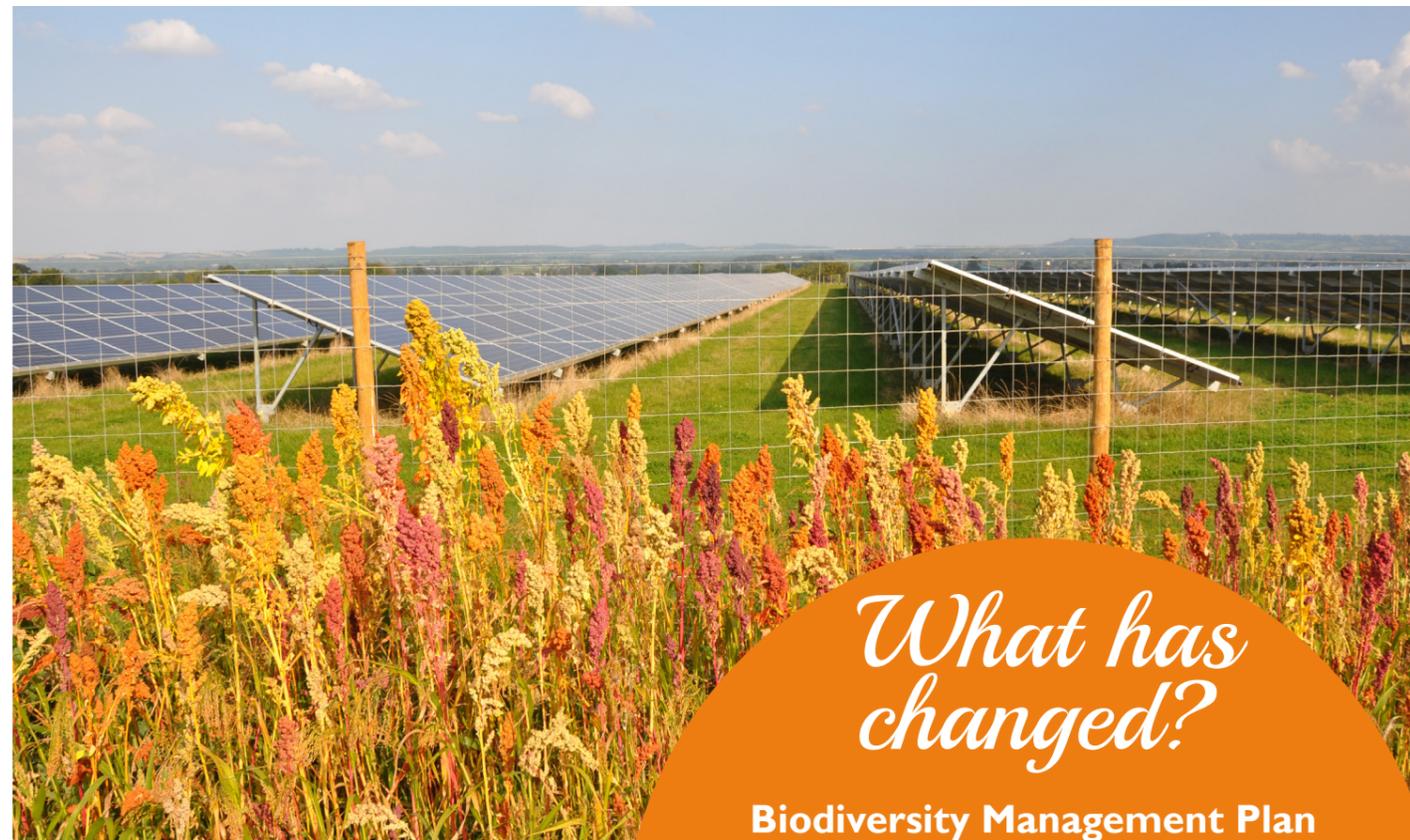


How the proposal has changed

- The design has developed in response to the results of conducted surveys and consultations. The submitted proposal aims to make the most efficient use of the land available, whilst accommodating any historical and ecological value on the site.
- The proposed design takes into account shading from boundary vegetation so that trees and hedgerows along the boundaries can remain in situ. It also preserves areas related to the site's former use as an airfield and respects the existing Public Right of Way to the prison.
- There are 2 surviving features relating to the site's former use as an airfield. These are noted as 'strongpoints' and are protected under Policy BH2. The strongpoints have been precisely identified and located on the ground and their protection has been ensured in the design of the layout plan.
- Following discussions with the local RSPB group and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA), a study was undertaken to better understand the foraging and nesting opportunities for Lapwing on the site. The study demonstrated that the site currently presents few opportunities for the Lapwing, and there is no evidence of Lapwing currently nesting there. The NIEA retracted their original request for further surveys.
- As part of the Biodiversity Management Plan submitted with the application, areas of wild bird seed and species-rich grass are proposed in the wide, panel-free field margins. These areas will provide valuable foraging and nesting opportunities for birds as well as improved habitats for invertebrates and small mammals.
- The installation of several bird and bat boxes around the site boundaries is also proposed to further encourage nesting and roosting.

