

PLANNING STATEMENT WITH STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

PROPOSED SOLAR PARK AT; BROOKBARN FARM, WICK, LITTLEHAMPTON, WEST SUSSEX, BN17 7PE

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by Pegasus Group Ltd on behalf of Anesco Ltd (hereafter referred to as the Applicant) in support of the accompanying planning application for a solar photovoltaic park on land at Brookbarn Farm, Wick.
- 1.2 This statement identifies the context and the need for the proposed development and includes an assessment of how it accords with relevant national and local planning policies and other planning material considerations.
- 1.3 The applicant submitted a request for a Screening Opinion under Regulation 5 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (EIA) Regulations 2011 to the Council on 17th July 2014.
- 1.4 Given the benign nature of the proposals coupled with the specific location of the site and the beneficial planting proposed, it is considered that whilst there will be some effects upon the environment as a consequence of the scheme, none of these are considered to constitute '**significant effects**' upon the environment, as set out in Central Government Guidance. Accordingly, it is considered that the proposal does not constitute EIA development and would not require an Environmental Statement to be submitted with the planning application for the scheme. The Council confirmed this in their response, reference PE/00455/14, on the 6th August 2014.
- 1.5 In the absence of a formal Environmental Impact Assessment, it is acknowledged that it is necessary to assess the effects of the proposed development by way of a number of technical studies. The application submission therefore comprises:
 - i) Application form, duly completed and signed, Ownership Certificate and Agricultural Certificate;
 - ii) Planning Statement with statement of community consultation;
 - iii) Design and Access Statement;
 - iv) Ecological Assessment – Phase 1 Habitat Survey;
 - v) Flood Risk Assessment (due to site size in excess of 1Ha);
 - vi) Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment with planting proposals;
 - vii) Heritage Statement;
 - viii) Topographical Survey;
 - ix) Transport assessment and construction management plan

2. APPLICATION SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

- 2.1 The application site covers an area of approximately 5.2 hectares. The site is located to the northwest of Wick, approximately 3km north of Littlehampton and 2.5km south of the A27 junction. The site is presently bordered by the railway line to the south and the Black Ditch watercourse (tributary of the River Arun) to the north, with agricultural land forming the wider surroundings.
- 2.2 Vehicular access to the site for the delivery of the solar panels is proposed via Old Mead Road, accessed from the A284 to the east via the A27 transport network.
- 2.3 The site is located within the designated Countryside and within the 'Setting of Arundel' area and the settlement gap between Arundel and Littlehampton. It is outside of special landscape areas. The site is not in close proximity to any Conservation Areas.

3. THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1 Each string of solar panels would be mounted on a rack supported by pile driven foundations. Between each string of panels there would be a distance of approx. 4.5m to avoid any shadowing effect from one panel to another. The panels would be mounted at around 0.7m from the ground at the lowest edge, rising to a maximum of 2.4m at the highest point (the rearmost edge). The panels would be tilted at around 20 degrees from the horizontal, orientated to face due south towards the sun, and are fixed in that orientation.
- 3.2 The solar farm would use small string inverters, mounted on the back/underside of the solar panels, thereby removing the need for visible inverter buildings. There would also be two low voltage switch/transformers. The transformers (2.4m high, located within 3.5m by 3.5m by 2.0m high fences with switchgear alongside (1.1m by 2.6m by 1.9m). One metering circuit breaker unit within GRP enclosure is also proposed, with dimensions of approximately 2.5m by 2.8m by 2.4m tall.
- 3.3 Connection to the National Grid would be via underground cables to an existing overhead 11kV line adjacent to the eastern Application Site boundary. No new above ground cabling is required for the Proposed Development.
- 3.4 Perimeter security fencing is proposed to be of a deer fence wire mesh design, and would be 2m high as detailed in plan reference 001065_400A. A security beam (infra-red) system would be mounted on 1.2m high poles inside the deer fence close to the array.
- 3.5 The access to the site for the delivery of the solar panels is proposed via Old Mead Road, accessed from the A248 to the east via the A27 transport network.
- 3.6 It is expected that the proposed panels will be erected for a period of 25 years.

4. COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

- 4.1. A letter of notification was sent out in advance of the application submission, to the local Ward Councillors and Littlehampton Town Council. A copy of the letter addressed to the Town Council is attached at Appendix 1 for information.
- 4.2. A period of 21 days was given for those contacted to respond by. The Town Council responded positively, and the applicant will be attending the Town Council's Planning and Transportation Committee on the 15th December, to discuss the proposed development and agree a community benefit that would be agreeable to the Town Council. The community benefit agreed will be reported to Planning Officers following the meeting.

5. POLICY FRAMEWORK

- 5.1. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that all planning applications are determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. At the time of submission, the Development Plan consists of the saved Local Plan (2003) policies, the emerging Arun Local Plan (2011-2031) policies, and the Littlehampton Neighbourhood Plan.

National Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 5.2. The NPPF was published on 27th March 2012. At its core, the document establishes a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Paragraph 17 encourages the development of renewable energy technology whilst paragraph 98 establishes that all projects, even small scale ones, provide a valuable contribution to cutting greenhouse gas emissions. It also supports the approval of such applications where the impacts are (or can be made) acceptable.

National Planning Practice Guidance for renewable and low carbon energy

- 5.3. The above document provides guidance to Local Authorities on the matters to consider when determining applications for large scale solar parks. The overall guidance is that of support for renewable energy proposals if its impacts are acceptable, or can be made so. The NPPF also advises of a sequential approach to site selection in order to minimise visual and landscape character impacts.

- 5.4 In the first instance, the site has been selected due to the proximity of a viable grid connection for this scale of development. Without an available Grid connection, renewable energy developments cannot proceed. The available connection at this location is sufficient to enable unobtrusive underground connection with no additional overhead lines or road crossings (and subsequent closures) required.
- 5.5 Secondly, as the site forms part of a former landfill site it lies within Grade 4 agricultural land. It is considered that such land should be preferred over the 'Best and Most Versatile' Agricultural land classifications of Grade 1, 2 and 3a, and consequently this adds significant justification for the site selection. Furthermore, during the operation phase the agricultural use would actually be improved for the growing of a wildflower meadow. Following decommissioning it may be maintained for this purpose still, or other agricultural functions as the farm requires.
- 5.6 Thirdly, when compared to other sites, the proposed location is away from sensitive views from residential development. Whilst there is a nursery site nearby, the use of rooftop mounted panels instead of ground mounted panels, was considered to result in a much greater adverse visual effect, due to the heights proposed. This was considered to more likely conflict with policy Area 3 of the Local Plan regarding views affecting the setting of Arundel. In addition, the proposed field location was both of a sufficient size to meet the grid capacity requirements, and of such poor soil quality as to justify an efficient and significantly more productive reuse of the land. In contrast, the use of nearby commercial rooftop was not of a commercial scale as to be economically viable for the development to proceed, nor meet the deployment requirements of the DNO Grid Connection.
- 5.7 Finally, the proposed tree and shrub planting to the south of Black Ditch, once established, would effectively further obscure views of the proposed development from all of the viewpoint locations to the west, north and east of the Application Site. The planting would also remain in situ long after this temporary development is decommissioned, providing ongoing landscape and biodiversity benefits. The visual implications are explored further in the submitted Landscape Visual Impact Assessment.

Planning practice guidance for renewable and low carbon energy

- 5.8 The above document, published in July 2013, also requires Local Authorities to consider visual impacts on the local landscape, security matters, the preservation of heritage assets and the enhancement of the local character with native screen planting. Each of these matters is addressed below and in the accompanying documents with this statement.

The UK Low Carbon Transition Plan (2009)

- 5.9 This plan confirms the roles that renewable energy will play in achieving the UK's statutory carbon budget of 15% of all energy – for electricity, heat and transport – from renewable sources by 2020. Specifically with regard to the generation of electricity, renewable technology electricity generation is set to increase to 30% by 2020.

The UK Renewable Energy Strategy (2009)

- 5.10 In working toward the 15% renewable energy target for 2020, it is estimated that 12% of heat could come from sustainable biomass, biogas, solar and heat pumps, supplying the equivalent of 4 million households with their current heating demands.
- 5.11 The document recognises that UK has significant solar and thermal resources and states that photovoltaic panels can generate renewable electricity for on-site use, or for export to the grid, even when the sky is overcast.
- 5.12 Finally, the document outlines that individuals and communities should play a key role by supporting large-scale renewable energy projects in their localities, both through their involvement in the formal planning process and through broader support for, and involvement in, developing renewable energy.

