



Planning Statement

Small-scale Solar Installation at Manor Farm, Hayling Island

Solar Voltaics Ltd

Title

Planning Statement

Client

Solar Voltaics Ltd

Project Number

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Final for Submission

Report Number

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 This planning supporting statement has been prepared by Adams Hendry Consulting Limited (Adams Hendry) on behalf of Solar Voltaics Ltd in support of an application for full planning permission for a small-scale solar installation at Manor Farm, Hayling Island. The proposal will generate electricity principally for use on site.
- 1.2 In addition to this planning statement, the planning application submission includes the following:

Planning Application Drawings

Site Location plan (Drawing no. SV/1250/SLP)

Site Plan (Drawing no. SV/1250/PAA)

Proposed Site Layout Plan (Drawing no. SV/1250/PSL)

Proposed Solar Array Elevations (Drawing no. SV/MF/001)

Proposed Switch Room Elevations, Roof Plan and Floor Plan (Drawing no. SV/MF/002, sheets 1 to 3)

2 Context for the Proposal

Background and Need

- 2.1 A number of planned improvements are proposed to be undertaken to the electricity infrastructure at Manor Farm, which is currently not sufficient to adequately support the existing and future operational needs of the farm.
- 2.2 The annual electricity demand for Manor farm is currently in excess of 80,000kwh per year, and this will increase in the future as heating systems and boilers are converted from fuel oil to environmentally friendly heat pumps. There is no mains gas at the farm meaning that all heating of the farm and associated buildings is either provided by oil or electricity, both of which are expensive and increasing in cost.
- 2.3 The proposal for small-scale renewable energy generation at the farm has been developed in light of the Government's commitment to substantially increasing renewable energy provision in the UK.
- 2.4 This vision is supported by the Government's Feed-in Tariffs (FITs) scheme which was introduced in April 2010, with the intention of encouraging the deployment of small-scale (up to 5MW), low-carbon electricity generation. The proposal falls under the FITs scheme.

Scope of this Planning Application

- 2.5 The planning application relates solely to the installation of ground mounted solar panels, above and below ground cabling, and an associated small switch room building on land at Manor Farm. A detailed description of the proposals is provide in Section 4.
- 2.6 This installation will then be connected to the electricity network through above and below ground cabling at a new on site substation. The substation does not form part of the proposals, as it is being installed by SSE under the wider planned electricity improvements being implemented at the farm.

Environmental Impact Assessment

- 2.7 Industrial energy installations producing electricity and exceeding 0.5 hectares (ha) fall under Section 3 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011, as requiring screening under the EIA Regulations.
- 2.8 The application proposals do not exceed 0.5ha nor, given the nature, size and location of the proposed development, are they likely to have a significant effect on the environment. On this basis the proposals are not considered to be EIA development.
- 2.9 It is important to also note that the proposals are not associated with, part of, nor on the same site or scale as the potential larger solar farm on land to the north of the proposal site, that has been the subject of a Screening Opinion issued under Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011, by Havant Borough Council (ref.GEN/14/003601).

Consultation

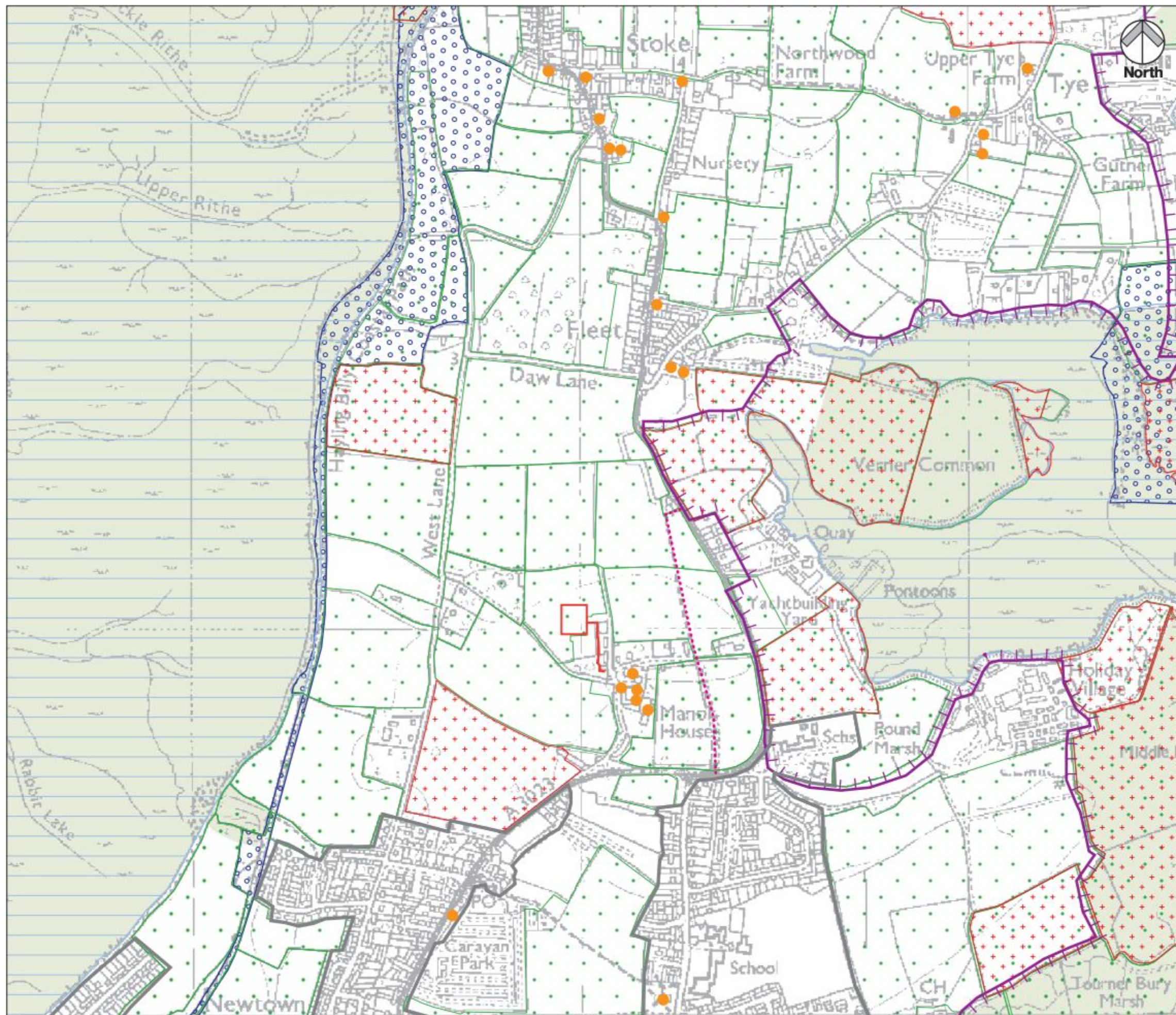
- 2.10 The proposals have been the subject of pre-application discussions with Havant Borough Council.

