

Landscape Statement of Common Ground between Renewable Energy Systems Ltd and Hawksworth and Thoroton Action Group

Land East of Hawksworth and Northwest of Thoroton



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1. INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE

- 1.1. This Landscape Statement of Common Ground (“LSoCG”) is made between the following parties:
 - a) Renewable Energy Systems Ltd (the “**Appellant**”); and
 - b) Hawksworth and Thoroton Action Group (“**HTAG**”)(together the “**Parties**”).
- 1.2. This LSoCG has been jointly prepared by the Appellant and HTAG, and establishes the landscape matters on which the Parties agree and disagree.
- 1.3. Appendix 1 of this LSoCG is a Scott Schedule which sets out the visual effects as assessed by the Appellant, HTAG, and Rushcliffe Borough Council (RBC).
- 1.4. This LSoCG should be read in conjunction with the overarching SoCG between the Appellant and HTAG, which sets out the following sections concerning the appeal: factual background; minor amendments to the scheme; description of appeal site and planning history; the appeal proposal; planning policy; matters agreed and not agreed; and draft planning conditions.

2. MATTERS AGREED AND NOT AGREED

Matters agreed

Landscape and Visual Effects

- 2.1. The officer’s report concludes that the proposed development has been designed to respect the character of the landscape, and uses the field pattern to integrate the scheme as far as practicable (but see matters not agreed on this point). It also concludes that the development accords with Core Strategy Policy 10 (Design and Enhancing Local Identity) (which is not agreed between the parties).
- 2.2. That any adverse landscape or visual effects associated with the Proposed Development should be considered for the lifetime of the solar farm.
- 2.3. That the level of sensitivity of users of public rights of way (PRoWs) is High.
- 2.4. That the adverse visual effects arising during construction and the first few years of operation at the appellant’s viewpoint (VP) 5 would be Major (‘significant’).
- 2.5. That the landscape proposals associated with the Proposed Development would result in a net gain in the hedgerow and tree resource within the site (but see matters not agreed).
- 2.6. That the site is not part of a valued landscape within the meaning of para 180(a) of NPPF.



Glint and Glare

- 2.7. The glint and glare assessment concludes that there would be no significant impact on residential properties (but see matters not agreed).

Decommissioning And Reinstatement of Land

- 2.8. At the end of the operational lifespan (40 years), the solar panels and the majority of other infrastructure would be removed with the exception of the DNO substation compound and its associated access and cabling.

Vehicular Access and Traffic

- 2.9. It is proposed that the site would be accessed from a new vehicular access point off Thoroton Road. Required visibility splays will be provided by removing a small section of hedgerow (17 metres).

Impact on Public Rights of Ways (PROW)

- 2.10. The Nottinghamshire County Council Rights of Way Team is satisfied that the development has retained the Rights of Way in their current location to acceptable terms and has no objection to the proposals (but in terms of impacts on users of Rights of Way, see matters not agreed).

Matters not agreed

- 2.11. The effects of the Proposed Development on landscape character and visual amenity.
- 2.12. Whether the proposed development has been designed to respect the character of the landscape and uses the field pattern to integrate the scheme as far as practicable.
- 2.13. Whether the proposed development:
- i) Is sensitively sited with a design and layout that positively integrates with its local context.
 - ii) Conserves and enhances local landscape character.
 - iii) Protects and enhances Green Infrastructure with greater access, connection and amenity enhancements.
 - iv) The historic environment and heritage assets and their settings are protected including Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas.
 - v) Protects the settlement pattern and residential amenity.
 - vi) Is not visually intrusive, whilst protecting the visual amenity of any residents and users of public rights of way.
- 2.14. Whether, at the end of the Proposed Development's lifespan, the predicted effects are reversible.



- 2.15. Whether the land would be returned to its former agricultural use, similar in form to its current state.
- 2.16. Whether the method used for the Landscape and Visual Appraisal and subsequent addenda was sound and in accordance with the *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment*, Third Edition (GLVIA3).
- 2.17. With the exception of those set out in Matters Agreed above, overall levels of effects during the construction, decommissioning and operational phases on the identified landscape, visual and recreational receptors, including along the proposed construction / decommissioning route; in particular, whether the proposed development '*would have a significant adverse impact on landscape character and visual amenity*' RfR1).
- 2.18. The differences of opinion result mainly from the following matters of disagreement (see also Scott schedule comparing levels of visual effects in Appendix 1):
- i) Whether the appellant's landscape and visual baseline studies are sufficient, in terms of the landscape and visual receptors identified and included in the effects assessments.
 - ii) The relevance of the Melton and Rushcliffe Landscape Sensitivity Study: Wind Energy Development (2014) to the assessments.
 - iii) With the exception of those set out in Matters Agreed above, levels of landscape, visual, and recreational receptor value, and susceptibility to change in the form of the appeal scheme proposals, and thus, overall levels of receptor sensitivity.
 - iv) Levels of magnitude of landscape and visual change, in particular relating to:
 - a) Whether the effects assessment should be based on the assumption that the 40-year operational lifetime of the scheme is 'temporary' or 'permanent'.
 - b) To what extent the proposed appeal scheme would be at odds with the existing pattern of land use.
 - c) The height of proposed scheme elements assessed in the LVA/s.
 - d) Effects on the site's topography.
 - e) To what extent the proposed mitigation measures in the form of new planting and management of the existing and proposed trees and hedgerows on the site would 1) reduce levels of adverse effects on landscape character and visual amenity arising from the proposed development; and 2) result in beneficial landscape and / or visual effects.
 - f) The method used for the appellant's glint and glare assessment and its findings.
 - g) Whether users of PRowS on / close to the site, and lanes adjacent to the site would experience glint and glare effects.
 - h) Whether residential receptors would experience higher levels of magnitude of glint and glare effects than the appellant's assessment predicts.



- i) Whether the proposed permissive routes would give rise to beneficial or adverse effects on users.
- v) The range and geographical extent of landscape and visual effects.
- vi) Cumulative effects.

2.19. Other matters not agreed include:

- i) Effects on soils.
- ii) Sheep-grazing.



Appendix 1: Visual Summary Comparison Schedule between the Appellant, Hawksworth and Thoroton Action Group (HTAG) and Rushcliffe Borough Council (RBC)

Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)
Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

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