

# FORMATION OF A 49.9MW SOLAR FARM

Kinnon Park Farm

**Namene Solar**

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## Second of two Public Consultations

Welcome to the second Public Consultation for the proposal at Kinnon Park Farm, by Methven.

### Purpose of this Consultation

This drop in consultation provides an opportunity for you to share your views of the potential benefits and impacts of the Solar Installation. This consultation is also a key part of Perth and Kinross Council's Planning Permission process, and we will share the outcomes with Councillors.

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### Next Steps

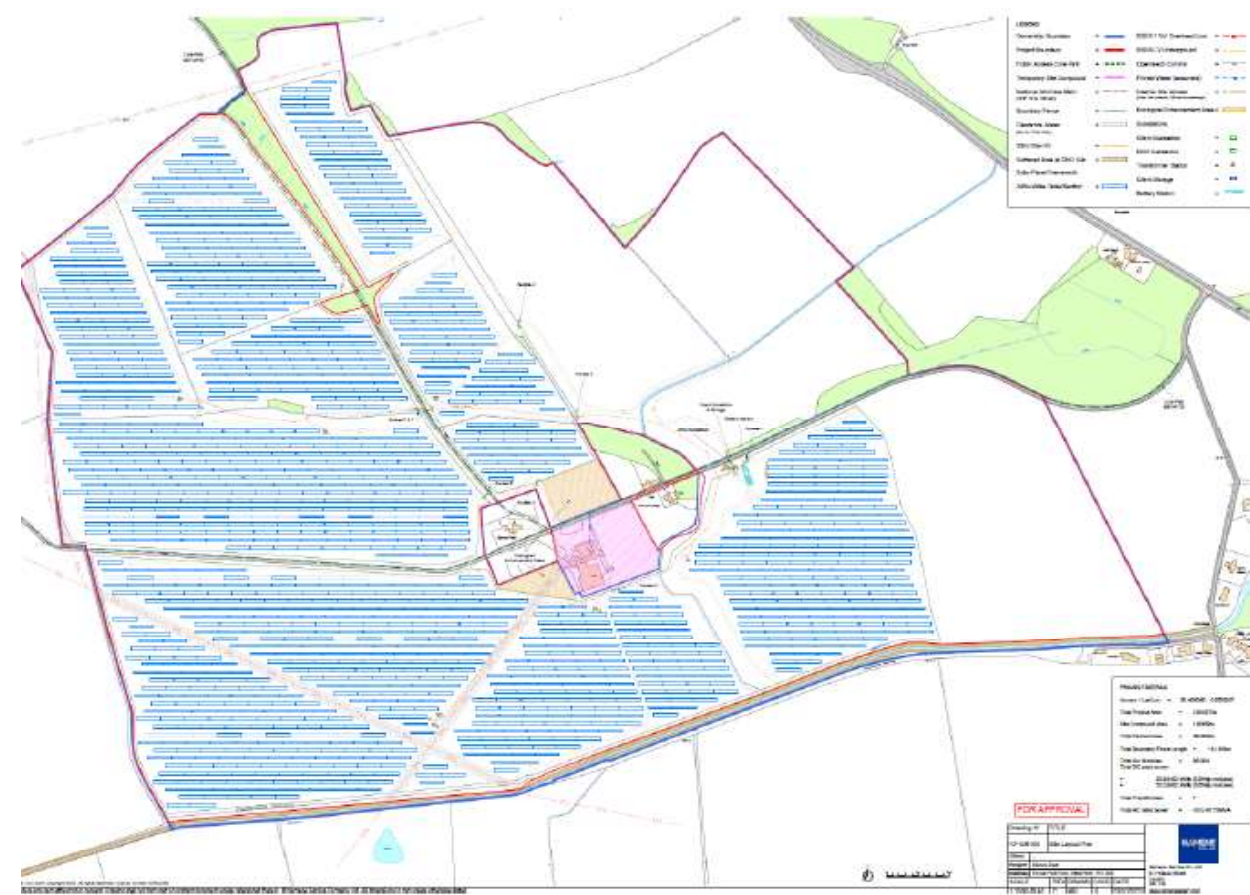
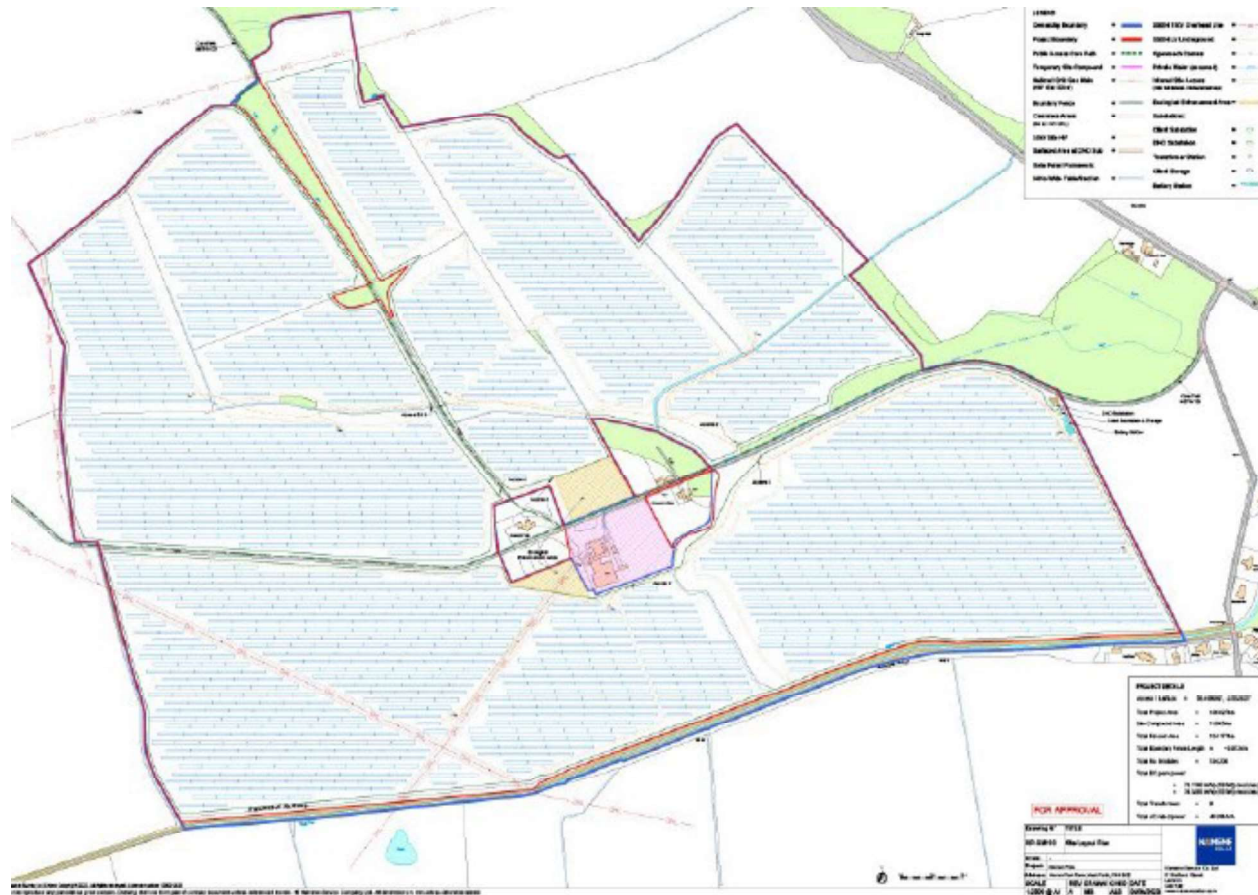
After this consultation with the local community, our next steps will be to:

