



# Meridian Solar Farm

EN010169

Volume 6

Environmental Statement

6.3 ES Appendix 5-1:  
Agriculture and Soils  
Legislation, Policy and  
Guidance

APFP Regulation 5(2)(a)

Infrastructure Planning (Applications:  
Prescribed Forms and Procedure)  
Regulations 2009

March 2026

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Purpose of this Appendix

- 1.1.1. This Environmental Statement (ES) appendix identifies and describes the legislation, policy and supporting guidance considered relevant to the assessment of the likely significant effects of Meridian Solar Farm (hereafter referred to as 'the Scheme') with regards to agriculture and soils. Policy is considered at both national and local levels.
- 1.1.2. This appendix does not assess the Scheme against legislation and policy, instead the purpose of considering legislation and policy in the EIA is twofold:
- To identify legislation and policy that could influence the sensitivity of receptors (and therefore the significance of effects) and any requirements for mitigation; and
  - To identify legislation and policy that could influence the methodology of the EIA and signposting where this is dealt with in the ES. For example, a policy may require the assessment of an impact or the use of a specific methodology.
- 1.1.3. Instead, policy compliance is assessed within the **Planning Statement** (Doc Ref. 7.1).
- 1.1.4. The following sections identify and describe the legislation, policy and supporting guidance considered specifically relevant to the agriculture and soils assessment, which have been taken into account in preparing the ES.

## 2. Legislation

- 2.1.1. Regulation 5 (Paragraph 2c) of the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017<sup>1</sup> requires that the EIA must identify, describe, and assess in an appropriate manner, considering each individual case, the likely significant direct and indirect effects of the Scheme on land and soil. The EIA has been undertaken in accordance with Regulation 5.

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<sup>1</sup> The Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017. Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2017/572> [Accessed 22 December 2025].

### 3. National Policy Statements

3.1.1. The EIA has been undertaken with reference to the following National Policy Statements (NPSs), which are relevant to the Scheme:

- Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (NPS EN-1)<sup>2</sup>;
- National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy (NPS EN-3)<sup>3</sup>; and
- National Policy Statement for Electricity Networks Infrastructure (NPS EN-5)<sup>4</sup>.

3.1.2. The NPSs set out the Government's energy policy for the delivery of major energy infrastructure, along with the need for new infrastructure and guidance for determining applications for Development Consent Orders (DCOs). The NPSs provide specific guidance and criteria that applicants should cover when assessing the effects of their Scheme, and how the Secretary of State should consider these impacts and any mitigation measures applied.

3.1.3. The relevant NPS requirements for Agriculture and Soils are provided in Table 3-1, along with an indication of where in the ES this information can be sourced.

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<sup>2</sup> DESNZ (2025). Overarching NPS for Energy (NPS EN-1). Available at: <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/695d1015f41883f4e50ed9ab/overarching-national-policy-statement-for-energy-en-1-web-accessible.pdf> [Accessed 09 January 2026]

<sup>3</sup> DESNZ (2025). NPS for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (NPS EN-3). Available at: <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/695d1368b5c46330350ed9a2/national-policy-statement-for-renewable-energy-infrastructure-en-3-web-accessible.pdf> [Accessed 09 09 January 2026]

<sup>4</sup> DESNZ (2025). NPS for Electricity Networks (NPS EN-5). Available at: <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/695d12e1b5c46330350ed9a1/national-policy-statement-for-electricity-networks-infrastructure-en-5-web-accessible.pdf> [Accessed 09 January 2026]

