



OAKLANDS FARM SOLAR PARK

Applicant: Oaklands Farm Solar Ltd

Statement of Common Ground with South Derbyshire District Council and
Derbyshire County Council

Draft following Deadline 4 - October 2024

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DOCUMENT CONTROL

Statement of Common Ground between Oaklands Farm Solar Limited and the Local Planning Authorities (Derbyshire County Council and South Derbyshire District Council)

Applicant: Oaklands Farm Solar Limited

Project: Oaklands Farm Solar Park

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CONTENTS

1	STATUS – DEADLINE 4	3
2	INTRODUCTION	4
2.1	CONTEXT	4
2.2	THE ROLE AND APPROACH OF THE LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITIES	4
3	MATTERS COVERED BY THIS SOCG	6
4	MATTERS AGREED	8
4.2	THE APPLICATION SITE	9
4.3	THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT	11
4.4	LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY CONTEXT	13
4.5	PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT	14
4.6	DESIGN AND PARAMETERS	16
4.7	DCO REQUIREMENTS AND PRACTICAL MATTERS	17
	Requirement 4 – Phases of authorised development and date of final commissioning	17
	Requirement 5 – Detailed Design Approval	17
	Requirement 23 – Amendments to approved details	17
	Procedure for discharge of requirements	17
	Other Practical Matters	18
4.8	CLIMATE CHANGE	19
4.9	GLINT AND GLARE	21
	Baseline and Methodology	21
	Effects	21
	Mitigation and Relevant Requirements	21
4.10	LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACTS	22
	Baseline and Methodology	22
	Effects	23
	Cumulative Assessment	24
	Mitigation and Relevant Requirements	25
4.11	NOISE	26
5	MATTERS UNDER DISCUSSION	28
6	MATTERS NOT AGREED	29
7	SIGNATURES	30

1 STATUS – POST DEADLINE 4

1.1.1 This draft of the SoCG has been submitted following Deadline 4, with the agreement of all Parties, to provide an update to the ExA on the status of discussions between the Parties at this point in the Examination.

1.1.2 The status of discussions on the individual topics following Deadline 4 are as follows:

Topic	Status at Deadline 4
The Application Site	Agreed
The Proposed Development	Agreed
Legislative and Policy Context	Agreed
Principle of Development	Agreed
Design and Parameters	Agreed
DCO Requirements and Practical Matters	Agreed
Climate Change and Carbon Reduction	Agreed
Glint and Glare	Agreed
Landscape and Visual	Agreed
Noise	Agreed
EIA Cumulatives	Under Discussion
Biodiversity, Ecology and Trees	Under discussion
Highways	Under discussion
Heritage and Archaeology	Under discussion
Water Resources, Flood Risk and Ground Conditions	Under discussion
Agricultural Land	Not Agreed – Wording being drafted

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 CONTEXT

- 2.1.1 Oaklands Farm Solar Limited (“the Applicant”) is applying to the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero for a Development Consent Order (“DCO”) (“the Application”) under Section 37 of the Planning Act 2008 (“PA 2008”) for the construction, operation, maintenance and decommissioning of ground mounted solar photovoltaic arrays and a Battery Energy Storage System (“BESS”) on land west of the village of Rosliston and east of Walton-on-Trent in South Derbyshire (“the Site”).
- 2.1.2 This Statement of Common Ground has been produced by the Applicant and the Local Planning Authorities (namely Derbyshire County Council and South Derbyshire District Council), (“the Parties”) and identifies those matters where the Parties are in agreement or those matters where discussions are ongoing or which are areas of disagreement.
- 2.1.3 This SoCG has been produced through discussions between the Parties. It will continue to be reviewed, updated and resubmitted as the examination into the Application continues. The SoCG therefore reflects the position of the Parties at the date of the latest version.

2.2 THE ROLE AND APPROACH OF THE LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITIES

- 2.2.1 In the context of this SoCG the term ‘Local Planning Authorities’ describes the two authority areas which contain in full the site which is the subject of the Application. In this case that is Derbyshire County Council (“DCC”) and South Derbyshire District Council (“SDDC”).
- 2.2.2 DCC and SDDC have agreed to share resources in order to act in the Examination as a single entity, and are therefore referred to jointly in this SoCG as the Local Planning Authorities (“the LPAs”). If either DCC or SDDC have taken a position individually on a particular matter which differs from the other LPA then that has been specifically recorded in the relevant section of this SoCG.
- 2.2.3 The Applicant has remained in continued engagement with the LPAs during the preparation and following the submission of the Application.
- 2.2.4 SDDC have submitted an Adequacy of Consultation Representation [AoC-012], a Relevant Representation [RR-295], suggested locations for the site inspection [PDA-002], a further response on suggested site inspection locations [REP1-028] and responses to the 1st Written Questions [REP1-029].
- 2.2.5 DCC have submitted an Adequacy of Consultation Representation [AoC-004], a Relevant Representation [RR-078] and a response to the 1st Written Questions [REP1-026].

