Stell Solar Farm

Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Report

On behalf of

Enviromena

Project Ref: 333100426 | Rev: 01 | Date: February 2025

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For and on behalf of Stantec UK Limited				

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1 Introduction

1.1.1 This report has been prepared by Stantec UK Limited (Stantec)[1], on behalf of Enviromena (the 'Applicant'). This report accompanies a request to North Yorkshire Council (NYC) to adopt a Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) screening opinion for the construction of a c.30MW solar farm (the 'Proposed Development') on land at Lords Lane, Exelby, North Yorkshire (the 'Site') (shown in Appendix A).

1.1.2 This report reflects the requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (as amended)[i] (the 'EIA Regulations'). In accordance with Regulation 6 of the EIA Regulations, this report contains:

a) a plan sufficient to identify the land;

b) a description of the development, including in particular:

i. a description of the physical characteristics of the development and, where relevant, of demolition works;

ii. a description of the location of the development, with particular regard to the environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected;

c) a description of the aspects of the environment likely to be significantly affected by the development;

d) to the extent the information is available, a description of any likely significant effects of the proposed development on the environment resulting from:

i. the expected residues and emissions and the production of waste, where relevant; and

ii. the use of natural resources, in particular soil, land, water and biodiversity; and

e) such other information *or representations as the person making the request may wish to provide or make, including any features of the proposed development or any measures envisaged to avoid or prevent what might otherwise have been significant adverse effects on the environment."*

1.2 Requirement for EIA

1.2.1 In order to determine whether the proposed development comprises 'EIA development' regard must be had to the EIA Regulations and supporting Planning Practice Guidance[ii] (PPG). EIA development is defined by the EIA Regulations as development:

"…likely to have significant effects on the environment by virtue of factors such as its nature, size or location."

1.2.2 EIA development falls into two Schedules of the EIA Regulations. EIA is mandatory for developments listed within Schedule 1. Schedule 2 developments require EIA if they would lead to likely significant effects on the environment, of which is pertinent to the Proposed Development.

1.2.3 In deciding whether a Schedule 2 development is EIA development, Regulation 5(4) states:

[1] Stantec are Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) qualified assessors and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Quality Mark registrants.

'Where a relevant planning authority … has to decide under these Regulations whether Schedule 2 development is EIA development, the relevant planning authority … must take into account in making that decision -

a) Any information provided by the applicant;

b) The results of any relevant EU environmental assessment which are reasonably available to relevant planning authority…; and

c) Such of the selection criteria set out in Schedule 3 as are relevant to the development.'

1.2.4 To allow NYC to determine the need for an EIA, this report provides a description of the Site and the Proposed Development, a review of the EIA Screening Criteria based on the EIA Regulations and PPG, a completed EIA Screening Checklist, and a site location plan at Appendix A.

2 The Site and Proposed Development

2.1 Site Description and Context

2.1.1 The Site (as shown in Appendix A) totals 45.96 hectares (ha) in area and comprises agricultural fields. There is a small cluster of farm buildings, including an occupied residential dwelling (Lords Moor Farm) situated centrally within the wider Site area but which notably is outside the redline extent and is not associated with the development. The Site lies within the administrative area of NYC, approximately 1.9 km south-east of Bedale.

2.1.2 The Site is bounded by Firby Beck (watercourse) to the north, Old Stell (watercourse) to the east, woodland and field margins to the south and a field margin to the west. Beyond the Site the land is predominantly of agricultural use. Hollins Lane enters the Site in the south-west corner and travels through the centre of the Site where it becomes Lords Lane and leaves the Site to the north, both of which serve Lords Moor Farm.

2.2 Environmental Baseline Conditions

Biodiversity

2.2.1 There are no statutory or non-statutory ecological sites located within 5km to the Site. The closest Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is Newton-Le-Willows Meadows SSSI approximately 6.6 km to the north-west.

2.2.2 There are two blocks of deciduous woodland which are designated as Priority Habitat along parts of the northern and southern boundaries of the Site.

2.2.3 There is a waterbody, Main Cut which travels through the eastern portion of the Site in a north-south direction.

2.2.4 The predominant habitat on Site is agricultural fields, with sporadic trees lining field boundaries.

Townscape and Landscape

2.2.5 The Site is located in a rural area, predominantly made up of agricultural fields. The only landscape designation within 10km is Nidderdale National Landscape (formerly Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty), located approximately 9.3 km to the west.

2.2.6 A Public Right of Way (PRoW) 10.11/4/1 runs east to west through the eastern area of Site, following a field boundary and the boundary of Lords Moor Farm, PRoW 10.11/5/1 runs north to south through the Site, following Lords Lane, and PRoW 10.11/4/2 runs north-east to south-west through the western area of Site, following Hollins Lane. PRoW access will be maintained during construction, operation and decommissioning.

2.2.7 The nearest area of residential properties comprises the small village, Exelby, which at its centre is approximately 460 m north-east, with the closest residential property located approximately 200m north. There is one residential property and operational farm buildings at the centre of the Site ‘Lords Moor Farm’, but which is highlighted is outside the redline boundary and scope of the proposals. Access will be maintained to Lords Moor Farm via Lords Lane and Hollins Lane during construction, operation and decommissioning.

2.2.8 Additionally, there are a number of other farm buildings within the local vicinity of the Site.

Noise and Vibration

2.2.9 There is a Noise Important Area (Area ID 6339) located approximately 2 km east of the Site, located on the A1(M).

2.2.10 The nature of the Site is of agricultural use with sporadic farm buildings, meaning the background noise levels will be low, dominated by agricultural practices, with influence from the A1(M) to the east.

