location (source: Google Maps)

## 2.2 The proposed development

The proposal is for the construction of a solar farm with an export capacity of 7MW for a temporary period of 40 years from the date of the first commercial export of electricity on parcels off Hamilton and Cauldwell Road, between Sutton-in-Ashfield and Mansfield, NG17 5LB.

It is expected to generate 6.36GWh of clean renewable electricity per annum, which will be supplied to nearby homes, industrial units and businesses via a connection to the local electricity grid. This will be enough to power in excess of around 2,300 homes (based on average UK household electricity consumption).

It includes the erection of inverter and transformer stations and a substation for the grid connection. The proposals also include considerable new soft landscaping works, including new hedgerow planting, landscaping works include and the creation of biodiversity net gain areas.

The description for the application is as follows:

*“Ground-mounted solar photovoltaic (PV) farm with continued agricultural use, associated access, all necessary infrastructure, equipment and works, including security fencing, landscaping provision and ecological enhancements”*

The development comprises the temporary erection of multiple rows of PV arrays, for a duration of up to 40 years, after which time it will be decommissioned, the equipment will be removed and the land

reinstated to its original condition.

The PV arrays will be ground-mounted and are not expected to exceed 3m in height at their highest point. The arrays are spaced to avoid any shadowing effect from one row to another with topography dictating exact row spacing and will seek to avoid the higher and/or more visible areas.

Site access is expected to be taken from the Hamilton Road via an existing field access.

The proposal will require the installation of several inverters (or micro-inverters), transformer cabins and the erection of a new post and wire deer fence.

The solar farm will comprise of the following:

The solar array:

- Panels will be arranged in east-west rows approximately and tilted southwards at approximately 20-30 degrees from the horizontal.
- They will be mounted on metal frames and set into the ground by direct or screw piling.
- The panels are designed to absorb as much light energy as possible and so there is minimal glint or glare.
- The maximum height of the panels will be determined by the assessment work described below but are expected to be up to 3m to the top of the panel frame on level ground.

Inverter cabins to convert direct current (DC) electricity, into usable alternating current (AC) power. Transformer cabins will transform the power up to a suitable voltage for the electricity grid.

An on-site substation will connect the solar farm to the local energy distribution network. The site will be connected to the 11kV Sutton Junction Primary substation located in the northern western corner of the Area A. The Grid connection proposal from the Distribution Network Operator (DNO) has been accepted prior to the submission of this application.

A security fence of around 2m high is required around the perimeter of the solar farm. This will be post and wire deer fencing, which is appropriate to the semi-agricultural setting.

Lighting will only be required for emergency maintenance and is not expected to be permanent. Security cameras – infrared security cameras are likely to be mounted on the boundary fence or on freestanding poles within the site.

The total construction period is typically in the order of 16-24 weeks including any pre-preparation of the site, fencing, assembly and erection of the PV arrays, installation of the inverters/transformers and grid connection. The total construction timescales and HGV movements will be confirmed once a Transport Statement has been finalised for the scheme.

Future management of the site is expected to involve:

- Small ad-hoc repairs as necessary.
- Annual testing of electrical connections.
- Testing of protection equipment every four years.
- Annual maintenance of inverters, transformers and substation.

- Grass-cutting and vegetation maintenance 2-4 times a year.
- Cleaning of cabins and interiors twice a year and module surfaces once a year.
- The entire development can be completely removed when the site ceases operation.

### 2.3 Planning History

An Environmental impact assessment screening opinion (SCR/2020/0003) for a solar farm was submitted which concluded that the solar farm is not an EIA Development.

A planning application (LPA ref: V/2022/0562) for a “*Development of a solar farm with ancillary infrastructure, security fence, access and landscaping*” was submitted to Ashfield District Council in July 2022. The application was refused by the Council in December 2022, citing landscape and visual and heritage as the main reasons for refusal.

A subsequent appeal was lodged to challenge the Council’s refusal in June 2023, however, the appeal was dismissed by the Planning Inspectorate in November 2024.

## Planning Policy Context

This section summaries the planning policies and guidance relevant to the development proposed.

Section 38(6) of the Town and Country Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 places a statutory duty on local planning authorities to determine planning applications in accordance with the development plan unless materials planning considerations indicate otherwise.

### 3.1 Local Plan Policy Context

The site is located within an area covered by the Ashfield District Councils’ Local Plan Review (Adopted 2002). It is noted that an emerging Local Plan for 2023–2040 has recently undergone Regulation 22 examination in 2024.