- Update the development proposals, taking cognisance of community feedback
- Submit an Application for Planning Permission to The Council by Winter 23/24.
- Further opportunity for the public to provide comments on the proposal directly to The Council.
  - Determination of Application by PKC Spring/Summer 24.



# Steps Taken Since Consultation Event 1

Reduced number of panels (from 134,300 to 96,084)- the developers have removed entire fields from their plan due to concerns on visual impact and the use of arable land.



Following feedback that the community did not feel well informed about the first event, we have met with the Community Council, we delivered 2500 leaflets through door. Through members of the community council we have spread word of the event via social media.

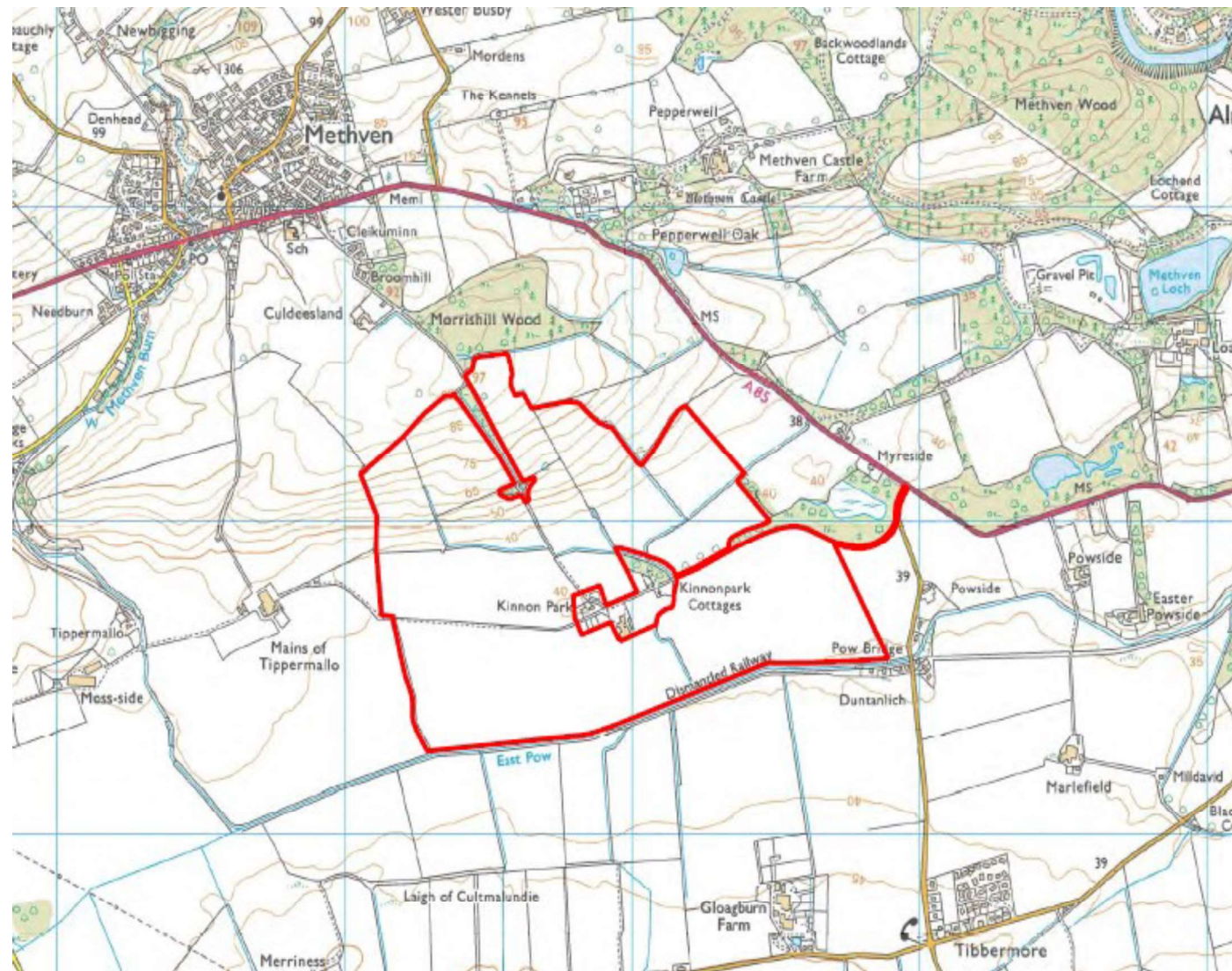
Perth and Kinross Council confirmed last week that an EIA (Environmental Impact Assessment) would not be required, meaning that national EIA regulations do not perceive this proposal to carry significant environmental effects. Various reports will still be required to submit a planning application and will be available for the community to view upon submission.

