

**THE TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT) REGULATIONS
2017 SCREENING MATRIX**

NOTES FOR TECH		
APPLICATION PROPOSAL		Ref No 21/503277/ENVSCR
Screening Opinion: The proposed development is for a solar energy farm with a site area of approximately 78 hectares which would generate and store up to 60 megawatt (MW) of renewable energy to be exported to the Grid.		
ADDRESS (Eckley Farms) Land North Of Sheephurst Lane Marden Kent		
RECOMMENDATION - Environmental Impact Assessment Not Req.		
WARD Marden And Yalding	PARISH/TOWN COUNCIL Collier Street	APPLICANT Statkraft AGENT
DECISION DUE DATE 05/07/21		PUBLICITY EXPIRY DATE

Case Reference	21/503277/ENVSCR	Brief description of the project/ development	<p>Screening Opinion: The proposed development is for a solar energy farm with a site area of approximately 78 hectares which would generate and store up to 60 megawatt (MW) of renewable energy to be exported to the Grid.</p> <p>Site area approximately 78ha. Thermal output 60 MW.</p> <p>The distance between each row of solar array is usually 6-8 metres, with approximately 25% of the total site area covered by the arrays. The panel structures will generally be 3 metres in height by 6 metres in depth (although in instances of uneven topography, these could reach a maximum height of 3.5 metres).</p> <p>The solar energy farm will also include the following electrical components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 33kV and 132kV cables; • Inverters; • Transformers • Sub station; • Switch room; • Disconnectors; • Energy storage containers <p>Security measures include the installation of a wire-mesh perimeter fencing designed to allow small animals to pass through the site. The electrical equipment will be located in a compound which will have additional secure fencing due to the nature of the equipment it contains.</p> <p>The site will have no external artificial lighting but it will have infrared security detection cameras pointing directly within the site. The solar energy farm will be connected to the high voltage overhead line on the site.</p>
Applicant	Statkraft		
LPA	Maidstone Borough Council		

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Site	Land North of Sheephurst Lane, Marden, Kent.		
MBLP designation	Countryside; Minerals Safeguarding Area	Constraints	Minerals Safeguarding Area-Paludina Limestone PROW: KM248 North boundary: KM244 South-east corner SSSI Impact Risk Zone Adjacent Ancient Woodland Flood Zone 3 Green and Amber Great Crested Newt Risk Zone Close to Listed Buildings: Oasthouse NE of Little Cheveney; Oasthouse SE of Little Cheveney Barn SW of Little Cheveney; Oasthouse N of Great Sheephurst Farmhouse Little Cheveney Farm, Great Sheephurst Farmhouse;

Is the project Schedule 1 development according to Schedule 1 of the EIA Regulations?	No
If YES, which description of development (THEN GO TO Q4)	Click here to enter text.
Is the project Schedule 2 development under the EIA Regulations?	Yes
If YES, under which description of development in Column 1 and Column 2?	Schedule 2 Development Type 3(a): <i>Industrial installations for the production of electricity, steam and hot water (unless included in Schedule 1)</i>
Is the development within, partly within, or near a 'sensitive area' as defined by Regulation 2 of the EIA Regulations?	no
If YES, which area?	Click here to enter text.
Are the applicable thresholds/criteria in Column 2 exceeded/met?	Yes
If yes, which applicable threshold/criteria?	The area of works exceeds 0.5 ha
Are the Indicative Thresholds in the Planning Practice Guidance exceeded ?	Yes- Thermal output of more than 50MW. Level of emissions to air, arrangements for the transport of fuel and any visual impact.
Has the LPA or SoS issued a Screening Opinion (SO) or Screening Direction (SD)? (In the case of Enforcement Appeals, has a Regulation 37 notice been issued)	No
If yes, is a copy of the SO/SD on the file?	N/A
If yes, is the SO/SD positive?	N/A
Has the appellant supplied an ES ?	No

