

Light Valley Solar

Environmental Statement Volume 3

Appendix 3.1: Site Selection Assessment Report

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Light Valley
Solar

Infrastructure Planning

Planning Act 2008

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

Light Valley Solar

DCO Submission

Appendix 3.1 Site Selection Assessment report

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Executive Summary

- 1.1.1 This Site Selection Assessment Report (SSAR) has been prepared on behalf of Light Valley Solar Limited (the 'Applicant') in relation to an application (the 'Application') for a Development Consent Order (DCO) for the construction, operation and maintenance, and decommissioning of a solar photovoltaic (PV) electricity generating station and associated development comprising Battery Energy Storage System (BESS), substations, grid connection infrastructure and associated infrastructure (herein referred to as the 'Proposed Development').
- 1.1.2 The SSAR sets out the approach taken by the Applicant to identify the location for the Proposed Development, in accordance with the Applicant's Project Objectives and other site selection criteria including proximity to the point of connection, consideration of planning, environmental and spatial constraints, discussions with landowners and application of operational criteria.
- 1.1.3 As a comparative exercise at Stage 5, this SSAR also assesses other potential development areas within a 25 km radius of the Monk Fryston Substation, to evaluate the location of the Proposed Development against other potential development areas in order to establish whether the Proposed Development is in a suitable location for a 500MW solar development.
- 1.1.4 There is no prescribed methodology in national planning policy or guidance for site selection in relation to solar development. However, the Applicant is obliged to include information on the reasonable alternatives that have been studied within the Environmental Statement, in accordance with the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017. In assessing alternative sites, it is appropriate to take a proportionate approach, considering only those which meet the Project Objectives and where the alternative can deliver the same infrastructure capacity in the same timescale. Further, planning policy is clear that permission should not be refused for development on one site simply because fewer adverse effects would result from developing similar infrastructure on another suitable site. For further information, see Section 2.1 of this SSAR.
- 1.1.5 This SSAR concludes that there are no more suitable and available locations within the search area than the location for the Proposed Development, based on the Project Objectives and the criteria applied. The location of the Proposed Development is therefore considered to be suitable for the scale of solar development proposed, and the basis on which the Applicant has selected the Solar Development Sites accords with relevant planning policy relating to site selection and alternatives set out in the Overarching National Policy Statement of Energy (NPS EN-1) and the National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (NPS EN-3).
- 1.1.6 The SSAR also explains how the Sequential Test has been applied by the Applicant in the selection of the Solar Development Sites for the Proposed Development. This is in line with Overarching National Policy Statement for

Energy EN-1 (NPS EN-1) which requires flood risk to be taken into account when selecting a site through the application of the Sequential Test, which aims to steer development towards areas at the lowest risk of flooding.

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 This Site Selection Assessment Report (SSAR) has been prepared by Light Valley Solar Limited (the Applicant) for Light Valley Solar (the Proposed Development). The SSAR sets out the approach taken by the Applicant to identify the location for the Proposed Development, in line with the Project Objectives and other evaluation criteria, and explains the reasonable alternatives considered, in order to establish that the Proposed Development is in a suitable location.
- 1.1.2 When submitted, the Development Consent Order (DCO) will seek consent for the construction, operation and maintenance, and decommissioning of a solar photovoltaic (PV) electricity generating facility and energy storage facility. The Proposed Development comprises a solar photovoltaic (PV) electricity generating station of over 100 megawatts (MW) and ‘associated development’ comprising a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS), grid connection infrastructure and other infrastructure integral to the construction, operation and maintenance, and decommissioning phases.
- 1.1.3 The Proposed Development includes (amongst other elements) the Solar Development Sites, which are split across a total of seven separate land parcels as presented in Figure 2.1: Illustrative Site Layout Plans (ES Volume 2) [EN0110012/APP/LVS/06.02.02.01]. Full details of the Proposed Development are set out in ES Chapter 2: Proposed Development (ES Volume 1) [EN0110012/APP/LVS/06.01.02].
- 1.1.4 The amount of land within the Order Limits is 1,270 hectares (ha) which includes all land required to deliver the Proposed Development. The total area within the Solar Development Sites is 900 ha.
- 1.1.5 The Proposed Development is located entirely within the administrative area of North Yorkshire Council, to the north and west of Selby. The Location Plan [EN0110012/APP/LVS/02.01] shows the Order Limits in which the Proposed Development will be located.

1.2 Purpose and structure of this report

- 1.2.1 The purpose of this SSAR is to set out the approach taken by the Applicant to identify the location for the Proposed Development. As a validation exercise, it also assesses a number of other potential development areas against standardised criteria to explore alternatives and establish that the Proposed Development is in a suitable location.
- 1.2.2 This SSAR also explains how the Sequential Test has been applied as part of the site selection process for the Solar Development Sites, demonstrating that no areas at a lower risk of flooding are appropriate or reasonably available for the location of the Proposed Development. Whilst this SSAR focuses on how the

Sequential Test has been applied in site selection, information on how the sequential approach to design has been applied in the design of the Proposed Development at site level, and how the Exception Test has been applied, are set out in the Flood Risk Assessment (ES Volume 3) [EN0110012/APP/LVS/06.03.15.01a].

1.2.3 The remainder of this report sets out the following:

- 1) Section 2 sets out planning policy on alternatives and describes the site selection methodology;
- 2) Section 3 sets out the site selection results;
- 3) Section 4 sets out the policy background for the Sequential Test and demonstrates how the Sequential Test has been met; and
- 4) Section 5 provides conclusions on the site selection process and the Sequential Test.

1.2.4 Supporting annexes include:

- 1) Annex A: Site Selection Assessment Figures
- 2) Annex B: Assessment Indicators and Evaluation Criteria
- 3) Annex C: Assessment Indicator Policy and Guidance Justification
- 4) Annex D: Potential Development Area Assessment Results

1.2.5 A list of Figures is set out in Table 1-1 below:

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| Figure | Title |
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| 1 | Stage 1: Defining the Search Area |
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| 3 | Stage 2 Residual Unconstrained Land for Consideration |
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| 20 | PDA 9 - Constraints |
| 21 | All PDAs Against Environmental Constraints |
| 22 | Stage 5 Check and Balance Exercise on Remaining Land |

1.3 Approach to constraints mapping

- 1.3.1 The assessment of Potential Development Areas (PDAs) in this SSAR is considered to be high level, using data from readily available sources. Further environmental studies and assessments have been carried out in relation to PDA 8, being the site of the Proposed Development. However, these have been discounted for the purposes of this SSAR on the basis that there were not carried out at the time the site was selected. This approach also allows more consistent comparisons between PDA 8 and other identified PDAs, where such detailed survey work has not been carried out and it would not be proportionate to do so. This approach is compliant with NPS EN-1 which states in paragraph 4.3.22, “the consideration of alternatives in order to comply with policy requirements should be carried out in a proportionate manner.”

2 Site Selection Methodology

2.1 Planning policy on site selection

- 2.1.1 There is no prescribed methodology in national planning policy or guidance for site selection in relation to solar development. Paragraph 4.3.9 of the Overarching National Policy Statement (NPS) for Energy (NPS EN-1) (Ref 1) states that “*this NPS does not contain any general requirement to consider alternatives or to establish whether the proposed project represents the best option from a policy perspective*” and paragraph 2.3.5 of the National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (NPS EN-3) (Ref 2) is clear that in general, the Government does not seek to direct applicants for renewable energy infrastructure to specific sites. Instead, NPS EN-3 paragraph 2.3.9 recognises that:

“most renewable energy resources can only be developed where the resource exists and where economically feasible, and because there are no limits on the need established in Part 3 of EN-1, the Secretary of State should not use a consecutive approach in the consideration of renewable energy projects (for example, by giving priority to the re-use of previously developed land for renewable technology developments)”.

- 2.1.2 However, paragraph 4.3.17 of NPS EN-1 notes that there may be a policy or legal requirement to consider alternatives. In particular, applicants are obliged to include information on the reasonable alternatives that have been studied within the Environmental Statement, in accordance with the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017. This should include reasons for the applicant’s choice, taking into account the environmental, social and economic effects, and where relevant, technical and commercial feasibility (paragraph 4.3.15 of NPS EN-1). Further details of the alternatives assessed for the Proposed Development are set out in ES Chapter 3: Alternatives and Design Iteration (ES Volume 1) [EN0110012/APP/LVS/06.01.03].

- 2.1.3 NPS EN-1 paragraphs 4.3.22 to 4.3.29 explain the weight to be given to alternatives in decision making by the Secretary of State, which includes, but is not limited to, the following:
- 1) the consideration of alternatives to comply with policy requirements should be proportionate;
 - 2) only alternatives which meet the objectives of the proposed development need to be considered;
 - 3) it should be considered whether there is a realistic prospect of the alternative delivering the same infrastructure capacity in the same timescale;
 - 4) permission should not be refused for development on one site simply because fewer adverse impacts would result from developing similar infrastructure on another suitable site, and regard should be made as appropriate to the possibility that all suitable sites for energy infrastructure of the type proposed may be needed for future proposals;
 - 5) alternatives that are not among the main alternatives, should only be considered if important and relevant to the decision;
 - 6) alternatives must be in accordance with relevant NPS policy;
 - 7) alternative proposals which mean the necessary development could not proceed, for example, due to commercial viability or physical suitability, can be excluded on the grounds that they are not important and relevant to the decision;
 - 8) alternative proposals which are vague or immature can be excluded on the grounds that they are not important and relevant to the decision; and
 - 9) it is intended that potential alternatives to a proposed development should, wherever possible, be identified before an application is made.

2.1.4 Policy relating to flood risk is also relevant to site selection, with the Sequential Test being applied as part of the site selection process. NPS EN-1 refers to the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) for flood risk and coastal change (Ref 16) to provide guidance on how the Sequential and Exception Tests should be applied. In particular, paragraph 027a (Reference ID: 7-027a-20220825) of the PPG states that:

“The sequential test should be applied proportionately, focusing on realistic alternatives in areas of lower flood risk that could meet the same development need”

2.1.5 Paragraph 027a continues that:

“It may also, in some cases, be relevant to consider whether large scale development could be split across a number of alternative sites at lower risk of flooding, but only where those alternative sites would be capable of accommodating the development in a way which would still serve its intended market(s) as effectively.”

- 2.1.6 When considering alternatives, it is also important to note that paragraph 3.3.62 of NPS EN-1 recognises that there is a critical national priority (CNP) for the provision of nationally significant low carbon infrastructure to meet urgent provision for energy security and legally binding net zero targets. Section 4.2 of NPS EN-1 defines solar as a low carbon energy generating technology and affords all solar NSIPs critical national priority infrastructure status. In accordance with the National Policy Statement for Electricity Networks Infrastructure (EN-5) (Ref 3), the electricity transmission infrastructure associated with the Proposed Development also benefits from CNP infrastructure status.
- 2.1.7 Notably, NPS EN-1 paragraph 4.2.34 states that the fact that there may be other potential plans or projects deliverable in different locations to meet the need for CNP infrastructure is unlikely to be treated as an alternative solution (in an HRA context).
- 2.1.8 Paragraphs 2.10.10 to 2.10.40 of NPS EN-3 sets out the factors influencing site selection for solar development including irradiance, site topography, network connection, proximity to dwellings and agricultural land classification.
- 2.1.9 In line with the above policy, the site selection process and assessment has been carried out proportionately, selecting sites which have the potential to meet the development need and serve the intended market. This has been done by focusing on sites which have the potential to deliver a project of the same scale as the Proposed Development, and through application of the Project Objectives when assessing potential sites, to ensure they can meet the intended market effectively.

2.2 Application of Project Objectives

- 2.2.1 As noted above, NPS EN-1 paragraph 4.3.22 provides that only alternatives that can meet the objectives of the proposed development need to be considered by the Secretary of State in its decision making.
- 2.2.2 The Project Objectives for the Proposed Development are as follows:
- 1) Objective 1: A solar farm and battery scheme that will support the decarbonisation and security of the UK's energy supply by maximising its clean energy generation potential.
 - 2) Objective 2: A solar farm and battery scheme which will be deliverable in a timely manner in line with the grid connection date and which supports the objectives of the Clean Power 2030 Action Plan.
 - 3) Objective 3: A solar farm and battery scheme which supports through flexibility future technological advancement to deliver an optimal and efficient use of grid connection capacity.
 - 4) Objective 4: A solar farm and battery scheme which is able to deliver on its environmental mitigation requirements and deliver community benefits.
 - 5) Objective 5: A solar farm and battery scheme which supports the on-going agricultural economy in North Yorkshire.

2.2.3 These Project Objectives have been utilised throughout the site selection process in determining the suitability of alternative sites. Furthermore, as objectives for the Proposed Development, they underpin it (as noted, for example, in the Design Approach Document [EN110012/APP/LVS/05.05], where the Design Vision and Design Principles are explained to flow from these Project Objectives), and thus constitute the 'development need' for the purposes of the PPG on Flood Risk (paragraph 027a).

2.3 Stage 1: Identification of an Area of Search

2.3.1 The first stage of the Applicant's site selection process required the identification of an area of search, based on an available point of connection (POC), and the general irradiance levels and topography of the area, being a key technical factor to the success of a solar project, as discussed in NPS EN-3.

2.3.2 There is a consensus between Government and industry that the single biggest obstacle to the deployment of renewable energy is the capacity of the electricity grid and long delays for grid connections. Like most solar energy development, site selection for the Proposed Development therefore began with the Applicant exploring National Grid's mapping system to identify an available POC into the national electricity transmission system (NETS) or the distribution system with available capacity.

2.3.3 Following exploration of National Grid's mapping system, the Applicant understood that North Yorkshire had suitable levels of irradiance to gain a viable yield from current solar panel technology. Furthermore, North Yorkshire has a significant history of power generation with existing infrastructure and capacity making it a suitable location for the Proposed Development. In addition, North Yorkshire Council aims to achieve net carbon neutrality by 2030 with the Council's Climate Change Strategy seeking to install an additional 2,500 MW of solar, onshore wind and hydropower by 2038. As noted in paragraph 2.10.11 of NPS EN-3, irradiance is a key consideration in identifying a potential site as the amount of electricity generated on site is directly affected by irradiance levels. Irradiance levels are in turn affected by surrounding topography, with an uncovered or exposed site of good elevation and favourable south facing aspect more likely to increase year-round irradiance levels.

2.3.4 This revealed that the area surrounding Monk Fryston Substation had sections of open and relatively flat land (particularly to the east), which in principle would have suitable topography and levels of irradiance to accommodate a solar scheme and storage.

2.3.5 Having undertaken this exercise, through discussions with National Grid, a POC was identified at the Monk Fryston Substation which had available capacity for a utility scale energy project, to connect by 2030. NGET confirmed that this capacity was for 500MW for solar, with a 500MW import and export for BESS. The ability to service this substation connection capacity therefore became the 'intended market' that the Proposed Development needs to serve, for the purposes of the PPG on Flood Risk (paragraph 027a).

- 2.3.6 Having established the POC and the generating capacity to be developed, the Applicant began to consider suitable sites. In doing so, the Applicant was mindful of NPS EN-3 paragraph 2.10.9, which provides that:
- “Along with associated infrastructure, a solar farm currently requires between 1.6 and 2.25 hectares for each MW of output., However, this will vary significantly depending on the site, with some being larger and some being smaller.”*
- 2.3.7 Therefore, for a grid connection of 500 MW, a site size of between 800 and 1,125 ha (excluding cable route) is needed. At this stage in the process, the Applicant generally seeks to find a site, or combination of sites, which is around 10% larger than is needed to provide flexibility for design, sufficient land for environmental mitigation measures (in light of Project Objective 4) and other constraints that may become known through the design development process. In determining an initial site size, the Applicant also allows additional space for overplanting in line with NPS EN-3 paragraph 2.10.47. Overplanting (where the installed generating capacity of the project is larger than the grid connection) allows the Applicant to take account of degradation in panel array efficiency and availability (i.e. where panels fail) over time and therefore enables the grid connection to be maximised across the lifetime of the project. Using this approach, the Applicant focussed its initial search on sites around 1,100 ha. Finding this amount of land aligns with the Project Objectives, which provide that the Proposed Development should be able to maximise its energy generation potential (Objective 1), seek optimal use of grid connection capacity (Objective 3) and deliver on ecological mitigation requirements (Objective 4).
- 2.3.8 It was recognised that it may not be possible to identify a single site of this size. Therefore, the Applicant considered both contiguous land parcels and land parcels near one another in its initial search.
- 2.3.9 A 25 km radius was considered by the Applicant to be a viable cable connection distance for a solar project of this scale, albeit as the distance from the POC increases, transmission losses increase and larger contiguous solar development areas are generally required to maintain viability as the higher transmission costs must be balanced by a larger more efficient solar array. The POC and 25 km search area are shown on **Figure 1, Annex A**.

2.4 Stage 2: Exclusion of Planning, Environmental and Spatial Constraints and Consideration of Previously Developed Land

- 2.4.1 Stage 2 of the site selection process involved a high-level assessment of the area of search, using publicly available data and application of local and national planning policy, to identify any planning, environmental and spatial constraints which would affect the suitability of sites within the area of search to accommodate a solar project equivalent to the Proposed Development. The constraints considered at Stage 2 are set out in the sections below and mapped on **Figure 2, Annex A**.

Agricultural Land Classification

- 2.4.2 Paragraph 2.10.23 of NPS EN-3 recognises that *“at this scale, it is likely that applicant’s 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.”*
- 2.4.3 Paragraph 5.11.12 of NPS EN-1 provides that *“applicants should seek to minimise impacts on the best and most versatile 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).”*
- 2.4.4 Best and most versatile (BMV) agricultural land is defined as land in grades 1, 2 and 3a of the Agricultural Land Classification. Land that is not classified as best and most versatile constitutes medium and low-grade agricultural land (grades 3b, 4 and 5).
- 2.4.5 Solar farms are temporary structures (albeit long term) and the effects on agricultural land are reversible. Unlike most built development and other renewable energy proposals (such as energy from waste plants) they do not constitute significant permanent development resulting in the loss of agricultural land. However, in accordance with planning policy, the site selection process initially sought to exclude land that publicly available data identified as being within an agricultural land classification category that is, or includes, BMV land.
- 2.4.6 The Applicant considered agricultural land classification in its site selection process by reviewing Natural England’s 1970s Provisional Agricultural Land Classification. That dataset does not distinguish between grade 3a (BMV) and grade 3b (non-BMV) land. Therefore, for the purposes of stage 2 of the site selection process, the Applicant excluded all Grade 1, 2 and 3 land (including both 3a and 3b land), so that its initial search was focussed on suitable and available non-BMV land. The Applicant has not relied on the Agricultural Land Classification Post 1988 Survey data (which differentiates between Grade 3a and 3b land) because its coverage within the 25 km search area is limited, with pockets of data available around York, Garforth, Wetherby, Selby, Sherburn in Elmet and Goole.
- 2.4.7 **Figure 2, Annex A**, shows that a large proportion of land within the search area is categorised as Grade 2 or 3. A small swathe of Grade 1 land is located to the east of the POC near Howden whilst swathes of unclassified land (i.e. not Grade 1, 2 or 3) are to the west and southwest.

Nationally Designated Landscapes

- 2.4.8 As set out in paragraphs 5.10.7 to 5.10.8 of NPS EN-1, National Landscapes and National Parks have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and natural beauty. No National Landscapes or National Parks were present within the search area.

Designated International and National Ecological and Geological Sites

- 2.4.9 Internationally and nationally designated biodiversity sites are afforded high protection in national and local planning policy, NPS EN-1 and NPS EN-3. The following designations were identified and any land covered by these designations was excluded: National Nature Reserves (NNR), Sites of Special Scientific Importance (SSSI), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Areas (SPA), and Ramsar sites. This notably includes the Skipwith Common SAC, SSSI, NNR and Lower Derwent Valley SPA, SAC, SSSI, NNR in the northeast of the search area, together with a number of SSSIs within the search area.
- 2.4.10 In addition, areas of Ancient Woodland were excluded.

Designated National and Local Archaeological Designations and Built Heritage Assets

- 2.4.11 Paragraph 5.9.28 of NPS EN-1 places great weight on the conservation of designated heritage assets, and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be.
- 2.4.12 In the initial high-level review of the search area, the Applicant identified and avoided designated heritage assets, namely scheduled monuments, world heritage sites, registered battlefields, dense concentrations of listed buildings, registered parks and gardens and conservation areas. A buffer of 150 m was applied to listed buildings.

Proximity to Sensitive Human Receptors

- 2.4.13 Paragraph 2.10.19 on NPS EN-3 recognises that “*Utility-scale solar farms are large sites that may have a significant zone of visual influence*”. Consideration was given to minimising the proximity of nearby sensitive human receptors which include residential dwellings and urban areas. Given the potential for visual amenity, and glint and glare impacts on densely populated areas, the Applicant excluded urban areas and settlements other than when considering the potential for use of previously developed land.

Green Belt

- 2.4.14 Paragraph 5.11.20 of NPS EN-1 states that there is a general presumption against inappropriate development within Green Belts, and that “*such development should not be approved except in very special circumstances*”. Therefore for the purposes of Stage 2, the Applicant initially sought to avoid the South and West Yorkshire Green Belt surrounding the POC, as well as the York Green Belt to the northeast of the POC.

Flood Zones 2 and 3

- 2.4.15 As set out in section 5.8 of NPS EN-1, the aims of planning policy on development and flood risk are to ensure that flood risk from all sources of flooding is taken into account at all stages in the planning process to avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding, and to steer new development to areas with the lowest risk of flooding.
- 2.4.16 It is noted that NPS EN-1 also sets out that new energy infrastructure can be, exceptionally, necessary in flood risk areas, for example where there are no reasonably available sites in areas at lower risk. This would be subject to satisfying the Sequential Test and the Exception Test.
- 2.4.17 Accordingly, and applying the Sequential Test, the Applicant initially sought to avoid land with Flood Zones 2 and 3, with land at a lower risk of flooding preferred in the initial search for sites.
- 2.4.18 **Figure 3, Annex A** shows the remaining land for consideration following removal of the above constrained land.

2.5 Stage 3: Applying Operational Criteria, Consideration of Previously Developed Land and Identifying Potential Development Areas

- 2.5.1 Having removed land constrained by the above factors, at Stage 3 of the site selection process, key operational criteria for large scale solar development were applied to the unconstrained land within the search area, namely topography and site size and shape (referred to as 'site assembly' in this report), to identify areas of unconstrained land that would be operationally suitable for a solar project equivalent to the Proposed Development (and thereby meeting Project Objectives 1-3). Thereafter, four Potential Development Areas (PDAs) were identified on the potentially suitable land, to consider whether there are any areas of the identified unconstrained land that could offer a suitable site for the Proposed Development.
- 2.5.2 Also at this stage, and in light of EN-3 paragraph 2.10.21 stating that "*while land type should not be a predominating factor in determining the suitability of the site location applicants should, where possible, utilise suitable previously developed land, brownfield land, contaminated land and industrial land*", previously developed land that could be utilised for the Proposed Development as part of any PDA was considered.
- 2.5.3 The following sections set out the criteria applied at Stage 3.

Previously developed land, brownfield land, contaminated land industrial land and rooftops

- 2.5.4 In line with NPS EN-3 paragraph 2.10.21, opportunities to locate solar PV panels on previously developed land (PDL)/brownfield land, contaminated land,

industrial land were explored including within the built-up areas excluded at Stage 2.

PDL/Brownfield Sites

- 2.5.5 In 2017, the Town and Country Planning (Brownfield Land Register) Regulations 2017 required each Local Planning Authority to keep a register of PDL suitable for residential development. The latest data for the area of search is located on the brownfield registers prepared by North Yorkshire Council, Leeds City Council, City of York Council, East Riding of Yorkshire Council, City of Doncaster Council, Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council, Wakefield Council and the Metropolitan Borough of Kirklees Council.
- 2.5.6 Within the PDL search, sites under 40 ha were discounted as they are smaller than the minimum site size applied by the Applicant in its search for sites (the reasons for this threshold are discussed below under Site Assembly).
- 2.5.7 This left one PDL site within the 25 km search area for consideration, being Selby-9 in the administrative boundaries of North Yorkshire Council, which comprises 42.71 ha of land at Olympia Park, Barlby Road, Barlby, as shown on **Figure 4, Annex A**. A small proportion of the site is subject to a live planning application for site preparation works and the construction of an access road to facilitate the wider Olympia Park development site (ref: 2019/1027/EIA). The application was approved at Planning Committee in April 2021 subject to the completion of a s106 agreement. North Yorkshire Council's planning register indicates that the application is still awaiting a formal decision. Further, the site is allocated for mixed-use development under Policy SP7 – Olympia Park Strategic Development Site of the Selby Local Plan (2013) (Ref 4). Policy SP7 states that it is intended that the site will deliver new employment opportunities and approximately 40% of the housing target for Selby. This includes approximately 1,000 new dwellings and 23 ha of employment land up to 2027, including B1 offices, B1 and B2 industrial units, B8 storage and distribution premises, local convenience retail facilities and a public house. A proportion of the site (approximately 10 ha) will be reserved for longer term use. Although the policy supports micro generation infrastructure, given the development requirements on the site, the remaining land would not be able to accommodate a large scale solar development. Whilst the site could be joined with other land, the remaining available land is less than the 40 ha minimum threshold applied by the Applicant, and its relative isolation from other PDAs means that connection to other sites as part of a larger scheme would be unviable, due to the complexity of connections to other sites and the POC. It was therefore discounted.
- 2.5.8 In conclusion, the assessment of PDL within the search area identified no land of a suitable size (approximately 1,100 ha) to facilitate a 500MW solar project, either individually or in combination with other sites.

Contaminated Land

- 2.5.9 In accordance with Part IIA of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and the Contaminated Land (England) Regulations 2000, all local authorities are required to maintain a public register of land determined as contaminated within their borough.
- 2.5.10 The relevant local authority contaminated land registers were reviewed to identify opportunities to use contaminated land. North Yorkshire Council, City of York Council and Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council had no sites which matched the legal definition of contaminated land under Part 2A of the Environmental Protection Act 1990. Contaminated land registers for Leeds City Council, East Riding of Yorkshire Council, City of Doncaster Council, Wakefield Council and the Metropolitan Borough of Kirklees Council focussed on areas of contaminated land that require remediation and/or have already been remediated or how inspections of contaminated land are carried out, rather than land available for development. The majority of the land parcels listed are residential gardens that would not be suitable or available for solar development. On that basis, contaminated land was not considered further.

