



High Grove Solar

Preliminary Environmental Information Report Appendix 1.1 Competent Expert Evidence

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1 Background

- 1.1.1 European Union Directive 2014/52/EU requires that developers ensure that the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) report (Environmental Statement) is prepared by 'competent experts'. In addition, The Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 states that 'the environmental statement must be accompanied by a statement from the applicant outlining the relevant expertise or qualifications of such experts'. As such, this Statement of Competence has been prepared by Arup, as lead EIA Coordinator for High Grove Solar (the Proposed Development), to outline the capability of the company and the competency of the individuals responsible for undertaking and reporting the EIA.

2 Environment Lead

- 2.1.1 Arup is a leading provider of environmental services to a wide range of clients and development sectors in the UK. Arup has a large and highly experienced team of EIA practitioners who have managed hundreds of EIAs and prepared Environmental Statements and other technical reports to accompany applications under various consenting regimes. The EIA team is supported by a large team of technical environmental specialists, covering a wide range of technical disciplines.

3 IEMA EIA Quality Mark



- 3.1.1 Arup is a registrant to the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) EIA Quality Mark and undertakes all EIA work in line with the EIA Quality Mark Commitments. The EIA Quality Mark is a voluntary scheme through which EIA activity is independently reviewed, on an annual basis, to ensure it delivers excellence in: EIA management, EIA team capabilities, EIA regulatory compliance, EIA context and influence, EIA content, EIA presentation, and improving EIA practice. Many of Arup's EIA Coordinators hold Practitioner or Full (Chartered) Membership status with IEMA, or are members of other appropriate professional institutions.

4 Competent Experts

- 4.1.1 Summaries of the qualifications and experience of the project team are presented below.

EIA lead – Arup

4.1.2 The EIA lead has over 20 years experience in environmental assessment and management, with a background in research, compliance, and environmental due diligence, they have extensive experience in leading multidisciplinary teams to undertake statutory EIA for infrastructure including energy, road, rail, aviation, and mixed use development under various planning regimes, including DCO.

4.1.3 They are a Chartered Environmentalist, Chartered Water and Environmental Manager and Chartered Waste Manager, and hold BSc (Hons) in Environmental Chemistry and a PhD in Chemical Engineering. They lead the Environmental Assessment and Management team in Birmingham specialising in environmental impact assessment and management of infrastructure development projects.

EIA coordinator - Arup

4.1.4 The EIA coordinator is a Chartered Environmentalist with a BSc (Hons) in Environmental Science, and over 8 years' experience in the delivery of EIAs, including for DCOs. They hold a wealth of project experience coordinating multidisciplinary teams on a range of projects, including energy, rail, urban regeneration and property sectors.

Agricultural Land and Soils – Reading Agricultural

4.1.5 The agricultural land and soils assessment lead author holds a BA (Hons), MSc, Fellow of the British Institute of Agricultural Consultants (FBIAC), Practitioner of the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (PIEMA), and Member of the Institute of Soil Science. They are a Director of Reading Agricultural Consultants Ltd with over 35 years' experience of assessing the impacts of developments on agricultural land and soils, and considerable experience of providing expert evidence at public inquiries, hearings and DCO examinations. The deputy author holds a BSc (Hons), MSc, and is a Member of the Institute of Soil Science, with 12 years' experience as a soil scientist, assessing impacts of developments on agricultural land and soils.

Biodiversity – Wardell-Armstrong

4.1.6 The lead author is an ecologist with over 18 years professional experience based in London working mainly in the east and south-east of England. They have worked on a variety of EIA projects including for energy infrastructure projects, and several based in East Anglia. Their experience includes all stages of development from site allocation, planning application (including protected species licencing and Habitats Regulations Assessment), overseeing construction and post-construction monitoring. They are a named ecologist on development licences for bats. They are a full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management and a Chartered Environmentalist.

4.1.7 The Biodiversity assessment and surveys have been supported by an ecologist with six years experience, who has worked on numerous projects across East Anglia. They have experience on a range of EIA projects, including numerous solar developments.

Climate Change & Glint and Glare– Wardell-Armstrong

- 4.1.8 The lead author is a Technical Director with 18 years' experience as an Energy & Climate Change consultant, after graduating from Exeter University with a 1st Class degree in Renewable Energy. They have been involved in various aspects of wind and solar power development and is competent in project managing Environmental Impact Assessments and planning applications for a range of renewable developments. Previous projects have included onshore wind, biomass CHP, deep geothermal and solar PV developments. His other responsibilities have included writing technical chapters, feasibility assessments and detailed financial appraisals across a range of different project types, as well as carrying out resource modelling, GIS and data interpretation.
- 4.1.9 They have completed numerous greenhouse gas and climate change assessments across activities as diverse as building developments to mining operations to renewable energy installations, as well as carrying out site appraisals and due diligence work.
- 4.1.10 They have personally worked on several hundred glint and glare assessments, primarily in the UK but also internationally, covering projects from small-scale roof mount projects to very large NSIP projects.

Cultural Heritage and Archaeology – Headland Archaeology

- 4.1.11 The lead author of the heritage chapter has BSc MSc ACIFA. They have two years of experience as an archaeology and built heritage consultant following 5 years of experience as an archaeologist. They have Associate membership of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists and have prepared two previous Environmental Statements.
- 4.1.12 Preparation of the chapter has been overseen by the deputy author, BA PGDip MCIFA. They have over 20 year's post graduate experience with 13 as an archaeology and built heritage consultant working primarily on renewable energy Environmental Impact Assessments. They are a full Member of the Chartered Institute of Archaeologists.