Advice was initially sought in September 2014 on the principle of the development on the site and other considerations for the determination of a planning application, and confirmation on planning application requirements.

- 2.11 Pre-application advice from HBC suggested that the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH) were contacted to clarify the extent to which renewable energy targets have been met to date. Contact was initially made with PUSH via email on 17th October, however a response was not received prior to the submission of the planning application.
- 2.12 HBC also advised that the Civil Aviation Authority were contacted in respect of glint and glare and effects on neighboring uses and aircraft. As discussed in Section 4, the proposal will not result in any glint or glare due to the use of low-reflective PV panels. Consultation was therefore not deemed appropriate, and this is confirmed by the CAA's 'Guidance on Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) Planning Consultation Requirements' (August 2012), which confirms that it is not necessary to consult the CAA about *'general planning applications not affecting CAA property'*.
- 2.13 The guidance further states that *'as a general rule, concerning local land use and planning issues, including cases where local aerodromes may be affected or involved, lie solely within the remit of local authorities'* (paragraph 1.1).
- 2.14 The application site does not lie within an area at risk of flooding, and does not trigger a need for a Flood Risk Assessment. Whilst HBC's pre-application advice is that the Environment Agency be consulted on drainage, given the nature of proposed development, and the conclusions of the drainage statement included in this document (paragraph 4.21), pre-application consultation with the Environment Agency was not deemed necessary.
- 2.15 The proposals have been subject to pre-application discussions with Hampshire County Council (Ecology). Further details are provided in Section 6. The discussions with HCC Ecology are ongoing.

3 Site and Surroundings

- 3.1 The site is 0.49ha in size and comprises part of an agricultural field at Manor Farm, situated on Hayling Island in Hampshire (see Figure 1).
- 3.2 The site is part of a larger field which has been subdivided by post and wire fencing into a series of individual grazing paddocks, however it is not currently grazed by livestock. The site is within a largely rural area, surrounded by agricultural land, but also lies immediately north of a large complex of existing farm buildings. A number of ancillary farm units are present, and operations at the farm include garden waste composting.
- 3.3 The site for the small switch room building is adjacent to existing industrial farm buildings, within the main farm complex. It comprises land currently used for storage of farm machinery and materials, and also lies adjacent to a chicken coup and run.
- 3.4 Manor Farm lies north of Manor Road (A3023), from which it is accessed via an unnamed road. The A3023 is the arterial route for Hayling Island, providing access from Havant and the mainland via Langstone Bridge, to the more densely populated southerly areas of the Island.
- 3.5 The nearest residential properties (110 and 112 West Lane) lie 100m north west of the site and are situated off West Lane. The Osier Dell farmhouse is situated within the main farm complex, 150m south of the site. A cluster of properties lies off Manor Lane, approximately 300m south of the site. The Maypole Pub lies approximately 300m to the northeast of the site.
- 3.6 Approximately 200m east of the site is a public right of way, running in a southerly direction from The Maypole Pub.
- 3.7 Chichester Harbour bounds the east of Hayling Island and Langstone Harbour the west. The site is situated fairly centrally on the Island, being approximately 500m inland of both eastern and western shores.
- 3.8 The site lies within approximately 450m of the Solent Maritime Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Chichester and Langstone Harbours Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar sites, Langstone Harbour and Chichester Harbour Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), and the Hayling Billy Local Nature Reserve.
- 3.9 The Chichester Harbour Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty lies 400m to the east of the site.
- 3.10 A cluster of five Grade II listed buildings lies to the south of the site, within the main farm complex. The buildings comprise granaries, a stable block, barn and the South Hayling Manor house, all believed to date from circa 1777.
- 3.11 The application area lies outside of land that the Environment Agency consider is at risk of flooding.



KEY

- Site location
- SSSI, SPA, Ramsar
- SAC
- Chichester Harbour AONB
- Local Nature Reserve
- Listed Buildings
- ⋯ Public footpath
- Urban boundary
- + Important sites for Brent Geese and/or Waders
- + Uncertain sites for Brent Geese and/or Waders

Source:
Havant Borough Council Proposals Map
Magic.gov.uk
English Heritage

SOLAR VOLTAICS

MANOR FARM, HAYLING ISLAND

Figure 1 :

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS

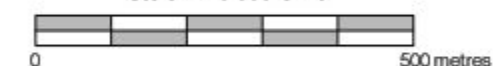
Drawing No : SV/1250/01

Revision: **A**

Drawn by: NM

Date: 22/10/14

Scale 1: 10 000 @ A3



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4 The Proposal

- 4.1 The proposal involves the installation of ground mounted solar panels for the generation of renewable energy, and an associated small switch room building. As discussed in Section 2, a separate new substation is being installed by SSE under existing planned improvements to the electricity infrastructure at Manor Farm, and will allow connection of the solar panels to the farm supply and electricity network.
- 4.2 As also discussed in Section 2, the annual electricity demand for Manor Farm is due to increase in the coming years as the farm reverts away from oil, to more environmentally friendly heat pumps.
- 4.3 The proposed small scale solar installation will have an output of 250kw and provide 70% of the farm's total electricity requirement. This will significantly reduce the amount of electricity that the farm requires to take from the national grid, generating sustainable energy, reducing electricity costs and helping to maintain the farm's long term viability.

