



## Welbeck Colliery Solar Farm Access Road

### Planning Statement

lightsource bp

On behalf of Lightsource bp

## Document Control Sheet

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## Contents

- 1 INTRODUCTION ..... 1**
- 2 SITE CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND ..... 2**
  - 2.1 Background ..... 2
  - 2.2 Site Description ..... 2
  - 2.3 Designations ..... 3
  - 2.4 Planning History ..... 3
- 3 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT ..... 5**
- 4 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT ..... 6**
  - 4.2 Local Planning Policy ..... 6
  - 4.3 Material Considerations ..... 9
- 5 PLANNING ASSESSMENT ..... 12**
  - 5.2 Principle of Development ..... 12
  - 5.3 Transport ..... 13
  - 5.4 Ecology ..... 14
- 6 CONCLUSION ..... 15**

## Figures

- Figure 2.1 Site Location ..... 2
- Figure 3.1 Site Layout Plan ..... 5

## Tables

- Table 1.1: Planning Application Package ..... 1
- Table 2.1 Planning History ..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1.1 Stantec have been instructed by Lightsource bp (the ‘Applicant’) to submit a full planning application to Mansfield District Council (the ‘Council’) for an access road from the A60 to allow the Applicant to access the adjacent solar farm into the future.

1.1.2 This planning application applies for the following proposed development:

**“Proposed new hardcore access track from the A60 to enable access to Welbeck Solar Farm”**

1.1.3 This Planning Statement sets out the details of the above proposals and should be read in conjunction with the drawings and information accompanying the planning application.

1.1.4 Table 1.1 provides a list of drawings and documents submitted in support of this planning application.

**Table 1.1: Planning Application Package**

Plan / Document	Reference
<b>Documents</b>	
Application Form	N/A
Preliminary Ecological Appraisal	R001 V2
Transport Statement	L520-FN01
<b>Plans</b>	
Site Location Plan	AD_SLP
Site Layout Plan	ACC_LYT
Proposed Site Access Visibility	L520/01
Road Cross Section	UK_EDP_RCS

1.1.5 The application site refers to the new proposed access route which runs from the A60 to the boundary of the solar farm site. A full description of the Site and its surroundings is provided at Section 2.

1.1.6 The remaining report is structured as follows:

- Section 2.0 Site Context and Background;
- Section 3.0 Proposed Development;
- Section 4.0 Planning Policy Context;
- Section 5.0 Planning Assessment; and
- Section 6.0 Conclusion.

## 2 SITE CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

### 2.1 Background

- 2.1.1 The site is located on land to the south of the former Welbeck Colliery, Meden Vale, Mansfield. It is located entirely within the administrative boundary of Mansfield District Council, within the Warsop Civil Parish. The site is currently in agricultural use.
- 2.1.2 The solar farm was granted consent in 2013 (ref: 2012/0557/NT) and was subsequently built out by the applicants Re-Fin Solar and has been in operation since 2014.
- 2.1.3 Lightsource bp now own, operate and maintain the solar farm. Access to the site is currently from the existing colliery access off Elkesley Road to the east. Vehicles needing to access the site must, at present, drive through the village of Meden Vale via Elkesley Road, before turning into a private road associated with the old colliery site.
- 2.1.4 It is vital the solar farm can be accessed for routine maintenance, however the existing access route has a limited time for use. The benefit of a site access directly from the A60 is that no vehicles accessing the Solar Farm would be required to route through Meden Vale, and following the period upon which the existing access route ceases to exist, a more efficient and sustainable access route will be in place.
- 2.1.5 Figure 2.1 shows the locational context of the proposed access road.

**Figure 2.1 Site Location**



### 2.2 Site Description

- 2.2.1 The site boundary for the new access road extends to 0.65ha. The route of the proposed access road runs east off the A60 and parallel to the A60, before turning east and finally turning north again to

where it reaches the edge of an existing access track to the solar farm. Once the track heads north it is set within existing scrub land and follows the existing access track to the solar farm.