Landscape and visual amenity- Arup

- 4.1.13 The lead author for the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) is an industry leading expert and advocate for landscape-led design of major development schemes. They are passionate about the environment and sustainable approaches to planning, design and management.
- 4.1.14 The lead author is a Chartered Landscape Architect and an Associate Director at Arup with over 20 years of experience in the planning, design and management of major infrastructure. Their expertise is recognised through their previous positions on the Landscape Institute Technical and Research Committee and the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA) Panel. They recently contributed to the Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE) Blue-Green Infrastructure Manual and were lead author of a technical guidance note on the

planning, design and management of infrastructure, published by the Landscape Institute. They have also previously published guidance on preparing heritage and townscape character assessments and on neighbourhood planning. The lead author has regularly given evidence as an expert witness at DCO Examination, Public Inquiry and Examination in Public.

- 4.1.15 The wide-ranging experience of the lead author includes acting as Environmental Overseeing Consultant for landscape for Phase 1 of HS2 and leading on the management of a national portfolio of sites for the Environment Agency. They have supported numerous DCO applications, including the consented A428 Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet Improvements, Sunnica Energy Farm, Gate Burton and Longfield Solar Farm projects and the LionLink Interconnector and the A27 Arundel Bypass schemes. Their role on such projects includes overseeing the LVIA and using the results of this assessment to inform the iterative design. They apply a strategic, landscape-led, multi-disciplinary approach to the design of infrastructure projects which addresses the sensitivities of the landscape and maximises opportunities for environmental net gain. They also regularly give advice on the stewardship, management and maintenance of green assets, including for major infrastructure clients such as HS2, Network Rail and Transport Infrastructure Ireland.
- 4.1.16 Many of the projects that the lead author has supported relate to nationally designated areas of landscape comprising National Parks or National Landscapes, including giving advice on behalf of major infrastructure organisations and local planning authorities.

Noise and Vibration – Wardell-Armstrong

- 4.1.17 The noise and vibration chapter approvals have been undertaken by a Technical Director with over 18 years' experience in acoustics and vibration and a full member of the Institute of Acoustics. Holds a post graduate diploma in Acoustics and Noise Control Engineering and an MSc in Environmental Management.
- 4.1.18 The lead author is a Principal Acoustic Consultant with over 5 years' experience in acoustics and vibration and full member of the Institute of Acoustics. Holds an MSc in Audio Acoustics and Signal Statistics.

Socio-economics – Arup

- 4.1.19 The socio-economics chapter has been led by a Chartered Member of the Royal Town Planning Institute (MRTPI) with qualifications including Bsc in Geography and Msc in Urban Planning. The author is an experienced town planner and social value leader with 14 years' experience for a wide range of types and scales of development in the UK and internationally.

Traffic and Transport – Arup

- 4.1.20 The lead author for the Traffic and Transport Assessment (MSc, BA (Hons)) is an experienced Senior Consultant with more than 10 years experience in EIA, Transport Assessment, and Construction Traffic Management planning. They have led Traffic and Transport inputs for NSIPs and major planning application for

major development projects across the United Kingdom across a range of sectors. They have also led the review, as a planning consultee, for Solar Farm Development as a local authority officer. They are member of the Chartered Institute for Highways and Transportation and the Transport Planning Society.

Water Resources and Flood Risk – Arup

- 4.1.21 The lead author for the Water Resources and Flood Risk Chapter is an experienced Hydrogeologist with more than 10 years experience. They are a Chartered Geologist (CGeol) with extensive experience in the delivery of multi-disciplinary major infrastructure projects in sensitive water environments, including through the DCO process.
- 4.1.22 They have been supported by technical specialists in relevant water disciplines including Water Environment Regulations (MCIWEM CWEM) and Flood Risk Assessment (CGeog FRGA and MCIWEM CWEM CSci CEnv).

Arboricultural – Treework Environmental Practice

- 4.1.23 The lead author for the Arboricultural Assessment is an experienced arboriculturist with 23 years experience. They are a Chartered Surveyor (MRICS), Chartered Arboriculturist (MICFor), Chartered Environmentalist (CEnv) and Professional Member of the Arboricultural Association (MArborA). They have led arboricultural inputs for NSIPs and major planning applications. Their expertise is recognised through their position on the British Standards Institution Trees Committee and they are chair of the revision for BS 5837.

Ornithology – Avian Ecology

- 4.1.24 The lead author (MSc) of the Ornithology Assessment has four years' experience in ornithology prior to four years' experience as an ecological consultant. During this time, they have contributed to PEIR/ES report chapters relating to ornithology on numerous solar PV array developments.
- 4.1.25 The Ornithology Assessment has been supported by the Managing Director (MSc, MCIEEM), who is lifelong ornithologist with over 20 years of experience as an ecological consultant specialising in renewable energy developments. During this time, they have written and/or contributed to numerous PEIR/ES report chapters for ecological or ornithological interest, including at several solar PV array and other renewable energy developments. They have acted as an Expert Witness on ecological matters at a number of Public Inquiries and Hearings for planning appeals.

