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HB/PD/CIR.H.0452

18 March 2014

Planning Services
Havant Borough Council
Public Service Plaza
Civic Centre Road
Havant, PO9 2AX

For the attention of: The Planning Department

Dear Sir/Madam,

LAND AT MANOR FARM, HAYLING ISLAND, HAMPSHIRE, REQUEST FOR A SCREENING OPINION UNDER REGULATION 5 OF THE TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT) REGULATIONS 2011

We write on behalf of Hive Energy (the 'Applicant') to formally request a Screening Opinion to determine whether there is a requirement for an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) to accompany a planning application for a proposed solar park on land at Manor Farm, Hayling Island in Hampshire. This request is made under Regulation 5 of the Town and Country Planning (EIA) Regulations 2011.

In accordance with the EIA Regulations we have provided the following information:

- i. A plan sufficient to identify the land (Appendix A); and
- ii. A brief description of the nature of the proposed development and of its possible effects on the environment (Appendix B).

We look forward to receiving the Screening Opinion within the necessary timeframe as specified in the Regulations and confirmation that the Screening Opinion will be placed on the Public Register.

Yours sincerely,

Principal Environmental Planner
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**APPENDIX A
PLAN SUFFICIENT TO IDENTIFY THE LAND**

APPENDIX B
BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE NATURE OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT
AND OF ITS POSSIBLE EFFECTS ON THE ENVIRONMENT

SECTION 1 – SITE AND DEVELOPMENT DETAILS

Site Address

Manor Farm, Hayling Island, Hampshire, PO11 0QW

Site Context

The site comprises approximately 19 hectares of agricultural land, located within a rural area of Hayling Island. The site is located approximately 360m inland of both Langstone Harbour and Chichester Harbour. The site lies directly southeast of Fleet, 1.3km north of Gable Head, 1.2km north of Newtown and 0.8km south of Stoke.

The main road on the island is the A3023, connecting the mainland with West Town via Stoke and Fleet. At its nearest point the road is located 0.1km to the east of the site. West Lane lies to the west of the site's western boundary and Daw Lane runs along the north, connecting West Lane with the A3023. Agricultural drainage ditches run along some field boundaries within the site.

The site would be accessed from the west of the site via West Lane, or from the north of the site via Daw Lane.

The site does not exceed 5m AOD and has a flat topography. It comprises a series of rectilinear shaped fields. The London & South East Region 1:250,000 Series Agricultural Land Classification Map (2010) identifies land within the site and its immediate environs as Grade 2 agricultural land.

The nearest residential buildings to the site include Aston House, approximately 100m to the northwest and a small number of isolated properties to the south, the nearest lying 30m south of the site's boundary. Manor Farm lies 200m to the south. The village of Fleet is approximately 100m from the site's north eastern corner.

Overhead lines traverse the central section of the site.

The site is located within the administrative boundary of Havant Borough Council.

Nature and Purpose of the Proposed Development

The proposed development would be a solar park for the generation of renewable energy, comprising the installation of solar panels arranged in rows (strings) with associated inverters and transformers/transformer housings, a client and Distribution Network Operator (DNO) sub-station, underground cabling, security fencing and CCTV, and associated infrastructure and landscaping. The solar panels would be fixed onto a metal framework, laid out in strings in an east-west orientation and facing south, which would be driven into the ground, avoiding deep foundations, where ground conditions allow. The solar panels would be installed to a maximum height of circa 2.4m above ground level, tilted to an angle of between 15 and 30 degrees to the horizontal, with the bottom edge raised off the ground to enable grass to grow and sheep to graze beneath and around panels.

Inverters and transformers would be located away from the site boundary. Transformers would be located in housing units. The sub-stations would be appropriately located near the site access, with the client sub-station located within the main solar park fencing and DNO sub-station located within its own compound providing 24hour access to the DNO. Perimeter fencing (circa 1.9m) would be located around the solar park with inward facing CCTV cameras (on circa 3m high poles) situated at strategic locations along the perimeter fencing. Associated infrastructure includes underground cabling and access tracks.