**Table 3-1: Relevant NPS Policy for Agriculture and Soils**

Relevant NPS Paragraph	Requirement of the NPS	Location of information provided to address this
<b>Overarching NPS for Energy EN-1</b>		
5.11.4	Development of land will affect soil resources, including physical loss of and damage to soil resources, through land contamination and structural damage. Indirect impacts may also arise from changes in the local water regime, organic matter content, soil biodiversity and soil process.	Section 5.7 of <b>ES Chapter 5: Agriculture and Soils</b> (Doc Ref. 6.1) describes the embedded mitigation established to avoid and minimise impacts on soils, including through measures set out within the <b>Outline Soil Management Plan (OSMP)</b> (Doc Ref. 7.14) and the <b>Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (OCEMP)</b> (Doc Ref. 7.10).
5.11.12	Applicants should seek to minimise impacts on the Best and Most Versatile (BMV) agricultural land (defined as land in grades 1, 2 and 3a of the Agricultural Land Classification) and preferably use land in areas of poorer quality (grades 3b, 4 and 5).	Section 5.6 of <b>ES Chapter 5: Agriculture and Soils</b> (Doc Ref. 6.1) and <b>ES Appendices 5-2 and 5-3</b> (Doc Ref. 6.3) provide a description of the agriculture and soils baseline including Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) assessment. Large parts of the Site and the surrounding area comprise Best and Most Versatile (BMV) agricultural land and, therefore, it has not been possible to avoid BMV land. Where practicable, areas of lower grades have been used. Further information is provided within <b>ES Chapter 3: Alternatives and Design Evolution</b> (Doc Ref. 6.1) and the <b>Planning Statement</b> (Doc Ref. 7.1).
5.11.13	Applicants should also identify any effects and seek to minimise impacts on soil health and	Impacts on soil health and quality have been considered within Section 5.8 of <b>ES Chapter 5: Agriculture and Soils</b> (Doc Ref. 6.1).

Relevant NPS Paragraph	Requirement of the NPS	Location of information provided to address this
	protect and improve soil quality taking into account any mitigation measures proposed.	Section 5.7 of <b>ES Chapter 5: Agriculture and Soils</b> (Doc Ref. 6.1) also describes the embedded mitigation established through the <b>OSMP</b> (Doc Ref. 7.14) for the protection of soil health and quality.
5.11.14	Applicants are encouraged to develop and implement a Soil Management Plan which could help minimise potential land contamination. The sustainable reuse of soils needs to be carefully considered in line with good practice guidance where large quantities of soils are surplus to requirements or are affected by contamination.	Section 5.7 of <b>ES Chapter 5: Agriculture and Soils</b> (Doc Ref. 6.1) describes the embedded mitigation established to avoid and minimise impacts on soils, including from contamination. These measures are set out in detail within the <b>OSMP</b> (Doc Ref. 7.14) and the <b>OCEMP</b> (Doc Ref. 7.10). The sustainable reuse of soils is also described in the <b>OSMP</b> (Doc Ref. 7.14).
5.11.23	Although in the case of most energy infrastructure there may be little that can be done to mitigate the direct effects of an energy project on the existing use of the proposed site (assuming that some of that use can still be retained post project construction) applicants should nevertheless seek to minimise these effects and the effects on existing or planned uses near the site by the application of good design principles, including the layout of the project and the protection of soils during construction.	Section 5.6 of <b>ES Chapter 5: Agriculture and Soils</b> (Doc Ref. 6.1) and <b>ES Appendices 5-2 and 5-3</b> (Doc Ref. 6.3) provide a description of the agriculture and soils baseline including ALC assessment. Large parts of the Site and the surrounding area comprise BMV agricultural land and, therefore, it has not been possible to avoid BMV land. Where practicable, areas of lower grades have been used. Further information is provided within <b>ES Chapter 3: Alternatives and Design Evolution</b> (Doc Ref.6.1) and the <b>Planning Statement</b> (Doc Ref. 7.1).

Relevant NPS Paragraph	Requirement of the NPS	Location of information provided to address this
5.11.34	The Secretary of State should ensure that applicants do not site their scheme on the best and most versatile agricultural land without justification. Where schemes are to be sited on best and most versatile agricultural land the Secretary of State should take into account the economic and other benefits of that land. Where development of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary, areas of poorer quality land should be preferred to those of a higher quality.	
<b>National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy EN-3</b>		
2.10.21	While land type should not be a predominating factor in determining the suitability of the site location applicants should, where possible, utilise previously developed land, brownfield land, contaminated land and industrial land. Where the proposed use of any agricultural land has been shown to be necessary, poorer quality land should be preferred to higher quality land avoiding the use of “Best and Most Versatile” agricultural land where possible.	As set out within <b>Appendix D: Site Selection Report</b> of the <b>Planning Statement</b> (Doc Ref. 7.1), the Applicant reviewed opportunities for the reuse of previously developed land, brownfield land, contaminated land and industrial land, and no sites of suitable scale in the vicinity of Point of Connection were identified.  Section 5.6 of <b>ES Chapter 5: Agriculture and Soils</b> (Doc Ref. 6.1) and <b>ES Appendices 5-2 and 5-3</b> (Doc Ref. 6.3) provide a description of the agriculture and soils baseline including ALC assessment. Large parts of the Site and the surrounding area comprise BMV agricultural land

