



TECHNICAL APPENDIX 11: PROW MANAGEMENT PLAN

Kingston Solar Farm

18/08/2022



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CONTENTS

Introduction	5
Consultation	6
PRow Design and Mitigation Measures	6
Proposed PRow Upgrades and Enhancement	8
PRow Management (Health and Safety).....	8
Conclusion	10

INTRODUCTION

Background

- 1.1. This Public Right of Way (PRoW) Management Plan forms part of a Planning Application submitted to Rushcliffe Borough Council (“the Council”) as Local Planning Authority (“LPA”), on behalf of Renewable Energy Systems (RES) Ltd (“the Applicant”), for a proposed 49.9MW solar farm and associated infrastructure (the “Proposed Development”) on lands circa 1.3km south of the village of Gotham and 0.75km northwest of the village of East Leake, Nottinghamshire (the “Application Site”); the approximate centre point of which can be found at Grid Reference E453185, N328739.

Development Description

- 1.2. The Proposed Development will consist of the construction of a 49.9MW solar farm with bi-facial solar photovoltaic (PV) panels mounted on metal frames, new access tracks, underground cabling, perimeter fencing with CCTV cameras and access gates, two temporary construction compounds, substation and all ancillary grid infrastructure and associated works.
- 1.3. Further detail on the Proposed Development can be found in the Planning Statement in **Volume 1**. The Proposed Development can be viewed in **Figures 4 of Volume 2: Planning Application Drawings**.

Scope of Management Plan

- 1.4. This PRoW Management Plan has been produced to address the interactions between the PRoW and the Proposed Development.
- 1.5. The Plan describes where PRoWs would be crossed by the Proposed Development and how PRoWs would be managed to ensure they remain safe to use, and disruption to the users of the PRoW is minimised. It will also include enhancement measures proposed by the applicant.

PRoW Network

- 1.6. All PRoWs located within or adjacent to the site are shown on **Figure 16 of Volume 2: Planning Application Drawings**. The PRoW network is well used and a valued amenity in the local area. Information on the width of all PRoWs within and adjacent to the site was also sought from Nottinghamshire County Council (NCC) in order to inform the design and ensure appropriate buffers were applied as part of the Proposed Development.

- 1.7. A 1:10,000 scale extract from the working copy of the Council's definitive map and information relating to any applications and / or legal Orders to stop up, divert, alter or create a PRow was provided by NCC.
- 1.8. Results from the search confirmed that both Gotham Bridleways 10, 11 and 12 cross the Application Site; West Leake Bridleways 1 and 3 and Footpath 6 abut, and Bridleways 3, 5 and 13 also cross the Application Site.

CONSULTATION

- 1.9. Throughout the pre-application stage of the Proposed Development, consultation with Rushcliffe Borough Council's RoW Officer was undertaken by the Applicant and Neo Environmental Ltd.
- 1.10. Consultation was also held with the local community and local recreation groups. More details can be found in the **Statement of Community Involvement in Volume 2** of this application.

PROW DESIGN AND MITIGATION MEASURES

- 1.11. As noted above, a number of PRows pass through or abut the Application Site and a number of these showcase open views across the landscape. The Proposed Development underwent a number of design iterations to minimise any potential impacts on the PRow network and to take account feedback from consultation with Rushcliffe Borough Council and other statutory and non-statutory bodies including the British Horse Society, the Ramblers Association and the local community.
- 1.12. At the time of submitting the pre-application advice request (January 2021), two accesses were proposed to be used for the Application Site; Wood Lane to the north and Stocking Lane to the south, however following consultation with the RoW Officer, the local community and wider stakeholders, access options were refined and Stocking Lane was removed from the design. Wood Lane to the north is now proposed to be the only access route. It will be widened to a maximum of 4.5m to accommodate all vehicles needed to access the site during construction. See the **Statement of Community Involvement in Volume 2** for further detail.
- 1.13. In addition, mitigation planting has been proposed to further reduce landscape and visual impacts on the PRow network. A summary of design changes and mitigations is detailed below while details of specific species proposed for woodland, hedgerow and shrub / scrub planting proposed across the Application Site is included in the **Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (LEMP), Figure 1.14 of Technical Appendix (TA) 1, Volume 3.**