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Question	(Part 2a) / (Part 2b) – Answer to the question and explanation of reasons Briefly explain answer to Part 2a and, if applicable and/or known, include name of feature and proximity to site (If answer in Part 2a / 2b is 'No', the answer to Part 3a / 3b is 'N/A')		(Part 3a) / (Part 3b) (only if Yes in part 2a) – Is a Significant Effect Likely? Is a significant effect likely, having regard particularly to the magnitude and spatial extent (including population size affected), nature, intensity and complexity, probability, expected onset, duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact and the possibility to effectively reduce the impact? If the finding of no significant effect is reliant on specific features or measures of the project envisaged to avoid, or prevent what might otherwise have been, significant adverse effects on the environment these should be identified in bold.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Will construction, operation or decommissioning of the project involve actions which will cause physical changes in the topography of the area? 	no			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Will construction or operation of the project use natural resources above or below ground such as land, soil, water, materials/minerals or energy which are non-renewable or in short supply? 	Yes	Construction will utilise materials, land, water and energy etc	No	The magnitude is not significant and the construction period is relatively short.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Are there any areas on/around the location which contain important, high quality or scarce resources which could be affected by the project, e.g. forestry, agriculture, water/coastal, fisheries, minerals? 	?	Area is partly safeguarded under the Kent Waste and Minerals Local Plan 2020.	No	There are no active quarries of Paludina Limestone in Kent and the Solar panels etc would not impact on the reserve or its quality in the long term.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Will the project produce solid wastes 	No			

Question	(Part 2a) / (Part 2b) – Answer to the question and explanation of reasons		(Part 3a) / (Part 3b) (only if Yes in part 2a) – Is a Significant Effect Likely?	
during construction or operation or decommissioning?				
○ Will the project release pollutants or any hazardous, toxic or noxious substances to air?	No			
○ Will the project cause noise and vibration or release of light, heat, energy or electromagnetic radiation?	No	Some reflection of natural light from panels, but no artificial light emissions. Energy generation within the array and associated elements will be confined to grid connection.		
○ 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			
○ Are there any areas on or around the location which are already subject to pollution or environmental damage, e.g. where existing legal environmental standards are exceeded, which could be affected by the project?	No			
○ Will there be any risk of major accidents (including those caused by climate change, in accordance with scientific knowledge) during construction, operation or decommissioning?	No	Likely positive effects of renewable energy generation.		
○ Will the project present a risk to the population (having regard to population density) and their human health during construction, operation or decommissioning? (for	No	Surrounding area sparsely populated		

Question	(Part 2a) / (Part 2b) – Answer to the question and explanation of reasons		(Part 3a) / (Part 3b) (only if Yes in part 2a) – Is a Significant Effect Likely?	
example due to water contamination or air pollution)				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Are there any water resources including surface waters, e.g. rivers, lakes/ponds, coastal or underground waters on or around the location which could be affected by the project, particularly in terms of their volume and flood risk? 	No	By their nature the proposals will not materially affect surface water drainage patterns.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Are there any protected areas which are designated or classified for their terrestrial, avian and marine ecological value, or any non-designated / non-classified areas which are important or sensitive for reasons of their terrestrial, avian and marine ecological value, located on or around the location and which could be affected by the project? (e.g. wetlands, watercourses or other water-bodies, the coastal zone, mountains, forests or woodlands, undesignated nature reserves or parks. (Where designated indicate level of designation (international, national, regional or local))). 	Yes	Green and Amber Zone Great Crested Newt Risk Zone SSSI Impact Risk Zone	No	<p>Ecological surveys to detect GCN or Licensing will be required for the planning application. Separate legislation protects the species to ensure mitigation.</p> <p>The scheme would not be of a type that would impact on the SSSIs. The River Beult lies over 3.5km north of the site and the Marden Meadows 3.6km to the east.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Could any protected, important or sensitive species of flora or fauna which use areas on or around the site, e.g. for breeding, nesting, foraging, resting, over-wintering, or migration, be affected by the project? 	?	Ancient woodland to the west boundary – buffer area may overlap western most site boundary.	No	The AW is outside the application site and securing an adequate buffer would be sufficient mitigation.

Question	(Part 2a) / (Part 2b) – Answer to the question and explanation of reasons		(Part 3a) / (Part 3b) (only if Yes in part 2a) – Is a Significant Effect Likely?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Are there any areas or features on or around the location which are protected for their landscape and scenic value, and/or any non-designated / non-classified areas or features of high landscape or scenic value on or around the location which could be affected by the project?¹ Where designated indicate level of designation (international, national, regional or local). 	No	No nearby LLV's.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Is the project in a location where it is likely to be highly visible to many people? (If so, from where, what direction, and what distance?) 	No	Structures are generally low lying. Potential impacts will be localised. Low density of population in the surrounding area. Established field margins and landscaping will screen from longer distance views. No higher ground viewpoints.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Are there any areas or features which are protected for their cultural heritage or archaeological value, or any non-designated/classified areas and/or features of cultural heritage or archaeological importance on or around the location which could be affected by the project (including potential impacts on setting, and views to, from and within)? Where designated indicate level of designation (international, national, regional or local). 	Yes	Several Listed Buildings to the SE which may have their settings impacted upon.	?	Depends on the significance of their setting and the final layout of the development and level of screening. Impacts principally localised.