Industrial Land

- 2.5.11 An assessment of sites allocated for employment (industrial land) within the 25 km search area identified no land of an adequate area to facilitate a large-scale solar development. The data for this assessment was taken from the site allocations identified within the adopted Local Plans for the administrative areas within the area of search. This includes the following areas:
- 1) North Yorkshire Council:
 - a) Former Selby District Council (Ref 5)
 - b) Former Harrogate District Council (Ref 6)
 - 2) Leeds City Council (Ref 7) including Aire Valley Leeds Area (Ref 8)
 - 3) City of York Council (Ref 9)
 - 4) East Riding of Yorkshire Council (Ref 10)
 - 5) City of Doncaster Council (Ref 11)
 - 6) Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council (Ref 12)
 - 7) Wakefield Council (Ref 13)
 - 8) Metropolitan Borough of Kirklees Council (Ref 14)
- 2.5.12 Table 2-1 below contains (in descending order of site size for employment capacity) details of all the sites allocated for employment within the 25 km search area that are 40 ha or above in size. Site sizes smaller than 40 ha were not considered due to their inability to provide a viable land parcel to accommodate large scale solar development.

- 2.5.13 Of the sites over 40 ha, none were considered available due to existing planning permissions or allocations. Although some sites had parcels of remaining land following development, the area was not considered large enough to accommodate the scale of solar development proposed.
- 2.5.14 No sites over 40 ha were identified within the areas of the Former Selby District Council, the Former Harrogate District Council, Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council or the Metropolitan Borough of Kirklees Council.

Table 2-1 Employment/ Industrial Land identified from Local Plan Allocations within the Area of Search

| Site No. | Site Name | Council | Site Size (ha) | Comments |
|----------|---------------------------|----------------------|--|--|
| ES09 | Land South of Knottingley | Wakefield Council | 136.68 (employment capacity) (156.39 gross site area) | <p>The Wakefield District Local Plan (2036) has allocated the site for employment uses (E(g)(ii) research and development of products or processes, B2 general industrial and B8 storage and distribution). Inward investment opportunities associated with advanced manufacturing, research and development, creative and digital and e-commerce logistics should be accommodated on the site. Ancillary offices will also be acceptable.</p> <p>The EIA Scoping Report was submitted in November 2021 for the development of approx. 450,000 sqm of industrial development (ref: 21/02797/EIASC). The Scoping Report was withdrawn in January 2025.</p> <p>Given the above, solar development would not be compatible with the uses defined within the allocation.</p> |
| ST5 | York Central | City of York Council | 78 | <p>The site is located in the City of York which is at the maximum extent of and partially within the area of search.</p> <p>An outline planning permission with all matters reserved for the redevelopment of York Central was approved in December 2019 (ref: 18/01884/OUTM). This permission included mixed-use development of 2,500 homes; office, retail and leisure uses; hotel with up to 400 bedrooms; non-residential institutions for the expansion of the National Railway Museum; multi-storey car parks; provision of community uses and all associated works. A number of applications</p> |

| Site No. | Site Name | Council | Site Size (ha) | Comments |
|----------|----------------------------|---|----------------|--|
| | | | | <p>relating to the proposal have since been submitted with ground works appearing to have commenced.</p> <p>Given the above, and the location of the site in the City of York, the site would be unsuitable for large scale solar development.</p> |
| EMP04 | East of Selby Road, Thorne | City of Doncaster Council | 73.63 | <p>Outline planning permission was granted subject to section 106 agreement in January 2022 for the demolition of the existing building on site and proposed employment development consisting of light industrial (Class B1c use), general industrial (Class B2 use) and storage and distribution (Class B8 use) units (ref: 16/02136/OUTA).</p> <p>A number of applications relating to the proposal has since been submitted, including reserved matters, variation and discharge of conditions.</p> <p>The site is therefore unavailable for large scale solar development.</p> |
| AV64 | Temple Green | Leeds City Council – Aire Valley Leeds Area | 69.56 | <p>The site is located within the Leeds City Region Enterprise Zone which comprises an allocation for general employment uses (mainly industry and storage and distribution uses).</p> <p>Outline approval was granted in May 2006 for warehouse and distribution development with car parking and landscaping (ref: 21/199/05/OT) and for industrial warehouse units and layout access (ref: 21/252/02/OT). Two applications for the extension of time and non-material amendments were granted for the outline approval 21/199/05/OT in October 2019 (ref: 19/9/00121/MOD) and January 2020 (ref: 19/9/00320/MOD). Several applications have since been submitted with reserved matters approval being granted for 5 no. new storage and distribution units (Class B8 use) was granted on the site in October 2025 (ref: 23/03202/RM).</p> <p>Reserved matters approval was also granted in April 2024 for the construction of a single warehouse and distribution unit (Class B8 use) (ref: 23/03201/RM). These proposals</p> |

| Site No. | Site Name | Council | Site (ha) | Size | Comments |
|----------|---------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------|------|---|
| | | | | | <p>form part of Gateway 45 Leeds, the largest logistics and manufacturing scheme in the Leeds City Region.</p> <p>In addition, full planning permission was granted in March 2023 for the erection of 23 units for use class B2, B8 and E(g) (iii) purposes (ref: 21/07191/FU).</p> <p>An existing warehouse facility and car dealership are also present on the site.</p> <p>These existing and proposed uses take up the vast majority of the site, with the remaining area being unviable for large scale solar development due to its size.</p> |
| GOO-L | Land at Junction 36 (M62) | East Riding of Yorkshire Council | 61.85 | | <p>A small proportion of the site (to the south of the M62 and west of the A161) is within the 25 km search area.</p> <p>Existing industrial, office and manufacturing uses are present on the majority of the site.</p> <p>The East Riding of Yorkshire Local Plan Update Allocations Document states that the majority of development on the site must be B2 and B8 use classes.</p> <p>Given the above, the site is neither available nor suitable for large scale solar development.</p> |
| PED01 | Carcroft Common, Carcoft | City of Doncaster Council | 49.28 | | <p>The site is identified within the Doncaster Local Plan (2015-2035) and considered suitable for employment development. However, Policy 3 of the Local Plan states that the site is currently not considered developable in the plan period. A mixture of public and private investment would be needed over the long term to improve accessibility to the site and mitigate flood-risk impacts.</p> <p>There are no live or decided planning applications in relation to the site, although there are reports from 2024 that the site is to be developed by Hybrid Air Vehicles Ltd for a production site for hybrid air vehicles, subject to planning permission.</p> |

| Site No. | Site Name | Council | Site Size (ha) | Comments |
|----------|--|---|--|--|
| | | | | The location of the site (north of Doncaster) is in the very south of the search area. PDA1 is located north of Doncaster, but is discounted for other reasons as set out in Section 3 below. On that basis, the site is isolated from other potential sites. Furthermore, it would not be commercially viable to connect the site to the rest of the Proposed Development. |
| AV63 | Logic Leeds (Skelton Moor Farm) | Leeds City Council – Aire Valley Leeds Area | 46.40 | <p>The site is located within the Leeds City Region Enterprise Zone which comprises an allocation for general employment uses (mainly industry and storage and distribution uses).</p> <p>Existing industrial, office and distribution uses are present on the site, thereby making the site unavailable for large scale solar development.</p> |
| ES04 | Land at Ferrybridge C Power Station, Stranglands Lane, Ferrybridge | Wakefield Council | 42 (employment capacity) (162.56 gross site area) | This land is either already built on or is the subject of proposals for development by Mount Park (with planning permission 23/00100/HYB) or is the subject of the SSE Ferrybridge Next Generation Power Station DCO proposal. |
| ES14 | Land South of Junction 30 M62 Castlegate Wakefield | Wakefield Council | 41.9 (employment capacity) (47.9 gross site area) | <p>A hybrid planning application was submitted in September 2025 on the proportion of the site to the south of Castle Gate Road for full planning permission for highway infrastructure works and outline planning permission for E (g) (ii) research and development of products or processes, E (g) (iii) industrial processes, B2 general industrial and B8 storage or distribution uses with ancillary E (g) (i) offices (ref: 25/01769/HYB).</p> <p>Farm buildings and a vehicle storage area are present on the proportion of the site to the north of Castle Gate Road. These existing and proposed uses take up the vast majority of the site, with the remaining area (approximately 11 ha) being unviable for large scale solar development.</p> |

| Site No. | Site Name | Council | Site (ha) | Size | Comments |
|----------|-----------|---------|-----------|------|---|
| | | | | | Furthermore, the Wakefield District Local Plan (2036) has allocated the site for employment uses (E(g)(ii) research and development of products or processes, B2 general industrial and B8 storage and distribution). It is a key policy objective for the site to provide employment, apprenticeship and skills development opportunities for local residents. Therefore, solar development would not be compatible with the uses defined within the allocation. |

Commercial and Residential Rooftops

- 2.5.15 Consideration was given to commercial rooftops. However, initial considerations showed that it was unlikely that there would be individual commercial rooftops or combined premises of an adequate area to facilitate large-scale solar generation or provide a viable combination of locations to achieve that generation.
- 2.5.16 The number of commercial rooftops that would be required would be held in multiple land ownerships and the legal complexities and costs involved in combining multiple sites of this nature is not viable to deliver a solar development at transmission scale. Further, the practical complexities in linking multiple smaller sites, for instance complex cable routing and associated disruption, make the use of multiple commercial rooftops unviable for a scheme of equivalent size to the Proposed Development.
- 2.5.17 Given the Government has promoted financial incentives to encourage homeowners to install solar PV systems, rooftop solar is clearly desirable both on residential and commercial premises. However, this is not considered as an alternative to the Proposed Development. Commercial premises and houses are both consumers and generators of electricity and therefore do not help provide low carbon and renewable alternatives to conventional sources of electricity production at grid scale. In essence, roof-mounted solar panels should be deployed in addition to large scale solar farms, rather than instead of them. This is reinforced by the Government’s Clean Power 2030 Action Plan: A new era of clean electricity, published in December 2024 (Ref 15), which sets out the scale of renewable generation required to meet net zero. It states that the move away from traditional energy sources and electrification mean there is expected to be a doubling of electricity consumption that will require strong growth in power generation from a diverse range of clean sources on a sustained basis through the 2030s and 2040s. This will require the utilisation of all opportunities for solar generation. Further details on the use of rooftop solar in the wider energy mix is set out in the Statement of Need **[EN0110012/APP/LVS/05.03]**.

Topography

- 2.5.18 For large-scale solar development, land that is as flat as possible is considered optimal, as this is ideal for construction and helps reduce visual intrusion. Flatter land also limits the shading between solar PV panels and enables the solar PV panels to be optimally configured for best production levels.
- 2.5.19 Topographical constraints have been identified and mapped (as shown on **Figure 5, Annex A**). Land with a 5% or less gradient has been considered in the identification of PDAs. As flatter land is preferred, the specific topography of each PDA is also assessed at Stage 5.

Site Assembly

- 2.5.20 Large areas of open land are generally preferred for large scale solar development as they may lead to less vegetation removal for easy installation of the solar infrastructure. This also reduces the amount of buffering required for tree root protection, avoidance of shading compared to small fields and can reduce the solar development's impact on vegetation such as hedgerows and trees.
- 2.5.21 The Applicant's analysis regarding the minimum area for large scale solar to be economically viable identified a threshold of at least 40 ha of open land for an individual site. This is the minimum site size considered by the Applicant to be viable (based upon the balance of costs of connecting infrastructure between individual sites and electricity losses from the connection cabling necessary) to form part of a network of sites sufficient to accommodate a 500 MW scheme.
- 2.5.22 The minimum individual site size of 40 ha is based upon the Applicant's economic analysis of the MW output per ha to be achieved taking into consideration infrastructure costs including the grid connection and the need for a percentage of the land to provide environmental mitigation, if required. A smaller development area results in higher unit costs and an assessment was made as to the maximum cost and therefore minimum site area threshold that would be viable for the Scheme to meet the target financial metrics and achieve Project Objectives 1-3. However, it is noted that smaller sites may be considered viable provided they are not isolated and are within close proximity to a larger site, thus reducing infrastructure costs. Smaller areas of land were considered at a later stage in the design evolution of the Proposed Development, where smaller land parcels were in close proximity to larger available land parcels and under the same ownership, making them more viable for inclusion. However, for this stage of the assessment, land parcels under 40 ha were discounted.
- 2.5.23 The shape of land parcels is also relevant, because irregular shaped sites can prevent an efficient layout of solar PV panels and affect the overall viability. On that basis, irregularly shaped areas were screened out at this stage.
- 2.5.24 The application of the above topographical and site assembly criteria to the unconstrained land identified in Stage 2, led to the identification of four PDAs, shown on **Figure 7, Annex A**, which were taken forward to Stage 4 evaluation.

2.6 Stage 4: Evaluation of Potential Development Areas

2.6.1 Stage 4 considered the suitability of the PDAs which have been identified in Stage 3 (as shown on **Figure 7, Annex A**).

2.6.2 Ultimately, as explained in Section 3 below, following the Stage 4 evaluation, none of the unconstrained PDAs were considered to be appropriate and available to accommodate the operational requirements of the Proposed Development. On that basis, it is considered that there are no areas of unconstrained and confirmed available land within the 25 km search area that could accommodate the Proposed Development.

2.7 Stage 5: Widening the Search to Grade 2 and 3 Agricultural Land, Green Belt and Flood Zones 2 and 3

2.7.1 Having not identified suitable and available PDAs within the parameters defined for Stages 1-4, the Applicant considered land constrained by Grade 2 and 3 agricultural land, Green Belt and land within Flood Zones 2 and 3. These areas were reintroduced because planning policy is nuanced in relation to these constraints and does not entirely preclude development in these areas (see Section 2.4 above and Section 4 below for more details). Planning policy is not so nuanced in relation to other constraints, such as ecologically protected sites and heritage assets, and therefore these constraints remained excluded from the search area.

2.7.2 Land agents were instructed to liaise with landowners within the constrained areas to identify suitable land. Land agents were briefed to take into consideration the following factors:

- 1) proximity and route to the POC; and
- 2) planning, environmental and spatial constraints, including those considered in Stages 1-4 above.

2.7.3 Landowner willingness is important to ensure compliance with Project Objective 5; the Applicant wished to work with landowners who saw the Proposed Development as a helpful way to maintain the on-going viability and/or profitability of their agricultural landholdings and thus supporting the on-going agricultural economy in North Yorkshire. The availability of willing landowners also reduces and potentially avoids the need for compulsory acquisition powers to be used.

2.7.4 This exercise led to the identification of Solar Development Sites 1-5 for the Proposed Development. Following flood modelling, Solar Development Site 5 was removed from the Proposed Development. Solar Development Sites 6-8 were also added at a later stage, having been brought forward by willing landowners. Although these sites are located within constrained land, they are close to other Solar Development Sites, they are of appropriate size to deliver a project of this scale and they are within an appropriate distance to provide a viable grid connection. Therefore, they are considered viable for inclusion.

- 2.7.5 Whilst Solar Development Site 1 is located some distance to the north, and the Applicant's primary focus for sites was close to the POC, Solar Development Site 1 is still within the 25 km search area considered by the Applicant to be a viable cable connection distance for a solar project of this scale. As noted in paragraph 2.3.9 above, when the distance from the POC increases, transmission losses increase and larger contiguous solar development areas are generally required to maintain viability. Solar Development Site 1's size (at 344.8 ha) makes it more viable for connection into the Proposed Development, despite its distance from the POC. Its size also justifies its inclusion as it allows the Proposed Development to maximise its grid connection offer and therefore meet Project Objectives 1 and 3. Its inclusion was also driven by landowner willingness, as initial approaches to the landowner were positively received. Solar Development Site 1 is also owned by a single landowner, which reduces the legal complexities and costs involved in including it within the Proposed Development.
- 2.7.6 The robustness of the Applicant's process for identifying suitable sites on constrained land can be seen when a comparative exercise is taken against unchosen sites, located on Grades 2 and 3 agricultural land, Green Belt and/or land within Flood Zones 2 and 3, as mapped on **Figures 12 to 15, Annex A**. As can be seen from **Figure 15**, there are large areas of constrained land that were not chosen. However, applying a proportionate approach (in line with NPS EN-1 paragraph 4.3.22) enables the identification of potential development areas that are less constrained than others (e.g. with fewer areas constrained by flooding even if located on Grade 3 land) and more likely to be acceptable to landowners (using the professional knowledge of land agents) The search led to PDAs 5, 6, 7 and 9 being identified for further consideration.
- 2.7.7 It should be noted that, in places, the Stage 5 PDAs identified by land agents encroach into areas that would not have been considered applying the Stage 2 and 3 criteria (such as areas at higher topographic data or areas that include designated heritage assets). To incorporate entire land parcels suggested by land agents, these constrained areas have not been excluded from the PDAs, but have been considered and rated accordingly in the Stage 5 assessment.
- 2.7.8 **Annexes B – D** of this SSAR sets out a comparative exercise of these PDAs against the chosen Solar Development Sites (named as PDA 8). This comparative exercise considered the Project Objectives and, in the context that Objectives 1-2 requires a scheme to be able to be consentable and buildable to be brought forward, relevant planning and environmental considerations (as informed by NPS policy) and operational considerations.
- 2.7.9 Finally, as a check and balance exercise, any additional less constrained land within the 25 km search area that had not been incorporated into PDAs was also considered. As shown on **Figure 22, Annex A**, this led to the identification of an area of grade 3 agricultural land following the M62 between Knottingley and Goole which was considered at a high level, but discounted.
- 2.7.10 For reference, all 9 PDAs are shown on **Figure 21, Annex A** against the environmental constraints mapped at Stage 2 of the site selection process.

3 Site Selection Results

3.1 Stages 1 and 2: Identification of the Area of Search and Unconstrained Land

- 3.1.1 The area of search identified for the site selection assessment is shown in **Figure 1, Annex A**. This shows the POC at Monk Fryston Substation together with the radii of 5 km, 10 km, 15 km, 20 km and 25 km to show the search area.
- 3.1.2 **Figure 2, Annex A** shows the planning and environmental constraints identified and excluded at Stage 2 in order to identify the constraints affecting the area of search.
- 3.1.3 **Figure 3, Annex A** shows the output from this mapping, identifying areas of unconstrained land which have not been excluded from the area of search.

3.2 Stages 3 and 4: Identifying Potential Development Areas and Further Evaluation

- 3.2.1 **Figures 4-6, Annex A** show the output following the application of the Stage 3 criteria, i.e. site size, land assembly, consideration of previously developed land and topography for unconstrained land.
- 3.2.2 **Figure 4, Annex A** shows brownfield land over 40 ha within the search area. This has been identified using brownfield registers prepared by Councils within the search area. As set out in Section 2.5 above, only one site was identified with this site not being available due to committed development and local plan allocations. Therefore, brownfield sites were not considered further. Industrial/employment land allocations have not been mapped as mapping data was not available, but they have been considered and the results are reported in Section 2.5 above.
- 3.2.3 **Figure 5, Annex A** shows unconstrained land identified from the mapping at Stage 2 overlaid on land within the search area with a gradient of 5% or less.
- 3.2.4 **Figure 6, Annex A** shows the areas of land which were identified at Stage 2 but did not meet the Stage 3 criteria and have therefore been discounted (see purple shaded areas). These areas were not suitable due to proximity to other available sites, irregularity of shape and/or size (i.e. areas that were irregular in shape and/or would not meet to 40 ha threshold and/or could not easily be joined to other sites).
- 3.2.5 **Figure 7, Annex A** shows 4 PDAs which were identified at Stage 4 following application of the above criteria. The PDAs were discounted for the following reasons:
- 1) PDA 1 was discounted on the basis that the majority of the PDA is potentially committed for use by the Fenwick Solar Farm, a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project that has been through the DCO examination phase. A decision on whether to grant development consent for the project is expected in February 2026. PDA 1 is also 434.64 ha,

which would not be sufficient on its own to accommodate a solar project equivalent to the Proposed Development. Given its size, PDA 1 could not meet the Project Objectives as a site of this size on its own could not maximise the development's clean energy generation potential or make efficient use of the grid connection offer (Objectives 1 and 3). It would also not be able to deliver the appropriate environmental mitigation within the land available (Objective 4).

- 2) PDA 2 was discounted because half of the PDA is taken up by the Selby Golf Club and Gateforth Park Retirement Village which is being constructed in a phased manner (ref: 2018/0743/FULM). PDA 2 is also 105.11 ha, which would not be sufficient on its own to accommodate a solar project equivalent to the Proposed Development. Given its size and existing land uses which would reduce the site size further, PDA 2 could not meet the Project Objectives as a site of this size could not maximise the development's clean energy generation potential or make efficient use of the grid connection offer (Objectives 1 and 3). It would also not be able to deliver the appropriate environmental mitigation within the land available (Objective 4).
- 3) PDA 3 was discounted on the basis that it is allocated within Aire Valley Leeds which is a major regeneration area to the south east of Leeds City Centre. The area has the potential to deliver thousands of new homes and job opportunities, community facilities, and leisure and visitor attractions. The Aire Valley Leeds Action Plan was adopted by Leeds City Council in November 2017, forming part of the statutory development plan for Leeds and guides the regeneration of the area. A portion of this PDA encompasses the brownfield site AV64 identified within Section 2.5 (Table 2-2). As set out in Table 2-2, this portion of the PDA is discounted as a result of the existing land use and planning permissions with the site forming part of Gateway 45 Leeds. The remainder of the site is allocated for housing, green infrastructure, transport infrastructure, core cycle network and a park and ride. PDA 3 is also 104.71 ha, which would not be sufficient on its own to accommodate a solar project equivalent to the Proposed Development. Given its size and the proposed land uses for the site, PDA 3 could not meet the Project Objectives as a site of this size could not maximise the development's clean energy generation potential or make efficient use of the grid connection offer (Objectives 1 and 3). It would also not be able to deliver the appropriate environmental mitigation within the land available (Objective 4).
- 4) PDA 4 was discounted on the basis that it is entirely taken up by the existing Wetherby Racecourse. It is therefore unavailable for solar development. PDA 1 is also 49.63 ha, which would not be sufficient on its own to accommodate a solar project equivalent to the Proposed Development. Given its size and the fact that the PDA is currently in use, PDA 4 could not meet the Project Objectives as it could not maximise the development's clean energy generation potential or make efficient use of

the grid connection offer (Objectives 1 and 3). It would also not be able to deliver the appropriate environmental mitigation within the land available (Objective 4).

- 3.2.6 In summary, none of the 4 PDAs identified on unconstrained land are suitable or available for solar development. Land within the PDAs is largely already in use, or earmarked for future development. Further, even if the PDAs were available, they would not be large enough to accommodate a solar project equivalent to the Proposed Development, and therefore their use does not align with the Project Objectives. Therefore, the search for sites was broadened to consider more environmentally constrained land within the 25 km search area.

3.3 Stage 5: Widening the Search to Consider Grades 1, 2 and 3 Agricultural Land, Green Belt and Flood Zones 2 and 3

- 3.3.1 Following PDAs 1-4 being discounted, Grade 2 and 3 agricultural land, Green Belt and areas within Flood Zones 2 and 3 were reintroduced back into the 25 km search area and PDAs 5, 6, 7 and 9 as well as the chosen location of PDA 8 were identified.
- 3.3.2 **Figure 12, Annex A** shows the Grade 2 and 3 agricultural land and Green Belt to be added back into the search area
- 3.3.3 **Figure 13, Annex A** shows the location of land in Flood Zones 2 and 3 to be added back into the search area.
- 3.3.4 **Figure 14, Annex A** shows the residual unconstrained land over 40 ha and land that was discounted due to proximity, shape and/ or size. It also shows the location of Flood Zones 2 and 3.
- 3.3.5 **Figure 15, Annex A** shows the residual unconstrained land for consideration at Stage 5 in purple, outlining PDAs 5-9.
- 3.3.6 **Figures 16 to 20, Annex A** provide a more detailed view of PDAs 5 to 9 mapped against various environmental constraints.
- 3.3.7 **Figure 21, Annex A** shows all 9 PDAs against environmental constraints, in order to identify any other parcels of land within the search area which should be considered as part of a check and balance exercise.
- 3.3.8 **Figure 22, Annex A** provides a more detailed view of a parcel of land that was identified for further consideration under the check and balance exercise.
- 3.3.9 **Annex D** sets out the results of the assessment of the PDAs against assessment indicators. A summary of the assessment for each PDA is included below.

PDA 5: Towton and Saxton

- 3.3.10 PDA 5 comprises seven individual sites within two clusters, located to the east of the A1(M) and the north and north west of Sherburn in Elmet. The northern parcel

is located directly adjacent to Towton whilst the southern parcel is to the south west of Saxton. The PDA is approximately 5 km from the POC at its nearest point.

- 3.3.11 The PDA covers an area of 564 ha, being approximately half the land required to accommodate the Proposed Development. However, it could be combined with nearby PDAs to form a larger site, subject to further technical assessment. There is a live planning application within PDA 5 for residential development at Towton Hall and an application in relation to a wellness retreat outside of, but immediately to the west of, the northern parcel. However, these applications are small and with mitigation are unlikely to affect the overall use of the PDA for solar development. The majority of PDA 5 (81%) is located on land with a gradient of less than 5%, whilst 19% of the land has a gradient greater than 5%.
- 3.3.12 Parcels of Ancient Woodland site immediately adjacent to, but outside of, the PDA which may require mitigation. Stutton Ings SSSI and Kirkby SSSI are within 2 km of the northern parcel of the PDA, the former being located approximately 305 m north and the latter 1.4 km east. Two public rights of way (PRoW) and the Rangers Walk National Trail intersect the PDA and there are a few isolated properties within the PDA. The villages of Saxton and Towton are within close proximity to the PDA, and a small section of Towton sits within the PDA boundary. Approximately half of the PDA is within a mineral safeguarding area. There are no obvious access constraints for construction traffic. Flood Zone 1 encompasses the majority of the northern parcel with a small area of the east of the PDA within Flood Zone 2. The southern parcel is largely within Flood Zone 1, but there are localised areas of Flood Zones 2 and 3 present around Stream Dike. There are limited amounts of surface water flooding shown within PDA 5. Risks from other sources of flooding are low. In terms of solar array shading, the northern parcel of the PDA is largely unaffected by shading as a result of only a few areas of scattered woodland/ trees. In contrast, the southern parcel has a small area of woodland within the site off Coldhill Lane, and a large area of woodland is also located to the west of the site.
- 3.3.13 The major constraints identified for PDA 5 are land use and cultural heritage. The land within the PDA comprises approximately 86% Grade 2 ALC and the entirety of the PDA lies within Green Belt. Unlike other PDAs, a Locally Important Landscape Area (LILA) is located within the majority of the PDA whilst a site of local importance for nature conservation is within part of the PDA. As to cultural heritage, a Registered Battlefield is located on almost the entirety of the northern parcel of the PDA. The Registered Battlefield is a designated heritage asset and substantial harm is unlikely to be avoided, rendering the northern section of the PDA unviable. Further, Saxton Conservation Area is located immediately to the north of the southern parcel (meaning there is likely to be significant effects on its setting).
- 3.3.14 PDA 5 has been assessed against the Project Objectives. The PDA is not large enough to accommodate a 500 MW solar development on its own and would therefore not maximise clean energy generation potential in comparison with the other PDAs (Objective 1). Furthermore, it would mean that the PDA would not be able to deliver a scheme which is an optimal and efficient use of grid connection

capacity (Objective 3), given the Applicant has secured a 500 MW grid connection. At present, further discussions with landowners would be required to consider whether the PDA could support the on-going agricultural economy (Objective 5).