Access would be obtained via West Lane or Daw Lane, subject to detailed site investigations and design. This would be discussed with the Highways Agency prior to the submission of any planning application.

SECTION 2 – APPLICABLE THRESHOLDS

Does the Proposed Development fall within Schedule 1 (Y/N)?	No
If yes what is the applicable description?	N/A
<i>If yes, the project automatically requires EIA</i>	
If no, does the Proposed Development fall within Schedule 2 (Y/N)?	Yes
If yes, what is the applicable description?	(3a) Industrial installations for the production of electricity, steam, and hot water.
Is the Project located in or adjacent to a 'Sensitive Area'?	No
<i>If yes proceed to Section 3</i>	
If no, what is the corresponding applicable threshold in Schedule 2?	The area of the development exceeds 0.5ha
Does the Project exceed the applicable threshold (Y/N)?	Yes
<i>If yes, proceed to Section 3</i>	
<i>If no, and the project is not located within or adjacent to a defined 'Sensitive Area', the proposed development is unlikely to constitute EIA Development.</i>	

SECTION 3 – ASSESSMENT OF LIKELY SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS

Questions to be considered	Likely / Unlikely? Briefly describe	Is this likely to result in a significant effect? Yes / No Briefly state why
1) Will construction, operation or decommissioning of the project involve actions which will cause physical changes in the locality (topography, land use, changes in waterbodies etc)?	Yes – Temporary change in land use from agriculture to energy production (circa 25 years). The area immediately surrounding the site would be unaffected.	No significant effect – Physical changes would occur within the site boundary only. The surrounding area would remain unchanged. The site may continue in a dual-agricultural use for the management of grass by low density grazing by sheep. The proposed development would be temporary (25 years) following which, the site would be returned to agricultural use.
2) Will construction or operation of the project use natural resources such as land, water, materials or energy, especially any non-renewable resources or in short supply?	Yes – Construction would require use of limited natural resources, as is standard for construction phases of a scheme. There would be no excessive or unusual use of natural resources. The project will be a net producer of renewable energy.	No significant effect – Relates only to normal construction-related use of natural resources during construction and decommissioning phases only. There would be no long term 'consumption' of natural resources. There would be a benefit in terms of renewable energy production, thereby reducing use of natural resources off-site for energy.
3) Will the project involve the use, storage, transport, handling or production of substances or materials which could be harmful to human health or the environment, raise concerns about actual or perceived risks to human health?	Yes – Temporary storage of fuels, and vehicle maintenance substances / materials (lubricants, screen wash etc) during construction and decommissioning phases only.	No significant effect / risk – Relates to only normal construction-related materials during construction and decommissioning phases only. Normal construction best practice measures would be adopted to mitigate potential risk.
4) Will the project produce solid wastes during construction, operation or decommissioning?	Yes – Standard construction wastes only; given the scale and nature of construction (primarily installation) waste generated would be low. No operational waste involved.	No significant effect – Relates to only normal construction-related waste generation during construction and decommissioning phases only. Majority of materials could be either re-used or recycled on decommissioning.

Questions to be considered	Likely / Unlikely? Briefly describe	Is this likely to result in a significant effect? Yes / No Briefly state why
5) Will the project release pollutants or any hazardous, toxic or noxious substances to air?	No – No hazardous, toxic or noxious substances are involved in the site operations during any phases.	No effect
6) Will the project cause noise and vibration or release of light, heat energy or electromagnetic radiation?	Yes – Project may cause minor increase in noise levels during the temporary, short-term, construction and decommissioning phases. No notable (non-standard) construction methods would be adopted). No noise, light, heat energy or electromagnetic radiation would be generated during operation.	No significant effect – Development is set in the context of nearby farming operations at Manor Farm. Normal construction best practice measures would be adopted to mitigate against noise and/or air pollution.
7) 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?	No – Solar development does not involve the release of substances likely to cause land or water contamination.	No effect
8) Are there any areas on or around the site 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?	No – No such areas exist affecting the site or immediate environs.	No effect

