



Little Crow

Solar Park

Little Crow Solar Park, Scunthorpe

ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT: TECHNICAL APPENDICES

APPENDIX 3.4

WOODLAND MANAGEMENT PLAN

Revision:
APFP Reg:
PINS Reference:

Submission
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EN010101

Author:
Date:

Barton Hyett
October 2019

Summary table		
Site Name:	Little Crow Solar Farm	
Project reference:	I.2991	
Site Address:	Little Crow Solar Farm, Broughton, Scunthorpe, Lincolnshire	
Nearest Postcode:	DN16 1XP	
Central Grid reference:	SE 938 114	
Client:	INRG Solar (Little Crow) Ltd	
Local Planning Authority:	North Lincolnshire Council	
Relevant planning policies:	Policies CS16 and CS 17 of the Development Plan (Core Strategy 2011-2026)	
Statutory Controls:	Tree Preservation Order	Conservation Area
	Yes - Tree Preservation Order (High Santon, Burnt Strip No1 and No2) 1985' relates to G2 of the Tree Survey.	None
Topographical Survey:	Yes - provided for undertaking the tree survey	
Notes:	To be read in conjunction with Arboricultural Impact Assessment [Document Ref 7.15 LCTA4.8]	
Report author:	Richard Hyett - Director	
Date of issue:	11th October 2019	

REPORT CONTENTS:

1. Instruction	1
2. Background	1
3. Woodland under management plan	1
4. Adjacent woodland - plan status unknown	3
5. Statutory Protection	4
6. Summary	4

1. Instruction

- 1.1. I have been instructed by INRG Solar (Little Crow) Ltd to provide arboricultural advice in relation to the current long-term management proposals for the woodland areas surrounding the proposed solar farm on land referred to as the Little Crow Solar Farm.
- 1.2. Through the Statutory consultation process the Planning Inspectorate requested further information in order to provide some certainty that the trees and woodland surrounding the site will remain in place throughout the lifetime of the development.
- 1.3. The scope of my instruction was to review the existing tree survey results, the potential arboricultural impacts of the proposed development along with the available long-term management prescriptions for the woodland surrounding the site.
- 1.4. The aim of my review was to be able to provide an overview of the anticipated changes in the treescape within and surroundings the site throughout the life of the proposed solar farm development.

2. Background

- 2.1. Due to the potential generating capacity of the solar farm, the development is classed as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) and will therefore be the subject of a Development Consent Order (DCO) issued by the Secretary of State.
- 2.2. This review is based on available woodland management planning information, current legislation and policy. The site is expected to have an operational life of 35 years.
- 2.3. A tree survey (in accordance with BS5837:2012) was undertaken at the site in order to identify the arboricultural constraints and opportunities present at the site. In addition, this survey informed the iterative design process of the proposed site layout and design. Further to the preparation of an emerging layout design an Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) was produced

[Document Ref 7.15 LCTA4.8]. The AIA identifies the potential arboricultural impacts, their significance as well as putting forward appropriate mitigation where necessary.

- 2.4. In summary, the AIA identified that the proposed development will require the removal of some individual trees and the partial removal of some hedgerows. In addition, some minor pruning (crown lifting) to retained trees is likely to be required. However, with the exception of G44 within the tree survey (the felling of which is discussed in Section 3) all significant tree groups and areas of woodland within the site itself will be retained. The AIA sets out the protection measures required to ensure these trees are adequately safeguarded throughout the construction of the proposed development.

3. Woodland under management plan

- 3.1. Any woodland management work of significance is controlled through the robust regulatory framework provided by the Forestry Act 1967 (and subsequent amendments). The control of such works is undertaken by the Forestry Commission who administer Felling Licences along with any grant aid for works.
- 3.2. The Brocklesby Estate is responsible for the management of the woodland within, and to the north, of the site. This woodland is currently under a management plan. All of the compartments of woodland within the plan (and relevant to the site) have works proposed within the plan period. The management plan was submitted to the Forestry Commission as part of a felling licence application. The licence has now been granted and issued.
- 3.3. The table below (Figure 1) summarises the proposed woodland management works to the compartments within, and associated to, the site. The table can be read in conjunction with the drawings included within the AIA report or the management plan maps included at APPENDIX 1 of this report.

Figure 1: Summary table of proposed management works.

