AGENDA

PLANNING, TRANSPORT AND DEVELOPMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING

Date: Tuesday 17 December 2013
Time: 6.30 pm
Venue: Town Hall, High Street, Maidstone

Overview and Scrutiny

Membership:

Councillors: Chittenden, Collins (Chairman), McLoughlin, Munford, Ross, Springett, Watson, de Wiggondene and Mrs Wilson

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Continued Over/:

Issued on 9 December 2013

Alison Broom

Alison Broom, Chief Executive, Maidstone Borough Council, Maidstone House, King Street, Maidstone Kent ME15 6JQ

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Planning, Transport and Development Overview & Scrutiny Committee

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 19 NOVEMBER 2013

Present: **Councillor Collins (Chairman), and Councillors Burton, Chittenden, Mrs Gooch, McLoughlin, Ross, Springett, Watson and Mrs Wilson**

Also Present: **Councillors Garland, Councillor Pickett and Councillor Mrs Paterson.**

45. THE COMMITTEE TO CONSIDER WHETHER ALL ITEMS ON THE AGENDA SHOULD BE WEBCAST

RESOLVED: That all items on the agenda be web-cast.

46. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Munford and De Wiggondene.

47. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Councillors Mrs Gooch and Burton substituted for Councillors Munford and De Wiggondene respectively.

48. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS/WITNESSES

Councillor Garland, Councillor Pickett and Councillor Mrs Paterson were noted as a Visiting Members with an interest in all items on the agenda.

49. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures.

50. TO CONSIDER WHETHER ANY ITEMS SHOULD BE TAKEN IN PRIVATE BECAUSE OF THE POSSIBLE DISCLOSURE OF EXEMPT INFORMATION

RESOLVED: That all items on the agenda be taken in public as proposed.

51. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 15 OCTOBER 2013.

The Committee highlighted two amendments to the minutes:

- That Councillor Springett be added to the list of those present; and
- That Councillor Burton be included as a Visiting Member.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the minutes held on 15 October, subject to the two amendments highlighted, be agreed as a correct record and duly signed.

52. AMENDMENT TO ORDER OF BUSINESS

It was proposed that item 8, Maidstone Borough Local Plan Public Consultation Draft – Group 2 Policies and item 9, Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy be taken together.

RESOLVED: That item 8, Maidstone Borough Local Plan Public Consultation Draft – Group 2 Policies and item 9, Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy be taken together.

53. MAIDSTONE BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN PUBLIC CONSULTATION DRAFT – GROUP 2 POLICIES & GREEN AND BLUE INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY

A Member of the Committee moved that the Committee had not had sufficient time to consider the reports and recommended that both items be deferred until a later date.

The Committee was informed that a meeting could be arranged on 2 December 2013 at 6.30pm which would fit with the decision timetable.

The motion was seconded. The Committee voted on the motion, 3 in favour with 6 abstentions. The motion was carried.

RESOLVED: That item 8, Maidstone Borough Local Plan Public Consultation Draft – Group 2 Policies and item 9, Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy be deferred and considered by the Committee on 2 December 2013.

54. FIVE YEAR SUPPLY MID-YEAR UPDATE

Emma Boshell, Planning Officer, Spatial Policy, introduced the report to the Committee. She explained that the update was in response to the recommendation made by the Committee at its meeting on 26 September 2013.

Ms Boshell explained that the report identified those sites that had been included in windfall; it included caveats and assumptions in its calculations. She referred the Committee to the table on page 208 of the agenda which showed the 5 year Housing Land Supply at April 2013 and the table on page 210 which reflected the position in September 2013 which showed that the shortfall had been reduced to -252.

In response to Members questions it was confirmed that completions and non-completion figures (for planning permissions) had not been included in the calculations presented. The officer explained that the guidance given by the NPPF was that monitoring should take place on an annual basis as the process was hugely resource intensive; it involved the whole team, taking a month to complete.

Members felt that the recommendation made at its meeting on 26 September which requested an update 'at a mid-year point on planning permissions, windfall sites and non-completions' had only been fulfilled in part.

The Committee considered sites such as the Kent Institute of Medicine & Surgery (KIMS) and the planning permissions granted for housing units. It queried how and when these would be included in Maidstone's 5 year housing land supply calculations. Members also considered Houses in Multiple Occupancy (HMOs) and how they were calculated in terms of housing units.

It was explained that in the annual monitoring of planning permissions only included Class C3. The Committee was informed that there was a Class C3 element at the KIMS site in the allocation of homes for staff. With regards to HMOs further investigation was required to establish whether they were 'self contained units' and therefore Class C3.

In response to questions relating to completed and non-completed planning permissions, the Committee was informed that:

- Based on past trends completion rates had always exceeded non-completion rates; and
- The outline planning permissions for the housing units at KIMS may not fall into the Council's current 5 year housing land supply.

It was explained that with smaller sites and where planning applications for 'reserved matters' had come forward it may be possible to include a completed planning permission with some certainty. With larger sites there would be a phased implementation. By meeting with house builders the Council was able to establish what planning permissions were likely to be completed, it was confirmed that the same process would be under taken with the KIMS site.

Visiting Member and Leader of the Council, Councillor Garland addressed the Committee in relation to meeting the 5 year housing land supply. He questioned the possibility and of a higher housing target (than the current 11,080) and therefore the negligible effect of further interim monitoring. In response to Members questions it was confirmed that at present, the housing target of 11,080 was arguably the best figure to date and was evidence based.

Mr Jarman explained that the 3 stage process that was to be undertaken to refresh the housing target:

- **Stage 1** - Establish the Housing need;
- **Stage 2**- Establish what Maidstone can reasonably supply by evidencing gaps and constraints; and
- **Stage 3** – Discussions with neighbouring authorities.

The Committee recommended that officers returned to update it on Maidstone's housing need and what the Council could reasonably supply at

stage 2 in the process described. It was confirmed that this would fit with the Committee's February meeting date.

RESOLVED: That

a) The Committee be updated at its February meeting on Maidstone's housing need and what the Council can reasonably supply at stage 2 in the process described.

55. FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered its future work programme. It was agreed that an additional meeting should be scheduled for 2 December to consider the deferred items on the agenda.

Members felt that the existing December meeting date should be held at present with a view to cancelling the meeting, dependent on the outcome of the meeting on 2 December.

The Committee requested that special arrangements be made for the publication of reports scheduled to come to its January and February meetings; that they made available to it at least two weeks before the meeting date.

RESOLVED: That

a) An additional meeting should be scheduled for 2 December to consider the deferred items on the agenda; and
b) Special arrangements be made for the publication of reports scheduled to come to the Planning, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee's January and February meetings; that they made available to it at least two weeks before the meeting date.

56. DURATION OF MEETING

6.35pm to 7.35pm

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

PLANNING, TRANSPORT AND DEVELOPMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

17 DECEMBER 2013

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Report prepared by Darren Bridgett

1. SOLAR ENERGY PLANNING POLICY ADVICE NOTES

1.1 Key issue for decision

To consider the attached guidance documents at Appendix A (Planning policy advice note: Domestic and medium scale solar PV arrays (up to 50kW) and solar thermal) and Appendix B (Planning policy advice note: Large scale (>50kW) solar PV arrays) as planning policy advice notes that will advise decision makers when determining planning applications.

1.2 Reason for urgency

1.2.1 This decision is urgent so that the documents proposed for adoption as planning policy advice notes can be used to guide planning applications already submitted to the council. A number of screening opinions, to determine if an environmental impact assessment is required, prior to potentially submitting an application, have also been submitted to the council. This means that potentially more applications for this type of development could soon be submitted to the council.

1.3 Recommendation of the Head of Planning and Development

That the Planning, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee (PTD OSC) recommends that the Cabinet Member for Planning, Transport and Development adopt the planning policy advice notes at Appendix A (Planning policy advice note: Domestic and medium scale solar PV arrays (up to 50kW) and solar thermal) and Appendix B (Planning policy advice note: Large scale (>50kW) solar PV arrays) as planning policy advice notes that will advise decision making when determining planning applications.

1.4 Reasons for recommendation

1.4.1 The technology behind solar photovoltaic (PV) panels has existed for a number of years and has in the main been utilised in fairly small scale schemes, such as on the roofs of buildings. The government provides two incentives to encourage the generation of renewable energy which have had a significant impact on the demand for the development of large-scale PV installations in the UK:

a. Renewable Obligation Certificates (ROC) which are an incentive for the deployment of large scale renewable energy in the UK. The Renewable Obligation is currently only available to new electricity generators until 31 March 2017 and lasts for 20 years; and[1]
b. The 'Feed-in Tariff' (FiT), which provides an index-linked guaranteed subsidy for smaller scale solar PV from central government for 25 years.

1.4.2 To date in Maidstone Borough there has been one permitted planning application for a solar farm at Lenham, there is one application currently awaiting determination and there are/have been a number of screening opinions submitted (to ask if an environmental impact assessment is required) for large scale solar farms.

1.4.3 Currently the council has no adopted planning policy or guidance referring to solar energy and solar farm developments of any size. Policy DM2 – Renewable and low carbon energy schemes, of the emerging Maidstone Borough Local Plan will deal with larger scale renewable energy developments including solar farms, but this can only provide a high level guidance on the policy issues that need to be considered. The advice notes that are recommended for adoption in this report are consistent with the policy proposed in the plan. These notes cover technical issues including landscape and visual impact and traffic generation.

1.4.4 At the national level the National Planning Policy Framework is not specific about solar farms but advises that local authorities should have a positive strategy to promote energy from renewable sources whilst ensuring that adverse impacts are addressed satisfactorily, including cumulative landscape and visual impacts. Further guidance on solar farms was published by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) in July 2013 (Planning practice for renewable and low carbon energy) which covers a range of issues that need to be considered by planning authorities when considering large scale solar farms. This document is referred to in the supporting text of emerging policy DM2 – Renewable and low carbon energy schemes.

[1] In the near future the Government is likely to change the way that it subsidises large scale renewable energy installations: http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-25210963.

1.4.5 As an emerging industry, there are few examples of detailed planning guidance that are in use by other local authorities around the country. However, Cornwall Council has seen significant activity as it has the highest solar irradiation levels in the UK. It has produced two detailed guidance notes that provide a best practice template. Ashford Borough Council has taken the core of this document and amended it for local use. With both Cornwall's[2] and Ashford's[3] permission, Maidstone officers have adapted versions of these documents dealing with, firstly, domestic and medium scale solar arrays and secondly, large scale arrays so that they are applicable to the context of this borough. The Kent Planning Officers' Group (KPOG) is currently exploring the potential for these guidance notes to be shared among the Kent districts to provide relevant county-wide guidance on this issue.

1.4.6 It is important to note that both guidance notes are principally concerned with providing good practice to potential applicants on the planning and development of solar proposals. To a significant extent they expand on the issues that local planning authorities should take into account when making decisions on planning applications identified by DCLG guidance in July 2013. They are not intended as policy documents stating where such proposals will or will not be considered acceptable by the local planning authority but instead, set out the most important criteria by which schemes should be judged on an individual case by case basis. They also set out key procedural guidance including the scope of information that would normally be expected to accompany any planning application for such developments.

1.4.7 This report therefore recommends that PTD OSC recommends to the Cabinet Member for Planning, Transport and Development that these two documents (Appendix A and Appendix B) be adopted as planning policy advice notes which will assist in the decision making process when the council has to determine relevant planning applications.

1.5 Alternative action and why not recommended

1.5.1 The council could publish the proposed guidance documents for wider public consultation, including with the solar power industry. This would enable the council to take account of any comments that were made and then subsequently adopt the documents.

[2] Cornwall Council: Renewable energy planning guidance note 1: The development of domestic and medium scale solar PV arrays (up to 50kW) and solar thermal and Renewable energy planning guidance note 2: The development of large scale (>50kW) solar PV arrays.
[3] Ashford Borough Council: Renewable energy planning guidance note 1: The development of domestic and medium scale solar PV arrays (up to 50kW) and solar thermal and Renewable energy planning guidance note 2: The development of large scale (>50kW) solar PV arrays.

1.5.2 This may have the benefit of providing additional weight in planning terms to the content of the documents when it comes to the decision-making process.

1.5.3 However, there are timescale implications for such an approach which would involve delay to the adoption of the documents. Given the interest in these developments, any such delay would have implications for the council's ability to determine applications if it wished to take the proposed advice into account. The council could choose to review this position at an appropriate point in the future if it considers that consultation on process would be beneficial. Any review would need to be programmed into the future work timetable.

1.6 Impact on corporate objectives

1.6.1 For Maidstone to be a decent place to live. The development of solar farms is an emotive issue and for some people living in the borough, the way that these developments affect the countryside will be key to their perspective of the borough as having a decent living environment. This issue needs to be addressed with sufficient objectivity and sensitivity, which is why the adoption of these documents as planning policy advice notes is recommended.

1.7 Risk management

1.7.1 There is the risk that these documents may in the longer term be superseded by national guidance. However, the government has at the moment issued only high level practice guidance (DCLG, July 2013). In this instance, the relatively small resource required to produce these documents and to adopt as planning policy advice notes means that the council is in a beneficial position.

1.7.2 There is a risk that further policy prescription may be required. While this may be a risk, policy DM2 – Renewable and low carbon energy schemes, will be adopted as part of the emerging Maidstone Borough Local Plan. When adopted this policy will add weight to the technical guidance provided in the planning policy advice notes.

1.8 Other implications

1.8.1

1.	Financial	
2.	Staffing	
3.	Legal	X
4.	Equality impact needs assessment	
5.	Environmental/sustainable development	X
6.	Community safety	
7.	Human Rights Act	
8.	Procurement	
9.	Asset management	

1.8.2 Legal. There are legal implications stemming from the adoption of this document and how it is used. This is not a policy document and cannot be used to determine applications in itself. This document provides guidance for developers and for officers and members as part of the decision making process.

1.8.3 Environmental/sustainable development. The submission of solar farm applications is seen by the public as either contributing to or detracting from the environment/sustainable development agenda. In any case these documents will provide further guidance so that decisions can be made appropriately.

1.9 Relevant documents

1.9.1 None.

1.9.2 Appendices

1.9.3 Appendix A. Planning policy advice note: Domestic and medium scale solar PV arrays (up to 50kW) and solar thermal.

1.9.4 Appendix B. Planning policy advice note: Large scale (>50kW) solar PV arrays.

1.9.5 Background documents

1.9.6 None.

IS THIS A KEY DECISION REPORT?

Yes	X	No	

If yes, this is a Key Decision because: It affects all wards and parishes

……

Wards/Parishes affected: All……..

……..

Maidstone Borough Council

Planning policy advice note: Domestic and medium scale solar PV arrays (up to 50kW) and solar thermal

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Maidstone Borough Council would like to thank Cornwall Council for permission to use their original document.

Maidstone Borough Council would also like to thank Ashford Borough Council for permission to use their amendments to the original document.

This document is produced by

Maidstone Borough Council

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Contents

Appendices

1.1 This guidance note aims to provide planning advice in respect of solar photo voltaic (PV) and roof mounted solar thermals installations with a capacity of up to 50kW, or approximately 200 solar PV panels. Planning advice in respect of solar PV installations greater than 50kW is provided within a sister document 'Development of large scale solar PV arrays'.

1.2 This guidance note can be found on our website at: www.maidstone.gov.uk/residents/planning/local-plan/evidence.

1.3 If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact the Development Management team at preapps@maidstone.gov.uk or ring 01622 602736.

1.4 The council continuously seeks to improve the quality of the advice and guidance that it offers and would be happy to receive comments, suggestions or images which may improve this guidance document.

2.1 It is estimated that the Earth receives enough energy from the sun in one hour to supply the world's energy requirements for a year. The advance of solar PV technology, the decreasing cost of this technology, and the high solar irradiation levels within southern England mean that solar PV can be an attractive technology for generating electricity.

2.2 The map below shows the global irradiation and solar electricity potential for mainland UK.

Feed in tariff

2.3 The Feed in Tariff (FiT) provides a financial subsidy towards a number of renewable energy technologies, including solar PV. The FiT is a considerable financial incentive and, in respect of solar PV, applies for a period of 25 years.

2.4 As a result of the FiT Maidstone Borough Council anticipates an increase in the number of solar PV arrays, with a capacity up to 50kW, both roof mounted and ground mounted. This document sets out our guidance and suggestions in respect of how such arrays could be developed in the borough.

Solar ready buildings

2.5 In order to facilitate and optimise the potential generation of electricity from solar PV and heat from solar thermal panels in Maidstone the design and orientation of new or renovated buildings should be undertaken in a manner which, where possible, optimises the southerly orientation of any appropriate roof or wall structures at an appropriate angle, ideally 33-35 degrees. The roof or wall should also be structurally capable of accommodating an appropriately sized solar PV array.

2.6 Buildings should, where appropriate, be designed, orientated and constructed to ensure that they are solar ready buildings and can accommodate the installation of solar PV panels either now or in the future.

Freiburg, south Germany. The design and orientation of these buildings has been undertaken in order to optimise the potential for installing solar PV. Solar irradiation levels in Kent are similar to those found in Germany.

3.1 Maidstone Borough has one Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) – the Kent Downs. Its extent can be seen on the Local Plan Policies Map on the Maidstone web site: http://maidstone.addresscafe.com/app/exploreit/.

3.2 The purpose of the AONB designation is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area. The designation gives formal recognition to an area's landscape importance but does allow for the development of communities and economic activity. The AONB designation is not necessarily a constraint on renewable energy development. Developments are encouraged provided that they do not have a significant adverse impact on the AONB.

Conservation areas

3.3 There are 41 conservation areas in Maidstone and as these areas have been designated due to their special character the installation of solar PV panels should be undertaken sensitively.

3.4 In conservation areas planning permission for the installation of solar panels would be required if:

- The solar panel would be installed on a wall forming the principal (usually the main frontage which has the front door and often faces the road) or side elevation of the dwelling house or would be visible from a highway.
- On a wall of a building within the curtilage of the dwelling house and would be visible from a highway.
- If permitted development rights have been removed by a previous permission or by an article 4 direction - always check.

3.5 In addition check the council's website for guidance on permitted development rights or the Planning Portal www.planningportal.gov.uk/permission/house.

Listed buildings

3.6 Buildings which are of particular historical or architectural interest may be designated as a listed building. There are approximately 2,000 listed buildings within Maidstone Borough and information on these buildings may be found at: www.maidstone.gov.uk/residents/planning/landscape,-heritage-and-design/listed-buildings. Any solar panels installed on a listed building or on a building within its curtilage will normally require planning permission and may also require listed building consent. Any stand alone solar panel installation within the curtilage of a listed building will normally require planning permission although there may often be a preference for installations on outbuildings/extensions to listed buildings, rather than applying such an installation on the listed building itself.

3.7 English Heritage have provided comprehensive advice relating to the most appropriate and sensitive way to install solar PV panels on buildings of historic importance and this advice may be viewed at: www.english-heritage.org.uk/publications/small-scale-solar-electric-photovoltaics-energy.

Domestic scale (<4kW) solar PV and solar thermal installations

Householder permitted development rights for solar panels

4.1 New permitted development rights (The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Amendment) (England) Order 2011) for the installation of domestic microgeneration equipment came into effect on 6 December 2011. More information is available on the Planning Portal.

4.2 The guidance contained in this document reflects this but it is always recommended that if in any doubt as to whether planning consent is required obtain confirmation from the council by submitting an application for a Lawful Development Certificate (proposed).

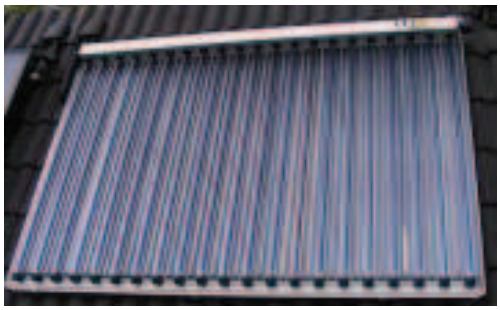
Solar photovoltaic (electricity) panels

1.48kWp system. This could generate up to 1200kWh per year. Centrally mounted on slate roof minimises visual impact.