The developer has commissioned a Glint and Glare assessment, regrettably this information is not currently available, the technical nature of this assessment takes around 3 months to complete. The full report will be available to view on PKC's website when an application if an application is submitted.



# NAMENE SOLAR

**Namene** is a business that believes people and planet should come first. They provide affordable, highly reliable, everyday devices to those who need them the most. They harness clean technology to transform lives and livelihoods. 'Namene' means 'new dawn.' They chose this name for our business because they know the important role that clean technology has in building a more sustainable and equitable world.



## The Proposals

The proposed solar farm at Kinnon Park will feed green energy into the grid and support a local reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. The total land area for the proposals is around 125Ha, which is made up of around 12 fields. An application to PKC will be for; Change of land use from agriculture to renewable energy generation of up to 49.9MW for a period of up to 40 years.

This may comprise:

96,084 ground-mounted solar panels. The mountings up to 3m high, south facing, and fixed. The panels would be located in rows or strings to represent a coherent and relatively simple layout. Inverters to convert the energy into electrical current suitable for the grid will be positioned around the solar farm areas.

Battery storage units, DNO substation and private substation would be secured in containers approximately 3m high – located in the east of the site nearest the main highway access via A85.

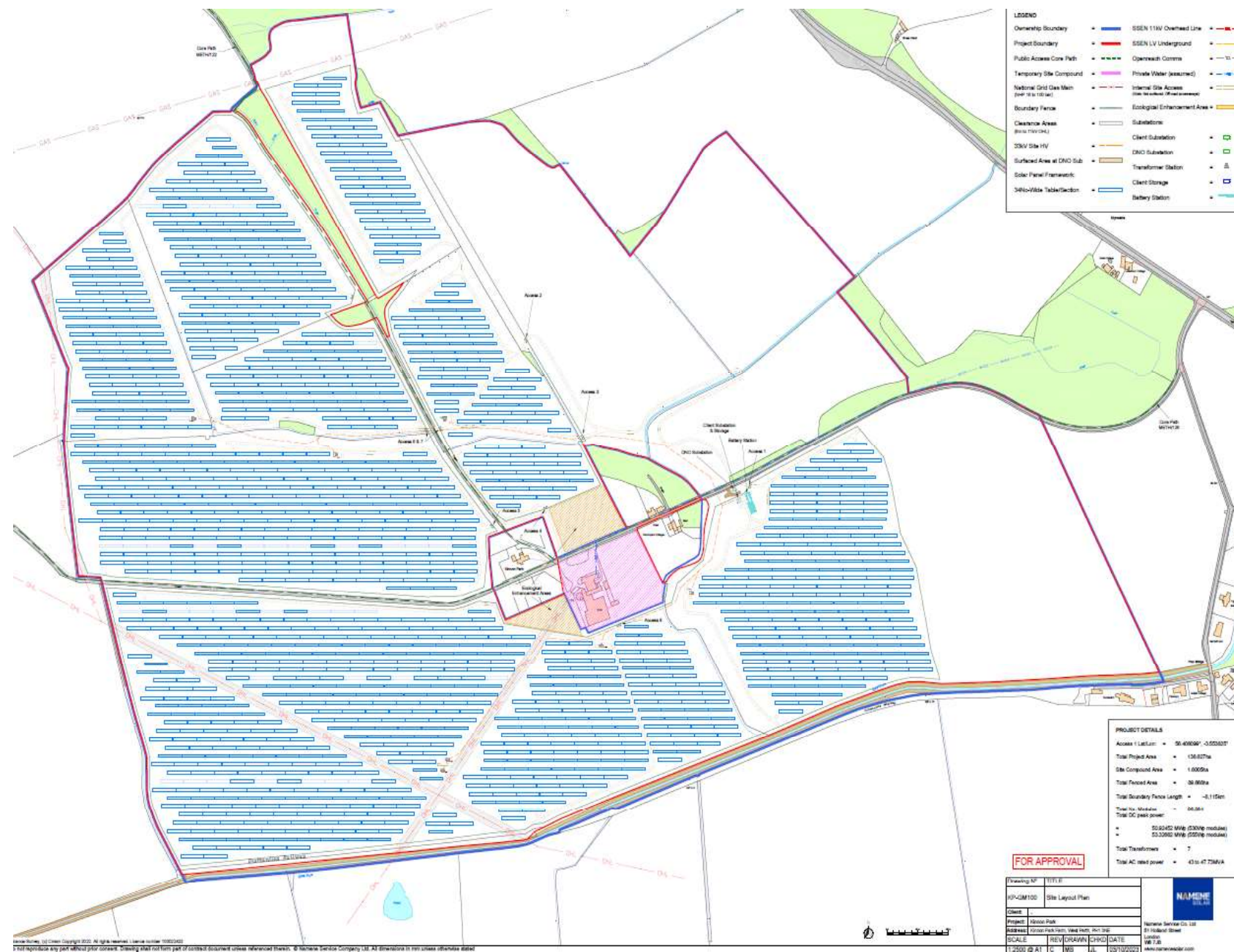
Site would be secured by deer-style fencing of 2.0m in height, supported by wooded posts of approx. 2.0m in height. CCTV cameras would be erected either pole or fence-mounted, located at strategic points.