2.2.11 The nearest residential properties are described above.

Heritage and Archaeology

2.2.12 There are no designated heritage assets on or adjacent to the Site. With the exception of listed buildings, there are no other statutory designated heritage assets within 2 km of the Site. There are four listed buildings (all Grade 2) within 1 km of the Site. Three are clustered in Exelby to the north-east, namely: Fairfield (Ref. 1151224) (approximately 390 m from the Site), Orchard House (Ref. 1190082) and Exelby Lodge Cottage (Ref. 1190073) (both approximately 500 m from the Site). Floodbridge (Ref. 1151234) is located approximately 720 m north on the B6285.

2.2.13 Thorp Perrow Arboretum (Ref. 1001075) a Grade II Registered Park and Garden is located approximately 900 m to the west of site.

2.2.14 Based on professional judgement, given the Site's rural location and distance from these designated heritage assets, it is unlikely to be more than a peripheral and marginal element in their setting, if it forms part of their setting at all.

2.2.15 There is potential for unknown archaeological assets to be present on Site. The likely presence of below ground archaeological assets will be confirmed through a geophysical survey and a Desk Based Assessment, written into a Heritage Statement.

Agricultural Land

2.2.16 The Agricultural Land Classification[iii] (ALC) system divides agricultural land quality into five grades (from Grade 1 'Excellent' to Grade 5 'Very Poor'), with Grade 3 subdivided into Sub-grade 3a 'Good' and Subgrade 3b 'Moderate'. 'Best and Most Versatile' ('BMV') agricultural land is classified as Grades 1, 2 or 3a. ALC mapping via Natural England's Yorkshire & The Humber Region Agricultural Land Classification Map[iv], indicates that the land within the Site is categorised as Grade 3 land.

2.2.17 An ALC survey will be undertaken to confirm the presence or absence of BMV land on-site.

Flood Risk and Drainage

2.2.18 According to the Environment Agency's Flood Map for Planning[v], an area across the north and east of the Site is located in Flood Zone 3, associated with Firby Beck, Main Cut and Old Stell, therefore is at a high risk of fluvial flooding (≥1% risk of flooding each year). The remaining Site is located in Flood Zone 1 and therefore is at a low risk of fluvial flooding (<0.1% chance of fluvial flooding in any given year). The Site is at a very low risk of surface water flooding, with areas of low risk at the periphery of the site boundary. The nearest watercourses are described in the above sections, comprising Main Cut, Firby Beck and Old Stell. None of these are designated as main rivers by the Environment Agency. The Environment Agency details that this Site is unlikely to flood from groundwater sources.

2.2.19 As per data viewed via MAGIC, the Site is not located within a groundwater Source Protection Zone (SPZ). The Site is however marked as a drinking water safeguard zone for surface water.

2.2.20 A Flood Risk Assessment will be undertaken and submitted alongside the planning application, in addition to a Drainage Strategy.

Air Quality

2.2.21 Using the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) interactive map[vi], the Site is shown as not being located within an AQMA. The closest AQMA is located in Bedale, which was declared in November 2017 for exceeding annual NO_2 levels, located approximately 1.9 km north-west of the Site.

Ground Conditions

2.2.22 The bedrock geology comprises Brotherton formation (limestone and dolomitic) to the east and Edlington formation (mudstone and calcareous) to the west. The superficial deposits comprise Alne Glaciolacustrine formation (clay and silt).

2.2.23 The underlying bedrock aquifer at the Site are classified a Principal Aquifer, with a small area of Secondary B in the far western portion of the Site. The underlying superficial aquifer is classified as unproductive.

2.2.24 MAGIC maps indicate that the Groundwater Vulnerability on-site is defined as Low.

2.2.25 As per data viewed via the Environment Agencies landfill map[vii]. There are no active landfill sites within 500m of the Site, however there is a historic landfill site within 500 m of the Site:

- Floodbridge Tip located approximately 490 m north of the Site, which accepted industrial, commercial, household and liquid sludge waste, opening in 1938. The date of last input is unknown.

2.2.26 The Site is not located within a Coal Mining Reporting Area[viii].

2.3 The Proposed Development

2.3.1 The Applicant intends to submit a planning application for the:

"Installation of ground mounted photovoltaic farm with associated infrastructure, engineering works, access, and landscaping."

2.3.2 No demolition works are anticipated during construction.

2.3.3 It is assumed that the maximum height of the Proposed Development (solar arrays, transformer station and inverters) will be no greater than 2.6 m above ground level.

2.3.4 There are two access points to the Site, via Lords Lane from the north and Hollins Lane from the west.

2.3.5 The construction of the Proposed Development is anticipated to take 7 months.

2.3.6 The Proposed Development would have an operational life of 40 years, at which point the infrastructure would be decommissioned and all infrastructure would be removed from the Site and the land returned to its former use. As with construction, best practices will be adopted during decommissioning to reduce any potential environmental impacts, with all activities being undertaken in accordance with any relevant guidance and legislation at the time.

2.4 Mitigation and Enhancement Measures

2.4.1 In accordance with Regulation 6(2)(e) of the EIA Regulations, a number of mitigation measures have been committed to at this screening stage as part of the Proposed Development.

2.4.2 The Proposed development will be designed to minimise potentially negative effects and maximise positive effects. Additional mitigation measures will include adherence to best practice measures during the construction, operation and decommissioning phases, which will be written into plans and secured via planning conditions.