BRE Guidance (2013)

- 5.13 The November 2013 BRE Guidance for the development of large scale ground mounted solar PV systems requires at page 6 that such developments are proposed on agricultural land of classifications 3b, 4 and 5. The site has an agricultural classification of Grade 4, in accordance with this Guidance.
- 5.14 The document also requires details of the scheme's Grid connection and Electricity Generating Capacity. Based on Ofgem's average household

consumption of electrical energy of 3300kwh p.a, the proposed site's generation of 3MW would provide equivalent power for over 100 no. homes per annum.

- 5.15 Consideration of ongoing land maintenance is covered on page 7 of the document. It is proposed that a wildflower mix will be planted across the site, and the landowner would undertake the ongoing land management himself, mowing the field as required within the existing operations of the farm. Following decommissioning it may be maintained for this purpose still, or other agricultural functions as the farm requires.
- 5.16 Finally, the applicant is also a member of a Solar PV Recycling scheme known as PV Cycle UK. They are a photovoltaic (PV)-focused, Government-approved, not-for-profit Producer Compliance Scheme (PCS), who ensure that at the end of the life of the panels, they will be fully collected and recycled.

Local Policy

- 5.17 The local policies relevant to the assessment of the application include the saved policies within the 2003 Local Plan, policies within the emerging Local Plan (2011-2031), and Supplementary Planning Guidance Archaeology (2003). The site also falls within the very northwest corner of the Littlehampton Neighbourhood plan area designation.

Principle of Development

- 5.18 Neither the Council's adopted or emerging local plans contain allocations of land for renewable developments. The proposed development will generate 3MW of electricity from solar energy which is a renewable source. Energy production from solar arrays emits no pollution, produces no greenhouse gases and use no finite fossil-fuel resources. The proposal therefore represents a sustainable form of energy which would last a period of 25 years; the development is not permanent. The increased production of energy from solar panels offers very real benefits in savings in CO2 emissions and reducing the impact of greenhouse gases on climate change. The development will also ensure a constant and affordable source of energy, contribute to economic stability and provide a further form of diversification to support the rural economy of West Sussex. This is considered to accord with the presumption in favour of sustainable development at policy SD SP1 of the emerging Local Plan, Policy 1 of the Neighbourhood Plan and Part 10 of the NPPF which states that

local authorities should *"have a positive strategy to promote energy for renewable and low carbon sources"* and *"design their policies to maximise renewable and low carbon energy development while ensuring that adverse impacts are addressed satisfactorily, including cumulative landscape and visual impacts."* It is therefore considered that the proposed development would make a valuable contribution toward renewable energy targets within the District, and support the Council's progress toward a reduction in CO2 emissions.

5.19 With regard to the adopted Local Plan, policy GEN21 states that Planning Permission will be granted for renewable energy developments provided that:

- (i) *There is no significant harmful environmental effect on the quality of the natural and built environments;*
- (ii) *There is no unacceptable impact on the amenity of neighbouring residents;*
- (iii) *There is no adverse effect on public safety;*
- (iv) *Development will make a contribution to meeting need on a local, regional or national basis and the reduction in emissions of damaging greenhouse gases.*

5.20 The application site does not lie within the AONB as resisted by the detailed text of policy GEN21. The site lies to the far west of the nearest built development and would not affect any existing Rights of Way. As such, the scheme would have no adverse impact on public safety or residential amenity. In addition, the submitted suite of environmental reports evidences that the proposal would not result in an adverse effect upon the natural environment. It is clear that the development would contribute towards the reduction in CO2 emissions, as supported by the NPPF, and that the proposed form of development outside settlement boundaries is not precluded by saved policy GEN3, but complies with the requirement to diversify the rural economy in accordance with this and policy C SP1 of the emerging Local Plan. Consequently, the proposal is considered to address the requirements of policy GEN21.

Agricultural Use

5.21 Saved Local Plan policy AREA 12 seeks to preserve the 'Best and Most Versatile' agricultural land. Emerging Local Plan policy DM1 (Soils) also requires that all applications on Best and Most Versatile land which involve 'permanent loss' of 1 hectare or more are to be accompanied by a report on agricultural land. The site is classified as Grade 4 land, and accordingly would not conflict with either of these policies. In addition, the planting of a

wildflower meadow beneath the panels would both enhance the biodiversity opportunities of the site and part-retain the agricultural use of the land.

