

Ref. No. P/2022/00567		Site / Location: Land at Newbold Quarry, Lichfield Road, Barton under Needwood, Staffordshire	
Description of development: Proposed Solar Farm			
<b>PART 1 - Is a Screening Opinion Required?</b> (ref: <a href="#">EIA Regulations 2017</a> , and <a href="#">Planning Practice Guidance – Screening Schedule 2 projects</a> )			Yes / No
1	Development Description	<p>Do you have enough information to define the size and type of development (a plan, description of type/nature/ purpose and possible effects)?**</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Yes</b> (proceed to step 2) (Application ref. / Request for Screening Opinion ****add hyperlink**)</li> <li>• <b>No</b> - either take the precautionary principle and assume the worst case or, request more information confirming 3 week deadline not commence until received;</li> </ul> <p>**Note - <b>Changes or extensions may also need an EIA!</b> (Schedule 2, category 13)</p>	Yes
2	Is it a Schedule 1 development?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Yes/No</b> (explain) <b>YES</b> – The development is category..... and a <b>screening opinion is not required as an EIA mandatory!</b> <b>NO</b> – If the development is not listed in Schedule 1 it may be listed in Schedule 2 (proceed to step 3)</li> </ul>	No
3	Is it a Schedule 2 development? (Schedule 2, Col 1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Yes/No</b> (explain)</li> <li>• <b>YES</b> - The development falls/could fall within category 3 Energy Industry (proceed to step 4)</li> <li>• <b>NO</b> – If the development is not listed in Schedule 2 a <b>screening opinion is not required and EIA not required!</b></li> </ul>	Yes
4	4(a) Does the development fall within the absolute threshold/criteria? (Schedule 2, Col 2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Yes/No</b> – (explain) The threshold/criteria is/are 0.5 hectares and the proposal is/are 17 hectares (proceed to step 4b)</li> </ul>	Yes
	4(b) Is the proposal within/near to a 'sensitive area'? (e.g. SSSI, NP, AONB, SAC, RAMSAR, Scheduled Monument)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Yes/No</b> – (explain) <b>YES</b> – The development falls within/near to the following designated site(s) There are no 'sensitive areas' within or near to the proposed site. There is an SBI at Branston Water Park approx. 112m to the north-east of the site, however, this is not listed in the legislation as one of the 'sensitive area' criteria.</li> </ul>	No
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If you have answered '<b>Yes</b>' to the threshold/criteria <b>a screening opinion is required</b> – proceed to Part 2</li> <li>• If you have answered '<b>No</b>' to the threshold/criteria and the development <b>is</b> within/near a sensitive area <b>a screening opinion is required</b> – proceed to Part 2</li> <li>• If you have answered '<b>No</b>' to the threshold/criteria and the development <b>is not</b> within/near a sensitive area <b>a screening opinion is not required.</b></li> </ul>	
5	Conclusion	Screening opinion required?	Yes

**PART 2 – Are the proposals EIA development?**

EIA usually required for (i) major developments of more than local importance; (ii) development in particularly environmentally sensitive or vulnerable locations; (iii) developments with unusually complex and potentially hazardous environmental effects. This checklist has been prepared with reference to Schedule 3 and Regulation 4 (2) and used to determine whether significant effects are likely to arise from the development. The Regulations also apply to changes to EIA development and reserved matters / subsequent approvals (ref: [Schedule 3 - EIA Regulations 2017](#), [Regulation 4 \(2\)](#) and [Planning Practice Guidance – Screening Schedule 2 projects](#))