Construction Environmental Management Plan

2.4.3 In order to avoid significant environmental effects during the construction and decommissioning phases, best practice measures will be implemented through a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP), which will be secured by a planning condition. These measures will include:

- A table showing the objectives, activities (mitigation/optimisation measures), and responsibilities for the implementation of those activities;
- The broad plan of the work programme including working hours and delivery times;
- Details of prohibited or restricted operations (location, hours etc);
- Institutional arrangements for its implementation and for environmental monitoring: responsibilities, role of the environmental authorities, participation of stakeholders;
- Contact during normal working hours and emergency details outside working hours;
- Provision for reporting, public liaison, and prior notification of particular construction related activities;
- The mechanism for the public to register complaints and the procedures for responding to such complaints; and
- The details of proposed routes for Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) travelling to and from the site.

2.4.1 As required, construction traffic measures will be implemented as part of the CEMP. Measures that will be implemented include:

- Planning and managing both vehicle and pedestrian routes;
- The elimination of reversing, where possible;
- Safe driving and working practices;
- Adequate visibility splays and sight lines;
- Provision of signs and barriers; and
- Adequate parking for off-loading storage areas.

2.4.2 During the construction phase, a waste management measures will be included within the CEMP to limit the on and off-site environmental impacts of the construction waste. These measures would focus on:

- Recycled and secondary materials;
- Waste reduction;
- Waste segregation;
- Waste recovery; and
- Waste disposal.

Biodiversity

2.4.3 The mitigation set out below is considered standard best practice on construction sites. Pollution control measures contained within the CEMP will be adopted to avoid and mitigate any impacts associated with demolition and construction in proximity sensitive receptors in proximity to the Site, such as nearby watercourses.

2.4.4 With regard to the potential for nesting birds within trees and scrub, any clearance of the Site should be undertaken outside of nesting bird season (1st March to 31st August). Should any clearance be required within the nesting bird season, a nesting bird check by a qualified ecologist will confirm the presence / likely absence of nesting birds in these areas 48 hours prior to clearance. If active nests are discovered, then works will cease until the nest is deemed inactive.

2.4.5 Tree protection measures will be put in place to ensure that there is no damage to the trees and their roots that line the boundaries. These will be included within the Arboricultural Impact Assessment that is to be submitted alongside the planning application.

Design Measures

2.4.6 To reduce potential significant environmental effects during operation of the Proposed Development, mitigation measures can be built into the design, including but not limited to:

- Offsets from environmental features such as watercourses, trees and hedges;
- Landscape planting to provide visual screening; and
- Considerate placement of solar infrastructure within the Site.

2.5 Planning Application Documentation

2.5.1 It is anticipated that the planning application will be accompanied by the following documents:

- Agricultural Land Classification Report;
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA), informed by phase 1 surveys and breeding and wintering bird surveys;
- Biodiversity Net Gain Metric;
- Arboricultural Impact Assessment;
- Heritage Statement, informed by a geophysical survey;
- Flood Risk Assessment (FRA);
- Drainage Strategy;
- Landscape Visual Assessment;
- Transport Statement;
- Glint and Glare Assessment;
- Design and Access Statement;
- Planning Statement; and
- Statement of Community Involvement.

3 Screening Assessment

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 In determining whether the Proposed Development constitutes EIA development, consideration should be had to the following questions:

- is the proposed development of a type listed in Schedule 1?;
- if not, is it listed in Schedule 2?;
- is it located within a sensitive area?;
- does it meet any of the relevant thresholds and criteria set out in Schedule 2? and/or
- would it lead to likely significant effects on the environment after the inclusion of standard mitigation measures?

3.1.2 These questions are explored further in this section with reference to the EIA Regulations and supporting PPG.

3.2 Schedule 1 Projects

3.2.1 EIA is mandatory for projects listed in Schedule 1 of the EIA Regulations. Schedule 1 developments are large scale projects for which significant effects would be expected and comprise developments such as new airports and power stations. The Proposed Development is not of a type listed in Schedule 1.

3.3 Schedule 2 Projects

3.3.1 EIA is discretionary for projects listed in Schedule 2. If a development is of a type listed in Schedule 2 then it may be classified as EIA development depending on its location (i.e., if it is within a sensitive area) and / or whether it meets any of the relevant thresholds or criteria in Column 2.

Sensitive Areas

3.3.2 Sensitive Areas are defined in the EIA Regulations as:

- Sites of Special Scientific Interest and European Sites;
- National Parks, the Broads, and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty; and
- World Heritage Sites and Scheduled Monuments.

3.3.3 In certain cases, local designations which are not included in the definition of sensitive areas, but which are nonetheless environmentally sensitive, may also be relevant in determining whether an assessment is required. Furthermore, in considering the sensitivity of a particular location, regard should also be had to whether any national or internationally agreed environmental standards (e.g., air quality) are already being approached or exceeded.

Thresholds

3.3.4 The Site is not located within a Sensitive Area. The Proposed Development does however fall within Category 3 of Schedule 2, '*Energy industry',* sub-section (a) '*Industrial installations for the production of electricity, steam and hot water'*. The thresholds for developments as set out in Schedule 2 (3)a relate to those where "*the area of the development exceeds 0.5 hectares*". At 45.96 ha in area, the Proposed Development exceeds this threshold. Accordingly, this screening assessment has been prepared to determine whether the Proposed Development would be likely to result in significant environmental effects. To achieve this, Schedule 3 of the EIA Regulations and PPG need to be considered. Information on these is set out below.

3.3.5 Whilst it is acknowledged that solar farm developments do not fit neatly into a category of Schedule 2, the EIA Regulations are intended to have a wide scope and broad purpose. Schedule 2 Part 3a ((a) *Industrial installations for the production of electricity, steam and hot water,* is considered the most relevant category for a solar development project, and in any case, the screening decision is made on the potential for likely significant effects on the environment.