- 3.3.15 On this basis, PDA 5 is not considered to support the Project Objectives, and along with the substantial environmental constraints identified, is an unsuitable alternative for the Proposed Development.

PDA 6: Wistow

- 3.3.16 PDA 6 is a large single site near Wistow, to the south west of Cawood and south east of Ryther. The PDA is approximately 8.5 km from the POC at its nearest point.
- 3.3.17 The PDA is 1,312 ha, which would be a sufficient size to accommodate a solar project equivalent to the Proposed Development. An area of the PDA (61 ha) near Cawood is subject to an existing planning application for a solar farm and BESS. In addition, smaller planning applications relating mainly to current land use are present within the PDA, however, these are small and with appropriate buffers, are unlikely to affect the overall use of the PDA for solar development. The entirety of PDA 6 is located on land with a gradient of less than 3%.
- 3.3.18 Ancient Woodland immediately abuts the PDA (which may require mitigation) with further parcels of Ancient Woodland nearby. Burr Closes SSSI and Bolton Percy Ings SSSI are located within 2 km of PDA 6. Several PRoWs intersect the PDA 6, these being largely positioned towards the north of the PDA. Various properties and land uses are scattered throughout the PDA, including residential and business/ agricultural uses. The settlements of Wistow, Cawood and Biggin border PDA 6 with a section of the PDA intersecting Wistow in the east. A mineral safeguarding area for sand and gravel encompasses nearly the entirety of the PDA whilst approximately a quarter of the PDA is within a mineral safeguarding area for brick clay. The PDA is outside of the Green Belt. The southern boundary of the PDA abuts a Site of Importance of Nature Conservation (SINC). There are no obvious access constraints for construction traffic, although some local roads within the PDA may require mitigation, dependent on the layout of Solar PV panels. In terms of solar array shading, there are only a few areas of scattered woodland/trees throughout the PDA, although a large area of woodland associated with Little Moss Hagg woods is immediately south of the PDA.
- 3.3.19 The major constraints identified for PDA 6 are land use, cultural heritage, and fluvial and surface water flooding. As to land use, the land within the PDA is entirely made up of ALC Grade 2 agricultural land, in contrast to PDA 8, which contains less Grade 2 land. There is one Grade II Listed Building within the PDA (which would need to be avoided and appropriate buffers put in place to avoid likely significant effects). There are also multiple Listed Buildings within 500 m, including Grade I Listed Buildings. Cawood Conservation Area is located approximately 100 m to the north of PDA 5 whilst five Scheduled Monuments are within 2 km of the PDA, the closest being 100 m north east. As to flooding, Flood

Zone 3 encompasses a significant proportion of the central and northern areas of the PDA with further areas contained within Flood Zone 2. Furthermore, numerous isolated pockets of surface water flooding are present across the PDA. Other sources of flooding are not considered major constraints, although the majority of the PDA is within a reservoir flood risk area when combined with a fluvial event.

- 3.3.20 PDA 6 has been assessed against the Project Objectives. The PDA is large enough to accommodate a 500 MW solar scheme and therefore can maximise clean energy generation potential and provides flexibility to deliver optimal and efficient use of grid connection capacity (Objectives 1 and 3). However, it is currently unknown whether the PDA could support the on-going agricultural economy (Objective 5) as the Applicant is unaware of the current circumstances of the landowners or their tenants using the land within the PDA, but initial approaches to landowners did not reveal an opportunity to accommodate the development.
- 3.3.21 On this basis, PDA 6 is considered to support some, but not all of the Project Objectives. In combination with the constraints identified, it is not considered to be a suitable alternative for the Proposed Development.

PDA 7: Osgodby/North Duffield

- 3.3.22 PDA 7 comprises a large area of land to the east of the A19 and Barlby and to the west of Bubwith. The settlement of North Duffield is surrounded by the PDA. PDA 7 is approximately 16 km from the POC at its nearest point.
- 3.3.23 PDA 7 is 2,904 ha, which is larger than required to accommodate a solar project equivalent to the Proposed Development. A large section of the southerly part of the PDA to the east of Barlby and to the west of South Duffield is subject to a number of planning applications (including other solar farms) which means that a large section of the PDA would need to be removed, reducing the available space to accommodate the Proposed Development by around 700 ha (before consideration of other constraints). The entirety of PDA 7 is located on land with a gradient of less than 3%.
- 3.3.24 The PDA comprises entirely Grade 3 agricultural land. The PDA is outside of the Green Belt. There are no Listed Buildings within the PDA boundary although there are Listed Buildings and Scheduled Monuments nearby and Thornganby Conservation Area is located approximately 230m to the east of the PDA boundary. In terms of field shading, there are only a few areas of scattered woodland/trees throughout the PDA, although there is a large area of woodland associated with Skipworth Common immediately to the west of the PDA boundary. Areas of PDA 7 are within Flood Zones 2 and 3, particularly in the south east section and there are areas at higher risk of surface water flooding. These could be avoided through design but would further reduce the overall amount of land available for built development. The risk from other sources of flooding is considered low. There are no obvious access constraints for HGVs. Some local roads within the PDA may require mitigation, depending on PV layout.

Small sections of the PDA on the edges of North Duffield and in Cliffe Common are Recreational Open Space. There is also Ancient Woodland immediately adjacent to the PDA which may require mitigation.

- 3.3.25 The major constraints identified for using PDA 7 for the Proposed Development are ecology and biodiversity. PDA 7 is an extremely environmentally constrained site which is bordered by multiple statutorily designated sites on both the eastern and western borders. The PDA is also immediately adjacent in the east to the River Derwent and Lower Derwent Valley Ramsar and SAC sites, the Lower Derwent Valley Special Protection Area (SPA), the Lower Derwent Valley National Nature Reserve (NNR), and the River Derwent and Derwent Ings SSSI, all of which run along nearly the entire eastern boundary of the PDA and are therefore not easily avoided through site design. The PDA is also immediately adjacent in the west to Skipworth Common SAC, NNR and SSSI. As a result, there is a high likelihood of potential impact pathways, which have the potential to require compensatory measures. Brighton Meadows SSSI is also nearby.
- 3.3.26 PDA 7 has also been assessed against the Project Objectives. The PDA is larger than required to accommodate a solar project equivalent to the Proposed Development, however, due to proposed land uses in the south and areas that would need to be removed due to ecology and biodiversity constraints, the remaining land is unlikely to be of sufficient size to support the Project Objectives of maximising the development's clean energy generation potential (Objective 1) and delivering a scheme which is flexible and can deliver an optimal and efficient use of grid connection capacity (Objective 3). Further, the PDA is unlikely to be able to deliver the required environmental mitigation requirements (Objective 4), because the ecological constraints, particularly those associated with the Lower Derwent Valley and River Derwent, affect broad areas of the PDA and would require large buffers and/or removals of land from the PDA in order to mitigate likely significant effects on those receptors. At present, it is unclear whether PDA 7 would support the ongoing agricultural economy (Objective 5), as the Applicant has not made enquiries with landowners in this area and is therefore unaware of the current circumstances of the landowners or their tenants using the land within PDA 7.
- 3.3.27 In summary, PDA 7 is not considered to support the Project Objectives. There are also the substantial constraints which in combination would require significant sections of land to be removed and would not leave sufficient land to deliver the Proposed Development. These factors, in combination make it an unsuitable alternative for the Proposed Development.

PDA 8: Escrick and Hambleton

- 3.3.28 For consistency across PDAs, the following constraints analysis of PDA 8 is based on publicly available data and does not take into account further detailed survey work and assessments that have been carried out since it was identified as the proposed site for the Proposed Development (see Section 1.3 above).

- 3.3.29 PDA 8 comprises seven Solar Development Sites located between Monk Fryston Substation in the south and extending to Escrick in the north. The majority of the Solar Development Sites are located close to the POC, between the villages of Thorpe Willoughby, South Milford and Birkin, whilst Solar Development Site 1 is located further away, near Escrick. The nearest section of the PDA to the POC is 2.3 km and the further site is 20 km away.
- 3.3.30 PDA 8 is 900 ha at the time of DCO Application, which is smaller than the size presented at PEIR (1,022 ha). This size at application is smaller than the 1,100 ha of land that the Applicant sought to identify when selecting a site, reflecting the fact that it has been through a process of design evolution to avoid environmental constraints. Given that a process of design evolution has already taken place for PDA 8, less flexibility is required for PDA 8 and 900 ha is considered large enough to accommodate a 500 MW solar scheme. The entirety of the PDA is located on land with a gradient of less than 3%.
- 3.3.31 There are no major ecological or biodiversity constraints associated with PDA 8 based on publicly available data. There are no Local Nature Reserves within the PDA or the 500m study area. Sherburn Willows SSSI is the only national designation within 2 km, located 1.7 km north west of the PDA boundary. The nearest internationally designated sites are further away, with Skipworth Common SAC located 2.4 km to the south of Solar Development Site 1, and the River Derwent and Lower Derwent Valley Ramsar and SAC and the Lower Derwent Valley SPA located approximately 2.8 km to the east of the Solar Development Site 1. There is no Ancient Woodland within the PDA although Ancient Woodland does abut Solar Development Site 1 and is near the PDA in other places. With regard to landscape and visual, there are no national landscape designations within the 5 km study area and no residential properties within the PDA boundary. There are no major cultural heritage constraints associated with the PDA. There are no obvious access constraints for HGVs although some mitigation of local roads may be required.
- 3.3.32 The major constraints associated with PDA 8 are land use and flooding. PDA 8 is located on some areas of Green Belt, however, this only affects the southerly section of Solar Development Site 4 and approximately half of Solar Development Site 2, (in contrast to PDA 5 for instance, which is entirely within the Green Belt). The PDA also includes sections 50% Grade 2 agricultural land and 50% Grade 3 agricultural land (based on the 1970s Provisional ALC dataset), however this is less than PDAs 5 and 6 which would use a higher percentage of BMV land. As to flooding, there are areas of the PDA in Flood Zones 2 and 3 and areas at higher risk of surface water flooding. Risks from other sources of flooding are not considered to be major constraints, although there are areas that fall within the reservoir flood risk area on wet days.
- 3.3.33 PDA 8 has been assessed against the Project Objectives. The PDA is large enough to accommodate a 500 MW solar scheme, and therefore can maximise clean energy generation potential and provides flexibility to deliver optimal and efficient use of grid connection capacity (Objectives 1 and 3). PDA will allow for the delivery of the Proposed Development in a timely manner in line with the grid

connection date (Objective 2), as discussions with landowners have enabled options to be signed with all parties in the SDSs. PDA 8 is also well placed to deliver environmental mitigation requirements and community benefits (Objective 4). Finally, PDA 8 is well positioned to support the on-going agricultural economy in North Yorkshire (Objective 4); engagement with landowners has confirmed that there is sufficient available land to accommodate the Proposed Development and will allow landowners to diversify their land-use and income.

- 3.3.34 Therefore, PDA 8 is well placed to deliver all the Project Objectives and, whilst the site is environmentally constrained with regard to land use and flooding, it is less constrained than alternatives in relation to other assessment criteria, such as ecology and biodiversity and cultural heritage as set out in **Annex D**. Therefore on balance, it is considered no more constrained than the alternatives considered.

PDA 9: Little Fenton

- 3.3.35 PDA 9 comprises land located near to Little Fenton, to the south east of Church Fenton and the north of Hambleton.
- 3.3.36 PDA 9 is 1,507 ha, which is sufficient to accommodate a scheme equivalent to the Proposed Development. The PDA is located entirely on land with a gradient of less than 3%.
- 3.3.37 There are areas of Ancient Woodland immediately adjacent to the PDA boundary that may require mitigation. There are no Local Nature Reserves within 500 m. There are five SSSIs within 2 km. There are no national nature reserves within 2 km and no international designations within 5 km. There are no obvious access constraints for HGVs although some local roads may require mitigation. As to field shading, there are only a few areas of scattered woodland throughout the PDA, but larger areas immediately east of the PDA boundary that may shade areas of the PDA.
- 3.3.38 The major constraints in relation to PDA 9, landscape and visual, heritage, flood risk and land use. As to landscape and visual, the villages of Biggin and Little Fenton are outside of, but entirely surrounded by, the PDA. There are also numerous properties within the PDA, with the highest concentration around Nanny Lane leading to Church Fenton. Regarding cultural heritage, there is a scheduled monument 'Paradise Lodge moated site and grange of the Prior of Bolton' within the PDA boundary and another Scheduled Monument immediately adjacent to the PDA boundary. Regarding flooding, PDA 9 is constrained by fluvial risk in particular, with PDA being almost entirely within Flood Zone 2 with areas of Flood Zone 3 present that align to the many watercourses crossing the area. There are very limited, spatially separate areas of Flood Zone 1, but development would be necessary in Flood Zones 2 and 3 given only small areas of Flood Zone 1 within the PDA. There are also many localised areas that are at medium to high risk of surface water flooding. As to land use, initial approaches to the landowners revealed a lack of opportunity to accommodate the Proposed Development on PDA 9. As stated above, landowner willingness is a key matter

to ensure that the development can be delivered and to reduce/potentially avoid the need for compulsory acquisition. Therefore the lack of landowner willingness is a key constraint to PDA 9.

- 3.3.39 PDA 9 has also been assessed against the Project Objectives. PDA 9 is a sufficient size to accommodate a utility scale solar project and therefore is well placed to maximise clean energy generation potential and provides flexibility to deliver optimal and efficient use of grid connection capacity (Objectives 1 and 3). It is unlikely that PDA 9 could meet Objective 5, because initial approaches to landowners did not reveal an interest to accommodate the Proposed Development as a helpful way to maintain the on-going viability and/or profitability of their agricultural landholdings and thus supporting the on-going agricultural economy in North Yorkshire.
- 3.3.40 Therefore, PDA 9 is considered to support some, but not all, of the Project Objectives. In combination with the constraints identified, it is not considered to be a suitable alternative for the Proposed Development.

Other land within the search area

- 3.3.41 As a check and balance exercise, any additional less constrained land within the 25 km search area that has not been incorporated into PDAs has been considered.
- 3.3.42 As shown on **Figure 22, Annex A**, there is an area of Grade 3 agricultural land following the M62 between Knottingley and Goole. However, this area is constrained by a variety of built development, including the settlements of Eggborough, Kellington, Great Heck and Pollington. There are also existing industrial uses close to those settlements which take up a large proportion of the available land. This includes an existing solar farm to the south of the A62 between Great Heck and Pollington, and the site of the former Eggborough coal fired power station which is planned to be used to accommodate a combined cycle gas turbine (CCGT) power station under the Eggborough CCGT (Generating Station) DCO made in 2018 (Planning Inspectorate Ref: EN010081). Outside of the main settlements and built development areas, there are numerous individual properties scattered across the area and appropriate buffers would need to be applied to remove or reduce the likely significant effects on these properties. The entirety of the area is also covered by a Source Protection Zone, which would need to be considered further.
- 3.3.43 Therefore it is unlikely that the area shown in **Figure 22, Annex A**, on its own, would be sufficient to accommodate a 500MW solar development and further land would need to be added to this area to provide enough space and flexibility to accommodate the development together with the environmental buffers and mitigation that would be required. Whilst additional nearby areas of land could be explored and added to the development area, these are more constrained (for instance by Green Belt and land within ALC Grade 2 to the south, and Flood Zones 2 and 3 to the north and west), and therefore this area is no less

constrained and therefore not materially more suitable than the proposed site for the Proposed Development. On this basis, it has been discounted.

3.4 Conclusion of site selection assessment

- 3.4.1 As set out above, NPS EN-1 paragraph 4.3.22 supports a proportionate approach to the consideration of alternatives noting the level and urgency of need for new energy infrastructure. The relevant planning policy in NPS EN-1 and EN-3 does not provide guidance on how to prioritise multiple constraints and does not rule out development on constrained land. It notes that it would not be correct to refuse an application for development on one site simply because fewer adverse impacts would result from developing similar infrastructure on another suitable site, given the possibility that all suitable sites for energy infrastructure of the type proposed may be needed for future proposals (NPS EN-1 paragraph 4.3.24). Therefore whilst the Applicant has considered alternatives to meet policy requirements (including the requirement to explain the alternatives considered in its ES), it has done so in a proportionate way, as set out in this Section 3.
- 3.4.2 The process has considered 9 PDAs in total. PDAs 1-4 were considered as being on environmentally unconstrained land, but were not appropriate or available for a solar project equivalent to the Proposed Development.
- 3.4.3 PDAs 5-9, located on constrained land (in respect of Green Belt, Grade 2-3 agricultural land and Flood Zones 2-3) were then considered, having been identified undertaking a proportionate approach. A summary of how each of PDAs 5-8 compare in relation to their proportions of Green Belt, ALC Grades 1,2 and 3 and Flood Zones 2 and 3 are provided in Table 3-1 below.

Table 3-1 Comparison of Green Belt, ALC and Flood Zones within PDAs 5 to 9

| Constraint | PDA 5 | PDA 6 | PDA 7 | PDA 8 | PDA 9 |
|--|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Proportion of PDA in Green Belt | | | | | |
| Green Belt | 100% | 0% | 0% | 19% | 0% |
| Agricultural Land Class within PDA (based on 1970s Provisional ALC) | | | | | |
| ALC Grade 1 | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| ALC Grade 2 | 86% | 98% | 0% | 50% | 30% |
| ALC Grade 3 | 14% | 1% | 100% | 50% | 68% |
| Non-agricultural land | 0% | 1% | 0% | 0% | 2% |
| Proportion of Flood Zones 2 and 3 within PDA | | | | | |
| Flood Zone 2 | 0% | 26% | 3% | 32% | 72% |
| Flood Zone 3 | 1% | 32% | 4% | 22% | 20% |

- 3.4.4 As set out in **Annex D** and above, major constraints were identified for each of the PDAs based on publicly available data (see Section 1.3). However, none of the alternative PDAs provided a more suitable alternative to PDA 8, based on the

criteria considered. For instance, whilst PDAs 5, 6, 8 and 9 all contain Grade 2 land, PDAs 5 and 6 contain a greater proportion than PDA 8. PDA 9 contains no Green Belt and less Grade 2 agricultural land than PDA 8, but is more constrained by flood risk (with larger proportions within Flood Zones 2 and 3 than PDA 8) and in relation to landscape and visual, heritage and land use.

3.4.5 PDA 8 is also considered to perform best against the Project Objectives, demonstrating potential to meet all of the Project Objectives in comparison to the other PDAs, which could not do so.

3.4.6 Therefore, in conclusion, there are no more suitable and available locations within the search area than the location for the Proposed Development, based on the assessment criteria applied and in consideration of the Project Objectives. The location of the Proposed Development is therefore considered to be suitable for the scale of solar development proposed, and the basis on which the Applicant has selected the Solar Development Sites accords with relevant planning policy relating to site selection and alternatives set out in NPS EN-1 and NPS EN-3.

4 Sequential Test

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 NPS EN-1 paragraph 5.8.21 requires that flood risk is taken into account when selecting a site by applying the Sequential Test. This is a sequential risk-based approach which aims to steer development towards areas with the lowest risk of all forms of flooding.

4.1.2 However, it is noted that a recent change to the Planning Practice Guidance on Flood Risk and Coastal Change (Paragraph: 027 Reference ID: 7-027-20220825) (Ref 16) emphasises a more proportionate approach to be taken to application of the Sequential Test in relation to surface water flooding, in particular. It states that:

“where a site-specific flood risk assessment demonstrates clearly that the proposed layout, design, and mitigation measures would ensure that occupiers and users would remain safe from current and future surface water flood risk for the lifetime of the development (therefore addressing the risks identified e.g. by Environment Agency flood risk mapping), without increasing flood risk elsewhere, then the sequential test need not be applied.”

4.1.3 In satisfaction of the above test, the Flood Risk Assessment for the Proposed Development is contained in ES Appendix 15.1 (Volume 3) **[EN0110012/APP/LVS/06.03.15.01a]** and shows that the Proposed Development would remain safe from current and future surface water flood risk for the lifetime of the development, without increasing flood risk elsewhere. This has been achieved by applying a sequential approach to site layout planning, avoiding placement of critical components, such as the BESS and 275kV substations, in areas of flood risk, and through the incorporation of flood resilience measures into the overall design of the Solar Development Sites. Therefore, the above exception is met and it is not required to apply the Sequential Test to surface water flooding in relation to the Proposed Development. However, the Applicant has nevertheless applied the Sequential Test in its site selection process to all sources of flooding, because consideration of surface water flooding is useful when assessing the suitability of any alternative site, even if the site of the Proposed Development can be demonstrated to be safe for its lifetime. For example, an alternative site may be at higher risk of surface water flooding than the chosen site, which could be more difficult to mitigate through design, and would be a reason to generally prefer one site over another.

4.1.4 Following recent case law and appeals, it is noted that PPG Paragraph: 027a Reference ID: 7-027a-20220825, states that the Sequential Test should be applied proportionately, focussing on realistic alternatives in areas of lower flood risk that could meet the same development need. As noted in Section 2.2 above, for the purposes of the Proposed Development, the Project Objectives defined its ‘development need’. Furthermore, in the context that Objectives 1-2 requires a scheme to be able to be consentable and buildable to be brought forward,

relevant planning and environmental considerations (as informed by NPS policy) and operational considerations have been taken into account and balanced in choosing an appropriate site. This means that whilst flood risk has been an important factor that has been taken into account, it has been considered in a proportionate manner alongside other factors.

- 4.1.5 PPG paragraph 027a also notes, that in considering the appropriateness of site sizes, it may:

“also, in some cases, be relevant to consider whether large scale development could be split across a number of alternative sites at lower risk of flooding, but only where those alternative sites would be capable of accommodating the development in a way which would still serve its intended market(s) as effectively.”

The consideration of the Sequential Test to the Proposed Development therefore took account of the ability of sites to aid the Applicant in servicing the 500MW substation connection capacity at Monk Fryston as the ‘intended market’ that the Proposed Development needs to serve.

- 4.1.6 This section explains how the Sequential Test has been applied in the site selection process for the Proposed Development. The Flood Risk Assessment (ES Volume 3) [EN0110012/APP/LVS/06.03.15.01a] sets out application of the Sequential Test at site level to the layout of the Solar Development Sites (for instance, by locating vulnerable infrastructure) and application of the Exception Test.

The Solar Development Sites

- 4.1.7 The Flood Zone extents for the Order Limits can be seen on ES Figure 15.10 (ES Volume 2) [EN0110012/APP/LVS/06.02.15.10] and a summary of the Flood Zone classification for each Solar Development Site is provided below. Details of flood risks from other sources of flooding are dealt with in **Annex D** to this report and the Flood Risk Assessment for the Proposed Development at ES Appendix 15.1 (Volume 3) [EN0110012/APP/LVS/06.03.15.01a]:

- 1) **Solar Development Site 1:** Solar Development Site 1 is considered as two distinct parcels each with different Flood Zone classifications. The northern parcel of land is predominately in Flood Zone 1 and the southern parcel in Flood Zones 2 and 3.
- 2) **Solar Development Site 2:** Solar Development Site 2 is predominantly located in Flood Zone 1, with a small area of land along the eastern boundary of the site located within Flood Zones 2 and 3 in the vicinity of Fleet Dike.
- 3) **Solar Development Site 3:** Solar Development Site 3 is located within Flood Zone 2.
- 4) **Solar Development Site 4:** Solar Development Site 4 is situated within Flood Zones 2 and 3. A large area to the northeast of the site is within

Flood Zone 3, with the remainder of Solar Development Site 4 being within or surrounded by Flood Zone 2.

- 5) **Solar Development Site 6:** Solar Development Site 6 is predominantly located within Flood Zone 1. Areas of Flood Zone 2 and 3 are located within the immediate vicinity around Milford Common Drain and Lumby Common Drain, which cross the site.
- 6) **Solar Development Site 7:** Solar Development Site 7 is located entirely within Flood Zone 1.
- 7) **Solar Development Site 8:** Solar Development Site 8 is predominantly in Flood Zone 1, with parcels of land adjacent to the northern and western boundary being located within Flood Zone 2 in close proximity to Habholme Dike.

- 4.1.8 Solar Development Site 5, as presented at EIA Scoping and at non-statutory consultation, was removed from the Proposed Development before statutory consultation. More detailed flood modelling was carried out which confirmed that Solar Development Site 5 was not suitable for development due to potential flood depths.

The Cable Route Corridor

- 4.1.9 The Interconnecting Cables and Grid Connection Corridor have been excluded from application of the Sequential Test.
- 4.1.10 As set out in ES Chapter 3: Alternatives and Design Iteration (ES Volume 1) **[EN0110012/APP/LVS/06.01.03]**, the routing of the Cable Route Corridor was chosen in order to minimise potential impacts on various environmental constraints. The Cable Route Corridor does pass through areas at higher risk of flooding, and a site-specific Flood Risk Assessment for the Cable Route Corridor is provided in ES Appendix 15.1 Annex H: Cable Route Corridor **[EN0110012/APP/LVS/06.03.15.01a]**. However, as reported in the Flood Risk Assessment, the overall risk of flooding in the Cable Route Corridor is low from rivers, surface water, groundwater and very low from artificial sources given that the cables will be located underground and will be designed to mitigate risks from groundwater such as through use of sealed joint bays, appropriate backfill materials and implementation of local drainage measures during construction. Given that the cables, once installed, are likely to have little effect on flood risk, it is not necessary to consider the Cable Route Corridor further in the Sequential Test.