Ecology

- 5.22 Saved policy GEN30 seeks to protect legally protected species whilst emerging Local Plan policy ENV DM5 requires a net gain in biodiversity as a result of development proposals. Improvements are also required in accordance with policy GI SP1 of the emerging Local Plan which seeks to improve the biodiversity functions of the Green Infrastructure network. The submitted Ecological Assessment concludes at paragraph 5.2 that *"The application site comprises entirely of species-poor semi-improved/improved grassland pasture considered to be of limited ecological value. The development proposals should be seen as an enhancement in ecological terms through provision of new hedgerow planting and species-rich grassland, which in turn would provide significantly enhance opportunities for bats, birds and invertebrates"*. It is therefore considered the proposal accords with the above policies in this respect.

Landscape

- 5.23 Saved policy AREA3 and emerging Local Plan policy LAN DM2 seek to protect views of Arundel, whilst saved policy AREA10 seeks to preserve the openness of strategic gaps. Saved policy GEN25 and emerging policy LAN DM1 also seek to protect the character of the landscape. To address this, the accompanying Landscape Visual Impact Assessment has fully considered the visual implications of the proposed development upon the surrounding landscape. Proposals for additional planting are also included to enhance the landscape benefits in the long term whilst assimilating the development into the locality.
- 5.24 The security fencing will be an open deer mesh design and therefore in keeping with other paddock and deer fencing common in rural areas. Native hedgerow planting is also proposed. The proposed panels are set in from the site boundaries and security fencing so as to avoid being cast in shade by them.
- 5.25 The proposal has been fully assessed within the accompanying Landscape Visual Impact Assessment, which concludes that *"the proposed development is considered to be appropriate to the setting and landscape character of the site and offers suitable landscape mitigation measures in terms of visual amenity"*.

- 5.26 Furthermore, the proposed development is temporary in nature, and following decommissioning would be restored to its present agricultural use, in accordance with saved Local Plan AREA 12. The proposal is therefore considered to accord with the landscape requirements of policies AREA3 and GEN27.

Highways

- 5.27 Emerging Local Plan policy T SP1 requires developments to be supported by a Transport Assessment which ensures the development would not have an adverse effect on the local highway network, whilst providing adequate access, turning and parking provision. In this instance the access to the site will be from the A284 to the east via the A27 transport network. This routing will minimise disruption to local traffic and ensure the peaceful protection of residents within and the wider area.
- 5.28 The use of the existing access from Old Mead Road also ensures that adequate visibility splays are achieved in accordance with Manual for Streets requirements, and that the surface material is bonded and so would not result in any loose material on the A284.
- 5.29 It is important to note that once the development has been fully installed the traffic movements to the site will be minimal, with only quarterly inspections required. Thus the impact on the road network will be minimal. The main traffic impact will be during the construction phase. The construction period will take approximately 10 weeks, based on a six day working week (0730 to 1800 hours from Monday to Friday, and 0830 to 1300 hours on Saturdays). No construction work will occur on Sundays and Bank Holidays.
- 5.30 HGV deliveries will be advised to arrive after 09:30, and therefore will not affect the local highway network during the weekday morning peak periods. The construction will entail a total of 90 deliveries to the site. This equates to approximately 1.5 deliveries per day on average over the 10 weeks (Monday to Saturday) construction phase. On average, 15 staff will be at the site each day, which equates to approximately 30 two-way traffic movements.
- 5.31 Where possible, all deliveries of components will be organised to occur during the working week, and outside of the highway network peak periods.

- 5.32 Once operational, the number of vehicles accessing the site for maintenance purposes, would be a single vehicle approximately twice per month.

Flooding

- 5.33 Saved policy GEN9 requires that developments would not result in an increase in foul or surface water runoff over the existing situation. Emerging Local Plan policy W DM2 also requires the submission of a Flood Risk Assessment and appropriate mitigation measures. The site is located within Flood Zone 2, where, due to the site area size in excess of 1Ha, a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) is required. The submitted FRA by RMA Environmental confirms at paragraph 5.7 that *"the proposed development will be safe and that it would not increase flood risk elsewhere. The proposed land use is classified as 'less vulnerable' to flooding and is therefore considered appropriate in relation to the flood risk vulnerability classifications set out in Table 3 of the NPPF. The development should therefore be considered acceptable in planning policy terms"*. The development would also not result in any foul drainage requirements. The proposal is therefore considered to accord with policy GEN9 in this respect.