3.4 Schedule 3 Projects

3.4.1 Schedule 3 of the EIA Regulations sets out selection criteria which relate to specific matters including: the characteristics of the proposed development; the location of the proposed development; and the characteristics of the potential impact. These factors should be taken into account as part of the screening process and are set out below:

Characteristics:

- The size and design of the whole development;
- Cumulation with other existing development and / or approved development;
- The use of natural resources, in particular land, soil, water and biodiversity;
- The production of waste;
- Pollution and nuisances;
- The risk of major accidents and/or disasters relevant to the development concerned, including those caused by climate change, in accordance with scientific knowledge; and
- The risks to human health (for example, due to water contamination or air pollution).

Location:

- The existing and approved land use;
- The relative abundance, availability, quality and regenerative capacity of natural resources (including soil, land, water and biodiversity) in the area and its underground; and
- The absorption capacity of the natural environment.

Potential Impact:

- The magnitude and spatial extent of the impact (for example geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);
- The nature of the impact;
- The transboundary nature of the impact;
- The intensity and complexity of the impact;
- The probability of the impact;
- The expected onset, duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact;
- The cumulation of the impact with the impact of other existing and / or approved development; and
- The possibility of effectively reducing the impact.

3.5 Consideration of Cumulative Effects

3.5.1 Schedule 4 of the EIA Regulations requires consideration of a proposed development cumulatively with other existing and / or approved development. Guidance on the consideration of cumulative effects in the EIA *screening* process is set out in the PPG, which echoes the requirements of the EIA Regulations:

"each application (or request for a screening opinion) should be considered on its own merits. There are occasions where other existing or approved development may be relevant in determining whether significant effects are likely as a consequence of a proposed development. The local planning authorities should always have regard to the possible cumulative effects arising from any existing or approved development."

3.5.2 A search for potential developments that could result in cumulative effects has been carried out via NYC's planning register[ix] up to 2km from the site, up to 1st August 2024. The search identified the potentially cumulative developments set out in **Table 3.1** that are either *'existing or approved'* in accordance with the EIA Regulations.

Table 3.1: Cumulative developments in close proximity to the Site

Application Reference Number and Site Address	Description	Current Status	Approx. distance and orientation from site
21/03058/FUL Part Os Field 3541 Bedale North Yorkshire	Construction of 75 dwellings and associated infrastructure	Granted (November 2022)	1.2 km north-west
20/02314/FUL Land Adjacent Southlands Farm Bedale North Yorkshire	Construction of 80 residential units with associated access, infrastructure (pumping station & electrical substation) and landscaping	Disproved (January 2024)	1.2 km north-west
22/00303/FUL Bedale Allotment Association The Allotment Gardens Masham Road Bedale North Yorkshire	Construction of a residential development comprising 14no dwellings	Granted (July 2023)	2.1 km north-west

National Planning Practice Guidance

3.5.3 Paragraphs 057 and 058 of the PPG provide guidance to help determine whether significant effects are likely. In general, the more environmentally sensitive the location, the lower the threshold will be at which significant effects are likely. **Table 3.2** below sets out the PPG's indicative criteria, thresholds and key issues to be considered in determining whether a development is likely to require an EIA.

Table 3.2: Planning Practice Guidance Indicative Screening Criteria[x]

Development type	Indicative criteria and threshold	Key issues to consider
3 (a) Industrial installations for the production of electricity, steam and hot water.	The area of the development exceeds 0.5 hectare.	Level of emissions to air, arrangements for the transport of fuel and any visual impact.

3.6 Screening Assessment

3.6.1 This section assesses the proposed development against the EIA screening criteria outlined above and presents the assessment of the environmental effects likely to occur as a result of the proposed development. Table 3.3 sets out a review of all the above criteria and requirements and specifically addresses the proposed development at the site.

Table 3.3: Planning Practice Guidance EIA Screening Matrix

Part 1 - Question	Part 2 - Answer to the question and explanation of reasons (Yes/No or Not Known (?) or N/A)		Part 3 - Is a Significant Effect Likely? (Yes/No or Not Known (?) or N/A)	
1. Natural Resource				
1.1 Will construction, operation or decommissioning of the project involve actions which will cause physical changes in the topography of the area?	**N**	There will be no material physical changes to the topography of the Site or surrounding area.	**N/A**	
1.2 Will construction or operation of the project use natural resources above or below ground such as land, soil, water, materials / minerals or energy which are non-renewable or in short supply?	**Y**	The construction and operational phases of the Proposed Development will use resources, as would be expected for a solar project.	**N**	The implementation of a CEMP during the construction phase will include best practice measures to mitigate any potential effects associated with the consumption of natural resources. Accordingly, the Proposed Development will be designed to reduce any likely significant effects on natural resource consumption and include sustainable building methods where feasible to minimise energy consumption. The Proposed Development will incorporate all relevant water and energy saving measures which will be secured through planning conditions.
1.3 Are there any areas on / around the location which contain important, high quality or scarce resources which could be affected by the project, e.g. forestry, agriculture, water / coastal, fisheries, minerals?	**N**	The Site is not located within or in proximity to an area of important, high quality or scarce resources.	**N/A**	
2. Waste				
2.1 Will the project produce solid wastes during construction or operation or decommissioning?	**Y**	As with nearly all construction and decommissioning activities, the Proposed Development will result in waste materials from the preparation and undertaking of works. Due to the nature of the Proposed Development, there would be minimal waste generated by the operational phase of the Proposed Development. Should the solar panels become	**N**	The Principal Contractor will ensure that construction and decommissioning waste is managed carefully to maximise recycling and reuse and minimise waste sent to landfill. Any waste arisings during the construction and decommissioning phases will be managed in accordance with the CEMP and all applicable legislation and disposed of in line with best practice. Large