A 49.9MW (AC) export capacity will provide:

- Provide enough electricity to power more than 16,580 homes and could save the emission of 11,210 tonnes of CO2 annually



# PLANNING POLICY POSITION



## National Planning Policy

The National Planning Framework 4, adopted in February 2023, put the climate and nature crisis at the forefront of its long-term vision. Prioritising green energy ensures that the country meets its Net Zero goals (Scotland's Climate Change Plan, backed by legislation, has set an approach to achieving net zero emissions by 2045). Relevant Policies are;

- 1 Tackling the Climate and Nature Crises
- 2 Climate Mitigation and Adaptation
- 3 Biodiversity
- 5 Soils
- 7 Historic Assets and Places
- 9 Vacant Land
- 11 Energy
- 14 Design, Quality and Place
- 22 Flood Risk

## PKC Local Development Plan

- Principle of development/Sustainability (Policy 33A, 35)
- Landscape, Place, Historic Environment (Policy 1A, 1B, 29, 31, 38, 39)
- Public Access (Policy 15)
- Ecology and Biodiversity (Policy 40, 41, 50, 51)
- Transportation and Access (Policy 60)

The draft of Scotland's Energy Strategy looks to set out action to reduce barriers to enable and encourage greater solar deployment. The Government are keen to see the number of solar installations offering community benefits increase and continue to encourage the sector to consider what packages of community benefit it can offer communities local to development.

Any future planning application will be assessed by Perth and Kinross Council against the National Planning Framework as well as the Local Development Plan. The Council will further examine any relevant Supplementary Guidance.

In addition it is likely The Council will consult with internal service colleagues (such as environmental health, transportation, business and economic development, green space, and access officers) as well as external agencies (for example, Nature Scot, SEPA, and Historic Environment Scotland), who will be asked to comment on the proposed plans from their own perspectives.

# CLIMATE AND CONSTRAINTS

## Climate Emergency:

In June 2019, Perth and Kinross Council agreed to declare a climate emergency and the COP26 UN Climate Change Conference in Glasgow 2021 emphasised the importance of caring for developments impact on climate change. Perth and Kinross within their Vision for Low Carbon Place aim to:

Ensure that development and land uses make a positive contribution to helping to minimise the causes of climate change and adapting to its impacts.

Promote the sustainable development of electricity generation from a diverse range of renewable and low-carbon energy technologies.

## Constraints:

To address the planning policy matters outlined above, the applicants have already instructed several land use studies to address and where needed mitigate any impact of the development such as;

Heritage Impact Assessment

Access and Transportation Assessment

Ecology Assessment

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment

When a planning application is prepared, these studies along with a Planning Statement and other information will be submitted to support the plans and to demonstrate compliance with the planning policies and guidance outlined previously.

The following information boards outlines each constraint and what Namene may propose to reduce any negative impact from the development.

### **The topics to be covered in order are;**

Ecology

Ground Conditions

Heritage

Transport

Landscape and Visual

Community Benefit



# ECOLOGY

The site has 9 phase 1 habitat types including, arable land, broad-leaved woodland, hedgerows, scattered trees and ruderal vegetation.

The main area is arable land and has limited potential to provide a habitat for protected species.

Brown hares were noted to be present on the site.

Ruderal vegetation is located around the boundaries of the site and can provide a habitat for protected ground nesting birds.

Trees on the site can also provide a habitat for nesting birds, and old nests were noted to be present during a site investigation.

The woodland to the north of the site provides a habitat for red squirrels, however, none were spotted at the time of the survey.