Solar Panel Array

- 4.4 The proposed solar panels would be ground mounted, each on a single post driven 1.5m into the ground, as shown on Drawing no. SV/MF/001. The panels will be arranged in rows with associated inverters. There will be 8 rows in total, as shown in Drawing no.SV/MF/001.
- 4.5 Each solar panel is 1.0m (w) x 1.64m (l) x 0.04m (d). The panels will be south facing and tilted at an angle of 30 degrees, such that they can operate at maximum efficiency.
- 4.6 The panels will have a low-reflective surface and not result in glint or glare. The support framework for the panels comprises matt galvanised steelwork. The panels are 'self cleaning' and require little or no maintenance, once installed.
- 4.7 Each row of panels is inter-connected with above ground cables which are then combined into a single cable running above and below ground to the switch room building and sub-station. Aside from limited trenching for the below ground cabling, the solar installation requires no excavations.

Above and below ground cabling

- 4.8 Above and below ground armoured cable will be laid in the route shown in Drawing no.SV/1250/PSL. For the majority (approximately 100m) of the route, the cable will be clipped to existing structures.
- 4.9 Approximately 40m of the cable route will be laid in a 200mm (w) x 600m (d) trench. The routing of the below ground cabling has been designed such that it avoids passing through or close to existing mature trees, and will predominately be laid below existing areas of made ground and hardstanding which will be excavated and made good.

Switch Room Building

- 4.10 As discussed in Section 2, planned improvements are due to be undertaken to the electricity infrastructure at Manor Farm. A small switch room building is required to support both the planned improvements, and the solar installation.

- 4.11 The building is proposed approximately 100m south of the solar array site, shown on Drawing no.SV/1250/PSL. It will house electrical metering, consumer units, mains switches and associated electrical equipment, and be situated adjacent to existing farm buildings and the main farm complex, in order to minimise visual and built appearance, as shown on Drawing no.SV/MF/002 Sheet 1.
- 4.12 The building will be 3m(w) x 2m(l) x 3.0m(h), with a footprint of 6m². Proposed elevations are shown on drawing no SV/MF/002 Sheets 1 to 2.
- 4.13 The building will be constructed of brick to match existing farm buildings, both in style and materials. The building will have a 1m high natural slate pitched roof, also to match existing farm buildings.

Landscaping

- 4.14 Careful consideration has been given to developing an appropriate landscaping scheme, shown in Drawing no. SV/1250/PSL. A mix of native planting hedge is proposed along the existing track to the south west of the solar array, to add additional screening from the south and west, and further screen any views from West Lane. Views from properties to the north west are currently screened by existing trees and vegetation.
- 4.15 The hedges will be a mixed native species hedge, comprising the following species mix:

Percentage	Species	Height	Root
60 %	Hawthorn	60 – 80 cm	Bare roots
10%	Blackthorn	60 – 80 cm	Bare roots
10%	Field Maple	60 – 80 cm	Bare roots
10%	Hazel	60 – 80 cm	Bare roots
5%	Spindle	60 – 80 cm	Bare roots
5%	Gelder Rose	60 – 80 cm	Bare roots

- 4.16 The hedge plants will be notch planted in double staggered rows at 5 plants per linear metre, protected by 60cm spiral rabbit guard and attached to bamboo cane supports. Hedge plants will be planted in a trench, backfilled with topsoil/compost mix with mulch applied to surface. The future management and maintenance of the landscaping can be secured by planning condition.
- 4.17 The site of the solar array will be mown as required, to keep grass height below 0.3m to prevent shading.

Security

- 4.18 The farm is a secure and private site with controlled gated access entry. Existing fencing separates the proposed site from distant PRow's, as shown in Drawing no. SV/1250/PSL, and as such no specific security is proposed as part of the scheme. The small switchroom building will have a security lock system and is proposed within a secure location of the farm complex.

Transport

- 4.19 Once operational, the scheme will require minimal infrequent maintenance on an ad hoc basis, and as such will not result in any significant transport movements. The performance of the solar installation can be monitored remotely over the internet, further reducing the need for visits to the site. Construction phase traffic is detailed below.

Drainage

- 4.20 There is no requirement for a drainage system to be installed on site, as rainfall onto the solar panels will run off and enter into the ground as existing. Rainfall onto the small roof area of the switch room will be discharged to soakaway. The details of this can be secured by condition if necessary. No additional hard surfacing is proposed as a result of the scheme. As such, there will be no adverse impacts on surface water run-off or drainage, nor an increased risk of surface water flooding as a result of the proposal.

Construction arrangements

- 4.21 Construction of the solar array will take place in the first quarter of 2015, and take approximately 2-3 weeks. Approximately four operatives are required on site during the construction phase. A single tractor driven post driver will be employed for a two day period to drive the solar panel posts into the ground at the start of construction. Construction after this initial phase is manual and will not involve additional machinery.
- 4.22 During construction there will be a total of four 40ft articulated trailer deliveries to the site, in two delivery slots about 1 week apart. The farm has safe and adequate access, and is routinely accessed by heavy farm vehicles and machinery. The construction of the scheme will not result in any significant transport movements or have safety implications on the highway network.
- 4.23 Construction of the switchroom building will take approximately 6 weeks and be undertaken simultaneously.

5 Relevant Planning Policy

- 5.1 This section of the Planning Statement provides a summary of the planning policies that are relevant to the proposals. Figure 1 shows the location of the proposal site and the surrounding planning and environmental designations.
- 5.2 The application site lies within Havant District and as such will be determined by HBC.

National Planning Policy

- 5.3 Material to any planning decision is the advice contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), published in March 2012, and the Government's Planning Practice Guidance, published in March 2014.

Local Planning Policy

- 5.4 The statutory development plan comprises the:
- Havant Borough Local Plan: Core Strategy (adopted March 2011)
 - Havant Borough Local Plan (Allocations) (adopted July 2014)
 - Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan (adopted October 2013)

Havant Borough Local Plan: Core Strategy

- 5.5 The Havant Borough Local Plan: Core Strategy, subsequently referred to as 'Core Strategy' was adopted in 2011. It sets out the spatial planning strategy for the area up to 2026. The following policies of the Core Strategy are of relevance to the proposed development:
- CS11: Protecting and Enhancing the Special Environment and Heritage of Havant Borough
 - CS12: Chichester Harbour Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)
 - CS14: Efficient use of Resources
 - CS16: High Quality Design
 - CS17: Concentration and Distribution of Development within the Urban Areas
 - DM8: Conservation, Protection and Enhancement of Existing Natural Features

Havant Borough Local Plan: Allocations

- 5.6 The Havant Borough Local Plan (Allocations), subsequently referred to as the 'Allocations Plan', was adopted in July 2014. It identifies sites for specific uses up to 2026 and includes development management policies for the District. The following policies of the Allocations Plan are of relevance to the proposed development:
- AL1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
 - DM20: Historic Assets
 - DM23: Sites for Brent Geese and Waders

Havant Borough Council Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

- 5.7 The Havant Borough Council Design Guide SPD supplements the Core Strategy and seeks to raise the standard of design across the Borough.

