



**ARCUS**

**ADDENDUM TO PLANNING, DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT**

**SOAY SOLAR FARM AND GREENER GRID PARK**

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## 1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

An application for the construction of solar photovoltaic development, installation of battery energy storage system (BESS), energy management and grid stabilisation equipment with landscaping, access and associated infrastructure and erection of temporary construction compounds ('the Development') was submitted to East Riding of Yorkshire Council ('the Council') on December 7<sup>th</sup> 2021 on behalf of Statkraft UK LTD and validated on January 26<sup>th</sup> 2022 (Planning Ref: 21/04505/STPLF).

During the statutory consultation period for the planning application, numerous responses were received from local residents, Parish Councils, Council officers and technical/environmental consultees. In addition, the Applicant attended a meeting of Allerthorpe Parish Council on June 13<sup>th</sup> 2022, where attendees requested some amendments to the scheme.

As such, the layout and landscaping plan have been amended to address the concerns raised by consultees and a suite of amended environmental reports has been prepared to reflect the revised design.

This Addendum summarises the changes made to the proposal and explains how the environmental impacts which were assessed in the original application submission will be affected by the revisions. The Addendum should be read in conjunction with the previously submitted Planning, Design and Access Statement.

## 2 PROPOSED REVISIONS

### 2.1 Summary of revisions

The main amendments to the design and the reasons for them are summarised in the table below. The amendments are shown on the revised Site Layout and Landscape and Ecology Mitigation and Enhancement Plan.

Description of amendment	Reason for amendment
Field N2 is no longer proposed for solar development and will continue to be available for agricultural use.	The panels were removed in response to a request from the residents of properties at Warren Farm and Allerthorpe Parish Council. This removal of solar panels from this area will further preserve residential amenity for the dwellings at and around Warren Farm.
The Temporary Construction Compound has been moved 135 m to the north of its previous location in the southwest corner of Field G.	The Temporary Construction Compound within the solar farm was moved to the north to address concerns by residents of the properties around Warren Farm regarding potential impacts of the Temporary Construction Compound on residential amenity. The Temporary Construction Compound for the solar farm will now be more than 340 m from the nearest residential property in order to minimise the risk of disturbance to residential amenity.
The proposed access route for construction and operation has been amended so that it runs between Fields M1 and M2.	The access route has been moved as requested by local residents so that the route will not pass close to the properties at Warren Farm.

Description of amendment	Reason for amendment
A 100 m buffer has been applied to on-site and off-site ponds with habitat potential for great crested newts. These buffers are now shown on the Site Layout Plan and the solar panel area and fence-line has been reduced in Fields C and I to ensure that no built development encroaches within 100 m of the ponds.	A non-licensed approach based on avoidance is being followed for great crested newts and as such, additional measures have been taken to ensure that there will be no development within 100 m of the ponds.
The habitat enhancement area in the north of the Site has been enlarged and extended to the east into part of Field I. The area of scrub planting with tussock grassland mix will therefore increase.	The removal of solar panels from the 100 m buffer from the pond adjacent to Field I is an opportunity to increase the amount of habitat enhancements proposed and create more habitat which is suitable for great crested newts.
The proposed secondary hedgerow along the Public Right of Way to the west of Fields E, F and G has been moved slightly to the east so that it is approximately 3 m from the bridleway.	This change has been made in order to preserve the amenity of Public Right of Way Users.
Above-ground infrastructure is no longer proposed within the maximum swing distance of overhead powerlines. Offsets have also been applied from the associated pylons. This has resulted in a substantial reduction in the number of proposed batteries, inverters and transformers within the Greener Grid Park from 238 to 189.	The National Grid Asset Protection Team requested the removal of infrastructure such as solar panels, batteries, etc. from under/around their powerlines and pylons to meet their operational/maintenance requirements.
The red line planning application boundary has been amended slightly to accurately reflect landownership boundaries.	The red line has been amended in light of consultation responses from local residents. The total area within the red line has decreased to 148 hectares, 1 hectare less than the previous red line.
Additional gates are proposed in the fence-line to the west in fields A, C E, F, M, O and P.	The gates have been added to provide access to the fields and security for the Development.
The number of field transformers has decreased from 32 to 10 and their locations have changed slightly. There have been associated minor amendments to the location and number of internal access tracks to the solar fields.	This change is driven by the Applicant's technical requirements for the locations of the field transformers.
The solar panel layout within the fields has been amended slightly with different spacing between the modules.	These changes have been made due to the Applicant's operational requirements and changes in the technical specifications of the equipment to be used.