Relevant NPS Paragraph	Requirement of the NPS	Location of information provided to address this
		and, therefore, it has not been possible to avoid BMV land. Where practicable, areas of lower grades have been used. Further information is provided within <b>ES Chapter 3: Alternatives and Design Evolution</b> (Doc Ref.6.1) and the <b>Planning Statement</b> (Doc Ref. 7.1).
2.10.22	Whilst the development of ground mounted solar arrays is not prohibited on Best and Most Versatile agricultural land, or sites designated for their natural beauty, or recognised for ecological or archaeological importance, the impacts of such are expected to be considered.	Section 5.8 of <b>ES Chapter 5: Agriculture and Soils</b> (Doc Ref. 6.1) provides an assessment of impacts on BMV agricultural land.
2.10.23	It is recognised that at this scale, it is likely that applicants' developments will use some agricultural land. Applicants should explain their choice of site, noting the preference for development to be on suitable brownfield, industrial and low and medium grade agricultural land.	As set out within <b>Appendix D: Site Selection Report</b> of the <b>Planning Statement</b> (Doc Ref. 7.1), the Applicant reviewed opportunities for the reuse of previously developed land, brownfield land, contaminated land and industrial land, and no sites of suitable scale in the vicinity of Point of Connection were identified.  Section 5.6 of <b>ES Chapter 5: Agriculture and Soils</b> (Doc Ref. 6.1) and <b>ES Appendices 5-2 and 5-3</b> (Doc Ref. 6.3) provide a description of the agriculture and soils baseline including ALC assessment. Large parts of the Site and the

Relevant NPS Paragraph	Requirement of the NPS	Location of information provided to address this
		<p>surrounding area comprise BMV agricultural land and, therefore, it has not been possible to avoid BMV land. Where practicable, areas of lower grades have been used. Further information is provided within <b>ES Chapter 3: Alternatives and Design Evolution</b> (Doc Ref.6.1) and the <b>Planning Statement</b> (Doc Ref. 7.1).</p>
2.10.24	<p>Where sited on agricultural land, consideration may be given as to whether the proposal allows for continued agricultural use and/or can be co-located with other functions (for example, onshore wind generation, storage, hydrogen electrolyzers) to maximise the efficiency of land use.</p>	<p>As described within Section 5.7 of <b>ES Chapter 5: Agriculture and Soils</b> (Doc Ref. 6.1) and the <b>Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (OLEMP)</b> (Doc Ref. 7.16), areas within the Order Limits, which will be used to provide environmental benefits for ground-nesting birds including skylark mitigation, will remain in arable use. Furthermore, grass cover within the PV areas can be managed via sheep grazing.</p>
2.10.25	<p>The ALC is the only approved system for grading agricultural quality in England and Wales and, if necessary, field surveys should be used to establish the ALC grades in accordance with the current, or any successor to it, grading criteria and identify the soil types to inform soil management at the construction, operation, and decommissioning phases in line with the Defra Construction Code. Applicants should refer to Natural</p>	<p>Section 5.6 of <b>ES Chapter 5: Agriculture and Soils</b> (Doc Ref. 6.1) describes the ALC baseline of the Site and is informed by <b>ES Appendices 5-2 and 5-3</b> (Doc Ref. 6.3) which contain the ALC survey data.</p>