Questions to be considered	Likely / Unlikely? Briefly describe	Is this likely to result in a significant effect? Yes / No Briefly state why
9) Will there be any risk of accidents during construction or operation of the project which could affect human health or the environment?	Unlikely – Standard construction-related risks of spillages associated with plant and machinery.	No significant effect – Normal construction best practice measures would be adopted to mitigate potential risk.
10) Will the project result in social changes, e.g., in demography, traditional lifestyles, employment?	No	No effect
11) Are there any areas on or around the location which are protected under international or national or local legislation for their ecological, landscape, cultural or other value, which could be affected by the project?	Yes – Site is not subject to any international designation. Nearby national/local designations/ areas of value include: • Site lies >150m west of the Chichester Harbour Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). • There are two Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAMs) on Hayling Island: Tournier Bury 1.5km to the southeast of the site and a World War II Heavy Anti-aircraft gunsite (P2) at Sinah Common, 2.4km to the southwest. • A number of Listed Buildings can be found on Hayling Island. The nearest to the site are in Fleet, including: Old Fleet Manor (170m to the northeast); a granary (200m to the northeast); Forge Cottage (230m to the northeast). There are five Listed Buildings	No significant effect – • The site and its immediate surroundings are not within any areas of national or local importance. • The site's location inland of Langstone Harbour and Chichester Harbour means it is close to a number of nationally designated areas such as the SAC, the SPA, SSSIs and Ramsar site. There will be no direct effects on these designated areas however, (designated for their marine and estuarine characteristics) given the benign nature of solar panel development. • The site is >150m from the AONB (at its nearest point), separated by flat topography, the A3023 and agricultural land with established hedgerows and trees that would filter views of the development. • Furthermore given the wider context of the AONB's estuarine setting, significant effects on the setting and/or views into/out of the AONB would be unlikely. • There would be no direct effects on the Scheduled Ancient Monuments or Listed Buildings. Effects on their setting are unlikely to be significant due to the intervening established trees and hedgerows, with or without any mitigation screening, and the flat topography. Consideration of any potential, less significant, effects on cultural heritage features could be appraised through a cultural heritage report to accompany the planning application. • Effects on local ecological interest features and/or protected species would not be significant in the context of an EIA.

Questions to be considered	Likely / Unlikely? Briefly describe	Is this likely to result in a significant effect? Yes / No Briefly state why
	around Manor Farm (>200m to the southeast), including two granaries, a barn, a stable block and South Hayling Manor. • The water around Hayling Island (Langstone Harbour and Chichester Harbour) is a Ramsar site. • Chichester Harbour Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is located 370m east of the site. Langstone Harbour SSSI is 350m to the west of the site. Sinah Common SSSI is 2.4km southwest of the site. • The waters in Langstone Harbour and Chichester Harbour together form the Solent Maritime Special Area of Conservation (SAC) • The waters in Chichester and Langstone Harbours are also a Special Protection Area (SPA) • The waters surrounding Hayling Island comprise mudflat BAP Priority Habitat and on the east coast of the island, there are some areas of Reedbed BAP Priority Habitat (>550m from the site). • Hayling Billy Local Nature Reserve (LNR) is located >100m to	Consideration of any potential, less significant, effects could be adequately assessed, though the undertaking of an appropriate survey and report to be submitted in support of the planning application. • The development would be temporary (circa 25 years) and following its decommissioning the land would be returned to an agricultural use. During operations the site could retain a dual-agricultural use through grassland management by low density grazing.

