Chapter 8 – Land Take, Soil Quality and Agricultural Land

Postcombe and Lewknor Solar Farm Environmental Statement

Postcombe and Lewknor Solar Farm Limited

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

ALC	Agricultural Land Classification
BGS	British Geological Survey
BMV	best and most versatile
DEFRA	Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
ES	Environmental Statement
ha	Hectares
IEMA	Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment
MAFF	Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food's
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
PPG	Planning Practice Guidance
PRoW	Public Right of Way
PV	Photovoltaic
SMP	Soil Management Plan
SODC	South Oxfordshire District Council
UKSO	United Kingdom Soil Observatory

8. Land Take, Soil Quality and Agricultural Land

8.1 Executive Summary

8.1.1 This chapter of the Environmental Statement (ES) evaluates the potential impacts of the Proposed Development on land take, soil quality, and agricultural land. The assessment is based on detailed field surveys, including an Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) survey and a Soil Management Plan (SMP).

8.1.2 The solar site is primarily in agricultural use, predominantly arable farming, and includes Grade 3a ("good quality") and Grade 3b ("moderate quality") land. The ALC survey found that 45.5% of the site consists of Grade 3a land, which is considered "best and most versatile" (BMV), while 53.2% is Grade 3b. The solar site contains no land of Grades 1 or 2.

8.1.3 The Proposed Development is designed to minimise permanent impacts on higher quality land, with fixed infrastructure (e.g. substation) sited mainly on Grade 3b land. Soil quality across the solar site is generally good, with moderate organic matter and high nutrient levels, reflecting intensive arable cultivation.

8.1.4 The report concludes that the short-term, reversible effects of construction and decommissioning such as compaction or disturbance are minor and can be effectively mitigated by implementing best practices outlined in the SMP. Long-term impacts are also assessed as minor, due to the temporary nature of the development and the restorative potential of fallowing land under solar arrays.

8.1.5 Cumulatively, the loss of agricultural land across this and nearby solar developments is more significant—especially regarding Grade 3b land—but this is offset by the temporary and reversible nature of the impacts, with potential long-term soil health benefits.

8.1.6 Overall, the assessment determines that the Proposed Development aligns with local and national policies, presents no significant adverse effects on soils or agricultural land, and incorporates sufficient mitigation measures to protect soil integrity and agricultural potential throughout the project lifecycle.

8.2 Introduction

8.2.1 This chapter presents the environmental information used to assess the effects arising from the construction, operation and decommissioning of the Proposed Development upon land use and soils.

8.2.2 This chapter is intended to be read alongside the supporting appendices:

- **Appendix 8.1:** Agricultural Land Classification Survey
- **Appendix 8.2**: Soil Management Plan

8.2.3 **Appendix 8.1** details of the results of an Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) Survey carried out by Soil Environment Services Ltd in August 2022 on behalf of the Applicant, to identify the subgrade of land.

8.2.4 **Appendix 8.2** details the proposed mitigation methods to prevent damage to the soil during construction and operation of the Proposed Development. This was prepared by Land Research Associates Ltd in November 2023.

8.2.5 These surveys were done early in the project when the Site boundary was 77 hectares (ha) in total. This excluded the cable corridor and was based on a reduced solar site boundary. The cable corridor has been excluded from this assessment due to the nature of the cabling, this is only expected to cause a temporary disruption to the land. During the construction of the cable trenching, the Applicant will ensure that the soil is not exposed for more than two months to ensure that this keeps the soil alive.

8.2.6 The Site boundary consists of 95.89 ha of land, of which 6.65 ha is for the cable corridor for the Site's grid connection. The solar site area is 89.24 ha in size, which is an additional 12.24 ha to the ALC survey area. The areas previously excluded from the ALC are not anticipated to have any infrastructure in these areas, this includes a section of the motorway included within the red line boundary, therefore there is no impact to the land expected in these areas.

8.2.7 The Site and survey area is shown on Drawing 1 in **Appendix 8.1.**

8.3 Legislation, Policy & Guidance

Planning Policy

8.3.1 The Planning Statement associated with this planning application sets out full the planning policy framework that is relevant to the EIA. The national, regional and local policies relevant to this chapter have been reviewed and outlined below.