The following policies from the Local Plan review (2002) are considered key to the application:

- **Policy ST1 – Development**

Development will be permitted where it will not conflict with other policies within the local plan, will not adversely affect the character, quality, amenity or the safety of the environment, highway safety or the capacity of the transport system. The development will not prejudice the comprehensive development of an area and will not conflict with an adjoining or nearby land use.

- **Policy ST4 – The Remainder of the District**

The policy allows for development outside of the main urban areas and named settlements and permission will only be given for sites allocated for development and where development is appropriate to the green belt, or the countryside as set out in policies EV1 and EV2.

- **Policy EV2 – The Countryside**

Development in the countryside will only be given permission for appropriate development. Development must be located and designed so as not to adversely affect the character of the countryside, in particular openness.

- **Policy EV4 – Mature Landscape Area**

Development which does not adversely affect the character and quality of mature landscape areas will be permitted.

- **Policy EV11 – Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites**

Development affecting ancient monuments or other sites of archaeological interest will only be permitted where it would preserve a scheduled ancient monument or other nationally important monument and/or its setting.

Other policies relevant to the site from the Emerging Local Plan, 2023- 2024 (Reg 19), for which pre-submission consultation took place between December 2023 – January 2024 and is currently under examination. Consideration will be given to policies within the document, with reference to the extent to which the draft policies accord with the NPPF. The policies which will be referred to include:

- Strategic Objective SO11 – To meet the global challenge of climate change
- Strategic Policy S2: Achieving Sustainable Development
- Strategic Policy S3: Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change
- Strategic Policy S6: Meeting Future Needs - New Settlement: Land at Cauldwell Road, Sutton in Ashfield
- Strategic Policy S13 Protecting and Enhancing Our Green Infrastructure and the Natural Environment
- Strategic Policy S14 Conserving and Enhancing Our Historic Environment
- Policy CC1: Zero and Low Carbon Developments and Decentralised, Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Generation
- Policy EV9: The Historic Environment
- Policy EV10: Protection and Enhancement of Landscape Character
- Policy SD2: Good Design Considerations for Development

### *3.2 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, December 2024)*

The NPPF sets out the Government’s Planning policies for England and how they should be applied. The policies in the NPPF are material considerations that should be considered in the determination of all planning applications. The Framework confirms the statutory presumption in favour of the Development Plan and sets out the Government’s national planning policies for the achievement of sustainable development.

The relevant NPPF Paragraphs are as follows:

- Paragraph 8: ‘Sustainable development’
- Paragraph 11: ‘Presumption in favour of sustainable development’
- Paragraph 88: ‘Supporting a prosperous rural economy’
- Paragraph 160: ‘Determining planning applications for renewable energy’
- Paragraph 161: ‘Meeting the challenge of climate change’

- Paragraph 187: 'Conserving and enhancing the natural environment'
- Paragraph 202: 'Conserving and enhancing the historic environment'

### *3.3 Benefits of the Proposal*

The proposed development will bring significant economic and environmental benefits that address the various strands of sustainable development set out in the NPPF. These benefits are summarised below and should carry significant weight in the planning balance:

#### *Benefit 1 - Climate change and renewable energy generation*

In the 21st Century, climate change is a recognised phenomenon of international and global significance. The scientific evidence is overwhelming and has recently led to cross-party support for legislation that enshrines “*net-zero greenhouse gases emissions*” within the Climate Change Act 2008.

The NPPF is clear that “*The planning system should support the transition to net zero by 2050... contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions... and support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure*” (Paragraph 161).

The proposed project will contribute significant renewable energy, directly addressing the climate emergency declared by the Government on 1st May 2019, hence supporting the transition away from fossil fuels.

#### *Benefit 2 - Landscape and ecological enhancements*

The site currently consists of arable land. The fields are surrounded by mature hedges and trees, all of which are expected to remain. While agriculture will be able to continue throughout the operation of the solar farm, it will be less intensive, allowing the land to regenerate and for parts of the site to be managed for their ecological value.

A Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment based on Natural England’s calculator will be submitted and based on recent similar developments is expected to demonstrate very considerable gains.

The result will be an area providing continued agriculture, ecological benefits, a more interesting and varied landscape as well as energy generation.

#### *Benefit 3 – Farm Diversification*

In the case of the proposed development, the income from the solar farm will make an important contribution to the continued viability of the farm holding whilst allowing sheep to graze under the panels, therefore remaining subservient to the main agricultural use of the farms.

## Planning Appraisal

The design of the scheme has undergone substantial evolution since the introduction of the initial red line area as part of the original application which was refused in 2022. The submitted layout plan (2115\_02) illustrates the extent of the development following the commencement of technical studies.

