



Priory Farm Solar Array

Grazing Management Plan

Prepared for

AGR Solar 4 Limited

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1.1 This Grazing Management Plan has been prepared for the proposed development of a Solar Farm on Land at Graveley Lane and to the East of Great Wymondley, Hertfordshire (the Site).

1.1.2 Approval for the development, subject to Conditions was granted on 11th March 2024, under the appeal reference APP/X1925/V/23/3323321 (planning application reference 21/03380/FP).

1.1.3 Condition 23 of the Decision Notice required that:

“No electricity shall be exported to the National Grid until a grazing management plan (GMP) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The GMP shall detail which parts of the site shall be used for the grazing of livestock, during which months of the year, and how the grazing is to be managed. Within three years of the date of first export, the grazing of livestock shall commence on the site in accordance with the GMP. The approved GMP shall be implemented thereafter. Any changes to the GMP during the lifetime of the permission shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval in writing and shall not be carried out except in accordance with the approved revised GMP.

Reason - To ensure that agricultural use continues on the site.”

1.1.4 The soft landscape proposals for the development are shown on drawings 3004-01-020 to 023 and include details of proposed grazing grass mixes and show the designated grazing areas for the development.

1.1.5 The Site comprises largely arable agricultural land set within a rural landscape.

1.1.6 Management practices are proposed that will enhance the Site for the benefit of local wildlife. The design and long-term management of the land seeks to maintain and improve functionality through protecting and enhancing potentially important wildlife corridors i.e. through the enhancement and maintenance of native species hedgerows within and around the Site whilst retaining the agricultural use of the site.



2.0 IMPLEMENTATION

- 2.1.1 Details of the management of all habitats on the Site are provided in the Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (LEMP) (Avian Ecology Limited, 2004).
- 2.1.2 The majority of the site will be sown with Cotswold Seed's Mix 20: 'HERBAL' Grazing Ley – Four Year Drought Resistant Ley, or similar, to provide a high-quality sward supporting grazing of livestock across the site. Deep rooting ingredients will improve soil structure and draw up essential vitamins and minerals for the animals.
- 2.1.3 The mixture will be sown at 32.5kg/ha to manufacturer's recommendations and with the recommended fertiliser applications, to ensure good establishment of the sward.
- 2.1.4 Seeding will be carried out between March and October 2025 and will be undertaken when ground and climactic conditions are suitable. It will not be carried out when the ground is waterlogged, frost bound or during periods of cold drying winds or drought.
- 2.1.5 The seed will be sown by broadcasting through mechanical means onto a fine, firm seed bed following an application of farmyard manure. In areas where a machine is unable to access, such as far underneath panels, seeding in these areas will be broadcast by hand.
- 2.1.6 Once sown, the ground will be immediately rolled twice, where possible, to ensure good soil-to-seed contact.
- 2.1.7 Following seeding the grazing pasture will be left to establish for the first 6 to 8 weeks to allow the grass to establish. If seeding is undertaken towards the end of the sowing season (September/ October) grazing will not be undertaken during the Winter. The grass will be left until the following March before sheep are allowed into the Site. Cutting may be undertaken through the winter as required to maintain a sward height of 50mm.
- 2.1.8 After 6 to 8 weeks light grazing by sheep will be introduced at 3 sheep/ ha. This will encourage a thickening up of the sward through tillering. To avoid over-grazing and to produce an even and healthy sward the livestock will be rotated between the different grazing areas on site.



3.0 LONG-TERM MANAGEMENT

- 3.1.1 Once the grazing pasture is established with good ground cover and soils are effectively bound by root growth, envisaged to be 1 year after sowing, the livestock numbers will increase as appropriate to continue successful management, up to a maximum of 5 sheep/ha plus followers (lambs) between March and November. The livestock will continue to be rotated around the Site to prevent over-grazing and allow sward recovery. The grazing pasture will be maintained at a height of minimum 50mm across the grazing period.
- 3.1.2 Rotations between grazing areas will on a regular basis with areas being allowed a period of 4-6 weeks for recovery and regrowth following grazing.
- 3.1.3 Between November and March stock levels will be reduced to a maximum of 3 sheep/ ha plus followers.
- 3.1.4 At times where the ground is very wet or waterlogged then the livestock will be moved appropriately to prevent the ground being churned up by hooves, which could encourage rilling and bare patches of soil, that in turn could cause weed growth.
- 3.1.5 Pasture management interventions such as topping may be undertaken occasionally as required or in certain areas, in order to avoid grass getting into unsuitable condition for the sheep.
- 3.1.6 The sward composition of the grazing pasture will be reviewed annually to identify any injurious weeds, such as ragwort, thistle, Dock etc, and management of these weeds would be undertaken as appropriate.
- 3.1.7 If it is found on the annual inspection that areas of bare soil are occurring, then the specific grazing area will be removed from the stock rotation. Areas affected by erosion will be scarified, the soil cultivated locally and then reduced to a fine till, and the areas re-seeded with the grass seed mix specified in Section 2. These areas will be protected from sheep grazing for 6 to 8 weeks to allow the sward to establish.
- 3.1.8 The diversity of the sward will be monitored regularly to ensure the targets for species under the Biodiversity Net Gain are being met. When diversity starts to decline, typically around year 4-5 after sowing, a review of the suitability of the mix will be undertaken. Over-sowing of the pasture will be carried out with the same seed mix



as in Section 2, or similar and as available, or as agreed with the Local Planning Authority.

- 3.1.9 Where injurious weeds are encountered, such as those listed within the Weeds Act (1959), or invasive non-native species as listed within the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) herbicide treatment may be required. This shall be via spot treatment and managed to prevent spread to other species. Applications will be undertaken immediately after sheep have been removed from the grazing area prior to the area entering a recovery period.

4.0 SPECIES RICH GRASSLAND MANAGEMENT

- 4.1.1 Once proposed hedgerow planting has become established through mechanical cutting, typically after 5 years, the species-rich grassland margins around the perimeter could be managed through a combination of periodic grazing and/or mechanical cutting.

5.0 MONITORING

- 5.1.1 Grazing areas will be monitored annually to ensure stock levels are suitable for the maintenance of the grass, injurious weeds are not dominating the sward and the required targets for Biodiversity Net Gain are being met.
- 5.1.2 The following indicators will be used to review and amend stocking densities:
- An increase in the amount of uneaten grass, the accumulation of litter, an increase in vigorous rank and unpalatable grasses, and a reduction in low growing herbs: indicates stocking density is too low (need to increase density).
 - A reduction in density/diversity of plants, excessive poaching, weed invasion and the development of bare patches: indicates stocking density is too high (need to reduce density).
- 5.1.3 If it is found on the annual inspection that areas of bare soil are occurring, such as under solar panels, around troughs and in gateways, then the specific grazing area will be removed from the stock rotation, high-use features such as troughs or gateways will be moved and measures will be put in place as described in Section 3.