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2025;
- Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) Natural Environment 2024 & Minerals 2014; and
- South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011-2035.

National Planning Policy Framework

8.3.2 The NPPF (2025) seeks to conserve and enhance the natural environment, paragraph 7 stating: *"The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, including the provision of homes, commercial development, and supporting infrastructure in a sustainable manner."*

8.3.3 Paragraph 187 lists six means by which planning policies should achieve this, a, b, e, and f being relevant to soils and agricultural land resource: *"Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:*

- *a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);*
- *b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;*
- *e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and*
- *f) remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate."*

8.3.4 Further to Paragraph 180, the footnote to Paragraph 181 goes on to say that "*Where significant development of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary, areas of poorer quality land should be preferred to those of a higher quality. The availability of agricultural land used for food production should be considered, alongside the other policies in this Framework, when deciding what sites are most appropriate for development*."

8.3.5 The glossary of the NPPF gives the following definition for best and most versatile (BMV) agricultural land: "*Best and most versatile agricultural land: Land in grades 1, 2 and 3a of the Agricultural Land Classification*".

Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) – Natural Environment (2024)

8.3.6 The PPG sets out how planning can take account of and safeguard soils. It states classification of soil grades and BMV and signposts the 2011 DEFRA Code of Practise for the sustainable use of soils on construction sites.

South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011-2035

8.3.7 The strategy sets out support for proposals for sustainable economic growth in rural areas. Including Policy EMP10: Development in Rural Areas notes the *"promotion of sustainable development and diversification of agricultural land".*

8.3.8 Policy DES7: Efficient Use of Resources notes that it is favourable to avoid "*the development of the best and most versatile agricultural land, unless it is demonstrated to be the most sustainable choice from reasonable alternatives, by first using areas of poorer quality land in preference to that of a higher quality, and other relevant guidance*."

Guidance

8.3.9 The following best practice guidelines/guidance etc are of relevance:

- The British Geological Survey (BGS) 'A Guide to Mineral Safeguarding in England' (2007) states that one element of their purpose is to not needlessly

sterilise proven resources by non-mineral development, although there is no presumption that any areas within a MSA will be acceptable for mineral extraction;

- Natural England's Guide to assessing development proposals on agricultural land (February 2021);
- UK Government and Defra's A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment which sets out what we will do to improve the environment;
- The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food's (MAFF) Agricultural Land Classification of England and Wales Revised guidelines and criteria for grading the quality of agricultural land (1988) provides the current guidelines and criteria for grading the quality of agricultural land in England and Wales;
- The IEMA guidance document 'A New Perspective on Land and Soil in Environmental Impact Assessment' (2022) seeks to advocate a new and wider approach to assessing the soil functions, ecosystem services and natural capital provided by land and soils;
- Defra's Construction Code of Practice for the Sustainable Use of Soil on Development Site (2011) provides Technical Guidance on the handling, storage and (re)use of soil within construction projects; and
- The Institute of Quarrying (2021) Good Practice Guide for Handling Soils in Mineral Workings details stripping, handling, storage, reinstatement, and management of soil resources, including advice on stockpile design. This document replaces Defra's 'Good Practice for Handling Soils', published in 2000.

8.4 Consultation

8.4.1 Through the scoping process Natural England were consulted

Table 8.1: Consultation Responses

Consultee	Consultation Response	Applicant Action
South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) - March 2023 - P23/S0203/SCO	*"The loss of any Grade 3a and 3b land has the potential for likely significant environmental effects. The LPA is therefore of the opinion that Land take, soil quality and agricultural land should be scoped into the EIA and ES, including through consideration of potential for likely significant environmental effects arising from cumulative impacts."*	Land take, Soil Quality and Agricultural Land were scoped into the EIA.
Natural England – February 2023 – P23/S0203/SCO	*"The following issues should be considered and, where appropriate, included as part of the Environmental Statement (ES):* *• The degree to which soils would be disturbed or damaged as part of the development* *• The extent to which agricultural land would be disturbed or lost as part of this development, including whether any best*	ALC Survey and SMP were completed.