Relevant NPS Paragraph	Requirement of the NPS	Location of information provided to address this
	<p>England guidance, or any successor to it, for more information about the assessment process for development proposals on agricultural land.</p>	
<p>2.10.26</p>	<p>Applicants are encouraged to develop and implement a Soil Resources and Management Plan which could help to use and manage soils sustainably and minimise adverse impacts on soil health and potential land contamination. This should be in line with the ambition set out in the Environmental Improvement Plan to bring at least 40% of England’s agricultural soils into sustainable management by 2028 and increase this up to 60% by 2030. This should include consideration of mitigation against impacts to peat soils where these are present.</p>	<p>Section 5.7 of <b>ES Chapter 5: Agriculture and Soils</b> (Doc Ref. 6.1) describes the embedded mitigation established to avoid and minimise impacts on soils, including from contamination. These measures are set out in detail within the <b>OSMP</b> (Doc Ref. 7.14) and the <b>OCEMP</b> (Doc Ref. 7.10).</p>
<p>2.10.119</p>	<p>The Defra Construction code of practice for the sustainable use of soils on construction sites provides guidance on ensuring that damage to soil during construction is mitigated and minimised. Mitigation measures focus on minimising damage to soil that remains in place, and minimising damage to soil being excavated and stockpiled. The measures aim to preserve soil health and soil</p>	<p>Section 5.7 of <b>ES Chapter 5: Agriculture and Soils</b> (Doc Ref. 6.1) describes the embedded mitigation established to avoid and minimise impacts on soils. These measures are set out in detail within the <b>OSMP</b> (Doc Ref. 7.14), which makes reference to</p>

Relevant NPS Paragraph	Requirement of the NPS	Location of information provided to address this
	structure to minimise soil carbon loss and maintain water infiltration and soil biodiversity. Mitigation measures for agricultural soils include use of green cover, multispecies cover crops - especially during the winter - minimising compaction and adding soil organic matter. Mitigation of impacts to peat soils should include water table management and minimising soil disturbance.	the DEFRA Code of Practice for the Sustainable Use of Soils on Construction Sites <sup>5</sup> .
2.10.137	The Secretary of State should ensure that the applicant has put forward appropriate mitigation measures to minimise impacts on soils or soil resources.	Section 5.7 of <b>ES Chapter 5: Agriculture and Soils</b> (Doc Ref. 6.1) describes the embedded mitigation established to avoid and minimise impacts on soils. These measures are set out in detail within the <b>OSMP</b> (Doc Ref. 7.14).
<b>NPS for Electricity Networks Infrastructure EN-5</b>		
2.9.26	The applicant's commitment, as set out in their ES, to mitigate the potential detrimental effects of undergrounding works on any relevant agricultural land and soils, particularly regarding Best and Most Versatile land. Such a	Section 5.7 of <b>ES Chapter 5: Agriculture and Soils</b> (Doc Ref. 6.1) describes the embedded mitigation established to avoid and minimise impacts on soils. These measures are set out in detail within the <b>OSMP</b> (Doc Ref. 7.14), which makes reference to

<sup>5</sup> Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (2008). Construction Code of Practice for the Sustainable Use of Soils on Construction Sites.

Relevant NPS Paragraph	Requirement of the NPS	Location of information provided to address this
	commitment must guarantee appropriate handling of soil, backfilling, and return of the land to the baseline ALC, thus ensuring no loss or degradation of agricultural land. Such a commitment should be based on soil and ALC surveys in line with the 1988 ALC criteria and due consideration of the Defra Construction Code of Practice for Sustainable Use of Soils on Construction Sites. .	the DEFRA Code of Practice for the Sustainable Use of Soils on Construction Sites <sup>6</sup> .

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<sup>6</sup> Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (2008). Construction Code of Practice for the Sustainable Use of Soils on Construction Sites.

## 4. National Planning Policy Framework<sup>7</sup>

- 4.1.1. National Planning Policy Framework<sup>7</sup> outlines the Government’s planning policies for England and provides guidance on their implementation. Paragraph 5 outlines that while the NPPF does not contain specific policies for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs), the NPPF is still relevant when considering the determination of DCOs. As a result, the EIA is taking the NPPF into account.
- 4.1.2. Relevant NPPF requirements relating to agriculture and soils, along with an indication of where the information is located within the ES to address these requirements, are provided in Table 4-1.

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<sup>7</sup> *National Planning Policy Framework (2025)*. Available at: <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/675abd214cbda57cacd3476e/NPPF-December-2024.pdf>. [Accessed 7/11/2025]

