

CASE STUDY

SECURING PLANNING PERMISSION FOR A 4.3MW RENEWABLE ENERGY PROJECT

CLIENT: CENTRICA BUSINESS SOLUTIONS UK LTD.

LOCATION: MORPETH, NORTHUMBERLAND

HIGHLIGHTS:

- **Planning Consultancy**
- **Environmental Assessment**
- **Renewable Energy Development**

CONTEXT

Centrica Business Solutions UK Ltd. appointed Arthian to prepare and coordinate a planning application for a proposed 4.3MW solar farm and associated infrastructure on a 5.7-hectare site within the administrative boundary of Northumberland County Council.

The project formed part of Centrica's commitment to supporting renewable energy infrastructure and reducing carbon emissions through sustainable power generation. To support the planning application, Arthian assembled a multidisciplinary team providing planning, flood risk and drainage, noise, contaminated land, and glint and glare expertise, alongside specialist ecological, transport, landscape and heritage assessments.



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Arthian

The project required careful consideration of ecological constraints while ensuring that environmental requirements, planning policy obligations and stakeholder expectations were fully addressed.

Key challenges included:

- Addressing the presence of protected species identified during site surveys
- Managing ecological sensitivities associated with adjacent woodland habitats
- Coordinating multiple technical disciplines and specialist consultants
- Integrating environmental constraints into the evolving site design
- Delivering a comprehensive planning submission within programme timescales

THE CHALLENGE

Early ecological investigations identified the presence of great crested newts within the development site. As a protected species, their presence required additional targeted survey work to establish potential impacts and identify appropriate mitigation measures capable of supporting development while maintaining compliance with environmental legislation.

In parallel, consultation feedback highlighted the need for additional protection measures around adjacent woodland habitats. This required the project team to review the site layout and consider how ecological safeguards could be strengthened while maintaining the operational requirements of the proposed solar farm.

Successfully balancing renewable energy objectives with ecological protection became a key consideration throughout the planning process.

THE SOLUTION

Arthian coordinated and managed the full planning application process, acting as the central point of contact between the client, technical consultants and planning stakeholders.

The team delivered and coordinated a comprehensive suite of technical assessments, including:

- Planning Statement
- Noise Assessment
- Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy
- Glint and Glare Assessment
- Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
- Landscape Mitigation Plan
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal
- Biodiversity Net Gain Report
- Tree Survey Report
- Transport Assessment
- Construction Traffic Management Plan
- Cultural Heritage and Archaeology Assessment

To address ecological constraints associated with great crested newts, a local Great Crested Newt licence was secured, ensuring compliance with relevant legislation and ecological best practice. This approach enabled the development proposals to progress while safeguarding protected species and supporting a robust planning case.

The project team also incorporated an expanded woodland buffer into the development design in response to consultee feedback. This enhancement helped protect sensitive habitats, strengthen ecological connectivity and ensure alignment with planning guidance and environmental best practice.

Throughout the project, identified constraints were carefully assessed and integrated into the design process, ensuring that environmental considerations informed key project decisions from an early stage.

OUTCOME

Through effective project management and multidisciplinary coordination, Arthian successfully delivered a robust planning application for the proposed solar farm development.

The integrated approach ensured that ecological constraints, stakeholder feedback and technical requirements were fully addressed within the design and planning strategy, resulting in a strong planning submission supported by a comprehensive evidence base.

Planning permission for the Piramal Solar Farm was successfully secured in June 2024.



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