Solar thermal (hot water) panels

4.3 The sun can also heat water. There are two main types of solar thermal panels: flat plate or vacuum tube.

4.4 Solar thermal panels have similar collection principles to photovoltaic panels, i.e. a system would often be roof mounted, inclined towards the sun in a south facing direction with the heat output proportional to the amount of direct sunlight striking the panel. Planning considerations including permitted development rights are essentially the same as for PV systems.



Vacuum tube and flat plate solar thermal panels.

4.5 Which type is most suitable will depend on several factors including when you use the hot water, how much space you have available, what temperature of hot water you are trying to produce and aesthetics. Generally, vacuum tubes are more efficient so take up a smaller area, are better suited for hotter water and winter performance.

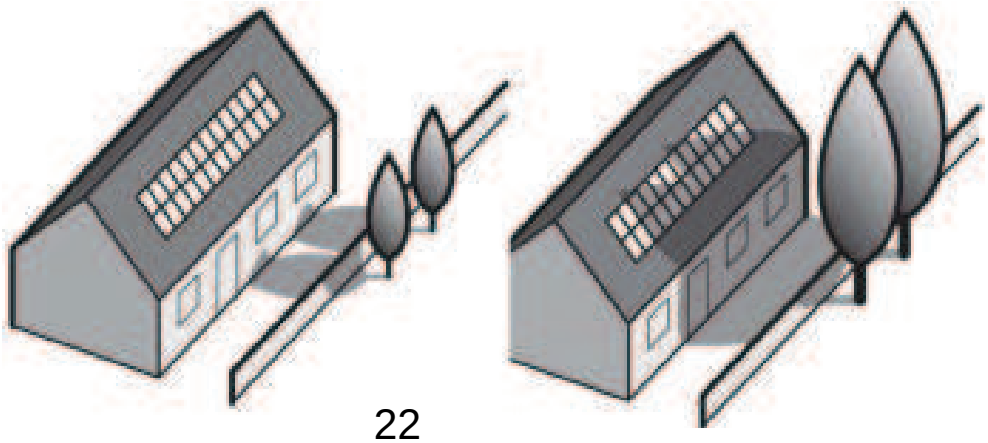
4.6 Flat plate collectors are more cost effective for summer use (e.g. campsites with large roof areas available). Consideration should be given to the positioning of solar thermal panels so that if you intend to locate solar photovoltaic panels in the future, space will be available.

Roof or wall mounted domestic scale (<4kW) solar PV and solar thermal installations - key planning considerations

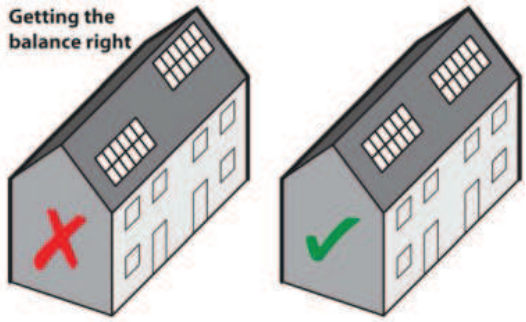
4.7 Where the roof orientation is correct, the roof is structurally sound and not in full or partial shade a roof mounted solar PV installation may be ideal.

4.8 Although a particular roof or wall may be suitable other factors may need to be considered;

4.9 The solar panels will need to be protected from shade throughout their life. Consideration should therefore be given to the proximity of existing or future trees or vegetation which may cause shading. Allowance should be made for the future growth of trees and vegetation or the erection of buildings, particularly where such matters are outside your control (i.e. on neighbouring land or buildings).



The shading of solar panels will significantly affect their performance. Be mindful of shading, particularly where the cause is outside of your control, such as neighbouring vegetation. Allow for tree growth.



- Other structures such as lamp posts, telegraph poles and overhanging cables can affect the performance of the solar panels.
- Can the solar installation be incorporated as an integral part of the structure of the building i.e. solar slates or other solar design solutions?
- Consider the effect of any solar installation on the character or appearance of the building. Such installations should be configured in a way which maintains, enhances or improves the balance and proportions of the recipient building or nearby buildings. This may include designing the solar installation to complement existing windows and roof lights and avoiding designs which may appear disproportionate and unbalanced. In some instances it may be worthwhile contacting neighbours to discuss the installation of joint schemes (which could also reduce the cost) and improve the overall appearance of the installation.
- Structural suitability of the proposed roof or roof covering. Solar PV panels are likely to be installed for the 25 year life of the FiT. It is therefore important to consider the longevity and suitability of the existing roof and roof covering and determine whether it is appropriate to undertake any replacement or repair work to the roof prior to installing solar PV panels. The installation of solar PV panels may also protect the underlying roof from degradation caused by sunlight.
- On flat roofs consider the potential for constructing a supporting framework for solar panels. The framework could be designed to allow the angle of the panels to be adjusted seasonally to reflect seasonal changes in the height of the midday sun.
- In villages and other built up areas consider whether there might be any cumulative impacts on the overall appearance on a collection of buildings or roofs. This may be assisted by choosing a colour and/or
- design that blends with building materials and surrounding landscapes such as a non-shiny anti-glare option that would be less conspicuous in the wider landscape. Solar panels with dark surfaces may be more acceptable on buildings with slate roofs or on new buildings in areas where slate roofs are characteristic.
- Outbuildings or extensions can provide good locations for solar panels while having a minimal effect on the original building.

2kWp system will generate up to 1650kWh per year. These solar slates are integrated in a concrete tiled roof and are virtually hidden when viewed from the street.

Roof or wall mounted domestic scale (<4kW) solar PV and solar thermal installations – is planning permission required?

4.10 In many cases fixing solar panels to your roof is likely to be considered permitted development under planning law with no need to apply for planning permission. There are, however, important exceptions and provisos which must be observed.

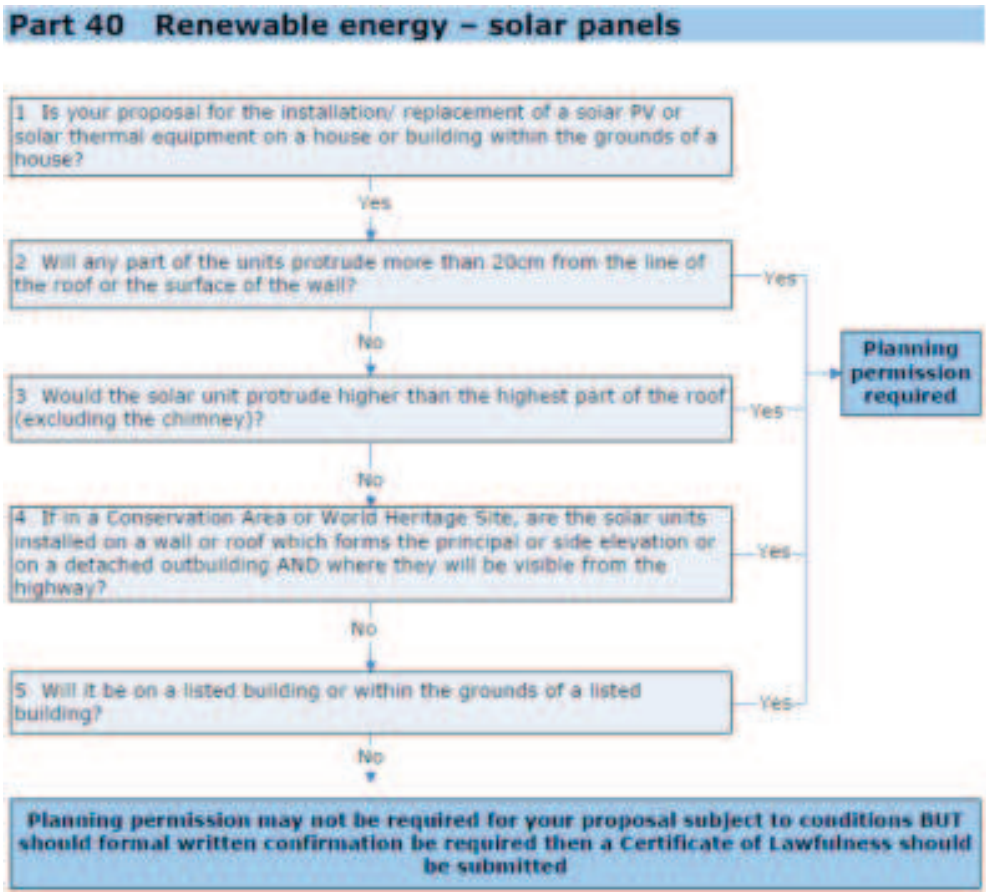
4.11 If you are a leaseholder, you may need to get permission from your landlord, freeholder or management company.

A roof mounted 4kW solar PV installation being installed while the roof is being reslated.

Conditions which all solar installations are subject to

4.12 Panels on a building should be sited, so far as is practicable, to minimise the effect on the appearance of the building and, when no longer needed for micro-generation they should be removed as soon as possible.

4.13 Solar panels fixed to the roof of a single dwelling house or building within the curtilage are classed as development, but may often be permitted development. Permitted development is a part of planning which enables certain types of development to take place without requiring planning permission.



4.14 Planning permission will not normally be required for the installation of solar panels on a domestic roof subject to all of the following criteria being met:

- The panel(s) should be fixed parallel to the existing roof slope(s).
- The panel(s) should project no more above the roof surface than a typical roof light (a velux style window – up to 20cm projection).
- The highest part of the panels should not be higher than the highest part of the original roof.
- There are no restrictions on development at the house (as a result of conditions imposed on the original or any subsequent planning permissions).
- The property is not a listed building.
- The property is not a flat, whether it is in a purpose block of flats or a house or other building converted into flats.

4.15 Solar panels fixed to house walls do not normally require planning permission provided:

- The highest part of the panels is not higher than the highest part of the original roof.

- The highest part of the panels does not exceed 4 metres in height, within 2 metres of a boundary of the curtilage of the house.
- The panels do not project closer to a highway than the original house unless there would be 20 metres between it and the highway.

4.16 Solar panels applied to a flat roof will not normally require planning permission provided they would not protrude more than 20cm above the roof surface.

Building control

The installation of solar panels on a domestic property may require compliance with Building Regulations. Particular attention should be given to:

- Structural loading and stressing, including snow loading.
- Wind uplift which may affect wind pressure acting on roofs.
- Resistance to moisture, ensuring any penetrations through roof remain water tight.
- Electrical safety.

You are advised to contact Building Control Services email: buildingcontroladministration@maidstone.gov.uk.

Or phone: 01622 602701, for further information.

Domestic scale (<4kW) standalone or ground mounted solar PV installations – key planning considerations

4.17 In some instances, for example where there is no suitable roof elevation or the property is a listed building and there is sufficient space within the curtilage of the building to develop without affecting its character, consideration should be given to the development of a standalone or ground mounted solar PV installation. The advantages of such an installation include:

- Ease and safety of installation, cleaning and maintenance.
- Potential choice and flexibility of site selection and panel orientation.
- More efficient operation due to cooler temperatures caused by better air circulation and more optimal orientation.
- Potentially less visual/landscape impact than roof mounted structure.
- Potential dual use (e.g. log store, machinery store, hen house etc).

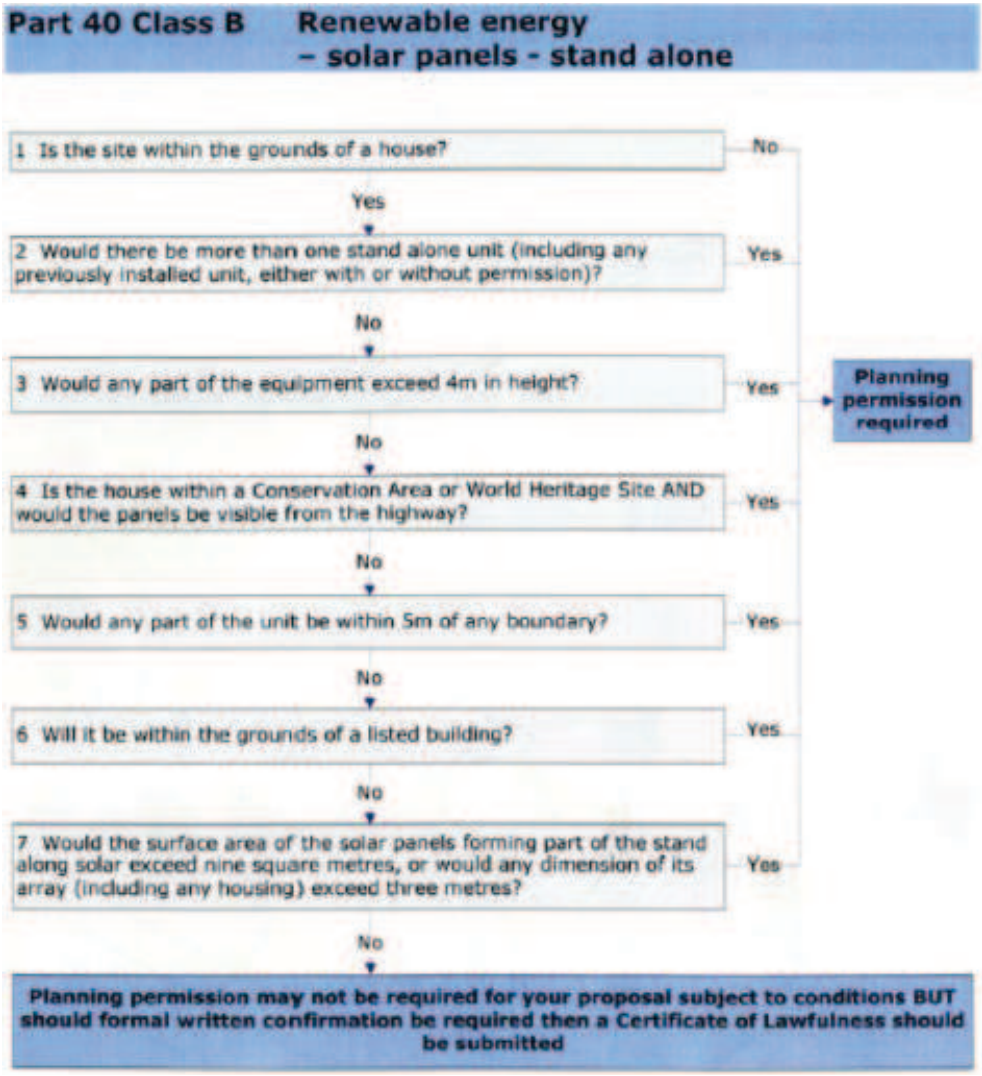
A 4kW ground mounted solar PV installation. The area covered by the array could be utilised for a number of dual purposes such as a log store, machinery store, hen house etc. Installation by Clean Earth Energy.

Domestic scale (<4kW) standalone or ground mounted solar PV installations – is planning permission required?

4.18 In some cases the installation, alteration or replacement of standalone or ground mounted solar panels is likely to be considered 'permitted development' under planning law with no need to apply for planning permission. There are, however, important exceptions and provisos which must be observed.

4.19 The following limits apply to standalone or ground mounted solar panels:

- Should be no higher than four metres.
- Should be at least 5m from boundaries.
- Size of array is limited to 9 sq m or 3m wide and 3m deep.
- Should not be installed within boundary of a listed building.
- In the case of land in a conservation area it should not be visible from the highway.
- Only one standalone solar installation is permitted.



4.20 A standalone or ground mounted solar PV array should be carefully located in order to ensure that the installation is protected from shade throughout its life. Allowance should be made for the future growth of trees and vegetation or the erection of buildings, particularly where such matters are outside your control (i.e. on neighbouring land or buildings). If the proposed array is fixed to any building that lies in the curtilage of a listed building, then Listed Building Consent may also be required.

4.21 Below are other possible solutions to mounting solar PV panels when the available roof space is not suitable:

- The development of a car port using solar PV panels as an integral part of the roof.
- Locating solar PV panels on a garage or other outbuilding.
- Creation of covered walkways using solar PV panels as roofing.
- Formation of covered bike/motorbike shelter.
- Incorporation within a conservatory or other extension.

Planning application and planning application fee for domestic scale solar PV installations

Consider the use of solar PV panels as the roof for a covered walkway.

4.22 Maidstone Borough Council expects that any planning application for a domestic scale solar PV installation should be accompanied by the following information:

- A location plan (1:1250 metric scale).
- A site/block plan (1:500 metric scale).
- Elevations (for both roof and ground mounted arrays) (1:100 metric scale).
- A roof plan (where applicable) (1:100 metric scale).
- A supporting statement.
- A Heritage Statement where applicable.

4.23 The planning team at Maidstone will be able to assist you and confirm the level of information necessary to accompany and support any planning application.

4.24 Please submit your application online via the Planning Portal at www.planningportal.gov.uk/planning/applications/planningapplications.

4.25 The fee for submitting such a planning application (at January 2014) would be £172. Please note if the application is not within the domestic curtilage the plant and machinery fee would apply which is £385 per 0.1ha.

4.26 If the householder application is related to two or more dwellings the fee would be £339.

Government guidance

5.1 The National Planning Policy Framework confirms the government's commitment to sustainable development with one of the core planning principles being to:

"Support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, taking full account of flood risk and coastal change, and encourage the reuse of existing resources, including conversion of existing buildings, and encourage the use of renewable resources (for example, by the development of renewable energy)."

5.2 Further detailed guidance is available in "Planning practice for renewable and low carbon energy" published by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) in July 2013, it confirms that:

a. Active solar technology, (photovoltaic and solar water heating) on or related to a particular building is often permitted development (which does not require a planning application) provided the installation is not of an unusual design, or does not involve a listed building, and is not in a designated area, and

b. Where a planning application is required, factors to bear in mind include:

i. The importance of siting systems in situations where they can collect the most energy from the sun.

ii. Need for sufficient area of solar modules to produce the required energy output from the system.

iii. The effect on a protected area such as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or other designated areas.

iv. The colour and appearance of the modules, particularly if not a standard design.

Medium scale (4-50kW) solar PV installations

5.3 Rising energy costs and the introduction of the Feed in Tariff (FiT) have significantly increased the financial viability and attractiveness of installing a medium scale solar PV facility. These installations may be roof/wall mounted or standalone/ground mounted in association with a range of activities including domestic, agricultural, industrial and community. A 50kW solar PV array will include approximately 200-250 solar panels and require an area of approximately 300m^2.

A 49.35kW ground mounted solar PV installation in Cornwall. The installation consists of 116 solar PV panels in four rows approximately 65 metres long.

Electricity generating capacity

5.4 Planning applications for medium scale solar PV installations should clearly indicate the installed capacity (kW) of the proposed facility. While it is accepted that the performance of the solar panels may degrade over time the initial installed capacity should be provided. The capacity factor and estimated annual production (KWh p.a.) should also be provided together with the number of residential properties electricity equivalent for UK. A pro forma table, explaining these terms, is attached as Appendix A. This information will allow members of the public, and elected members, to clearly understand the generating capacity of the proposed facility.

Roof or wall mounted medium scale (4-50kW) solar PV installations

5.5 Prospective applicants should consider the following points, addressed in detail above, when considering the potential development of a 4-50kW roof mounted solar PV installation;

- Solar ready buildings.
- Roof orientation.
- Visual impact/colour etc.
- Structural suitability of the proposed roof or roof covering.
- Kent Downs AONB, conservation areas or listed buildings.

The roof of this agricultural grain drying unit has been clad with solar PV panels which generate a high proportion of the electricity required by the facility. Image courtesy of Clean Earth Energy.

