

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL27 April 2022Report by Director of EnvironmentGREENHAGS: PROPOSED LEASE FOR A SOLAR FARM**PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. The purpose of the report is to seek Council approval to enter into a 35 year lease with Engenera Renewables Group for land at Greenhags, Newton Mearns to allow the creation of a solar farm which will generate renewable electricity.

RECOMMENDATIONS

2. It is recommended that the Council:
- a) Approves the proposal to lease the land shown in appendix 1 to Engenera Renewables Group for a period of 35 years subject to the Group obtaining the necessary statutory consents; and
 - b) Delegates to the Director of Environment in consultation with the Chief Officer – Legal and Procurement to conclude the detailed terms of the lease including the annual rental.

BACKGROUND

3. The Council owns a considerable area of land in the Greenhags area which is situated directly north of the M77 and A77 roads, approximately 3.5 km south-west of Newton Mearns and 6 km west of Eaglesham.

4. A large part of the Council's land holding was a former landfill site which constrains potential development opportunities due to contamination issues. The main use over recent years has been for grazing lets which generate very little income. Alternative potential opportunities for this land have been under consideration and in view of this grazing lets have not been renewed over recent years.

REPORT

5. The Council has recently been in discussions with Engenera Renewables Group (a renewable energy solution provider) regarding the potential for them to lease part of the land and create a 35 MWp electricity generating solar farm on around 114 acres of the site.

6. This would involve the installation of approximately 65,600 solar panels each with a generating capacity of 535 Wp. The proposed method of mounting the panels would be a pile driven mounting structure with a pile depth of 1.8 m which should have no negative impact on the existing ground.

7. The solar farm would generate 100% renewable electricity (certified as such by REGO (Renewable Energy Guarantees of Origin) which would then be sold on by Engenera Renewables Group to the market.

8. The area of land the Engenera Renewables Group have requested to lease is attached (appendix 1). They have asked for a 35 year lease.

9. The Group have offered the Council an annual rental of somewhere in the region of £175,000-£250,000 dependent upon the rates they can secure for generated electricity sold on the market. The rental would be negotiated with the Director of Environment in due course. The rental would be index linked with RPI index each year.

10. The proposal would be subject to the Group obtaining any relevant statutory consents such as planning permission, grid connection and/or roads consents prior to any lease being entered into.

11. The proposed project is part of the company's complete regional re-generation and decarbonisation programme which is founded on community ethos. Engenera plan to use local contractors as well as re-train certain individuals and skilled tradesman to support the development and ongoing maintenance of the site.

FINANCE AND EFFICIENCY

12. The proposal could potentially generate additional annual income of between £175,000 and £250,000 which would be index linked (RPI) each year after year one.

CONSULTATION AND PARTNERSHIP WORKING

13. Consultation has been carried out with colleagues in Legal Services and Procurement.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROPOSAL AND CONCLUSION

14. A large part of the Council's land holdings at Greehags was previously a landfill site which has constrained any potential development due to contamination issues.

15. As a consequence the land has until recently been let for grazing which generates very little income.

16. This proposal offers an opportunity for the generation of REGO registered renewable energy (electricity) within the Council area and at the same time generates a substantial annual rental income for the Council.

17. The proposal also demonstrates an innovative approach by the Council towards decarbonisation and the better utilisation of what was effectively derelict land.