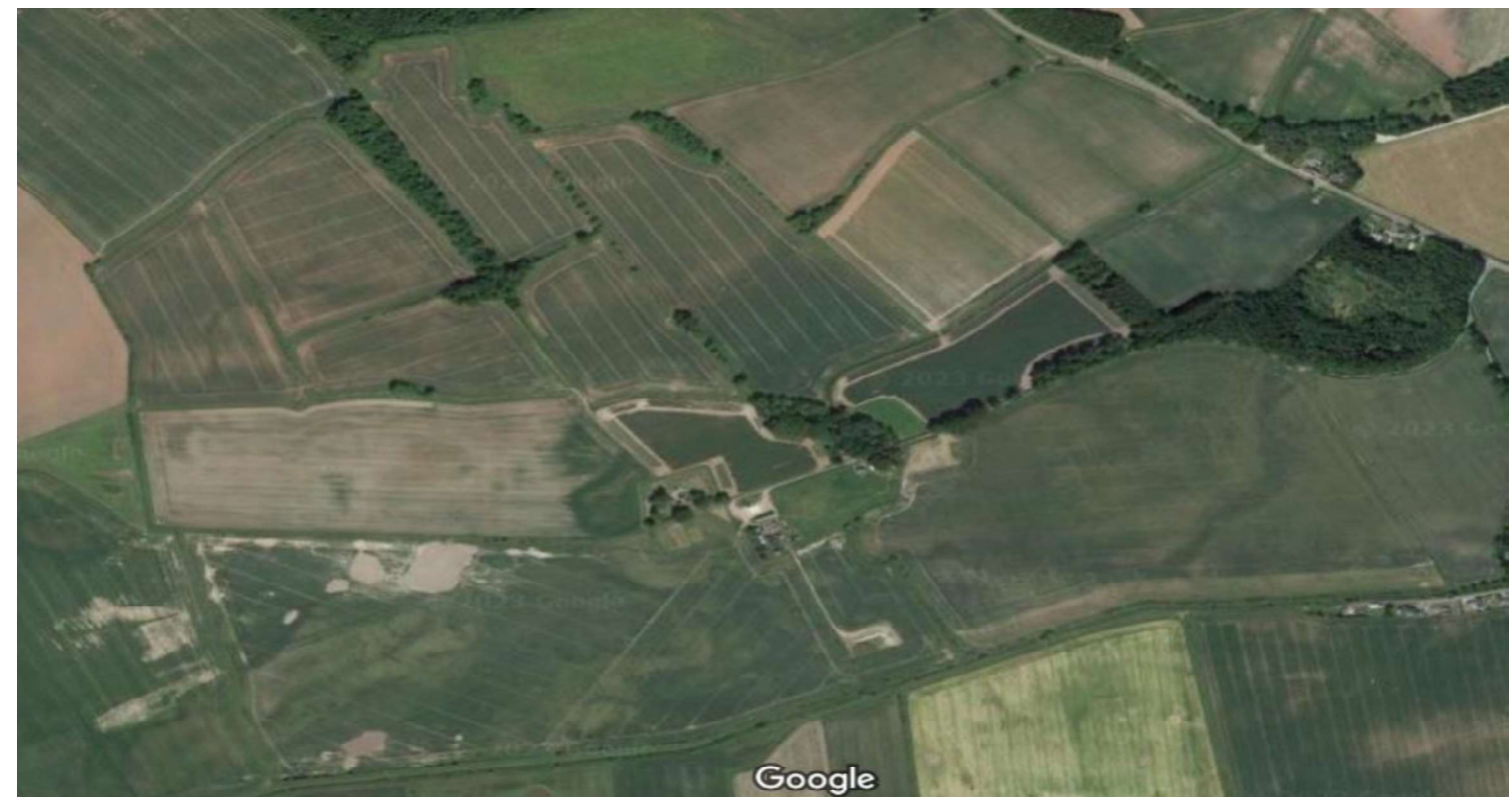
# GROUND CONDITIONS

The land has been used as farmland since the earliest available map until present.

Drains and watercourses are recorded across the site, all of which discharge into the East Pow watercourse.

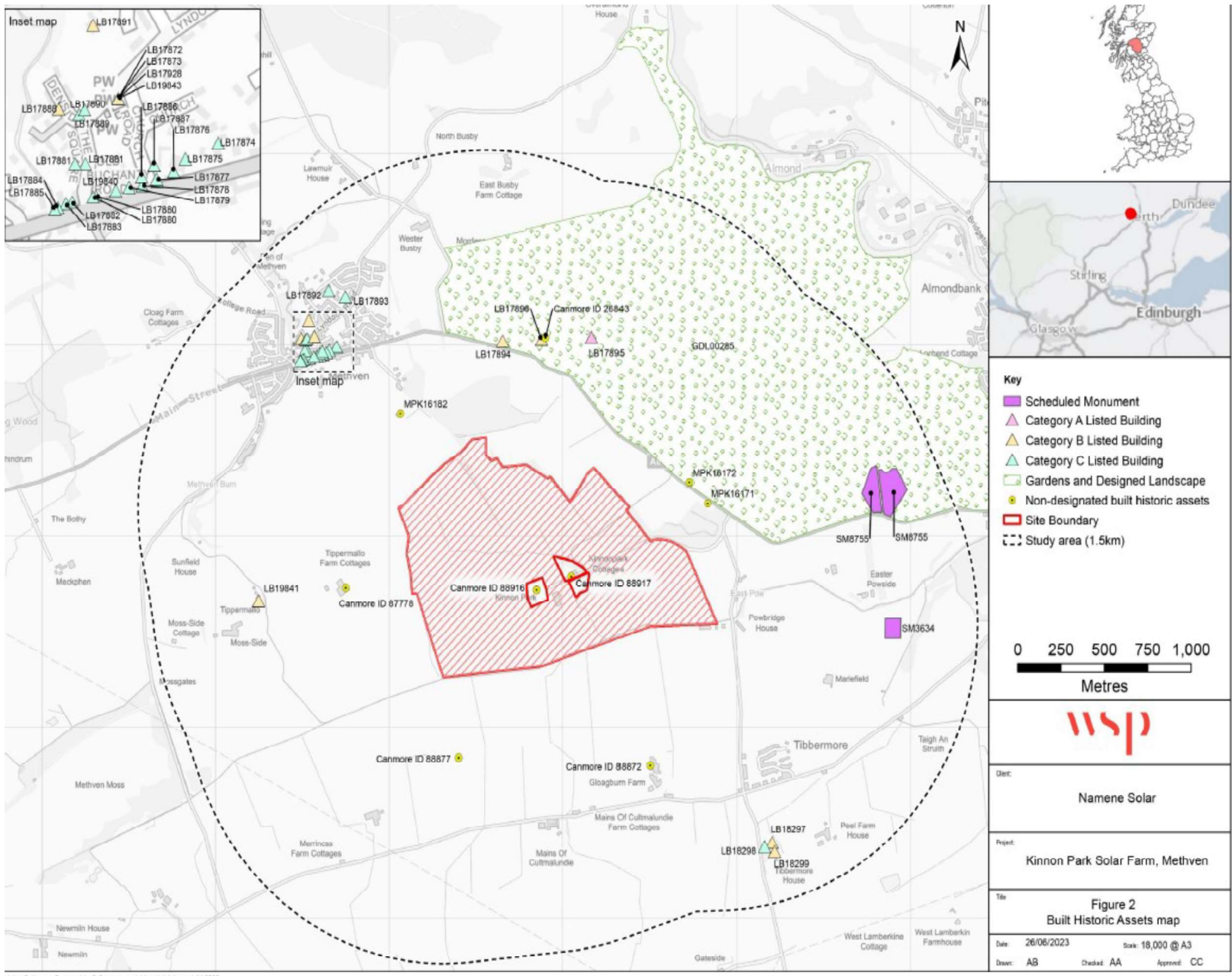
There have been buildings present on the site since 1866. Historically, a railway line was present along the southern boundary before being dismantled.