Planning application and planning application fee for medium scale solar PV installations

5.6 Planning permission would normally be required for development involving the installation of a solar PV installation to the roof or wall of an agricultural, industrial or community building. Maidstone Borough Council expect that any planning application for a medium scale roof mounted solar PV installation should be accompanied by the following information:

- A location plan (1:1250 metric scale).
- A site/block plan (1:500 metric scale).
- Elevations (for both roof and ground mounted arrays) (1:100 metric scale).
- A roof plan (where applicable) (1:100 metric scale).
- Design and access statement.
- A supporting statement.
- A historic environment statement where applicable.

5.7 The planning team will be able to assist you and confirm the level of information necessary to accompany and support any planning application.

5.8 Please submit your application online via the Planning Portal at: www.planningportal.gov.uk/planning/applications/planningapplications.

5.9 The fee for submitting such a planning application would be £385.

5.10 Such applications may require Building Regulation approval and you are advised to contact Building Control Services email: buildingcontroladministration@maidstone.gov.uk phone: 01622 602701 for further information.

Medium scale (4-50kW) standalone or ground mounted solar PV installations – key planning considerations

5.11 In some instances, for example where existing roofs are unsuitable to accommodate a solar PV installation as a result of orientation, structural loading or roof covering, or because of undesirable visual impact, consideration could be given to the development of a standalone or ground mounted solar PV installation. Such ground mounted installations may offer a number of advantages when compared to roof mounted installations, including:

- Ease and safety of installation, cleaning and maintenance.
- Potential choice and flexibility of site selection and panel orientation.
- More efficient operation due to cooler working temperatures caused by better air circulation and more optimal orientation.
- Potentially less visual/landscape impact than roof mounted structure.

A - Site selection

5.12 When considering site selection for a ground mounted or stand alone solar PV installation there are a number of factors that should be considered:

- The solar panels will need to be protected from shade throughout their life.
- The proximity of existing or future trees or vegetation which may cause shading.
- Allowance should be made for the future growth of trees and vegetation or the erection of buildings, particularly where such matters are outside your control, i.e. on neighbouring land or buildings.
- In order to minimise the impact on any agricultural activities and minimise landscape/visual impact the facility should be close to farm buildings, hedge/wall or field boundary and not in the centre of a field.
- To avoid excessive installation costs the facility will normally need to be located within 200 metres of an existing electricity meter.

B - Proximity to public footpaths, bridleways and highways

5.13 The existence of public rights of way (PROW), including public footpaths, bridleways and highways, should be carefully considered at the site selection and design stage. A medium scale ground mounted solar PV facility should not, by virtue of its size, scale or setting, have an unacceptable impact, either during its construction or operation, on users of such a PROW. Where a PROW may be affected by such development careful mitigation, including appropriate landscape planting, should be considered and detailed within any planning application. Additional measures, such as the erection of an interpretation board explaining the role of the facility, may allow the development to become an accepted feature along the PROW.

C - Site levelling works

5.14 The site selection process should avoid the identification of a site where site levelling works would be required in order to accommodate any ground mounted solar PV installation. If any site levelling works are proposed the extent of these levelling works should be discussed at the pre application stage and detailed within any planning application.

D - Development in relation to current land uses

5.15 Ideally medium sized stand alone or ground mounted solar PV installations should utilise previously developed land, contaminated land, industrial land or brownfield sites and should avoid landscapes designated for their natural beauty and/ or sites of acknowledged/recognised ecological/archaeological importance/interest.

E - Assessment of the impact upon agricultural land

5.16 The National Planning Policy Framework (2012) requires the presence of best and most versatile agricultural land (defined as land in grades 1, 2 and 3a of the agricultural land classification) to be taken into account alongside other sustainability considerations. The framework expresses a preference for development to be directed to land outside of this classification (3b, 4 and 5). Although a 50kW ground mounted solar PV installation would occupy a relatively small area of land, and such land could continue to be grazed, there would be some impediment to intensive agricultural use and the use of best and most versatile agricultural land should therefore be avoided where possible. In essence, although the need to support diversification of agricultural land in order to sustain an agricultural enterprise is recognised, it is advisable to utilise grassland and field margins for such ground mounted solar PV installations in preference to arable land.

F - Ground maintenance

5.17 Vegetation will grow beneath the solar panels and this will require management, particularly to avoid the site becoming overgrown with noxious weeds and assist with the eventual restoration of the site, normally to its former use. There are various techniques for managing this vegetation, these include mowing, strimming, spraying or mulching. Spraying should be avoided wherever possible and mulching large areas is likely to present technical challenges and may add to the landscape/visual impact of a development proposal. Where any solar PV installation is proposed on agricultural land there is a desire, both in terms of food production and the rural scene, to continue an agricultural use on the site.

Sheep and cattle grazing under solar PV arrays. Cattle grazing would not be recommended with ordinary mounting systems. Images courtesy of Steve Edmunds, Mole Valley Renewables.

Where sheep grazing is proposed under solar panels it is recommended that the panels are positioned not less than 900mm from the ground. All cabling etc. must be adequately protected. Installation at the Olde House, Chapel Amble, Cornwall.

5.18 Grazing is therefore to be encouraged wherever practicable. Cattle, horses, pigs and goats are likely to be too 'physical' for most standard solar PV arrays but sheep, chickens or geese should normally be acceptable.

G - Soil stripping, storage and replacement

5.19 The development of a medium scale solar PV installation may require the excavation of soils associated with construction compounds, access roads, cable trenching etc. Where such soil stripping occurs topsoil and subsoil should be stripped, stored and replaced separately in order to minimise soil damage and to provide optimal conditions for site restoration.

Soil excavation during cable trenching at the 5MW Trefullock solar PV farm in Cornwall. Note how topsoil and subsoil are stored on opposite sides of the cable trench in order to avoid the mixing of soil types and facilitate subsequent soil replacement and site restoration.

Buffer strips of 4m+ between hedges and solar panels could be used for access purposes while also providing access for hedge management and biodiversity.

H - Access tracks

5.20 Solar PV facilities which are developed on agricultural land should:

- Aim to minimise disturbance to the agricultural land.
- Be temporary, capable of removal and 'reversible'.
- Minimise their landscape/visual impact and their impact on the rural scene.

5.21 The installation and use of access tracks should therefore be kept to an absolute minimum. Access tracks between rows of solar panels will generally not be acceptable. Agricultural vehicles, including tractors, quad bikes and 4WD, should be capable of servicing these facilities without the need to construct access tracks.

I - Security fencing/lighting

5.22 Applicants will be expected to direct considerable effort towards minimising the landscape/visual impact of solar PV arrays. Whilst there is an acknowledged need to ensure solar PV facilities are adequately secured it would be unfortunate if such security measures resulted in an unacceptable landscape/visual impact. Applicants should:

- Minimise the use and height of security fencing.
- Utilise existing features, such as hedges or landscaping, to screen security fencing.
- Use natural features, such as vegetation planting, to assist in site security.
- Minimise the use of security lighting. Such lighting should be avoided and any lighting proposed should utilise a passive infra-red (PIR) technology

designed and installed in a manner which minimises glare, light pollution and impacts on biodiversity, in particular bats (see ecology section).

- Ensure that appropriate measures are in place to facilitate continued access by larger mammals, such as badgers and foxes.

Close welded mesh panel fencing, as shown here at the Wheal Jane solar farm, generally has a low landscape/visual impact while also being versatile and providing a good level of site security.

A 1.2m high stockproof fence may be sufficient in some instances. Allowing grazing animals, such as sheep, to maintain the grass sward beneath and surrounding the panels in a controlled manner. Installation at the Olde House, Chapel Amble, Cornwall.

5.23 In some instances specialist fencing may be necessary in order to prevent access by deer. Such deer fencing can be much less intrusive than other forms of fencing and should be considered where possible.

5.24 Planning applications should contain full details and specifications of all security and lighting installations in order to allow an accurate landscape/visual/ecological assessment of the proposal to be made.

5.25 Where pole mounted CCTV facilities are proposed the location of these facilities should be carefully considered in order to minimise visual/landscape impact. In exposed landscapes such structures should be avoided where possible.

J - Ground anchors

5.26 Solar PV facilities which are developed on agricultural ground should be 'reversible', allowing the site to be easily restored to a more intensive agricultural use.

5.27 Intrusive development, such as trenching and foundations, should therefore be minimised and the use of excavated concrete filled foundations on site should be avoided. Solar PV arrays should be installed using 'pile' driven or screw foundations, or pre-moulded concrete blocks (shoes), and capable of easy removal. A 50kW ground mounted solar PV array may only require 25 footings and these should each be capable of easy removal.

5.28 Where pile driven foundations are proposed applicants should ensure that such development would not exceed statutory noise levels at any nearby noise sensitive properties.

The ground anchors and framework associated with the development of the 1.4MW Benbole solar PV farm in Cornwall.

Where there are areas of archaeological interest, and therefore a need to avoid ground disturbance, the use of precast concrete anchors should be considered, as shown here at the 5MW Trefullock solar farm in Cornwall.

Where pile driven foundations are proposed consideration should be given to the noise impact at nearby sensitive receptors. Difficult ground conditions, such as those encountered at the 1.4MW Wheal Jane solar farm shown here, may also require drilling.

K - Tracking

5.29 Some solar PV arrays will follow the daily movement of the sun across the sky in order to take maximum advantage of the solar gain. These systems are known as trackers and, although they maximise solar gain, they are expensive to install and maintain.

5.30 Some solar PV arrays will be static. These are less expensive to install and maintain but, because they do not follow the suns movement, they are not as efficient as trackers. A compromise is reached with some seasonal trackers where solar panels are generally static but can be moved quarterly to reflect seasonal changes in the height of the midday sun. The type of solar PV array installed, and the extent of any tracking, will have an impact on the landscape/visual assessment and the planning application should clearly indicate the type of array proposed.

5.31 The impact of trackers on grazing animals such as sheep should be carefully considered to avoid such animals becoming trapped in any moving parts.

L - Grid connection

5.32 Application proposals should provide a broad indication of the route of connectivity to the electrical grid. Such details are not strictly necessary in order for any planning application to be validated or registered but this information is required to confirm that such connectivity would avoid areas of high ecological or archaeological sensitivity.

M - Landscape and historic landscape/visual impact

5.33 The landscape and historic/visual impact of a medium sized solar PV installation is likely to be one of the most significant impacts of such development.

5.34 Developers may be attracted to southerly sloping sites, where solar gain is greatest. However such sites may be of high agricultural value and are likely to be more visible within the wider landscape.

5.35 Solar PV installations are regarded as a temporary use of land (refer to Appendix C) and as such the removal of existing vegetated field boundaries, including hedges will not be permitted as this will irrevocably alter the landscape character of the site.

5.36 The development will need to have regard in both its design layout, and future maintenance plans for the retention of growth of vegetation on these important boundaries, including the opportunity for individual trees to grow on to maturity. Details of the management/maintenance proposals for vegetation beneath the solar panels should also be detailed within any planning applications.

A soil mound, less than 2m high, can sometimes assist in reducing the visual/landscaping impact of a proposed solar installation. There is a need to ensure that the screening mound itself does not have a detrimental visual/landscape impact and consideration should be given to the vegetation management. This mound has been carefully designed to allow sheep grazing. Installation at the Olde House, Chapel Amble, Cornwall.

5.37 Visual impacts on historic sites may include the effects of applications on the setting of listed buildings and scheduled monuments as well as on the historic landscape character of the area. Assessment of such impacts may be more involved than simply noting the presence of such assets on or close to a proposed site.

5.38 The landscape/visual impact must be considered with great care at the pre-application stage, where appropriate the council's planning department should be consulted at an early stage and mitigation measures proposed wherever necessary.

5.39 The 'Landscape site assessment for standalone or ground mounted solar PV', attached as Appendix B, provides some assistance in undertaking a landscape assessment and this template should be completed and submitted in support of a planning application for such an installation.

5.40 Existing hedges and established vegetation, including mature trees, should be retained wherever possible.

5.41 Trees and hedges should be protected during construction. Additional hedge planting should be considered where such landscape screening would beneficially screen the proposed development.

Careful consideration should be given to the impact of existing or proposed vegetation in order to ensure that such vegetation does not cast a shadow on any installed solar panels.

N - Archaeology

5.42 Solar developments will only affect below ground archaeological deposits where they involve the disturbance of ground. This may cause direct impacts on archaeological deposits through ground disturbance associated with trenching, foundations, fencing, temporary haul routes etc. For developments between 4-50kW applications should use non penetrative foundations (concrete blocks), should involve a minimum of trenching and should be located away from known sites as recorded on the historic environment record (HER) maintained by Kent County Council – these can be located online using the Heritage Gateway.

5.43 Where applications are received within archaeologically sensitive locations, the council may seek professional archaeological monitoring of ground works as a condition of consent.

5.44 Checklist for advising on potential landscape and visual impacts:

- Check the sensitivity of the current landscape character to change, does the site have capacity to accept such a development?
- Establish the area over which the development will be visible, and assess magnitude of change to the view should the development be built. Is this change in view significant from key vantage points (e.g. houses, footpaths, important viewpoints/sightlines and vistas)?
- Consider any new cumulative impacts created between the site and other similar developments in close proximity
- Is there an opportunity to increase the diversity of the landscape character by further tree planting or allowing single trees within hedges to grow to maturity?
- Are proposed mitigation measures adequate and likely to be effective in terms of reducing the impact of the development on landscape character and visual amenity?

- Flat and gently sloping sites should be favoured over steep south facing slopes.
- In terms of location, sites occupying slacker gradients are likely to have an overall reduced impact on landscape character and visual amenity.

O - Ecology

5.45 The nature of ecological impacts directly resulting from the development of a medium scale solar PV facility will depend on the ecological characteristics and features of the site and sensitivity to proposed changes. Schemes may reduce habitat and habitat suitability for some species, but may also be capable of integrating different uses of land and delivering environmental gains. Developers should consider the impacts that could take place through the construction, operation and decommissioning stages of a scheme.

5.46 The most important element with respect to ecology is site selection. Intensively managed agricultural land is likely to be of least ecological interest and therefore most suitable, in ecological terms, for such solar PV installations. Sites of recognised ecological importance should be avoided.

5.47 The main impacts and mitigation requirements are likely to be:

- **Lighting –** Security lighting may affect bats and have an impact on the character of the surrounding landscape. It is advised that lighting is not used unless absolutely necessary. If lighting is necessary it must be minimised and directed away from hedges / woodland / scrub.
- **Cables –** Overhead and underground cables have the potential to adversely impact upon biodiversity and on the character of the surrounding landscape. Cable routes need to be carefully designed to avoid any areas of ecological interest and to have the least impact on the surrounding landscape character.
- **Construction –** Existing hedges should be fully retained and no new hedge breaks created. If any hedges/scrub are to be removed, further surveys including for dormice and reptiles may be necessary. Pile driving may affect any badgers nearby; this will need to be informed by a badger survey and a licence may be necessary.
- **Fencing –** We advise that buffer strips (at least 2m) are left between perimeter fencing and hedges. The fencing must allow badgers, reptiles and other fauna access into the site (whilst retaining any grazing animals). We advise that a gap is left around the entire base of the fence to allow small mammals and reptiles access, with larger gaps or gates for badgers at suitable intervals.

Kobern-Gondorf facility solar PV facility, in Germany, is used as a nature reserve for endangered species of flora and fauna.

5.48 Enhancement, management and monitoring – ground mounted solar PV installations have the potential to increase the biodiversity value of a site if the land was previously intensively managed. Sheep grazing or an autumn cut with removal of grass cuttings could increase the botanical diversity of the site. A suitable management regime for the site should be considered, bearing in mind shading by the solar panels. Hedges should be managed appropriately, and could be laid to reduce gaps. Owl boxes should be considered in association with any inverter/substation housing. Proposed enhancements should build upon and extend existing habitats or create new important habitats e.g. cultivated strips/plots for rare arable plants, rough grassland margins, bumble bee plant mixes, wild bird mixes, wetlands etc.

P - Community involvement and engagement

5.49 Community involvement and engagement should be considered as an integral part of the development process. The extent of this engagement will depend upon the size, nature and location of the proposed development although developers are advised to discuss their proposal with neighbours and nearby residents at the pre-design, conceptual stage in order to allow any views to be taken into account prior to the submission of a formal planning application.

Q - Pre-application discussions

5.50 Potential applicants are strongly encouraged to enter into pre application discussions with the council. All local parish councils should be involved in any discussions, in accordance with the Maidstone Statement of Community Involvement (2013).

R - Duration of planning permission and planning conditions

5.51 The Feed in Tariff for solar PV applies for a period of 25 years. Ground mounted solar PV installations should normally be regarded as a temporary use of land, and hence the need for 'reversibility', and the ability for all structures to be removed and the land returned to its original use. Planning permissions will normally:

- Need to be implemented within a period of three years.
- Contain a timeframe for the completion of the construction and commissioning of the development.
- Be for a temporary period only, and a maximum period of 25 years from the commissioning of the facility should be applied.
- If electricity production from the solar array has permanently ceased for more than six months during the anticipated 25 year period, the array and any associated structures should be removed and the ground reinstated to its original condition.

5.52 Planning applications should specify the length of time being applied for. A 25 year time limit will normally be imposed.

5.53 Any planning permission for a medium scale standalone or ground mounted solar PV installation will normally contain a schedule of planning conditions. A template schedule of planning conditions is attached at Appendix C. This is provided for information purposes only, conditions attached to individual planning permissions may vary depending upon particular development proposals and site considerations.

S - Planning application and planning application fee

5.54 Planning permission would normally be required for development involving a medium scale (4-50kW) standalone or ground mounted solar PV installation. Maidstone Borough Council expects that any planning application for such a solar PV installation should be accompanied by the following information:

- A location plan (1:1250 metric scale).
- A site/block plan (1:500 metric scale).
- Elevations.
- Design and access statement.
- A supporting statement.
- Fencing specification and details (where applicable).
- Details of connection to electrical grid.
- Details of any ancillary works or buildings proposed, including elevations.
- An ecological assessment where applicable.

- A landscape/visual assessment if the application site lies within, or would impact upon, the Kent Downs AONB (see Appendix B and our Local Plan Policies Map).
- A historic environment statement where applicable.
- Completed 'Electricity Generating Capacity' form (see Appendix A).

5.55 The planning team will be able to assist you and confirm the level of information necessary to accompany and support any planning application.

5.56 The fee for submitting such a planning application would be £385 per 0.1ha.

5.57 The planning application boundary, and planning application fee, relates to the site area. The planning application boundary should extend around the proposed solar PV and any security fencing and any immediate ancillary works e.g. access tracks. It is for the applicant to ensure that all proposed development is included within the boundary of the planning application.

5.58 Please apply online via the Planning Portal at www.planningportal.gov.uk/planning/applications/planningapplications.

5.59 A planning application will not be registered until the correct planning application fee has been received by Maidstone Borough Council.

Appendix A - Electricity generating capacity

Planning applications for medium scale solar PV arrays (4-50kW) should be accompanied by the following information.

Installed capacity (kW)[1]	Capacity factor[2]	Estimated annual production (kWh p.a.)[3]	Number of residential properties electricity equivalent[4]

Notes

1. Installed capacity is the full-load, continuous rating of generating equipment under specific conditions as designated by the manufacturer. In other words, this is the power generated when the equipment is working at full capacity.
2. Capacity factor is the calculated factor which compares the plant's actual production over a given period of time with the amount of power the plant would have produced if it had run at full capacity for the same amount of time. The capacity factor should take account of the specific equipment and the specific location. It is expressed as a percentage.
3. Estimated annual production of electricity based upon the installed capacity and the capacity factor.
4. Number of residential properties that would be powered by the estimated annual production based upon the UK average household consumption of 4,629 KWh/year.