Part 1 - Question	Part 2 - Answer to the question and explanation of reasons (Yes/No or Not Known (?) or N/A)		Part 3 - Is a Significant Effect Likely? (Yes/No or Not Known (?) or N/A)	
		damaged or faulty, they would be replaced as required.		quantities of construction phase-related waste are not anticipated. The CEMP will set out the measures to reduce waste generation during the construction and decommissioning, including identifying opportunities to re-use and recycle on-site and off-site, agreements with material suppliers to reduce the amount of packaging and avoidance of over-ordering. Any operational waste arisings will be dealt with appropriately, recycled where possible, and disposed of in line with NYC's requirements and managed in accordance with all applicable legislation.
3. Pollution and Nuisances				
3.1 Will the project release pollutants or any hazardous, toxic or noxious substances to air?	**N**	Due to the nature of the Proposed Development, there will be no storage of large volumes of hazardous materials on-site. During the construction and decommissioning phases of the Proposed Development, dust could be generated. There may also be emissions associated with plant and vehicles this phase, namely NO_2, PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$. Due to the nature of the Proposed Development, there would be minimal emissions associated with the operational phase, with vehicle movements limited to periodic maintenance activities. On-site construction and decommissioning related vehicles will be operated in-line with the CEMP to ensure that pollutant emissions are reduced and avoided where possible, e.g., plant vehicles will be maintained to a good condition and engines would not be left to idle. The CEMP will be secured via a planning condition and will ensure of no significant environmental effects.	**N/A**	
3.2 Will the project cause noise and vibration or release of light, heat, energy or electromagnetic radiation?	**Y**	The potential exists for noise effects to result from the construction and decommissioning activities associated with the proposed development. Given the Sites rural setting, the existing noise climate on-site will be low. No	**N**	Construction and decommissioning effects will be managed in accordance with best practice measures, implemented through the CEMP, and are not anticipated to generate significant adverse effects in relation to noise, vibration and lighting. The

Part 1 - Question	Part 2 - Answer to the question and explanation of reasons (Yes/No or Not Known (?) or N/A)		Part 3 - Is a Significant Effect Likely? (Yes/No or Not Known (?) or N/A)
		significant noise is anticipated to be generated during operation, with the exception of noise generated during periodic maintenance visits, and a low hum from the transformer stations, which is not audible beyond a few meters. During the construction and decommissioning phases, there may be additional lighting requirements during hours of reduced light. There will be no operational lighting requirements. Any lighting would be limited to maintenance activities and emergency lighting and it is likely that lighting would be operated via sensors, with appropriate lighting cowls fitted to reduce glare and unnecessary light spill to surrounding sensitive receptors. During the construction phase, there is the potential for vibration to be generated by construction related activities associated with piling. However, these would be short term and temporary, and would not be considered significant. Whilst the Proposed Development will generate energy, no heat, energy or electromagnetic radiation will be caused or released that will be of consequential harm to any receptors.	CEMP will be secured through a planning condition. Any external lighting and illumination would be designed carefully in accordance with relevant British Standards and Institute of Lighting Professionals (ILP)[xi] and the CIE (International Commission on Illumination) report[xii]. It is therefore considered that there will be no significant lighting impacts.
3.3 Will the project lead to risks of contamination of land or water from releases of pollutants onto the ground or into surface waters, groundwater, coastal waters or the sea?	**N**	The type of development (i.e. solar panels) is not considered highly contaminative, and the operational phase of the Proposed Development is will not create high volumes of contamination. During the construction and decommissioning phases, standard mitigation measures such as health and safety procedures for construction workers and ensuring that any chemicals or oils will be stored in appropriately bunded containers and in accordance with relevant legislation will be implemented to ensure that any potentially significant effects will be	**N/A**

Part 1 - Question	Part 2 - Answer to the question and explanation of reasons (Yes/No or Not Known (?) or N/A)		Part 3 - Is a Significant Effect Likely? (Yes/No or Not Known (?) or N/A)
		mitigated. These measures would be secured via planning condition within the CEMP. Surface water run-off will be managed on-site during the construction and decommissioning phases through standard mitigation measures implemented through the CEMP. A Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) and Drainage Strategy will be submitted in support of the planning application. The Proposed Development will not result in any significant adverse effects related to contamination.	
3.4 Are there any areas on or around the location which are already subject to pollution or environmental damage, e.g. where existing legal environmental standards are exceeded, which could be affected by the project?	**N**	The Site is not located within an area already subject to pollution or environmental damage. Construction and decommissioning activities will be managed through the CEMP which will include standard, best practice measures such as ensuring bulk cement and other fine powder materials are delivered to the site in enclosed tankers. Dust generation would be managed in accordance with standard best practice measures, enforced through the CEMP and is not anticipated to generate significant adverse effects. Construction and decommissioning vehicle emissions would be managed through the CEMP.	**N/A**
4. Population and Human Health			
4.1 Will there be any risk of major accidents (including those caused by climate change, in accordance with scientific knowledge) during construction, operation or decommissioning?	**N**	During the construction and decommissioning phases the Principal Contractor would implement measures in accordance with Health and Safety legislation / requirements, and good practice measures (forming part of the CEMP) to minimise the risks of accidents that would have effects on people or the environment, resulting in no likely significant effects. There are no anticipated significant risks of accidents during operation as the Proposed Development does not involve users dealing with hazardous substances or involve operations that could cause a major	**N/A**