Compartment No.	Tree survey reference (AIA)	Size	Prescribed works	Restocking density (Stems per Hectare)	Timing
1001	G2	2.17	Thinning (up to 30%)	n/a	Within plan period
1002 (a)	n/a	0.60	Thinning (up to 30%)	n/a	Within plan period
1002 (b)	G3	1.35	Thinning (up to 30%)	n/a	Within plan period
1003	n/a	5.86	Thinning (up to 30%)	n/a	Within plan period
1004	G7	4.58	Thinning (up to 30%)	n/a	Within plan period
1005	G6/G9	9.32	Thinning (up to 30%)	n/a	Within plan period
1006	G7/G8	10.19	Thinning (up to 30%)	n/a	Within plan period
1007	G6/G9	8.83	Clear fell (Conditional on restocking)	2250	2019/2020
1008	G9	9.54	Thinning (up to 30%)	n/a	Within plan period
1009	G9	5.44	Clear fell (Conditional on restocking)	2250	2024/2025
1010	G23	1.62	Thinning (up to 30%)	n/a	Within plan period
1011	G44	2.05	Clear fell (Conditional on restocking)	2250	2024/2025
1012	G46	1.88	Thinning (up to 30%)	n/a	Within plan period

3.4. The proposed thinning works are required to provide healthy and long lived woodlands with a varied structure. Although the thinning is widespread, the works will have no discernible long-term impact on the integrity of the compartments (particularly from a visual perspective).

3.5. The management plan requires that clear felling is undertaken in compartments 1007, 1009 and 1011. These compartment are relatively small in area (8.83ha, 5.44ha and 2.05ha, respectively) and their felling is conditional on the compartments being restocked. The felling licence that consents to the felling has a restocking condition attached that requires all three compartments to be restocked at a density of 2250 stems/ha.

3.6. The clear felling of compartment 1011 will result in some impact within the interior of the site but this operation will have no effect on the integrity of the woodland blocks that surround the site.

3.7. Compartments 1007 and 1009 are larger in size and their felling will result in some impact on the continuous woodland across the north of the site. However, the felling of 1007 will be undertaken against the back drop of compartments 1004, 1005, 1006 and 1008 which will all be retained and thinned.

3.8. The restocking of all compartments will likely establish initially over a period of 5-7 years after felling so that a dense area of young trees will be establishing early in the operational life of the solar farm.

3.9. It should be noted that the presence of a woodland management plan and the grant of a felling licence by the Forestry Commission does not oblige a woodland owner to carry out the management works. Operational considerations of a woodland owner/estate may result in clear felling or thinning operations being postponed or cancelled. However, if any conditional clear felling or thinning is undertaken the woodland owner *is* obliged to restock in line with the requirements of the felling licence conditions.

4. Adjacent woodland - plan status unknown

- 4.1. A significant area of woodland is present to the east of the site (between the site itself and the settlement of Broughton) as well as some additional contiguous woodland located to the south of the site. No detail on the proposed management planning for this area of woodland is available to INRG Solar (Little Crow) Ltd or their agents.
- 4.2. The woodland extends to Ermine Street in the east (some 975m away) and as far south as the Forest Pines Golf Club in the south. This area of woodland was partially identified as G15, G43 and G47 in the tree survey undertaken to inform the development design. The entire wider woodland extends further and covers an area of circa 300Ha.
- 4.3. The vast majority of the woodland to the east of the site is designated 'Ancient Replanted Woodland' (ARW) as shown in Figure 2 below. In a planning policy context the current National Planning Policy Framework provides the same weight to ARW as it does to Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland (ASNW). Whilst in planning terms, this designation does not introduce any physical restriction or control on management works that can take place it does assist in ensuring that the designated ARW is safeguarded within the development management context.