6 Analysis of Planning and Environmental Issues

Principle of sustainable development and renewable energy provision

(Climate Change Act 2008, DECC Solar PV Strategy, NPPF, PPG, Core Strategy Policy CS14, Allocations Plan Policy AL1)

- 6.1 The Government is committed to substantially increasing renewable energy provision in the UK, in order to meet targets for reducing green house gas emissions as based on the Climate Change Act 2008. The Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC)'s UK Solar PV Strategy Part 1: Roadmap to a Brighter Future (October 2013) recognises the potential role and contribution that solar photovoltaics (PV), including ground mounted systems, can play in helping to meet the UK's renewable energy targets, and supporting the decarbonisation of the economy in the longer term. This Government's FITs scheme seeks to encourage the deployment of small-scale (up to 5MW), low-carbon electricity generation.
- 6.2 At the heart of the NPPF lies the presumption in favour of sustainable development, underpinned by 12 core planning principles. These principles include that planning should support the transition to a low carbon future and encourage the use of renewable resources, including through the development of renewable energy.
- 6.3 The NPPF also confirms that local planning authorities should have a positive strategy to promote energy from renewable and low carbon sources (paragraph 97). When determining planning applications, local authorities should:
 - "not require applicants for energy development to demonstrate the overall need for renewable or low carbon energy and also recognise that even small-scale projects provide a valuable contribution to cutting greenhouse gas emissions; and
 - approve the application (unless material considerations indicate otherwise) if its impacts are (or can be made) acceptable...." (NPPF, paragraph 98)
- 6.4 The Government's Planning Practice Guidance further reiterates the importance of supporting the delivery of appropriately sited green energy in response to climate change (paragraph 001).
- 6.5 Core Strategy Policy CS14 (Efficient Use of Resources) supports development that locally contributes to the delivery of the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH) target of 100MW of renewable energy by 2020 for the whole of the PUSH area. Paragraph 7.29 of the Core Strategy further recognises the role that renewable technologies will have in energy production throughout the borough over the plan period.
- 6.6 Policy AL1 of the Allocations Plan confirms the Council's commitment to taking a positive approach when considering development proposals, reflecting the NPPF's presumption in favour of sustainable development. Planning applications that accord with the policies in the local plan will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicated otherwise.
- 6.7 The scheme is considered to be in accordance with the NPPF, PPG and Policy CS14 of the Core Strategy. It will improve energy self sufficiency at Manor Farm, providing 70% of the farm's energy requirements through renewable sources, and reducing the carbon footprint of the farm by saving

in the region of 220 tonnes per year in carbon dioxide emissions.

- 6.8 It will therefore contribute to the Government's vision of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, help to meet the UK's renewable energy targets, and locally contribute to the delivery of the PUSH target for the South Hampshire sub-region.
- 6.9 The Feed in Tariffs for solar PV schemes of this project size will reduce after 31st December 2014, resulting in the proposed small scale solar installation becoming marginal in viability terms. It is the Applicants intention to seek to secure planning permission for the project before 31st December 2014 to allow pre-accreditation of the project and lock into the current available FIT rates. This will ensure the viability of the project is protected. If planning permission is granted after 31st December it will not be possible to secure the current FIT rates.

Agricultural Land and Development within the Countryside

(NPPF, PPG, Core Strategy Policy CS17)

- 6.10 National policy requires that planning should recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside (NPPF, paragraph 17). In addition, where significant development of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary, local planning authorities should seek to use areas of poorer quality land in preference to that of a higher quality, and take into account the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land (NPPF, paragraph 112).
- 6.11 Planning Practice Guidance advises that the Agricultural Land Classification method be used for assessing the quality of farmland to enable informed choices to be made about its future use (PPG, paragraph 026). It further encourages the effective use of land by focusing large scale solar farm on previously developed and non-agricultural land, providing it is not of high environmental value (paragraph 013).
- 6.12 Under Policy CS17 of the Core Strategy, development in non-urban areas will only be permitted if it is consistent with the policies for the countryside set out in national policy.
- 6.13 The proposal involves a small-scale solar installation that is minor in terms of size and scale. Its 250kw generating capacity is well below the definition of a large scale development (generally over 5MW) in DECC's Solar PV Strategy.
- 6.14 Situated in the countryside, the site comprises a small, self contained parcel of gravel based rough grazing land. It forms a small part of Manor Farm's wider agricultural holding which is substantial in size, covering much of the central area of Hayling Island. The application site's limited size and shape means it is difficult to farm using current large scale machinery and practices. This is the predominate reason it is not intensively farmed at the current time. The use of the application site for a solar installation will not result in the permanent loss of agricultural land, as following the cessation of its use for solar power generation the solar installation could be easily removed and the land returned to agricultural use. However, given its size and shape it is not considered likely that the application site would become intensively farmed in any event. The location of the application site is dictated by its purpose to serve the farm, and its subsequent operational need to be located near to the main farm complex and substation.
- 6.15 The site has been carefully chosen based on these operational requirements and agricultural use; it is the lowest grade land available within the practical vicinity of the farm. The site's location adjacent to existing farm operations has also been chosen to limit both visual appearance and minimise the distance of above and below ground cabling (landscape factors are discussed further

in paragraphs 6.21-6.42).