Part 1 - Question	Part 2 - Answer to the question and explanation of reasons (Yes/No or Not Known (?) or N/A)		Part 3 - Is a Significant Effect Likely? (Yes/No or Not Known (?) or N/A)
		accident. Any such substances required to be used as part of the proposed development would be regulated with all applicable workplace health and safety legislation. The drainage strategy for the Proposed Development will be designed to ensure there is no increase to flood risk on-site or elsewhere which will also accommodate an allowance for climate change and extreme rainfall events. A FRA and Drainage Strategy will be submitted as part of the planning application. Significant effects as a result of climate change are not anticipated.	
4.2 Will the project present a risk to the population (having regard to population density) and their human health during construction, operation or decommissioning? (for example due to water contamination or air pollution)	**N**	The Proposed Development is located within a rural area (see section 2.2 for further details). No risks of effects to human health due to contamination of water sources is anticipated. There will be no foul water drainage associated with the proposed development. Surface water runoff will be managed on-site during the construction and operational phases. Plant emissions and dust generation would be managed in accordance with standard best practice measures, enforced through the CEMP as outlined above. Vehicular movements will also be managed through the CEMP (e.g., by phasing construction deliveries) and would minimise risks associated with human health. Taking this into consideration, there would be no significant effects on human health in relation to water contamination or air pollution, as a result of the Proposed Development.	**N/A**
5. Water Resources			

Part 1 - Question	Part 2 - Answer to the question and explanation of reasons (Yes/No or Not Known (?) or N/A)		Part 3 - Is a Significant Effect Likely? (Yes/No or Not Known (?) or N/A)
5.1 Are there any water resources including surface waters, e.g. rivers, lakes / ponds, coastal or underground waters on or around the location which could be affected by the project, particularly in terms of their volume and flood risk?	**N**	Water resources in proximity to the Site are set out in Chapter 2. The CEMP and standard best practice measures will ensure of no significant effects. Surface water will be managed on-site during the construction, operational and decommissioning phases of the Proposed Development. A FRA and Drainage Strategy will be submitted as part of the planning application package.	**N/A**
6. Biodiversity (Species and Habitats)			
6.1 Are there any protected areas which are designated or classified for their terrestrial, avian and marine ecological value, or any non-designated / non-classified areas which are important or sensitive for reasons of their terrestrial, avian and marine ecological value, located on or around the location and which could be affected by the project? (e.g. wetlands, watercourses or other waterbodies, the coastal zone, mountains, forests or woodlands, undesignated nature reserves or parks. (Where designated indicate level of designation (international, national, regional or local)).	**N**	The Site does not contain or lie adjacent to any statutory ecological, landscape or historical designation. As part of the planning application, Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment and a PEA will be submitted. The ecological reporting to be submitted as part of the planning application package would, if required, identify any appropriate mitigation to minimise the likelihood for significant environmental effects. Due to the nature of the Proposed Development, significant ecological impacts are not anticipated. Additionally, solar development provides ample opportunity for biodiversity and ecological enhancement through landscaping design and lack of disturbance to the environment during the operational life of the Proposed Development.	**N/A**

Part 1 - Question	Part 2 - Answer to the question and explanation of reasons (Yes/No or Not Known (?) or N/A)		Part 3 - Is a Significant Effect Likely? (Yes/No or Not Known (?) or N/A)
6.2 Could any protected, important or sensitive species of flora or fauna which use areas on or around the site, e.g. for breeding, nesting, foraging, resting, over-wintering, or migration, be affected by the project?	**N**	A Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment, Arboricultural Impact Assessment, PEA, and any reports from subsequently recommended surveys will be submitted with the planning application which will identify any appropriate mitigation measures, if required. All wildlife is statutorily protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Standard, best practice measures will be applied through construction phase, including measures to control dust, and to prevent pollution, secured through the implementation of the CEMP (secured by planning condition). In most cases, potential impacts can be avoided. Where these cannot be avoided, mitigation or compensation measures will be implemented to ensure that no significant effect is likely. Any vegetation clearance of the site should be undertaken outside of nesting bird season (1st March to 31st August, inclusive). Should any clearance be required within the nesting bird season, a nesting bird check by a qualified ecologist will confirm the presence / likely absence of nesting birds in these areas 48 hours prior to clearance. If active nests are discovered, then site works will cease until the nest is deemed inactive.	**N/A**
7. Landscape and Visual			
7.1 Are there any areas or features on or around the location which are protected for their landscape and scenic value, and/or any non-designated / non-classified areas or features of high landscape or scenic value on or around the location which could be affected by the project? Where designated indicate level of	**N**	The Site is not located within a designated landscape area. The only landscape designation within 10 km is Nidderdale National Landscape, located approximately 9.3 km to the west. Whilst the surrounding area is rural, and the Proposed Development will introduce non-agricultural land use to the area. Landscaping and planting will be used to provide screening to nearby receptors along the boundary. Taking this into consideration, there would be no significant effects on the landscape as a result of the	**N/A**