The applicant will be submitting an EIA Screening request shortly and are currently undertaking specialist surveys for the revised scheme.

During the determination process, the applicant will undertake a public consultation with residents and community groups. It is anticipated that the layout plan may evolve further based on the feedback received from the local community.

In addition to considering comments from the local community, the layout will be reviewed in collaboration with technical consultants to address any further input received from statutory consultees. This iterative process aims to ensure that the final design accommodates feedback and achieves a scheme that avoids significant harm to the heritage asset and the natural or physical environment while being acceptable in planning terms.

Further desk-based review has been undertaken for the site and are summarised below:

### Principle of development

Part 14 of the NPPF states in paragraph 161 that planning system should support the transition to net zero by 2050. It goes on to state that it should help to shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure.

Paragraph 168 (a) states that local planning authorities should not require applicants to demonstrate the overall need for renewable or low carbon energy and gives significant weight to the benefits associated with renewable and low carbon energy generation and the proposal's contribution to a net zero future. Therefore, it is concluded that with careful design and appropriate landscape mitigations, the principle of development should be acceptable in this location.

### Landscape and Visual

The site is located within the Countryside as per Ashfield District Council's Local Plan (2002). It is located within the site of an existing farm complex and does not lie within any environmental or landscape designations. The fabric of landscape within the site is that of a relatively intact agricultural landscape, but one which is subject to the influence of the adjacent road network and settlement edge of Sutton-in-Ashfield and a large industrial estate.

There are no public footpaths that pass within the site boundary. The closest public right of way is The Timberland Trail which is located to the north and travels through Bleak Hills Business Park forming a link to King's Mill Reservoir. There is also a small section of historic bridleway to the east of the site located on Cauldwell Road which has been bisected by the A617. The visibility of the proposed development is limited or non-existent from the majority of the trail and footpaths.

The site falls within National Character Area (NCA) 49: Sherwood. The East Midlands Regional Landscape Character Assessment (EMRLCA) identifies the site within Group 10: Woods and Forests and the

Landscape Character Type 10b: Sandstone Forests and Heaths. The Greater Nottingham Landscape Character Assessment (2009) identifies the site as being located in the Sherwood character area.

A full Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment will be undertaken and submitted as part of the wider planning application pack.

### Heritage

A desk-based appraisal of the site utilizing resources such as DEFRA Magic Maps and Heritage Gateway, was undertaken.

- **Scheduled Monuments:** The nearest scheduled monument, is the Mound of Hamilton Hill, located approximately 150m at its nearest point from the site. This scheduled monument comprises the earthwork remains of a shallow depression with a possible terraced pathway leading into the depression on its south side, located on the northern edge of the summit plateau of Hamilton Hill in Sutton-in-Ashfield.
- **Listed Buildings:** There are no listed buildings located within close proximity (500m) of the site. There are Grade II Listed Buildings located to the west and north of the site. The closest listed buildings is the Unwins Mill (Grade II) located approximated 950m to the west of the site.

The topography and intervening vegetation ensure minimal or no direct intervisibility between the site and these heritage assets. A full Heritage and Archaeology Assessment will be submitted as part of the wider application.

### Use of Agricultural Land

The NPPF seeks to enable “*the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses*” (para. 88b), and for decisions to contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment, including “*the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land*” (para. 187b). Footnote 65 notes that “*Where significant development of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary, areas of poorer quality land should be preferred to those of a higher quality.*”

An Agricultural Land Classification survey will be undertaken as part of the planning application to confirm the land grade of the site. A site selection report will also be submitted as part of the wider submission pack which will demonstrate why this specific site was chosen for development.

However, it is important to reiterate that much of the land is currently arable and will remain in agricultural use for grazing throughout the operational period, while the removal of chemical inputs will help to restore natural nutrients and quality. Therefore, the proposed development provides the multifunctional benefits of continued agriculture, ecological enhancements, and continued agriculture.

### Ecology

An initial desktop assessment indicates that the site is not located near any designated ecological sites, including SSSIs, SPAs, SACs, Ramsar sites, or National Nature Reserves. The nearest designated sites are The Hermitage – Local Nature Reserve (LNR) and Oakham LNR, approximately 1km to the north of the proposed development.

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) will determine the presence of protected species or habitats on site. Additional surveys, if recommended, will inform mitigation strategies.

#### Biodiversity Net Gain

A Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment and management plan will be submitted to enhance ecological value, with no expected impacts on hedgerows or trees during construction or operation.