- 6.16 Notwithstanding the above, the site will remain as grass meadow following implementation of the solar array. In addition, when the array has reached the end of its practical life, the equipment will be disassembled and removed from the site. The main mounting posts of the system will be removed with a hydraulic puller, leaving no materials remaining in the ground.
- 6.17 Following this reinstatement plan, the site's use for a solar installation will have no detrimental impact on the operation of the farm, and the site's long term agricultural productivity will not be affected. Fundamentally, the scheme is essential to ensure future energy supplies and to reduce running costs, as such protecting the long term agricultural operation and viability of the farm.
- 6.18 Other options to meet the farm's energy requirements have been reviewed, including rooftop installations and the use of previously developed land. Rooftop installation of solar panels has, depending on the roofslopes used for the installation, the potential to impact on the settings of the cluster of listed buildings that lie within the main farm complex. Of perhaps greater significance, however, is that the roofs need to be of sufficient design and structure to take the weight of the solar panel installation. The existing agricultural buildings were not designed to take this weight and structural alterations to buildings could be required as part of any roof mounted installation. The orientation of the existing buildings and the presence of overshadowing from trees would also result in a much less efficient system. The area of available roofs is not sufficient to meet the farm's energy needs. These factors would make a roof mounted scheme unviable.
- 6.19 Given existing agricultural and composting operations at the main farm complex, there isn't brownfield land available to accommodate the proposal, and as such greenfield land is deemed the only feasible option.
- 6.20 In accordance with national policy and guidance, the site seeks to make use of poorer quality land in preference to that of higher quality, whilst also seeking a planning balance between operational requirements, landscape, and viability. The proposal is considered to be consistent with national policy and as such concords with Policy CS17 of the Core Strategy.

Landscape, Design and Heritage

(NPPF, Core Strategy Policy CS11, CS12, DM8, DM20)

- 6.21 The NPPF confirms that local planning authorities should design policies to maximise renewable and low carbon energy development, while ensuring that adverse landscape and cumulative impacts are addressed satisfactorily (NPPF, paragraph 97). National policy further seeks to ensure that developments are visually attractive and have appropriate landscaping (NPPF, paragraph 58). Great weight is given to conserving landscape in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (NPPF, paragraph 115).
- 6.22 Local planning policy (Core Strategy Policies CS11 and CS12) requires development, amongst other criteria, to;
- ensure key landscape and building form principles set out in the Havant Borough Townscape, Landscape and Seascape Character Assessment are protected and where possible enhanced;
 - protects and where possible enhances the borough's statutory and non-statutory designated landscape;
 - Protects and where appropriate enhances the borough's statutory and non-statutory heritage designations.

- Carefully assess the impact of individual proposals, and their cumulative effect, on the Chichester Harbour AONB and its setting.
- 6.23 In addition, landscape distinctiveness should be protected and landscaping works should integrate successfully with the local environment and existing natural features, using local materials and plant species (Core Strategy Policy DM8).
- 6.24 Core Strategy Policy CS16 requires development to be designed to a high standard, including responding to and drawing from local context. Heights, massing and materials are among the aspects of development that should be informed by characteristics of the locality.
- 6.25 Part 5 of the Havant Borough Council Design Guide SPD discusses Hayling Island, albeit this contains character assessments detailing the urban areas and not the area to which the application site lies. Nonetheless, the Design Guide has been considered when finalising the proposal.
- 6.26 A Photo Location Plan is contained in Appendix 1 (Drawing no. SV/1250/APP1), and confirms that the site is well screened from long and short distance views, by a combination of existing farm buildings, trees, mature hedgerows, and by the existing compositing facility to the south east of the site. In addition, the proposed relatively low height of the solar panels mean they are inconspicuous even from closer viewpoints.
- 6.27 Views to the north and east are screened significantly by dense hedgerow, shown in photos 8,9 and 13 of Appendix 1. There are very limited long distance views towards the site from the Public Right Of Way (PRoW) running to the east of the site, however the solar panels will not be visible from this vantage point given their limited height, and hedgerow present (Photo 3, Appendix 1).
- 6.28 Given the hedgerows to the north of the site, the site is not visible from Daw Lane in summer months, and is only marginally, if at all visible during winter months, and even then at considerable distance. The solar panels are orientated southwards and this, coupled with the intervening vegetation means that there would not be a landscape or visual impact.
- 6.29 Whilst the land is of a flat topography, there are limited views of the site from the southern end of West Lane. However, at its nearest visible point, the site will be a distance of 300m from West Lane, resulting in only limited and distant views of the solar panels.
- 6.30 Views of the site from the nearest properties on West Lane (no.2 110 and 112) will be limited given the screening already afforded by the existing trees and hedgerow that are unaffected by the proposals (Photo 4, Appendix 1). The solar panels will be south facing and as such face away from these properties.
- 6.31 There are limited and long distance views of the site from the Maypole Pub (Photo 3, Appendix 1) with intervening trees and hedgerows.
- 6.32 Views to properties south of the site on Manor Lane will also be minimal, given the low height of the panels, and distance from the site.
- 6.33 The small switch room building has been sensitively located and designed, such that it will have no bearing upon the landscape of the wider countryside. It will be barely visible from any viewpoints, given its location adjacent to existing farm buildings within the main farm complex, and if glimpsed would be seen within the context of the complex of much larger buildings.
- 6.34 Dimensions of the small switch room building are determined by the electricity equipment required

to be housed to meet the farm's operational requirements (including those required under wider planned improvements at the farm), and to provide access for maintenance and operation. Materials have been chosen to match existing farm buildings where possible.

- 6.35 The Chichester Harbour Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty lies approximately 350m to the east of the site. There are no views to the site from the AONB and as such the proposal will not have any impact on the setting of the AONB.
- 6.36 Views from higher ground, including Portsdown Hill and Portchester have also been assessed as part of the proposal, as shown in Appendix 2. Whilst, on a clear day, Hayling Island can be seen from higher ground to the west, and at Portsdown Hill (Existing View 1, Appendix 2), the site is over 10km from this higher ground and of such a minor scale that it will be inconceivable on the landscape. In addition, the solar panels will be south facing, away from higher ground to the north, and have a low-reflective surface such that no glint or glare will occur.
- 6.37 The cluster of Grade 2 listed buildings situated within the main farm complex are barely, if at all visible, from the site given the presence of existing farm buildings and units. The proposal will not therefore impact on the setting of these listed buildings.
- 6.38 Despite its well screened nature, careful consideration has been given to landscaping proposals during the finalisation of the scheme. An indicative landscaping scheme is proposed and shown in Drawing no. SV/1250/PSL. The landscaping scheme seeks to allow for sensitive additional screening to the solar array, whilst maintaining the character of the farmland on which it is sited.
- 6.39 As discussed further in paragraphs 6.46 to 6.48 below, an ecological management plan is proposed to be developed in consultation with Hampshire County Council (Ecology), and submitted within a fortnight of this application submission. This ecological management plan is likely to further inform the indicative landscaping scheme. The Applicant is keen to work with HBC and HCC Ecology to progress the indicative landscaping scheme should HBC wish.
- 6.40 In summary, the proposal is not considered to result in any adverse landscape impacts. In accordance with national and local planning policy, the development has taken careful account of landscape setting and seeks to protect the character and landscape value of the District. It is further accompanied by an indicative landscaping scheme, the details of which can be varied if necessary in response to HBC requirements, the details of which can be secured by condition.
- 6.41 There are no consented schemes in the vicinity of the site that would, in combination with the application proposals, give rise to any cumulative landscape or visual impacts.
- 6.42 As discussed in paragraph 4.9, below ground cabling avoids passing through or close to existing mature trees. This ensures that there will be no impact on trees, given that the cable will be clipped to existing structures where any trees are present near the proposed cable route.