The site is at very low risk of instability. There is a high-pressure gas pipeline, overhead electricity cables and Openreach cables within the site.





# HERITAGE



Any large-scale solar development will have some impact on historic assets within and in the vicinity of the site. This includes:

## **Methven Castle (LB17895)**

The impact on the setting of Methven Castle is considered to be a minimal negative impact. Natural screening along the boundary will lessen the visual impact. Where the site has a rise in topography, an alternative mitigation strategy could be proposed.

## **Tippermallo including Walled Garden (LB19841)**

The proposal will have a minimal negative impact on the setting of the asset. Again, adequate natural screening will lessen the visual impact of the proposals.

## **Inventory Garden and Designed Landscape: Methven Castle (GDL00285)**

The proposal will have a minimal negative impact on the setting. With adequate natural screening, visual impact will be reduced along the site's southern, eastern and north-eastern boundaries. In the northern area alternative mitigation could be utilised to reduce any visual impact.

## Non-Designated Heritage Assets

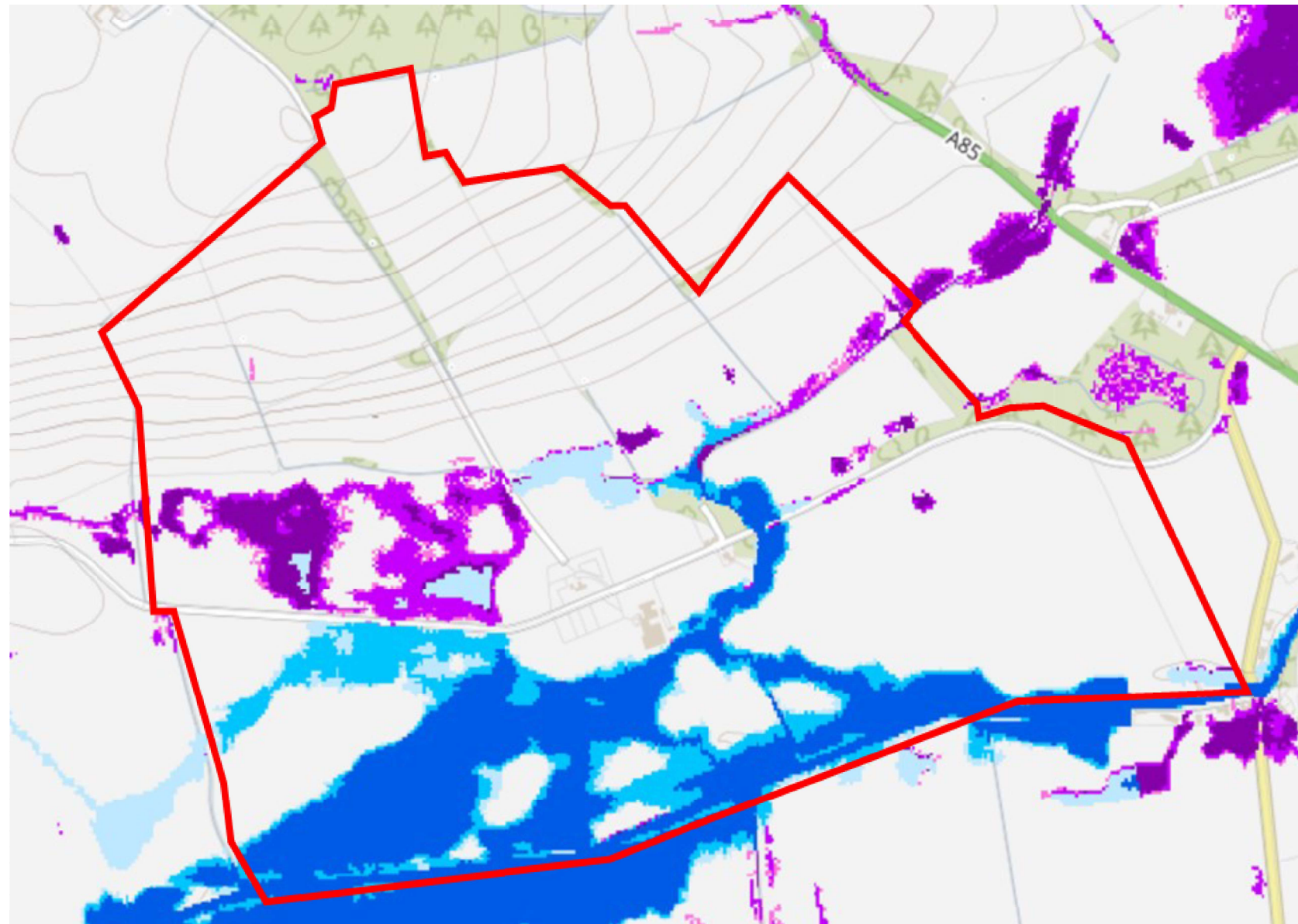
The settings of existing non-designated historical buildings may be compromised by the introduction of a solar farm, for example the Kinnon Park farmstead is currently appreciated in a rural landscape, and the settings of Kinnon Park cottages and Mains of Tippermallo and of Myreside Cottages and Merriless Farm. The consultants consider the development impact on these assets may be minimal negative. Further beyond, the farmstead of Gloagburn may also be impacted however this is judged to be neutral.