In addition, some changes have been made to the layout plan which do not affect the design of the scheme, including removing shading for habitat enhancement areas, which are shown on the Landscape and Ecological Mitigation Plan and showing the 100 m offset from Warren Farm Cottages.



## 2.2 List of Revised Plans and Documents

Revised Plan	Plan to be superseded
Figure 1 - Site Location Plan 3404-REP-061 Rev A	Figure 1 - Site Location Plan 3404-REP-061
General PV Layout – SCUXX-SOAY-000 PVL-100 Rev F	Figure 2 Indicative Site Layout 3404-SOAY-DR-PRE-0002 Rev J
Energy Storage Layout SCUXX-SOAY-000 HYB-100	Figure 3 - Greener Grid Park Layout Plan 3404-SOAY-DR-PRE-0003 Rev 2
Landscape and Ecology Mitigation and Enhancement Plan 5052-DR-LAN-101 Rev A	Landscape and Ecology Mitigation and Enhancement Plan 3404-DR-LAN-101 Rev A
Access Route and PRoW Map 3404-REP-070 Rev A	Figure 5 - Access Route and PRoW Map 3404-REP-070
Cross Sections SCUXX-SOAY-000 PVL-230.1 Rev A	N/A
Cross Sections SCUXX-SOAY-000 PVL-230.2 Rev A	N/A

Revised or Additional Document	Documented to be superseded or supplemented
Landscape and Visual Appraisal Addendum	Supplements existing Landscape and Visual Appraisal
Agricultural Land Classification Report (12 <sup>th</sup> April 2022)	Supersedes Agricultural Land Classification Report (22 <sup>nd</sup> July 2021)
Flood Risk Assessment Addendum	Supplements existing Flood Risk Assessment
Drainage Impact Assessment Addendum	Supplements existing Drainage Impact Assessment
Noise Impact Assessment	Supersedes existing Noise Impact Assessment
Arboricultural Impact Assessment	Supersedes existing Arboricultural Impact Assessment
Ecological Impact Assessment	Supersedes existing Ecological Impact Assessment
Great Crested Newt Non-Licensed Method Statement	New Document
Response to Natural England Comments	New Document
Biodiversity Metric Assessment	Supersedes existing Biodiversity Metric Assessment
Biodiversity Enhancement Management Plan	Supersedes existing Biodiversity Enhancement Management Plan
Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan	Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan

### **3 SUMMARY OF AMENDMENTS TO ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENTS**

#### **3.1 Access and Public Rights of Way**

The design amendments will not have a material impact on the access route to the Site or the traffic volumes in the Transport Statement which was previously submitted. However, access arrangements within the Site have been changed so that vehicles associated with the Development will no longer travel along the section of the Public Right of Way closest to Warren Farm and that stretch of the existing track will therefore no longer be upgraded to facilitate construction traffic. The revised access arrangement is shown on the amended Access Route and PRoW MAP (Figure 5, Rev 1).

As with the previous submission, a new access track will be created parallel to the PRoW in the northern part of the Site so that construction vehicles will not travel along the PRoW. The proposed hedge and tree planting has been amended slightly to ensure that it is set back from the PRoW.

A set of 3 cross-sections has been prepared to show the arrangement of the Development in relation to the PRoW (refer to Drawing SCUXX-SOAY-000-230.2 A, with locations of the cross-sections shown on Drawing SCUXX-SOAY-000-230.1 A).