2.2.6 SDDC and DCC then submitted a joint Local Impact Report at Deadline 2 [REP2-001].

3 MATTERS COVERED BY THIS SOCG

3.1.1 The matters covered by this SoCG comprise a number of general and procedural points relating to the Application, and then a number of specific environmental matters which sit within the function of the LPAs.

- The Scheme and Application Site
- The Proposed Development
- Planning Policy;
- DCO Requirements and Practical Matters
- EIA Cumulatives;
- Principle of Development
- Design and Parameters
- Agricultural Land;
- Biodiversity, Ecology and Trees;
- Climate Change and Carbon Reduction;
- Glint and Glare;
- Heritage and Archaeology
- Highways
- Landscape and Visual Impacts
- Noise;
- Water Resources, Flood Risk and Ground Conditions.

3.1.2 The following matters are not covered in this SoCG:

- (1) **Air Quality** – the Parties agree that the potential effects are insignificant and any potential adverse impacts at construction would be addressed through the CEMP;
- (2) **Ground Contamination** – the Parties agree that there are no potential effects subject to the mitigation measures which are proposed being employed;
- (3) **Public Rights of Way** – the position of the Local Authorities, as set out in their LIR is that there would be a neutral impact on Public Rights of Way.

- (4) **Minerals** – the Local Authorities acknowledge in their LIR that the site does not impact upon identified Mineral Safeguarding Areas or identified economic mineral resources.

3.1.3 The position of the Parties on each of the matters covered in this SOCG is recorded in the following sections of this SoCG, as follows:

- (1) **Matters Agreed** – the Parties are in agreement on the matter;
- (2) **Matters under Discussion** – the Parties are in continued discussion regarding the matter or aspects of it, so a position of agreement or disagreement has not yet been reached;
- (3) **Matters Not Agreed** – the Parties have discussed the matter in question but are unable to agree a position on it, or on aspects of it.

3.1.4 Each matter is recorded in terms of the baseline, the assessment methodology, the position of the Parties on the matter in question, and any related Requirement.

4 MATTERS AGREED

4.1.1 **Position at Deadline 4:** The following matters have been agreed, as reflected in this Section of the SoCG:

- The Application Site
- The Proposed Development
- Legislative and Policy Context
- Principle of Development
- Design and Parameters
- DCO Requirements and Practical Matters
- Climate Change and Carbon Reduction
- Glint and Glare
- Landscape and Visual
- Noise

4.2 THE APPLICATION SITE

- 4.2.1 The Site lies within the administrative boundaries of South Derbyshire District Council and Derbyshire County Council. It is located approximately 0.25km west of the village of Rosliston and 0.7km south-east of Walton-on-Trent, and extends from the former Drakelow Power Station, north of Walton Road, to the south of Coton Road. The Site (Order Limits) occupies a total area of approximately 191 hectares.
- 4.2.2 The following references are used where necessary to describe the different areas of the Site:
- (1) **Oaklands Farm Area** - contains the proposed solar PV panel array, BESS, substation and other ancillary elements including landscaping and a permissive path together with means of permanent operational site access.
 - (2) **Fairfield Farm Area** - contains the proposed cable route between the solar park and the grid connection point including temporary access to that area for the purposes of construction and decommissioning.
 - (3) **Park Farm Area** - comprises the proposed cable route between the Solar Park and the grid connection point including temporary access to that area for the purposes of construction and decommissioning.
 - (4) **The Drakelow Power Station Area** - comprises the final part of the cable route and the point of connection to the National Grid, including permanent means of operational access.
- 4.2.3 The Site mainly comprises agricultural land of arable and pastoral fields, enclosed by low clipped hedgerows with occasional hedgerow trees, and post and wire fencing. A small area of the northern section of the site is located within land associated with the operational National Grid Drakelow Substation and this area comprises scrub and trees and a series of overhead power lines.
- 4.2.4 The Site is crossed by a series of large scale power lines connecting into the Drakelow Substation. A small section of the Cross Britain Way / National Forest Way long distance path crosses the Site.

Constraints

- 4.2.5 The Parties agree the following:
- (1) The Site is not within any nationally designated landscapes (such as National Parks or Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty/National Landscapes) or the Green Belt.
 - (2) There are no listed buildings, Scheduled Monuments or registered parks and gardens within the Site.