Appendix B - Landscape site assessment for stand alone or ground mounted solar PV

1	Description of development	
2	Location of site	
3	Landscape character area within which the site is located (refer to the council's landscape character assessment: www.maidstone.gov.uk/residents/planning/local-plan/evidence) The assessment will need to examine adjacent landscape character areas where the site is located close to the area boundary.	
4	Is the site within the Kent Downs AONB? Yes/no What is the distance to the boundary of the nearest AONB?	
5	Looking at the relevant landscape character area from the Maidstone Borough assessment, how much of the description and key characteristics relate to the site?	
	High - Many features are in common with the character area description or key characteristics.	
	Moderate - Some features are in common with the character area description or key characteristics.	
	Low - Few features are in common with the character area description or key characteristics.	
	None - The site has no features in common with the character area description or key characteristics.	
6	What aspects of the character of the area will be changed by the development, to what magnitude and to what extent?	
	High - High level of change. High adverse effect.	
	Moderate - Moderate level of change. Moderate adverse effect.	

	Low - Few changes. Low adverse effect.	
	No change.	
7	Combine the values derived from points 5 and 6 above to determine the **sensitivity of the landscape character** to a solar development.	

		Point 7 Proposed Change		
Point 6		Low	Moderate	High
Landscape	Low	L	LM	M
Character	Moderate	LM	M	MH
Significance	High	M	MH	H

Sensitivity of landscape character

Low	Site makes little contribution to the landscape character and is not significantly vulnerable to change.
Low/moderate	Site makes a small contribution to the landscape character which is vulnerable to adverse change, or the site is fairly significant in terms of character, but the character can withstand the change.
Moderate	Site makes a good contribution to the landscape character which will suffer a level of adverse change due to the solar development.
Moderate/high	Site contributes much to the local distinctiveness and character of the area and is vulnerable to change.
High	The site is typical of the area's character and the solar development is likely to be detrimental to this.

8	How visible is the site from the surrounding landscape, will the visual impact be high, moderate, low or no impact?	
	High - The solar development is very visible from the landscape around the site, with little potential to mitigate the visual impact.	

	Moderate - The solar development is visible from a number of locations, with some potential for mitigation.	
	Low - The solar development is partially visible from a small number of locations with likely potential for mitigation.	
	None - The solar development would not be visible from any position within the surrounding landscape.	
9	Determining the overall landscape and visual sensitivity to the solar development. The value rating from point 8 - sensitivity of landscape character and the value rating from point 9 - visibility when combined give a value of the landscape's overall sensitivity to a solar development.	

Landscape sensitivity to change **(point 8)** + visibility **(point 9)** = overall sensitivity to proposed change **(point 10)**

		Point 9 Visibility		
		High	Moderate	Low
Point 8 Sensitivity of landscape character	High	H	MH	M
	Moderate/high	H	MH	M
	Moderate	MH	M	ML
	Moderate/low	MH	M	ML
	Low	M	ML	L

Overall sensitivity to solar farm development

Low overall sensitivity – (L)

There will be little discernable impact on the landscape, and or the landscape has potential to be positively enhanced through the construction of a solar development. Any small changes in landscape character will not be strongly expressed

Low/moderate overall sensitivity – (LM)

Small adverse changes in the landscape character which are unlikely to be strongly expressed. There is likely to be a potential for landscape enhancement.

Moderate overall sensitivity – (M)

There will be some negative change in the landscape character which will be visible, there may be potential for mitigation through appropriate scaling, siting, and design, or screening.

Moderate/high overall sensitivity – (MH)

The construction of a solar development will result in a significant negative effect or change in the landscape character that will be highly visible with unlikely potential for mitigation.

High overall sensitivity – (H)

The construction of a solar development will result in a significant negative effect or change in the landscape character that will be highly visible with no potential for mitigation, which would not in itself have an impact upon character.

Appendix C - Template schedule of planning conditions

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 3 years from the date of this permission.

   Reason: In accordance with the requirements of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

2. Within 25 years and six months following completion of construction of development, or within six months of the cessation of electricity generation by the solar PV facility, or within six months following a permanent cessation of construction works prior to the solar facility coming into operational use, whichever is the sooner, the solar PV panels, frames, foundations, inverter modules and all associated structures and fencing approved shall be dismantled and removed from the site. The developer shall notify the LPA in writing no later than five working days following cessation of power production. The site shall subsequently be restored in accordance with the approved restoration scheme no later than three months following the cessation of power production.

   Reason: To ensure the achievement of satisfactory restoration.

3. Where details of any fencing or security measures have not been included with the planning application;

   Prior to the installation or erection of any fencing or security measures details of such infrastructure shall be submitted to, and agreed in writing with, the Local Planning Authority.

   Reason: To minimise the landscape, visual and environmental impact of the development.

4. Artificial lighting is generally not encouraged at such sites. The Local Planning Authority may restrict such lighting by use of the following condition;

   No artificial lighting shall be installed until details of such lighting has been submitted to, and agreed in writing by, the Local Planning Authority.

   Reason: To minimise the landscape, visual and environmental impact of the development.

Appendix D - Crime prevention advice for the development of domestic and medium scale solar PV arrays up to 50kW

Domestic scale roof or wall mounted solar PV installations (<4kW)

It is probably less likely that solar panels located on roofs will be an obvious target for criminals primarily because of the inherent difficulty in accessing roofs.

However if, for example, a property is in a remote location with no overlooking neighbours then this may become a more attractive proposition to the criminal.

The following crime prevention points should therefore be considered by the applicant.

- For more vulnerable locations the general physical security of the site should be assessed. Robust secure gates and/or lockable drop down bollards should prevent a vehicle having easy access to the site which in itself may be a significant deterrent.
- Also consider how accessible the roof in question may be to a criminal. Are there surrounding flat roofs or large trees which could provide easier climbing opportunities?
- Ensure any ladders or other items that could assist climbing are kept secure.
- There are products now available which lock the panels together so as to make removal of individual panels very hard.
- Ensure you buy the panels from a trustworthy legitimate source. Do some homework, if the panels are being offered for sale very cheaply there may be a reason!
- Panels should be installed correctly. This should be by a security screw fixing requiring a specialist tool so making it more difficult for any opportunist criminal to easily remove panels.
- Consider using anti climb paint if appropriate (remember there will still be a need to access the roof legitimately and also a need to comply with the legal guidance in using such products)
- There are ways of alarming the solar panels which will then activate upon any interference. This may, depending on circumstances, be able to be connected to a domestic alarm system/mobile phone.
- Consider overtly marking the panel frame (postcode and house name or number is the nationally recognised method).
- Each panel should have a URN Unique Reference Number ask the installer to give you these and keep a note of them.

Domestic scale stand alone or ground mounted solar PV installations (>4kW)

It is probably fair to assume these panels may be at higher risk of theft or damage than roof mounted panels.

Preventing theft or damage to panels should also be a consideration when considering actual location sites for panel arrays.

Perhaps the ideal scenario would be to install such panels where they can be under natural surveillance of the owner but are out of general view and easy public access.

The following points should also be considered:

- Some of the larger solar farms already in existence have suffered with instances of vandalism. To help prevent stone thrown damage consider installing panels far enough away from public roads or rights of way to make this difficult.
- Anyone trying to steal panels will almost certainly require the use of a vehicle to do so.
- Ensuring any would be thief would have to carry panels some distance to their vehicle is likely to act as an initial deterrent and will also increase the chances of detection. Therefore preventing unauthorised vehicular access should be of paramount importance when selecting a location. An enclosed field, having only one suitably controlled access point would be useful. Field gates in use should be robust and lockable. Lockable drop down bollards used in conjunction with such gates will certainly help deter the opportunist thief.
- There are products now available which lock the panels together so as to make the removal of individual panels very hard.
- Ensure you buy the panels from a trustworthy legitimate source. Do some homework, if the panels are being offered for sale very cheaply there may be a reason!
- The panels should be installed correctly. This should be by a security screw fixing requiring a specialist tool so making it more difficult for any opportunist criminal to easily remove panels.
- There are ways of alarming the solar panels which will then be activated upon any interference. This may, depending on circumstances, be able to be connected to a domestic alarm system/mobile phone.
- Consider overtly marking the panel frame (postcode and house name or number is the nationally recognised method).
- Each panel should have a URN Unique Reference Number ask the installer to give you these and keep a note of them.
- Geese kept on site around the arrays can be excellent guards and a significant deterrent.

Roof or wall mounted medium scale (4-50kW) solar PV installations

Again it is probably less likely that solar panels located on roofs will be an obvious target for criminals primarily because of the inherent difficulty in accessing roofs. However for example if a property or business is in a remote location with no overlooking neighbours then this may become a more attractive proposition to the criminal.

The following points should therefore be considered:

- The general physical security of the site should be assessed. Robust secure gates and/or lockable drop down bollards may prevent a vehicle having easy access to the site which in itself may be a significant deterrent (The standard for rating bollards, blockers and gates is PAS 68:2007 and PAS 68:2010).

- Does the site already have suitable security fencing in place? If perimeter fencing is to be used then it should be a proven security fence. Fencing which is not of a specialist security type is likely to offer at best only token resistance to intruders. Planting up and alongside any fencing will be acceptable providing there is no detrimental effect upon site surveillance that is available.
- Also consider how accessible the roof in question may be to a criminal. Are there surrounding flat roofs or large trees which could provide easier climbing opportunities?
- Ensure any ladders or other items that could assist climbing are kept secure.
- There are products now available which lock the panels together so as to make removal of individual panels very hard.
- Ensure you buy the panels from a trustworthy legitimate source. Do some homework, if the panels are being offered for sale very cheaply there may be a reason!
- Panels should be installed correctly. This should be by a security screw fixing requiring a specialist tool so making it more difficult for any opportunist criminal to easily remove panels
- Consider using anti climb paint if appropriate (remember there will still be a need to access the roof legitimately and also a need to comply with the legal guidance in using such products)
- Each panel should have a URN Unique Reference Number ask the installer to give you these and keep a note of them.

Medium scale (4-50kW) stand alone or ground mounted solar PV installations

With this increase in scale of installation and investment the crime prevention measures to be considered also increase.

In preventing theft of the panels there is likely to be a need to install security fencing and security gates for some of the larger installations.

The advice offered below covers the general crime prevention points which should be considered by any applicant.

Perimeter security and access control

- If perimeter fencing is to be used then it should be a proven security fence. The recommendation would be to install fencing which has been tested and approved to current UK Government standards. Fencing which meets the SEAP (Security Equipment Approval Panel) class 1-3 may be the most appropriate. Alternatively for smaller scale sites appropriate weld mesh or similar type fencing may suffice.
- Fencing which is not of a specialist security type is likely to offer at best only token resistance to intruders.
- Planting up and alongside any fencing will be acceptable providing there is no detrimental effect upon site surveillance that is available.
- The standard for rating bollards, blockers and gates is PAS 68:2007 and PAS 68:2010.

- Landscaping techniques such as ditches and berms (bunds) may also be appropriate in some instances. To be effective in stopping vehicles these need to be designed carefully.
- There should be a minimum number of vehicular access points onto site, ideally only one. Clearly such access points will present the most obvious means for the criminal also and therefore will require a robust and adequate defence.
- Some thought should also be given to the wider issues of access around any site. If for instance the land surrounding the site is under the same ownership can this be made more secure by improving gates etc. Again this provides layers of difficulty for the criminal to overcome.
- Some of the larger solar farms already in existence have suffered with instances of vandalism. To help prevent stone thrown damage consider installing panels far enough away from public roads or rights of way to make this difficult.

Utilising electronic security

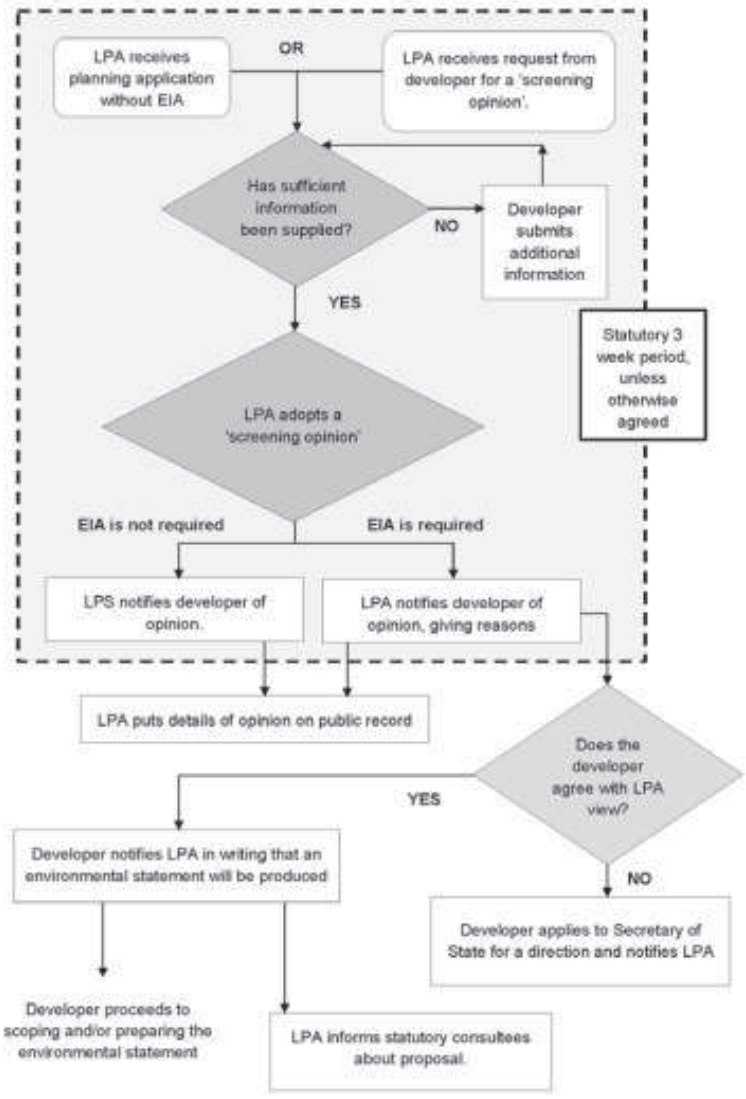
- There is a huge range of security technology available.
- In selecting which type of technology to employ a proper assessment on a site specific basis should be undertaken to ensure any system will be fit for the purpose intended.
- For CCTV this assessment is commonly called an Operational Requirement (OR) An obvious example would be to establish how effective will the CCTV be at night at these locations. There will be probably little reward in deploying CCTV or other defence unless it is monitored in some way or can provide an instant alert in some form and also who would then respond to this? CCTV which simply records will probably be of very limited value.
- There are ways of alarming the solar panels which will then activate upon any interference. This may, depending on circumstances, be able to be connected to a domestic alarm system/mobile phone.

Other security options

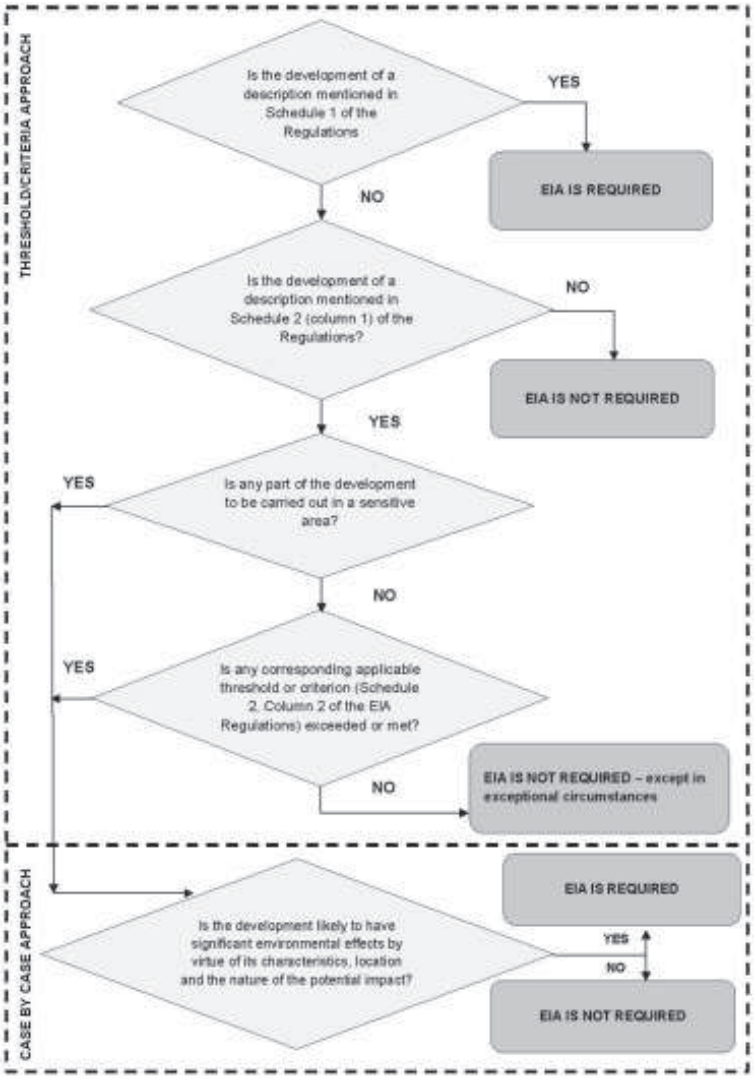
- The presence of site security personnel or patrols in some capacity could be considered including in terms of response to site alarm activations
- Consider overtly marking the panel frame (postcode and house name or number is the nationally recognised method)
- There are products now available which lock the panels together so as to make the removal of individual panels very hard.
- Ensure you buy the panels from a trustworthy legitimate source. Do some homework, if the panels are being offered for sale very cheaply there may be a reason!
- The panels should be installed correctly. This should be by a security screw fixing requiring a specialist tool so making it more difficult for any opportunist criminal to easily remove panels.
- Geese kept on site around the arrays can be excellent guards and a significant deterrent.
- Each panel should have a URN Unique Reference Number ask the installer to give you these and keep a note of them.

Appendix E - Screening procedures overview

Screening procedures overview



Screening decision



Maidstone Borough Council

Planning policy advice note: Large scale (>50kW) solar PV arrays

www.maidstone.gov.uk/localplan

MAIDSTONE Borough Council
Great People, Great Place, Great Opportunity

Maidstone Borough Council would like to thank Cornwall Council for permission to use their original document.

Maidstone Borough Council would also like to thank Ashford Borough Council for permission to use their amendments to the original document.

This document is produced by

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Contents

Appendices

1.1 This guidance note aims to provide planning advice in respect of solar photo voltaic (PV) installations with a capacity in excess of 50kW. Planning advice in respect of solar PV installations with a capacity of less than 50kW is provided within a sister document 'Domestic and medium scale solar PV arrays of (up to 50kW) and solar thermal'.

1.2 If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact the planning team at preapps@maidstone.gov.uk or ring 01622 602736.

1.3 The council continuously seeks to improve the quality of the advice and guidance that it offers and would be happy to receive comments, suggestions, or images which may improve this guidance document.

2.1 This map illustrates the irradiation and solar electricity potential for the UK. The greatest irradiation is within the south of England.

Large, grid-connected solar PV power plants

2.2 Large, centralised solar PV power systems, mostly at the multi- megawatt scale, have been built to supply power for local or regional electricity grids in a number of countries including Germany, Switzerland, Italy and also in Cornwall.

Feed in tariff

2.3 The Feed in Tariff (FiT) essentially provides developers with a financial subsidy towards solar PV. The tariff for solar PV is index linked and guaranteed for 25 years. The original FiT for solar PV has been subject to a review which has subsequently had a significant impact on the development of large scale solar PV installations within the UK.