The cross-sections demonstrate that the fence-line of the solar farm will be set back over 14 m from the Public Right of Way, with the solar panels set back 5 m from the fence-line. The Public Right of Way will be separated from the fencing and solar panels by existing and proposed trees and hedges to preserve the amenity of PRoW users.

Overall, the revisions to the access and PRoW arrangements will further mitigate construction and operational impacts on the existing PRoW and residents of Warren Farm.

#### **3.2 Landscape and Visual**

A Landscape and Visual Appraisal Addendum has been prepared to consider whether the design changes would have an impact on the conclusions of the Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) which was previously submitted. Amended Photomontages for Viewpoint 4 (Allerthorpe Footpath No.2, West of Warren Wood are submitted with the LVA Addendum.

The Addendum acknowledges that the scale of Development will be reduced slightly and confirms that the design changes will not have any effect on the conclusions of the original LVA.

#### **3.3 Agricultural Land Use**

The amendments to the design of the Site have a minimal effect on the use of agricultural land, although the removal of solar panels from Field N will result in the continued availability of the area (approximately 3 hectares) for agricultural use.

In light of a request for further information received from Natural England (dated 4<sup>th</sup> March 2022), a revised Agricultural Land Classification Report (dated 12<sup>th</sup> April 2022) has been produced by Soil Environmental Services. Whilst the agricultural land classification of the Site is unchanged, Section 6 of the Report has been expanded to provide further evidence regarding the classification of the entire Site as Grade 3b land based on records of very low crop yields at the Site. These records confirm that erosion and droughtiness have reduced the agricultural productivity at the Site and support the classification of the soils at the Site as Grade 3b.

#### **3.4 Arboricultural Impact**

A revised Arboricultural Impact Assessment has been provided due to the amended internal access arrangements. Due to the amended access route through fields M1 and M2, the removal of one additional tree (category C) and one additional woodland (category B) is

required. In addition, the partial removal of some hedges and tree groups may be required to facilitate construction and access.

The Development has been designed to avoid high value trees and the vegetation that is required to be removed represents a very small proportion of the trees, hedges and woodlands present at the Site. The design amendments will not result in any significant effects on the tree coverage of the Site or its Green Infrastructure and the habitat enhancements and additional planting proposed will mitigate the effects of these removals.

### **3.5 Ecology and Biodiversity**

The area to be occupied by solar development has been reduced and the area which will be reserved for habitat enhancements has been increased, as shown on the revised Landscape and Ecological Mitigation and Enhancement Plan. The revised Biodiversity Enhancement Management Plan confirms that the amount of proposed mixed native species hedgerow, native deciduous woodland and tussock grassland have all increased as a result of the design changes, while there has been a very slight reduction in the number of proposed native species hedgerow trees, native shrub mix, bird cover crop and native species grassland and wildflower meadow.

A revised Biodiversity Metric Assessment has been undertaken, which confirms a biodiversity net gain of 134.36% at the Site, which is higher than the previous biodiversity net gain of 114.73%.

As the Development will be set back at a minimum of 100 m from any great crested newt ponds, a non-licensed approach to great crested newts will be followed. The expanded habitat enhancement area in the north of the Site adjacent to Allerthorpe Common will contain native scrub planting which will create additional habitats for great crested newts, some of which will be located 100 m of great crested newt ponds. As such, a Non-Licensed Method Statement has been prepared to set out the measures to ensure that the construction and operation of the Development will not result in harm to this species or its habitats.

With regard to the consultation comments received from Natural England dated 4<sup>th</sup> March 2022, a letter of response by the project ecologist has been prepared to clarify the approach to habitat mitigation/enhancement and protection of great crested newts.

In light of the revised access track arrangement to route vehicles through Field M further away from Warren Farm Cottages, a new water crossing is proposed between Fields M1 and M2. This location was subject to a water vole survey in May 2022 and was found to be unsuitable for supporting foraging or sheltering water voles and no burrows were identified within 100 m of the crossing. Direct harm or disturbance to water vole is therefore very unlikely.

In addition, the Ecological Impact Assessment has been revised to reflect the non-licensed approach to great crested newts, the revised access arrangements and the increased biodiversity net gain.