- (3) The Drakelow area of the Site includes a wooded area between Walton Road and the Drakelow substation which is covered by a blanket Tree Preservation Order (TPO No.122).
- (4) A small section of the Grove Wood Local Wildlife Site lies within the eastern part of the Park Farm Area of the Site.
- (5) The entire site is designated as part of the National Forest which covers 200 sq. miles of land in the Midlands covering parts of Derbyshire, Leicestershire and Staffordshire and aims to link the two ancient Forests of Charnwood and Needwood.
- (6) There is an existing network of public rights of way (PRoW) in proximity to the Site although only Footpath SD48/9/1 crosses the Site. This PRoW runs east to west connecting the settlement of Rosliston in the east and Walton-on-Trent to the west of the Site. It also forms part of the Cross Britain Way which is a Long Distance Path.
- (7) The River Mease SAC and SSSI are located around 4.4km to the south of the Site and the Proposed Development lies within the Risk Impact Zone. The Coppershill Spinnery potential Local Wildlife Site (LWS) lies adjacent to the Site to the west of the Oaklands Area. There are then a small number of LWS and potential LWSs within 2km of the Site.
- (8) The nearest heritage assets are the two Grade II listed buildings in close proximity to the Park Farm Area which are the Gate Piers at the Drakelow Lodge Entrance to Drakelow Power Station to the northwest of Walton Road and Grove Farmhouse located at Park Farm. The nearest Conservation Area is approximately 400m northwest of the Site at the closest point in Walton-on-Trent to the Site. The nearest Scheduled Ancient Monument is the hillfort 230m southwest of Old Hall Cottages around 1km to the west of the Oaklands Farm Area.
- (9) The nearest ancient woodland is Grove Wood located approximately 55m to the east of the Park Farm Area.
- (10) The majority of the site falls within Flood Zone 1. A small part of the site, associated with the water course which runs north to southeast immediately to the north of the Oaklands Farm area falls within Flood Zone 3.

Planning history

- 4.2.6 The Parties agree that the relevant planning history is as set out in Appendix A of the Applicant's Planning Statement [APP-181].
- 4.2.7 The Parties agree that there is no planning history directly relating to the Site itself which is of direct relevance to the consideration of the Proposed Development.

4.3 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

4.3.1 A full description of the Project is provided within the Environmental Statement (Doc 6.1). The Parties agree that the main components of the Proposed Development are as follows:

- Solar Photovoltaic (PV) modules and mounting structures;
- Solar Inverter Units;
- Transformer Units for Solar Output;
- Energy Storage Facility;
- Electrical Cabling and Connection to the Grid;
- Fencing, CCTV and other security measures;
- Access Tracks;
- Construction compounds, storage and welfare units;
- Watercourse crossings.

4.3.2 The Project is split into a number of key works within the Order Limits including areas where ancillary works are required for the construction and operation of the key works. A plan showing the DCO boundary is provided in the Location Plan [APP-005].and location of the key works is provided in the Works Plan [APP-007].

4.3.3 The different elements of the works pertaining to the Project is set out in the Table below.

Proposed Development Works
Work No. 1 - a ground mounted solar photovoltaic generating station
Work No. 2 - a battery energy storage system compound
Work No. 3 - works in connection with a new 132/33kV onsite substation
Work No. 4 - works to trench and lay 132 kilovolt electrical cables connecting Work No. 3 to Work No. 5
Work No. 4A - crossing Rosliston Road with electrical cabling
Work No. 4B - temporary stopping up of water courses to trench and lay cables, installation of culverts, drainage and other features to cross watercourses
Work No. 4C - crossing Walton Road with electrical cabling
Work No. 4D - crossing Coton Road with electrical cabling
Work No. 5 - connection and installation works to the existing transmission network substation, including works to trench and lay 132 kilovolt electrical cables connecting to Work No. 4C
Work No. 5A - construction, operational maintenance and decommissioning access for Work No. 5

Work No. 5B - access to National Grid operational land for the construction, maintenance and decommissioning of Work No.5
Work No. 6 - temporary construction and decommissioning of access tracks and compounds
Work No. 7 - general works
Work No. 8 - works to facilitate access for all works excluding Work No. 5
Work No. 9 - works for areas of habitat management
Work No. 10 - works to implement new permissive path through Order limits

4.4 LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY CONTEXT

4.4.1 The Parties agree that:

- The Proposed Development is a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (“NSIP”) by virtue of it being an onshore generating station in England which does not generate electricity from wind and which would have a generating capacity of over 50MW;
- The BESS is associated development for the purposes of this application;
- That the following National Policy Statements have effect; EN-1: Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (January 2024), EN-3: Renewable Energy Infrastructure (January 2024) and EN-5: Electricity Networks Infrastructure (January 2024).
- That the Application falls to be determined under Section 104 of the Planning Act 2008 which states that the Secretary of State, in making its decision, must have regard to (in summary) any National Policy Statement which has effect, any local impact report, any matters prescribed and any other matters which the Secretary of State thinks are both important and relevant to their decision.
- The following aspects of the Derbyshire County Council Development Plan are relevant to the Proposed Development:
 - The Derbyshire Climate Change Strategy;
 - The Derbyshire Environment and Climate Change Framework;
 - The Derbyshire Spatial Energy Strategy.
- The South Derbyshire Local Plan Part 1 (2016) and the South Derbyshire Local Plan Part 2 (2017) are those aspects of the South Derbyshire District Development Plan which are relevant to the Proposed Development.