- 2.2.2 There is an existing footway/cycleway along the western side of the A60. However, this footway/cycleway is not part of any designated PRow.
- 2.2.3 The Site is bound by agricultural fields to the south and west, and the southern edge of a public footpath to the north. It is bound by existing hedgerow and woodland adjacent the public highway of the A60 to the west. In the further surrounding area of the site is the former colliery, further agricultural fields, hedgerows with trees, woodland and residential properties and farmsteads.
- 2.2.4 The site of the solar farm forms part of the former Welbeck Colliery spoil heap for which permission was granted for its restoration in 2012 prior to the development of the solar farm and as such, this area is characterised by a steep topography which slopes downwards to the southeast.
- 2.2.5 The area of land to the north of the solar farm lies within the district of Bassetlaw.

## 2.3 Designations

- 2.3.1 The Site is not located within the Green Belt, nor is the Site located within, or near to an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and is not in proximity to any conservation areas or listed buildings. The closest designations with regards to listed buildings and conservations areas are located within the village of Warsop approximately 550m south of the Site.
- 2.3.2 Furthermore, the Site is also not in proximity to any Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) or Ancient Woodland and does not include any Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAM) or World Heritage Sites (WHS). The closest SAM to the site is Cuckney Motte and Bailey Castle, located approximately 1.8km north of the site.
- 2.3.3 A Public Right of Way (PRow) (ref. Warsop FP39) runs adjacent to the proposed road from the A60, to Meden Vale, which vehicles accessing the solar farm would be required to cross to maintain the solar farm once or twice per month.
- 2.3.4 The site lies entirely within Flood Zone 1 meaning it is at the lowest possible risk of flooding.

## 2.4 Planning History

- 2.4.1 As stated previously, the proposal for the solar farm was approved in February 2013. The planning history for the site and surrounding solar farm area is detailed within Table 2.1.

**Table 2.1 Planning History**

Reference Number	Description of Development	Decision
2012/0557/NT	Development of a photovoltaic farm with an installed capacity of 12.2mw per annum, including 51,024 solar panels installed on arrays, 7 no. Associated central inverter stations, 1 no. Exit point substation building, security fence, CCTV system, landscaping, underground cabling and access roads.	Granted 11/02/2013
2013/0239/NT	Proposed alternative access to Welbeck Solar Farm (approved by planning permission reference: 2012/0557/NT).	Granted 03/07/2013

2014/0194/NT	Non-material amendment to planning permission 2012/0557/NT (development of a photovoltaic farm with an installed capacity of 12.2mw per annum, including 51,024 solar panels installed on arrays, 7 no. Associated central inverter stations, 1 no. Exit point substation building, security fence, CCTV system, landscaping, underground cabling and access roads) to amend the module layout, framework and substation plans.	Granted 08/05/2014
2014/0398/NT	Non-material amendment to planning permission 2013/0238/NT (development of a photovoltaic farm with an installed capacity of 12.2mw per annum, including 51,024 solar panels installed on arrays, 7 no. Associated central inverter stations, 1 no. Exit point substation building, security fence, CCTV system, landscaping, underground cabling and access roads). To amend module mounting system from 4 modules in landscape to 3 modules in portrait, amend overall module layout amend transfer station details and reduce from 6no. to 5no. and reduction of panels 51,024 to 45,000.	Granted 30/07/2014



### 3 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

3.1.1 This full planning application seeks consent for the development of a new access road which extends approximately 414.17m. The description of development is as follows:

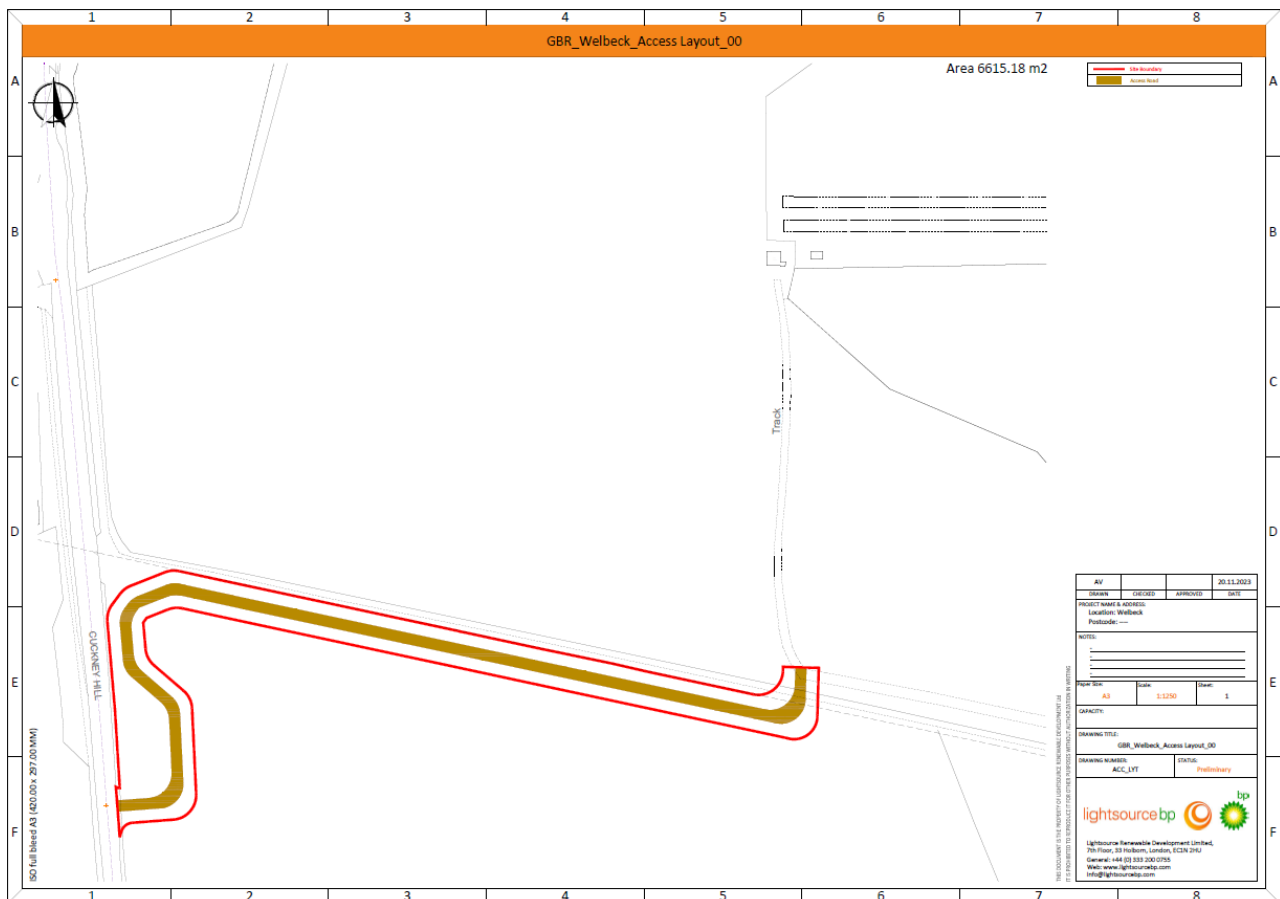
**“Proposed new hardcore access track from the A60 to enable access to Welbeck Solar Farm”**

3.1.2 The route of the proposed access road runs east off the A60 and parallel to the A60, before turning east and finally turning north again to where it reaches the edge of an existing access track to the solar farm. Once the track heads north it is set within existing scrub land and follows the existing access track to the solar farm.

3.1.3 Operational traffic for solar farm maintenance is minimal with just one or two movements a month by a small van or 4x4 vehicle.

3.1.4 Figure 3.1 below indicates the site layout for the proposed development.

**Figure 3.1 Site Layout Plan**



## 4 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

4.1.1 This section of the Planning Statement outlines the relevant planning policy context for the proposed development and considers national and local policy guidance.

4.1.2 For reference, the following documents are considered the most relevant:

- The National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF')
- Mansfield District Local Plan (2013 to 2033)

### 4.2 Local Planning Policy

4.2.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning applications should be determined in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. This approach is further clarified in national policy. The Development Plan for Mansfield was adopted in September 2020 and provides policies to guide development within the district from 2013 to 2033.

4.2.2 The following section will identify the key planning policies that will need to be considered in relation to the development of transport infrastructure and additionally renewable energy given the proposed development in turn relates to the necessary infrastructure to support a renewable energy scheme.

#### Mansfield Local Plan 2020

4.2.3 The Government requires every Local Plan to be reviewed at least once every five years. The current Local Plan as adopted by Mansfield in 2020 is currently under review at Regulation 18 stage. An eight-week consultation was held from August to October 2023 which considered "Issues and Opportunities" though the consultation statement resulting from this process has not yet been published. For the purpose of this application the Mansfield Local Plan 2020 continues to hold full weight.

