

Our Ref: 3656-01/JM/AR

11 March 2025

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cc. paul.chaston@north-herts.gov.uk

FAO Naomi Reynard
North Hertfordshire District Council
Development and Conservation
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Dear Ms Reynard

APPLICATION REF. 24/02333/FP: ELECTRICAL GRID CONNECTION BETWEEN THE APPROVED PRIORY FARM SOLAR ARRAY (APPLICATION REFERENCE: 21/03380/FP) AND WYMONDLEY SUBSTATION, HERTFORDSHIRE – PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO APPLICATION BOUNDARY

We write, on behalf of AGR Solar 4 Limited ('the Applicant') to seek an amendment to the redline boundary for the above proposal. Following discussions with yourself and Mr Chaston where the proposed amendments were presented, it was agreed in principle that these could be dealt with under the current application (which at time of writing, is at the determination stage).

The redline boundary amendment would require a limited number of changes to the application materials; principally the planning drawings and biodiversity net gain (BNG) calculations.

This letter sets out the proposed redline amendments and describes the revised application materials.

Proposed Redline Amendment

The proposed redline amendment has been made in response to comments from the LPA's Ecology Officer on the application. The Officer noted that the area around the existing substation at the southern end of the route sits within a Local Wildlife Site (LWS) and queried why the boundary here was drawn so extensively. In addition, the Officer considered that the proposal would be required to deliver Biodiversity Net Gain (discussed further below).

At the time the application was submitted the Applicant had not concluded discussions with National Grid regarding the precise location of the cable connection into the substation. The Applicant has now undertaken further dialogue and has agreed a connection point. This has allowed the Applicant to reduce the planning boundary line at the substation and thereby minimise the area of the application within the LWS.

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Additionally, a section of the route proposed to be horizontal directional drilled (HDD) to the north of the substation has been extended to further reduce impacts on habitats along the cable route here. This has slightly altered the trajectory of the cable route and thus slightly altered the redline boundary along this section.

The revised redline boundary has reduced from 25,174m² to 17,138m², does not introduce any additional development and does not affect and new landowners.

Updated Planning Materials

Planning Drawings

The proposed redline amendment requires several of the application planning drawings to be revised. The table below sets out which drawings have been amended, and which are unchanged.

Currently Submitted Drawings	Amended / Unchanged	Revised Drawing Reference
3656-01-001 Site Location Plan	Amended	3656-01-001 Site Location Plan_RevA
3656-01-002a Statutory Plan_RevA	Amended	3656-01-002a Statutory Plan_RevB
3656-01-002b Statutory Plan_RevA	Amended	3656-01-002b Statutory Plan_RevB
3656-01-002c Statutory Plan_RevA	Amended	3656-01-002c Statutory Plan_RevB
3656-01-003a General Arrangement_RevA	Amended	3656-01-003a General Arrangement_RevB
3656-01-003b General Arrangement_RevA	Amended	3656-01-003b General Arrangement_RevB
3656-01-003c General Arrangement_RevA	Amended	3656-01-003c General Arrangement_RevB
3656-01-004 Cable Trench Details Plan	Unchanged	-

Biodiversity Net Gain Calculations

The LPA's Ecology Officer's comments stated that the proposal would need to provide Biodiversity Net Gains (BNG). The original planning submission previously sought exemption through temporary impacts as it was argued the habitats along the trench route could be restored within 2 years.

However, the Applicant now accepts the LPA's position that the proposal is not exempt from BNG and has provided materials to demonstrate that the mandatory 10% gains can be delivered.

As the proposed cable route redline boundary has no scope to achieve 10% gains on-site, an offsite mitigation area has been identified. This area would sit within the consented Priory Farm Solar Array site (planning ref: 21/03380/FP) which the proposed cable route would provide a connection to the grid. The offsite mitigation area would deliver BNG of 27.27% and thus comfortably meet the required gains.

The following materials have been submitted alongside this covering letter to demonstrate the BNG being delivered:

- i. A 'BNG Information Note' which sets out further details on the BNG delivery; and
- ii. An updated BNG Metric Calculation (Priory Farm Solar Array Statutory Biodiversity Metric V2 issue).

Existing Technical Reports

The proposed changes to the redline boundary for the cable route would not materially affect the conclusions of the submitted technical assessment reports. As such it was agreed with the Council that the reports would not need to be amended and that it was only necessary to update the planning drawings.

Accordingly, the following documents / reports originally submitted within the application remain unchanged:

- i. Planning Statement;
- ii. Appendix A - Ecological Assessment (notwithstanding the provision of a BNG assessment);
- iii. Appendix A - Ecological Assessment (Appendix 2 Water Vole and Otter Report);
- iv. Appendix B - Arboricultural Impact Assessment;
- v. Appendix C - Heritage Impact Assessment; and
- vi. Appendix D - Transport Statement.

We trust that the contents of this letter self-explanatory. However, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned should you have any queries or require any further information.

Yours sincerely



Jonathan Maginness

Senior Planning Consultant on behalf of Axis



Enc:

- 3656-01-001 Site Location Plan_RevA
- 3656-01-002a Statutory Plan_RevB
- 3656-01-002b Statutory Plan_RevB
- 3656-01-002c Statutory Plan_RevB
- 3656-01-003a General Arrangement_RevB
- 3656-01-003b General Arrangement_RevB
- 3656-01-003c General Arrangement_RevB
- BNG Information Note
- Priory Farm Solar Array_Statutory_Biodiversity_Metric_V2 issue

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