Consultee	Consultation Response	Applicant Action
	and most versatile (BMV) agricultural land would be impacted."	
Lewknor Parish Council – February 2023 - P23/S0203/SCO	*"The percentages quoted relate to land in SODC, however, 66% of land in SODC is designated AONB. The percentages above are in respect of that remaining 33% and therefore misrepresented above."* *"The land is used for crops and it was referenced in the report that at the time of survey there was a good wheat crop growing in the field. It is graded as 3a and 3b but noted that "Grade 3 ALC is widely available in SODC." Therefore cannot be regarded as poor quality land.* *3a Good quality agricultural land capable of producing moderate to high yields of a narrow range of arable crops or moderate yields of a wider range of crops.* *3b Moderate quality agricultural land capable of producing moderate yields of a narrow range of crops or lower yields of a wider range of crops.* *It also states that in 1983 the gradings were – "Provisional map indicated the site is located on ALC Grade 3 and borders ALC Grade 2" therefore this has not changed.* *In addition to addressing all of the above the EIA decision for this development proposal does require examination of the 'cumulative impacts on the local area, in combination with nearby developments and should also take into account the need for crop production and Uk Food Security."*	The Site is outwith the Chilterns National Landscape and the temporary change in land use will provide a restorative break to the soil from intensive agricultural use, as discussed in the SMP (**Appendix 8.2**).

8.5 Assessment Methods

Surveys and Reports

8.5.1 With reference to the ALC Report in **Appendix 8.1**, this chapter:

- Outlines Legislation, Policy & Guidance (**Section 8.3**);
- Highlights consultation (**Section 8.4**);
- Describes the methodology used (**Section 8.5**);
- Describes the relevant Site factors affecting agricultural land quality (**Section 8.5**); and
- Makes conclusions on the ALC grade(s) (**Section 8.7**).

Site Survey

8.5.2 A detailed Soil and ALC survey was carried out on the 14th of December 2021 and

again on the 17th of July 2022.

8.5.3 The field survey consisted of auger borings, one every 100 m in general and a pit excavated in each of the main soil types to confirm the structures and stone content if needed. Laboratory analysis of soil textures was undertaken in order to confirm textures such the heavy/medium clay and medium/fine sand categories or stone content.

8.5.4 Soil profiles, type and textures have been described using the 'Soil Survey Field Handbook' (Hodgson, 1976). Soil colourings have been described using the 'Munsell Soil Colour Book' (Munsell, 1994).

8.5.5 A Soil Management Plan (SMP) (**Appendix 8.2**) was later prepared in November 2023 by Land Research Associates Ltd. This was based on laboratory analysis to define the soil types on the solar site.

ALC Grading of the Site

8.5.6 Conclusions have been made using the results of a combination of a desktop study and site survey, following ALC Guidelines (Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food 1988).

8.5.7 The ALC guidance provides a framework for classifying land according to the extent to which its physical or chemical characteristics impose long-term limitations on agricultural use. The framework divides agricultural land into five grades (Grade 1 "Excellent" to Grade 5 "Very Poor"), Grade 3 is subdivided into Subgrade 3a "Good" and Subgrade 3b "Moderate".

8.5.8 The National Planning Policy Framework (Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities September, 2023) defines the best and most versatile agricultural land as land in Grades 1, 2 and 3a.

Factors Affecting Agricultural Land Classification

8.5.9 As described within the ALC Guidelines, the main physical factors affecting agricultural land quality are:

- Climate;
- Site;
- Soil; and
- Interactive limitations.

Climate Parameters

8.5.10 Climate has a major influence on land quality, affecting its potential agricultural uses, influencing both the cost and level of production achievable.

8.5.11 Following ALC Guidelines, establishing climatic data and soil parameters allow calculations to be made in order to establish potential limitations to agricultural activity. Climatic data for this Site can be seen at **Table 8.2**.

Table 8.2: ALC Climate Data for Postcombe and Lewknor

Climatological Information		
Factor	**Units**	**Value**
Altitude AOD	m	115
Accumulated Temperature	day°C (Jan-June)	1381.0
Average Annual Rainfall	mm	696.2
Field Capacity Days	days	149.5
Moisture Deficit Wheat	mm	101.8
Moisture Deficit Potatoes	mm	91.9
Overall Climate ALC Grade	Grade 1	

8.5.12 Overall, climate will not result in the most significant limiting factor for this site.

Survey Limitations

8.5.13 ALC Guidelines (Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food, 1988) define physical soil properties affecting cropping and management of land as:

- Texture;
- Structure;
- Depth;
- Stoniness; and
- Chemical fertility.