4.2 Policy Context

Overarching National Policy Statement (NPS) for Energy (EN-1)

- 4.2.1 The aims of planning policy on development and flood risk are set out within paragraph 5.8.6 of NPS EN-1, *“to ensure that flood risk from all sources of flooding is taken into account at all stages in the planning process to avoid*

inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding, and to steer new development to areas with the lowest risk of flooding.”

- 4.2.2 NPS EN-1 notes that new energy infrastructure can be exceptionally necessary in flood risk areas, for example, if there are no reasonably available sites in areas at a lower risk of flooding. This is set out in paragraph 5.8.7 of NPS EN-1 and aims to ensure that the development does not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere and where possible, reduces flood risk overall. The development should also be designed and constructed to remain operational in times of flooding.
- 4.2.3 The application of the Sequential Test is set out in paragraph 5.8.21 of NPS EN-1 with a sequential, risk-based approach followed to steer new development towards areas with the lowest risk of flooding (Flood Zone 1). If land within Flood Zone 1 is not reasonably available, consideration should then be given to sites within medium risk areas (Flood Zone 2). Only after all reasonably available sites within Flood Zones 1 and 2 have been assessed can sites within high risk areas (Flood Zone 3) be considered.
- 4.2.4 NPS EN-1 paragraph 5.8.9 notes that if no sites at a lower risk of flooding have been identified following the Sequential Test, then the Exception Test can be applied. The Exception Test provides a *“method of allowing necessary development to go ahead in situations where suitable sites at lower risk of flooding are not available.”* However, as noted in paragraph 5.8.10, the Exception Test can only be applied where the Sequential Test cannot deliver an acceptable site and it has *“identified reasonably available, lower risk sites appropriate for the proposed development, where accounting for wider sustainable development objectives, application of relevant policies would provide a clear reason for refusing development in any alternative locations identified.”* This includes alternative sites that are within national, heritage and nature conservation designations such as National Landscapes, SSSIs and World Heritage Sites, where development would not usually be considered appropriate.
- 4.2.5 In order to pass the Exception Test, paragraph 5.8.11 of NPS EN-1 states that it must be demonstrated that:
- “the project would provide wider sustainability benefits to the community that outweigh flood risk; and*
- the project will be safe for its lifetime taking account of the vulnerability of its user, without increasing flood risk elsewhere, and, where possible will reduce flood risk overall.”*
- 4.2.6 As set out in paragraph 5.8.12 of NPS EN-1, there must be no increase in flood risk elsewhere as a result of development, with this considered in design. The predicted impacts of climate change throughout the lifetime of development must also be accounted for. Development should not result in the net loss of floodplain storage, and any deflection or constriction of flood flow routes should be safely managed within the development site. Natural flood management techniques should be incorporated into mitigation measures.

- 4.2.7 Should development be located within an area at risk of flooding, it is vital that a sequential approach is applied to the layout and design of development. NPS EN-1 paragraph 5.8.29 states that any vulnerable aspects of the development should be located on parts of the site which have a lower and residual risk of flooding. It goes on to state that opportunities should also be sought to use open space for purposes such as amenity, wildlife habitat and flood storage uses. Further opportunities should be taken to reduce built footprint of previously developed sites and the implementation of SuDS which will lower flood risk.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 4.2.8 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Ref 17) states at paragraph 170 that in terms of development within areas at risk of flooding, this should be *“avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk. Where development is necessary in such areas, the development should be made safe for its lifetime without increasing flood risk elsewhere.”*
- 4.2.9 In areas known to be at risk of flooding now or in the future, a sequential risk-based approach should be undertaken with development steered to areas with the lowest risk of flooding from any source. Should there be any reasonably available sites appropriate for the proposed development in areas with a lower risk of flooding, development should not be allocated or permitted (paragraphs 173 and 174).
- 4.2.10 Paragraph 175 of the NPPF outlines the approach for the Sequential Test and when it should be used:
“The Sequential Test should be used in areas known to be at risk now or in the future from any form of flooding, except in situations where a site-specific flood risk assessment demonstrates that no built development within the site boundary, including access or escape routes, land raising or other potentially vulnerable elements, would be located on an area that would be at risk of flooding from any source, now and in the future (having regard to potential changes in flood risk).”
- 4.2.11 Following the application of the Sequential Test, if it is not possible to locate development within areas with a lower risk of flooding, the Exception Test may then be applied. However, as noted within paragraph 177, the need for the Exception Test will depend on the potential vulnerability of the site and the development proposal, as outlined within the Flood Risk Vulnerability Classification set out in Annex 3 of the NPPF. Notably, Annex 3 of the NPPF specifically refers to solar farms by classing such development as *‘essential infrastructure.’*
- 4.2.12 Paragraph 178 of the NPPF sets out the approach for the Exception Test, noting that it should be informed by a strategic or site-specific flood risk assessment. To pass the Exception Test, it has to be demonstrated that:
a) *“the development would provide wider sustainability benefits to the community that outweigh the flood risk; and*

b) the development will be safe for its lifetime taking account of the vulnerability of its users, without increasing flood risk elsewhere, and, where possible, will reduce flood risk overall.”

4.2.13 Where development is permitted within areas at risk of flooding, and the Sequential and Exception Tests have been applied, it must be demonstrated through a site-specific flood risk assessment that (paragraph 181):

- a) “within the site, the most vulnerable development is located in areas of lowest flood risk, unless there are overriding reasons to prefer a different location;*
- b) the development is appropriately flood resistant and resilient such that, in the event of a flood, it could be quickly brought back into use without significant refurbishment;*
- c) it incorporates sustainable drainage systems, unless there is clear evidence that this would be inappropriate;*
- d) any residual risk can be safely managed; and*
- e) safe access and escape routes are included where appropriate, as part of an agreed emergency plan.”*

4.2.14 The Government began a consultation on an updated NPPF on 16 December 2025, with the consultation scheduled to close on 10 March 2026. As a final version has not yet been published, it is not a material consideration (and thus for DCO purposes, not an important and relevant consideration). It has therefore not been considered for submission of the DCO Application. The position will be reviewed during Examination of the DCO Application.

Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) – Flood risk and coastal change

4.2.15 NPS EN-1 refers to the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) for flood risk to provide guidance on how the Sequential and Exception Tests should be applied.

4.2.16 The PPG states that the Sequential Test has been designed to ensure that areas at little or no risk of flooding from any source are developed in preference to other areas at a higher risk of flooding (Paragraph: 023 Reference ID 7-023-20220825).

4.2.17 All forms of flood risk such as surface water flooding need to be treated consistently with river (fluvial) and tidal flooding in mapping probability and accessing vulnerability, so that the Sequential Test can be applied across all areas at risk of flooding (Paragraph: 023 Reference ID 7-023-20220825).

4.2.18 The PPG reiterates that the Sequential Test ensures that a sequential, risk-based approach is followed to steer new development towards areas with the lowest risk of flooding, taking account all sources of flood risk and climate change. Where it is not possible for development to be located within areas at low risk of flooding, the Sequential Test should compare reasonably available sites within medium risk areas and only then, when there are no reasonably available sites in low and medium risk areas, within high risk areas (Paragraph: 024 Reference ID 7-024-20220825).

- 4.2.19 In terms of applying the Sequential Test, the PPG notes paragraph 175 of the NPPF and states that a proportionate approach should be taken in relation to surface water flooding in particular. As noted above, it goes on to say that where a site-specific flood risk assessment clearly demonstrates that the proposed layout, design and mitigation measures would ensure that occupiers and users would remain safe from both current and future surface water flood risk for the lifetime of the development, without increasing the risk of flood risk elsewhere, then the Sequential Test does not need to be applied (Paragraph: 027 Paragraph Reference ID: 7-027-20220825).
- 4.2.20 When determining the search area for the application of the Sequential Test, the PPG notes that this can be defined by local circumstances relating to the type of development proposed and the needs it proposes to address. The catchment area should be appropriate to the nature and scale of the proposal and the settlement it is proposed for. There should be a focus on assessing realistic alternative sites in areas at lower risk of flooding which can meet the same development need as the proposed site (Paragraph: 027a Reference ID 7-027a-20220825).
- 4.2.21 The PPG states that for infrastructure proposals of regional or national importance, the search area may extend beyond the local planning authority boundary. Consideration may also need to be given to whether large scale development could be split across a number of alternative sites at lower risk of flooding, but only where the alternative sites could be capable of accommodating the development effectively (Paragraph: 027a Reference ID 7-027a-20220825).
- 4.2.22 For a site to be considered 'reasonably available', the PPG states that their location must be suitable for the type of development proposed, they are able to meet the same development needs, and they have a reasonable prospect of being developed at the same time as the proposal. Where alternative lower-risk sites could be capable of accommodating the proposed development, they do not need to be owned by the applicant to be considered 'reasonably available' (Paragraph: 028 Reference ID 7-028-20220825).
- 4.2.23 The approach to the Exception Test is reiterated in the PPG as set out in NPS EN-1 and the NPPF.
- 4.2.24 The Exception Test should however not be used to justify development in areas at risk of flooding when the Sequential Test has already shown that there are reasonably available, lower risk sites which are appropriate for the proposed development (Paragraph: 031 Reference ID 7-031-20220825).

Local planning policy

- 4.2.25 In regard to the Sequential Test, the Selby District Core Strategy (being the relevant Local Plan for the Proposed Development) (Ref 4) states that wherever possible, development will be avoided in areas at risk of flooding through the application of the Sequential Test and Exception Test. Where development must be located within areas of flood risk, it must be demonstrated that development

can be safe without increasing the risk of flood risk elsewhere (Policy SP15: Sustainable Development and Climate Change).

- 4.2.26 North Yorkshire Council launched on 1 April 2023, replacing the previous two-tier system of local government in North Yorkshire which was made up of the county council and seven district and borough authorities (including Selby District Council). As a result, a new North Yorkshire Local Plan ((Ref 18) is being prepared to replace the separate district local plans. The North Yorkshire Local Plan is still in its infancy (adoption is anticipated for late 2028) and a draft plan is yet to be published. On that basis, it has not been considered for this report.

4.3 Application of the Sequential Test to site selection

- 4.3.1 The Sequential Test has been applied in site selection for the Proposed Development in accordance with NPS EN-1, the NPPF, the PPG and local planning policy. As detailed above, a staged approach to site selection was adopted, considering areas at lower risk of flooding first.
- 4.3.2 At Stage 2 of site selection, areas within Flood Zones 2 and 3 were excluded from the area of search, in order to focus the initial search for sites on areas at lower risk of flooding. As set out in Section 2.4 above, other constraints were also excluded at this stage, including ALC Grades 1, 2 and 3 and Green Belt. As a result of this exercise, four PDAs were identified for further assessment. However, due to existing or proposed land use and site size, none of those PDAs were able to accommodate a solar project equivalent to the Proposed Development or deliver the Project Objectives. On the basis that the PDAs were constrained, flood risk to the PDAs from other sources was not considered at this stage and the PDAs were discounted.
- 4.3.3 At Stage 5 of the site selection process, and on the basis that the initial four PDAs on areas of lower flood risk were not viable, constrained land was considered, including land within Flood Zones 2 and 3, and land constrained by ALC Grades 2 and 3 and Green Belt. Whilst Flood Zones 2 and 3 were included in their entirety, the Applicant took a proportionate approach to selecting the PDAs, focussing on land which appeared less constrained. By doing so, the Applicant avoided large areas of land constrained by flood risk, such as in the east of the search area around the River Ouse and Humber Estuary. This demonstrates a sequential and proportionate approach to site selection.
- 4.3.4 PDAs 5 to 9 have been assessed against standardised assessment criteria as set out in **Annex C** and the assessment results are set out in **Annex D**. This includes an assessment of the PDAs against all sources of flooding.
- 4.3.5 In addition to the PDAs, a further area of land, shown on **Figure 22, Annex A**, was identified and considered at a high level (as set out in Section 3.3 above). This area of land is within Flood Zone 1, but was quickly discounted for other reasons (namely land use and lack of available space for a project equivalent to the Proposed Development, which means it could not meet the Project Objectives). Therefore it was not taken forward for more detailed assessment including a more thorough assessment of flood risk from all sources.

- 4.3.6 With regard to flood risk, PDA 5 performs better than PDAs 6, 7, 8 and 9 (PDA 8 being the site of the Proposed Development). It is largely located on Flood Zone 1 and surface water flooding is limited within PDA 5. All PDAs perform similarly in relation to flood risk from groundwater and sewers and the risk from artificial sources of flooding for PDA 5 is low. However, PDA 5 has been discounted for other, non-flood related reasons which make it unsuitable for development. This includes:
- 1) land use constraints, because the PDA comprises 84% Grade 2 agricultural land and is entirely located within the Green Belt;
 - 2) cultural heritage constraints including the presence of a Registered Battlefield which covers most of the northern part of the PDA and would not be able to be utilised for the Proposed Development; and
 - 3) PDA 5 is not considered to meet all of the Project Objectives and in particular, due to its size, would not meet Objectives 1 and 3.
- 4.3.7 Given the above, PDA 5 was discounted.
- 4.3.8 Of the remaining three PDAs, PDA 7 performs better than PDAs 6, 8 and 9 in terms of flood risk, with a large proportion of the PDA located in Flood Zone 1. There are areas of Flood Zones 2 and 3 present, but these could potentially be avoided through design. However, there are large areas of surface water flooding in the southern section of the PDA which would need to be managed. All PDAs perform similarly in relation to flood risk from groundwater and sewers and the risk from artificial sources of flooding for PDA 7 is low. However, PDA 7 has been assessed as unsuitable for development due to ecology constraints, notably the presence of multiple statutorily designated sites on both the eastern and western borders. The designations on the eastern border run the entire length of the PDA and would not be easily avoided through design. Finally, existing land uses in the southwest section of the PDA would require a large section of the PDA to be removed which, in combination with the removal of land due to flood risk and ecology constraints, would not leave sufficient land to deliver the Proposed Development. On this basis, PDA 7 is not considered to meet Project Objectives 1 and 3 due to the lack of available land for development once constraints have been avoided. The PDA is also unlikely to deliver the required ecological mitigation requirements (Project Objective 4) due to the extent and location of ecological constraints which would require large sections of the PDA to be avoided. Therefore, it has been discounted.
- 4.3.9 PDAs 6, 8 and 9 are all considered to be heavily constrained by flood risk. All contain areas of Flood Zones 2 and 3 which could not be entirely avoided through design (albeit less vulnerable elements of the built development could be placed in higher risk areas for PDAs 6 and 8). All PDAs contain areas at high risk of surface water flooding. All PDAs perform similarly in relation to flood risk from groundwater and sewers flooding from artificial sources.
- 4.3.10 However, PDA 9 contains more areas of Flood Zones 2 and 3 than PDAs 6 and 8, as summarised in Table 3-1 (Section 3.4) above. As a result, there are fewer opportunities to site vulnerable infrastructure on areas at lower risk of flooding for

- PDA 9. PDA 9 has also been discounted for non-flood related matters, namely landscape and visual, heritage, and land use. PDA 9 is also not considered able to meet all of the Project Objectives. On that basis, PDA 9 has been discounted.
- 4.3.11 Unlike PDA 8, PDA 6 is outside of the Green Belt. However, PDA 6 has been discounted for other, non-flood related reasons as well as flood risk. In particular, PDA 6 is heavily constrained by land use, with the entirety of the PDA being located on Grade 2 BMV agricultural land. There are also cultural heritage constraints with one Grade II Listed Building within the PDA and other notable heritage assets nearby. It is also unclear whether the land would be available, as initial approaches to the landowners revealed a lack of opportunity to accommodate the Scheme. PDA 6 is not considered able to fully meet the Project Objectives and has therefore been discounted.
- 4.3.12 PDA 8 (being the site of the Proposed Development) is constrained by flood risk (with similar constraints to PDA 6). However, it performs better overall than the other PDAs identified, when all assessment criteria are considered. (based on publicly available data, see Section 1.3 above). As to land use, PDA 8 is constrained by areas of Green Belt unlike PDA 6, but it contains less Green Belt than PDA 5. PDA 8 includes some areas of higher grade agricultural land, but it contains less of these constrained areas than PDAs 5 and 6. There are no major cultural heritage, or ecology or landscape constraints PDA 8, which are present for other PDAs. PDA 8 is also considered able to meet all the Project Objectives and, whilst the site is environmentally constrained, it is no more constrained than the alternatives considered. On that basis, PDA 8 has been taken forward as the site for the Proposed Development.
- 4.3.13 In conclusion, the Sequential Test has been taken to site selection, with the initial search for sites focussed on areas at lower risk of flooding (i.e. the 'unconstrained areas'). No areas at lower risk of flooding were assessed as suitable for development, and therefore the Applicant went on to consider higher risk areas and five PDAs were identified for assessment. Of these, PDA 8 has been selected as the most suitable for development. Whilst PDA 8 carried a higher amount of Flood Risk Zone 2 land than PDAs 5 and 7, and a similar amount to PDA 6, it contains less than PDA 9. PDA 8 is also considered to be the most suitable for development of all of these PDAs, when other environmental and planning factors are considered, and best placed to meet the Project Objectives. This approach demonstrates that the Sequential Test has been applied and is in line with PPG Paragraph: 027a Reference ID: 7-027a-20220825, which states that the Sequential Test should be applied proportionately, focussing on realistic alternatives in areas of lower flood risk that could meet the same development need.

5 Conclusion

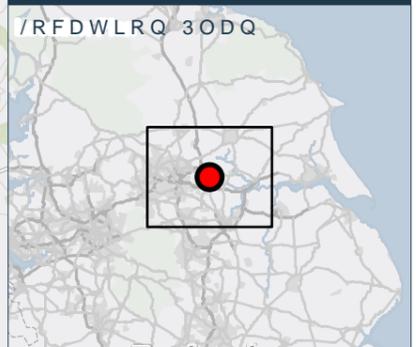
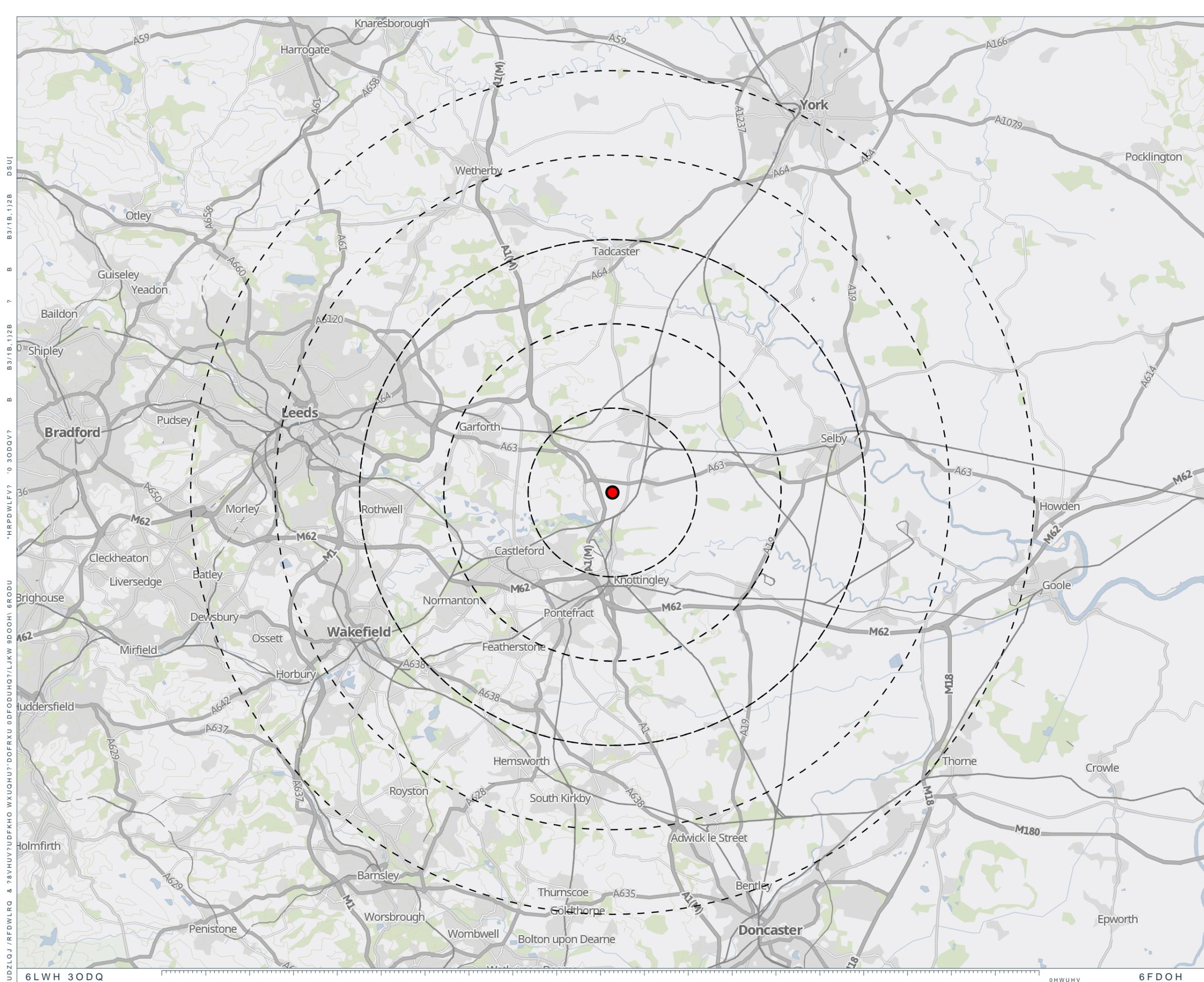
- 5.1.1 A methodical site selection process has been undertaken to consider alternative reasonably available sites which would be suitable for the location of the Proposed Development. This involved a proportionate approach in accordance with NPS EN-1, seeking sites which had the potential to meet the Project Objectives.
- 5.1.2 As demonstrated, no unconstrained land has been identified within the search area which is suitable and available to accommodate the Proposed Development. Therefore, constrained land has been considered. Within that constrained land, using professional judgement, a range of factors were considered against standardised assessment criteria and against the Project Objectives to identify the land to be taken forward.
- 5.1.3 Noting the absence of any suitable and available unconstrained land, it is considered that there are no more suitable locations within the area of search than the location for the Proposed Development, based on the criteria identified. Subsequently, the Proposed Development's location is assessed to be suitable and appropriate for the scale of solar development proposed.
- 5.1.4 Section 4 of this SSAR sets out how the sequential test has been applied in site selection. It demonstrates that the Applicant's search for sites was initially focussed on areas at lower risk of flooding and that areas at higher risk were only considered once lower risk areas had been discounted. Whilst PDA 8 carried a higher amount of Flood Risk Zone 2 land than PDAs 5 and 7, and a similar amount to PDA 6, PDA 8 is considered to be the most suitable for development of all of these PDAs, when other environmental and planning factors are considered, and best placed to meet the Project Objectives. This approach demonstrates that the Sequential Test has been applied and is in line with PPG Paragraph: 027a Reference ID: 7-027a-20220825, which states that the Sequential Test should be applied proportionately, focussing on realistic alternatives in areas of lower flood risk that could meet the same development need.