4.4.2 Other national policy of relevance is the National Planning Policy Framework and the National Planning Policy Guidance. The Written Ministerial Statement of the 15th May 2024 is also relevant to the Proposed Development.

4.5 PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT

- 4.5.1 The Parties agree that the key policy relating to the principle of development is set out in NPS EN-1 (Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy - 2024).
- 4.5.2 In respect of the principle of development the Parties agree that the following statements from EN-1 are relevant:
- EN1 - 3.2.2 - *'it is not the role of the planning system to deliver specific amounts or limit any form of infrastructure covered by this NPS'.*
 - EN1 - 3.2.4 - *'It is not the government's intention in presenting any of the figures or targets in this NPS to propose limits on any new infrastructure that can be consented in accordance with the energy NPSs'.*
 - EN1 - 3.2.6 - *'The Secretary of State should assess all applications for development consent of the types of infrastructure covered by this NPS on the basis that the government has demonstrated that there is a need for those types of infrastructure which is urgent'.*
 - EN1 - 3.2.7 - *'In addition the Secretary of State has determined that substantial weight should be given to this need when considering applications for development consent under the Planning Act 2008.'*
 - EN1 - 3.3.62 - *'Government has concluded that there is a critical national priority (CNP) for the provision of nationally significant low carbon infrastructure'.*
 - EN1 - 3.3.63 - *'Subject to any legal requirements, the urgent need for CNP infrastructure, to achieving our energy objectives, together with the national security, economic, commercial and net zero benefits, will in general outweigh any other residual impacts not capable of being addressed by application of the mitigation hierarchy. Government strongly supports the delivery of CNP infrastructure and it should be progressed as quickly as possible.'*
 - EN1 - 4.1.7 - *'Where this NPS or the relevant technology specific NPSs require an applicant to mitigate a particular impact as far as possible, but the Secretary of State considers that there would still be residual adverse effects after the implementation of such mitigation measures, the Secretary of State should weigh those residual effects against the benefits of the proposed development. For projects which qualify as CNP Infrastructure, it is likely that the need case will outweigh the residual effects in all but the most exceptional cases. This presumption, however, does not apply to residual impacts which present an unacceptable risk to, or interference with, human health and public safety, defence, irreplaceable habitats or unacceptable risk to the achievement of net zero. Further, the same exception applies to this presumption for residual impacts which present an unacceptable risk to, or unacceptable interference offshore to navigation, or onshore to flood and coastal erosion risk'.*

- 4.5.3 The policy context provided above means that the Parties agree that there is an urgent need for this type of Development which should be given substantial weight and that the type of Development is a Critical National Priority where, subject to the specific wording of the EN-1 policy, the need case will in general outweigh the residual effects not capable of being addressed by application of the mitigation. In respect of Paragraph 4.1.7 of EN-1, the Parties agree that no residual impacts have been identified which present an unacceptable risk to or interference with human health and public safety, defence, irreplaceable habitats, the achievement of net zero, navigation or flood and coastal erosion risk.

4.6 DESIGN AND PARAMETERS

- 4.6.1 Section 4.7 of EN-1 sets out criteria for Good Design for energy infrastructure. EN-1 then requires applicants to demonstrate how the proposed design has evolved, in order to demonstrate that infrastructure projects are sustainable and as attractive, durable and adaptable as they can be, with functionality, aesthetics, amenity and visual impacts having been considered. EN-3 reiterates the message the need for good design, with Paragraph 2.10.61 making clear that panel arrays should seek to maximise the power output of a site.
- 4.6.2 The Parties agree that the Design Statement sets out how the Applicant has identified key opportunities and constraints and has used those to identify a series of Design Objectives. The Parties agree that, as set out at Section 8.4 of the Design Statement, the illustrative design of the Proposed Development has evolved during the preparation of the Application in order to take account of technical work and to reflect the identified constraints and opportunities and the identified Design Objectives.
- 4.6.3 The Parties agree that by seeking to achieve the identified Design Objectives the Proposed Development has been shown to follow with the policy relating to good design in EN-1 and EN-3. The principles of the design of the Proposed Development are captured through the design parameters set out in Chapter 4 of the ES and in the Design Statement and will be the basis on which the Local Authorities assess the detailed design of the Proposed Development through Requirement 5.