Government guidance

3.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (2012) confirms the government's commitment to sustainable development with one of the core planning principles being to:

"support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, taking full account of flood risk and coastal change, and encourage the reuse of existing resources, including conversion of existing buildings, and encourage the use of renewable resources (for example, by the development of renewable energy)"

3.2 Further detailed guidance is available in the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) guidance note, "Planning practice for renewable and low carbon energy", published in July 2013, which identifies particular factors that Maidstone Borough Council will need to consider when determining applications for large scale solar farms, such as:

1. Encouraging the effective use of previously developed land, and if a proposal does involve greenfield land, that it allows for continued agricultural use and/or encourages biodiversity improvements around arrays.
2. That solar farms are normally temporary structures and planning conditions can be used to ensure that the installations are removed when no longer in use and the land is restored to its previous use.
3. The effect on landscape of glint and glare (see guidance on landscape assessment at paragraphs 39-40) and on neighbouring uses and aircraft safety.
4. The extent to which there may be additional impacts if solar arrays follow the daily movement of the sun.
5. The need for, and impact of, security measures such as lights and fencing.
6. Great care should be taken to ensure heritage assets are conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, including the impact of proposals on views important to their setting. As the significance of a heritage asset derives not only from its physical presence, but also from its setting, careful consideration should be given to the impact of large scale solar farms on such assets. Depending on their scale, design and prominence, a large scale solar farm within the setting of a heritage asset may cause substantial harm to the significance of the asset.
7. The potential to mitigate landscape and visual impacts through, for example, screening with native hedges.
8. The energy generating potential, which can vary for a number of reasons including, latitude and aspect.

Paragraph 39

"Cumulative landscape impacts and cumulative visual impacts are best considered separately. The cumulative landscape impacts are the effects of a proposed development on the fabric, character and quality of the landscape; it is concerned with the degree to which a proposed renewable energy development will become a significant or defining characteristic of the landscape."

Paragraph 40

"Cumulative visual impacts concern the degree to which proposed renewable energy development will become a feature in particular views (or sequences of views), and the impact this has upon the people experiencing those views. Cumulative visual impacts may arise where two or more of the same type of renewable energy development will be visible from the same point, or will be visible shortly after each other along the same journey. Hence, it should not be assumed that, just because no other sites will be visible from the proposed development site, the proposal will not create any cumulative impacts."

3.3 This guidance note provides more information for potential developers and explains the approach to handling applications that the council will take.

A - Pre-application discussions

3.4 Potential applicants are strongly encouraged to enter into pre-application discussions with the council. We will want to involve the local parish council in any discussions in accordance with our Statement of Community Involvement (2013).

B - Environmental impact assessment

3.5 Large scale solar PV arrays are not expressly listed in Schedule 2 to the EIA Regulations 2011; however it is quite possible such developments could have a likely significant effect on the environment. In the absence of any express listing the Authority applies a broad and purposive approach to the issue of EIA. To date the large scale solar PV developments in the UK in rural areas are typically on agricultural land. In this context solar PV developments appear similar to greenhouses and therefore the council considers that development listed in A2 of Annex A to the EIA Circular 02/99 would closely follow the approach below:

"Development (such as greenhouses, farm buildings etc.) on previously uncultivated land is unlikely to require EIA unless it covers more than five hectares. In considering whether particular development is likely to have significant effects, consideration should be given to impacts on the surrounding ecology, hydrology and landscape'. In addition to the above description the council will also screen under paragraph A11 (power stations)."

C - Screening

3.6 As a starting point the proposal should be assessed against the selection criteria in Schedule 3 of the EIA Regulations. In general, EIA is likely to be needed for Schedule 2 developments if the solar PV development is in a particularly environmentally sensitive or vulnerable location.

3.7 In each case it will be necessary to judge whether the likely effects on the environment of that development will be significant in that particular location. In judging whether the effects of a development are likely to be significant it is necessary to have regard in particular to the visual impact of the development on landscape character and how this will be affected by the installation of a solar farm development, and also the possible cumulative effect with any existing or approved development. This should include situations where there is more than

one application for solar PV development which should be considered together. Any views expressed by consultees should be taken into account. Advice should be sought from consultees where there is any doubt about the significance of a development's likely effects on a 'sensitive area' as defined in the EIA Regulations.

D - Planning application fee

3.8 There is no national guidance on the fee category for solar PV installations. The Development Management team considers that such applications fall within category 5 of the Town and Country Planning (Fees for Applications and Deemed Applications) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2008. This category, for the erection, alteration or replacement of plant or machinery, imposes a fee of £385 for each 0.1ha up to 5ha. Where the site exceeds 5ha the fee would be £19,049; plus an additional £115 for each additional 0.1ha, subject to a maximum total of £250,000.

3.9 A 15ha solar PV facility (the average size of a 5 MW system) would therefore attract a planning application fee of; £19,049 (for 5ha) + £115 for each additional 0.1ha = (£11,500). Giving a total of £30,549.

3.10 The planning application boundary, and planning application fee, relates to the site area. If the solar PV panels are close to a field boundary and there is an existing or proposed fence the planning application area should reflect these field boundaries. If the solar PV panels are some way away from the field boundaries (e.g. >50m) where a separate fence is proposed the planning application boundary should extend around the proposed solar PV panels with a separate planning application area extending around the fenced area. In such instances it would be unreasonable for the application area (and planning application fee) to include relatively large tracts of field where no development is proposed. Where no fence is proposed and solar PV panels are positioned in the middle of a field well away from the field boundaries the planning application boundary should be drawn around the proposed array and any immediate ancillary works e.g. access tracks. It is for the applicant to ensure that all proposed development is included within the boundary of the planning application.

3.11 A planning application will not be registered until the correct planning application fee has been received by Maidstone Borough Council.

E - Full planning application

3.12 Outline planning permission cannot be granted for a planning application submitted in category 5 of the above fee regulations. Only detailed planning applications will therefore be validated. Some matters, such as the exact dimension/model of solar panel, may be 'reserved' but sufficient detailed information should accompany any planning application to allow the local planning authority to fully determine such an application.

F - Site levelling works

3.13 Consideration should be given to the existing site contours. If any site levelling works are proposed to facilitate the development of a solar PV array the extent of these levelling works should be discussed at the pre-application stage and detailed within any planning application.

Development of the 5MW solar PV farm, Cornwall. Images courtesy of Low Carbon Solar Partners.

G - Development in relation to current land use

3.14 Ideally large scale solar PV arrays should be directed towards previously developed land (PDL)/brownfield sites, contaminated land, industrial land. There are few sites of appropriate status and size in Maidstone Borough. Large scale solar PV arrays should avoid landscapes designated for their natural beauty, sites of acknowledged/recognised ecological/archaeological importance/interest. It is therefore likely that such development will look to land currently in agricultural use.

The development of a 1.4 MW solar PV farm on land adjacent to the Hendra Holiday Park, Newquay will assist in meeting the demand of this facility. Images courtesy of Hendra Holiday Park.

H - Assessment of the impact on agricultural land

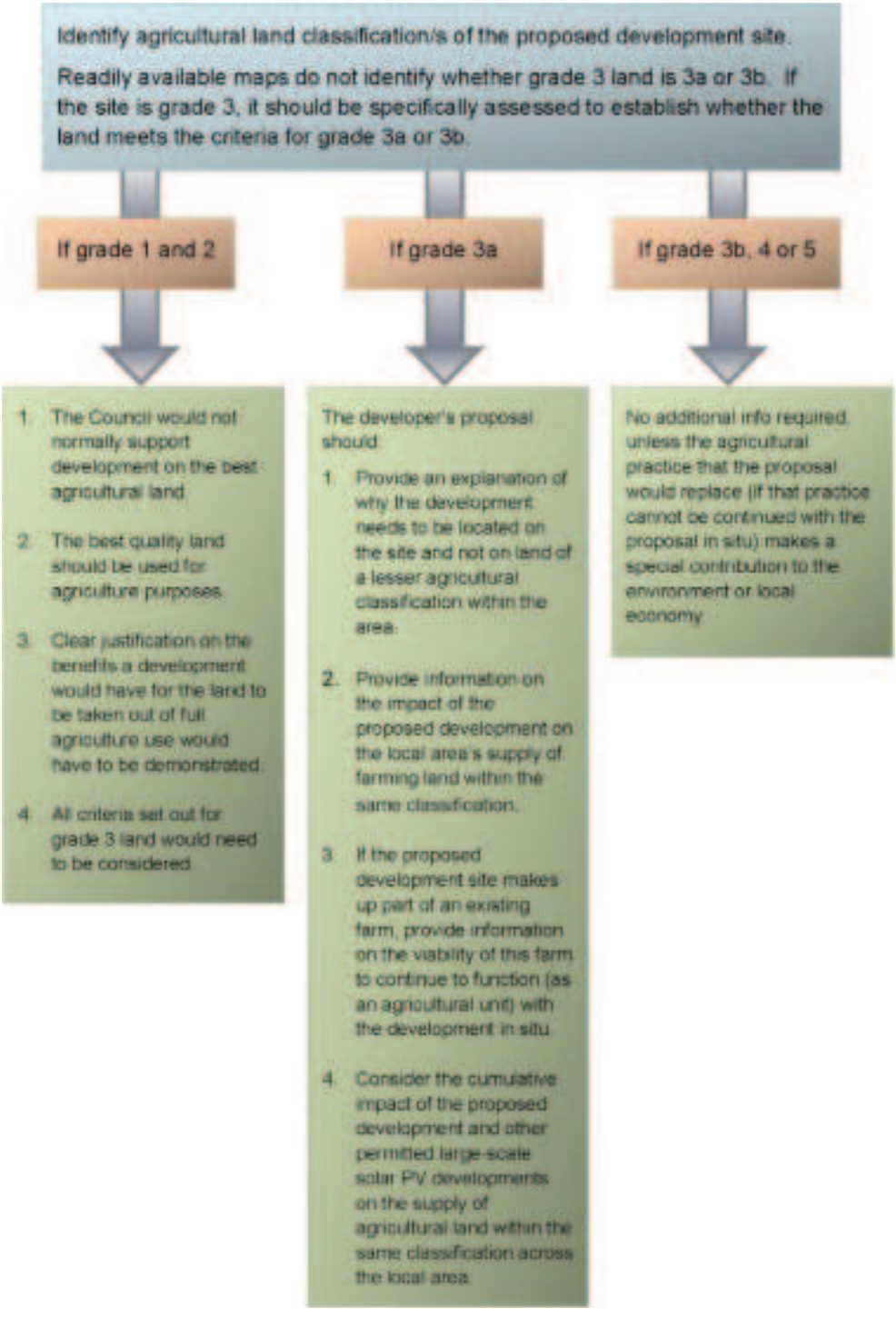
3.15 The National Planning Policy Framework indicates that

"Local planning authorities should take into account the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land. Where significant development of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary, local planning authorities should seek to use areas of poorer quality land in preference to that of a higher quality."

3.16 The presence of the best and most versatile agricultural land (defined as land in grades 1, 2 and 3a of the agricultural land classification) will therefore be a significant issue in the determination of applications to be taken into account alongside other sustainability considerations.

3.17 This position should be taken into account when identifying sites for large scale solar photovoltaic development. The following steps should be undertaken by the developer when considering locating a large scale solar photovoltaic development on agricultural land. If a planning application is subsequently submitted it should be accompanied by the relevant information detailed in the steps below.

Construction of a 1.4MW solar PV farm at the former tin mine site at Wheal Jane, Cornwall. Such sites should generally be considered for development in preference to agricultural land.



Maidstone Borough Council's steps for developers on agricultural land classification.

I - Ground maintenance

3.18 Vegetation will grow under the solar panels and this will require management, particularly to avoid the site becoming overgrown with noxious weeds and assist with the eventual restoration of the site, normally to agriculture. There are various techniques for managing the vegetation, these include mowing, strimming, spraying or mulching.

3.19 Spraying should be avoided wherever possible and mulching large areas is likely to present technical challenges and may add to the landscape/visual impact of a development proposal. Few of these management techniques are regarded as sustainable, particularly on sites up to 15ha, and there is a desire, both in terms of food production and the rural scene, to continue an agricultural use on the site.

3.20 Grazing is therefore to be encouraged wherever practicable. Cattle, horses, pigs and goats are likely to be too 'physical' with the solar PV arrays but sheep, chickens or geese should be acceptable. In order to facilitate grazing within the solar farm it is advised that solar panels are positioned at least 900mm above ground level and all cabling etc. is suitably protected.

Sheep and cattle grazing under solar PV arrays. Support structures and the height of panels would need to be substantial in order to allow cattle grazing and would not ordinarily be recommended. Images courtesy of Steve Edmunds, Mole Valley Renewables.

Adequate spacing between rows of panels is necessary to avoid overshadowing. Vegetation will grow between these rows and this vegetation will require management. The image below shows the 1.4MW Wheal Jane solar PV farm, Cornwall. Image courtesy of Lightsource Limited.

J - Construction compound

3.21 The development of a large scale solar PV array will require the delivery and storage of construction materials, plant, machinery and office/welfare accommodation. It is therefore likely that a temporary construction compound will be required. Such compounds should be carefully located in order to minimise environmental or amenity impact and any planning application should contain details of their size and location. Topsoil and subsoil should be stripped from such areas and stored on site for replacement following the completion of construction works. Details of such soil stripping, storage and replacement should be contained within any planning application, together with the anticipated life of the construction compound.

Case study

Wheal Jane, Truro, Cornwall

Ref: PA10/03993

The 1.55MW Wheal Jane solar PV farm in Cornwall under construction in Spring 2011. Image courtesy of Lightsource Limited.

Background

3.22 The site of the former Wheal Jane Mine is located approximately 5km south west of Truro and 8km north east of Penryn in the heart of one of Cornwall's historic mining areas and within a predominantly rural, rolling landscape characterised by scattered settlements associated with early mining activities and farming. The mining and processing of tin at the site ceased in 1991. A treatment facility located at the site currently treats mine water, removing heavy metals with resultant residues being deposited in a large tailings dam at the site. The site is host to a range of companies that specialize in mining, minerals processing, civil engineering and providing employment for approximately 150 staff. An agreed masterplan framework sought to develop the site into an 'earth science cluster', providing renewable energy technologies that would utilise natural resources at the site and provide new office accommodation and related infrastructure.

3.23 A planning application was subsequently submitted for the development of a 1.55MW 'solar farm at the site. This would involve the installation of 5,760 solar PV panels on a site of 3.88ha with associated inverters, substation and security fencing. The planning application sought planning permission for a period of twenty five years.

Issues and mitigation

Landscape and visual impact

3.24 Views from visual receptors close to the site would be limited to glimpses above and between intervening vegetation. The existing topography would minimise views from the closest highway. Distant views would be limited and the development would appear as a small feature in such long distance views. Appropriate soft landscaping and habitat creation would integrate the site within the local countryside and appropriate boundary fencing was secured by planning condition.

Ecology

3.25 An ecological impact assessment was submitted in support of the planning application. This identified impacts with the potential to arise from both the construction and operational periods particularly vegetation clearance, construction activities, lighting and the operational phase. It was concluded that the proposed development would not have an unacceptable ecological impact, and indeed offered the potential for ecological benefit.

K - Soil stripping, storage and replacement

3.26 The development of a large scale solar installation is likely to require the excavation of soils associated with construction compounds, access roads, cable trenching etc. Where such soil stripping occurs topsoil and subsoil should be stripped, stored and replaced separately in order to minimise soil damage and to provide optimal conditions for site restoration. Any planning application should contain a methodology for soil stripping, storage and replacement and this methodology should subsequently be adhered to during site development.

Soil excavation during cable trenching at the 5MW Trefullock solar PV farm in Cornwall. Note how topsoil and subsoil are stored on opposite sides of the cable trench in order to avoid the mixing of soil types and facilitate subsequent soil replacement and site restoration.

The construct on compound associated with the development of the 5MW Trefullock solar PV farm in Cornwall.

L - Access tracks

3.27 Solar PV facilities which are developed on agricultural land should:

- Aim to minimise disturbance to the agricultural land.
- Be temporary, capable of removal and 'reversible'.
- Minimise their landscape/visual impact and their impact on the rural scene.

3.28 The installation and use of access tracks should therefore be kept to an absolute minimum. Access tracks between rows of solar panels will generally not be acceptable. Agricultural vehicles, including tractors, quad bikes and 4WD, should be capable of servicing these facilities without the need to construct access tracks.

Buffer strips of 5m+ between hedges and solar panels could be used for access purposes while also providing access for hedge management and biodiversity.

M - Security fencing/lighting

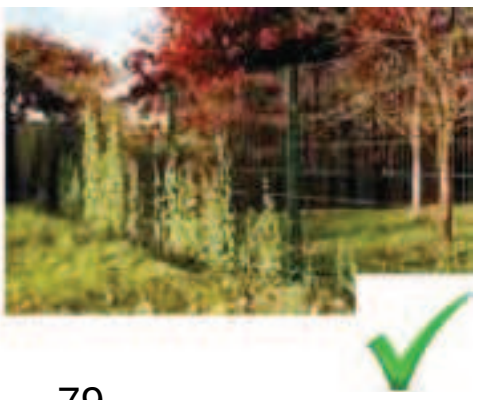
3.29 Applicants will be expected to direct considerable effort towards minimising the landscape/visual impact of solar PV arrays. Whilst there is an acknowledged need to ensure solar PV facilities are adequately secured it would be unfortunate if such security measures resulted in an unacceptable landscape/visual impact. Applicants should:

- Minimise the use and height of security fencing.
- Utilise existing features, such as hedges or landscaping, to screen security fencing.
- Use natural features, such as vegetation planting, to assist in site security.
- Minimise the use of security lighting. Any lighting such utilise a passive infra-red (PIR) technology and should be designed and installed in a manner which minimises glare, light pollution and impacts on biodiversity, in particular bats (see ecology section).
- Ensure that appropriate measures are in place to facilitate continued access by larger mammals, such as badgers and foxes.

Close welded mesh panel fencing, as shown here at the Wheal Jane solar farm, generally has a low landscape/visual impact while also being versatile and providing a good level of site security.

3.30 In some instances specialist fencing may be necessary in order to prevent access by deer. Such deer fencing can be much less intrusive than other forms of fencing and should be considered where possible.

Photo courtesy of The Green Company.



3.31 Planning applications should contain full details and specifications of all security and lighting installations in order to allow an accurate landscape/visual/ecological assessment of the proposal to be made.

3.32 Where pole mounted CCTV facilities are proposed the location of these facilities should be carefully considered in order to minimise visual/landscape impact. In exposed landscapes such structures should be avoided where possible.

3.33 Further security advice is provided in Appendix E.

Any security equipment, such as this CCTV system, should be as discreet as possible in order to minimise its visual and landscape impact.

N - Ground anchors

3.34 Solar PV facilities which are developed on agricultural ground should be 'reversible', allowing the site to be easily restored to a more intensive agricultural use.

3.35 Intrusive development, such as trenching and foundations, should therefore be minimised and the use of concrete should be avoided. Solar PV arrays should be installed using 'pile' driven or screw foundations, or pre-moulded concrete blocks (shoes), and capable of easy removal.

The ground anchors and framework associated with the development of the 1.4MW Benbole solar PV farm in Cornwall.

Where there are areas of archaeological interest and therefore a need to avoid ground disturbance, the use of pre-cast concrete anchors should be considered, as shown here at the 5MW Trefullock solar PV farm in Cornwall.

Where pile driven foundations are proposed consideration should be given to the noise impact at nearby sensitive receptors. Difficult ground conditions, such as those encountered at the 1.4MW Wheal Jane solar PV farm shown here, may also require drilling.

3.36 Where pile driven foundations are proposed applicants should ensure that such development would not exceed statutory noise levels at any nearby noise sensitive properties.

O - Tracking

3.37 Some solar PV arrays will follow the daily movement of the sun across the sky in order to take maximum advantage of the solar gain. These systems are known as 'trackers' and, although they maximise solar gain, they are expensive to install and maintain. Some solar PV arrays will be static. These are less expensive to install and maintain but, because they do not follow the suns movement, they are not as efficient as trackers. A compromise is reached with some solar arrays which are generally static but can be moved quarterly to reflect seasonal changes in the movement of the sun across the sky. The type of solar PV array installed, and the extent of any 'tracking', will have an impact on the landscape/visual assessment and the planning application should clearly indicate the type of array proposed.

3.38 The impact of 'trackers' on grazing animals such as sheep should be carefully considered to avoid such animals becoming trapped in any moving parts.