- 1.14. A 5m grassland buffer and hedgerow planting has been proposed between the existing PRow and the PV panels on the eastern side of BW 10 which passes in a north to south trajectory between Fields 10 and 11 (see **Figure 3 of Volume 2: Planning Application Drawings** for field numbers and **Figure 14 of Volume 2: Planning Application Drawings** for cross sections of the PRows). This has been proposed in order to ensure the openness of the route is not compromised, and the potential for adverse visual impacts is reduced. The existing hedgerow on the western side of BW 10 will be allowed to grow up to a height of 3-4m. Visual impacts on PRows in the surrounding area are assessed in greater detail in **Volume 3, TA 1: LVA**.
- 1.15. A buffer of circa 20m has been adopted along the northern boundary of Fields 7-10 in the northern section of the Application Site, which border Gotham Bridleway 11 (Wood Lane) and currently have open views across the fields. This buffer will host circa 10 metres of improved grassland and circa 10m of woodland. This will remove the risk of a corridor effect and maintain the landscape character of the surrounding area. A cross section drawing detailing the mitigation measures proposed along this Bridleway is included as **Figure 14 of Volume 2: Planning Application Drawings (Section AA)**.
- 1.16. Hedgerow planting is proposed along the north-eastern boundary of Field 15 in order to reduce views into the field from Gotham Bridleway Nos. 11 and 13 which border this field. This planting should fit congruously with the surrounding area due to the hedgerow planting which already exists further north along this bridleway.
- 1.17. Proposed infrastructure in Field 15 has also been buffered from its south-eastern field boundary which borders the Midshires Way (West Leake Bridleway No. 5). Mitigation here involves hedgerow planting to screen views of the proposed solar farm but continue to allow views from West Leake Bridleway No. 16 and West Leake Bridleway No. 5 looking north towards Crow Wood and beyond. This will also ensure open views towards East Leake are maintained when walking towards BW 5 from BW 13. New and infill hedgerow planting is proposed along the south-eastern boundary of Fields 15 and 16 and the south-western boundary of Field 16, in order to reduce any views of development in these fields from BW 5 (the Midshires Way).
- 1.18. There is considered to be sufficient screening along Bridleway 12, no changes are proposed in relation to the width of or planting along this PRow (hedgerows will be allowed to grow to height of 3-4m). An access track will cross it (see **Figure 4 of Volume 2: Planning Application Drawings** for Infrastructure Layout) and this access will be managed as per the details in the PRow Management (Health And Safety) section of this report and the **Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP): TA 5, Volume 3**.
- 1.19. It should also be noted that at its early stages, the Proposed Development extended southeast and incorporated another large field to the south-east of the Midshires Way. This was later removed in order to avoid enclosure of this route and reduce potential adverse visual impacts.

PROPOSED PRow UPGRADES AND ENHANCEMENT

Permissive Path

- 1.20. The Applicant proposes a permissive path to be incorporated into the design of the Proposed Development. The permissive path starts where Bridleway 1 and 12 meet on the southwestern corner of Field 7 and travels in a general eastern trajectory linking to Bridleway 10 which runs north–south between Fields 10 and 11 and Bridleway 11 which runs along the northern boundaries of Fields 7-11 and the north-eastern boundary of Field 15. The proposed permissive path is detailed on the LEMP which appends the Landscape and Visual Assessment, see **Figure 1.14 of Volume 3: Technical Appendix 1**.
- 1.21. It should be noted that the permissive path will not be adopted by the Council, and therefore will be maintained as part of the solar farm.

Additional Proposed Enhancements

- 1.22. The Applicant has proposed a number of additional enhancements across the site which aim to improve the enjoyment of those using the PRow network, which include:
- Wildflower meadows;
 - Proposed woodland and grassland planting;
 - The introduction of the new permissive path detailed above; and
 - Interpretation boards detailing educational information on renewable energy including solar farms and the need for such development, as well as information on local points of interest.
- 1.23. See LEMP (**Figure 1.14 of Technical Appendix 1: LVA of Volume 3**) for further detail. The locations and content of the interpretation boards will be agreed with the Council and local community.
- 1.24. The Applicant is open to supporting additional enhancements where appropriate, and has received a number of suggestions from the ROW officer and members of the local community, which they continue to explore.