4.7 DCO REQUIREMENTS AND PRACTICAL MATTERS

- 4.7.1 Reference is made in the topic specific sections of this SoCG to individual Requirements relating to those topics where necessary. This Section deals with general Requirements and other procedural and practical matters.

Requirement 4 – Phases of authorised development and date of final commissioning

- 4.7.2 The Parties agree that the wording of Requirement 4 is appropriate. The Parties agree that the amendment made to Requirement 4 to introduce the need for a construction timetable and phasing plan is sufficient to provide clarity as to the phases of development.

Requirement 5 – Detailed Design Approval

- 4.7.3 The Parties agree that the wording of Requirement 5 is appropriate and sufficient to ensure that final details of the Proposed Development are provided to the local planning authority for approval.
- 4.7.4 The Parties agree that the identification of the design parameters within the Environmental Statement and the Design Statement is sufficient to provide clarity as to the parameters against which the detailed design will be assessed, with the Environmental Statement and Design Statement both identified as certified documents within the dDCO.
- 4.7.5 The Applicant is amending the dDCO so that Requirement 5 refers directly to the details of the coating of the solar panels to be a matter which is covered through Requirement 5. The Parties agree that the inclusion of that reference in Requirement 5 ensures that appropriate anti-reflective coating will be used on the panels within the Proposed Development.

Requirement 23 – Amendments to approved details

- 4.7.6 The Parties agree that Requirement 23 provides for amendments and variations to be made to the approved scheme, so long as those changes are immaterial where it has been demonstrated that the change would not give rise to any materially new or different environmental effect from that assessed in the environmental statement.

Procedure for discharge of requirements

- 4.7.7 The Parties agree with the process for discharging requirements, as set out in Part 3 of Schedule 1 of the draft DCO. The parties agree that a deemed consent after 28 days is appropriate, on the basis of the amendment made by the Applicant to the appropriate Articles in the dDCO which provide for the 28 day period to be extended if agreed in writing between the parties. The Parties agree that it is not necessary for the dDCO to draw specific or further attention to the deemed consent process.

Other Practical Matters

Discharge of Requirements and Monitoring

- 4.7.8 In their Local Impact Report, SDDC and DCC raise the issue of the burden on the Local Authorities of resourcing the assessment, approval and ongoing monitoring of Requirements and Obligations.
- 4.7.9 The Parties agree that the Applicant proactively sought to enter into a Planning Performance Agreement with the Parties during the preparation of the Application, with the intention of that PPA to be to assist with the resourcing of the work of the Local Authorities during the preparation and determination of the Application. That PPA was not required, as the Local Authorities secured funding from Government to assist with their resourcing of their work during the examination of the Application.
- 4.7.10 The Applicant proposes to enter into a Planning Performance Agreement with the local authorities for the purpose of them being able to appropriately resource the assessment, approval and ongoing monitoring of the Requirements and Obligations of the DCO. The Parties agree that the use of a Planning Performance Agreement provides a mechanism for ensuring that the local authorities have sufficient resourcing to perform that role, and that discussions regarding the scope, content and amount of funding would take place following the determination of the DCO application.

4.8 CLIMATE CHANGE

Baseline and Methodology

- 4.8.1 The effect of the Proposed Development on climate change has been quantified using the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment's guidance on Assessing Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Evaluating their Significance published in 2022. A desk-based assessment has been completed in accordance with the guidance to determine the potential effects of the Proposed Development on the climate.
- 4.8.2 A 16-month construction programme has been assumed for the assessment (from Spring 2026 to Summer 2027), followed by a 40-year operational lifetime (Summer 2027 to Spring 2067) and a 12-month decommissioning phase (Summer 2067 to Summer 2068).
- 4.8.3 Where activity data has allowed, expected Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions arising from the construction, operational and decommissioning phases of the Proposed Development have been quantified using a calculation-based methodology as stated in the BEIS 2021 emissions factors guidance.
- 4.8.4 The agricultural nature of the site is such that the GHG emissions from the current land use will be minor and not material in the context of the overall Proposed Development. For the purpose of the assessment, a conservative baseline of zero GHG emissions has been assumed to present a worst case scenario.
- 4.8.5 Climate change effects relating to increased rainfall and potential flood risk are dealt with in the Chapter 8 Water Resources and Flood Risk in the ES and summarised under Water Resources, Flood Risk and Ground Conditions in this SoCG.