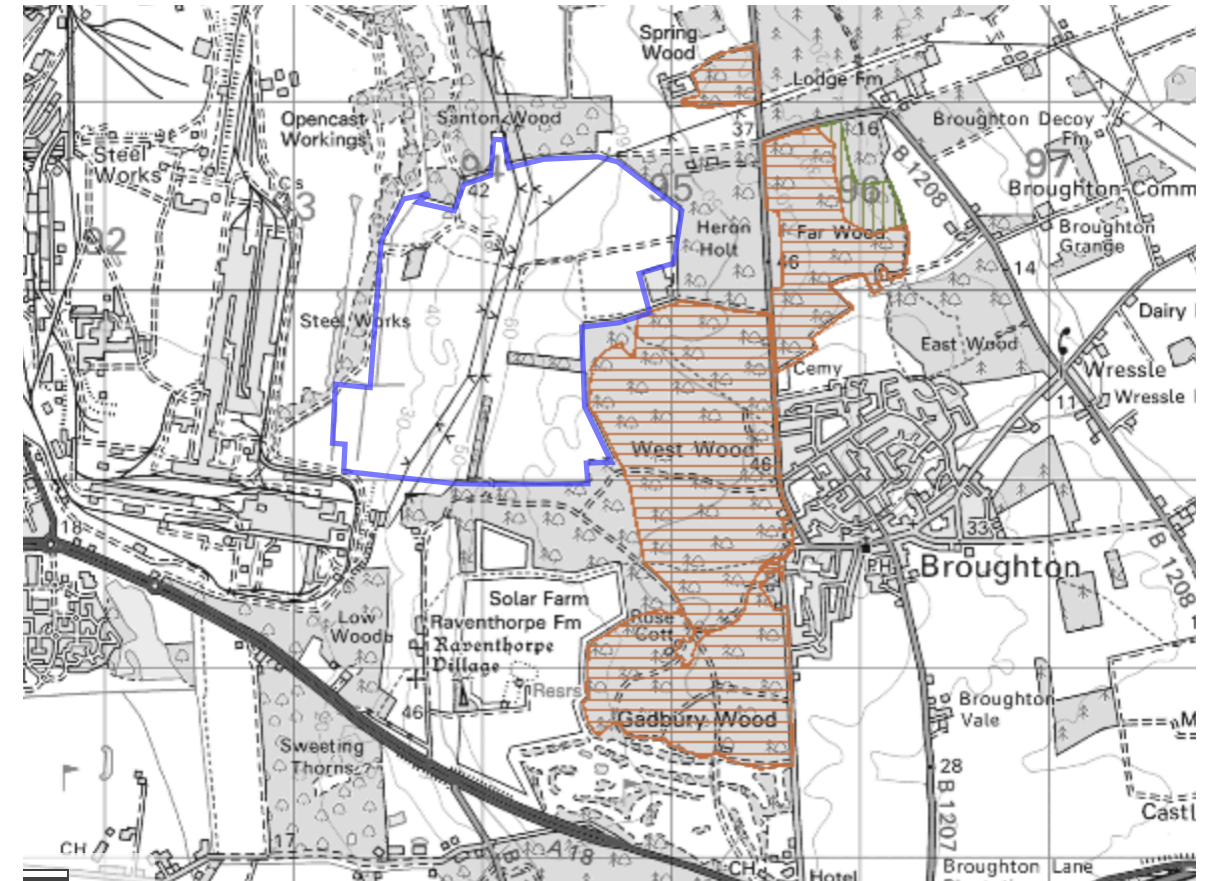


Figure 2: Excerpt from the Government's MAGIC map of land designations. Showing areas of Ancient Replanted Woodland in a brown crosshatch (with a single area of Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland remote from the site - green crosshatch) and the approximate site boundary in blue.

5. Statutory Protection

- 5.1. In addition to the statutory control of felling under the Forestry Act, an additional layer of protection exists for some compartments of woodland adjacent to the site. The dark green polygons on the map excerpt below contain trees that are protected by Tree Preservation Order (TPO).
- 5.2. Notwithstanding specific exceptions, and in general terms, a TPO prevents the cutting down, uprooting, topping, lopping, wilful damage or wilful destruction of protected trees or woodlands without the prior written consent of the LPA. Therefore in the absence of a felling licence (the granting of which overrides the presence of a TPO), North Lincolnshire Council have the ability to control what management works are undertaken within the areas highlighted below.