Archaeology

- 5.34 The 2003 Archaeology SPD seeks to protect areas of archaeological potential. An Archaeological Assessment by West Sussex Archaeology is submitted with the proposal, which concludes that the proposal has a *"low potential for archaeological remains to existing within the site"* such that *"a recommendation that no further archaeological work be required"*. The proposal is therefore considered to address the requirements of the SPD in this respect.

Public Rights of Way

- 5.35 Saved policy GEN 16 seeks to protect and improve Public Rights of Way (PRoW) surrounding the development. The proposal will not directly affect any PRoW surrounding the site, and as such accessibility will not be reduced or impacted by the proposal. In addition, the proposal includes significant landscape boundary enhancements which would improve the 'rural characteristics' of the surrounding PRoW in accordance with policy GEN16. Finally the proposal would not restrict access to any existing public open space as protected by the Neighbourhood Plan Policy 16. Consequently, the development is considered to be acceptable in this respect.

Light

- 5.36 No external lighting is proposed; security will be provided by an infra-red light beam security system, which would not have an adverse impact on the area in relation to night time light pollution, thus addressing the requirements of saved Local Plan policy GEN33 emerging Local Plan policy QE DM2.

Noise

- 5.37 The arrays will be separated sufficiently from any residential properties to ensure no concerns arise with regards to noise nuisance. Specifically the inverter noise levels would be <50dB(A)@1m from the source. This is not considered to be in any way significant, as the inverters are spread across the site behind the back of the panels, thus reducing noise due to the physical rows of modules between them, the boundary landscaping, and the significant distance to any receptors. This is also in contrast to the many farm vehicles that would be ploughing and harvesting the land in its agricultural use. This aspect is therefore considered to comply with the noise protection requirements of saved Local Plan policy GEN32 and emerging Local Plan policy QE DM1.

Dust and Odour

- 5.38 No dust or odour will be generated by the proposed panels or associated equipment, in accordance saved Local Plan policy GEN34 emerging Local Plan policy QE DM3.

6. OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS – THE CLIMATE CHANGE IMPERATIVE AND ENERGY POLICY

Global Warming and Climate Change

- 6.1 Many analyses of the climate change problem, now including the UN Climate Change Conference in Cancun (December 2010), Durban (November/December 2011) and the Stern Review, have underlined the need to act to reduce carbon emissions. Renewable energy (including Solar Parks), is one of the few supply-side options that can make a major difference to emissions in the UK.

The Stern Review – Financial Implications of Global Warming

- 6.2 The government-commissioned Stern Review into the financial impact of global warming was published in October 2006 and made hard-hitting statements about the human, environmental and economic costs of climate change.
- 6.3 Sir Nicholas Stern, a former World Bank economist, said in his 700-page report that industrial countries cannot afford not to take action on climate change. He warned that dealing with the floods, storms and rising sea levels caused by global warming could plunge the world into an economic crisis similar to the Great Depression in the 1930's. He said that although dealing with climate change could cost one per cent of world GDP, not doing anything could cost 20 times more. The Report states:

“Delaying action, even by a decade or two, will take us into dangerous territory. We must not let this window of opportunity close. There is still time to avoid the worst impacts of climate change, if we act now and act internationally. Governments, businesses and individuals all need to work together to respond to the challenge. Strong, deliberate policy choices by governments are essential to motivate change.”

- 6.4 This message from Stern has been welcomed across the political spectrum.
- 6.5 The Energy and Climate Change Secretary Mr Edward Davey stated in a press release on 06 February 2012 *“In today's world the savviest states understand that going for growth means going green. Low-carbon markets are the next frontier in the battle for global pre-eminence....I want the UK to be the number one destination for green investment. We're in this race to win it.”*