Wildlife and biodiversity

(NPPF, Core Strategy policies DM8 and CS11, Allocations Plan Policy DM23)

- 6.43 The NPPF seeks to contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible (paragraph 109). Opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around developments should be encouraged, and permission refused should development result in significant harm that cannot be avoided, adequately mitigated, or compensated for (paragraph 118).

- 6.44 Core Strategy Policy DM8 seeks to protect natural features of nature conservation importance. Policy CS11 requires that development protects and where possible, enhances the borough's statutory and non-statutory designated habitats, and features of biological interest. Particular regard must be had to the hierarchy of nature conservations within the borough, the highest protection of which is afforded to SPAs, SACs and Ramsar sites.

Brent Geese and Waders

- 6.45 The site is allocated on the Havant Allocations Plan Proposals Map as an uncertain site for Brent Geese and/or waders. Policy DM23 of the Allocations Plan confirms that planning permission will be granted for development on such sites where appropriate surveys are undertaken and it is determined that the site has no importance.
- 6.46 At the pre-application stage, Hampshire County Council (Ecology) confirmed that the site is uncertain in terms of its suitability to support Brent Geese and/or waders. A Phase 1 Ecology Survey has been carried out by a qualified ecologist and a report prepared in a draft form. Initial findings of the Phase 1 Ecology Survey indicate that the site is unsuitable habitat for Brent Geese, due to its lack of openness and fences which compartmentalise it. Additionally, the composting facility adjacent to the field produces a considerable amount of noise irregularly which is not conducive to foraging or roosting birds.
- 6.47 Nonetheless, the Applicant proposes to participate in an ongoing dialogue with Hampshire County Council (Ecology), in order to establish and agree any potential mitigation measures based on a 'worst case scenario', should Brent Geese or Waders be present on the site. These measures may include removing fences on land north of the site, to increase its openness and suitability for Brent Geese, or an agreed landscaping scheme for the wider area.
- 6.48 Opportunities also exist in order to improve habitat for biodiversity on site, by sowing wildflowers below the panels and managing these appropriately. As such, it is proposed that an Ecology Report and details of an ecological management plan developed in consultation with Hampshire County Council (Ecology), will follow within a fortnight of this submission.

Other Protected and Notable Species

- 6.49 The draft Ecology Report concludes that the proposals are unlikely to impact on bats, badgers, dormice, or Great Crested Newts. A small area of reptile habitat will be impacted, however a watching brief by an experienced ecologist will be undertaken during the installation of the cable where it cuts through potential reptile habitat.
- 6.50 The development's construction will be scheduled to avoid peak bird nesting season, unless prior inspection of the site by an ecologist concluded that there are no nesting birds present immediately prior to the commencement of works. If the presence of nesting birds is confirmed, any works which may disturb them will be delayed until the young birds have fledged the next of their own accord.

Other environmental and amenity considerations

(NPPF, Core Strategy Policy CS16)

- 6.51 The NPPF requires that planning ensures a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings (paragraph 17).
- 6.52 Local planning policy seeks to ensure that development does not cause unacceptable harm to the

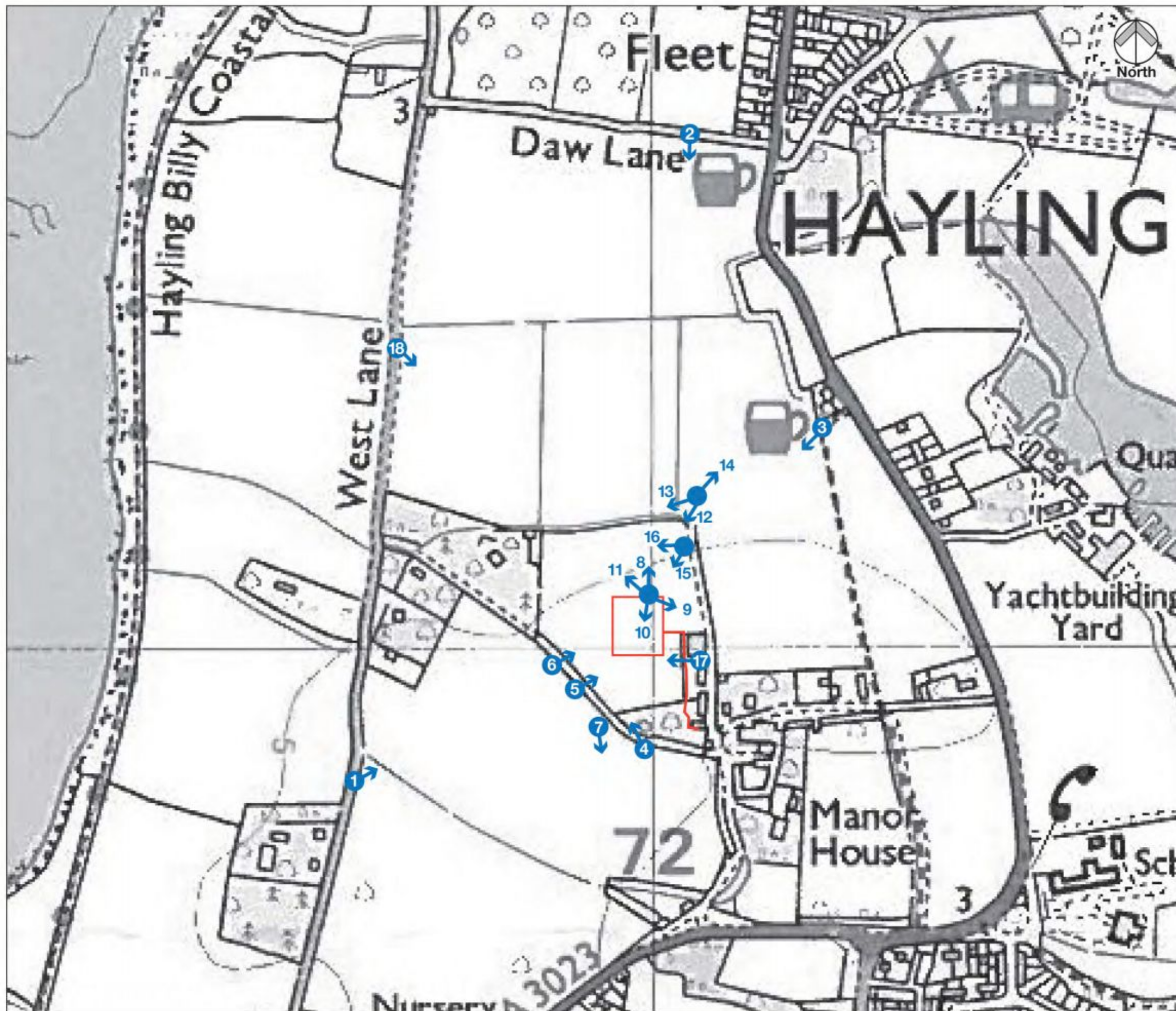
amenity of neighbours, including through loss of outlook or privacy, or through noise (Core Strategy policy CS16).