Part 1 - Question	Part 2 - Answer to the question and explanation of reasons (Yes/No or Not Known (?) or N/A)		Part 3 - Is a Significant Effect Likely? (Yes/No or Not Known (?) or N/A)	
designation (international, national, regional or local).		Proposed Development.		
7.2 Is the project in a location where it is likely to be highly visible to many people? (If so, from where, what direction, and what distance?)	**Y**	The Proposed Development will be visible from the residents at Lords Moor Farm, users of the footpaths described in paragraph 2.2.6, and road users of Hollins Lane and Lords Lane. Due to the flat topography and proposed and existing vegetation (which is to be retained), the Proposed Development is unlikely to be visible within the wider landscape.	**N**	Sufficient offset has been provided between the property and the placement of solar infrastructure. In addition, boundary planting has been proposed to provide a visual screen to users of PRoW 10.11 4/1. Any impacts experienced during construction will be temporary due to the presence of construction plant and vehicles. Visual operational impacts will remain for the operational period for the few immediately surrounding receptors, however, as described above, sufficient offsets and landscaping plans have been incorporated, therefore, no significant effects are anticipated.
8. Cultural Heritage / Archaeology				
8.1 Are there any areas or features which are protected for their cultural heritage or archaeological value, or any non-designated / classified areas and/ or features of cultural heritage or archaeological importance on or around the location which could be affected by the project (including potential impacts on setting, and views to, from and within)? Where designated indicate level of designation (international, national, regional or local).	**N**	Due to the distance of the nearest statutory designated built heritage assets from the Site, it is not anticipated that there will be adverse or significant impacts resulting from the proposed development on the surrounding assets. A geophysical survey will be undertaken of the site which will confirm the presence of potential to discover unknown archaeological remains, and inform the final design layout. A Heritage Statement (submitted alongside the planning application) will detail the required mitigation measures for construction, to mitigate potential significant impacts to unknown assets.	**N/A**	
9. Transport and Access				
9.1 Are there any routes on or around the location which are	**Y**	There are three PRoWs within the site boundary / along the proposed access route.	**N**	All PRoWs within the site and along the along the access route will remain open during construction. Appropriate

Part 1 - Question	Part 2 - Answer to the question and explanation of reasons (Yes/No or Not Known (?) or N/A)		Part 3 - Is a Significant Effect Likely? (Yes/No or Not Known (?) or N/A)	
used by the public for access to recreation or other facilities, which could be affected by the project?				measures will be included within the CEMP to ensure pedestrian safety is maintained for users PRoW 10.11/4/1 and 10.11/4/2, and any likely significant effects are avoided.
9.2 Are there any transport routes on or around the location which are susceptible to congestion, or which cause environmental problems, which could be affected by the project?	**Y**	The Site is not located within an AQMA. The surrounding road network comprises a local road network consisting of local minor roads and B roads. The construction phase of the Proposed Development would involve changes to traffic movements (e.g. use of HGVs). There is likely to be an increased number of vehicles using the local road network during construction of the Proposed Development, albeit this will be temporary. There is potential for traffic impacts resulting from the proposed development to create congestion on the surrounding roads, without the implementation of mitigation measures. The operational phase will generate limited vehicle movements, relating to periodic maintenance activities.	**N**	A Transport Statement will be submitted as part of the planning application which will assess the construction and operational phases of the Proposed Development. During the construction phase, standard, best practice measures will be adopted to prevent any significant effects, such as appropriate construction routing, phased delivery of goods onto the site to prevent congestion and impacts on the services surrounding the Site. These measures will be enforced through a CEMP, which will be secured via a planning condition. HGVs movements in the construction phase will be low in frequency and volume, given the scale of the Proposed Development. No significant adverse effects on transport routes are anticipated. With the above measures in place any effects will be managed and will not be significant.
10. Land Use				
10.1 Are there existing land uses or community facilities on or around the location which could be affected by the project? E.g. housing, densely populated areas, industry / commerce, farm/agricultural holdings, forestry, tourism, mining, quarrying, facilities relating to health, education, places of worship, leisure /sports / recreation.	**Y**	The land use at the Site and in the immediate vicinity of the Site is agricultural. Whilst the land use will change due to the Proposed Development, solar development is not considered to substantially alter the quality and nature of the land beneath, due to the limited ground works required to install solar panels and the associated infrastructure. An ALC survey will be undertaken to confirm the presence or absence of BMV land on-site.	**N**	The results of the ALC survey will confirm the amount of BMV land present within the Site. Whilst the design of the Proposed Development will not be influenced by the results of the ALC survey, the BMV land will not be permanently lost, due to the temporary and reversible nature of solar development, additionally, during construction soil will be handled in accordance with a soil handling strategy to ensure the quality of the soil stock is not impacted. The construction phase of the Proposed Development will result in construction traffic movements and potentially noise and air quality emissions. However, these effects will be managed by best

Part 1 - Question	Part 2 - Answer to the question and explanation of reasons (Yes/No or Not Known (?) or N/A)		Part 3 - Is a Significant Effect Likely? (Yes/No or Not Known (?) or N/A)
			practice measures, including the CEMP, and effective design, and will not be significant, as above. As indicated above, the proposed development is not anticipated to result in significant effects on transport. This will be confirmed via the Transport Statement, with appropriate mitigation measures written into the CEMP. The land beneath the panels will be sown with a meadow grassland mix. This will be subject to light mowing and presents opportunities for sheep grazing, at the landowner's discretion. Whilst the operation of the Proposed Development removes land from strict agricultural uses, the land once operation ceases and is returned to its former use is often of better quality than before having been without intensive agricultural use for the duration of the operation of the Proposed Development. A FRA and Drainage Strategy will further detail measures to reduce and avoid environmental impacts to the land.
10.2 Are there any plans for future land uses on or around the location which could be affected by the project?	**N**	No. The land within and surrounding the Site is not subject to any local planning allocations.	**N/A**
11. Land Stability and Climate			
11.1 Is the location susceptible to earthquakes, subsidence, landslides, erosion, or extreme /adverse climatic conditions, e.g. temperature inversions, fogs, severe winds, which could cause the project to present environmental problems?	**N**	No. The Site is not located in an area susceptible to earthquakes, subsidence, landslides, erosion, or extreme / adverse climatic conditions.	**N/A**