**Table 4-1: Relevant NPPF Requirements for Agriculture and Soil**

Relevant NPPF Paragraph	Requirement of the NPPF	Location of information provided to address this
180	<p>Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protecting and enhancing of soils.</li> <li>• Recognising the economic and other benefits of the BMV agricultural land.</li> </ul>	<p>Section 5.8 of <b>ES Chapter 5: Agriculture and Soils</b> (Doc Ref. 6.1) provides an assessment of impacts on BMV land. Section 5.7 of <b>ES Chapter 5: Agriculture and Soils</b> (Doc Ref. 6.1) describes the embedded mitigation established to avoid and minimise impacts on soils. These measures are set out in detail within the <b>OSMP</b> (Doc Ref. 7.14).</p>
181 (Footnote 62)	<p>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.</p>	<p>Section 5.6 of <b>ES Chapter 5: Agriculture and Soils</b> (Doc Ref. 6.1) and <b>ES Appendices 5-2 and 5-3</b> (Doc Ref. 6.3) provide a description of the agriculture and soils baseline including ALC assessment. Large parts of the Site and the surrounding area comprise BMV agricultural land and, therefore, it has not been possible to avoid BMV land. Where practicable, areas of lower grades have been used. Further information is provided within <b>ES Chapter 3: Alternatives and Design Evolution</b> (Doc Ref.6.1) and the <b>Planning Statement</b> (Doc Ref. 7.1).</p>

## 5. Local Policy and Guidance

5.1.1. Local policy relevant to the agriculture and soil assessment comprises the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan (SELLP) 2011-2036<sup>8</sup>. The relevant considerations are summarised within Table 5-1.

**Table 5-1: Relevant Local Policy and Guidance with respect to Agriculture and Soil**

Relevant Document	Relevant Policies	Location of information provided to address this
South East Lincolnshire Local Plan (SELLP) 2011-2036	<p>Policy 3(13): Design of new development: Development proposals will demonstrate how the following issues, where they are relevant to the proposal, will be secured: the use of locally sourced building materials, minimising the use of water and minimising land take, to protect best and most versatile soils; and</p> <p>Policy 31(B): Climate Change and Renewable and Low Carbon Energy: that, with the exception of wind energy, renewable energy facilities and associated infrastructure will be permitted provided individually or cumulatively there would be no significant harm to agricultural land take.</p>	Section 5.8 of <b>ES Chapter 5: Agriculture and Soils</b> (Doc Ref. 6.1) provides an assessment of impacts on agriculture and soils.

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<sup>8</sup> Lincolnshire County Council (2019) *South East Lincolnshire Local Plan 2011-2036*. Available at: <https://southeastlincslocalplan.org/media/21941/South-East-Lincolnshire-Local-Plan-2011-2036/pdf/Local-Plan-text-March-2019.pdf?m=1720710748483>. [Accessed 10 October 2025]

## 6. Other Guidance

### 6.1. ISEP (2022) Guidance: A New Perspective on Land and Soil in Environmental Impact Assessment

6.1.1. Institute of Sustainability and Environmental Professionals (ISEP)'s (formerly Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA)) 'A New Perspective on Land and Soil in Environmental Impact Assessment' (2022)<sup>9</sup> provides guidance on the methodology to be used to assess impacts on soils and land as part of an EIA.

6.1.2. The guidance seeks to embed into EIA practice the concepts of soil functions, soil biodiversity, soil health, ecosystem services and natural capital, and to consider the influence of soil carbon on climate change. The guidance introduces a soil functions-based EIA evaluation methodology and improved mitigation measures for soil conservation, to avoid and minimise detrimental impacts on soil resources and to ensure that all soils are sustainably managed.

### 6.2. Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2025) Planning Practice Guidance for the Natural Environment

6.2.1. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government 'Planning Practice Guidance for the Natural Environment' (2025)<sup>10</sup> outlines how planning can take account of the quality of agricultural land to enable informed choices on the future use of soil resources and agricultural land within the planning system.

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<sup>9</sup> ISEP (2022) *A New Perspective on Land and Soils in Environmental Impact Assessment*. Available at: [https://www.iema.net/media/3xejdu0u/2022-iema\\_land\\_and\\_soils\\_guidance.pdf](https://www.iema.net/media/3xejdu0u/2022-iema_land_and_soils_guidance.pdf). [Accessed 7/11/2025]

<sup>10</sup> Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2025) *Planning Practice Guidance for the Natural Environment*. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/natural-environment> [Accessed 7/11/2025]

### **6.3. Natural England (2012) Technical Information Note 049 (TIN049): Agricultural Land Classification: Protecting the BMV Agricultural Land**

6.3.1. Natural England's 'Technical Information Note 049 (TIN049): Agricultural Land Classification: Protecting the BMV Agricultural Land' (2012)<sup>11</sup> provides guidance on the Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) system.