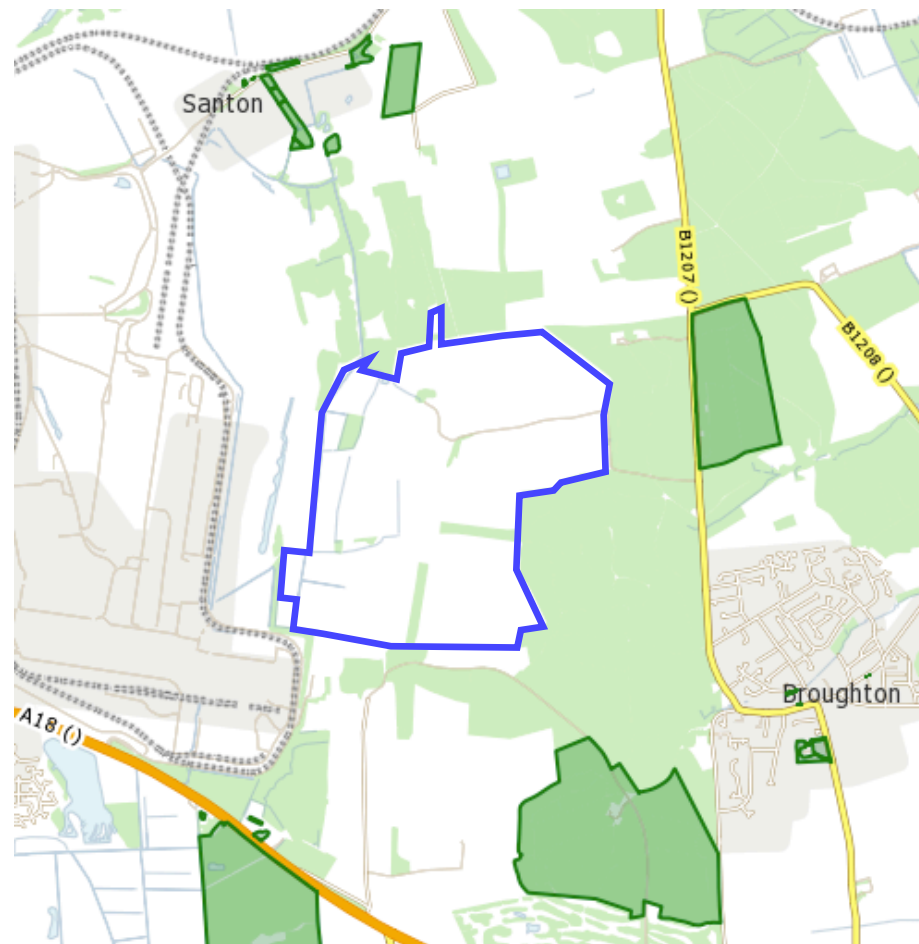


Figure 3: Excerpt from the North Lincs Council online planning map . The map indicates area of trees (dark green polygons) surrounding the site that are protected by Tree Preservation Order and the approximate site boundary in blue.