Potential Effects

- 4.8.6 The likely effects of the Proposed Development have been identified as:
- A negligible to minor adverse effect on GHG emissions and resultant climate change from the construction of the Proposed Development principally associated with embodied carbon in the development's infrastructure.
 - A negligible to minor adverse effect resulting from decommissioning activities at the end of the project lifetime.
 - An overall moderate to major significant beneficial effect on GHG emissions and resultant climate change resulting from the production of low carbon renewable energy equivalent to powering 35,000 homes over 40 years.

Mitigation and Relevant Requirements

- 4.8.7 A suite of measures is proposed to further reduce emissions associated with the construction and decommissioning phase including the sustainable sourcing of materials, waste recycling and sustainable travel measures. These are detailed in the Outline CEMP secured through Requirement 8 of the dDCO and the Outline DEMP secured through Requirement 21.

Position of the Parties

- 4.8.8 No significant effects were identified for Landscape and Visual and Ecology as a consequence of projected climate change.
- 4.8.9 Minor effects are predicted in relation to the Proposed Development's resilience to climate change.

4.9 GLINT AND GLARE

Baseline and Methodology

- 4.9.1 A Glint and Glare assessment of the Proposed Development has been undertaken by suitably qualified experts and following industry guidance. The assessment considers the effects of the development on road users, public rights of way, nearby residences and aviation activity.
- 4.9.2 The area surrounding the Proposed Development is semi-rural with some residential areas, regional roads and local roads. There are five airfields within 10km of the site.

Effects

- 4.9.3 Following the implementation of the mitigation measures identified below the Proposed Development is predicted to result in the following effects:
- Minor and not significant effects on road users, public rights of way, nearby residences and aviation activity.
 - No significant cumulative effects with other proposed or permitted developments.
- 4.9.4 The LPAs identify two specific points in their Local Impact Report; a further review of the vegetation screening at road receptors 15 and 56 and additional evidence regarding vegetation screening and line of sight at worst case residential dwelling receptors. The Parties have agreed that those are matters which would be addressed at detailed design stage as they do not represent matters of concern.

Mitigation and Relevant Requirements

- 4.9.5 To eliminate potential adverse effects on road users, two areas of c.300m in length along Coton Road and an unnamed road north west of Coton-in-the-Elms will be planted with new hedgerow and have temporary screening installed (until such time as the hedgerow matures) to obscure any glare from the panels on road users.
- 4.9.6 This mitigation is detailed in the Outline LEMP in Appendix 5.6 of Document 6.1.

4.10 LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACTS

Baseline and Methodology

- 4.10.1 The study area for the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) was defined (and agreed through consultation with SDDC and DCC) as an area of 5km radius around the site (see LVIA Figure 5.1). It mostly comprises the Village Estate Farmlands Landscape Character Type (see LVIA Figure 5.4b) which is a broad scale, gently rolling lowland landscape with mixed farming (intensive cropping and improved permanent pasture). It contains broadleaf plantations, game coverts, tree lined pastoral stream corridors, and medium to large regular and sub-regular fields with mainly hawthorn hedgerows. Winding country lanes with wide grass verges are a feature along with small, nucleated hilltop villages often with prominent church spire.
- 4.10.2 The site is located within four different landholdings and displays many of the key characteristics of the Village Estate Farmlands Landscape Character Type it is located within. The key landscape elements/ features within the site are:
- Gently rolling topography with localised high points.
 - Medium to large mixed arable and pastoral fields.
 - Low (and often managed) hawthorn and blackthorn hedgerows with hedgerow trees.
 - Isolated trees within fields and small woodland copses.
 - The Pessall Brook that cuts west to east through the site.
 - The Cross Britain Way / National Forest Way long distance footpath.
- 4.10.3 There are no landscape designations covering the site or within the study area.
- 4.10.4 The pattern of settlement within the wider study area is typically defined by compact villages together with larger towns in the north. There are a number of individual farmsteads and some isolated residential properties that are connected by a network of minor roads and rural lanes. The Cross Britain Way / National Forest Way long distance footpath crosses the study area and runs through part of the site (see LVIA Figure 5.7b). Other local Public Rights of Way are located throughout the study area, often providing links between settlements and farmsteads (see LVIA Figure 5.7b).
- 4.10.5 To inform the assessment of visual effects brought about by the Proposed Development, a total of 11 representative viewpoints were selected through desk study, field work and consultation with statutory consultees (see LVIA Figures 5.7a and b). The viewpoints were originally agreed with SDDC and DCC in July/ August 2021 for the PEIR. The list was then revised and agreed with DCC in March 2023, following a reduction in the extent of the Proposed Development. Each viewpoint has been illustrated with panoramic photographs with ranges taken from the same locations when trees were both in leaf (summer) and not in leaf (winter) to ensure

seasonality has been represented in the baseline views. As agreed with DCC in March 2023, full photomontages (at AVR3 Level) showing the Proposed Development on completion at Year 1 and Year 10 were produced for Viewpoints 1, 2, 3, 5a and 8 using the photography captured in winter to demonstrate the worst-case scenario in terms of potential visibility of the Proposed Development. For the remaining Viewpoints 4, 6, 7, 9, 10 and 11, photomontages were produced at AVR2 Level were produced for the remaining viewpoints, with the Proposed Development represented by single colour massing where visible and composited and masked into the baseline photograph (see LVIA Figures:5.10-5.21).