PRow MANAGEMENT (HEALTH AND SAFETY)

- 1.25. This section of the PRow Management Plan describes how the PRowS that cross the Proposed Development Site will be managed. It is the Applicant's intention to keep all of the identified PRowS open during construction of the Proposed Development, where practicable and safe to do so. It is also proposed that all PRowS within the site will remain as they are currently surfaced. Should any PRowS be damaged during the construction phase, the Applicant will be liable to repair the damage and return it to a comparable surface condition.
- 1.26. For security and safety purposes, the Proposed Development will be closed to the general public via security fencing and a locked gate. The security fence installed around the perimeter of the solar farm will be erected at the start of the construction programme and will remain for the duration of the operation until decommissioning of the solar farm. A dedicated person will be appointed for the management of the delivery booking system.
- 1.27. Wood Lane is proposed to be widened to a maximum 4.5m. HGV's accessing the site during the construction phase will be c. 2.5m wide, leaving sufficient room for users of the PRow to continue use. A banksman will be available at the proposed site access on Wood Lane, for the duration of the construction period. It is proposed that only when the Grid Transformer is being delivered will this road need to be closed temporarily, however this will be for a short period of time, some 10 minutes. See **CTMP, TA 5, Volume 3** for further information. This will be discussed and agreed with Rushcliffe Borough Council / Nottinghamshire County Council RoW Officers and the appropriate procedure for its closure will be adhered to at all times.
- 1.28. Banksman will also be available when construction vehicles must cross over any Bridleways within the site, always without fail, and users of the PRow network will be given priority, with construction vehicles held until it is safe to cross. A community liaison officer will also be available for users of the PRow network to call if required both during the construction period and the operational phase. In addition, due to Wood Lane being a Bridleway, there will be a banksman in place at the junction off Kegworth Road for the duration of the construction period. There will also be one in place at the site entrance so that construction vehicles can be managed to mitigate any impact on users of the bridleway.
- 1.29. All points where PRowS cross the Proposed Development will be appropriately signed, advising the public of dates and hours of working (with limitations proposed on working times and HGV scheduling) – more details can be found in the **CTMP: TA 5, Vol 3**.
- 1.30. Signs will also alert construction vehicle drivers not to cross without a banksman available. The exact location of signs providing this information will be agreed with Rushcliffe Borough Council / Nottinghamshire County Council ROW Officers.
- 1.31. Furthermore, drivers of construction vehicles accessing the site will be briefed via daily 'toolbox talks' with regards to the location of the PRowS and the potential for PRow users to be crossing these during construction hours.

- 1.32. The development will be enclosed by a 2.4m high deer fence, which will be screened with additional planting where appropriate (as discussed further in the following section).
- 1.33. No furniture, fence, barrier or other structure will be erected on or across a PRow without consultation and agreement with Rushcliffe Borough Council / Nottinghamshire County Council ROW Officers. CCTV will be inward facing and not directly cover any PRow.

CONCLUSION

- 1.34. This Management Plan sets out how the Proposed Development takes account of the PRow network in the area in order to minimise any potential impact.
- 1.35. It has considered available guidance and information on PRows and has been the product of site visits and consultation with the PRow Officers at Rushcliffe Borough and Nottinghamshire County Councils, the local community and local outdoor recreation groups.
- 1.36. The proposed management measures seek to ensure that PRows will remain effectively open to users throughout all stages of the Proposed Development, with safety measures in place to ensure continued safe use of the PRow. No PRow is proposed to be diverted and / or Stopped Up. It should also be noted that PRow widths are to remain in accordance with or wider than stated in the definitive map supplied by NCC.
- 1.37. The Applicant has proposed a number of additional enhancements across the site which aim to improvement the enjoyment of those using the PRow network.

The Applicant would maintain a regular dialogue with the PRow Officers at Rushcliffe Borough and Nottinghamshire County Councils throughout the construction period of the Proposed Development in order to ensure the objectives of the PRow Management Plan are achieved.