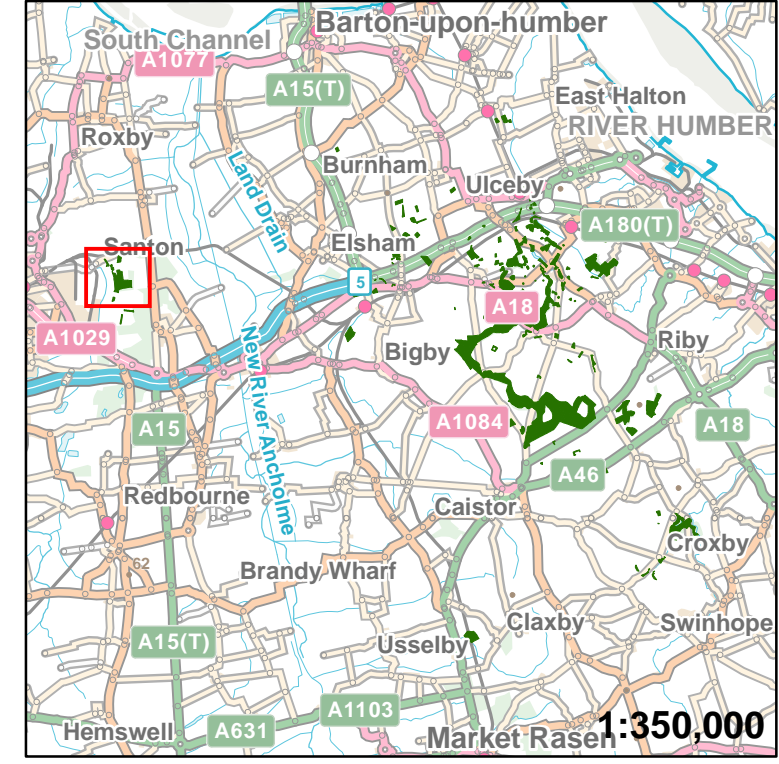
6. Summary

- 6.1. A review of the arboricultural impacts of the proposed development has been undertaken. In addition, a review of the available woodland management planning information for the woodland areas within and surrounding the site has been undertaken.
- 6.2. This review highlighted that some areas of woodland are identified to be clear felled as part of woodland management plan for the Brocklesby Estate. This plan has been prepared in line with appropriate silvicultural management principles and approved by the Forestry Commission. The areas that require clear felling are relatively small (8.83ha, 5.44ha and 2.05ha) and their felling is conditional on them being restocked.
- 6.3. The last of the currently proposed clear felling will be undertaken in 2024, but the operational life of the solar farm will likely extend to the mid 2050's and this is beyond the current plan period. As such, the restocking will successfully establish within the operational life of the proposed solar farm.
- 6.4. Any future woodland management works will be assessed within a robust regulatory framework through the Forestry Act 1967 (and subsequent amendments) as administered by the Forestry Commission. In general terms the Forestry Commission does not adopt a blanket policy of continuous cover forestry but the clear felling of any compartments surrounding the site will be conditional on restocking.
- 6.5. In summary, given the large size of the areas of woodland surrounding the site, their designations (ARW) and the existing statutory controls in place (Felling licence requirements and partial TPO), no substantial changes in the woodland cover and overall appearance of the woodlands around the site is anticipated within the operational life of the Little Crow Solar Farm development.

Richard Hyett MSc. BSc (Hons.), MArborA, MICFor.
Director

APPENDIX 1

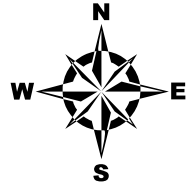
Woodland Management Plan - Felling Plans (Maps 7.24 and 8.24)



Brocklesby Estate

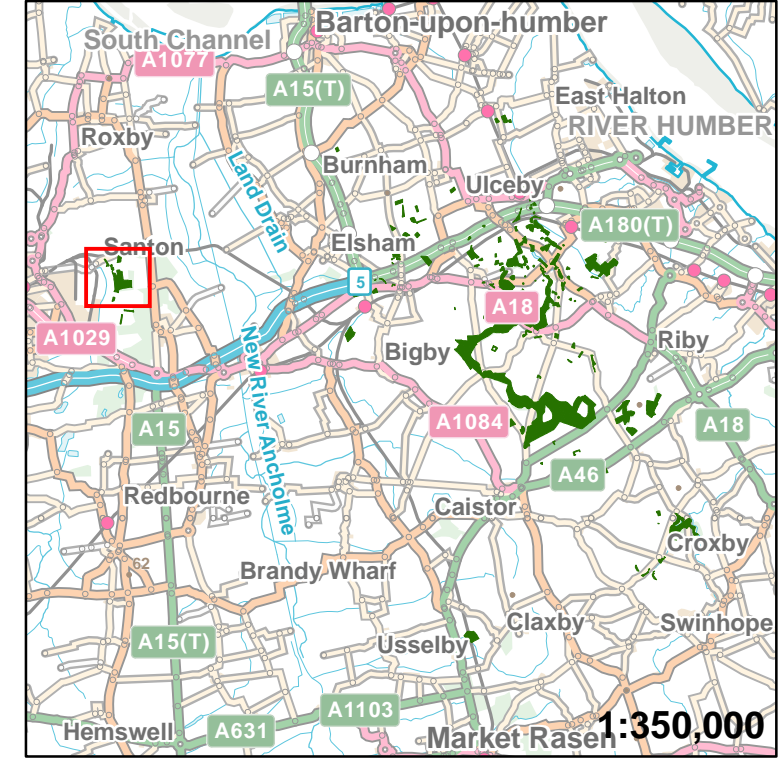
Legend

	CF
	Compartments



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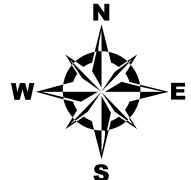
Map 7.24: 1-5 Felling plan



Brocklesby Estate

Legend

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- Compartments



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Map 8.24: 6-10 Felling Plan