P - Grid connection

Any buildings required in order to house electrical switchgear inverters etc should be designed and constructed in order to minimise their landscape and visual impact and should typically be of an agricultural style, clad with timber or local stone.

3.39 The capacity of the electrical grid network in the borough may be one of the greatest constraints to the development of solar PV farms. Such development is likely to be attracted to suitable sites within 2km of an existing electrical substation with sufficient capacity to accommodate the additional electrical supply. There is likely to be considerable interest in some areas and electricity substations may be unable to accommodate all development interest. It is likely that developers will have approached the relevant power distribution network provider to evaluate sites as part of the pre- application process.

3.40 Application proposals should provide a broad indication of the route of connectivity to the electrical grid. Such connectivity should avoid areas of high landscape, ecological or archaeological sensitivity.

Q - Landscape/visual impact

3.41 The landscape/visual impact of a solar PV park is likely to be one of the most significant impacts of such development.

5MW Howton solar PV farm in Cornwall. Image courtesy of Lightsource Limited.

3.42 Developers may be attracted to southerly sloping sites, where solar gain is greatest. However such sites may be of high agricultural value and are likely to be more visible within the wider landscape.

5MW Howton solar PV farm in Cornwall. Image courtesy of Lightsource Limited.

3.43 Solar farms are regarded as a temporary use of land (refer to Appendix C) and as such the removal of existing vegetated field boundaries, including hedges will not be permitted as this will irrevocably alter the landscape character of the site.

3.44 The development will need to have regard in both its design layout, and future maintenance plans for the retention of growth of vegetation on these important boundaries, including the opportunity for individual trees within the boundaries to grow on to maturity.

5MW Howton solar PV farm in Cornwall. Image courtesy of Lightsource Limited.

3.45 The landscape/visual impact must be considered with great care at the pre-application stage and mitigation measures proposed wherever necessary. Guidance to the information which should be provided within a landscape and visual impact assessment is covered in Appendix A. Information on landscape character assessment within Maidstone Borough can be found at www.maidstone.gov.uk/residents/planning/local-plan/evidence.

3.46 Existing hedges and established vegetation, including mature trees, should be retained wherever possible. Trees and hedges should be protected during construction. The impact of the proposed development on established trees and hedges should be informed by a tree survey (to BS 5837) and/or a hedge assessment as appropriate.

5MW Trefullock solar PV farm, Cornwall.

Construction of the 1.4MW solar PV farm on land adjacent to the Hendra Holiday Park, Newquay. Images courtesy of the Hendra Holiday Park.

A soil mound, less than 2m high, can sometimes assist in reducing the visual/landscaping impact of a proposed solar installation. There is a need to ensure that the screening mound itself does not have a detrimental visual/landscape impact and consideration should be given to the vegetation management. This mound has been carefully designed to allow sheep grazing. Installation at the Olde House, Chapel Amble, Cornwall.

Cumulative impact

Maidstone Borough Council maintains a record of all EIA screening requests received in respect of proposals for large scale solar PV installations and a record of all planning decisions. Prospective applicants are advised to contact the council to review these records at an early stage in order that, where necessary, the issue of cumulative impact for such development can be considered and addressed when preparing any planning application.

Careful consideration should be given to the impact of existing or proposed vegetation in order to ensure that any resultant shading of solar panels does not result in the future pruning or felling of such vegetation.

R - Ecology

3.47 Solar arrays could have implications for habitat loss, fragmentation and modification and for displacement of species. The nature of impacts will depend on the ecological characteristics and features of the site and sensitivity to proposed changes. Schemes may reduce habitat and habitat suitability for some species, but may also be capable of integrating different uses of land and delivering environmental gains. The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the national approach to conserving and enhancing the natural environment. It will be important to consider impacts that could take place through the construction, operation and decommissioning stages of a scheme.

3.48 The most important thing to get right with respect to ecology is choosing an appropriate location. Intensively managed agricultural land is likely to be of least ecological interest and therefore most suitable, in ecological terms, for solar PV farms.

3.49 Design should be informed and influenced by ecological assessments (phase 1 habitat surveys, protected species surveys etc). Issues that may need particular assessment include ground nesting birds, wintering birds, bats, dormice, reptiles and badgers. The use of an advising ecologist throughout the design process can ensure that adverse impacts are mitigated and biodiversity enhancements are maximised (note: protected species surveys are season dependent so contacting an ecologist at a very early stage is advisable).

3.50 The assessment will need to include a desk study for existing ecological records, an evaluation of the likely impacts of the solar PV farm upon ecological features, specify mitigation to avoid/minimise these impacts and list any further surveys required. The main impacts and mitigation requirements are likely to be:

- **Lighting -** security lighting may affect bats. It is advised that lighting is not used unless absolutely necessary. If lighting is necessary it must be minimised and directed away from hedges/woodland/scrub. A bat survey will be needed to inform any other mitigation required and indeed whether lighting would be allowable on site.
- **Cables -** overhead and underground cables have the potential to adversely impact upon biodiversity. Cable routes need to be carefully designed in consultation with the consulting ecologist.
- **Construction -** we advise hedges are fully retained and no new hedge breaks are created. If any hedges/scrub are to be removed, further surveys including for dormice and reptiles may be necessary. Pile driving may affect any badgers nearby; this will need to be informed by a badger survey and a licence may be necessary.
- **Fencing -** we advise that large buffer strips (at least 5m) are left between perimeter fencing and existing hedges. The fencing must allow badgers, reptiles and other fauna access into the site (whilst retaining grazing sheep).We advise a gap to allow small mammals and reptiles access is left around the entire base of the fence, with larger gaps or gates for badgers at suitable intervals.

Enhancement, management and monitoring

3.51 Solar PV farms have the potential to increase the biodiversity value of a site if the land was previously intensively managed. Sheep grazing or an autumn cut with removal of grass cuttings could increase the botanical diversity of the site. The ecological consultant should specify a suitable management regime for each case, bearing in mind shading by the solar panels. Hedges should be managed appropriately and could be laid to reduce gaps.

3.52 Proposed enhancements should build upon and extend existing habitats or create new important habitats e.g.: cultivated strips/plots for rare arable plants, rough grassland margins, bumble bee plant mixes, wild bird mixes, etc.

3.53 It is advised an ecological monitoring programme is developed to monitor impacts upon the flora of the site and upon any particular features (e.g. bats, wintering birds). Results of the monitoring will then inform any changes needed to the management/grazing regime.

Kobern-Gondorf solar PV facility, in Germany, is used as a nature reserve for endangered species of flora and fauna.

A 5m buffer strip between the field boundary and any fencing will allow access for maintenance purposes, minimise damage to the field boundary and provide an access corridor for wildlife.

Checklist for advising on potential nature conservation impacts

- Could the development site, alone or cumulatively, have impacts on a designated site and its objectives or designation?
- Is the site (habitat/species) sensitive to changes likely to result from a solar PV scheme?
- Can the site successfully integrate land uses and deliver environmental benefits?
- Are proposed mitigation measures adequate and likely to be effective?
- Is post-construction monitoring necessary?

- Have impacts been properly assessed in the EIA/HRA or other environmental assessment? Do we agree with the conclusions?
- Are there opportunities for environmental enhancement, such as creation of new natural screening features or management of the land/margins for conservation purposes?
- Are enhancement measures appropriate and do they contribute to wider aims in the area, such as Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) action plans?

3.54 Solar farms therefore can offer the opportunity to increase biodiversity and hence it is desirable to maximise the environmental benefit to the land where they are located. Recent (September 2011) guidance produced by Natural England technical information note TIN101 "Solar parks: maximising environmental benefits" http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/32027 offers more detailed advice on this aspect of solar farm development.

S - Historic environment

3.55 The impacts of solar PV developments on the historic environment will require expert assessment in most cases. Solar developments may affect heritage assets (sites, monuments, buildings and landscape) both above and below ground. Above ground impacts may include the effects of applications on the setting of listed buildings and scheduled monuments as well as on the historic landscape character of the area. Below ground impacts may include direct impacts on archaeological deposits through ground disturbance associated with trenching, foundations, fencing, temporary haul routes etc.

3.56 Maidstone Borough Council will expect all proposals to have been informed by a consultation with the historic environment record (HER) maintained by Kent County Council. Any application should identify the presence of both designated and undesignated heritage assets which may be affected by any development and identify if there will be a requirement for further information to support an application. If such a requirement is identified we will expect applicants who wish to proceed with such sites to undertake a further consultation with Kent County Council who will advise on a brief for the required expert assessment or evaluation work.

3.57 The results of such assessments will be required as supporting information in advance of the validation of applications. Maidstone Borough Council expects such assessments to follow the briefs set by the historic environment service and to demonstrate the use of appropriately qualified professional expertise. Where assessments are absent or inadequate the council may request further work to be undertaken in advance of determination. We will expect applications to take account of the results of historic environment assessments in their design, for instance through the sensitive planning of installations. Any opportunities to introduce better management of affected assets, or to improve the settings of designated sites, should be identified and this will be actively encouraged.

T - Drainage, surface water run-off and flooding

3.58 Due to the size of solar PV parks, planning applications will be expected to be accompanied by a flood risk assessment. This will need to consider the impact of drainage. As solar panels will drain to the existing ground, the impact will not in general be significant. Therefore this should not be an onerous requirement.

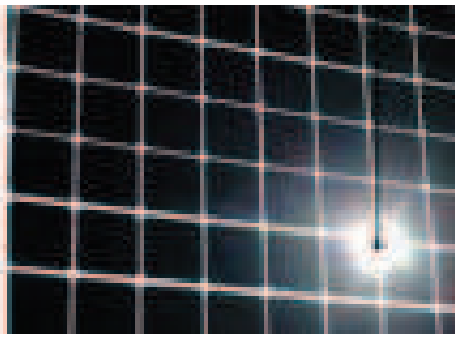
3.59 However on sloping sites the concentration of run-off from panels could lead to run-off caused by the formation of gullying. This is more likely where the underlying soils are not naturally free draining, the site is steep and the arrays are installed up-and-down the slope, rather than along contours. Simple sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS) drainage techniques, such as shallow swales or infiltration trenches, should be adopted to overcome this. These should aim to disperse the run-off at regular intervals to allow it to soak into the natural ground and prevent drainage paths forming straight down the slope. To avoid the concentration of flows, these should not necessarily be linked through the site but can be a series of short, contoured features.

3.60 Where access tracks need to be provided, permeable tracks should be used, and localised SUDS, such as swales and infiltration trenches, should be used to control any run-off.

3.61 Given the temporary nature of solar PV park sites should be configured or selected to avoid the need to impact on existing drainage systems and watercourses. Culverting existing watercourses/drainage ditches should be avoided. Where culverting for access is unavoidable, it should be demonstrated that no reasonable alternatives exist and where necessary only temporarily for the construction period.

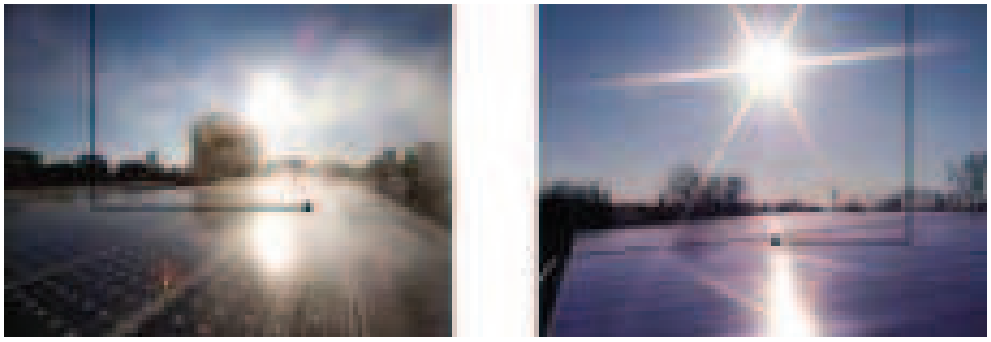
U - Glint and glare

3.62 Glint may be produced as a direct reflection of the sun in the surface of the PV solar panel. It may be the source of the visual issues regarding viewer distraction. Glare is a continuous source of brightness, relative to diffused lighting. This is not a direct reflection of the sun, but rather a reflection of the bright sky around the sun. Glare is significantly less intense than glint.



Glint

Also known as specular reflection, produced as a direct reflection of the sun in the surface of the PV solar panel. This is the source of the visual issues regarding viewer distraction.



Glare

A continuous source of brightness, relative to diffused lighting. This is not a direct reflection of the sun but rather a reflection of the bright sky around the sun. Glare is significantly less intense than glint.

3.63 Solar panels are designed to absorb, not reflect, irradiation. However, the sensitivities associated with glint and glare, and the landscape/visual impact and the potential impact on aircraft safety, should not be underestimated.

3.64 All applications should include a glint and glare assessment . This will be particularly important if tracking panels are proposed as these may cause differential diurnal and/or seasonal impacts.

3.65 The potential for PV panels, frames and supports to have a combined reflective quality should be assessed. This assessment needs to consider the likely reflective capacity of all of the materials used in the construction of the solar farm.

Solar PV facility adjacent to Saarbruecken airport.

East Langford 5MW solar PV farm, Cornwall. Image courtesy of Low Carbon Solar.

V - Community involvement

3.66 Community involvement should be considered as an integral part of the development process. Maidstone Borough Council advises any developer of solar facilities to engage the local community early in the development process, in accordance with the guidance detailed in the adopted Maidstone Statement of Community Involvement (2013).

Howton 5MW solar PV farm, Cornwall. Image courtesy of Low Carbon Solar Partners.

W - Airport safety

3.67 The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) is seeking to develop its policy on the installation of solar photovoltaic systems and their impact on aviation. Further information may be viewed at: www.caa.co.uk/homepage.aspx?catid=752.

X - Electricity generating capacity

3.68 Planning applications for commercial scale solar PV development should clearly indicate the installed capacity (MW) of the proposed facility. While it is accepted that the performance of the solar panels may degrade over time the initial installed capacity should be provided. The capacity factor and estimated annual production (MWh p.a.) should also be provided together with the number of residential properties electricity equivalent for UK, south east and Maidstone properties. A pro forma table, explaining these terms, is attached as Appendix B. This information will allow members of the public and the elected members to clearly understand the generating capacity of the proposed facility.

Y - Duration of planning permission and potential conditions

3.69 The Feed in Tariff for solar PV applies for a period of 25 years. Solar farms should normally be regarded as a temporary use of land, and hence the need for 'reversibility', and the ability for all structures to be removed and the land returned to its original use. Planning permissions will normally:

- Need to be implemented within a period of three years.
- Contain a time frame for the completion of the construction and commissioning of the development.
- Be for a temporary period only, and a maximum period of 25 years from the commissioning of the facility should be applied.

3.70 Planning applications should specify the length of time being applied for. A 25 year time limit will normally be imposed. Some typical conditions are listed in Appendix C.

Appendix A - Guidance on the information which should be provided within a landscape and visual impact assessment

It is vital that landscape considerations are embedded in the decision making process, as the most significant environmental effect of a development such as this, will be the impact on landscape character and visual amenity.

The question to be addressed is whether this solar farm scheme is likely to give rise to significant environmental effects on the landscape of Maidstone Borough, and thereby whether the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations apply to the application.

There are a number of elements associated with a solar farm development which have the potential to influence the significance of the impacts on landscape character and visual amenity:

- Gradient of the site and the surrounding landform.
- Extent of the application site.
- Height and layout of the panels.
- Colour of the panel's surrounding frames.
- Treatment of the ground below and between the panels, for example to grow crops, graze livestock, or to lay down mulch to reduce maintenance.
- Perimeter fencing.

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment – Third Edition – Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment 2011 provides advice on an appropriate approach to landscape assessment. The council would expect any application to be accompanied by an assessment based on the principles set out in this document.

Whether the EIA Regs are applied to the application or not, the impact of the proposal on landscape character and visual amenity needs to be examined through a comprehensive Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment. Such an assessment will need to cover the following detail:

1. Description of the development

- The need for the development set within local regional and national strategies.
- The timescale for construction, operation and decommissioning.
- The site's location and overall layout.
- Solar panel design and specification, method of construction/installation.
- Reasonable estimates of quantity and type of traffic which will be generated through construction and operation.

2. Site description

- Description of the main reasons for the site selection and any alternatives in site design or layout which have been considered.
- Area of proposed land which the panels will occupy, clearly described and indicated on a map or diagram.
- Illustrated description of the land use of the surrounding area.

- Description of the policies plans and designations which are relevant to the proposal.
- Evaluation of the direct, indirect, secondary and cumulative, short medium and long term effects resulting from the existence of the development.

3. Landscape baseline conditions

- The current condition of the landscape.
- Maidstone's Landscape Character Assessment 2012 provides the framework landscape character information.
- Relationship of the site to any designated areas of landscape at a national, regional or local level, and to areas of landscape value or scenic quality.
- Description of all baseline date sources and methods used to supplement this information.
- The landscape baseline should be evaluated in relation to its sensitivity and importance. The sensitivity evaluation of each landscape element should reflect its quality value, contribution to landscape character and the degree to which the particular element or characteristic can be replaced or substituted.

4. Predictions of impact

- Assess the scale, or magnitude of change to the landscape and visual element as a deviation from the baseline conditions for each phase of the proposal. Consideration will need to be given to visitor and resident populations and seasonal variations.
- Provide a zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV) diagram for the development indicating as a minimum a 1km, 2km and 4km radius from the site.
- The methods used to establish the magnitude should be clearly described and be appropriate and reasonable in relation to the importance of the landscape and visual impact.
- Where assumptions or unsupported data has been used in the predictions, these should be highlighted and accompanied by an indication of the reliability/confidence of those assumptions or data.
- Evaluation of the direct, indirect, secondary and cumulative, short medium and long term effects resulting from the existence of the development.

5. Impact significance

- Clearly describe the judgements which underpin the attribution of significance.
- The assessment of significance should consider the impact's deviation from the established baseline condition, the sensitivity of the landscape and receptors and the extent to which the impact will be mitigated or is reversible.
- The range of factors which are likely to influence the assessment of significance should be clearly identified.
- Provide detail of how these variables will affect the significance of the impacts over the life of the development.
- Identify the significance of impacts that remain following mitigation.

6. Mitigation

- Describe the measures proposed to avoid, reduce and if possible remedy significant adverse impacts on both landscape character and visual amenity.
- Provide and indication of the effectiveness of the stated measures.
- Clear indication of how the mitigation measures will be implemented.

7. Presentation of the landscape and visual impact assessment

- The document should be clear and logical in its layout and presentation and be capable of being understood by a non-specialist.
- It should be a balanced document providing an unbiased account of the landscape and visual effects, with reasoned and justifiable arguments.
- A glossary of all technical terms and a full reference list should be provided.
- Plans, diagrams and visual representations should be provided to assist in the understanding of the development and its impact and should be clearly labelled with all locations referenced in the text.

8. Non-technical summary

i. A stand alone document to be available to a non-specialist reader, to enable them to understand the landscape and visual impacts of the proposal.
ii. To include a summary description of the development; the aspects of the landscape character and visual amenity likely to be significantly affected; the likely significant effects; the mitigation measures to be implemented.
iii. Include as a minimum the plans, maps and other visual representations which illustrate the location of the application site, the footprint of the development and the location of key features.

Should you require any further advice or clarification of matters raised in this response, please contact: preapps@maidstone.gov.uk.

Appendix B - Electricity generating capacity

Planning applications for commercial scale solar PV development should be accompanied by the following information.

Installed capacity (MW)[1]	Capacity factor[2]	Estimated annual production (MWh p.a.)[3]	Number of residential properties electricity equivalent[4]

Notes

1. Installed capacity is the full-load, continuous rating of generating equipment under specific conditions as designated by the manufacturer. In other words, this is the power generated when the equipment is working at full capacity.
2. Capacity factor is the calculated factor which compares the plant's actual production over a given period of time with the amount of power the plant would have produced if it had run at full capacity for the same amount of time. The capacity factor should take account of the specific equipment and the specific location. It is expressed as a percentage.
3. Estimated annual production of electricity based upon the installed capacity and the capacity factor.
4. Number of residential properties that would be powered by the estimated annual production based upon the UK average household consumption of 4,629 KWh/year.