The potential mitigation and interventions proposed in these contexts include:

- The extent of the solar panel units is reduced in the northern part of the Site
- The use of adequate natural screening along the western and southern boundaries of the Site will assist in lessening the visual impacts
- Adequate natural screening along the southern, eastern and north-eastern boundaries of the Site



# FLOOD RISK



Data shows that the ground levels fall relatively steeply through the northern third of the site, with the central area, sloping gently towards the East Pow watercourse. Small elevated sections around the existing buildings are in flat areas on the east of the site.

**The site is at high risk of fluvial (river) flooding, as well as pluvial (surface water) flooding.**

NPF4 defines a framework for flood risk and land use vulnerability. The proposed solar farm would be classed as essential infrastructure, meaning there are certain constraints.

Areas of Medium to High Risk (chance of flooding is greater than 0.5% (1:200 years) development should be designed and constructed to be operation during floods, and not impede water flow.

Solar arrays can be flooded by up to 1m without any significant consequences, however further investigation is needed within localized areas that are at risk of flooding beyond 1m of depth.

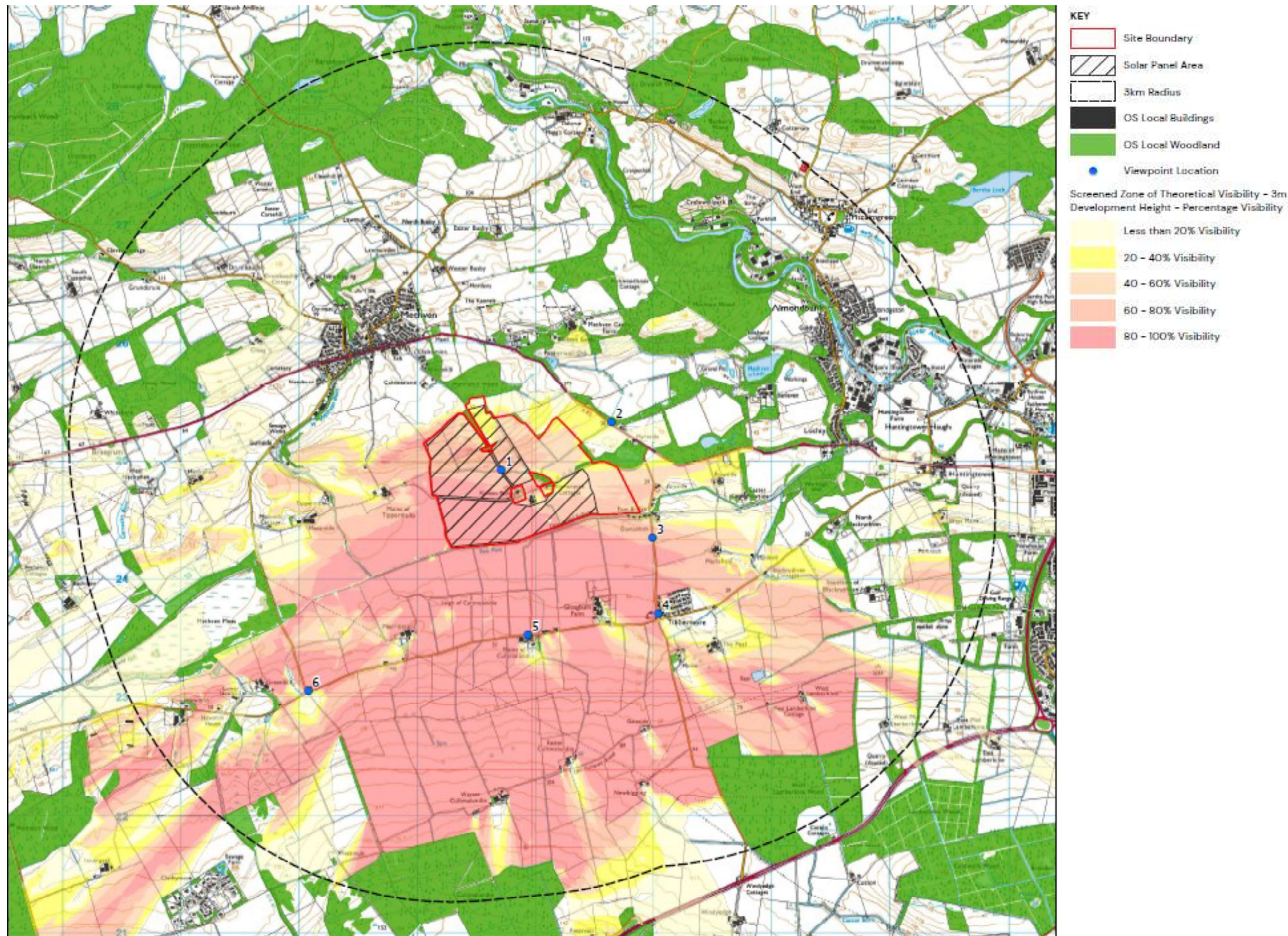
## Flood Risk Management Recommendations:

Management of flooding via earthworks and effective drainage. The siting of proposed inverters and transformers which are at risk of flood damage will be located out of areas at risk of flooding.