- 4.10.6 Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) mapping was used to identify where the Proposed Development will be visible in the landscape, which assisted with identifying landscape and visual receptors, and the representative viewpoints (see LVIA Figures 5.5a-d).

Effects

- 4.10.7 The layout of the Proposed Development (see LVIA Figure 5.6, or Figures 1a-1f in ES Appendix 5.6), was developed as part of an iterative assessment and design process. As part of this process, a number of measures to reduce and mitigate landscape and visual effects are included within the proposed layout. These are:

- Setting PV panels back from field edges to preserve field patterns.
- Avoiding loss of trees and hedgerows as much as possible.
- Providing new native planting of local provenance (listed on Figure 1b in ES Appendix 5.6) that is in character with the landscape of the site and its surroundings (i.e. in line with the management guidelines of the Village Estate Farmlands LCT), and is in accordance with the aims of The National Forest (see Figures 1a-1f in ES Appendix 5.6).
- Reducing views from the nearby local community of Rosliston by:
 - keeping the pastoral field (ref O9 – see LVIA Figure 5.2), which is partly visible above the tree line in the foreground, free from PV panels so that is retained as a rural feature within views from the edge of the settlement, helping to visually break up the Proposed Development on the skyline;
 - making use of Redferns Wood (see LVIA Figure 5.2) to filter or screen views of the Proposed Development;
 - planting new woodland to further filter views and to provide a wooded backdrop against which PV panels on the skyline will be seen; and
 - locating the substation and BESS near to the centre of the site in a lower lying and flatter area (see LVIA Figure 5.3 Existing Topography) so that they are not visible from the settlement.
- Reducing views from the nearby local community of Coton in the Elms by strengthening existing field boundaries within the site and changing the

management of the hedgerow along south-eastern boundary (Catton Lane) by allowing it to grow significantly taller, providing filtering of the Proposed Development.

- Setting PV arrays at least 100m away from residential properties, and ensuring that the design of the Proposed Development was carefully considered.
- Seeking to integrate ancillary components into the agricultural landscape through careful selection of material and finishes such as deer fencing around the PV arrays, using a dark and recessive colour for the BESS and transformers (as agreed with DCC in March 2023), and surfacing permanent access tracks with locally sourced gravel.
- Ensuring deer fencing along the edge of the site is positioned behind existing/ proposed hedgerows to reduce its visibility.
- Limiting operational lighting to alarm lights on transformer stations that are only activated in case of theft.

4.10.8 The identified landscape and visual effects of the Proposed Development are as follows:

- A major significant adverse effect on the landscape character of the site and its immediate surroundings (up to approximately 500m from the Proposed Development) reducing to a moderate significant adverse effect once the proposed planting matures (>10 years). No significant effects on landscape character beyond around 500m are predicted to occur.
- A major significant adverse effects on views experienced by road users of a short section of Coton Road/Church Street and users of the Cross Britain Way for the section that passes through the site. This will reduce to a moderate significant adverse effect once the proposed planting matures (>10 years).
- A moderate adverse significant effects for residents at the Coppice View and the Chase in Rosliston, local road users surrounding the site and public rights of way users in the southern part of the study area. This will reduce to a minor (not significant) for users of the local road network and public rights of way once the proposed landscaping matures (>10 years).
- A high magnitude of change for the Twin Oaks residential property 1(e) (Oaklands Farm landowner's property); however, no residential properties will experience a breach of the Residential Visual Amenity Threshold (see ES Appendix 5.5 Residential Visual Amenity Assessment, and LVIA Figure 5.9 showing location of properties).

Cumulative Assessment

4.10.9 A list of projects to be considered in the cumulative assessment was provided by SDCC in August 2021 and updated through further consultation with SDDC in February 2022, and via research by the Applicant's planners throughout 2023 (see

LVIA Figure 5.8). No significant cumulative effects with other proposed or permitted development were identified at the point of the Application being submitted.

- 4.10.10 The Applicant is reviewing and updating its cumulative assessment. The Parties remain in discussion regarding the cumulative effects in landscape and visual terms of any new cumulative projects which are identified through that work.