Appendix C - Template schedule of planning conditions for stand alone or ground mounted solar PV installations

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

   Reason: In accordance with the requirements of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

2. Within 25 years and six months following completion of construction of development, or within six months of the cessation of electricity generation by the solar PV facility, or within six months following a permanent cessation of construction works prior to the solar facility coming into operational use, whichever is the sooner, the solar PV panels, frames, foundations, inverter modules and all associated structures and fencing approved shall be dismantled and removed from the site. The developer shall notify the local planning authority in writing no later than five working days following cessation of power production. The site shall subsequently be restored in accordance with the approved restoration scheme no later than three months following the cessation of power production.

   Reason: To ensure the achievement of satisfactory restoration.

3. Where details of any fencing or security measures have not been included with the planning application;

   Prior to the installation or erection of any fencing or security measures details of such infrastructure shall be submitted to, and agreed in writing with, the Local Planning Authority.

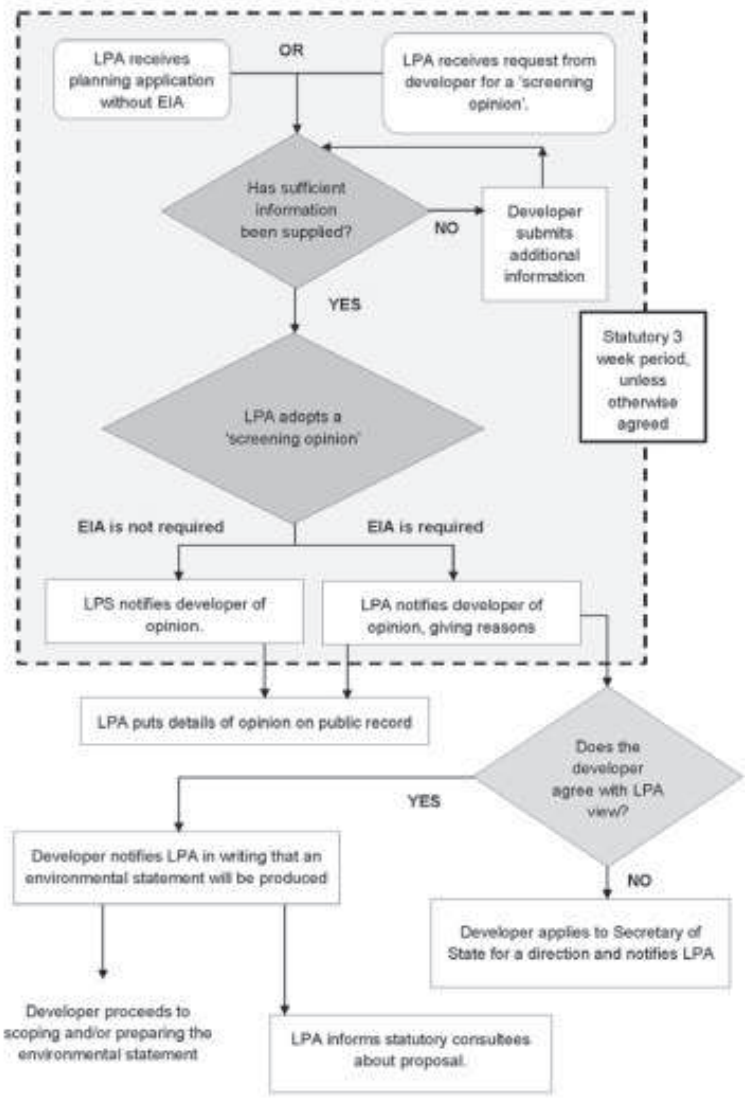
   Reason: To minimise the landscape, visual and environmental impact of the development.

4. Artificial lighting is generally not encouraged at such sites. The local planning authority may restrict such lighting by use of the following condition;No artificial lighting shall be installed until details of such lighting has been submitted to, and agreed in writing by, the local planning authority.

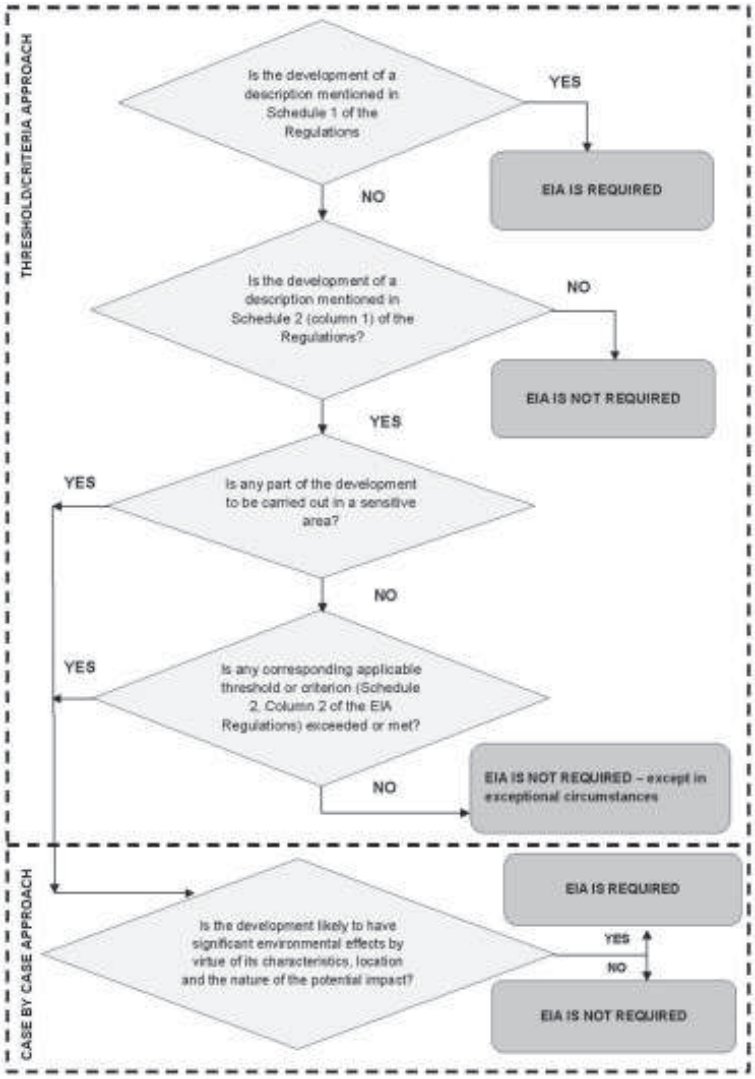
   Reason: To minimise the landscape, visual and environmental impact of the development.

Appendix D - Screening procedures overview

Screening procedure overview



Screening decision



Appendix E - Advice on security and crime prevention

Risk

Generating electricity from the sun using photovoltaic panels on a commercial scale is a relatively new venture within the UK and will bring with it new risks and challenges to protect the location and panels from criminals. Because this is a new project there is currently no UK crime data to base crime prevention advice on.

Policing experience indicates that placing large quantities of expensive photovoltaic panels in isolated locations without adequate protection will attract criminals and the photovoltaic panels and associated infrastructure will be stolen. The main risk will come from organised gangs who will use heavy duty tools and vehicles to remove large quantities of the panels. Stolen the panels are likely to be moved from the crime scene before re-emerging for sale.

Site

In view of the potential risk when considering suitable locations for solar farms a major consideration from a police view will be how the site can be protected from unauthorised vehicle entry. Full consideration of the natural defences of the site should be taken into consideration for e.g. steep gradient, substantial hedging, rivers etc. Wherever possible the boundary protection of the site should be an appropriate distance from the actual panels to discourage parking a vehicle against the site boundary and manually lifting stolen panels onto a vehicle.

Access to the site

The solar company/site owner will require vehicular access to the site. The physical security guarding this access must be robust to sustain a high level of attack as these sites will probably be remote and lacking any natural surveillance. Consideration should be given to protecting the access road at two separate locations;

1. At the actual entrance to the site and;
2. Away from the specific entrance to keep authorised vehicles a substantial distance from the site.

The security of solar farms must be properly assessed by all those involved in the planning process.

All planning applications should therefore include full details of the security proposals within the Design and Access Statement (as required by Department for Communities and Local Government Circular 1/2006 paragraph 87)

The security measures to be incorporated at each location will have to be considered on a site specific basis. They will obviously be determined to some degree by, for example, the existing landscape and local planning constraints etc.

The basic principle of all crime prevention is to provide layers of defence to whatever is in need of protection. In the case of solar farms this protection will almost certainly require both the physical element, such as fences or ditches and also the utilisation of appropriate technology such as CCTV.

The advice offered below covers the general crime prevention points which should be considered by any applicant.

Perimeter security and access control

If perimeter fencing is to be used then it should be a proven security fence.

The recommendation would be to install fencing which has been tested and approved to current UK Government standards.

Fencing which meets the SEAP (Security Equipment Approval Panel) class 1-3 may be the most appropriate.

Fencing which is not of a specialist security type is likely to offer at best only token resistance to intruders.

Planting up and alongside any fencing will be acceptable providing there is no detrimental effect upon site surveillance that is available. The standard for rating bollards, blockers and gates is PAS 68:2007 and PAS68:2010.

Landscaping techniques such as ditches and berms (bunds) may also be appropriate in some instances. To be effective in stopping vehicles these need to be designed carefully. Police are able to provide further specific advice in relation to the design of such defences upon request.

There should be a minimum number of vehicular access points onto site, ideally only one.

Clearly such access points will present the most obvious means for the criminal also and therefore will require a robust and adequate defence.

Some thought should also be given to the wider issues of access around any site. If, for instance, the land surrounding the site is under the same ownership can this be made more secure by improving gates etc. Again this provides layers of difficulty for the criminal to overcome.

Electronic security

There is a huge range of electronic security available. For most sites it is very likely that this will play an important role. In selecting which type of technology to employ a proper assessment on a site specific basis should be undertaken to ensure any system will be fit for purpose.

For CCTV this assessment is commonly called an Operational Requirement (OR). An obvious example would be to establish how effective will the CCTV be at night at these locations.

There will probably be little reward in deploying CCTV or other defence unless it is monitored in some way or can provide an instant alert in some form and also who would then respond to this? CCTV which simply records will probably be of very limited value.

Other options

The presence of site security personnel in some capacity should be considered including perhaps in terms of some types of response to site alarm activations.

The use of security bolts to secure photovoltaic panels and locked housing to secure inverters etc.

If the individual solar panels can be marked overtly this would reduce the ease with which they could be re sold/re used and thus help act as an additional deterrent and assist in any future identification.

Covert security marking should also be used.

Maidstone Borough Council

Planning, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday 17 December 2013

Future Work Programme

Report of: Orla Sweeney**,** Overview & Scrutiny Officer

1. Introduction

1.1 To consider the Committee's future work programme.

1.2 To consider the information update given by the Chairman.

2. Recommendation

2.1 That the Committee considers the draft future work programme, attached at **Appendix A**, to ensure that it is appropriate and covers all issues Members currently wish to consider within the Committee's remit. Any items on the draft future work programme, highlighted in bold, are provisional items for the Committee to approve.

2.2 That the Committee considers the sections of the List of Forthcoming Decisions relevant to the Committee at **Appendix B** and whether these are items that require further investigation or monitoring.

2.3 That the Committee considers its continuous professional development needs and recommends possible training or development sessions it would like to undertake.

3 Future Work Programme

3.1 Throughout the course of the municipal year the Committee is asked to put forward work programme suggestions. These suggestions are planned into its annual work programme. Members are asked to consider the work programme at each meeting to ensure that it remains appropriate and covers all issues Members currently wish to consider within the Committee's remit.

3.2 The Committee is reminded that the Constitution states under Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules number 9: Agenda items that 'Any Member shall be entitled to give notice to the proper officer that he wishes an item relevant to the functions of the Committee or Sub-Committee to be included on the agenda for the next available meeting of the Committee or Sub-Committee. On receipt of such a request the proper officer will ensure that it

is included on the next available agenda, the Member must attend the meeting and speak on the item put forward.'

4 List of Forthcoming Decisions

4.1 The List of Forthcoming Decisions (**Appendix B**) is a live document containing all key and non-key decisions.

4.2 Due to the nature of the List of Forthcoming Decisions, and to ensure the information provided to the Committee is up to date, a verbal update will be given at the meeting by the Chairman. The Committee can view the live document online at: http://meetings.maidstone.gov.uk/mgListPlans.aspx?RPId=443&RD=0

5. Impact on Corporate Objectives

5.1 The Committee will consider reports that deliver against the following Council priorities:

- 'For Maidstone to have a growing economy' and 'For Maidstone to be a decent place to live'.

5.2 The Strategic Plan sets the Council's key objectives for the medium term and has a range of objectives which support the delivery of the Council's priorities.

Appendix A

Planning, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2013-14

Meeting Date	Agenda Items	Details and desired outcome
18 June 2013	• Appointment of Chairman and Vice-Chairman • Leader & Cabinet Member Priorities for 2013/14 Municipal Year • Maidstone Landscape Character Assessment • Work Programming Workshop 2013-14	• Appoint Chairman and Vice-Chairman for 2013-14 • Ascertain work plan for the year and strategic direction for the Council & Select and develop review topics focusing on achievable outcomes.
23 July 2013	**CANCELLED**	**CANCELLED**
20 August 2013	• Development Management Policies for Local Plan • Public Consultation Approach for the Maidstone Local Plan	• To consider the reports and information presented and make recommendations as appropriate.
TRAINING 28 August 2013	• PowerPoint presentation to explain the methodologies behind the SHMA/SLAA/SEDLAA and how the Sustainability Appraisal fits into the process	• Background and preparation for the September and October meetings
17 September 2013	**SPECIAL MEETING** to act on the instruction of the extraordinary Council meeting on 2 September 2013 to the Planning, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee	• The Committee to update Council on 18 September
26 September 2013	**EXTRAORDINARY MEETING.** A second, follow up meeting to hear further evidence from Boughton Monchelsea Parish Council and Maidstone to enable the committee to make a recommendation in response to Council's instruction.	• To respond to Council's instruction.
15 October 2013	• Infrastructure Delivery Plan	• To consider the reports and information presented and make recommendations as appropriate.
19 November 2013	• Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy • Mid-Year Five Year Housing Land Supply • Maidstone Borough Local Plan Public Consultation Draft - Group 2 Policies	• To consider the reports and information presented and make recommendations as appropriate.
2 December 2013	**SPECIAL MEETING – DEFERRED ITEMS:**	

	• Maidstone Borough Local Plan Public Consultation Draft - Group 2 Policies • Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy	• To consider the reports and information presented and make recommendations as appropriate.
17 December 2013	• Solar Farms	• To consider the report and information presented and make recommendations as appropriate.
21 January 2014	• Maidstone Borough Local Plan Draft Spatial Strategy • Maidstone Borough Local Plan Public Consultation Draft – Group 3 Policies • Draft Integrated Transport Strategy – Vision and Objective	
18 February 2014	• Maidstone Borough Local Plan Public Consultation Draft (Regulation 18) • Infrastructure Delivery Plan • Community Infrastructure Levy Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule (***Training to be scheduled before the meeting***)	
18 March 2014		
15 April 2014	• Evaluations of Cabinet Member Priorities for 2013/14 Municipal Year • **Planning Enforcement (TBC)**	

LIST OF FORTHCOMING DECISIONS

Democratic Services Team
E: democraticservices@maidstone.gov.uk

Publication Date: **3 December 2013**

List of Forthcoming Decisions

INTRODUCTION

This document sets out the decisions to be taken by the Executive and various Committees of Maidstone Borough Council on a rolling basis. This document will be published as updated with new decisions required to be made.

KEY DECISIONS

A key decision is an executive decision which is likely to:

- Result in the Maidstone Borough Council incurring expenditure or making savings which is equal to the value of £250,000 or more; or

- Have significant effect on communities living or working in an area comprising one or more wards in Maidstone.

At Maidstone Borough Council, decisions which we regard as "Key Decisions" because they are likely to have a "significant" effect either in financial terms or on the community include:

(1) Decisions about expenditure or savings which equal or are more than £250,000.
(2) Budget reports.
(3) Policy framework reports.
(4) Adoption of new policies plans, strategies or changes to established policies, plans or strategies.
(5) Approval of portfolio plans.
(6) Decisions that involve significant service developments, significant service reductions, or significant changes in the way that services are delivered, whether Borough-wide or in a particular locality.
(7) Changes in fees and charges.
(8) Proposals relating to changes in staff structure affecting more than one section.

Each entry identifies, for that "key decision" –

- the decision maker
- the date on which the decision is due to be taken
- the subject matter of the decision and a brief summary
- the reason it is a key decision
- to whom representations (about the decision) can be made

- whether the decision will be taken in public or private
- what reports/papers are, or will be, available for public inspection

EXECUTIVE DECISIONS

The Cabinet collectively makes its decisions at a meeting and individual portfolio holders make decisions independently. In addition, Officers can make key decisions and an entry for each of these will be included in this list.

DECISIONS WHICH THE CABINET INTENDS TO MAKE IN PRIVATE

The Cabinet hereby gives notice that it intends to meet in private after its public meeting to consider reports and/or appendices which contain exempt information under Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended). The private meeting of the Cabinet is open only to Members of the Cabinet, other Councillors and Council officers.

Reports and/or appendices to decisions which the Cabinet will take at its private meeting are indicated in the list below, with the reasons for the decision being made in private. Any person is able to make representations to the Cabinet if he/she believes the decision should instead be made in the public Cabinet meeting. If you want to make such representations, please email janetbarnes@maidstone.gov.uk. You will then be sent a response in reply to your representations. Both your representations and the Executive's response will be published on the Council's website at least 5 working days before the Cabinet meeting.

ACCESS TO CABINET REPORTS

Reports to be considered at the Cabinet's public meeting will be available on the Council's website (www.maidstone.gov.uk) a minimum of 5 working days before the meeting.

HOW CAN I CONTRIBUTE TO THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS?

The Council actively encourages people to express their views on decisions it plans to make. This can be done by writing directly to the appropriate Officer or Cabinet Member (details of whom are shown in the list below).

Alternatively, the Cabinet are contactable via our website (www.maidstone.gov.uk) where you can submit a question to the Leader of the Council. There is also the opportunity to invite the Leader of the Council to speak at a function you may be organising.

List of Forthcoming Decisions

WHO ARE THE CABINET?