Questions to be considered	Likely / Unlikely? Briefly describe	Is this likely to result in a significant effect? Yes / No Briefly state why
	the site's north western boundary. Gutner Point LNR is located within the AONB, 1.3km east of the site. • There are two RSPB Reserves on the west coast of Hayling Island, located 900m to the southwest and 1.3km to the north. • The site is comprised of Grade 2 quality land under the Defra Agricultural Land Classification Scheme. • The area of Woodland immediately south of the site is Deciduous Woodland BAP Priority Habitat.	
12) Are there any other areas on or around the location which are important or sensitive for reasons of their ecology, e.g., wetlands, watercourses or other waterbodies, the coastal zone, mountains, forests or woodlands, which could be affected by the project?	Yes – There is potential for ecological interest in the hedgerow and streams within and bounding the site.	No significant effect - Existing hedgerow and trees would generally be retained, except for any minor alterations necessary for creating access. The effects on ecological interest features would not be significant in the context of EIA and could be adequately assessed though the undertaking of an appropriate survey and report to be submitted in support of the planning application. Benefits to these features would arise though further planting to improve fragmented hedges with infill plants and individual boundary trees. The nature of solar panel development is that it does not significantly affect the existing Greenfield run-off rates with run-off from solar panels to ground and is therefore unlikely to affect the nearby SAC, SPA and SSSIs. The proposed development would be accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment.

Questions to be considered	Likely / Unlikely? Briefly describe	Is this likely to result in a significant effect? Yes / No Briefly state why
13) Are there any areas on or around the site which are used by protected, important or sensitive species of fauna or flora, e.g., for breeding, nesting, foraging, resting, overwintering, migration, which could be affected by the project?	Yes – The application site is used for agricultural purposes with low potential for protected biodiversity interest features, primarily related to boundary features such as hedgerow, trees and ditches. In the wider area, the SPA, SAC, SSSIs and Ramsar site are frequented by birds which use the mud flats and salt marshes for feeding, breeding and migration.	No significant effect – The effects on ecological interest features would not be significant in the context of EIA. Consideration of less significant effects could be adequately assessed though the undertaking of an appropriate survey and report to be submitted in support of the planning application. The application would be supported by an Ecological Enhancement Plan and Habitat Management Plan setting out proposals to increase biodiversity and habitat on the site through additional planting of hedgerows, trees, grassland and wildflowers.
14) Are there any inland, coastal, marine or underground waters on or around the location which could be affected by the project?	Yes – The site is located approximately 360m from both the west and east coasts of Hayling Island. There are some agricultural drainage ditches within the site boundary.	No significant effect – The operation of existing drainage ditches would be unaffected. Surface water run-off from solar development is extremely low as water is shed from panels onto the surrounding land. Effects on flood risk and any necessary mitigation measures would be appraised as part of a Flood Risk Assessment.
15) Are there any areas or features of high landscape or scenic value on or around the site which could be affected by the project?	Yes – Site lies >150m west of the Chichester Harbour Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).	No significant effect – The site does not fall within the designated AONB area and is separated from it by agricultural land, the A3023 and established hedgerows and trees that would filter views of the development. Given the offshore characteristics of the AONB and relatively flat topography, with or without mitigation planting along boundaries, the opportunity for inter-visibility with the AONB would be low and unlikely to be significant in the context of an EIA. Consideration of potential, less significant, effects would be appropriately appraised by an accompanying Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.
16) Is the project in a location where it is likely to be highly visible to many people?	Yes – The nearest residential buildings to the site include Aston House, approximately 100m to the northwest. A small	No significant effect – Given the low-heights involved in solar farm development, the flat topography of the area and existing boundary and intervening established vegetation it is unlikely that the proposed development would be visible from

Questions to be considered	Likely / Unlikely? Briefly describe	Is this likely to result in a significant effect? Yes / No Briefly state why
	number of isolated properties are located to the south, the nearest lying 30m south of the site's boundary. Manor farm is approximately 200m to the south. The village of Fleet is (at its nearest point) 50m from the site's north eastern corner.	residential buildings or settlements. Consideration of the visual impact to nearby properties would be appropriately appraised by an accompanying Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment and screening and planting implemented to mitigate any views of the development, should it be visible.
17) Are there any routes on or around the site which are used by the public for access to recreation or other facilities, which could be affected by the project?	Yes – The Hayling Billy Coastal Path and Shipwrights Way run along the western coast of Hayling Island, parallel to the site's western boundary at a distance of >300m. There are no Public Rights of Way (PRoWs) within the site.	No significant effect – • PRoW would remain open throughout all phases of development. • Views from the recognised trail are unlikely to be experienced given the distance, relatively flat topography and intervening vegetation. • Views from the Hayling Billy Coastal Path and Shipwrights Way are unlikely to be experienced due to the existing hedgerows lining the route and will be limited in duration given the nature of footpath users.
18) Are there any transport routes on or around the site which are susceptible to congestion or which cause environmental problems, which could be affected by the project?	Yes – Minor local roads / farm tracks used to access land and farmsteads.	No significant effect – Traffic generation associated with solar development is extremely low. Volumes of traffic generated during construction and decommissioning would be temporary, short-term and at their peak would not exceed circa 6-10 HGV visits/day. Operational traffic is estimated at being circa 20 visits / year.