The results of the PEA will help identify the existing habitats and hedgerows. This information will be used to calculate the percentage of existing Habitats and Hedgerows present on site. A Landscape Ecology Mitigations and Enhancements (LEME) Plan will be designed which will demonstrate where the proposed enhancements such as new hedgerows, wildflower meadows and creation of Biodiversity Areas will be located on the site.

#### Flood Risk

The site lies within Flood Zone 1, the lowest flood risk category and there is low surface water flood risk present across the development parcels. A Flood Risk Assessment will be included in the application, as the site exceeds 1 hectare in size.

#### Trees

The site is bordered by mature hedgerows and trees, all of which will be retained. Appropriate setbacks and construction methods, such as shallow pile systems and buried cabling, will ensure no damage to any root protection areas. A full Arboricultural Impact Assessment and tree constraints plan will accompany the application.

#### Amenity

Solar farms are inherently low-impact developments. Potential nuisances, such as noise, dust, and vehicle movements, will be limited to the construction phase and managed through standard planning conditions. During operation, noise from inverter cooling systems will be minimal and located away from properties. The proposal involves no hazardous substances, lighting, or significant earthworks, ensuring no risk of contamination or pollution.

## Design and Access Statement

This submission is accompanied by an Outline Design and Access Statement, which sets out the process undertaken to select the site and outlines the key design principles that have informed the proposed scheme.

A full Planning Design and Access Statement will be submitted in due course, alongside all supporting survey documents.

## Site Selection

A Site Search report will be submitted as part of the application which describes in detail the process used to identify the site and assesses the proposed development against land use related policy and guidance.

It demonstrates the rigorous process the applicant has gone through to identify the site and demonstrates compliance with local and national planning policy and guidance. Having identified capacity for a new connection within the electricity grid, there follows a sequential planning approach to locate and identify sites that are available and suitable, including the potential for rooftops and where impacts can be reduced, ameliorated, or mitigated.

The 11kV Sutton Junction Primary Substation located adjacent to the site has been identified as having capacity to connect a generation project. An underground cable will then connect the site to this substation.

Criteria used to assess sites suitability include:

- Visibility from settlements.
- Landscape character.
- Potential effects on heritage assets.
- Flood risk.
- Agricultural land grade and ability to continue farming alongside energy generation.
- Access for construction vehicles.
- Potential effects on ecological designations and habitats.
- Topography.
- Existing landscape features on the site.

## Design principles, layout, scale, and appearance

Principles of good design were applied to the scheme's location, layout and scale as far as possible to ensure design excellence in accordance with the NPPF. Good design started with the choice of location within the study area, and then selection of visually contained fields within Hamilton farm and extended throughout the design process.

The following principles of good design have been applied to the layout and design of the proposed solar farm:

- Use of habitat management, and extended native species planting where necessary, to enhance the existing field boundary features and to provide a transition between the site and the adjacent areas.

- Creation of new habitats to maximise the wildlife/ biodiversity value of the site and establish the long-term management objectives for the ecological features on and around the site, to maximise wildlife and biodiversity – informed by the PEA, protected species surveys, mitigations and enhancements plan, and a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment.
- Use lower quality land where grazing can continue and be integrated with biodiversity enhancements and energy generation – an Agricultural Land Classification survey has been undertaken along with the Site selection process as described.
- Retain the existing landscape setting, and work with topography and landscape features in the area to add visual interest and new natural screening where necessary – this has been informed by the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) which will be submitted as part of the planning application.
- Contribute to a better understanding of designated and undesignated heritage and archaeological features and inclusion of appropriate mitigation measures if necessary.
- Retaining all existing hedgerows and trees wherever possible, recognising their individual, group, and wider landscape value, and safeguarding them, including their root protection areas through the implementation of buffer zones along field boundaries.
- Addition and enhancement of existing field boundaries through additional planting of native-species and positive management to a landscape management plan.
- Avoid adversely impacting the amenity of residential properties, including the impact from noise or glint and glare.
- Setting all landscape and ecological enhancement design within an actionable management plan to ensure coherence and mutually supporting elements.

## Site layout and design evolution

The site search identified Hamilton Farm as a deliverable location for solar development. Potential fields within the site were then selected, following which detailed feasibility assessments were undertaken. A site visit was carried out to understand the topography, proximity to surrounding public rights of way, grid connection point access routes to and from the site, and potential planning constraints such as residential or amenity impacts. The selected fields were considered both suitable and available, and were subsequently subject to further appraisals, including landscape and visual assessments, as well as desk-based studies on heritage and ecological constraints.