Mitigation and Relevant Requirements

- 4.10.11 All landscape and ecological proposals, to help mitigate the landscape and visual effects of the Proposed Development, are detailed in the Outline LEMP (Appendix 5.6 of Document 6.1). The Outline LEMP is secured through Requirement 9 of the DCO, which requires the submission and approval of a full LEMP which accords with the principles of the Outline LEMP.

4.11 NOISE

Baseline and Methodology

- 4.11.1 Noise surveys were completed in 2021 in accordance with industry guidance (BS4142:2014+A1:2019 and BS7445-1:2003) to measure and observe the existing noise climate and determine existing noise and vibration sources near to the Site (see ES appendix 11.1).
- 4.11.2 Monitoring locations were chosen which were likely to represent the noise climate experienced at noise sensitive receptors around the perimeter of the site. A desk study was undertaken to identify nearby noise sensitive dwellings and to establish the influence of existing noise sources.
- 4.11.3 The site and surrounding area are predominantly rural land in farming use. Ambient and background noise levels are generally controlled by road traffic noise on local roads, farm animals and birdsong. Local roads are relatively lightly trafficked and consequently, noise levels around the site are low. The busiest road is Walton Road to the north of Park Farm.
- 4.11.4 The Noise chapter of the ES has considered construction noise effects and operational noise effects. Construction noise has been assessed using methodology in BS5228:2009+A1:2014 for activity on site and using CRTN for construction traffics. Operational noise has been assessed with reference to methodology in BS4142:2014+A1:2019, principles in National Planning Policy Guidance on Noise, Local Planning Policy, and criteria in BS8233:2104 and WHO Guidelines. Noise levels have been predicted by considering likely construction activity and likely worst case operational noise source levels.

Potential Effects

- 4.11.5 A number of design measures have been incorporated in the design of the Proposed Development to mitigate or reduce potential effects, which includes locating the BESS centrally within the solar array to maximise distance from residences, locating inverters and transformers at least 100m from residences and standard noise pollution controls during construction and decommissioning processes. The resultant effects of the Proposed Development are assessed as:
- A potentially significant short-term effect at Comer Farm if night time work is required to install the grid connection cable under Rosliston Road.
 - A negligible/minor effect on road traffic noise during construction.
 - A negligible effect on nearby residences during the 40-year operation of the solar farm.
- 4.11.6 No significant cumulative effects with other proposed or permitted development have been identified.

Mitigation and Relevant Requirements

- 4.11.7 Best practice construction measures to mitigate and minimise noise emissions during construction and decommissioning are set out in the Outline CEMP (Appendix 4.3 of Document 6.1) secured through Requirement 8 of the dDCO and the Outline DEMP (Appendix 4.5 of the ES in Document 6.1) secured through Requirement 21.
- 4.11.8 Requirement 15 of the dDCO requires the Applicant to demonstrate that the detailed design of the Proposed Development (to be approved pursuant to Requirement 5) will accord with the operational noise emissions from the Proposed Development set out in the ES.

Position of the Parties

- 4.11.9 The Parties agree that the Proposed Development is satisfactory in respect of noise, so long as it is commissioned and operated in a manner that ensures the noise exposure predictions in Tables 11.18 and 11.19 of Chapter 11 of the ES are met and maintained for the duration of the development.

5 MATTERS UNDER DISCUSSION

5.1.1 Position at post Deadline 4: the Parties remain in discussion regarding the following matters:

- **Aspects of DCO Requirements and Practical Matters** - specifically the Parties remain in discussion regarding the specific wording of Requirement 21, the timeframes of decommissioning, the extent of the decommissioning works required and the need for the Applicant to provide certainty over the funding of decommissioning works. The Parties also remain in discussion regarding the extent of site preparation works and how those are captured in the dDCO.
- **EIA Cumulatives** (including landscape and visual impacts of any new cumulative projects identified). Position at Deadline 4 – the Parties are reviewing an updated list of cumulative schemes and an update will be provided at Deadline 5.
- **Biodiversity, Ecology and Trees**
- **Heritage and Archaeology**
- **Highways**
- **Water Resources, Flood Risk and Ground Conditions**

6 MATTERS NOT AGREED

- 6.1.1 **Position post Deadline 4:** in respect of the impacts of the Proposed Development on Agricultural Land, the Parties will each be recording their respective positions in this section of the SOCG.

7 SIGNATURES

7.1.1 The Parties confirm that their respective positions are as documented within this Statement of Common Ground.

Signed.....

Name and Position.....

On behalf of Oaklands Farm Solar Ltd

Date.....

Signed.....

Name and Position.....

On behalf of Derbyshire County Council

Date.....

Signed.....

Name and Position.....

On behalf of South Derbyshire District Council

Date.....