Questions to be considered	Likely / Unlikely? Briefly describe	Is this likely to result in a significant effect? Yes / No Briefly state why
19) Are there any areas or features of historic or cultural importance on or around the site which could be affected by the project?	Yes – • There are two Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAMs) on Hayling Island: Tournier Bury 1.5km to the southeast of the site and a World War II Heavy Anti-aircraft gunsite (P2) at Sinah Common, 2.4km to the southwest. • A number of Listed Buildings can be found on Hayling Island. The nearest to the site are in Fleet, including: Old Fleet Manor (170m to the northeast); a granary (200m to the northeast); Forge Cottage (230m to the northeast). There are four Listed Buildings at Manor Farm (>200m to the southeast), including two granaries, a barn, a stable block and South Hayling Manor.	No significant effect – There would be no direct effects on the Scheduled Ancient Monuments or Listed buildings. Opportunity for indirect effects on their settings would be limited due to the intervening hedgerows, mature trees and buildings, thus reducing the opportunity for any inter-visibility of the site and heritage features.
20) Is the project located in a previously undeveloped area where there will be loss of greenfield land?	Yes – Agricultural land.	No significant effect – The proposed development would be a temporary installation (approx 25 years). The site could continue in a dual-agricultural use for the management of grass by low density grazing. On decommissioning the site would revert back to agricultural use.

Questions to be considered	Likely / Unlikely? Briefly describe	Is this likely to result in a significant effect? Yes / No Briefly state why
21) Are there existing land uses on or around the location, e.g., homes, gardens, other private property, industry, commerce, recreation, public open space, community facilities, agriculture, forestry, tourism, mining or quarrying which could be affected by the project?	Yes – Agriculture (farm complex and fields). Garden (immediately south of site's southern boundary). Recreation (Public Right of Way, Tournurbury Golf Centre, Fleet Farm campsite). Industry (yacht building yard, nursery and small industrial estate at Aston House).	No significant effect – The proposed development would not affect the continued land use of surrounding areas nor use of the PRow. Views from the property and garden immediately south of the site's southern boundary will be filtered by existing buildings and established vegetation.
22) Are there any areas on or around the location which are densely populated or built-up which could be affected by the project?	Yes – The site is directly southeast of Fleet, 1.3km north of Gable Head, 1.2km north of Newtown and 0.8km south of Stoke.	No significant effect – Given the distances between settlements and the site, the existing established intervening hedgerow and tree planting, the relatively flat topography and the benign nature of solar farm development, there is unlikely to be a significant effect on nearby settlements.
23) Are there any areas on or around the site which are occupied by sensitive land uses e.g., hospitals, schools, places of worship, community facilities, which could be affected by the project?	No	No effect
24) Are there any areas on or around the site which contain important, high quality or scarce resources e.g., groundwater, surface waters, forestry, agriculture, fisheries, tourism, minerals, which could be affected by the project?	No	No effect
25) Is the project location susceptible	No	No effect

Questions to be considered	Likely / Unlikely? Briefly describe	Is this likely to result in a significant effect? Yes / No Briefly state why
to earthquakes, subsidence, landslides, erosion, flooding or extreme or adverse climatic conditions, e.g., temperature inversions, fogs, severe winds, which could cause the project to present environmental problems?		
26) Are there any plans for future land uses on or around the site which could be affected by the project?	None identified	No effect
27) Are there any other factors which should be considered, such as consequential development which could lead to environmental effects, or the potential for cumulative impacts with other existing or planned activities in the locality?	None identified	No effect

SECTION 4 – SUMMARY & CONCLUSION

The proposed development falls within the category of 'industrial installations for the production of electricity, steam and hot water (unless included in Schedule 1)' under Schedule 2, paragraph 3(a) as described by the EIA Regulations.