6 References

- Ref 1 Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (2023) Overarching National Policy Statement for energy (EN-1). Available at: [\(https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/overarching-national-policy-statement-for-energy-en-1-2025#:~:text=This%20version%20of%20the%20overarching,nationally%20significant%20infrastructure%20projects%20\(%20NSIPs%20\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/overarching-national-policy-statement-for-energy-en-1-2025#:~:text=This%20version%20of%20the%20overarching,nationally%20significant%20infrastructure%20projects%20(%20NSIPs%20)) (last accessed 08.01.2026)
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Annex A Site Selection Assessment Figures



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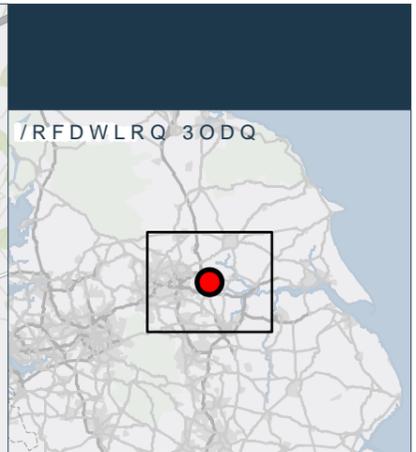
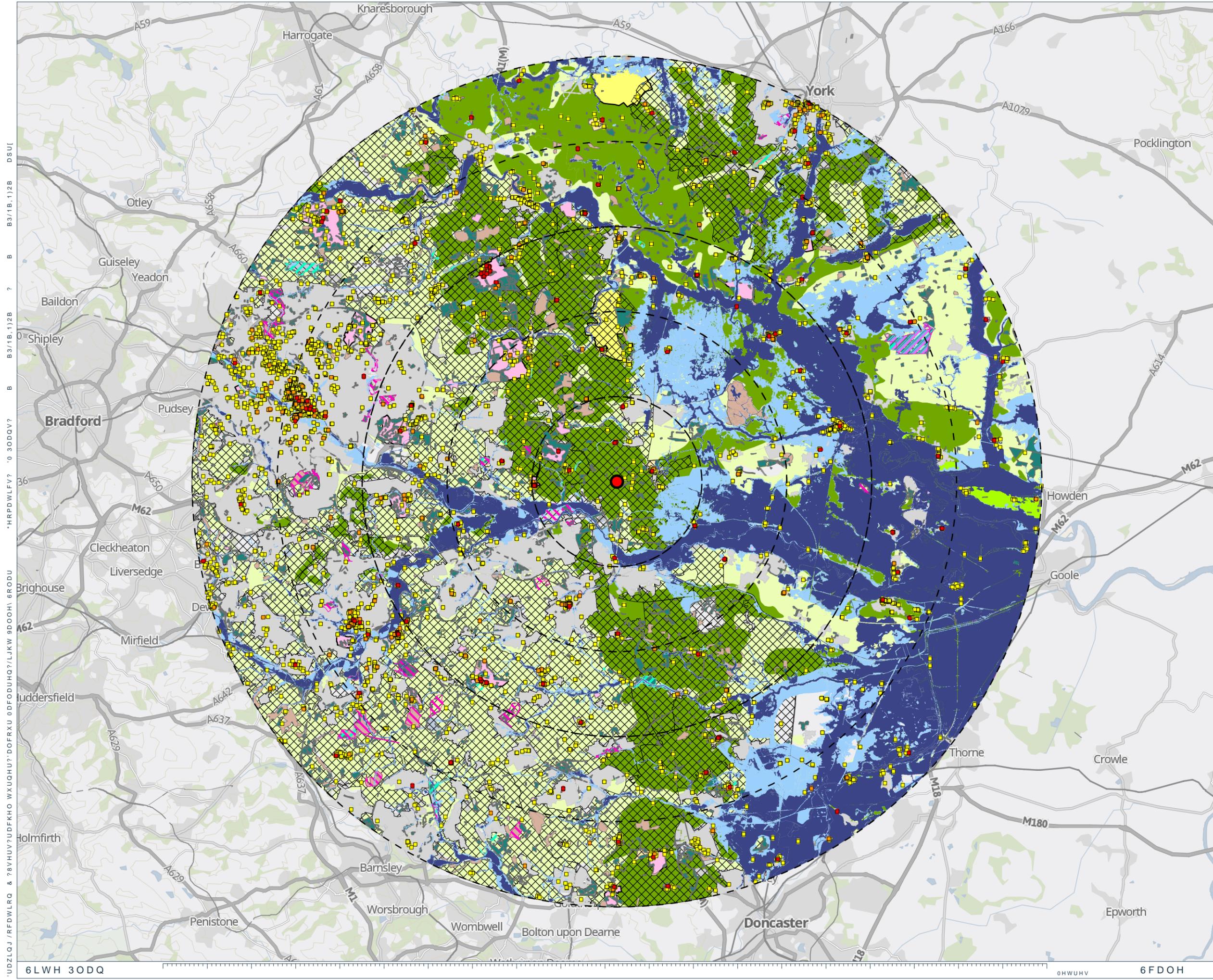
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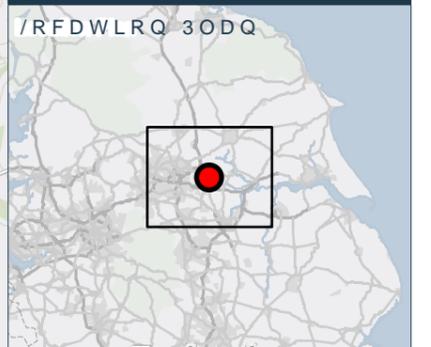
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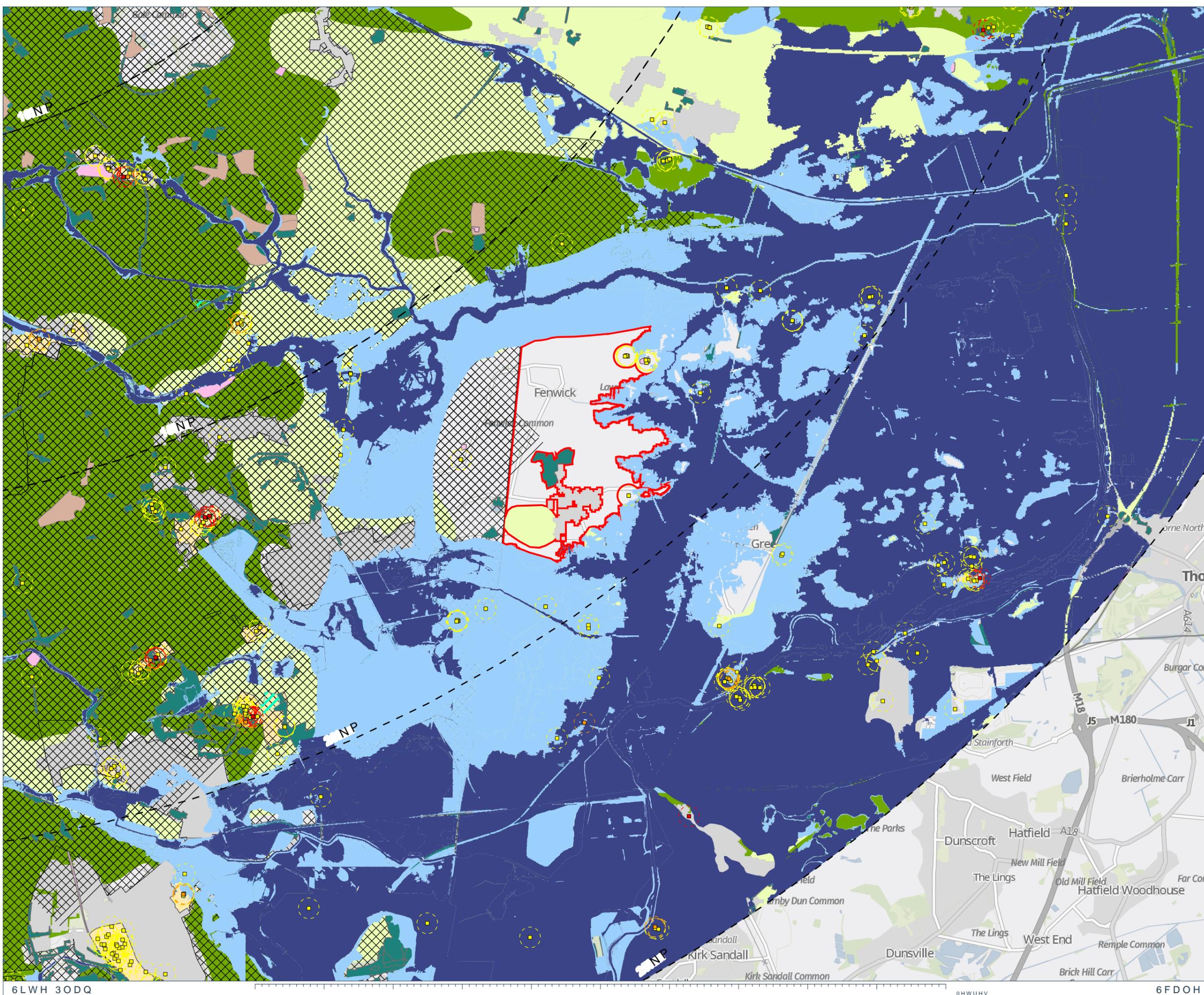
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GRHV QRW DFFRSW ODELOLW\ IRU DO\ ORV FDXVHG RU DULV
KHUHO SOWRXXJK RXU EHVW HIRUVV KDYH EHQH PDGH WR F
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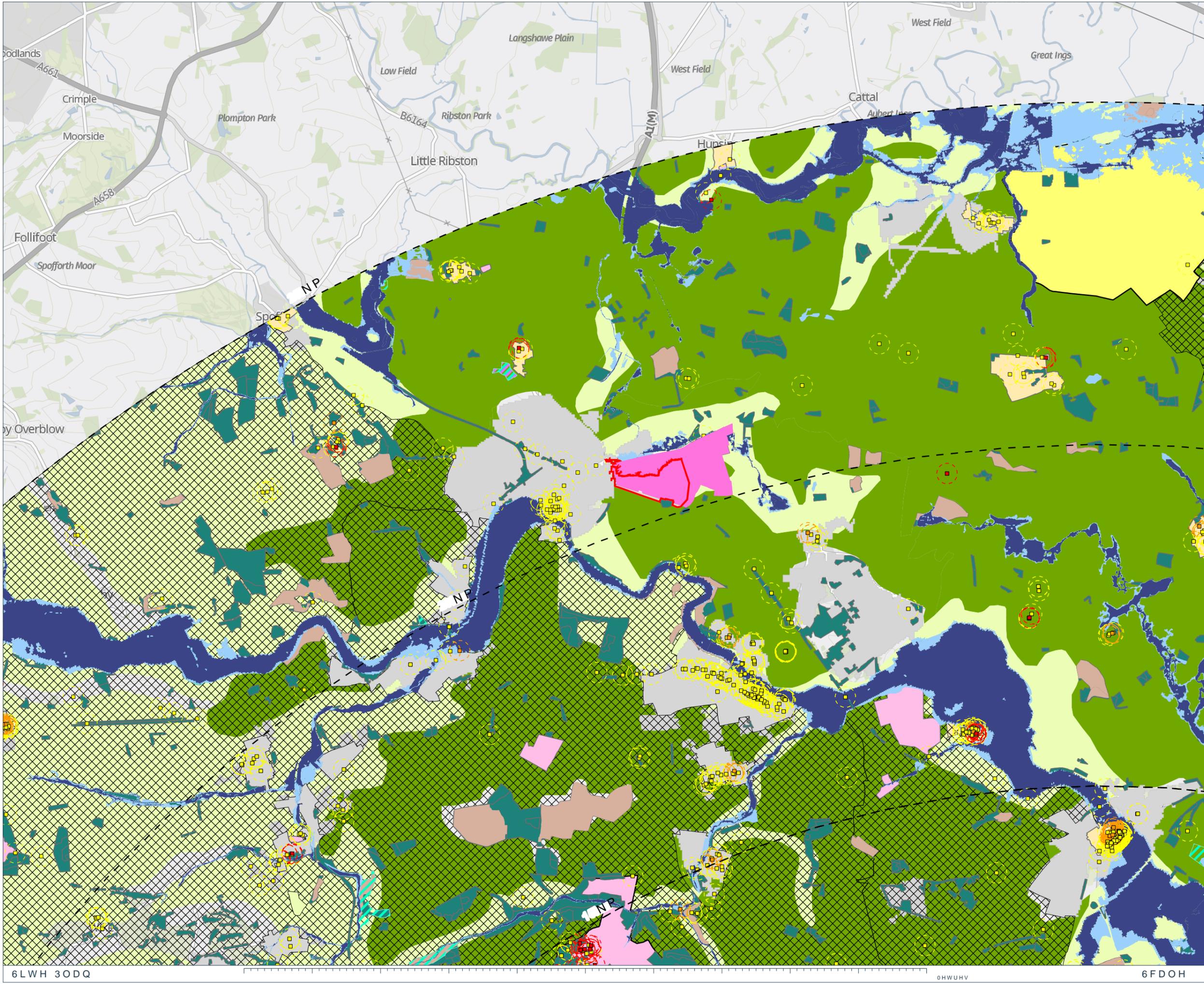
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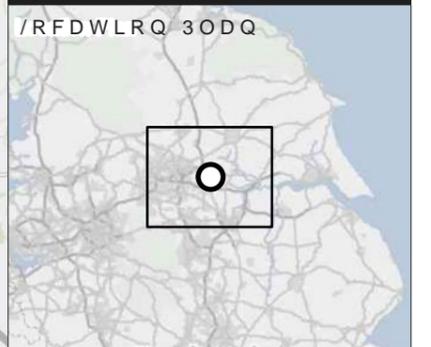
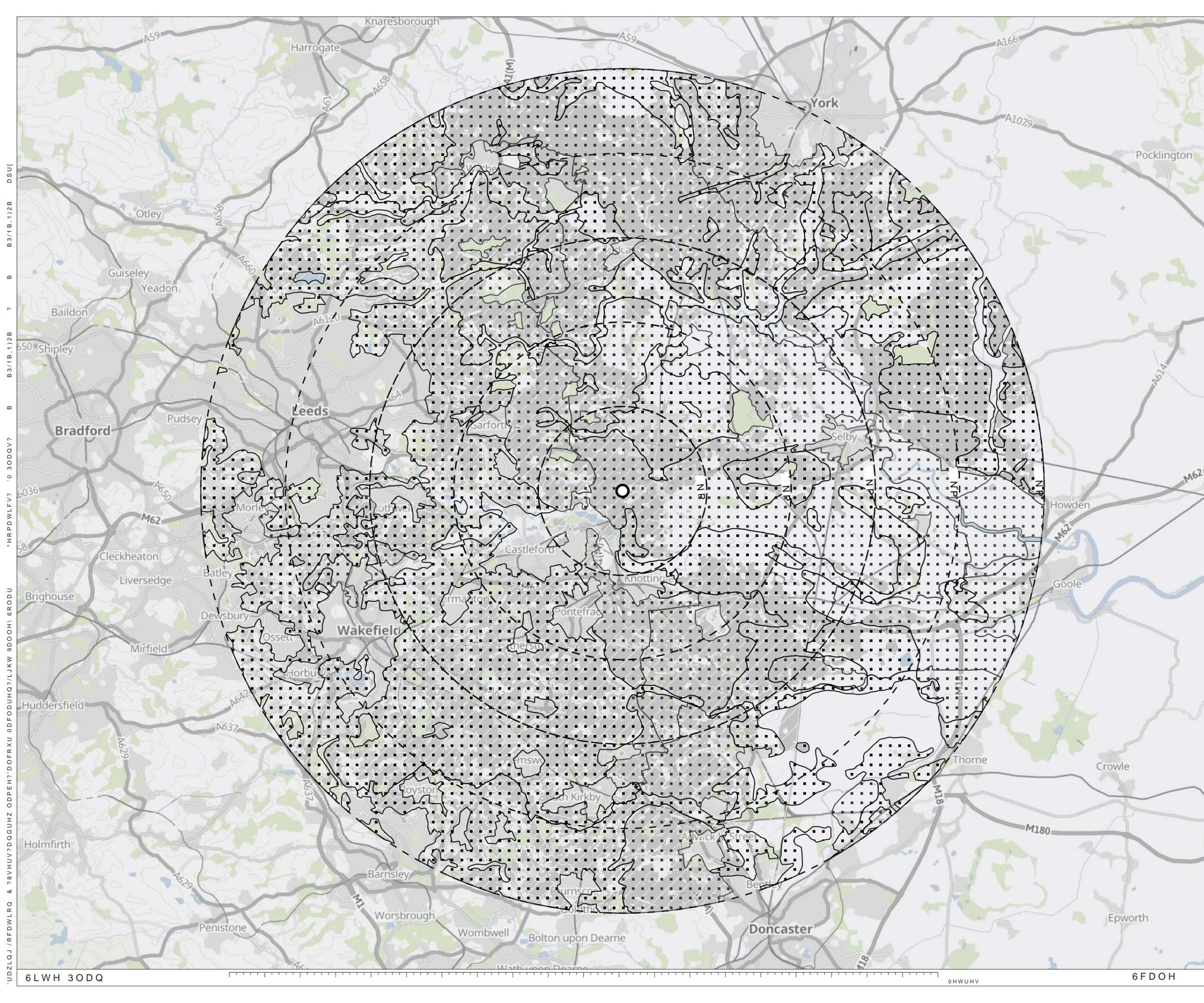
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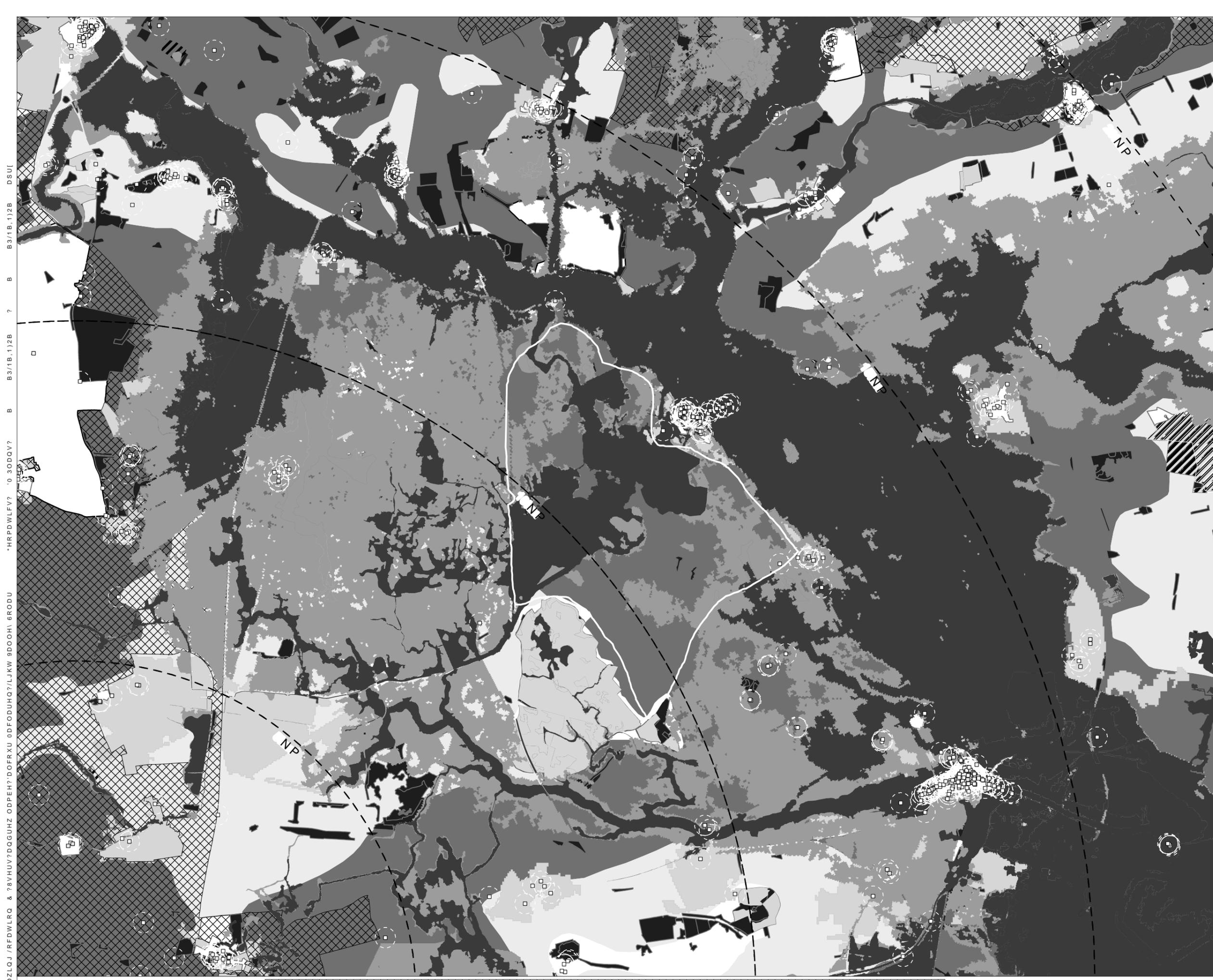
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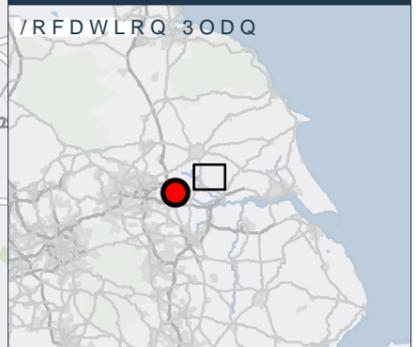
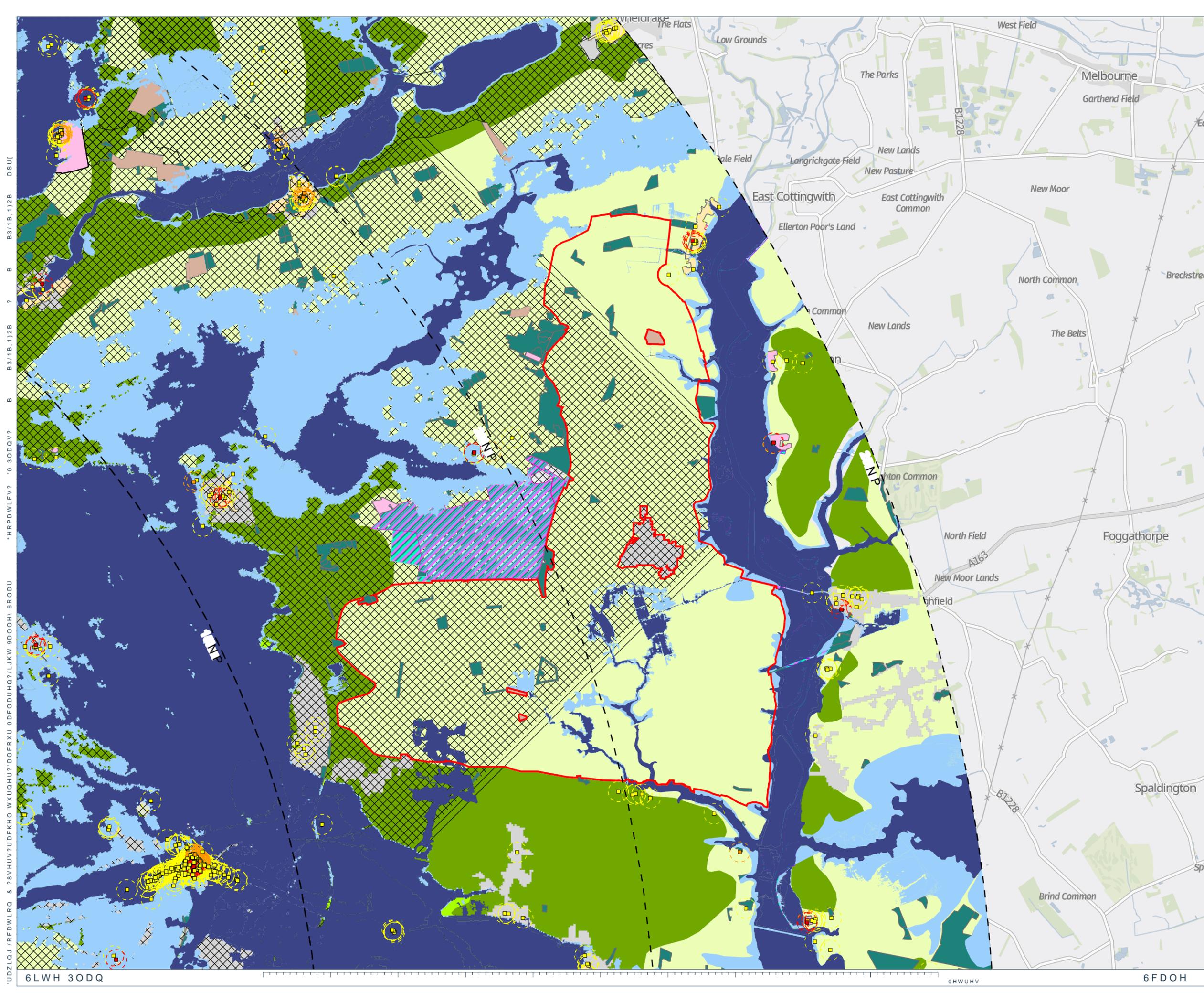
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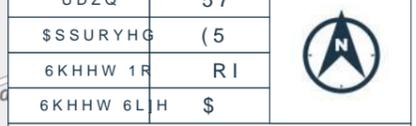
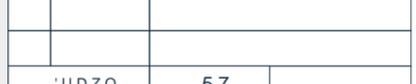
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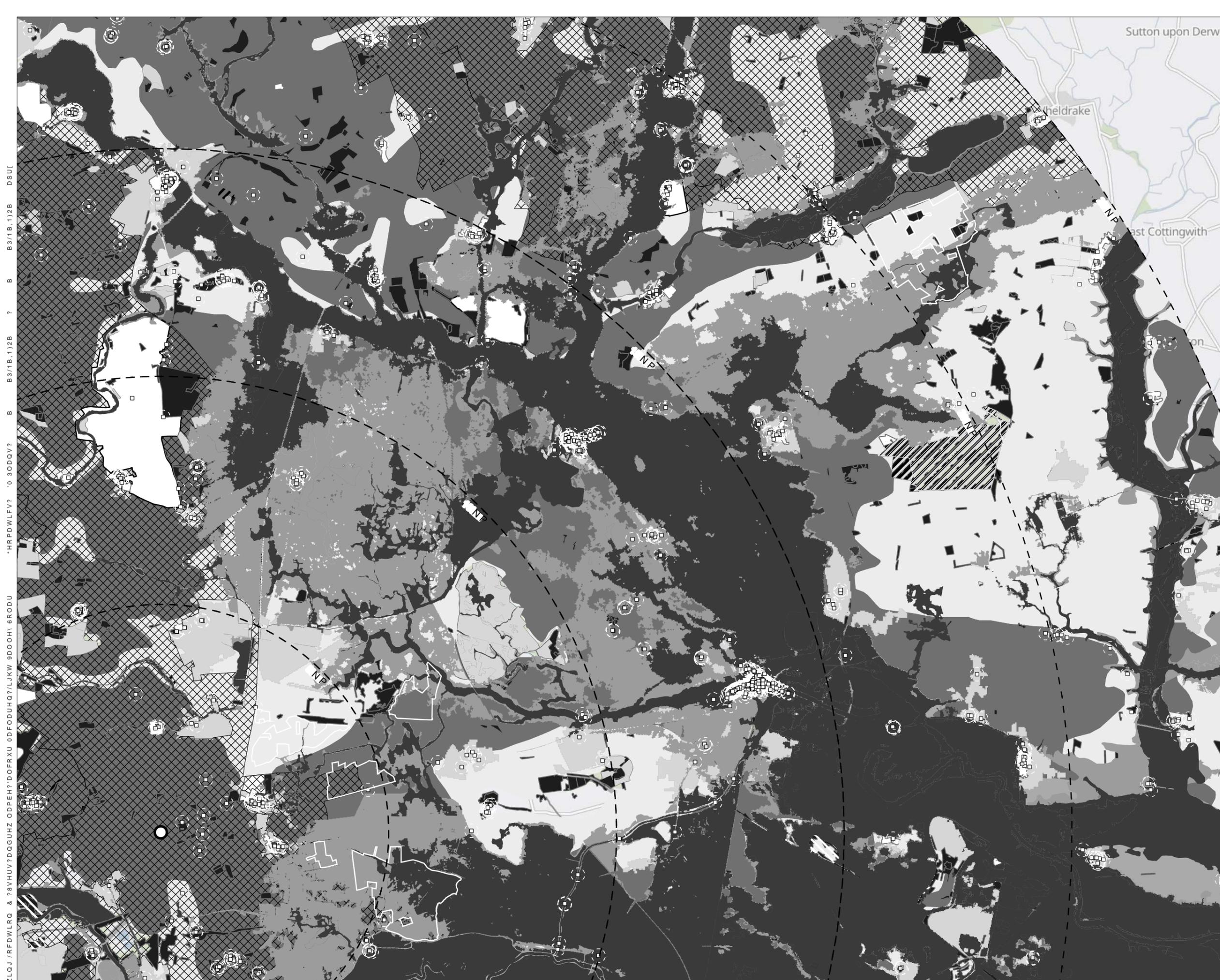
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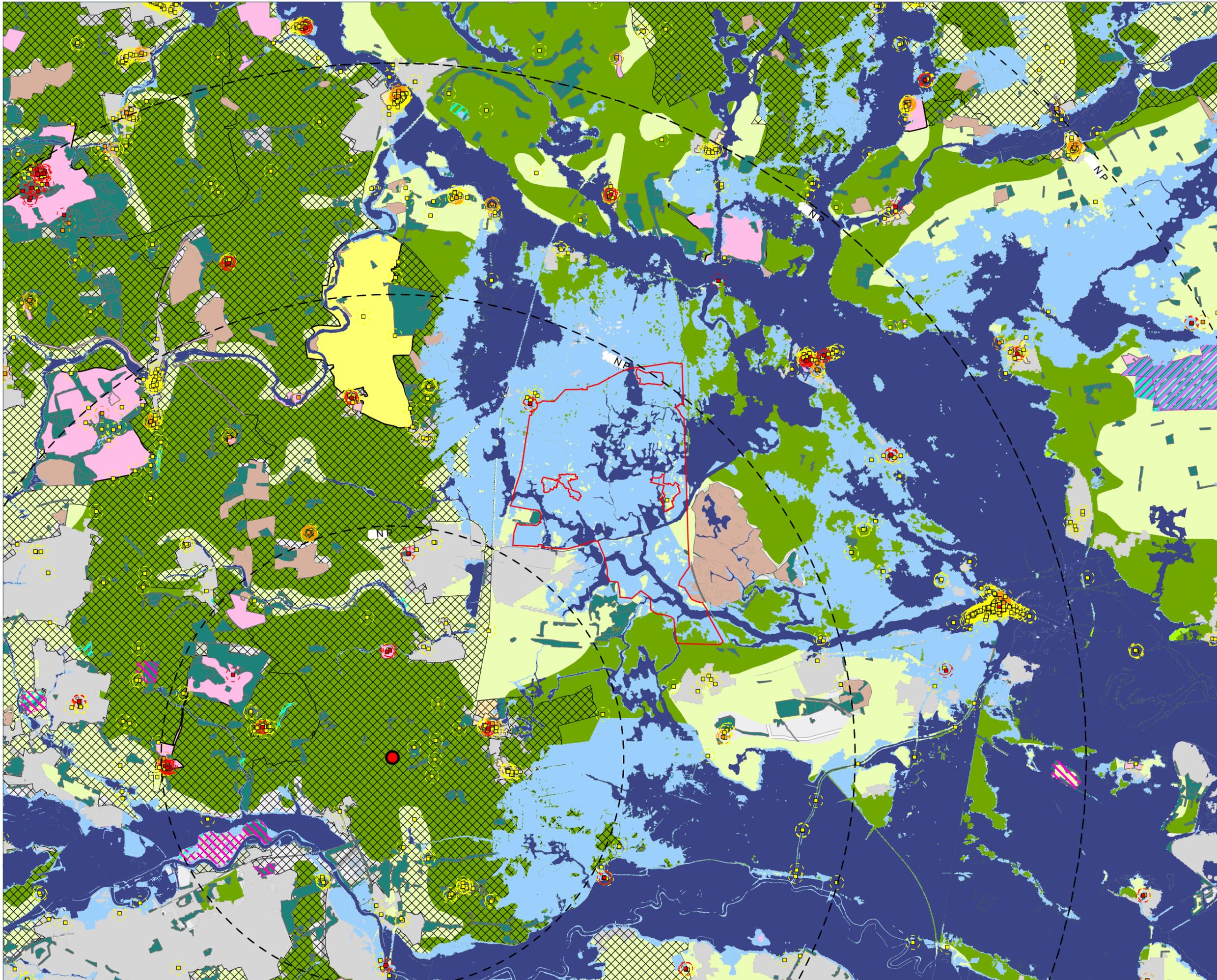
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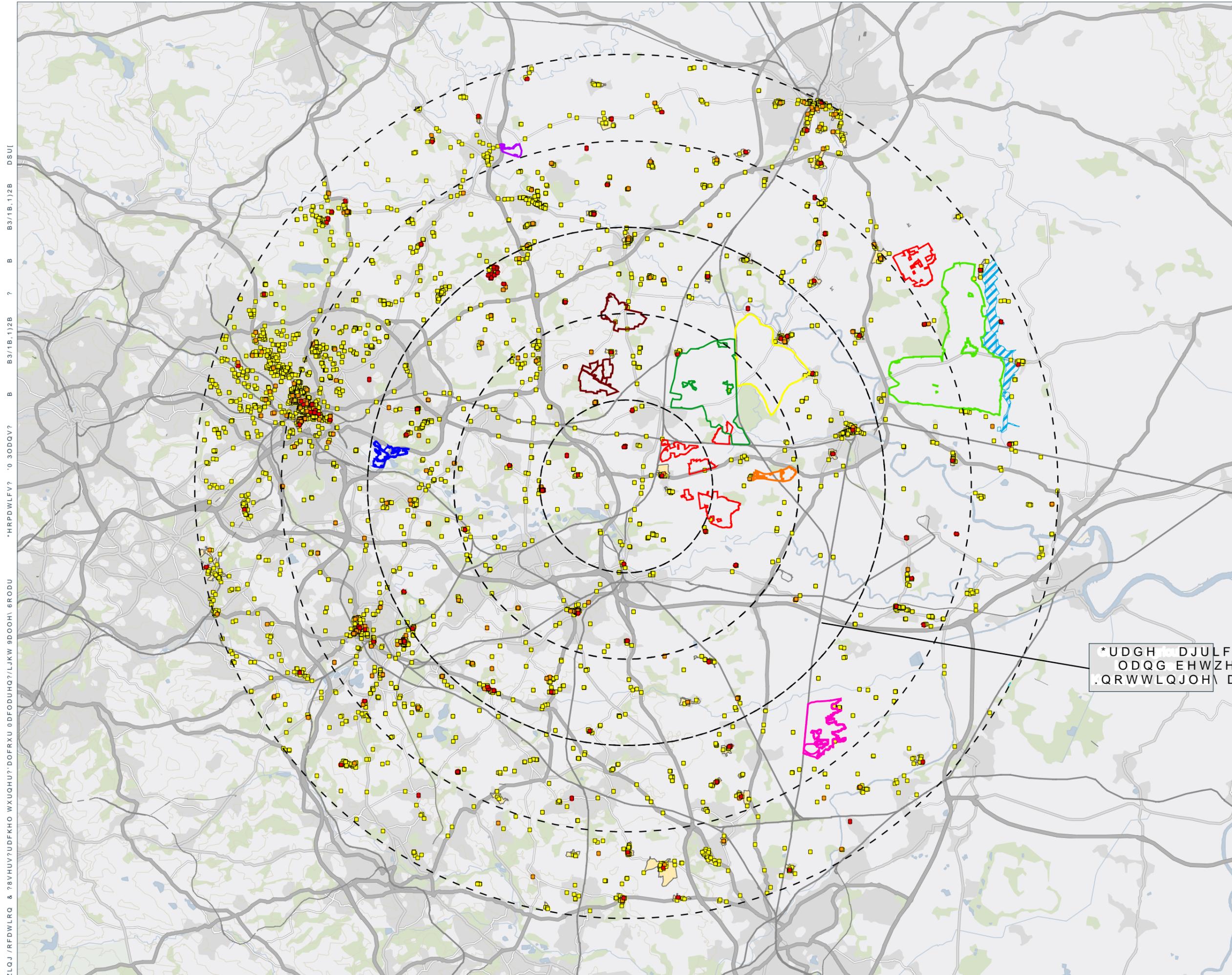
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Annex B Assessment Indicators and Evaluation Criteria