### **6.4. Natural England (2021) Guide to Assessing Development Proposals on Agricultural Land**

6.4.1. Natural England's 'Guide to Assessing Development Proposals on Agricultural Land (2021)<sup>12</sup> outlines the policies and resources to be considered by the relevant decision maker when determining consent for development proposals that affect agricultural land and soils. The policies and resources aim to protect the best and most versatile (BMV) agricultural land "from significant, inappropriate or unsustainable development proposals" and "all soils by managing them in a sustainable way".

### **6.5. Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (2009) Construction Code of Practice for the Sustainable Use of Soil on Construction Sites**

6.5.1. The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs 'Construction Code of Practice for the Sustainable Use of Soil on Construction Sites' (2009)<sup>13</sup> provides guidance on pre-construction planning and soil movement techniques and those measures to be adopted during construction activities (including landscaping and habitat creation) to assist in protecting soil resources.

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<sup>11</sup> Natural England (2012) *Agricultural Land Classification: protecting the best and most versatile agricultural land (TIN049)*. Available at: <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/35012> [Accessed 7/11/2025]

<sup>12</sup> Natural England (2021) *Guide to Assessing Development Proposals on Agricultural Land*. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/agricultural-land-assess-proposals-for-development/guide-to-assessing-development-proposals-on-agricultural-land>. [Accessed 7/11/2025]

<sup>13</sup> Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (2009) *Construction Code of Practice for the Sustainable Use of Soils on Construction Sites*. Available at: <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5b2264ff40f0b634cfb50650/pb13298-code-of-practice-090910.pdf>. [Accessed 7/11/2025]

## **6.6. Institute of Quarrying (2021) Good Practice for Handling Soils in Mineral Workings**

6.6.1. The Institute of Quarrying 'Good Practice for Handling Soils in Mineral Workings' (2021)<sup>14</sup> guidance outlines a methodology for assessing the suitability of soils for being handled.

## **6.7. The British Society of Soil Science (2022) Working with Soil Guidance Note on Benefitting from Soil Management in Development and Construction**

6.7.1. The British Society of Soil Science 'Working with Soil Guidance Note on Benefitting from Soil Management in Development and Construction' (2022)<sup>15</sup> provides guidance on the use of soil management plans in ensuring soils are protected during construction and planning.

## **6.8. Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (1988) Agricultural Land Classification of England and Wales: Revised Guidelines and Criteria for Grading the Quality of Agricultural Land**

6.8.1. The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF) (now the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) 'Agricultural Land Classification of England and Wales: revised guidelines and criteria for grading the quality of agricultural land' (1988)<sup>16</sup>, outlines the technical methodology for ALC surveys.

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<sup>14</sup> Institute of Quarrying (2021) Good Practice for Handling Soils in Mineral Workings. Available at: [www.quarrying.org/soils-guidance](http://www.quarrying.org/soils-guidance). [Accessed 7/11/2025]

<sup>15</sup> The British Society of Soil Science (2022) *Working with Soil Guidance Note on Benefitting from Soil Management in Development and Construction*. Available at: <https://soils.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/WWS3-Benefitting-from-Soil-Management-in-Development-and-Construction-Jan-2022.pdf>. [Accessed 7/11/2025]

<sup>16</sup> Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (1988) *Agricultural Land Classification of England and Wales: revised guidelines and criteria for grading the quality of agricultural land*. Available at: <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6257050620264448>. [Accessed 7/11/2025]

## **6.9. ISEP (2025) Solar PV on Agricultural Land: Essential Components of Environmental Assessments and Reports**

- 6.9.1. ISEP (2025) Solar PV on Agricultural Land: Essential Components of Environmental Assessments and Reports<sup>17</sup> sets out expectations for soil and agricultural land classification surveys. It emphasises the importance of protecting best and most versatile agricultural land and maintaining the reversibility of solar developments.

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<sup>17</sup> ISEP (2025) Solar PV on Agricultural Land: Essential Components of Environmental Assessments and Reports. Available at: <https://www.isepglobal.org/resources/news/2026/january/the-best-and-most-versatile-farmland-should-be-protected-amid-rapid-expansion-of-uk-solar-power-says-new-guidance/> [Accessed 2/2/2026]