- 6.53 The proposal is not considered to result in any adverse amenity impacts for existing or future occupants of land or buildings. As discussed in paragraphs 6.29-6.31, views of the site from the nearest properties on West Lane are distant and well screened. As such, any outlook from these properties over the solar array will be limited to oblique views, and seen within the operational context of the existing farm complex and composting facility.
- 6.54 There will be no adverse noise impacts as a result of the proposal. Ambient noise levels at the working farm and composting facility adjacent to the site are above the level at which any limited low level noise from the switch room or transformer would be audible.
- 6.55 The proposal is therefore considered to be in accordance with the NPPF and Core Strategy Policy CS16.

7 Summary and Conclusion

- 7.1 The proposal for a small-scale solar installation at Manor farm is essential to ensure an adequate electricity supply for the farm. It will significantly improve the self sufficiency of the farm, allowing for a renewable and clean source of electricity generation, cutting carbon emissions and helping to meet both national and local renewable energy targets.
- 7.2 The implementation of the solar array and switch room building adjacent to the existing farm complex will not negatively impact upon the openness of the wider countryside, or landscape features. There will be no impact on the amenity of the area or on nearby properties.
- 7.3 The viability of the scheme is dependent on securing planning permission for the project before 31st December 2014. For this reason, and following pre-application discussion with HBC, the application has been submitted with an Ecology Report and Ecological Management Plan to follow, based on the outcome of discussions with Hampshire County Council (Ecology) regarding the uncertainty of the site for Brent Geese and Waders. The draft Ecological Report has concluded that the proposal is unlikely to impact upon other protected and notable species.
- 7.4 Overall, there is an exceptional need for the proposal to secure the long-term operation and viability of Manor Farm. The scheme is considered to comply with national and local policies as detailed within this statement, and it is requested that HBC grants planning permission for the proposals at the earliest possible opportunity.

Appendix 1



KEY

 Site location

 Photo location points

Note: Photographs taken on 15th August 2014

SOLAR VOLTAICS

MANOR FARM, HAYLING ISLAND

Appendix 1 :

PHOTO LOCATION PLAN

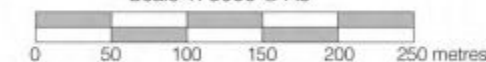
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Revision: **A**

Drawn by: NM

Date: 221014

Scale 1: 5000 @ A3



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Photo 1 - View looking northeast towards site from West Lane (approximate location of site marked red)



Photo 2 - View looking south towards site from Daw Lane (approximate location of site marked red)



Photo 3 - View looking southwest towards site from public footpath at The Maypole Pub (approximate location of site marked red)



Photo 4 - View looking northwest across site towards properties on West Lane



Photo 5 - View looking east across site



Photo 6 - View looking northeast across site



Photo 7- View from existing track to south of site looking south towards properties on Manor Road



Photo 8 - View looking north from site towards Daw Lane (screened by tall hedgerow)



Photo 9 - View looking east from site towards West Lane (screened by tall hedgerow)



Photo 10 - View looking south across site



Photo 11 - View looking northwest across site towards properties on West Lane



Photo 12 - View looking southwest towards site beyond hedge boundaries



Photo 13 - View looking west along hedge boundary to the north of the field containing application site



Photo 14 - View from north of field containing application site looking northeast towards West Lane and The Maypole Pub