### **3.6 Heritage**

The design amendments do not affect the contents or conclusions of the Heritage Impact Assessment, Outline Written Scheme of Investigation or Outline Archaeological Mitigation Strategy which were previously submitted.

### **3.7 Flood Risk and Drainage**

The Site is located entirely within Flood Zone 1 and the design changes in the amended scheme do not result in any significant change in flood risk vulnerability, as confirmed in the Flood Risk Assessment Addendum.

In terms of surface water drainage, the reduction in proposed infrastructure within the Greener Grid Park has resulted in a reduced impermeable area of 0.244 ha compared with 0.273 ha in the previous layout. The surface water drainage scheme proposed in the original submission, comprising extended scrapes in the solar farm and attenuation ponds in the Greener Grid Park, has not been changed or reduced. As a result, the revised scheme provides additional surface water management benefit, as set out in the Drainage Impact Assessment Addendum.

### **3.8 Glint and Glare**

Whilst the design amendments will result in an overall reduction in the number of solar panels within the Development, this reduction will not have a material effect on the conclusions of the Glint and Glare Assessments for residential, traffic and aviation receptors which were previously submitted. These reports are therefore based on an absolute worst-case scenario with a higher volume of solar development that is currently proposed.

### **3.9 Noise**

Noise modelling has been undertaken based on the amended scheme and a revised Noise Impact Assessment has been produced. As there has been a significant reduction in the number of batteries and transformers at the Greener Grid Park, the predicted noise levels at the nearest residential properties are 1 decibel lower than predicted as part of the initial noise assessment. The amended scheme will therefore result in reduced noise impacts. The revised predicted noise levels are set out in Table 9 in Section 8.1 of the Assessment.

As with the original Noise Impact Assessment, noise levels at the nearest properties will still be less than 5 dB above background levels and the Development therefore meets the Council's criteria with regard to noise.

### **3.10 Construction Management**

The amended scheme does not give rise to any material differences in construction methods for the Development. However, Section 4.4.2 and Appendix B of the Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan have been supplemented with further measures for the protection of great crested newts during construction and habitat creation activities.

### **3.11 Land Contamination**

The design amendments will not have any effect on the contents or conclusions of the Phase 1 Contaminated Land Assessment as previously submitted.

### **3.12 Fire Safety**

The design amendments will not have any effect on the contents or conclusions of the Fire Safety Report as previously submitted.

### **3.13 Community Benefit**

Whilst unrelated to the design changes and not a material consideration for planning, improvements have been made to the community benefits package which was set out in the Community Benefit Statement previously submitted.

In addition to the first-year sum of £65,000 for community projects, an ongoing fund of £20,000 per annum throughout the life of the project and will be made available starting from the second year of operation. This fund will be directed towards projects that support the transition to renewable energy, help to reduce fuel poverty and/or support the electrification of transport in the area.

Furthermore, a one-off contribution of £15,000 will be made to Yorkshire Wildlife Trust for the purposes of improving lowland heath and managing the Allerthorpe Common Nature Reserve to the north of the Site. It is acknowledged that this contribution does not address the concerns raised by Yorkshire Wildlife Trust or remove their objection to the scheme.

#### **4 CONCLUSION**

The proposed design amendments have been made to address issues raised by members of the local community and technical consultees during East Riding of Yorkshire Council's consultation on the planning application. The Applicant has sought to minimise the environmental and amenity effects of the Development, even where these have been deemed to be acceptable by Council Officers.

The design amendments have resulted in an overall reduction in the quantum of built development and an increase in landscape and ecological mitigation enhancements proposed, which will increase the biodiversity net gain offered by the Development. The revised scheme will also provide a greater level of protection for residential amenity as the proposed access track has been moved and a field of solar panels has been removed. All potential environmental effects of the amendment have been assessed in the revised and supplementary technical reports and the revised scheme will not result in any significant or unacceptable environmental effects and do not materially change the conclusions of the original planning submission.

As such, the Development in accordance with all relevant local and national planning policies as set out in the previously submitted Planning, Design and Access Statement.