4.2.4 The following policies within the Mansfield Local Plan considered of relevance to the proposed development are:

- S3 - Development in the countryside
- IN1 – Infrastructure Delivery
- IN9 – Impact of Development on the Transport Network
- NE1 – Protection and enhancement of landscape character
- CC1 – Renewable and Low Carbon Energy

#### Policy S3 – Development in the countryside

4.2.5 According to the Policies map, the site falls outside the settlement boundary of Maden Vale. Therefore, under this policy, development on the site is considered development in the countryside. This policy states that proposals for renewable and low carbon energy and proposals for transport infrastructure will be supported subject to a number of considerations set out within criterion 2 of the policy. Of relevance to this application are the following details of criterion 2:

Development will only be supported where:

- i. the appearance and character of the landscape, including its historic character and features such as views, settlement pattern, rivers, watercourses, field patterns and local distinctiveness is safeguarded or enhanced;
- v. It is appropriately accessible for the type of development proposed or, in the case of major development, will be made accessible by sustainable modes of transport; and

Policy IN1 – Infrastructure Delivery

4.2.6 Policy IN1 states all development proposals relating to infrastructure delivery will be expected to:

- a. meet all reasonable costs associated with new infrastructure required as a consequence of the proposal;
- b. where appropriate, contribute to the delivery of necessary related infrastructure to enable the cumulative infrastructure impacts of developments to be managed, including identified transport infrastructure requirements;
- c. provide for the future maintenance of facilities delivered as a result of the development; and
- d. where appropriate and necessary, enter into clawback agreements.

Policy IN8 – Protecting and improving the sustainable transport network

Policy IN8 states development proposals which enhance the existing sustainable transport network will be supported where they:

- a. protect and improve access to and along multi-user trails network across the district especially the Maun Valley Trail, Mansfield Way, Timberland Trail, Meden Trail, Dukeries Trail, Clipstone to Warsop, the National Cycle Route 6 and the Mansfield Strategic Cycle Route;
- b. provide new sustainable transport measures such as pedestrian and cycle routes, public transport facilities, and provision for community transport and taxis;
- c. assist the potential re-opening of the Dukeries railway line including the former Market Warsop railway station; facilitate the shift towards the use of ultra-low emissions vehicles; and
- d. facilitate the delivery of highway improvement schemes/sustainable transport solutions along the district's main arterial routes and public transport corridors.

Policy IN9 – Impact of development on the transport network

4.2.7 Under Policy IN9, development proposals will be supported provided

- a. they do not endanger highway safety, and allow for satisfactory access and egress from the highway and internal movements within the site;
- b. any significant impacts on the highway network can be suitably mitigated; and
- c. they do not impact on the safe operation of the rail network.

This policy also states that proposals which generate significant movement are required to:

- a. Be supported by a transport assessment or statement, together with a travel plan which demonstrates how sustainable transport measures set out in IN8 have been addressed; and

- b. be situated within settlement boundaries, as shown on the Policies Map, or in locations that are, or can be, well served by the full range of transport modes including public transport.

Policy NE1 – Protection and enhancement of landscape character

- 4.2.8 Under Policy NE1, development proposals are supported where they are informed by and are sympathetic to the area's landscape character.
- 4.2.9 Development within a landscape policy zone will be supported where it can be satisfactorily demonstrated, where appropriate and feasible, that it:
  - a. positively contributes towards meeting the defined landscape policy actions for the relevant landscape policy zone(s) (LPZ) and national character profile(s);
  - b. is designed to conserve and enhance important landforms, historic assets and their settings and landscape features;
  - c. identifies and mitigates any likely individual and cumulative impacts on the sensitivity and condition of the appropriate LPZ(s);
  - d. identifies and mitigates visual impacts on character and amenity; and
  - e. restores the landscape or removes any detracting features.
- 4.2.10 The proposed Site is located within the SH29 Meden Vale and Church Warsop Landscape Policy Zone (LPZ) with a landscape character labelled 'Sherwood Forest and Heaths'. The key characteristics of this character area to be conserved are as per below:

*“Undulating landform of low rounded hills overlying sandstone geology. The landscape has a mosaic of broadleaved, mixed and coniferous woodlands creating wooded skylines and enclosing extensive tracts of open arable farmland with large scale geometric fields with neatly trimmed often treeless hedgerows. Free draining acid soils support heathland often associated with woodland or on marginal land and roadsides. Narrow river corridors with pasture, flood meadows and woodland contrast with the adjacent arable farmland. Frequent large estates and parkland. Frequent evidence of coal mining industry and sandstone quarries are often locally conspicuous.”*

Policy CC1 – Renewable and low carbon energy

Policy CC1 states that proposals for renewable and low carbon energy development will be supported provided there are no significant adverse impacts alone and in-combination, in terms of:

- a. landscape character and visual effects when considered in conjunction with nearby developments and permitted proposals within the district or adjoining local authority areas;
- b. ecology, biodiversity (including bird flight paths), and geodiversity;
- c. pollution and emissions;
- d. amenity of nearby residential and non-residential uses;
- e. the built and natural environment resulting from the construction, operation and decommissioning of any equipment/infrastructure;
- f. loss of best and most versatile agricultural land;
- g. flooding;

- h. operation of telecommunication systems;
- i. aircraft safety;
- j. highway safety and traffic; and
- k. heritage assets and their setting.

### 4.3 Material Considerations

#### National Planning Policy Framework

4.3.1 The NPPF was updated in December 2023. It sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied.

4.3.2 The NPPF emphasises the importance of sustainable development. Paragraph 7 states:

*'The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. At a very high level, the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'*

4.3.3 Paragraph 8 sets out the three overarching objectives of achieving sustainable development through the planning system:

- **an economic objective** - to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure.
- **a social objective** - to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and
- **an environmental objective** - to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy."

4.3.4 NPPF paragraph 10 advises that:

*'So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development.'*

4.3.5 Paragraph 11 of the NPPF sets out the presumption in favour of sustainable development, which for decision-taking means the following:

*"c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or*

*d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:*

*i. the application of policies in this Framework that protects areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or*

*ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.”*

- 4.3.6 Section 14 Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change, Paragraph 152 states:

*‘The planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate ... It should help to: shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimise vulnerability and improve resilience; ... and support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure.’*

### **National Planning Practice Guidance**

- 4.3.7 In March 2014, the Government published its online Planning Practice Guidance (‘PPG’). This web-based resource brings together planning guidance on various topics including renewable and low carbon energy.

- 4.3.8 PPG Paragraph 001 (Reference ID: 5-001-20140306) sets out why planning for renewable and low-carbon energy is important. It advises:

*“increasing the amount of energy from renewable and low carbon technologies will help to make sure the UK has a secure energy supply, reduce greenhouse gas emissions to slow down climate change and stimulate investment in new jobs and businesses. Planning has an important role in the delivery of new renewable and low carbon energy infrastructure in locations where the local environment impact is acceptable.”*

### **Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1) and the National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3)**

#### **National Policy Statements**

- 4.3.9 The NPS sets out the national policy for planning decisions on applications for nationally significant renewable energy infrastructure projects. The 2011 NPS for energy infrastructure are superseded by the 2023 revised versions which came into force on 17<sup>th</sup> January 2024.

#### **NPS EN-1**

- 4.3.1 NPS EN–1 covers overarching National Policy Statements for Energy. Paragraph 1.2.1 confirms that *“this NPS, in combination with any relevant technology specific NPSs, may be a material consideration in decision making on applications that fall under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)”*.
- 4.3.2 EN-1 clearly sets out the need for new low carbon energy infrastructure to contribute to climate change mitigation. Paragraph 3.3.19 highlights that *‘given the changing nature of the energy landscape, we need a diverse mix of electricity infrastructure to come forward, so that we can deliver a secure, reliable, affordable, and net zero consistent system during the transition to 2050 for a wide range of demand, decarbonisation, and technology scenarios.’* EN-1 then goes on to state that wind and solar are the lowest cost ways of *‘generating electricity, helping reduce costs and providing a clean and secure source of electricity supply’*.
- 4.3.3 At Paragraph 4.1.7, the NPS advises that while applicants are required to mitigate particular impacts of renewable energy development as far as possible, it considers that there would still be residual adverse effects after the implementation of such mitigation measures, and that these residual adverse effects should be weighed against the benefit of the proposed development.
- 4.3.4 Section 5.10 of EN-1 considers Landscape and Visual Impact. It highlights *‘virtually all nationally significant energy infrastructure projects will have adverse effects on the landscape, but there may also*

*be beneficial landscape character impacts arising from mitigation*'. It also goes on to state that it needs to be considered whether any adverse impact on the landscape is temporary and will be capable of being reversed.