¹ See question 8.1 for consideration of impacts on heritage designations and receptors, including on views to, within and from designated areas.

Question	(Part 2a) / (Part 2b) – Answer to the question and explanation of reasons		(Part 3a) / (Part 3b) (only if Yes in part 2a) – Is a Significant Effect Likely?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Are there any routes on or around the location which are used by the public for access to recreation or other facilities, which could be affected by the project? 	Yes	Public rights of way KM 248 and KM244	?	Use of the PROW could continue after development and long term impact depends on the level of screening, but confined to relatively short sections of the respective PROW network.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Are there any transport routes on or around the location which are susceptible to congestion or which cause environmental problems, which could be affected by the project? 	No			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Are there existing land uses or community facilities on or around the location which could be affected by the project? E.g. housing, densely populated areas, industry / commerce, farm/agricultural holdings, forestry, tourism, mining, quarrying, facilities relating to health, education, places of worship, leisure /sports / recreation. 	No	Isolated farmhouses, dwellings and commercial units, the occupation/operation of which would not be affected by the nature of the development.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Are there any plans for future land uses on or around the location which could be affected by the project? 	No	No significant land use designations within either the adopted or emerging local plan.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Is the location susceptible to earthquakes, subsidence, landslides, erosion, or extreme/adverse climatic conditions, e.g. temperature inversions, fogs, severe winds, which 	No		N/A	

Question	(Part 2a) / (Part 2b) – Answer to the question and explanation of reasons	(Part 3a) / (Part 3b) (only if Yes in part 2a) – Is a Significant Effect Likely?
could cause the project to present environmental problems?		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Could this project together with existing and/or approved development result in accumulation of impacts together during the construction/operation phase? 	No	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Is the project likely to lead to transboundary effects?² 	No	
<p>The proposals fall within Schedule 2 of the Environmental Impact Regulations 2017. Notwithstanding the site being 60MW Thermal Output, which is marginally above the indicative threshold of 50 MW thermal output set out on the NPPG for this type of use there will be mitigation to control visual impact; noise will be of short duration during construction. Construction will utilise materials, land, water and energy etc but this is not significant. Several Listed Buildings to the SE which may have their settings impacted upon unless there is adequate mitigation from screen planting. 2 PROW would be affected during construction and may have their visual amenity impacted upon unless there is adequate mitigation from screen planting. The AW can be protected by a buffer and ecological surveys to detect any Great Crested Newts or Licensing will be required. The scheme would not be of a type that would impact on the SSSI. There will be a low increase to prevailing traffic levels during construction only. It is therefore considered that the development in that context is not so significant or wide ranging so as to warrant an Environmental Impact Assessment. This Screening Opinion is hereby adopted on behalf of Maidstone Borough Council and an Environmental Impact Assessment IS NOT REQUIRED for the development.</p>		
If a SO/SD has been provided do you agree with it?	N/A	
Is it necessary to issue a SD?	No	
Is an ES required?	No	


² The Regulations require consideration of the transboundary nature of the impact. Due to the England's geographical location the vast majority of TCPA cases are unlikely to result in transboundary impacts.

Question	(Part 2a) / (Part 2b) – Answer to the question and explanation of reasons	(Part 3a) / (Part 3b) (only if Yes in part 2a) – Is a Significant Effect Likely?
		OUTCOME
Is likely to have significant effects on the environment	ES required	
Not likely to have significant effects on the environment	ES not required	✓
More information is required to inform direction	Request further info	

NAME	Marion Geary
DATE	05.07.21

RECOMMENDATION – Environmental Impact Assessment Not Req. subject to the following conditions/reasons:

N/A

Delegated Authority to Sign:	Date:
	5/7/21

PRINT NAME: Austin Mackie	
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