B.1. Ecology and Biodiversity

B.1.1. Assessment Indicator: Is the potential development area likely to adversely impact any (a) internationally, nationally or locally designated site of ecological, biological or geological importance, (b) habitats identified as being of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity having regard to the following evaluation criteria?

- 1) Proximity of designated sites
- 2) Level of designation and sensitivity of those designated sites
- 3) Potential for provision of mitigation measures

| RAG | Evaluation Criteria |
|-----|--|
| | The potential development area has potential to have a significant adverse impact on (a) an internationally, nationally or locally designated site of ecological, biological or geological importance, (b) protected species, or (c) habitats identified as being of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity, which may be difficult to mitigate. |
| | The potential development area has potential for some adverse impact on (a) an internationally, nationally or locally designated site of ecological, biological or geological importance, (b) protected species, or (c) habitats identified as being of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity, which could be mitigated through appropriate buffers and management measures. |
| | The potential development area is unlikely to impact upon on (a) an internationally, nationally or locally designated site of ecological, biological or geological importance, (b) protected species, or (c) habitats identified as being of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity. |

B.2. Landscape and Visual

B.2.1. Assessment Indicator: Is the potential development area likely to adversely impact a locally or nationally designated landscape, or sensitive viewpoints, having regard to the following evaluation criteria?

- 1) Proximity of the potential development area from locally or nationally designated landscape, or sensitive viewpoints

- 2) Sensitivity and number of locally or nationally designated landscape, or potentially sensitive viewpoints such as from public rights of way or other public locations
- 3) Proximity of the potential development area from local community receptors
- 4) Potential for provision of screening or other mitigation measures

| RAG | Evaluation Criteria |
|-----|---|
| | The potential development area has the potential to have a significant adverse impact on a locally or nationally designated landscape, or important/sensitive viewpoints, which may be difficult to mitigate. |
| | The potential development area has potential to have some adverse impact on a locally or nationally designated landscape, or important/sensitive viewpoints, which may be difficult to mitigate. |
| | The potential development area is unlikely to have an adverse impact a locally or nationally designated landscape, or important/sensitive viewpoints, other than one which is unlikely to be difficult to mitigate. |

B.3. Land Use

B.3.1. Assessment Indicator: Does the potential development area have any existing land uses/development allocations/safeguarded areas/extant planning permissions which would potentially conflict with the proposed development having regard to the following evaluation criteria?

- 1) ALC grade for the PDA, with a preference to minimise the use of best and most versatile agricultural land
- 2) Interaction with Green Belt, which is to be avoided except in very special circumstances
- 3) Presence of Open Space, Common Land and Allotment designations within the PDA
- 4) Number and type of existing land uses within and adjacent to the potential development area
- 5) Extant planning permissions within the potential development area
- 6) Local plan/emerging local plan development allocations within the potential development area
- 7) Number and location of public rights of way within the potential development area
- 8) Proximity to urban areas

| RAG | Evaluation Criteria |
|-----|---|
| | The potential development area has the potential to conflict with a large number of uses, extant planning permissions and policy allocations which would be difficult to avoid. |
| | The potential development area has the potential to conflict with existing land uses, extant planning permissions and policy allocations which can be avoided. |
| | The potential development area has no land use conflicts. |

B.4. Cultural Heritage

B.4.1. Assessment Indicator: Is the potential development area likely to adversely impact designated heritage assets, having regard to the following evaluation criteria?

- 1) Proximity to designated heritage assets
- 2) Level and sensitivity of designated heritage assets
- 3) Potential for screening the potential development area from the asset

| RAG | Evaluation Criteria |
|-----|--|
| | The potential development area has potential to harm designated heritage assets, which may be difficult to avoid and mitigate. |
| | The potential development area has potential to harm designated heritage assets but could incorporate mitigation e.g. buffers/screening. |
| | The potential development area is unlikely to cause harm to designated assets. |

B.5. Access for Construction Traffic

B.5.1. Assessment Indicator: Is the local road network, from the primary road network to the potential development area, suitable for HGV access, having regard to the following evaluation criteria?

- 1) General suitability of the public highway
- 2) Distance to the primary road network
- 3) Sensitivity of land uses along the route to the primary road network
- 4) Physical or engineering constraints (bridges, level crossings, visibility, access points etc.)
- 5) Access to fields without having to remove hedgerows

| RAG | Evaluation Criteria |
|-----|---|
| | The local road network has significant constraints to HGV access. |
| | The local road network has some constraints to HGV access. |
| | The local road network is suitable for HGV access. |

B.6. Flood Risk

B.6.1. Assessment Indicator: Is the potential development area likely to be constrained by the risk of flooding from the relevant source (e.g fluvial, groundwater, artificial), having regard to the following factors?

| RAG | Evaluation Criteria |
|-----|--|
| | The majority of the potential development area is within an area with moderate or significant risk of flooding from the relevant source. |
| | The majority of the potential development area is within an area with no or low risk of flooding, but part of the area is within an area with a moderate or significant risk of flooding from the relevant source. |
| | The potential development area is entirely within an area with no or a low risk of flooding from the relevant source. |

B.7. Solar Array Shading

B.7.1. Assessment Indicator: Is the potential development area likely to be constrained by features which would result in shading having regard to the following factor?

- 1) Type and coverage (number) of features that might shade e.g. trees/woodland

| RAG | Evaluation Criteria |
|-----|--|
| | The potential development area has field boundary features which are likely to significantly constrain the solar array design. |
| | The potential development area has field boundary features which are likely to moderately constrain the solar array design. |
| | The potential development area has field boundary features which are unlikely to constrain the solar array design. |

B.8. Topography

B.8.1. Assessment Indicator: Is the potential development area affected by an undulating terrain of multiple gradients? The assessment will consider:

- 1) The proportion of the potential development area that is undulating/has varied topography.

| RAG | Evaluation Criteria |
|-----|--|
| | The terrain of the potential development area is likely to significantly constrain the solar array design. |
| | The terrain of the potential development area is likely to moderately constrain the solar array design. |
| | The terrain of the potential development area is unlikely to constrain the solar array design. |

B.9. Site Size

B.9.1. Assessment Indicator: Is the potential development area of sufficient size to accommodate a scheme of 500MW. The assessment will consider:

| RAG | Evaluation Criteria |
|-----|---|
| | The potential development area does not provide sufficient land to accommodate a 500 MW scheme and is too isolated from other potential development areas that could be linked. |
| | The potential development area does not provide sufficient land to accommodate a 500 MW scheme but is close to other potential development areas that could be linked. |
| | The potential development area provides sufficient land required to accommodate a 500 MW scheme. |

Annex C Assessment Indicator Policy and Guidance Justification

| Constraint/Assessment Indicator | Justification | Relevant National Policy | Relevant Local Policy | Relevant Project Objective |
|---------------------------------|--|--|--|--|
| Ecology and Biodiversity | To assess the impact on any internationally or nationally designated sites of ecological, biological or geological importance, protected species, habitats or other species identified as being of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity, in relation to the potential development area. | <p>NPS EN-1 Paragraph 5.4.2 Paragraph 5.4.4 Paragraph 5.4.5 Paragraph 5.4.7 Paragraph 5.4.8 Paragraph 5.4.13 Paragraph 5.4.14 Paragraph 5.4.16 Paragraph 5.4.17 Paragraph 5.11.27</p> <p>NPS EN-3 Paragraph 2.10.69 Paragraph 2.10.71 Paragraph 2.10.81</p> <p>NPS EN-5 Paragraph 2.2.10 Paragraph 2.9.6</p> <p>NPPF Paragraph 187 Paragraph 188 Paragraph 192 Paragraph 194 Paragraph 195</p> | <p>Selby District Core Strategy (2013) Policy SP15: Sustainable Development and Climate Change Policy SP17: Low-Carbon and Renewable Energy Policy SP18: Protecting and Enhancing the Environment Policy SP19: Design Quality</p> <p>Selby District Local Plan (2005) Environment Policies: ENV1, ENV7, ENV8, ENV9, ENV11, ENV12, ENV13, ENV14, ENV18, ENV21</p> <p>East Yorkshire Local Plan Update (2025) Policy S2: Addressing Climate Change Policy S9: Strengthening Blue/Green Infrastructure Policy EC5: Supporting the Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Sector Policy ENV1: Integrating High Quality Design Policy ENV2: Promoting a High Quality Landscape Policy ENV4: International, National, and Local Sites of Importance for Biodiversity Policy ENV5: Enhancing Biodiversity and Geodiversity</p> <p>City of York Council Local Plan (2025) Policy DP3: Sustainable Communities Policy SS1: Delivering Sustainable Growth for York Policy D2: Landscape and Setting Policy G11: Green Infrastructure Policy G12: Biodiversity and Access to Nature Policy G14: Trees and Hedgerows Policy CC1: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Generation and Storage</p> <p>Doncaster Local Plan (2021) Policy 26: Green Infrastructure Policy 29: Ecological Networks Policy 30: Valuing Biodiversity and Geodiversity</p> | Objective 4: A solar farm and battery scheme which is able to deliver on its environmental mitigation requirements and deliver community benefits. |

| Constraint/Assessment Indicator | Justification | Relevant National Policy | Relevant Local Policy | Relevant Project Objective |
|---------------------------------|---------------|--------------------------|---|----------------------------|
| | | | <p>Policy 32: Woodlands, Trees and Hedgerows Policy 33: Landscape</p> <p>Leeds City Council Core Strategy (2019) Policy P10: Design Policy G1: Enhancing and Extending Green Infrastructure Policy G2: Creation of New Tree Cover Policy G8: Protection of Important Species and Habitats Policy G9: Biodiversity Improvements Policy EN3: Low Carbon Energy</p> <p>Wakefield Local Plan (2024) Policy SP23: Design, Safety and the Local Environment Policy SP4: Mitigating and Adapting to Climate Change and Efficient Use of Resources Policy LP28: Green and Blue Infrastructure Policy LP35: Assessment of Applications for Renewable Energy Generation Developments Policy LP51: Ecological and Geological Conservation Policy LP52: Ecological Protection of Watercourses and Water Bodies Policy LP53: Wildlife Habitat Network Policy LP54: Protection of Trees and Woodland Policy LP56: Design of New Development Policy LP59: Landscape Design</p> <p>Barnsley Local Plan (2019) Policy D1: High Quality Design and Place Making Policy G11: Green Infrastructure Policy BIO1: Biodiversity and Geodiversity Policy CC1: Climate Change Policy RE1: Low Carbon and Renewable Energy</p> <p>Harrogate District Local Plan Policy HP3: Local Distinctiveness</p> <p>Kirklees Local Plan (2019) Policy LP24: Design Policy LP26: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy</p> | |

| Constraint/Assessment Indicator | Justification | Relevant National Policy | Relevant Local Policy | Relevant Project Objective |
|---------------------------------|--|--|--|---|
| | | | Policy LP30: Biodiversity & Geodiversity Policy LP31: Strategic Green Infrastructure Network Policy LP33: Trees | |
| Landscape and Visual | To assess how the potential development area may impact nationally designated landscapes such as National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty or sensitive viewpoints. The impact on locally designated and valued landscapes should also be considered. | <p>NPS EN-1 Paragraph 5.10.5 Paragraph 5.10.6 Paragraph 5.10.7 Paragraph 5.10.8 Paragraph 5.10.12 Paragraph 5.10.19</p> <p>NPS EN-3 Paragraph 2.10.88 Paragraph 2.10.149</p> <p>NPS EN-5 Paragraph 2.9.21</p> <p>NPPF Paragraph 187 Paragraph 188 Paragraph 189 Paragraph 190</p> | <p>Selby District Core Strategy (2013) Policy SP17: Low-Carbon and Renewable Energy Policy SP18: Protecting and Enhancing the Environment Policy SP19: Design Quality</p> <p>Selby District Local Plan (2005) Environment Policies: ENV1, ENV3, ENV6, ENV13, ENV15, ENV20, ENV21</p> <p>East Yorkshire Local Plan Update (2025) Policy EC5: Supporting the Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Sector Policy ENV1: Integrating High Quality Design Policy ENV2: Promoting a High Quality Landscape</p> <p>City of York Council Local Plan (2025) Policy DP3: Sustainable Communities Policy D1: Placemaking Policy D2: Landscape and Setting Policy CC1: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Generation and Storage</p> <p>Doncaster Local Plan (2021) Policy 33: Landscape Policy 41: Character and Local Distinctiveness Policy 42: Good Urban Design Policy 43: Views, Gateways and Taller Buildings Policy 46: Design of Non-Residential, Commercial and Employment Developments Policy 48: Landscaping of New Developments Policy 58: Low Carbon and Renewable Energy</p> <p>Leeds City Council Core Strategy (2019) Policy P10: Design Policy P12: Landscape</p> | Objective 4: A solar farm and battery scheme which is able to deliver on its environmental mitigation requirements and deliver community benefits.v |

| Constraint/Assessment Indicator | Justification | Relevant National Policy | Relevant Local Policy | Relevant Project Objective |
|---------------------------------|---|--|--|---|
| | | | <p>Wakefield Local Plan (2024) Policy SP23: Design, Safety and the Local Environment Policy LP17: Wakefield City Centre Skylines and Strategic Views Policy LP18: Wakefield City Centre Vistas Policy LP35: Assessment of Applications for Renewable Energy Generation Developments Policy LP55: Landscape Character Policy LP56: Design of New Development Policy LP59: Landscape Design</p> <p>Barnsley Local Plan (2019) Policy GD1: General Development Policy D1: High Quality Design and Place Making Policy LC1: Landscape Character Policy GI1 Green Infrastructure Policy RE1: Low Carbon and Renewable Energy</p> <p>Harrogate District Local Plan (2020) Policy GS6: Nidderdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Policy HP3: Local Distinctiveness</p> <p>Kirklees Local Plan (2019) Policy LP26: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Policy LP32: Landscape</p> | |
| Land Use | To ensure the potential development area will, where possible, avoid compromising: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land. Green Belt Local Amenity. Mineral Resources. Public Rights of Way. Existing Development Uses. Proposed Allocations. Other Safeguarded Areas. | <p>NPS EN-1 Paragraph 5.11.1 Paragraph 5.11.8 Paragraph 5.11.12 Paragraph 5.11.15 Paragraph 5.11.17 Paragraph 5.11.20 Paragraph 5.11.21 Paragraph 5.11.30 Paragraph 5.11.32 Paragraph 5.11.38</p> <p>NPS EN-3 Paragraph 2.10.19</p> | <p>Selby District Core Strategy (2013) Policy SP2: Spatial Development Strategy Policy SP3: Green Belt Policy SP12: Access to Services, Community Facilities and Infrastructure Policy SP15: Sustainable Development and Climate Change Policy SP17: Low-Carbon and Renewable Energy Policy SP18: Protecting and Enhancing the Environment Policy SP19: Design Quality</p> <p>Selby District Local Plan (2005) Green Belt Policies: GB1, GB2, GB3, GB4, DL1, SG1 Environment Policies: ENV1, ENV2, ENV3, ENV6, ENV18, ENV29</p> | <p>Objective 4: A solar farm and battery scheme which is able to deliver on its environmental mitigation requirements and deliver community benefits.</p> <p>Objective 5: A solar farm and battery scheme which supports the on-going</p> |

| Constraint/Assessment Indicator | Justification | Relevant National Policy | Relevant Local Policy | Relevant Project Objective |
|---------------------------------|---------------|--|---|---|
| | | <p>Paragraph 2.10.21</p> <p>NPPF</p> <p>Paragraph 23</p> <p>Paragraph 98</p> <p>Paragraph 105</p> <p>Paragraph 153Pararagph 154</p> <p>Paragraph 155</p> <p>Paragraph 160</p> <p>Paragraph 187</p> <p>Paragraph 188</p> <p>Paragraph 198</p> <p>Paragraph 223</p> | <p>Site Specific Allocation Policies: EMP2, EMP6, EMP9</p> <p>Policy EMP12: Protection of Agricultural Land</p> <p>Transport Policies: T8</p> <p>Recreation and Tourism Policies: RT1</p> <p>East Yorkshire Local Plan Update (2025)</p> <p>Policy S2: Addressing Climate Change</p> <p>Policy S3: Focusing Development</p> <p>Policy S4: Supporting Development in Villages and the Countryside</p> <p>Policy EC1: Supporting the Growth and Diversification of the East Riding Economy</p> <p>Policy EC5: Supporting the Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Sector</p> <p>Policy EC6: Protecting Mineral Resources</p> <p>Policy ENV1: Integrating High Quality Design</p> <p>Policy ENV6: Managing Environmental Hazards</p> <p>Policy C2: Supporting Community Services and Facilities</p> <p>City of York Council Local Plan (2025)</p> <p>Policy SS1: Delivering Sustainable Growth for York</p> <p>Policy SS2: The Role of York's Green Belt</p> <p>Site Specific Allocation Policies: SS3 to SS24</p> <p>Policy EC1: Provision of Employment Land</p> <p>Policy EC2: Loss of Employment Land</p> <p>Policy HW1: Protecting Existing Facilities</p> <p>Policy D1: Placemaking</p> <p>Policy G11: Green Infrastructure</p> <p>Policy G13: Green Infrastructure Network</p> <p>Policy G15: Protection of Open Space and Playing Fields</p> <p>Policy GB1: Development in the Green Belt</p> <p>Policy CC1: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Generation and Storage</p> <p>Policy ENV1: Air Quality</p> <p>Policy ENV2: Managing Environmental Quality</p> <p>Policy ENV3: Land Contamination</p> <p>Policy WM2: Sustainable Minerals Management</p> <p>Policy T5: Strategic Cycle and Pedestrian Network Links</p> | <p>agricultural economy in North Yorkshire.</p> |

| Constraint/Assessment Indicator | Justification | Relevant National Policy | Relevant Local Policy | Relevant Project Objective |
|---------------------------------|---------------|--------------------------|---|----------------------------|
| | | | <p>and Improvements</p> <p>Doncaster Local Plan (2021) Policy 1: Settlement Hierarchy Site Specific Allocation Policies: 3, 4, 5, 6 Policy 18: Development Affecting Public Rights of Way Policy 19: Access, Design and Layout of Public Rights of Way Policy 25: Development in the Countryside Policy Area Policy 26: Green Infrastructure Policy 27: Protecting Open Space and Non Designated Open Space Policy 42: Good Urban Design Policy 46: Design of Non-Residential, Commercial and Employment Developments Policy 51: Protection of Education, Community and Leisure Facilities Policy 54: Pollution Policy 55: Contamination and Unstable Land Policy 58: Low Carbon and Renewable Energy Policy 60: Protecting and Enhancing Doncaster's Soil and Water Resources Policy 61: Providing for and Safeguarding Mineral Resources</p> <p>Leeds City Council Core Strategy (2019) Spatial Policy 1: Location of Development Site Specific Allocation Policies: 4, 5, 7, CC1, CC2, H1, EC2, EC3 Spatial Policy 10: Green Belt Spatial Policy 13: Strategic Green Infrastructure Policy P9: Community Facilities and Other Services Policy T2: Accessibility Requirements and New Development Policy G1: Enhancing and Extending Green Infrastructure Policy G6: Protection and Redevelopment of Existing Green Space</p> <p>Wakefield Local Plan (2024) Policy SP3: Location of Development</p> | |