- 4.3.5 Section 5.11 of EN-1 is in regard to Land use. It states that applicants should preferably use land in areas of poorer agricultural quality and where schemes are sited on BMV land, it should be demonstrated to be necessary.

**NPS EN-3**

- 4.3.6 NPS EN-3 contains a section dedicated to Solar Photovoltaic Generation which details the factors that influence site selection by applicants. It also includes matters to be considered in the decision-making process (Section 2.10):

- 4.3.7 Section 2.10.35 to 2.10.39 is concerned with Accessibility and references the potential need for access tracks, stating:

*“Sometimes access routes will need to be constructed to connect solar farms to the public road network. Applications should include the full extent of the access routes necessary for operation and maintenance and an assessment of their effects.”*



## 5 PLANNING ASSESSMENT

5.1.1 Section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that decisions on planning applications “must be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise”.

5.1.2 This section of the Planning Statement assesses the suitability of the proposed development against relevant planning policy identified in the Section 4.0. The following key planning considerations are reviewed in this section:

- Principle of Development
- Technical Considerations
  - Transport;
  - Ecology;

### 5.2 Principle of Development

5.2.1 The proposed development is for an access road off the A60, which has been identified as an appropriate location to provide an alternative access route to enable the continued maintenance of the solar farm adjacent Welbeck Colliery to ensure its continued operation. It is vital the solar farm can be accessed for routine maintenance. The current vehicular access to the solar farm is through land not within the control and ownership of the applicant, and instead benefits from an easement whose exercise and duration is dependent upon the continued operation of the solar farm lease. The applicant therefore does not have a permanent right to access the freehold property and is making the current application to ensure that the ability to access the freehold property is independent of the current use of the property. The principle for development is therefore established.

5.2.2 Policies within the Mansfield Local Plan demonstrate clear support for proposals for renewable energy, which in turn would extend to the necessary infrastructure to support such renewable schemes. Consequently, the proposal for a new access road necessary to support the continued operation of the solar farm at Welbeck Colliery is supported in principle subject to the conditions of the local plan policies.

5.2.3 Local Plan policy S3 and CC1 states that proposals for renewable and low carbon energy will be supported but only where the appearance and character of the landscape is safeguarded. Policy NE1 builds upon this and supports proposals where they are sympathetic to the areas landscape character. The Site is located within LPZ SH29, the characteristics of which are detailed in Section 4.2. The proposed development, comprising loss of monocultured arable land of low biodiversity value and replacement with hardcore track is of no significant ecological consequence and would have minimal to no impact on the landscape character of the surrounding area or the LPZ. There will be a loss of approximately 4 metres of species poor hedgerow, though this is to be compensated by the planting of new hedgerow approximately 6 metres in total length and will be a more diverse hedgerow than is currently present. It is therefore considered that the principle of development is in compliance with and supported by local plan policies S3 and NE1.

5.2.4 Moreover, Policy CC1 requires that there are no significant impacts in terms of highway safety and traffic. Transport matters are covered in further detail later within this PS, however it has been evidenced that a safe and suitable access can be achieved from the A60 Cuckney Hill subject to hedgerows being moved to provide the necessary visibility splays. As such, the proposed development does not raise any significant impacts in terms of highway safety and traffic and is supported in principle by policy CC1.



- 5.2.5 The proposed new access road also complies with the criteria set out within Local Plan policy IN1.
- 5.2.6 Furthermore, the principle for the proposed development is reinforced by national planning policy, within the NPPF Paragraph 157 of section 14 states that the planning system should “*support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure*”, of which the proposal is considered associated infrastructure.
- 5.2.7 Section 14 Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change, Paragraph 157 additionally states:

*‘The planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate ... It should help to: shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimise vulnerability and improve resilience; ... and support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure.’*

- 5.2.8 A partial fall-back position exists whereby the landowner could construct the access track (excluding the new point of access onto the A60) under agricultural permitted development rights. Whilst the track would need to be used for agricultural purposes, the fact remains that a development of very similar type could come forward, without the requirement of planning permission. It is considered that this is a material consideration in the determination of the planning application, which should be given weight in the decision-making process.
- 5.2.9 The proposed access road is necessary for the continued maintenance and hence operation of the solar farm. Consequently, the need for the proposed development is led by its contribution to supporting the transition to a low carbon future, a principle promoted throughout national planning policy.