1	Applicable screening thresholds/criteria	Does the development fall within the applicable screening thresholds / criteria? (see <a href="#">applicable screening thresholds</a> )	<b>YES/ NO.</b>
2	Characteristic of the development:	Size and design of the whole development:	<p>The site is currently used as a quarry which falls under the remit of Staffordshire County Council. The proposal is for 17ha of the site to be used as a 20MW solar farm. The area of land affected is a parcel of greenfield land currently used for the grazing of livestock.</p> <p>Details of the specific design has not been provided, however, this would be similar to the layout of other approved solar farms and the applicant has confirmed that each panel will be raised approx. 2.4m from the ground set at a 20 degree angle.</p>
	Characteristic of the development:	Cumulation with other developments and/or approved development:	<p>There have been previous applications made to the County Council at the application site in respect of the existing quarry use. A 160ha extension to the quarry was approved in August 2014 by Staffordshire County Council, allowing the quarry operations to continue until the end of 2029. Following this the site is required to be restored to agricultural land, woodland and wetlands.</p> <p>It is not considered that there are any likely significant cumulative effects likely from other existing or approved developments. In addition, there are no similar proposals within the immediate local area to conclude that significant cumulative effects are likely.</p> <p>The use of 17ha of the application site to be used as a solar farm is not considered to lead to significant increases in traffic to the site.</p>

	Use of natural resources (e.g. land, soil, water and biodiversity):	The construction of a solar farm would use land, soil, water and energy that would be standard for a development of this size and is not considered to raise significant environmental effects. The agent have confirmed that the solar panels will be situated on the existing topography of the site with minimal contact with the land, no natural resources are required for construction or operation.
	Production of waste:	It is considered that there would be a limited amount of waste give that the solar panels will be situated on the existing topography of the site. The agent has confirmed that the solar farm will produce no solid waste.

	<p>Pollution and nuisances:</p>	<p>It is not considered that the proposed development would have a significant impact on air quality in the immediate area. Dust generation would be managed under relevant legislation, and given the type of development is not considered to be significant.</p> <p>The emissions associated with vehicle movements would not increase significantly during the course of the construction.</p> <p>The proposed development is for a solar farm which are not associated with hazardous substances or toxic emissions to air. There is not anticipated to be a requirement to store large volumes of hazardous materials, and the agent has confirmed that no pollutants will be released into the air.</p> <p>The area is at low risk of contamination due to its agricultural use. The land will not need to be significantly disturbed in order to install the solar panels. Therefore the possible remediation of the land should be undertaken with advice from the Environment Agency and the Council's Environmental Health Team.</p> <p>In terms of noise and disturbance there will be some noise and vibrations during the construction of the solar farm, however, this would be short-term, localised and is not considered to be significant. A Construction Management Plan should be submitted to support any future application to ensure that noise and disturbance is minimised. The agent has confirmed that once the solar panels become operational will not cause noise and vibration or the release of light, heat, energy or electromagnetic radiation.</p>
	<p>Risk of major accidents and/or disasters relevant to the development including climate change:</p>	<p>It is not anticipated that the proposed development would result in any significant increase in the risk of accidents given that the proposal is for a solar farm. It is therefore not considered that an EIA is required on this basis.</p>
	<p>Risk to human health (e.g. water contamination or air pollution):</p>	<p>It is not anticipated that the proposed development would result in any significant increase in risk to human health. Any impacts identified to water and air pollution would be managed through appropriate legislation.</p>

3	Location of the development (the environmental sensitivity of geographical areas likely to be affected):	Existing and approved land use ( <i>include past, present and future (allocated land/with permission)</i> )	The site forms part of the wider Newbold Quarry with permission from Staffordshire County Council to be used until 2029 following which the site will be returned to agricultural land, woodland and wetland. The site is not close to any residential properties, with the wider area forming open fields, quarry, Branston Water Park and industrial uses along the A38. The development would be sited on a parcel of agricultural land, on existing topography, with little disturbance to the land in order to construct the solar farm. Therefore it is not considered likely to have significant environmental impacts on the surrounding uses.
		Relative abundance, availability, quality, regenerative capacity of natural resources (including soil, land, water and biodiversity) in the area and its underground):	There are no areas on or around the site that contain important, high quality or scarce resources which could be affected by the development. The site is greenfield, and the land would be capable of being returned to its original condition in the event that the solar farm is no longer required. It does not contain any watercourse and only a small portion of the site along the north-western boundary is located in Flood Zones 2 and 3. The site is not the subject of or close to any Source Protection Zone.