River Flooding	Surface Water Flooding
<b>High Likelihood</b> Each year this area has a 10% chance of flooding.	<b>High Likelihood</b> Each year this area has a 10% chance of flooding.
<b>Medium Likelihood</b> Each year this area has a 0.5% chance of flooding.	<b>Medium Likelihood</b> Each year this area has a 0.5% chance of flooding.
<b>Low Likelihood</b> Each year this area has a 0.1% chance of flooding.	<b>Low Likelihood</b> Each year this area has a 0.1% chance of flooding.



# LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL



The site lies within a broad lowland valley, with predominant agricultural land use. The local landscape is generally quite open. Given the south-to-north rise in elevation, the northern fields are more evident than the lower southern fields.

It is accepted that this form of development is going to be visible from various locations due to the existing openness and visibility of the site. However, by excluding the use of certain areas (higher northern fields), and the inclusion of additional mitigation measures the proposed development could be successful without any unacceptable impact on landscape character or visual amenity.

Mitigation measures could include; additional natural planting and management of existing trees/hedges.



# Community Benefit

## Biodiversity;

- No trees to be affected by the works, unless advised necessary by an approved arboriculturist.
- Hedgerows will increase through landscape management, either new native hedges, or existing to be 'gapped' up. A full Landscape Management plan to be provided as part of the full application.
- Biodiversity will increase through establishing wildflower meadows and grasslands, supporting hedgerow growth, promoting wetland habitats and reducing farming intensity.
- Development will promote new specified biodiversity set asides.
- No protected species are at risk of displacement due to the proposed works. A full Ecological Management Plan to be submitted as part of the full application.

There is positive benefits for biodiversity net gain (BNG). A new Scottish Government planning policy which encourages all development to enhance biodiversity by actually demonstrating a 'net gain' where things would be better than they currently are in terms of wildlife, flora, fauna. The BNG also encourages recreational opportunities (noting there are a series of Core Paths around and through the Kinnon Park Farm to be retained). These features will all benefit the wider community, e.g. walks, cycles with interpretation and learning of the Climate Change or energy generation technology or others.

## Access;

Core path network will remain unchanged– the paths will be accessible and lined with new and improved hedgerows.

## Community Benefit;

Community benefits are a voluntary, non-mandatory contribution given to the community by operators and are completely separate from the planning process. Community benefits can be wide ranging and deliver a variety of projects, such as biodiversity enhancement, job creation schemes and environmental educations projects. There is no statutory requirement or obligation for benefits to be offered.

The 5-6 month construction phase may include local employment opportunities, and, there will be overnight stay / economic spend by other construction people.

The proposed development has significant strategic or national benefits to tackling the Climate Emergency through generation of low carbon renewable energy and fed directly into the national grid. It is not possible to physically connect each local household to the solar farm owing to voltage differences.

Perth and Kinross Council may request the applicants to address planning policy for developer contributions, Local Development Plan "Policy 5: Infrastructure Contributions" could provide a mechanism for the developer to be required by the Council to make a contribution to community infrastructure. The policy says " (b) the provision, or improvement of, off-site facilities and infrastructure where existing facilities or infrastructure will be placed under additional pressure". Developer Contributions and Affordable Housing Supplementary Guidance would also apply. National Planning Framework 4 (Scottish Government) does promote BNG, improved community health and wellbeing which are policy areas the developers will be asked to address in the planning application.

For Policy 5 to be relevant, the proposed solar farm would need to be shown to place existing facilities or infrastructure under additional pressure to qualify for a formal developer contribution. There are no existing facilities or infrastructure which would be under additional pressure by this proposed development.

Other approaches the developer may consider include voluntary working with Methven and District community groups or projects where a financial contribution to projects could be agreed, or where another benefit in kind could be given such as education and learning experiences for schools about Climate Change, renewable energy and land use proposals affecting our future.

We would like your suggestions on what causes or groups may be interested in this option.



# TRANSPORT

## **Construction traffic & movement of goods to the site**

The nature of the proposed development will generate a minimal number of vehicle movements associated with its operation, with construction activities having a potential impact on the operation of the adjacent road network.

Kinnon Park Farm can currently be accessed from the unclassified U47 via a priority junction, the form of which supports larger vehicles accessing and leaving the farm from and to the north.

It is anticipated that the majority, including all HGVs for delivery of goods to the site for construction, will access the site from the north using the A85 and U47, likely having come via the A9.

A framework Construction Traffic Management Plan will be submitted as part of the planning application. This will identify a range of measures to minimise the impact on existing road users. The CTMP will provide an estimate of the level of trips likely to be generated by construction activities in addition to identifying a strategy to minimise the impact of construction activities on users of the core paths which pass through the site.

# FEEDBACK

Please fill in a consultation feedback form

If you have any further questions or would like to submit comments via email, please contact;

Gray Planning and Development

Neil– [neil@grayplanning.co.uk](mailto:neil@grayplanning.co.uk)

07871010503



# SOLAR FAQS

## Will the proposals be located at Kinnon Park forever?

No! The farm is proposed for a period of up to 40 years.

## Is it good for the environment ?

Yes! Solar farms provide a range of environmental and biodiversity benefits. Panels are set on posts which = minimal disturbance to the ground. We can also establish wildflower meadows/grassland and support hedgerow growth and promote wet land habitats.

## Does land used for solar reduce food security?

No! Solar farms provide valuable income for farmers and the land can still be used for grazing. Installation on farms also allows the ground underneath to recover and can help regenerate soil quality.

## Is it sunny enough?

Yes! Solar panels don't need direct sunlight to operate and they produce power year round. Solar is reliable because sunrise and sunset is known for each day, so a forecast "yield" is very accurate.

## Key Facts!

Solar farms occupy less than 1% of the UKs overall land mass (0.08%)

Solar farms create very little glint and glare– the panels are designed to absorb light!

Up to 99% of the materials within a solar panel are recyclable.

Solar is the most affordable electricity in history!