Project Update, January 2015 PROPOSED SOLAR FARM at MAGHABERRY AIRFIELD Application Reference: S/2014/0913/F



What has changed?

Biodiversity Management Plan finalised to include seed-rich plots, bird boxes and log piles

Hedgerows grown taller and in-filled with native planting

Important 'strongpoints' from the former airfield preserved

As you may be aware, Lightsource Renewable Energy is working on a proposal for a solar farm at Maghaberry Airfield, adjacent to HM Prison Maghaberry. We already own and operate a variety of solar farms across the UK, working with local communities and landowners to generate green energy locally and sustainably.

We have now finalised our proposal and a formal planning application has been submitted to Downpatrick Area Office. The application has been given the following reference number: **S/2014/0913/F** and is currently awaiting validation.

This update aims to give a helpful insight into how the Biodiversity Management Plan has been refined, and give you an overview of how the proposal has developed in response to the results of surveys and consultations. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to get in touch with us directly.



Solar farms can provide great opportunities for wildlife

What Happens Next?

A planning application has now been submitted to Downpatrick Area Office, ref: **S/2014/0913/F**. The application is currently awaiting validation. Once validated, it will be available to view online and will begin the 'public consultation phase'.

Keep in touch...

If you have any further questions about the schemes, please do not hesitate to contact us.

THE REVISED PROPOSAL:

Proposed solar farm at: 'Land at Maghaberry Former Airfield', Maghaberry.

Lightsource has worked closely with ecologists on a Biodiversity Management Plan which has now been submitted as part of the planning application. The plan will ensure that the land is managed responsibly throughout the life of the solar farm; enhancing botanical biodiversity, improving prospects for wildlife and minimising disturbance, and allowing for agricultural practices on-site:



Sheep Grazing
Grass will be sown throughout the site, including the areas oversailed by panels. The solar farm has been designed to accommodate the grazing of small livestock, such as chickens or sheep. This will enable the land to produce food as well as locally generated energy.

Increased Food Resources
Hedgerow species providing valuable food resources for wildlife, such as Blackthorn, will be managed to allow them to flower, set fruit and seed.

Vegetation Protected
All mature trees and hedgerows within and around the site will be protected during the installation phase and managed long-term as part of the project.



Seed-Rich Areas
Areas of species-rich grass and wild bird seed are proposed in the wide, panel-free field margins between the perimeter fencing and the site boundaries. These areas will be allowed to develop a tussocky structure to provide enriched habitats for ground nesting birds, invertebrates and small mammals.

Surviving 'strongpoints' from the former airfield are protected by exclusion zones.

HM Prison Maghaberry



Dog Rose

Improved Hedgerows
Sections of existing hedgerow will be in-filled with native species, including Hawthorn, Blackthorn, Hazel and Dog Rose, to enrich wildlife habitats and improve natural screening. Hedgerows will be allowed to grow taller and will be managed at a height of 3-3.5 metres.



Bat Boxes
6 bat roost boxes are proposed, mounted on poles and suitable mature trees along the southern and eastern boundaries.



Hazel



Log Piles
Log piles in the field margins will encourage insect communities and provide shelter and hunting grounds for small mammals, reptiles and amphibians.



Bird Boxes
10 bird boxes are proposed in vegetation around the site boundary.



Security Fencing
Fencing of about 2 metres in height will be used around the perimeter of the solar farm. The fence will sit inside the surrounding trees and hedgerows.

All new cabling will be buried underground so there will be no new overhead lines.

HOW MUCH ENERGY?

- ☀️ 25.7 Megawatts Peak (MWp)
- 🏠 6,440 households powered
- 🌿 10,988 tonnes of carbon emissions saved, every year
- 🚗 ...Equivalent to taking 2,441 large family cars off the road

The operation of the solar farm would be of no disturbance to farm animals, wildlife, walkers or motorists. No flood lighting is needed, there are no moving parts, and as the solar panels are designed specifically to absorb daylight, an anti-reflective surface ensures any reflection of light is dull and minimal.