Councillor Christopher Garland
Leader of the Council
christophergarland@maidstone.gov.uk
Tel: 07903 113571

Councillor Stephen Paine
Cabinet Member for Planning, Transport and Development
stephenpaine@maidstone.gov.uk
Tel: 07906 271325

Councillor Malcolm Greer
Cabinet Member for Economic and Commercial Development (also Deputy Leader)
malcolmgreer@maidstone.gov.uk
Tel: 01634 862876

Councillor Marion Ring
Cabinet Member for Environment
marionring@maidstone.gov.uk
Tel: 01622 686492

Councillor Brian Moss
Cabinet Member for Corporate Services
brianmoss@maidstone.gov.uk
Tel: 01622 761998

Councillor John A Wilson
Cabinet Member for Community and Leisure Services
johnawilson@maidstone.gov.uk
Tel: 01622 720989

List of Forthcoming Decisions

Decision Maker and Date of When Decision is Due to be Made:	**Title of Report and Brief Summary:**	**Key Decision and reason (if applicable):**	**Contact Officer:**	**Public or Private** ***(if Private the reason why)***	**Documents to be submitted (*other relevant documents may be submitted*)**
Cabinet Due Date: Wednesday 4 Dec 2013	Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy Approval of Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy for public consultation (to be undertaken at the same time as the Maidstone Borough Local Plan).	KEY Reason: Policies, Plans, Strategies	Rob Jarman, Head of Development Management Robjarman@maidstone.gov.uk	Public	Green spaces for Maidstone strategy, 2005. Maidstone Open Space DPD, 2006. Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy
Cabinet Due Date: Wednesday 4 Dec 2013	MAIDSTONE BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN PUBLIC CONSULTATION DRAFT – GROUP 2 POLICIES 2nd group of local plan policies for approval by Cabinet	KEY Reason: Affects more than 1 ward	Rob Jarman, Head of Development Management Robjarman@maidstone.gov.uk	Public	MAIDSTONE BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN PUBLIC CONSULTATION DRAFT – GROUP 2 POLICIES
Licensing Committee Due Date: Wednesday 4 Dec 2013	Street Trading Application for Jubilee Square, Christmas Market Street Trading Application for Jubilee Square, Christmas Market		Lorraine Neale lorraineneale@maidstone.gov.uk	Private - Paragraph 3 – because of the financial and business affairs of the applicant	Street Trading Application for Jubilee Square,Christmas Market

Forthcoming Decisions
December 2013 - June 2014

Decision Maker and Date of When Decision is Due to be Made:	**Title of Report and Brief Summary**	**Key Decision and reason (if applicable)**	**Contact Officer:**	**Public or Private *if Private the reason why)***	**Documents to be submitted** *(other relevant documents may be submitted)*
Cabinet Member for Community and Leisure Services Due Date: Tuesday 10 Dec 2013	Transfer of former Oakwood Cemetery To consider agreeing to the freehold transfer to the Council of the land known as the former Oakwood Cemetery site, Oakapple Lane, Maidstone		Zena Cooke zenacooke@maidstone.gov.uk	Public	Transfer of former Oakwood Cemetery Enc. 1 for Transfer of former Oakwood Cemetery Enc. 2 for Transfer of former Oakwood Cemetery
General Purposes Group Due Date: Wednesday 11 Dec 2013	Nominations to Outside Bodies To consider nominations received for Outside Bodies.		Caroline Matthews carolinematthews@maidstone.gov.uk	Public	Nominations to Outside Bodies

Forthcoming Decisions
December 2013 - June 2014

Decision Maker and Date of When Decision is Due to be Made:	**Title of Report and Brief Summary**	**Key Decision and reason (if applicable)**	**Contact Officer:**	**Public or Private *if Private the reason why)***	**Documents to be submitted** *(other relevant documents may be submitted)*
General Purposes Group Due Date: Wednesday 11 Dec 2013	Council Tax Tax Base 2014 15 This report advises Members of the information currently available on the Tax Base for 2014/15 for Council Tax purposes. It identifies potential changes to that Tax Base, particularly those that are brought about by the Localisation of Council Tax Support Scheme for 2014/15. It also recommends the Tax Base for 2014/15.		Paul Riley, Head of Finance & Customer Services paulriley@maidstone.gov.uk	Public	Council Tax Tax Base 2014 15
Council Due Date: Wednesday 11 Dec 2013	Local Council Tax Discount Scheme Decision on the local council tax discount scheme to be applied for 2014/2015.		Stephen McGinnes stephenmcginnes@maidstone.gov.uk	Public	Local Council Tax Discount Scheme

Forthcoming Decisions
December 2013 - June 2014

Decision Maker and Date of When Decision is Due to be Made:	**Title of Report and Brief Summary**	**Key Decision and reason (if applicable)**	**Contact Officer:**	**Public or Private *if Private the reason why)***	**Documents to be submitted** *(other relevant documents may be submitted)*
Council Due Date: Wednesday 11 Dec 2013	Committee Membership To consider changes to committee membership		Janet Barnes janetbarnes@maidstone.gov.uk	Public	Committee Membership
Council Due Date: Wednesday 11 Dec 2013	Visiting Members at Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meetings Amendment to the Constitution		Christian Scade christianscade@maidstone.gov.uk	Public	Visiting Members at Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meetings
Council Due Date: Wednesday 11 Dec 2013	Calendar of Meetings To consider an amendment to the Calendar of Meetings for 2013/14 and the new calendar of Meetings for 2014/15.		Janet Barnes janetbarnes@maidstone.gov.uk	Public	Calendar of Meetings
Council Due Date: Wednesday 11 Dec 2013	Urgent Decisions Taken by the Executive To note the urgent decisions taken by the Executive.		Janet Barnes janetbarnes@maidstone.gov.uk	Public	Urgent Decisions Taken by the Executive Urgent Decisions Taken by the Executive

Forthcoming Decisions
December 2013 - June 2014

Decision Maker and Date of When Decision is Due to be Made:	**Title of Report and Brief Summary**	**Key Decision and reason (if applicable)**	**Contact Officer:**	**Public or Private *if Private the reason why)***	**Documents to be submitted** *(other relevant documents may be submitted)*
Council Due Date: Wednesday 11 Dec 2013	Exempt Appendix to Urgent Decisions Taken by the Executive Exempt Appendix to report		Janet Barnes janetbarnes@maidstone.gov.uk	Private - 3 - Financial Info/Business Affairs - contains commercially sensitive information	Exempt Appendix to Urgent Decisions Taken by the Executive
Cabinet Member for Corporate Services Due Date: Friday 13 Dec 2013 117	Council Tax, Business Rates and Housing Benefits Overpayments write offs Approval of write offs for irrecoverable debts of Council Tax, Business Rates and Housing Benefit Overpayments		Sheila Coburn sheilacoburn@maidstone.gov.uk	Public	Council Tax, Business Rates and Housing Benefits Overpayments write offs
Cabinet Member for Corporate Services Due Date: Friday 13 Dec 2013	Discretionary Housing Payment Future policy for the award of discretionary housing payments.		Stephen McGinnes stephenmcginnes@maidstone.gov.uk	Public	Discretionary Housing Payment

Forthcoming Decisions
December 2013 - June 2014

Decision Maker and Date of When Decision is Due to be Made:	**Title of Report and Brief Summary**	**Key Decision and reason (if applicable)**	**Contact Officer:**	**Public or Private *if Private the reason why)***	**Documents to be submitted** *(other relevant documents may be submitted)*
Cabinet Due Date: Wednesday 18 Dec 2013	Budget Strategy 2014 15 Onwards Capital To determine the strategy for developing the future Capital Programme, for 2014/15 onwards, as part of the consideration of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).	KEY Reason: Budget Reports	Paul Riley, Head of Finance & Customer Services paulriley@maidstone.gov.uk	Public	Budget Strategy 2014 15 Onwards Capital

Forthcoming Decisions
December 2013 - June 2014

Decision Maker and Date of When Decision is Due to be Made:	**Title of Report and Brief Summary**	**Key Decision and reason (if applicable)**	**Contact Officer:**	**Public or Private *if Private the reason why)***	**Documents to be submitted** *(other relevant documents may be submitted)*
Cabinet Due Date: Wednesday 18 Dec 2013	Refresh of the Corporate Improvement Plan for 2014-17 To consider the draft Corporate Improvement Plan 2014-17 before consultation with Corporate Services Overview & Scrutiny in January 2014 and adoption of the plan by Cabinet in February 2014. The Corporate Improvement Plan details the Council's improvement journey in terms of the key improvement workstreams and the priority services and projects for improvement.	KEY Reason: Policies, Plans, Strategies	Georgia Hawkes, Head of Business Improvement georgiahawkes@maidstone.gov.uk	Public	Refresh of the Improvement Plan for 2014-17 AppA_RefreshofImprovementPlan.pdf Refresh of the Corporate Improvement Plan for 2014-17

Forthcoming Decisions
December 2013 - June 2014

Decision Maker and Date of When Decision is Due to be Made:	**Title of Report and Brief Summary**	**Key Decision and reason (if applicable)**	**Contact Officer:**	**Public or Private *if Private the reason why)***	**Documents to be submitted** *(other relevant documents may be submitted)*
Cabinet Due Date: Wednesday 18 Dec 2013	Maidstone Enterprise Hub To consider allocating £700,000 to progress the project at the former Crown Post Office, King Street.	KEY Reason: Expenditure > £250,000	Karen Franek karenfranek@maidstone.gov.uk	Public	Maidstone Enterprise Hub
Cabinet Due Date: Wednesday 18 Dec 2013	Exempt Appendix - Maidstone Enterprise Hub Consider proposal to allocate £700,000 to progress the Enterprise Hub Project at the former Post Office building, King Street		Karen Franek karenfranek@maidstone.gov.uk	Private - contains commercially sensitive information	Maidstone Enterprise Hub
Cabinet Due Date: Wednesday 18 Dec 2013	Maidstone Partnership Board Changes to the Maidstone Locality Board and proposals for the establishment of a Maidstone Partnership Board	KEY Reason: Policies, Plans, Strategies	Sarah Robson, Community Partnerships Manager, sarahrobson@maidstone.gov.uk	Public	Maidstone Partnership Board

Forthcoming Decisions
December 2013 - June 2014

Decision Maker and Date of When Decision is Due to be Made:	**Title of Report and Brief Summary**	**Key Decision and reason (if applicable)**	**Contact Officer:**	**Public or Private *if Private the reason why)***	**Documents to be submitted** *(other relevant documents may be submitted)*
Cabinet Due Date: Wednesday 18 Dec 2013	Budget Strategy 2014/15 Onwards To agree a draft Council Tax and Budget Strategy for 2014/15 onwards.	KEY Reason: Budget Reports	Paul Riley, Head of Finance & Customer Services paulriley@maidstone.gov.uk	Public	Budget Strategy 2014/15 Onwards

Forthcoming Decisions
December 2013 - June 2014

Decision Maker and Date of When Decision is Due to be Made:	**Title of Report and Brief Summary**	**Key Decision and reason (if applicable)**	**Contact Officer:**	**Public or Private *if Private the reason why)***	**Documents to be submitted** *(other relevant documents may be submitted)*
Cabinet Due Date: Wednesday 18 Dec 2013	Budget Strategy 2014 15 Fees & Charges To consider the appropriate level of fees and charges for 2014/15 for services where the Council raises income by charging the user of a service and where the setting of the fee to be charged is discretionary. The Council has adopted a policy on the setting of fees and charges to ensure that a rational approach is used that takes account of all factors and creates a result that supports the priorities set out in the strategic plan.	KEY Reason: Fees & Charges	Paul Riley, Head of Finance & Customer Services paulriley@maidstone.gov.uk	Public	Budget Strategy 2014 15 Fees & Charges

Forthcoming Decisions
December 2013 - June 2014

Decision Maker and Date of When Decision is Due to be Made:	**Title of Report and Brief Summary**	**Key Decision and reason (if applicable)**	**Contact Officer:**	**Public or Private *if Private the reason why)***	**Documents to be submitted** *(other relevant documents may be submitted)*
Cabinet Member for Corporate Services Due Date: Friday 20 Dec 2013	Lease of Giddyhorn Lane Tennis Courts Lease renewal to Maidstone Lawn Tennis Club of the tennis courts at Giddyhorn Lane Playing Fields		Lucy Stroud lucystroud@maidstone.gov.uk	Private because of commercially sensitive information.	Lease of Giddyhorn Lane Tennis Courts
Cabinet Member for Community and Leisure Services Due Date: Tuesday 31 Dec 2013	Warm Homes Eco Pilot Review Describes progress, upcoming issues and seeks decision on next steps for the Warm Homes scheme in Maidstone	KEY Reason: Affects more than 1 ward	Helen Miller helenmiller@maidstone.gov.uk	public	Warm Homes Eco Pilot Review
Cabinet Member for Community and Leisure Services Due Date: Before Tuesday 31 Dec 2013	Cabinet Report Heather House Future Options Future options for Heather House community hall, Park Wood, Maidstone		John Littlemore, Head of Housing & Community Services johnlittlemore@maidstone.gov.uk	Public	Cabinet Report Heather House Future Options

Forthcoming Decisions
December 2013 - June 2014

Decision Maker and Date of When Decision is Due to be Made:	**Title of Report and Brief Summary**	**Key Decision and reason (if applicable)**	**Contact Officer:**	**Public or Private *if Private the reason why)***	**Documents to be submitted** *(other relevant documents may be submitted)*
Cabinet Member for Community and Leisure Services Due Date: Friday 3 Jan 2014	Health Inequalities Action Plan Action plan detailing work on reducing health inequalities in Maidstone	KEY Reason: Affects more than 1 ward		Public	Health Inequalities Action Plan
Cabinet Due Date: Wednesday 15 Jan 2014	Licensing Peer Challenge Findings and Next Steps		John Littlemore, Head of Housing & Community Services johnlittlemore@maidstone.gov.uk	Public	Licensing Peer Challenge
Cabinet Member for Planning, Transport and Development Due Date: Wednesday 15 Jan 2014	Solar energy advice notes To consider two planning policy advice notes to be used as guidance in determining solar energy applications.	KEY Reason: Policies, Plans, Strategies	Rob Jarman, Head of Development Management Robjarman@maidstone.gov.uk	Public	Solar energy advice notes

Forthcoming Decisions
December 2013 - June 2014

Decision Maker and Date of When Decision is Due to be Made:	**Title of Report and Brief Summary**	**Key Decision and reason (if applicable)**	**Contact Officer:**	**Public or Private *if Private the reason why)***	**Documents to be submitted** *(other relevant documents may be submitted)*
Cabinet Member for Corporate Services Due Date: Friday 24 Jan 2014	Bankruptcy Policy for Council Tax and Business Rates Debt The approach to be adopted by the council in collecting unpaid council tax and business rates through the use of bankruptcy proceedings.	KEY Reason: Policies, Plans, Strategies	Sheila Coburn sheilacoburn@maidstone.gov.uk	Public	Bankruptcy Policy for Council Tax and Business Rates Debt
Cabinet Member for Economic and Commercial Development Due Date: Friday 24 Jan 2014	Maidstone Museums' Collections Development Policy 2013 - 2018 To consider the approval of a revised Collections Development Policy for the Council's museums	KEY Reason: Policies, Plans, Strategies	Dawn Hudd, Head of Commercial and Economic Development, dawnhudd@maidstone.gov.uk	Public	Maidstone Museums' Collections Development Policy 2013-2018 Maidstone Museums' Collections Development Policy 2013-2018

Forthcoming Decisions
December 2013 - June 2014

Decision Maker and Date of When Decision is Due to be Made:	**Title of Report and Brief Summary**	**Key Decision and reason (if applicable)**	**Contact Officer:**	**Public or Private *if Private the reason why)***	**Documents to be submitted** *(other relevant documents may be submitted)*
Cabinet Due Date: Monday 27 Jan 2014	Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) The purpose of the IDP is to identify the infrastructure required to meet the spatial objectives and growth anticipated in the Local Plan and thus demonstrate that the Plan is both realistic and deliverable.	KEY Reason: Affects more than 1 ward	Rob Jarman, Head of Development Management Robjarman@maidstone.gov.uk	Public	Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP)

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Decision Maker and Date of When Decision is Due to be Made:	**Title of Report and Brief Summary**	**Key Decision and reason (if applicable)**	**Contact Officer:**	**Public or Private *if Private the reason why)***	**Documents to be submitted** *(other relevant documents may be submitted)*
Cabinet Due Date: Monday 27 Jan 2014	Maidstone Borough Local Plan Draft Spatial Strategy The report will consider the borough's objectively assessed needs arising from the Strategic Housing Market Assessment. It will seek Member approval of the draft local plan spatial strategy for public consultation, including the targets for new dwellings and employment/retail floorspace.	KEY Reason: Policies, Plans, Strategies	Sue Whiteside suewhiteside@maidstone.gov.uk	Public	Maidstone Borough Local Plan Draft Spatial Strategy
Cabinet Due Date: Monday 27 Jan 2014	Integrated Transport Strategy 2011-31 To consider the Integrated Transport Strategy 2011-31 for public consultation	KEY Reason: Affects more than 1 ward	Rob Jarman, Head of Development Management Robjarman@maidstone.gov.uk	Public	Integrated Transport Strategy 2011-31

Forthcoming Decisions
December 2013 - June 2014

Decision Maker and Date of When Decision is Due to be Made:	**Title of Report and Brief Summary**	**Key Decision and reason (if applicable)**	**Contact Officer:**	**Public or Private *if Private the reason why)***	**Documents to be submitted** *(other relevant documents may be submitted)*
Cabinet Due Date: Monday 27 Jan 2014	Maidstone Borough Local Plan Public Consultation Draft - Group 3 Policies This final group of local plan policies will comprise the housing target and spatial distribution of development for the borough, and a number of transport based policies.	KEY Reason: Affects more than 1 ward	Rob Jarman, Head of Development Management Robjarman@maidstone.gov.uk	Public	Maidstone Borough Local Plan Public Consultation Draft - Group 3 Policies
Cabinet Member for Environment Due Date: Before Friday 31 Jan 2014	Review and Progress Update of Waste Strategy To review the progress which has been made towards the objectives of the Council's 5 year Waste Strategy in preparation for a new Waste Strategy for 2015-2020.		Steve Goulette Stevegoulette@maidstone.gov.uk	Public	Waste Strategy 2010-2015 Review and Progress Update of Waste Strategy

Forthcoming Decisions
December 2013 - June 2014

Decision Maker and Date of When Decision is Due to be Made:	**Title of Report and Brief Summary**	**Key Decision and reason (if applicable)**	**Contact Officer:**	**Public or Private *if Private the reason why)***	**Documents to be submitted** *(other relevant documents may be submitted)*
Cabinet Member for Community and Leisure Services Due Date: Friday 31 Jan 2014	Play Area Improvements Programme 2013/14 A report to consider the allocation for the Play Area Improvements Programme for 2013/14		Amanda Scott amandascott@maidstone.gov.uk	Public	Play Area Improvements Programme 2013/14
Cabinet Due Date: Wednesday 12 Feb 2014	Budget Monitoring - Third Quarter 2013/14 Revenue and capital budget monitoring		Paul Riley, Head of Finance & Customer Services paulriley@maidstone.gov.uk	Public	Budget Monitoring - Third Quarter 2013/14

Forthcoming Decisions
December 2013 - June 2014

Decision Maker and Date of When Decision is Due to be Made:	**Title of Report and Brief Summary**	**Key Decision and reason (if applicable)**	**Contact Officer:**	**Public or Private *if Private the reason why)***	**Documents to be submitted** *(other relevant documents may be submitted)*
Cabinet Due Date: Wednesday 12 Feb 2014	Refresh of the Corporate Improvement Plan 2014-17 To consider the refreshed Corporate Improvement Plan for 2014-17, which details the Council's improvement journey in terms of the key improvement workstreams and the priority services and projects for improvement.	KEY Reason: Policies, Plans, Strategies	Georgia Hawkes, Head of Business Improvement georgiahawkes@maidstone.gov.uk	Public	Refresh of the Corporate Improvement Plan 2014-17 AppA_RefreshofImprovementPlan.pdf Refresh of the Corporate Improvement Plan 2014-17
Cabinet Due Date: Monday 24 Feb 2014	Maidstone Borough Local Plan Public Consultation Draft (Regulation 18) Report seeking approval to undertake public consultation (Regulation 18) on the draft Maidstone Borough Local Plan	KEY Reason: Policies, Plans, Strategies	Sue Whiteside suewhiteside@maidstone.gov.uk	Public	Maidstone Borough Local Plan Public Consultation Draft (Regulation 18)

Forthcoming Decisions
December 2013 - June 2014

Decision Maker and Date of When Decision is Due to be Made:	**Title of Report and Brief Summary**	**Key Decision and reason (if applicable)**	**Contact Officer:**	**Public or Private *if Private the reason why)***	**Documents to be submitted** *(other relevant documents may be submitted)*
Council Due Date: Wednesday 26 Feb 2014	Strategic Plan Refresh 2014-15 update for the final year of the strategic plan	KEY Reason: Policy Framework Document	Angela Woodhouse, Head of Policy and Communications angelawoodhouse@maidstone.gov.uk	public	Strategic Plan Refresh 2014-15