Photo 15 - View looking southwest across the site



Photo 16 - View looking west towards properties on West Lane

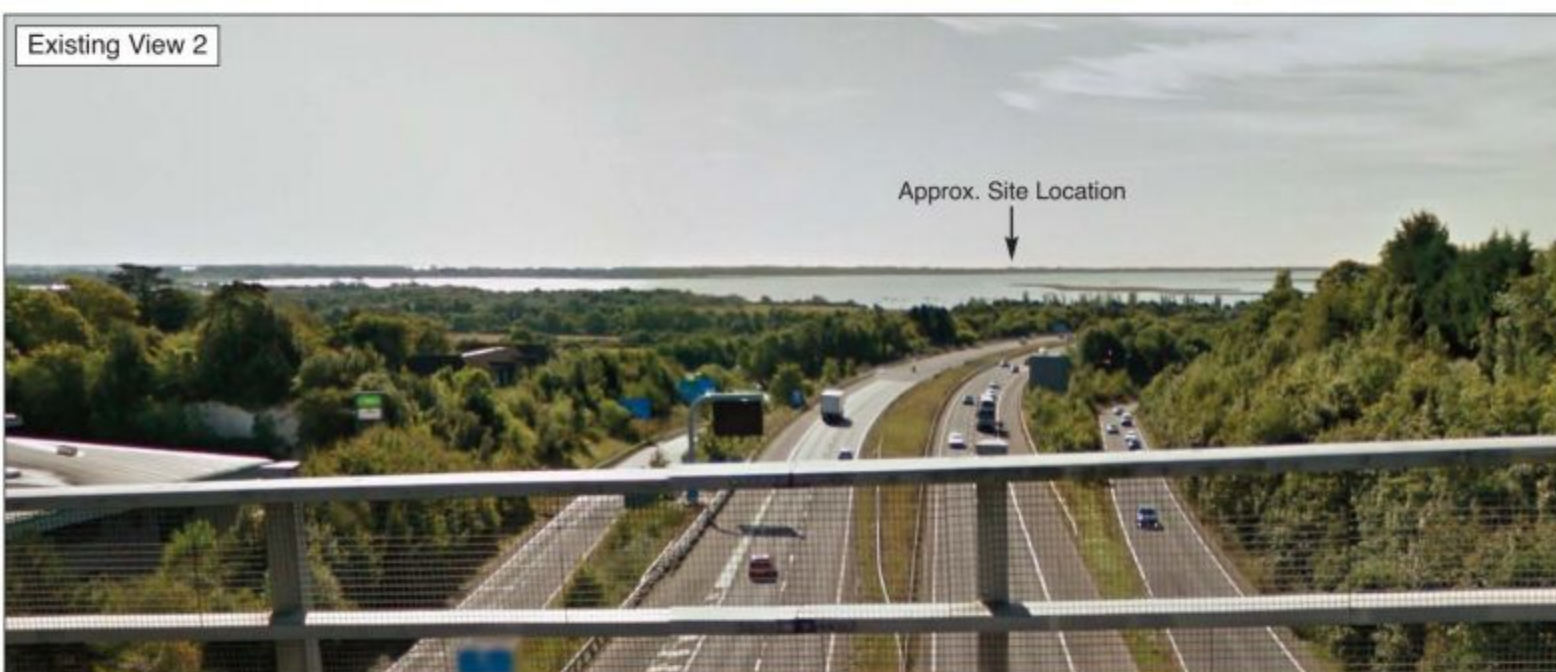
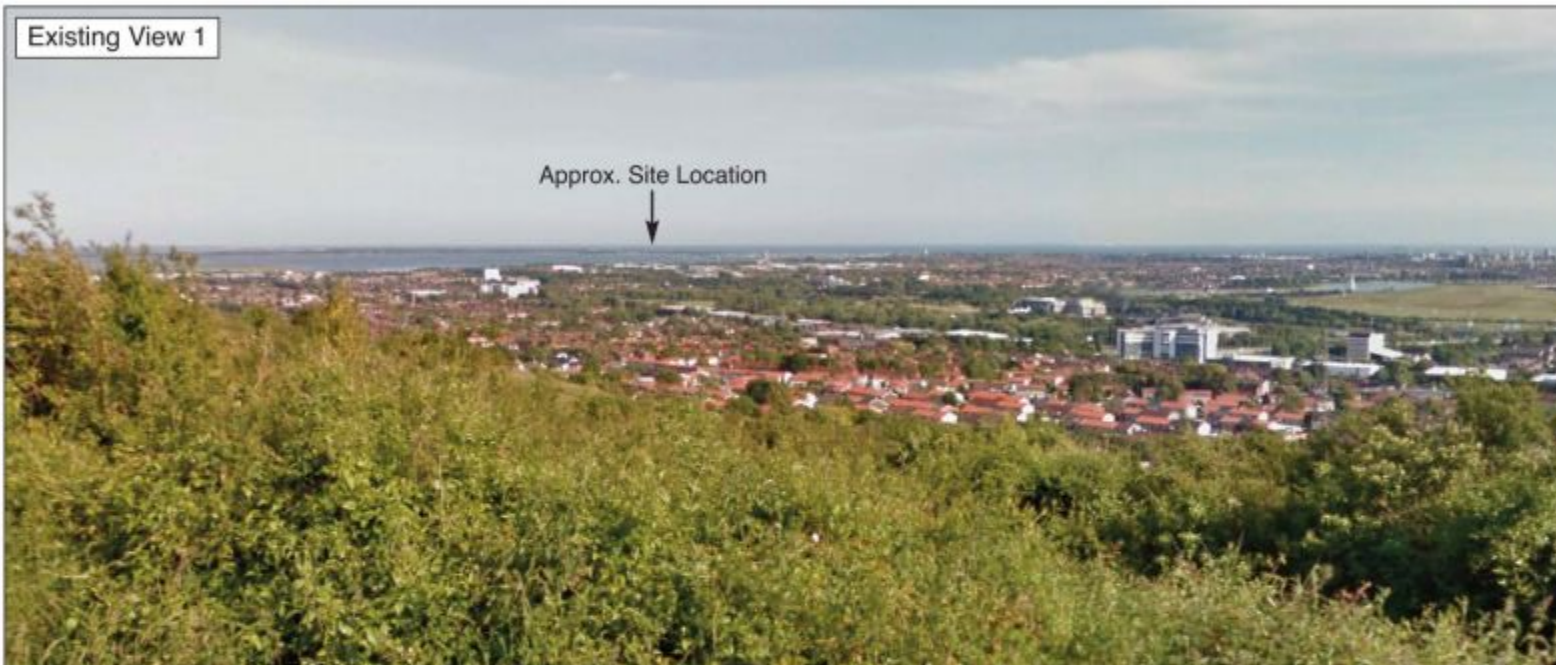


Photo 17 - View looking west from Manor Farm showing compost piles to east of the site



Photo 18 - View looking southeast towards site from West Lane (approximate location of site marked red)

Appendix 2



SOLAR VOLTAICS
MANOR FARM, HAYLING ISLAND

Appendix 2 :

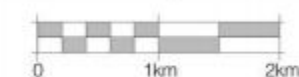
EXISTING VIEWPOINTS

Drawing No : SV/1250/APP2

Revision: **A**

Drawn by: MS

Date: 22/10/14



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