Part 1 - Question	Part 2 - Answer to the question and explanation of reasons (Yes/No or Not Known (?) or N/A)		Part 3 - Is a Significant Effect Likely? (Yes/No or Not Known (?) or N/A)
12. Cumulative Effects			
12.1 Could this project together with existing and/or approved development result in cumulation of impacts during the construction/operation phase?	**Y**	The potential exists for the Proposed Development to result in cumulative effects with the other developments, as set out in Table 3.1. However, this is unlikely due to the distance between the site and the other developments. Additionally, the Proposed Development, and the developments identified in Table 3.1 will individually implement a CEMP during their construction phases, which is expected to mitigate any potentially significant effects that could arise, therefore no significant effects are anticipated with the identified developments. During operation, given the distance between the Proposed Development and the other developments, no significant impacts are anticipated.	**N/A**
13. Transboundary Effects			
13.1 Is the project likely to lead to transboundary effects?	**N**	No.	**N/A**

4 Conclusion

4.1.1 The screening assessment has considered whether the proposed c.30MW Stell photovoltaic development at land at Lord's Lane, Exelby, North Yorkshire, is unlikely to give rise to significant effects on the environment.

4.1.2 The Proposed Development falls within Category 3 of Schedule 2, '*Energy industry',* sub-section (a) '*Industrial installations for the production of electricity, steam and hot water'*. The Site is not located within a sensitive area as defined by the EIA Regulations but it exceeds the indicative criteria and screening thresholds at more than 5 ha in total area.

4.1.3 With regard to the indicative criteria and thresholds identified in the PPG (set out in Table 3.2), the Proposed Development is above the thresholds where significant effects are considered to occur. However, the screening assessment has identified that significant effects on the environment are not considered likely either alone or in combination with other developments.

4.1.4 The Proposed Development will introduce infrastructure into a predominantly agricultural area; however, the immediate sensitive receptors have been considered within the design and landscaping plans, which will mitigate potential significant visual impacts. Whilst mitigation will be in place, the principal environmental concern remains to be the impact of the Proposed Development on the landscape and the surrounding receptors, in particular, the residents at Lords Moor Farm and the users of the footpaths. Other potential environmental concerns such as flood risk and contamination will be managed through the production of the CEMP, FRA and Drainage Strategy, which will address and minimise these potential impacts.

4.1.5 It is understood that the potential loss of BMV land is a key concern. An ALC survey will confirm the presence or absence of BMV land on-site. However, it is important to note that if BMV land is present on Site, it will not be permanently lost, due to the temporary and reversible nature of solar development. Whilst the Site is located within a rural area, with a local network of roads, a Transport Statement will also be produced, informed by a transport survey, to assess the impacts on traffic during the construction and operational phases. Appropriate soil management, traffic, air quality and noise mitigation measures will be written into a CEMP.

4.1.6 Considering the nature, location and scale of the Proposed Development and with regard to the above measures that will be put in place, it can be concluded that the Proposed Development will not result in significant adverse impacts and is therefore not considered to be EIA development as defined by the EIA Regulations.

References

[i] SI 2017/571 as amended by SI 2018/695

[ii] Environmental Impact Assessment Guidance (available at: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/environmental-impact-assessment) [last accessed 3rd July 2024]

[iii] The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (1988) Agricultural Land Classification System (Agricultural Land Classification of England and Wales - Revised guidelines and criteria for the grading of the quality of agricultural land), available at: http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/file/5526580165083136) [last accessed 3rd July 2024]

[iv] Natural England's Yorkshire & The Humber Region Agricultural Land Classification Map (available at: https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/130043) [last accessed 3rd July 2024]

[v] Environment Agency's Flood Map for Planning (available at: https://flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk/) [last accessed 3rd July 2024]

[vi] Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) interactive map (2024) (available at: https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/aqma/maps/). [last accessed 3rd July 2024]

[vii] Environment Agency England and Wales Landfill Map (2024) (available at: https://www.arcgis.com/home/webmap/viewer.html?webmap=60296f05349340d1aa02080766e526ad). [last accessed 3rd July 2024]

[viii] The Coal Authority (2024) Interactive Map. Available at: **https://mapapps2.bgs.ac.uk/coalauthority/home.html**. [last accessed 3rd July]

[ix] North Yorkshire Council Planning Register (2024) (available at: https://planning.richmondshire.gov.uk/online-applications/search.do?action=simple&searchType=Application) [last accessed 3rd July 2024]

[x] EIA Thresholds Table (available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/630689/eia-thresholds-table.pdf) [last accessed 3rd July 2024]

[xi] Institute of Lighting Engineers Guidance and Standards (https://www.theilp.org.uk/home/) *'Guidance Note for the Reduction of Light Pollution'*

[xii] CIE (International Commission on Illumination) Report (2017) *'Guide on the Limitation of the Effects of Obtrusive light from Outdoor Lighting Installation*

Appendix A Site Boundary

N

Legend

Site Boundary

Site Access

Lord's Moor Plantation

Pippy Beck

Lord's Moor Farm

Main Cut

Old Stell

Bracken Hills

James's Plantation

Hollins Farm

Caravan Site

Melgoats

Path (um)

LORD'S LANE

CG

FB

0 50 100 200m

REVISION	DESCRIPTION	BY	DATE
D	Updated title block and reduced to A2 @ 1:2500 scale	CC	18/10/2023
C	Added site access arrows	CC	12/06/2024
B	Drawing updated with General Layout RevF	CC	23/01/2024
A	Drawing created	CC	18/10/2023

SITE ADDRESS
Stell Solar Farm
Bedale
North Yorkshire
DL8 2ET

PROJECT	Stell Solar Farm
TITLE	Site Location Plan
NUMBER	ENV00100-07-SiteLocation

ENVIROMENA

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SCALE	SHEET	REVISION
1:2500	1 OF 1	D
DRAWN	CHECKED	APPROVED
CC	CC	CC

A2