		<p>Absorption capacity of natural environment (in Staffordshire these could include wetlands, riparian areas and forest areas; nature reserves/parks; SSSIs and international designations; areas where EU environmental quality standards have not been met; densely populated areas; landscapes of historical, cultural or archaeological significance):</p>	<p>There are no statutory designations within or immediately adjacent to the site, i.e. there are no Scheduled Monuments, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), National Parks, Registered Battlefields, Registered Historic Parks and Gardens, Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas or Ramsar Sites.</p> <p>The proposal is unlikely to have an adverse impact on the closest SAC at Cannock Chase through recreational pressure as the site is located more than 15km from Cannock Chase SAC.</p> <p>The closest designation is Branston Water Park SBI approx. 120m to the north-east of the site. There are no SSSI's within at least 500m of the application site.</p> <p>There are four listed features near to the site, all of which are Grade II listed. These are the footbridge approx. 150 to the north-east of the site, a milepost approx. 30 to the east of the access, a footbridge approx. 30m to the east of the access, and the Newbold Farmhouse approx. 400m to the south-west of the access and 600m to the south of the site.</p> <p>The Trent and Mersey Canal Conservation Area is approx. 30m (at its closest point) to the east of the site access.</p> <p>The site is within a mineral safeguarding area and consultation will need to take place with Staffordshire County Council.</p>
4	Types and characteristics of the potential impact	<p>The magnitude and spatial extent (e.g. geographical area and size of affected population likely to be affected):</p> <p>The nature of the impact:</p> <p>The transboundary nature of the impact:</p>	<p>The impact of the development is confined to the site and adjacent land. Residents, industrial area and highway users could be affected during the construction phase. These impacts could be managed through the relevant legislation.</p> <p>Noise and vibration during construction, and impact on contaminated land, these will be managed via appropriate legislation.</p> <p>There will be no transboundary impacts.</p>

	<p>The intensity and complexity of the impact:</p>	<p>The impact will vary from intense during the construction phase to limited upon completion. The impact will not be unusually complex.</p> <p>Whilst there will be landscape impacts, due to the introduction of solar panels, this will be low lying and limited due to boundary treatments and the land being relatively level. Therefore it is not considered sufficiently intense or complex to require an EIA.</p>
	<p>The probability of the impact:</p>	<p>The probability if the impacts will be manage through appropriate legislation.</p>
	<p>The duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact:</p>	<p>Construction impacts would be short term in duration and the operational effects would be long term. The construction impacts would be intermittent and frequent, with the operational impacts being continuous, however, these impacts are limited. The impacts of the development would be easily reversible and the land would be capable of being returned to its original condition in the event that the solar panels are no longer required.</p>
	<p>The cumulation of the impact with the impact of other existing and/or approved development:</p>	<p>There would be no significant cumulative impact with other existing or approved development.</p>
	<p>The possibility of effectively reducing the impact:</p>	<p>The impact can be managed through relevant legislation.</p>
	<p><b>EIA Development</b></p>	<p><b>No</b></p>
5	<p>The main reasons for the conclusion reached having regard to (Reg 5 (5)(a)) / (Reg 5 (5)(b)) .</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The site is not located within a sensitive area as defined by the EIA Regulations.</li> <li>• The site would have no significant cumulative impacts, in visual or pollution terms.</li> <li>• The site is agricultural land and the development is proposed to be of a scale that would not be significant beyond its local environs. There will be clear substantive impacts in terms of the setting of the listed buildings and conservation area and in relation to visual amenities, however, these will be localised and capable of full assessment during any planning application process by way of fully informed assessment based on documentation submissions.</li> <li>• Preliminary investigations confirm that there are no significant or complex environmental effects resulting from the proposals and that those environmental impacts envisaged can be addressed through attention to relevant legislation, submission of sufficient information at the planning application stage and the implementation of a CEMP if deemed necessary as a condition of any planning permission (should it be forthcoming based on the individual planning merits of the case).</li> </ul>	

	<b>Signed and dated</b>	<b>Case Officer</b>	<i>Lisa Bird</i> 30 <sup>th</sup> May 2022	<b>Team Leader/Team Manager</b>	<i>Naomi Perry</i> 31 <sup>st</sup> May 2022
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