| Constraint/Assessment Indicator | Justification | Relevant National Policy | Relevant Local Policy | Relevant Project Objective |
|---------------------------------|---------------|--------------------------|--|----------------------------|
| | | | <p>Site Specific Allocation Policies: SP4, LP19, LP23 Policy SP12: Leisure, Recreation and Open Space Policy SP14: Transport Network Policy SP19: Minerals Policy SP22: Green Belt Policy SP23: Design, Safety and the Local Environment Policy SP4: Mitigating and Adapting to Climate Change and Efficient Use of Resources Policy LP6: Protecting Employment Land Policy LP24: Strategic Leisure Corridors Policy LP25: Leisure Opportunity Areas Policy LP28: Green and Blue Infrastructure Policy LP35: Assessment of Applications for Renewable Energy Generation Developments Minerals Policies: LP37, LP38 Policy LP46: Open Space Policy LP49: Protected Areas of Open Land Policy LP50: Sports Facilities Policy LP56: Design of New Development Policy LP67: Pollution Control Policy LP69: Contaminated Land and Unstable Land Policy LP70: Protection of Agricultural Land Policy LP71: Soil Conservation</p> <p>Barnsley Local Plan (2019) Policy GD1: General Development Policy LG2: The Location of Growth Site Specific Allocation Policies: E1 to ES23, HS1 to HS95, MU1 to MU6, MIN1 to MIN6, MINAS1 to MINAS2, MINSG1 Policy E4: Protecting Existing Employment Land Policy E6: Rural Economy Policy T2: Safeguarding of Former Railway Lines Policy D1: High Quality Design and Place Making Policy GI1 Green Infrastructure Policy GI2: Canals - Safeguarded Routes Policy GS1: Green Space Policy GS2: Green Ways and Public Rights of Way Policy GB1: Protection of Green Belt Policy GB6: Safeguarded Land</p> | |

| Constraint/Assessment Indicator | Justification | Relevant National Policy | Relevant Local Policy | Relevant Project Objective |
|---------------------------------|---------------|--------------------------|--|----------------------------|
| | | | <p>Policy CC1: Climate Change Minerals Policies: MIN1, MIN2, MIN3 Policy CL1: Contaminated and Unstable Land Policy AQ1: Development in Air Quality Management Areas Policy UT2: Utilities Safeguarding Policy I2: Educational and Community Facilities</p> <p>Harrogate District Local Plan (2020) Policy GS2: Growth Strategy to 2035 Policy GS4: Green Belt Policy EC1: Protection and Enhancement of Existing Employment Areas Policy HP4: Protecting Amenity Policy HP5: Public Rights of Way Policy HP6: Protection of Existing Sport, Open Space and Recreation Facilities Policy HP8: Protection and Enhancement of Community Facilities Site Specific Allocation Policies: DM1, DM2, DM3, DM4</p> <p>Kirklees Local Plan (2019) LP3: Location of New Development Policy LP6: Safeguarded land (land to be safeguarded for potential future development) Policy LP8: Safeguarding employment land and premises Policy LP23: Core Walking and Cycling Network Policy LP24: Design Policy LP26: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Policy LP31: Strategic Green Infrastructure Network Minerals Policies: LP38, LP39, LP40 Policy LP48: Community Facilities and Services Policy LP51: Protection and Improvement of Local Air Quality Policy LP52: Protection and Improvement of Environmental Quality Policy LP53: Contaminated and Unstable Land Policy LP61: Urban Green Space Policy LP62: Local green space</p> | |

| Constraint/Assessment Indicator | Justification | Relevant National Policy | Relevant Local Policy | Relevant Project Objective |
|---------------------------------|---|--|--|--|
| Cultural Heritage | To assess how the potential development area may be likely to adversely impact designated, and undesignated, heritage assets. The higher the significance of the asset, the greater the presumption in favour of its conservation. Categories to consider include World Heritage Sites, Scheduled Monuments, Protected Wreck Sites, Protected Military Remains, Listed Buildings, Registered Parks and Gardens, Registered Battlefields and Conservation Areas. | <p>NPS EN-1 Paragraph 5.9.4 Paragraph 5.9.5 Paragraph 5.9.6 Paragraph 5.9.7 Paragraph 5.9.28 Paragraph 5.9.29 Paragraph 5.9.30 Paragraph 5.9.31 Paragraph 5.10.11</p> <p>NPS EN-3 Paragraph 2.10.99 Paragraph 2.10.104 Paragraph 2.10.108</p> <p>NPPF Paragraph 203 Paragraph 212 Paragraph 213 Paragraph 219 Paragraph 220</p> | <p>Selby District Core Strategy (2013) Policy SP18: Protecting and Enhancing the Environment Policy SP19: Design Quality</p> <p>Selby District Local Plan (2005) Environment Policies: ENV13, ENV16, ENV17, ENV22, ENV23, ENV24, ENV25, ENV26, ENV27, ENV28</p> <p>East Yorkshire Local Plan Update (2025) Policy EC5: Supporting the Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Sector Policy ENV2: Promoting a High Quality Landscape Policy ENV3: Valuing Our Heritage</p> <p>City of York Council Local Plan (2025) Policy DP3: Sustainable Communities Policy SS1: Delivering Sustainable Growth for York Policy D1: Placemaking Policy D4: Conservation Areas Policy D5: Listed Buildings Policy D6: Archaeology Policy D7: Non-Designated Heritage Assets Policy D8: Historic Parks and Gardens Policy D9: City of York Historic Environmental Record Policy CC1: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Generation and Storage</p> <p>Doncaster Local Plan (2021) Policy 34: Valuing our Historic Environment Policy 35: Understanding and Recording the Historic Environment Policy 36: Listed Buildings Policy 37: Conservation Areas Policy 38: Historic Parks and Gardens Policy 39: Development Affecting Archaeology Policy 40: Buildings or Structures of Local Historic Interest Policy 41: Character and Local Distinctiveness</p> <p>Leeds City Council Core Strategy (2019)</p> | Objective 4: A solar farm and battery scheme which is able to deliver on its environmental mitigation requirements and deliver community benefits. |

| Constraint/Assessment Indicator | Justification | Relevant National Policy | Relevant Local Policy | Relevant Project Objective |
|---------------------------------|---|---|--|--|
| | | | <p>Policy P10: Design Policy P11: Conservation</p> <p>Wakefield Local Plan (2024) Policy SP23: Design, Safety and the Local Environment Policy LP35: Assessment of Applications for Renewable Energy Generation Developments Policy LP63: Conserving the Historic Environment Policy LP64: Designated Heritage Assets Policy LP65: Non-designated Heritage Assets Policy LP66: Development Affecting Archaeological Sites</p> <p>Barnsley Local Plan (2019) Policy D1: High Quality Design and Place Making Policy HE1: The Historic Environment Policy HE3: Developments affecting Historic Buildings Policy HE4: Developments affecting Historic Areas or Landscapes Policy HE6: Archaeology Policy RE1: Low Carbon and Renewable Energy</p> <p>Harrogate District Local Plan (2020) Policy HP2: Heritage Assets</p> <p>Kirklees Local Plan (2019) Policy LP35: Historic environment</p> | |
| Construction Traffic Access | To assess the suitability for HGV access to the potential development area from the primary and local road network, with consideration to minimising traffic impacts and the need for management. | <p>NPS EN-1 Paragraph 5.14.1 Paragraph 5.14.7 Paragraph 5.14.14 Paragraph 5.14.19</p> <p>NPS EN-3 Paragraph 2.10.27 Paragraph 2.10.112 Paragraph 2.10.113</p> <p>NPPF Paragraph 89</p> | <p>Selby District Core Strategy (2013) Policy SP15: Sustainable Development and Climate Change</p> <p>Selby District Local Plan (2005) Environment Policies: ENV1, ENV6 Transport Policies: T1, T2</p> <p>East Yorkshire Local Plan Update (2025) Policy EC4: Enhancing Sustainable Transport Policy EC5: Supporting the Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Sector Policy ENV1: Integrating High Quality Design</p> | Objective 4: A solar farm and battery scheme which is able to deliver on its environmental mitigation requirements and deliver community benefits. |

| Constraint/Assessment Indicator | Justification | Relevant National Policy | Relevant Local Policy | Relevant Project Objective |
|---------------------------------|--|--|---|--|
| | | Paragraph 116 | <p>City of York Council Local Plan (2025) Policy DP3: Sustainable Communities Policy CC1: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Generation and Storage Policy T1: Sustainable Access</p> <p>Doncaster Local Plan (2021) Policy 19: Access, Design and Layout of Public Rights of Way Policy 42: Good Urban Design Policy 58: Low Carbon and Renewable Energy</p> <p>Leeds City Council Core Strategy (2019) Policy T2: Accessibility Requirements and New Development</p> <p>Wakefield Local Plan (2024) Policy LP27: Access and Highway Safety Policy LP35: Assessment of Applications for Renewable Energy Generation Developments</p> <p>Barnsley Local Plan (2019) Policy GD1: General Development Policy T4: New Development and Transport Safety Policy RE1: Low Carbon and Renewable Energy</p> <p>Kirklees Local Plan (2019) Policy LP21: Highways and Access</p> | |
| Solar Array Shading | To account for shading factors in the potential development area that are likely to constrain solar thermal and photovoltaic system outputs. | <p>NPS EN-3 Paragraph 2.10.11 Paragraph 2.10.12 Paragraph 2.10.52 Paragraph 2.10.53 Paragraph 2.10.54</p> | | Objective 1: A solar farm and battery scheme that will support the decarbonisation and security of the UK's energy supply by maximising its clean energy |

| Constraint/Assessment Indicator | Justification | Relevant National Policy | Relevant Local Policy | Relevant Project Objective |
|---------------------------------|---|---|---|--|
| | | | | generation potential. |
| Grid Connection | To assess potential constraints to grid connection within the potential development area, such as roads, rivers, railways and environmental designations. | <p>NPS EN-1 Paragraph 4.11.2 Paragraph 4.11.5 Paragraph 4.11.12</p> <p>NPS EN-3 Paragraph 2.10.14 Paragraph 2.10.16 Paragraph 2.10.17 Paragraph 2.10.52</p> <p>NPS EN-5 Paragraph 2.2.2 Paragraph 2.2.7 Paragraph 2.2.8 Paragraph 2.2.9</p> <p>NPPF Paragraph 121</p> | <p>Selby District Local Plan (2005) Environment Policies: ENV6</p> <p>East Yorkshire Local Plan Update (2025) Policy EC5: Supporting the Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Sector</p> <p>City of York Council Local Plan (2025) Policy CC1: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Generation and Storage</p> <p>Doncaster Local Plan (2021) Policy 21: Telecommunications and Utilities Infrastructure</p> <p>Wakefield Local Plan (2024) Policy LP56: Design of New Development</p> | Objective 4: A solar farm and battery scheme which is able to deliver on its environmental mitigation requirements and deliver community benefits. |
| Topography | To identify and, where possible, avoid undulating terrain of multiple gradients which is likely to prevent optimal energy generation. | <p>NPS EN-1 Paragraph 5.10.28</p> <p>NPS EN-3 Paragraph 2.10.11 Paragraph 2.10.12 Paragraph 2.10.52 Paragraph 2.10.53</p> <p>NPPF Paragraph 135</p> | | Objective 1: A solar farm and battery scheme that will support the decarbonisation and security of the UK's energy supply by maximising its clean energy generation potential. |
| Flood Risk | Planning policy expects the avoidance of Flood Zones 2 and 3 for development demonstrating a sequential approach to locating development with respect to flood risk has been followed. NPS EN-5 expects electricity networks infrastructure to be resilient to the effects of climate change | <p>NPS EN-1 Paragraph 5.8.3 Paragraph 5.8.4 Paragraph 5.8.6 to 5.8.22 Paragraph 5.8.24 to 5.8.35</p> <p>NPS EN-5</p> | <p>Selby District Core Strategy (2013) Policy SP15: Sustainable Development and Climate Change Policy SP19: Design Quality</p> <p>Selby District Local Plan (2005) Environment Policies: ENV5</p> | Objective 4: A solar farm and battery scheme which is able to deliver on its environmental mitigation requirements and |

| Constraint/Assessment Indicator | Justification | Relevant National Policy | Relevant Local Policy | Relevant Project Objective |
|---------------------------------|---------------|---|--|------------------------------------|
| | | <p>Paragraph 2.3.2 Paragraph 2.3.3</p> <p>NPPF Paragraph 167 Paragraph 168 Paragraph 178 Paragraph 184 Paragraph 185</p> | <p>East Yorkshire Local Plan Update (2025) Policy S2: Addressing Climate Change Policy EC5: Supporting the Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Sector Policy ENV1: Integrating High Quality Design Policy ENV6: Managing Environmental Hazards</p> <p>City of York Council Local Plan (2025) Policy DP3: Sustainable Communities Policy SS1: Delivering Sustainable Growth for York Policy CC1: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Generation and Storage Policy ENV4: Flood Risk</p> <p>Doncaster Local Plan (2021) Policy 56: Drainage Policy 57: Flood Risk Management</p> <p>Leeds City Council Core Strategy (2019) Policy EN5: Managing Flood Risk</p> <p>Wakefield Local Plan (2024) Policy SP4: Mitigating and Adapting to Climate Change and Efficient Use of Resources Policy LP29: Flood Risk Policy LP35: Assessment of Applications for Renewable Energy Generation Developments</p> <p>Barnsley Local Plan (2019) Policy CC3: Flood Risk</p> <p>Kirklees Local Plan (2019) Policy LP27: Flood risk</p> | <p>deliver community benefits.</p> |

Annex D Potential Development Area Assessment Results

| Indicator | Potential Development Area 5 | | Potential Development Area 6 | | Potential Development Area 7 | | Potential Development Area 8 | | Potential Development Area 9 | |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|---|------------------------------|--|------------------------------|---|------------------------------|--|------------------------------|---|
| PDA Size (ha) | 564 | | 1,312 | | 2,904 | | 900 | | 1,507 | |
| PDA Description | Towton and Saxton | | Wistow | | Osgodby/North Duffield | | Escrick and Hambleton | | Little Fenton | |
| Indicator | RAG | Justification | RAG | Justification | RAG | Justification | RAG | Justification | RAG | Justification |
| Ecology and Biodiversity | | <p>There are two areas of Ancient Woodland immediately adjacent to the northern parcel of the PDA 5 boundary, Renshaw Woods South towards the middle of the south western boundary and an unnamed woodland along Cock Beck to the north. There are a further two areas of Ancient Woodland within 500 m of the northern parcel of PDA 5, Patefield Wood located approximately 150 m south and Carr Wood approximately 300 m south. There are no Local Nature Reserves within the 500 m Study Area.</p> <p>In terms of National Designations, Stutton Ings Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is located approximately 305 m north of the northern PDA parcel. Kirkby Wharfe SSSI is also located approximately 1.4km east of the northern PDA parcel. Sherburn Willows SSSI is also located on the edge of the Study Area approximately 2 km to the south east of the more southern PDA parcel.</p> | | <p>There are two areas of Ancient Woodland immediately adjacent to the PDA 6 boundary, Great Lawn Wood, towards the middle of the western boundary and Little Moss Hagg Ancient Woodland for approximately 2 km between Bishopdyke Road and east of Scalm Lane of the southern boundary.</p> <p>Paradise Wood Ancient Woodland is also located approximately 400 m to the west of the PDA boundary. There are no Local Nature Reserves within the 500m Study Area.</p> <p>There are two SSSIs within the 2 km Study Area: Burr Closes, Selby, located approximately 1.4 km to the south east of the PDA boundary and Bolton Percy Ings located approximately 1.9 km to the north west of the PDA boundary.</p> <p>There are no other National Destinations within the 2 km Study Area.</p> | | <p>PDA 7 is an extremely environmentally constrained site which is bordered by multiple statutorily designated sites on both the eastern and western borders as well as having Ancient Woodland located on site.</p> <p>Thorganby Ancient Woodland sits in the north of the PDA boundary while two small areas of Cliffe Wood Ancient Woodland sit in the south. Manor Wood also sits approximately 150 m to the west of the more northerly portion of the PDA boundary. There are no Local Nature Reserves within the 500m Study Area.</p> <p>There are a number of both national and international designations within close proximity to PDA 7. In terms of national designations, the site is immediately adjacent in places along the eastern border with Lower Derwent Valley National Nature Reserve (NNR), River Derwent and Derwent Ings SSSI, all of which run nearly the entire length of the eastern boundary of the PDA and therefore are not easily avoided through site design. To the west it is also</p> | | <p>The nearest Ancient Woodland to PDA 8 is located immediately adjacent to the eastern edge of the most northerly parcel in the PDA boundary (Solar Development Site 1). There is also Ancient Woodland located approximately 215 m to the north of the parcel located near to the north west of Hambleton (Solar Development Site 8) and 325 m southwest of the most northerly parcel in the PDA boundary (Solar Development Site 1). There are no Local Nature Reserves within the 500 m Study Area.</p> <p>Sherburn Willows SSSI is the only National Designation within 2 km of the PDA boundary located approximately 1.7 km north west of the PDA boundary (Solar Development Site 7).</p> <p>There are a number of international designations within the 5km Study Area. These include: Skipwith Common SAC located approximately 2.4 km to the south of the most northerly PDA parcel (Solar Development Site 1), the River Derwent and Lower Derwent Valley Ramsar</p> | | <p>There are three areas of Ancient Woodland immediately adjacent to the PDA 9 boundary: Paradise Wood which is within but not included within the boundary and Great Lawn Wood and Little Moss Hagg which are both along the eastern boundary of the PDA. There are no further Ancient Woodlands within the 500m Study Area. There are no Local Nature Reserves within the 500m Study Area.</p> <p>There are five SSSIs within 2 km of the PDA boundary: Bolton Percy Ings (2.3 km north), Sherburn Willows (2.5 km south west) Kirkby Wharfe (2.7 km north), Burr Closes (4.6 km east) and Stutton Ings (4.8 km northwest). There are no National Nature Reserves within the 2 km Study Area.</p> <p>There are no international designations within 5 km of the PDA boundary.</p> |

| Indicator | Potential Development Area 5 | Potential Development Area 6 | Potential Development Area 7 | Potential Development Area 8 | Potential Development Area 9 |
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| | <p>There are no other National Destinations within the 2 km Study Area.</p> <p>There are no international designations within 5 km of the PDA boundary.</p> | <p>There are no international designations within 5km of the PDA boundary. It is worth noting that Skipwith Common Special Conservation Area (SAC) sits just outside the 5 km Search Radius approximately 5.2 km from the PDA boundary.</p> | <p>immediately adjacent to Skipwith Common NNR and SSSI. Brighton Meadows SSSI is also located approximately 150 m and 240 m east of the PDA boundary respectively.</p> <p>In terms of International Designations, the site is located immediately adjacent in places to a number of different designations associated with the Derwent Valley to the east and the Skipworth Common to the west. This includes the River Derwent and Lower Derwent Valley Ramsar and SAC sites, Lower Derwent Valley Special Protection Area (SPA) to the east which run nearly the entire length of the PDA's eastern boundary and therefore are not easily avoided through site design. Skipworth Common SAC is also located to the west.</p> <p>Given the PDA's proximity to European Protected Sites, there is a high likelihood of potential impact pathways and a potential need for compensatory measures.</p> | <p>and SAC and the Lower Derwent Valley SPA located approximately 2.8 km to the east of the most northerly PDA parcel (Solar Development Site 1).</p> | |
| <p>Landscape and Visual</p> <p>Study Area: Within the PDA - PRow and National Trails 5 km - National Landscape 500 m - other receptors</p> | <p>PDA 5 has two PRowS within the site, one in the northern parcel and one in the southern parcel. Rangers Walk National Trail runs through the west of the more southerly of the PDA parcels.</p> <p>There are no National Landscape designations within the 5 km Study Area.</p> | <p>PDA 6 has multiple PRowS within the site, largely positioned towards the north of the parcel. There are no National Trails within the site.</p> <p>There are no National Landscape designations within the 5km Study Area.</p> | <p>PDA 7 has multiple PRowS within the site of which these are fairly evenly distributed around the parcel. There are no National Trails within the site.</p> <p>There are no National Landscape designations within the 5km Study Area.</p> | <p>PDA 8 has multiple PRowS within the site which are fairly evenly distributed around the parcels (Solar Development Sites 1, 4, 6 and 8). There are no National Trails within the site.</p> <p>There are no National Landscape designations within the 5 km Study Area.</p> | <p>PDA 9 has multiple PRowS within the site of which these are fairly evenly distributed around the parcel. There are no National Trails within the site.</p> <p>There are no National Landscape designations within the 5 km Study Area.</p> <p>There are a number of residential and agricultural</p> |

| Indicator | Potential Development Area 5 | Potential Development Area 6 | Potential Development Area 7 | Potential Development Area 8 | Potential Development Area 9 |
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| | <p>There are a few isolated properties within both the northern and southern parcels. The nearest villages are that of Towton that slightly encroaches upon the more northerly PDA parcel near to where the A162 intersects the site and Saxton which sits immediately to the north of the southern parcel of the PDA boundary. The nearest town to PDA 5 is Sherburn in Elmet located approximately 1.2 km from the southern parcels boundary.</p> | <p>There are a number of residential and agricultural properties scattered throughout the site with the highest concentration being those associated with the villages of Wistow and Carwood which slightly infringe upon the site along its eastern boundary. The village of Ryther is also located immediately to the north of the PDA boundary. The village of Biggin is located approximately 250 m to the southwest of the PDA boundary. The nearest town to PDA 6 is Selby located approximately 2.8 km south east of the PDA boundary.</p> | <p>There are a number of residential and agricultural properties scattered throughout the site with the highest concentration being those associated with the village of Thorganby Gate which is located within the PDA boundary. Near the centre of the site the village of North Duffield is completely surrounded by the PDA boundary, however, no properties within this settlement appear to sit within the boundary itself. The villages of Barlby and South Duffield also sit immediately adjacent to the PDA boundary. The nearest town to PDA 7 is Selby located approximately 1.2 km to the north west.</p> | <p>There are no residential properties within the PDA boundary. The village of Birkin is located immediately to the south of the most southerly parcel in the PDA boundary (Solar Development Site 4). The nearest town to PDA 8 is Sherburn in Elmet located approximately 1.3 km from the southern parcel located closest to Monk Fryston (Solar Development Site 7).</p> | <p>properties scattered throughout the site with the highest concentration being those associated with the villages of Biggin, Little Fenton and Church Fenton. Biggin and Little Fenton are entirely surrounded by the PDA area but are excluded from the boundary whilst Nanny Lane leading into Church Fenton is included within the PDA boundary (and would likely need to be avoided). The nearest town to PDA 9 is Sherburn in Elmet located approximately 550m west of the PDA boundary.</p> |
| Land Use | <p>PDA 5 is in close proximity to the villages of Saxton, and Towton, which both border the PDA (Towton slightly encroaches on the PDA).</p> <p>Approximately half of the PDA is within a mineral safeguarding area for building stone</p> <p>There are PRoWs and one national trail within the PDA.</p> <p>There are no areas of Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CRoW) Registered Common Land within 500 m of the PDA boundary.</p> <p>The PDA is largely comprised of agricultural fields, with one farmhouse and associated</p> | <p>The PDA is bordered by the settlements of Wistow, Cawood, and Biggin. A section of the PDA intersects Wistow in the east. There are also various properties and land uses (such as a storage facility at the Wistow pithead site and other business/agricultural uses) scattered across the PDA.</p> <p>Nearly the entire PDA is within a mineral safeguarding area for sand and gravel. Approximately one quarter of the PDA is within a mineral safeguarding area for brick clay.</p> | <p>The village of North Duffield is completely surrounded by the PDA and the villages of Barlby and South Duffield sit immediately adjacent to the PDA boundary. There are also a number of residential and agricultural properties scattered throughout the PDA.</p> <p>The entire PDA is within a mineral safeguarding area for Brick Clay. Approximately half of the PDA is within a mineral safeguarding area for sand and gravel.</p> <p>There are various PRoW running through the PDA which are evenly distributed. There are no National Trails within the site.</p> <p>There is a small area of Common Land that infringes upon the PDA near to the village of Breighton.</p> | <p>There are no residential properties within the PDA boundary. The village of Birkin is located immediately to the south of the most southerly parcel in the PDA boundary (Solar Development Site 4).</p> <p>The entire PDA is in a mineral safeguarding area for Brick Clay. Solar Development Site 7 together with sections of Solar Development Sites 4 and 6 are within a mineral safeguarding area for limestone. Solar Development Sites 4, part of Solar Development Site 2 and 3, and the majority of Solar Development Site 1 are within a mineral safeguarding area for sand and gravel.</p> <p>There are various PRoW running through the PDA which</p> | <p>The village of Little Fenton is completely surrounded by the PDA and the villages of Biggin and Church Fenton sit immediately adjacent to the PDA boundary. There are also a number of residential and agricultural properties scattered throughout the PDA including a cluster of properties to the east of Church Fenton.</p> <p>Nearly the entire PDA (with the exception of the north east corner) is within a mineral safeguarding area for brick clay. Approximately half of the PDA is within a mineral safeguarding area for sand and gravel. A small section in the south of the PDA is also covered by a minerals safeguarding area for limestone.</p> |