8.5.14 Soil limitations may act independently or through interactions with climate or Site factors.

8.5.15 ALC Guidelines (Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food, 1988) define interactive limitations as:

- Soil wetness;
- Droughtiness; and

- Erosion risk.

8.5.16 As described within the ALC Guidelines, the main factors affecting agricultural land quality are:

- Gradient;
- Micro-relief (i.e., complex changes in slope / physical obstacles with a potential to cause hindrance to mechanical field operations); and
- Risk of flooding.

Gradient

8.5.17 The maximum gradient across the solar site is 7° and therefore the gradient will not result in a significant limiting factor for this solar site.

Mico-relief

8.5.18 There are very few limiting physical micro-relief factors influencing agricultural operations on the solar site, with no limitations such as boulders / rock outcrops, and abrupt changes of slope angle above the soil surface. The micro-relief will not result in a significant limiting factor for this solar site.

Risk of Flooding

8.5.19 The Government Flood Map for Planning (Natural England, 2025) website indicates that the solar site is located in flood zone 1. Land within flood zone 1 has a low probability of flooding from river and sea.

8.6 Baseline Conditions

Geology and Soil

Bedrock Geology

8.6.1 The BGS Geology Viewer (British Geographical Society, 2024) records a variety of bedrock geology across the solar site, as detailed below, in order of abundance:

- West Melbury Marly Chalk Formation – Chalk formed between 100.5 and 93.9 million years ago during the Cretaceous period. Spread across the majority of the eastern and western land parcels;
- Glauconitic Marl Member - Sandstone, Glauconitic. Sedimentary Bedrock formed between 100.5 and 93.9 million years ago during the Cretaceous period. Located in the north-east of the eastern parcel; and
- Upper Greensand Formation - Siltstone and Sandstone. Sedimentary Bedrock formed between 113 and 93.9 million years ago during the Cretaceous period. Located in the north-north-east of the eastern parcel.

Published Information on Soil Type

8.6.2 A variety of soil types are recorded across the solar site by the United Kingdom Soil Observatory (UKSO, 2025), as detailed below.

- Freely draining lime-rich loamy soils; and
- Slightly acid loamy and clayey soils with impeded drainage.

Published Information on Soil Depth

8.6.3 There is one soil depth recorded at the solar site by UKSO (2025), located within the M40 is as detailed below:

- Topsoil – Depth Base 0.15 m.

Published Information on Soil Moisture

8.6.4 UKSO (2025) records this land as having a dominant land cover of 'arable and horticulture', with a dominant grain of sand and a soil texture of medium (silty) to light (slightly) to heavy. The soil moisture based on 2007 records is 22.48.

Land Use

Published Information on Land Use

8.6.5 LandIS (2025) defines this land as in order of abundance as:

- Freely draining lime-rich loamy soils. Well suited to spring and autumn-sown cereals and other crops including grass but the land is mostly nitrate vulnerable.
- Slightly acid loamy and clayey soils with impeded drainage. Reasonably flexible but more suited to autumn sown crops and grassland; soil conditions may limit safe groundwork and grazing, particularly in spring.

Public Right of Ways

8.6.6 A Public Right of Way (PRoW) footpath (PRoW code: 277/7/10) traverses the eastern land parcel from the south-west corner to the north, with a bridleway bordering the southern Site boundary (Bridleway Code: 277/33/30). The PRoW runs under a 11 kV powerline, a 30 m setback has been put in place to allow access to the PRoW and power line.

Agricultural Land Classification Survey Results

8.6.7 Observations were carried out across 78 survey points at 100 m intersects.

8.6.8 The combination of a Wetness Class of III for the soils in the south-west with a Field Capacity Days of 149.5 and a topsoil texture of calcareous heavy clay cloam results in an ALC Grade of 3a.