- 6.6 He further stated on 9th March 2012 after the EU Environment Council meeting in Brussels *"There'll be no pause in the UK's efforts to push for a 30 per cent emissions target for 2020, providing the much needed certainty that business needs to invest in the green technologies of the future."*
- 6.7 The Minister for Energy and Climate Change, The Rt Hon Greg Barker MP, elaborated on the above in his speech to the large scale solar conference on 25th April 2013, stating *"the Coalition Government is committed to placing solar PV at the heart of the UK's energy mix"*.
- 6.8 Subsequently, on 3rd June 2013 Mr Davey stated in a speech at the Met Office Climate Services event that *"Our main challenge is to agree international actions that will reduce emissions enough to avoid really dangerous climate change, keeping global temperature rise to no more than 2 degrees above pre-industrial levels...And to meet this scenario, we need to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions by at least 50% by 2050...Here in Britain, building on the groundbreaking Climate Change Act of 2008 enacted under the previous Government, we are now acting to meet the domestic emissions targets we have set ourselves. The Carbon Plan sets out how we will achieve an 80% reduction by 2050...We need to tap into all the viable low-carbon technology available and help to drive its commercial viability. The Energy Bill going through parliament at the moment is a key part of our domestic response – enabling low carbon technologies to compete in the electricity market and attract investment...Above all, we must keep our eyes on the prize: a binding global deal to reduce carbon emissions and limit climate change to manageable levels"*.
- 6.9 As such it can be seen that the focus on climate change, its causes and solutions, is very much a political heavyweight issue with significant steps being made towards its resolution. This momentum now needs to be transferred into practice with the promotion and development of renewable energy schemes at the local level.

European Energy Policy

- 6.10 At a European level, there is the agreed commitment to reduce carbon emissions by 20% by 2020, compared to 1990 levels. The April 2009 Renewable Energy Directive commits each Member State within the European Union (EU) to a legally binding national target of a 20% reduction in its carbon

emissions and to achieve a target of deriving 20% of the EU's final energy consumption from renewable sources by 2020.

- 6.11 In order to achieve the overall EU renewable energy target of 20% the proposal includes individual targets for each Member State. **The UK's legally binding obligation is 15% of energy coming from renewable sources by 2020. This represents almost a seven-fold increase in the share of renewables in scarcely more than a decade. (UK Renewable Energy Strategy, DECC, July 2009).**
- 6.12 At the present time, the UK is also arguing for Europe to adopt an ambitious emissions reduction target for 2030 of 50% on 1990 levels as part of Europe's approach to the getting a global deal in 2015.

UK Energy Policy

- 6.13 Published in May 2007 "*Meeting the Challenge – The Energy White Paper*" establishes the government's energy strategy for the foreseeable future. The document builds on the themes and issues raised in the Energy Review. A clear statement of Government policy, the strategy set down in this document contains a number of key elements of relevance to the consideration of this planning application. Section 5.3 of the White Paper addresses policy on renewables and starts with a simple statement. "*Renewable energy has a key role to play in reducing carbon emissions and achieving security of supply.*"
- 6.14 Subsequently, on 12 July 2011 the Government published 'Planning our electric future: a White Paper for secure, affordable and low-carbon electricity'. The White Paper sets out key measures to attract investment, reduce the impact on consumer bills, and create a secure mix of electricity sources including gas, new nuclear, renewables, and carbon capture and storage. The statement confirms that "*the UK needs secure, low-carbon and affordable electricity. Households and businesses expect there to be light and power when they need it. It is a core function of Government to ensure that these expectations are met*". It also states that "*to meet our decarbonisation targets the majority of this new investment must be in a diverse range of low-carbon generation such as renewable...Investing in diversity is key to preserving and enhancing the UK's security of supply.*"

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- 6.15 Framing the above, the Climate Change Act (November 2008) set legally binding targets in reducing greenhouse gas emissions of at least 80% by 2050, and reduction in CO₂ emissions of at least 26% by 2020, against a 1990 baseline.
- 6.16 More recently in December 2013, the Government confirmed that the new Energy Bill had received Royal Assent on 18 December. The Bill is now an Act of Parliament (law). The press release accompanying the ascension confirmed that the Act would put *"in place measures to attract the £110 billion investment which is needed to replace current generating capacity and upgrade the grid by 2020, and to cope with a rising demand for electricity"*. The provisions of the Act have also enabled the *"Secretary of State to set a 2030 decarbonisation target range for the electricity sector in secondary legislation. A decision to exercise this power will be taken once the Committee on Climate Change has provided advice on the level of the 5th Carbon Budget, which covers the corresponding period (2028-32), and when the government has set this budget, which is due to take place in 2016"*.
- 6.17 Finally, in October 2013 and April 2014 a two-part UK Solar PV Strategy was published by the DECC. This encourages the use of Solar PV as a *"mature, proven technology"* (Part 1, para 9) in a *"variety of locations and contexts including domestic roofs, commercial and industrial properties, and on the ground in Brownfield and Greenfield sites"* (Part 1, para 10). For the reasons set out in sections 3 and 4 of this statement, it is considered that the best practice guidance as listed in Part 2, paragraph 66 will also be achieved.
- 6.18 The above references highlight that the encouragement of, and legal requirement for, considerable additional energy supply from renewable sources is a consistent and increasingly important level of guidance being issued from European and UK Government, and needs to be given significant weight when assessing the current proposal.

7. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 This Statement has explained the considerable support, through European, National and Local Planning policy and guidance, for the introduction of renewable energy schemes such as that proposed in this application.
- 7.2 The site is not located in a sensitive landscape designation. Landscape, ecology and other environmental considerations have been properly assessed and the accompanying suite of reports demonstrate that the site specific location and environment, combined with the benign nature of the proposals, will ensure the impact on the environment is appropriate.
- 7.3 It is considered that the proposed scheme complies with the relevant requirements of the Development Plan, and is strongly supported by material considerations within National Planning Policy, and a number of other documents relating to climate change and energy provision, as referred to within this Statement. The project would contribute towards achieving the UK's renewable energy generation and carbon emission reduction targets set in the UK Renewable Energy Strategy (2009).
- 7.4 For the reasons set out above, it is therefore concluded that the development proposals are acceptable and appropriate in planning terms and offer the opportunity to set an excellent example of how climate change issues can be successfully addressed within Arun District Council and beyond. It is therefore respectfully requested that planning permission should be granted.

APPENDIX 1: COPY OF NOTIFICATION LETTER

Ref: BNL.0638

22nd October 2014

FAO Mr P Herbert
Clerk to Littlehampton Town Council
Manor House
Church Street
Littlehampton
BN17 5EW

Dear Mr Herbert

**RE: Proposed Solar Farm, land at Brookbarn Farm, Courtwick Lane,
Wick, Littlehampton, West Sussex, BN17 7PE**

I am writing to you to raise awareness and provide some background information for a forthcoming planning application that will be submitted to Arun District Council on behalf of Anesco Ltd, for a 3MW solar park renewable energy development at the above site.

The site is approximately 8Ha in area (as shown on the accompanying plan) and is located to the northwest of Wick, approximately 3km north of Littlehampton and 2.5km south of the A27 junction. The site is presently bordered by the railway line to the south and the Black Ditch watercourse (tributary of the River Arun) to the north, with agricultural land forming the wider surroundings.

The site has been selected due to the local topography, separation from residential dwellings, and the access to the site from the A248 to the east, via the A27 transport network. The proposed development would entail rows of solar panels laid out across the site from east to west, in a south facing orientation and at a maximum height of 2.4m. The panels would be set in from each of the boundaries so as to preserve the vegetation as well as avoiding overshadowing of the panels. Stock-proof deer security fencing of a maximum 2.0m in height would also enclose the site. A wildflower planting mix and hedgerow boundary planting is proposed alongside the development, to enhance local biodiversity and provide screening to the development. It is proposed that the development would remain in place for 25 years.

As part of the application, we will submit a full suite of environmental documents. This would include a full landscape visual assessment with indicative photomontages of the proposal and a planting strategy. Ecological, flood risk, highway safety and archaeological surveys will also be submitted.

Finally, in accordance with the emphasis on development securing local community benefits, Anesco Ltd would like to engage with the Town Council at

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Registered Office: Pegasus House, Queens Business Centre, Whitworth Road, Cirencester, Gloucestershire, GL2 1RT

this early stage, as to whether there is a community project to which they could provide an upfront financial donation in the event of planning permission being granted. We trust that this would be of interest to you, and would appreciate feedback of who the relevant Town Council contact is, for Mr Lee Adams of Anesco Ltd to contact in this regard.

I hope this information is of assistance to you. We expect to make the formal submission to the Borough Council during December 2014, and the application will of course be subject to formal consultation, when all plans and background surveys and reports will be available to view. However, if you require further information regarding the proposed development in advance of the application, please let me know. Also, if you have any initial thoughts you would like to draw our attention as we prepare the application, we would be pleased to receive them at the contact details below.

Yours sincerely



Emily Temple BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI
Principal Planner