Development proposals falling within Schedule 2 require an EIA only if they are considered likely to have significant effects on the environment by virtue of factors such as nature, size or location. Given that the development site exceeds the screening threshold in Schedule 2 (industrial installations for production of electricity) of 0.5 hectares site area, it is appropriate to screen the proposals with the Local Planning Authority to determine if there are significant effects are considered likely to arise from the proposals.

The EIA Regulations require that the screening process considers the development proposals against the criteria and thresholds set out within Schedule 3, which comprises three broad categories: the characteristics of the development; the environmental sensitivity of the location; and the characteristics of the potential impacts.

The National Planning Policy Framework, Planning Practice Guidance (NPPF-PPG), under the Environmental Impact Assessment section, provides further indicative criteria and thresholds, as well as key issues to consider, in the determination of likely significance of effects. For 3(a) Energy Industry schemes, the criteria and advice given are:

- i) Indicative Criteria and Threshold - Thermal output of more than 50MW. Small stations using novel forms of generation should be considered carefully;
- ii) Key Issues to Consider - Level of emissions to air, arrangements for the transport of fuel and any visual impact.

The proposed development would fall below the indicative threshold and does not adopt a novel form of generation, nor would it involve emissions to air or the transport of fuel.

Notwithstanding the above, the NPPF-PPG clearly states that '*... it should not be presumed that developments above this threshold should always be subject to assessment, or those falling below these thresholds could never give rise to significant effects ... Each development will need to be considered on its merits*'.

Whilst not a requirement, to assist in the determination of likely significant effects the NPPF-PPG provides an example checklist to help ensure that the relevant issues, including those of Schedule 3 of the EIA Regulations, have been considered and to provide a clear audit trail of the screening process. The screening checklist has been used within our screening assessment (Section 3).

From our screening assessment, it is concluded that:

The proposed development is unlikely to give rise to significant environmental effects.

In summary:

- The application site is not within a 'sensitive area' as defined by the EIA Regulations, nor are there any sensitive ecological, landscape or heritage assets within the site or the immediate surrounding area. Although geographically close to the site, the Chichester Harbour AONB, the Solent Maritime SAC, the Chichester and Langstone Harbour SPA, the Chichester Harbour SSSI and the Langstone Harbour SSSI are not anticipated to be affected by the development. This is due to their offshore coastal and marine characteristics. It is anticipated that by virtue of the low level of development, flat topography, agricultural land and intervening vegetation that separates the designated areas from the site, visual impact will be negligible.
- The proposed development would not be of greater than local importance, the physical changes

would occur within the site boundary and potentially at the site's access only and environmental effects are unlikely to be experienced beyond the immediate locality;

- The land use is temporary (circa 25 years) and on decommissioning could be returned to existing agricultural use;
- There is a relative absence of sensitive receptors in the locality, i.e., residential buildings are separated by established vegetation and existing buildings, with other isolated properties and small settlements greater than 100m from the boundary;
- The construction, operation and decommissioning phases are not unusually complex nor would they involve any potentially hazardous materials or substances; and
- The construction and decommissioning phases would be short-term, traffic generation is extremely low and all works would be carried out using standard construction best practice to mitigate potential nuisance and pollution risk.

It is therefore concluded that whilst there is likely to be some effects upon the environment as a consequence of the proposed development, none of these are considered to constitute 'significant effects' upon the environment, as set out in EIA Regulations. Accordingly, it is considered that the proposals **do not constitute EIA development** and therefore do not require an Environmental Statement to be submitted with a planning application for the proposed development.