8.6.9 The Available Water Capacity which subsequently when considered with respect to the Moisture Deficient for wheat and potatoes resulted in a droughtiness limitation of Grade 3a or 3b over most of the solar site for wheat with the variation dictated by the depth to the chalk and root penetration into the fractured upper chalk.

8.6.10 Erosion is not considered to result in a significant limiting factor for this solar site.

8.6.11 The soils are mainly heavy silty clay loam topsoils over shallow in places silty clay loam subsoils over chalk. The soils over the sandstone have deeper clayey subsoils.

8.6.12 The structure in the subsoil is weak to moderate, medium sub angular blocky. Little significant variation exists over most of the solar site.

8.6.13 The depth, stoniness and chemical composition of the soil has therefore not been found to be a significant limiting factor for this solar site.

8.6.14 The ALC Survey has resulted in an Agricultural Land Classification of the following grades shown in **Table 8.3** below:

Table 8.3: ALC gradings and limitations

Grade	Ha	%	Limitation
1	0	0	
2	0	0	
3a	35	45.5	Wetness and Droughtiness
3b	41	53.2	Droughtiness
4	0	0	
5	0	0	
Non-agricultural land	1	1.3	Woodland
Total	**77**	**100%**	

Most Limiting Factors

8.6.15 Grade 3a areas: These areas are limited by either wetness in the south-west or droughtiness over the rest of the solar site.

8.6.16 Grade 3b areas: Droughtiness in the shallower soils over the hard chalk is the limitation in these areas.

Soil Survey Results

8.6.17 The topsoil laboratory analysis found that the topsoils have uniformly high nutrient concentrations which is typical of intensively managed arable land. These levels are unlikely to decrease significantly under the current management regime, this means that any habitat creation schemes under solar use would need to factor in management techniques to reduced nutrient concentrations (and the dominance of productive grasses and agricultural weeds).

8.6.18 Topsoil organic matter concentrations are moderate for a soil with high clay \content, normal for a soil under arable cultivation. Organic matter concentration of the surface layer would be expected to increase under permanent grass cover associated with solar use, with potential long-term benefits for soil structure and biological health.

8.6.19 For full details on the SMP see **Appendix 8.2**.

8.7 Mitigation

8.7.1 The main potential impacts of solar installation on long-term agricultural potential include:

- Temporary loss of land to energy infrastructure development.
- Compaction damage caused by inappropriate construction methods and timing.

8.7.2 Design has been constructed to mitigate impact on grade 3a soils where the substation and other infrastructure that would require a hardstanding has been placed on areas of grade 3b soil. Although there were still be impact to the Grade 3a where other infrastructure is to be placed e.g. access tracks, fences and solar panels.

8.7.3 All operations are to be undertaken strictly in accordance with the soil management plan and the Construction Code of Practice for the Sustainable Use of Soils on Construction Sites, DEFRA (2009).

8.7.4 Full details of the mitigation measures proposed are detailed in **Appendix 8.2**, but some key measures are outlined below:

Soil Stripping

- All soil handling to be limited to dry conditions between April and November.
- Whether soils are at an appropriate moisture content for handling to be checked by a simple ‘plasticity test’.
- Stripping should only take place using an excavator as described by sheet 1 in the MAFF Good Practice Guide for Handling Soils.
- Topsoil and subsoil resources should be stripped and stored separately in low bunds (less than 4 m in height), avoiding over-compaction.
- Topsoil should be stripped carefully to avoid dilution with subsoil.

- A tracked hydraulic excavator should be used to load topsoil and subsoil. The soils should be stripped, stockpiled, removed from storage and replaced by tracked hydraulic excavator using the loose technique (Sheet 4 MAFF Good Practice Guide) with only gentle firming by tracked vehicles.
- Soil stripping should be suspended during heavy rainfall. After rainfall, the wetness of the soil should be checked (by the earthworks contractor) before recommencing mechanised soil handling.

Construction Traffic Management

- All plant movement/work should be undertaken form access tracks or temporary matting to prevent soil compaction.

Solar Array Construction

- Topsoil should be stripped from track construction areas using the excavator/dumper truck method which avoids traffic on stripped surfaces.
- Long-term storage bunds should be sown to a grassland seed mix and kept weed free by cutting, to ensure topsoil is maintained in good condition for restoration.
- Temporary access tracks should be surfaced with imported aggregate, underlain by geotextile matting to ensure the aggregate can be fully removed during decommissioning.