### Summary

- 5.2.10 It is considered therefore, that the principle of development is categorically established for the proposed development and that the above discussion demonstrates how the proposal is not only compliant but also supported by National and Local Plan policies. The following sections proceed to discuss and satisfy all technical matters associated with the application.

## 5.3 Transport

- 5.3.1 In support of this application, a Transport Statement has been provided by PFA consulting, which considers the provision of a new access directly off the A60. Full details of which can be found within the Transport Statement accompanying this application (ref. L520-FN01).
- 5.3.2 The A60, which the proposed access route runs from, lies west of the Site and carries traffic south to Mansfield and north to Worksop. The road is a single carriageway and has a 50mph speed limit which begins from approximately 460m south of the proposed entrance to the access road and 1.4km north of the site entrance. Speed cameras are also placed to the north and south of the proposed new entrance.
- 5.3.3 Automatic Traffic Count (ATC) surveys were undertaken for a 7-day period between 17-23 May 2023. The surveys were undertaken approximately 160m either side of the proposed site access. Results from these surveys evidenced that actual vehicles speeds were seen to fall within the 50mph speed limit.
- 5.3.4 Based on this information and in accordance with the relevant Nottinghamshire Highways Design Guide, visibility splays have been plotted to the inside vehicle track, as shown on drawing L520/01 (within appendix B of the supporting Transport Statement). The proposed exit visibility splays can be seen to be achievable, subject to hedgerow removal indicated on drawing L520/01.

5.3.5 As such, the proposed development scheme demonstrates achievable provision of safe and suitable site access in accordance with the Nottinghamshire Highways Design Guide and therefore complies with relevant policies of the Local Plan, including policy IN9 and can therefore be considered acceptable in this regard.

## 5.4 Ecology

5.4.1 In support of this application a preliminary ecological appraisal has been produced by Sambrook Associates Ltd to assess the potential effects the proposed track may have on biodiversity, and where required, opportunities to avoid, offset or minimise such impacts.

5.4.2 The assessment concluded that the proposed development is highly unlikely to result in significant effects on nearby designated sites, habitats or species.

5.4.3 Taking this conclusion into account, the following recommendations were made:

- Good site management is implemented in line with the Considerate Constructors Scheme, Code of Considerate Practice.
- Due to the potential for effects on nesting birds, as a precaution a nesting bird survey is to be undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist if vegetation removal or construction is due to commence during the nesting bird season (between March-August inclusive). If nests are present they are to be left undisturbed until the young have fledged.
- To protect great crested newts, badgers and reptiles, the great crested newt Reasonable Avoidance Measures States is to be implemented in full.
- To compensate for the loss of 4m of species poor hedgerow, 6m of species rich hedgerow should be provided.

5.4.4 The ecological appraisal concludes by stating if the above recommendations are implemented, the development would not result in negative effects on biodiversity, and no further surveys are required.

5.4.5 As such, the proposed development scheme has been appropriately informed by the recommended ecological measures and will therefore have no negative impacts on biodiversity. Therefore, the proposed scheme complies with the relevant policies of the Local Plan, including Policy CC1, NE1 and S3 and can be considered acceptable in this regard.

## 6 CONCLUSION

6.1.1 This PS supports a planning application submitted on behalf of Lightsource bp for the following development:

***“Proposed new hardcore access track from the A60 to enable access to Welbeck Solar Farm”.***

6.1.2 The development comprises a 414.17m new access road off the existing public highway A60 Cuckney Hill. The current access route is not controlled by the applicant and this application is therefore seeking a long term solution that future proofs the continued ability to access the solar farm for operation and maintenance purposes.

6.1.3 The development is in accordance with and supported by local and national planning policy and will support the continued operation of a solar farm, in turn making a significant contribution in supporting the transition to a renewable energy system and the delivery of net zero. As such, the principle for developing a new access road is clearly established.

6.1.4 The applicant has consulted all relevant consultees, and the proposed development has been appropriately informed to take account of the relevant material considerations and local plan policies to ensure compliance and good design. It is therefore requested that planning permission be granted accordingly without delay.