18. There are no new staffing, property, policy, IT, equalities or other implications at this point in time.

RECOMMENDATIONS

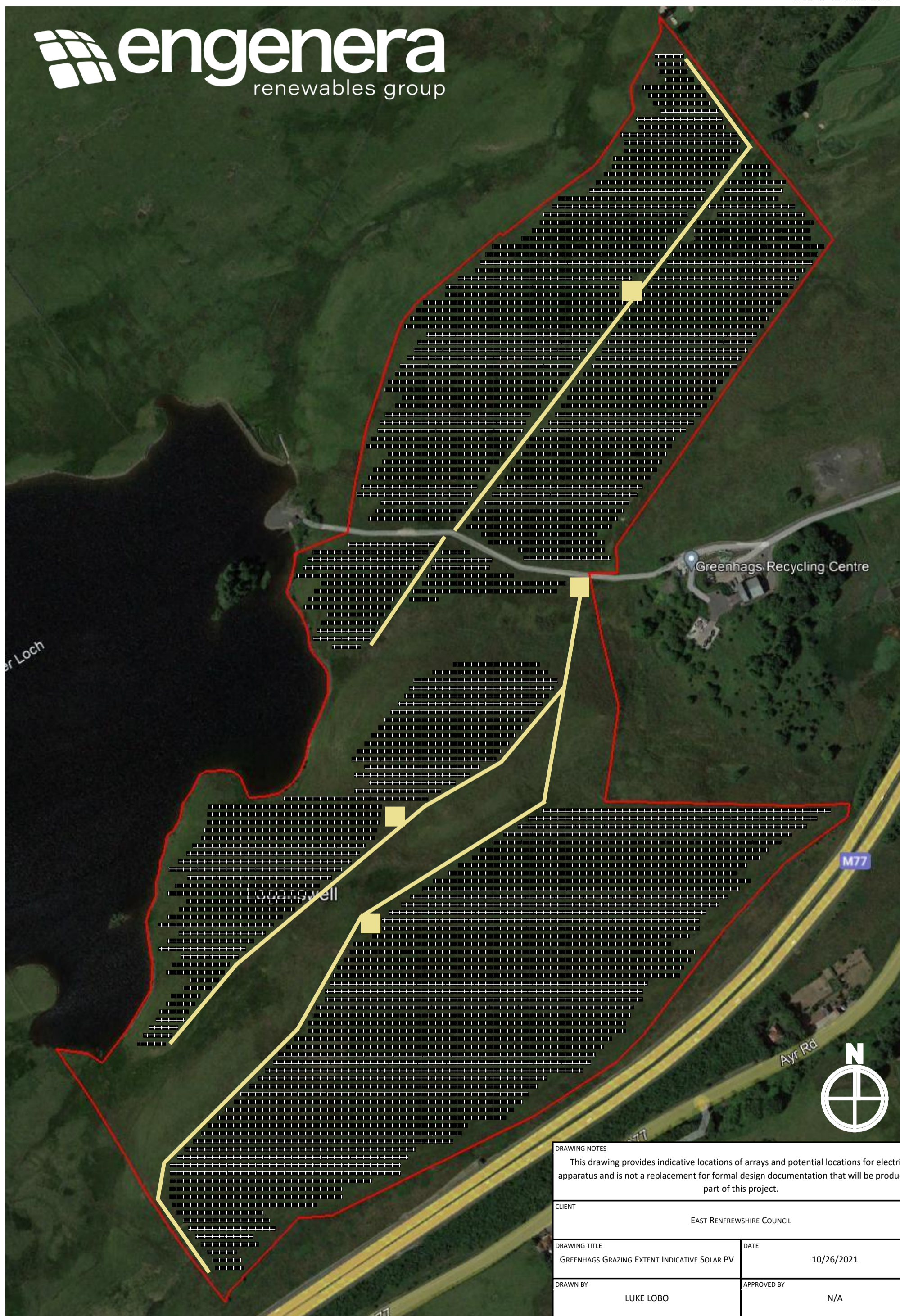
19. It is recommended that the Council:
- a) Approves the proposal to lease the land shown in appendix 1 to Engenera Renewables Group for a period of 35 years subject to the Group obtaining the necessary statutory consents; and
 - b) Delegates to the Director of Environment in consultation with the Chief Officer – Legal and Procurement to conclude the detailed terms of the lease including the annual rental.

Director of Environment

Further information can be obtained from - Andrew Cahill, Director of Environment – andrew.cahill@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk

April 2022

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DRAWING NOTES		
This drawing provides indicative locations of arrays and potential locations for electrical apparatus and is not a replacement for formal design documentation that will be produced as part of this project.		
CLIENT EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL		
DRAWING TITLE GREENHAGS GRAZING EXTENT INDICATIVE SOLAR PV	DATE 10/26/2021	
DRAWN BY LUKE LOBO	APPROVED BY N/A	
SCALE 1: 3500	SIZE @A3	PAGE 1 OF 1

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