8.8 Assessment of Potential Effects

Land Take

8.8.1 The solar site will result in a change to the dominant land use of agriculture to energy generation using solar PV infrastructure. The construction of the Proposed Development will result in some temporary loss of agricultural land.

8.8.2 According to the publicly available data (Natural England, 2024) there is approximately 30,727 ha of Grade 3 ALC within SODC. Based on this data Grade 3 ALC accounts for 45% of the land in SODC. The Proposed Development will cause a temporary loss of 35 ha of Grade 3a ALC, which equates to a temporary loss of 0.11% of Grade 3 ALC land across SODC.

8.8.3 The total footprint of the infrastructure of the Proposed Development equates to approximately 33 ha including the solar panel areas (approximately 27.4 ha) of which the footprint of the panel area in reality will be much less, given it is only the steel piles that will be driven into the ground. Excluding the solar panels the permanent infrastructure will measure approximately 5.6 ha. Based on this loss the Proposed Development would only result in a loss of 0.02% of Grade 3 ALC land in SODC.

8.8.4 The decommissioning of the solar site will allow the land to be restored to its original use. This soil will likely be returned in better condition than it is currently following the landscape and ecological enhancements proposed.

8.8.5 The PRoWs that cross the Site will require temporary diversions during the construction phase of the Proposed Development. Once operational the PRoW

will remain accessible and improved with additional landscape planting proposed either side of the PRoW to screen views of the Proposed Development.

8.9 Assessment of Cumulative Effects

8.9.1 The cumulative developments considered within this EIA have reviewed.

Development	Status	Approximate distance to the solar site	ALC Baseline
Harlesford Solar Farm (P20/S3245/FUL)	Operational	3.1 km north-north-west	Comprises 1.1 ha of Grade 3a land, 79.8 ha of Grade 3b land and 0.9 ha of non-agricultural land.
Dodwells Solar Farm (P21/S3915/FUL)	Awaiting Construction	3.2 km north	Comprises 4.4 ha of Grade 3a land, 107 ha of Grade 3b and 0.6 ha of non-agricultural land.
Cornwall Solar Farm (P20/S3244/FUL)	Operational	4 km north-west	Comprises 69.1 ha of Grade 3b land and 0.6 ha of non-agricultural land.
Chalgrove Solar Farm (P14/S1734/FUL)	Operational	4.7 km west	No data available.

8.9.2 Overall, when considering the cumulative developments there will be a total temporary loss of 40.5 ha of Grade 3a land in SODC.

8.9.3 As of February 2025 (UK GOV, 2025), the cumulative installed capacity of solar power in the UK was 17.9 GW. However, the Proposed Development supports the government aim to achieve 70 GW of solar power by 2035.

8.10 Summary

8.10.1 This technical appraisal sets out the baseline conditions around the Site and provide a high-level review and assessment of the general impacts of the Proposed Development.

8.10.2 A review of national and local policies and guidance relevant to the soils and agricultural land elements and proposals have been carried out to show how the Proposed Development accords with all relevant provisions.

8.10.3 Baseline conditions around the Proposed Development have been assessed for agricultural land and soil quality. This considered the land use, agricultural land, soil, geology and minerals.

8.10.4 The technical appraisal accords with all relevant policies and guidance and will not result in any significant impacts to the surrounding environment and is therefore acceptable on soils and agricultural grounds.

8.10.5 The majority of the agricultural land resource within the solar site is ALC Grade 3b (41 ha/53.2%). Best and most versatile (BMV) soils account for 35 ha (45.5%) of the solar site comprising Grade 3a land.

8.10.6 During the construction period the work undertaken will involve a temporary interruption to the use of the agricultural land within the solar site. The resulting permanent and local effect of the construction work on the agricultural land and soil quality will be minor.

8.10.7 The resulting short term, reversable and local effect of construction disturbance on the soil quality will be minor and not significant.

8.10.8 An SMP has been produced and submitted alongside the ES, which outlines soil management and handling measures to preserve the soil resource at the Site.

8.11 References

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