It was also essential to ensure that the project was financially viable and could be designed and delivered within a framework that supports economic, social, and environmental benefits. The selected fields offered sufficient land to meet these requirements. As a result, the development has been split into two areas, which together form the designated solar farm development area.

The layout has been carefully designed to balance technical performance and operational efficiency with the overarching design principles. These are illustrated on the Proposed Layout Plan (2115\_02), which demonstrates how any residual development impacts have been mitigated to an acceptable level. A Landscape Strategy is submitted alongside a full Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) to support the planning application.

In summary:

- Existing trees and hedgerows around the solar farm will be retained where possible, protected and managed. This provides visual screening, wildlife habitats and retains the landscape character of the farm and the surrounding area.
- Ecological appraisals and selected wildlife surveys recommended:

- Re-positioning the solar arrays within field boundaries to avoid disturbance of protected species.
  - Retaining existing hedging and trees within the development to enhance and maintain the landscape character.
  - These will be managed in accordance with the landscape and ecology mitigations, and enhancement will also provide increased breeding, foraging and commuting habitats for a range of species including bats, badgers, reptiles, otters and insects.
  - Set solar arrays away from the field boundaries which not only avoids damage to root protection areas of existing trees and hedgerows.
  - An internal access is proposed within the site to provide operational movement within the fields, and to farm access tracks.
  - Detailed discussions have been undertaken with the landowner, ecologists, and transport consultants to identify suitable access points to allow for sufficient vehicle movements whilst avoiding adverse impacts within the site and on neighbouring homes during construction.
  - Utilised existing farm track access points to and from the site.
- The landscape strategy demonstrates:
    - The fields were identified with the potential to improve biodiversity and wildlife through use of bird boxes to north facing tree trunks, and bat boxes to south facing tree trunks.
    - Field margins will be left as wildlife corridors to allow free movement of badgers and other small mammals for commuting and foraging across the site and wider area.
    - The site will be ecologically enhanced by replacing intensively farmed fields and monocultural crop for animal feed with a diverse rich grassland.
    - This will result in a greater plant diversity and will be managed with sheep grazing will allow a wider range of species to grow within the current pasture fields which in turn will provide a greater diversity of flora and reliant fauna species, across the entire site.
    - Native wildflower grassland will be sown across the site and managed.
    - Specially designed and positioned biodiversity areas will be created
    - Hibernacula and log piles will be installed around the site to encourage amphibians, reptiles and other wildlife.
    - Solar panels will be set no more than around 3m in height from ground level to allow for sheep to graze underneath and around the solar panels.
    - To protect amenity, the inverters and transformers were positioned well away from footpaths to reduce noise impacts to within the acceptable limits. A Noise Impact Assessment was undertaken which includes full details of noise impacts at nearest receptors.
    - The position of the development relative to footpaths and homes, existing vegetation, topography and woodland, together with proposed new planting, was used to minimise any risk of glint or glare.
    - The scheme design, layout, scale and appearance, the proposed solar farm will comply with local and national policy and guidance.

## Planning Benefits

The proposed development will result in the following significant benefits to the local and wider area. These should be taken into consideration during the determination of the planning application and are considered to outweigh any harm.

- This development will enable the generation of enough clean renewable energy to power the equivalent of 2,300 homes in the local area.
- The development will support the NPPF's target to support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate and will contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions whilst providing continued agricultural provision at the existing site.
- Provision of a Landscape Strategy which proposes new trees and hedgerows to supplement the considerable existing landscape features. A long-term Management Plan can be submitted as part of a suitably worded condition which will ensure the regeneration and management of the land for its ecological value.
- The Biodiversity Net Gain assessment confirms an increase in habitat and hedgerow units.
- The proposals will contribute towards social sustainability by providing low cost, clean power to the local grid which will benefit homes and businesses in the area.
- Significant and ongoing contribution to business rates.
- Employment of approximately 30 full time employees during construction, which brings value to the local area in the form of accommodation and other living expenditures for construction staff. During operation, approximately 4 remotely located full-time employees will be necessary for management and maintenance.
- Farm diversification which makes an economic contribution towards the viability of the existing farm holdings, enabling the continued use of the site for farming, enabling investment in farming activities and protecting the farm business during years of low agricultural yield.
- Economic benefits of providing infrastructure to support the growth and adaptation of businesses.

The proposed development of solar arrays and managed low-density grazing will allow a wider range of species to grow within the current pasture and arable fields which in turn will provide a greater diversity of flora and reliant fauna species, across the entire site.