| Indicator | Potential Development Area 5 | Potential Development Area 6 | Potential Development Area 7 | Potential Development Area 8 | Potential Development Area 9 |
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| | <p>buildings within the PDA. The majority of the PDA (approximately 482 ha, or 84%) is on Grade 2 agricultural land, with a smaller area of Grade 3 agricultural land.</p> <p>There are live planning permission applications in relation to residential development at Towton Hall ZG2025/0606/HPA (within the PDA in Towton) and in relation to a wellness retreat at Cocksford ZG2025/0957/FULM (outside of, but immediately to the west of the northerly section of the PDA). Both may require design mitigation, but there are no planning applications that would affect overall use of the PDA.</p> <p>The entirety of the PDA sits within the Green Belt.</p> <p>The majority of the PDA is within a Locally Important Landscape Area (LILA), allocated in the Selby District Local Plan 2005. Policy ENV15 provides that within LILAs, priority will be given to the conversation and enhancement of the character and quality of the landscape.</p> <p>Part of the PDA is covered by a site of local important for nature conservation as defined in the Selby District Local Plan 2005. Policy ENV9 provides that proposals for</p> | <p>There are multiple PRoWs and no national trails within the site.</p> <p>There are no areas of CRoW Registered Common Land within 500 m of the PDA boundary.</p> <p>98% of the PDA is located on Grade 2 agricultural land.</p> <p>Part of the PDA near Cawood (61 ha) is subject to an existing planning application for a solar farm and BESS (ZG2025/0762/EIA relating to Land East Of Broad Lane Cawood North Yorkshire). There are other smaller planning permission applications within the PDA relating mainly to current land use which would require mitigation in design, but these would not materially affect the overall use of the PDA for solar development.</p> <p>The PDA is outside of the Green Belt.</p> <p>The southerly boundary of the PDA abuts a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation as described in the Selby District Local Plan 2005. Policy ENV9 provides that proposals for development which would harm such an area will not</p> | <p>There is also a large area of Common Land immediately adjacent to the western side of the PDA boundary associated with Skipwith Common.</p> <p>The PDA is located entirely on Grade 3 agricultural land.</p> <p>The area of the PDA to the east of Barlby and to the west of South Duffield is subject to a number of planning applications clustered around the A163 including a solar farm on land near Osgodby Grange (2021/0978/FULM), a solar farm on land off Market Weighton Road (ZG2025/0733/EIA), erection of an anaerobic digestion facility at land off Market Weighton Road (ZG2025/0117/FULM) and other smaller applications which together, would make use of this section of the PDA unviable, reducing the PDA area by around 700 ha. There are other planning applications in and around the PDA, but these are smaller and not as concentrated, and could be avoided/mitigated against through design and scheme mitigation.</p> <p>The PDA is outside of the Green Belt.</p> <p>Small sections of the PDA on the edges of North Duffield and in Cliffe Common are Recreational Open Space, as described in the Selby District Local Plan 2005. Policy RT1 provides that proposals which would result in the loss of such space will not be permitted unless the use has</p> | <p>are evenly distributed (Solar Development Sites 1, 4, 6 and 8). There are no National Trails within the site.</p> <p>There is no CRoW Common Land within the PDA boundary. There is a small area of CRoW Common Land located to the north east of Solar Development Site 2. The CRoW land is located the southern side of the A63 in the village of Hambleton.</p> <p>The PDA comprises 50% Grade 2 and 50% Grade 3 agricultural land based on 1970s Provisional ALC dataset (note that the Applicant has since carried out more detailed ALC surveys for this PDA as the proposed site for the Proposed Development, which includes information on areas which are Grade 3a and Grade 3b land and indicates the presence of a small section of Grade 1 land. However, for consistency in RAG rating across PDAs, only publicly available ALC grading from the 1970s Provisional ALC dataset has been considered for site selection assessment. This does not differentiate between Grades 3a and 3b and does not show any Grade 1 land within the area).</p> <p>There are two relevant planning applications within the PDA and a number of applications relating to land adjacent to it. Within the PDA, there is 1) An EIA screening request for a solar farm which was submitted in</p> | <p>There are multiple PRoWs within the site of which these are fairly evenly distributed around the parcel.</p> <p>There are two small areas of CRoW Common Land within the PDA along Nanny Lane (Church Fenton) and Broad Lane.</p> <p>The majority of the PDA is within ALC Grade 3, with a section of ALC Grade 2 land to the north.</p> <p>There is a planning application (ZG2024/1322/FULM) for a proposed solar farm and BESS at land south east of Little Fenton, Sweeming Lane, Little Fenton, comprising approximately 17.5 ha of land. The application is currently awaiting a decision.</p> <p>There are a number of residential planning applications relating to the residential dwellings around Nanny Lane and Hall Lane to the east of Church Fenton. This includes a planning application (ZG2025/0351/PIP) for 8 self built plots on land South of Hall Lane, Church Fenton, for which planning was refused but an appeal is pending. It is likely that the residential properties in this area would be avoided through removal of this section from any proposed Order Limits.</p> <p>There are also other residential planning applications scattered around the PDA relating to</p> |

| Indicator | Potential Development Area 5 | Potential Development Area 6 | Potential Development Area 7 | Potential Development Area 8 | Potential Development Area 9 |
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| | <p>development which would harm such an area will not be permitted unless there are no reasonable alternative means of meeting the development need and it can be demonstrated that the reasons for the proposal outweigh the need to safeguard the site.</p> <p>Whilst there were some initial approaches to landowners, these were not materially progressed given the agricultural land and Green Belt constraints associated with this PDA.</p> | <p>be permitted unless there are no reasonable alternative means of meeting the development need and it can be demonstrated that the reasons for the proposal outweigh the need to safeguard the site.</p> <p>Initial approaches to the landowners revealed a lack of opportunity to accommodate the Proposed Development.</p> | <p>been abandoned, there is alternative provision, or the facilities can best be retained and enhanced through development of a small part of the site. The areas could be avoided through design/mitigation.</p> <p>Small sections of the PDA between North Duffield and Thorganby Gale are Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation as described in the Selby District Local Plan 2005. Policy ENV9 provides that proposals for development which would harm such an area will not be permitted unless there are no reasonable alternative means of meeting the development need and it can be demonstrated that the reasons for the proposal outweigh the need to safeguard the site.</p> <p>There have been no approaches to landowners for this PDA and therefore landowner willingness to accommodate a development is unknown.</p> | <p>November 2022 (2022/0052/SCN) within and surrounding an area of the PDA to the south east of Escrick (Solar Development Site 1), and 2) Prior notification for a bio fertiliser storage tank which was submitted in May 2023, with prior approval not being considered necessary confirmed in June 2023 on an area of the PDA to the north of Common Lane (ZG2023/0505/AGN) (Solar Development Site 6). The following applications relate to land adjacent to the PDA. An EIA screening opinion for a solar farm at Hillam Grange adjacent to an area of the PDA to the south east of Monk Fryston (Solar Development Site 3) was submitted in May 2023 (ZG2023/0557/SCN) and the related planning application was refused in March 2025 (ZG2023/1271/FULM) (Solar Development Sites 3 and 4). This decision is currently being appealed. An outline application (2021/1531/EIA) and reserved matters application (ZG2025/0529/REMM) for the demolition of colliery buildings and construction of employment floorspace comprising Use Classes B2, B8 and E9(g) was submitted in December 2021 and May 2025 respectively. The outline application was approved in June 2024 with the reserved matters awaiting a decision. These applications are located at Lennerton Lane, adjacent to an area of the PDA to the south</p> | <p>existing properties or areas close to them, which would need to be avoided.</p> <p>A section of the PDA south of Little Fenton and to the north of the B1222 is in use for an existing solar farm at Ash Row Farm.</p> <p>The PDA is outside of the Green Belt</p> <p>A small section of the PDA is within a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) as described in the Selby District Local Plan 2005. A larger SINC also abuts the eastern boundary of the PDA. Policy ENV9 provides that proposals for development which would harm such an area will not be permitted unless there are no reasonable alternative means of meeting the development need and it can be demonstrated that the reasons for the proposal outweigh the need to safeguard the site.</p> <p>Initial approaches to the landowners revealed a lack of opportunity to accommodate the Proposed Development.</p> |

| Indicator | Potential Development Area 5 | Potential Development Area 6 | Potential Development Area 7 | Potential Development Area 8 | Potential Development Area 9 |
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| | | | | <p>east of Sherburn in Elmet (Solar Development Site 8).</p> <p>The majority of the PDA is outside of the Green Belt. The southern section of Solar Development Site 4 and approximately half of Solar Development Site 2 is within the Green Belt. Solar Development Site 1 is in close proximity to (but outside of) the Green Belt. Solar Development Site 7 abuts, but is outside of, the Green Belt.</p> <p>There are no specific local planning policy allocations within the PDA.</p> <p>Initial approaches to landowners were positively received and ultimately sufficient land became available to accommodate the Proposed Development.</p> | |
| <p>Cultural Heritage Study Area</p> <p>500 m - Listed buildings, Registered Park and Garden, Registered Battlefields and Conservation Areas</p> <p>2 km - Scheduled Monument</p> | <p>There is one Grade II Listed Building within the PDA 5 boundary. There are multiple Listed Buildings within the 500 m Study Area, notably one Grade I Listed Building within 400 m north of the southern parcel in Saxton and a cluster of three Grade II* Listed Buildings approximately 500 m south of the southern parcel off Laith Staid Lane.</p> <p>The Battle of Towton (1461) Registered Battlefield covers almost the entirety of the northern parcel of the PDA boundary and also extends beyond the PDA boundary to within approximately 200 m of</p> | <p>There is one Grade II Listed Building within the PDA 6 boundary. There are multiple Listed Buildings within the 500 m Study Area, notably four Grade I Listed Buildings located between 150 m and 430 m from the PDA boundary (the closest being towards the east of the PDA boundary in Wistow) and two Grade II* Listed Buildings approximately 300 m to the north east in Cawood.</p> <p>Cawood Conservation Area is located approximately 100 m to the north of the</p> | <p>There are no Listed Buildings within the PDA 7 boundary. There are multiple Listed Buildings within the 500 m Study Area, notably one Grade I Listed Building located approximately 300 m east of the PDA boundary in Thorganby.</p> <p>Thorganby Conservation Area is located approximately 230 m to the east of the PDA 7 boundary. There are no further Conservation Areas within 500 m of the site.</p> <p>There are seven Scheduled Monuments located within 2 km of the PDA boundary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Danes Hills square barrow cemetery on Crook Moor – | <p>There are six Listed Buildings within the 500 m Study Area, however, all of these are Grade II Listed. The nearest Grade II Listed Building is located immediately to the south of the PDA boundary on the A63. It is worth noting that there is a Grade I Listed Building just outside the 500 m Study Area located in the village of Birkin.</p> <p>Monk Fryston Conservation Area is located approximately 150 m to the south of the parcel closest to Monk Fryston (Solar Development Site 6). Escrick Conservation Area is located approximately 250 m northeast of the most northerly PDA 8</p> | <p>There are no Listed Buildings within the PDA 7 boundary. There are multiple Listed Buildings within the 500 m Study Area, notably one Grade I Listed Building located approximately 130 m northwest of the PDA boundary in Church Fenton.</p> <p>There are no Conservation Areas, Registered Parks or Gardens or Battlefields within 500 m of the PDA boundary.</p> <p>There is a small Scheduled Monument 'Paradise Lodge moated site and grange of the Prior of Bolton' south east of Paradise Wood Ancient Woodland which unlike the wood</p> |

| Indicator | Potential Development Area 5 | Potential Development Area 6 | Potential Development Area 7 | Potential Development Area 8 | Potential Development Area 9 |
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| | <p>the northern edge of the southern parcel. Saxton Conservation Area is located immediately to the north of the southern parcel.</p> <p>There are four Scheduled Monuments located within the 2 km Study Area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medieval manorial complex, garden and water management features, St Mary's chapel, and a linear earthwork forming part of the Aberford Dyke system, located approximately 460 m north of the southern parcel; Linear earthworks known as Woodhouse Moor Rein and South Dyke, part of the Aberford Dyke system, located approximately 900 m northwest of the southern parcel; <i>Site of 'King Athelstan's Palace', immediately north of the church'</i> located approximately 1.2 km to the south east of the southern parcel; and A Roman Villa located approximately 2 km north east of the northern parcel. | <p>PDA 6 boundary. There are no further Conservation Areas within 500 m of the site.</p> <p>There are five Scheduled Monuments located within the 2 km Study Area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kensbury moated site, fishpond and fragment of a medieval field system, located approximately 100 m to the north east; Paradise Lodge moated site and grange of the Prior of Bolton, located approximately 420 m to the west; World War II airfield defences at RAF Church Fenton, located approximately 1 km to the west; Thorpe Hall moated monastic grange, located approximately 1.6 km to the south; and Kelfield moated site and fishpond, 180 m north of Kelfield Church, located approximately 2 km to the north east. | <p>located approximately 33 m west of the PDA boundary;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moated site and fishpond 140 m south of St Helen's Church located approximately 1.4 km west of the PDA boundary; Four round barrow Scheduled Monuments on Skipworth Common, located approximately 1.3 km to the west at their closest point; Danes Hills square barrow cemetery, 300 m south of Adamson Farm located approximately 1.9 km west of the PDA boundary; Wressle Castle, located approximately 1.7 km south of the PDA boundary; Site of Ellerton Priory located approximately 600 m east of the PDA boundary; and Motte and bailey castle, fishpond and moated site north and east of Aughton church located approximately 800 m east of the PDA boundary. | <p>parcel (Solar Development Site 1). There are no further Conservation Areas within 500 m of the site. Hillan Conservation Area is located just outside of the Study Area.</p> <p>There are two Scheduled Monuments located within 2 km of the PDA boundary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Danes Hills square barrow cemetery on Crook Moor located approximately 1 km south of most northern parcel (Solar Development Site 1); and Steeton Hall medieval magnate's residence and manorial centre located approximately 1.9 km west of the parcel closest to Monk Fryston (Solar Development Site 7). <p>The Roman fort 600 m west of Roall Hall sits just outside 2 km Study Area south east of the most southern parcel (Solar Development Site 4).</p> | <p>itself forms part of the PDA boundary. Moreover, the 'World War II airfield defences at RAF Church Fenton' Scheduled Monument is located immediately adjacent to the northern boundary of the site. The 'Site of 'King Athelstan's Palace', immediately north of the church' sits just outside the 2 km Study Area.</p> |
| Access for Construction Traffic | <p>PDA 5 can be accessed via the A1(M), A64, A162 or the M1, B1217 (albeit some bridges along B1217 which would need to be assessed further). There are no obvious access constraints for HGVs.</p> | <p>PDA 6 can be accessed via the A1(M), A63, B1222. There are no obvious access constraints for HGVs. Some local roads within the PDA may require mitigation, depending on PV layout.</p> | <p>PDA 7 can be accessed via the A19, A163. There are no obvious access constraints for HGVs. Some local roads within the PDA may require mitigation, depending on PV layout.</p> | <p>PDA 8 can be accessed via the A19 and local roads (Solar Development Site 1) and via the A1(M), A63 and local roads (for other Solar Development Sites). There are no obvious access constraints for HGVs. Some mitigation of local roads will be required.</p> | <p>PDA 9 can be accessed via the B1222. There are no obvious access constraints for HGVs. Some mitigation of local roads may be required, depending on PV layout.</p> |

| Indicator | Potential Development Area 5 | Potential Development Area 6 | Potential Development Area 7 | Potential Development Area 8 | Potential Development Area 9 |
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| Flood Risk: Fluvial and Surface Water | <p>PDA 5 is separated into two land parcels.</p> <p><u>Northern Parcel:</u> The northern parcel is mostly in Flood Zone 1. There is a very minor region within the east of the PDA 5 boundary which is within Flood Zone 2. The west of the site is bounded by Cock Beck and contains small areas of Flood Zone 3 (associated with fluvial flooding the Beck).</p> <p>It is considered that the development of the northern parcel could be entirely sited within the Flood Zone 1 area. Drainage works to create a surface water connection into Cock Beck may require minor drainage construction works in Flood Zone 3.</p> <p>With regard to surface water flooding, the Environment Agency's Risk of Flooding from Surface Water mapping indicates there are very limited amounts of surface water flooding shown within the northern parcel of PDA 5.</p> <p><u>Southern Parcel:</u> The southern parcel is bisected along the east-west line by Stream Dike. There are localised areas of Flood Zone 2 and 3 around Stream Dike, but otherwise the site is largely within Flood Zone 1.</p> | <p>PDA 6 contains Bishop Dyke as well as a number of other unnamed ordinary watercourses. The River Ouse (main river) is in close proximity to the northeastern boundary.</p> <p>A significant proportion of the central and northern areas of the PDA 6 site are contained within Flood Zone 3, with further areas contained within Flood Zone 2.</p> <p>Development would most likely be required within area of Flood Zone 2 and 3.</p> <p>With regard to surface water flooding, the Environment Agency's Risk of Flooding from Surface Water mapping indicates there are numerous isolated pockets of surface water flooding shown across PDA 6, likely indicating localised topographical depressions.</p> | <p>PDA 7 contains a number of Ordinary Watercourse tributaries to the Main River Derwent which runs to the east of the PDA 7 boundary.</p> <p>To the north of North Duffield, the site is largely within Flood Zone 1, with localised areas of Flood Zone 2 and 3 around the Old Derwent Watercourse and other tributaries. There are small, isolated pockets of surface water flooding.</p> <p>To the south of North Duffield, the site is again largely within Flood Zone 1, but with areas of Flood Zone 2 and 3 localised around the Lowmoor watercourse.</p> <p>However, with regard to surface water flooding, the Environment Agency's Risk of Flooding from Surface Water mapping indicates there are large areas of surface water flooding, which include large portions of high-risk areas.</p> <p>With careful design, it is anticipated that the development could be entirely sited within the Flood Zone 1 areas, with cable crossings and drainage potentially being required in areas of Flood Zone 2 and 3. In the southern area, the development would likely be within areas at high risk of surface water flooding which would need to be managed.</p> | <p>PDA 8 is separated into seven land parcels.</p> <p><u>Parcel west of Hambleton:</u> This parcel contains a number of unnamed Ordinary Watercourses / field drains. The main larger areas of the parcel are mostly within Flood Zone 1, albeit a reasonable proportion of the northeast of the parcel is within Flood Zone 2 and 3. The interconnecting corridors between the larger parcels are also contain areas of Flood Zone 2 and 3.</p> <p>With regard to surface water flooding, the Environment Agency's Risk of Flooding from Surface Water mapping indicates there is a moderate amount of surface water flooding, including high risk areas.</p> <p><u>Parcel southwest of Hambleton:</u> This parcel contains the Maspin Moor Drain and is in close proximity to the Main River Aire. The parcel is almost entirely within Flood Zones 2 and 3.</p> <p>There are small, isolated pockets of surface water flooding.</p> <p><u>Parcel East of Escrick:</u> This parcel contains a couple of unnamed watercourses. The southern half of the site is entirely within Flood Zone 2 and 3.</p> | <p>PDA 9 is a large land parcel predominantly within the Selby Area Internal Drainage Board area, with the exception of the northeastern-most corner.</p> <p>PDA 9 is bisected by Bishopdyke Rd and Bishop Dyke (a Main River), which both run in an east-west direction. South of Bishopdyke Rd, the Selby Dam, Upper Fox Drain and Fox Dike are all present within the PDA 9 boundary – all of which are designated as Main Rivers.</p> <p>The EA AIMS dataset has been reviewed which indicates flood defences are present on both banks of the Main River network within the PDA 9 boundary, including the Selby Dam and as far north as Bishop Dyke. These flood defences appear to take the form of Natural High Ground and Engineered High Ground.</p> <p>A large network of IDB watercourses (open and piped) are present within the extents of PDA 9, including Woodcock Drain and Carr Dike. The parcel also contains a number of unnamed Ordinary Watercourses, field drains and highway drains.</p> <p>PDA 9 is almost entirely within Flood Zone 2, with areas of Flood Zone 3 present that align to the many watercourses crossing the area. There are very limited, spatially separate areas of Flood Zone 1 suitable for development, and</p> |

| Indicator | Potential Development Area 5 | Potential Development Area 6 | Potential Development Area 7 | Potential Development Area 8 | Potential Development Area 9 |
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| | <p>It is considered that the development of the southern parcel could be entirely undertaken within the Flood Zone 1 area. Drainage works to create a surface water connection into Stream Dike may require minor construction works in Flood Zone 3, as may any cable crossing corridors which cross the watercourse.</p> <p>There are very limited amounts of surface water flooding shown within the southern parcel of PDA 5.</p> | | | <p>There are considerable patches of surface water flooding, with some larger areas being high risk.</p> | <p>development would be necessary in areas of Flood Zone 2 and 3.</p> <p>With regard to surface water flooding, the Environment Agency's Risk of Flooding from Surface Water mapping indicates that flood risk is highly variable across PDA 9. While large areas are shown to be at low risk from this source, there are many localised areas of medium to high risk distributed across the area, including in proximity to watercourses. Areas of higher risk are likely associated with local topography, shallow depressions and natural surface water flow paths.</p> |
| Flood Risk: Groundwater | PDA 5 is outside of a groundwater flood alert area and therefore the risk of groundwater flooding is considered to be low. | PDA 6 is outside of a groundwater flood alert area and therefore the risk of groundwater flooding is considered to be low. | PDA 7 is outside of a groundwater flood alert area and therefore the risk of groundwater flooding is considered to be low. | PDA 8 is outside of a groundwater flood alert area and therefore the risk of groundwater flooding is considered to be low. | PDA 9 is outside of a groundwater flood alert area and therefore the risk of groundwater flooding is considered to be low. |
| Flood Risk: Sewers | PDA 5 is largely greenfield (undeveloped) land containing highway corridors and small areas of development, largely associated with agricultural buildings. The northern parcel is in close proximity to Towton village. There are therefore likely to be sewer networks within or adjacent to the development boundary, however given the relative scale of developed areas compared to the size of the development, these are | PDA 6 is largely greenfield (undeveloped) land containing highway corridors and small areas of development, largely associated with agricultural buildings. To the northeast of PDA 6 is Cawood village. There are therefore likely to be sewer networks within the development boundary, however given the relative scale of developed areas compared to the size of the development, these are | PDA 7 is largely greenfield (undeveloped) land containing highway corridors and small areas of development, largely associated with agricultural buildings. Centred in the PDA 7 boundary is North Duffield village. There are therefore likely to be sewer networks within the development boundary, however given the relative scale of developed areas compared to the size of the development, these are thought to be minimal and localised risks. | PDA 8 is largely greenfield (undeveloped) land containing highway corridors and small areas of development, largely associated with agricultural buildings. There are therefore likely to be sewer networks within the development boundary, however given the relative scale of developed areas compared to the size of the development, these are thought to be minimal and localised risks. | PDA 9 is largely greenfield (undeveloped) land containing highway corridors and small areas of development, largely associated with agricultural buildings. Within the PDA 9 boundary are the settlements of Little Fenton and Biggin. There are therefore likely to be sewer networks within the PDA 9 boundary, however, given the relative scale of developed area compared to the size of the development, these are thought to present minimal and localised risks. |

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| | thought to be minimal and localised risks. | thought to be minimal and localised risks. | | | |
| Flood Risk: Artificial | PDA 5 is completely outside of the reservoir flood risk area on dry days and would be mostly outside of the reservoir flood risk area when combined with a fluvial event, with exception of a very small area to the east of the northern parcel. | PDA 6 has small areas which are within the reservoir flood risk area on dry days. The majority of the PDA 6 site is within the reservoir flood risk area when combined with a fluvial event. | PDA 7 is completely outside of the reservoir flood risk area on dry days and when combined with fluvial events. | The southernmost parcel of PDA 8 is almost entirely within the reservoir flood risk area on dry days. The northern two parcels of PDA8 have areas within the reservoir flood risk area on wet days. | PDA 9 is almost entirely within an area at risk of reservoir flooding on a 'wet day' when combined with a fluvial flood. Limited areas to the south of PDA 9 are shown to be at risk of flooding from reservoirs on a 'dry day', largely following the Selby Dam river. |
| Solar Array Shading Study Area: Woodland in or adjacent to the site. | The northern parcel of PDA 5 is largely unconstrained by shading with only a few areas of scattered woodland / trees throughout. The southern parcel has a small area of woodland located within the site off Coldhill Lane. There is also a large area of woodland located to the west of the site where the Rangers Walk trail passes through. | Inside the PDA boundary there are only a few areas of scattered woodland / trees throughout. There is a large area of woodland associated with Little Moss Hagg woods immediately south of the PDA boundary. | Inside the PDA boundary there are only a few areas of scattered woodland / trees throughout. There is a large area of woodland associated with Skipworth Common immediately west of the PDA boundary. | The northern parcel of PDA 8 is largely unconstrained by shading with only a few areas of scattered woodland / trees throughout. Whilst there are nearby woodlands i.e., Little Moss Hagg woods, these are largely concentrated towards the north which does not present a large issue from a shading perspective. | Inside the PDA boundary there are only a few areas of scattered woodland / trees throughout. There is a large area of woodland associated with Little Moss Hagg woods immediately east of the PDA boundary. |
| Topography | The majority of the PDA is located on land with a gradient less than 5% (81%). This includes 46% of the land having a gradient of less than 3% and 35% with a gradient between 3% and 5%. A total of 19% of the PDA is located on a gradient greater than 5%. | The entirety of the PDA is located on land with a gradient of less than 3%. | The entirety of the PDA is located on land with a gradient of less than 3%. | The entirety of the PDA is located on land with a gradient of less than 3%. | The entirety of the PDA is located on land with a gradient of less than 3%. |
| Site Size | The PDA is 564 ha and therefore would not, on its own, be large enough to accommodate a project with a 500 MW grid connection. It is near to other PDAs and could potentially be linked to another PDA to create an adequately | The PDA is 1,312 ha and therefore is of sufficient size to accommodate a project with a 500 MW grid connection | The PDA is 2,904 ha and therefore is of sufficient size to accommodate a project with a 500 MW grid connection | The PDA is 900 ha. This is smaller than the initial 1,100 ha site size that informs the Applicant's site selection, however, PDA 8 (being the site of the Proposed Development) when first considered by the Applicant was larger (for | The PDA is 1,507 ha and is therefore of sufficient size to accommodate a project with a 500 MW grid connection |

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| | <p>yellow bar</p> <p>sized site, subject to further technical assessment</p> | | | <p>instance, 1,022 ha presented at PEIR) and has been reduced through ongoing design evolution to avoid environmental constraints in a way that does not apply to other PDAs which have not been through the same process at the time of assessment. It is considered an adequate size to accommodate a project with a 500 MW grid connection.</p> | |



Light Valley
Solar

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