Appendix 3K – Ashbourne Solar Farm Objectives & Policies Assessment

Contents

1.0 Overview

Appendix 3K includes an assessment of the proposed Ashbourne solar farm against relevant objectives and policies. Appendix 3K should be read in conjunction with Appendix 4K and Appendix 5N which include the assessment of the proposed retirement village and residential development and Greenway. Each appendix includes assessment that is specifically relevant to that part of the application. Across a number of themes and topics, assessment of the proposal against the relevant objectives and policies has considered the overall Ashbourne development as a whole, and in these instances the assessment has been duplicated across the three appendices.

2.0 National Policy Statements

2.1 National Policy Statement for Renewable Electricity Generation 2011

Provision	Response
Objective: To recognise the national significance of renewable electricity generation activities by providing for the development, operation, maintenance and upgrading of new and existing renewable electricity generation activities, such that the proportion of New Zealand's electricity generated from renewable energy sources increases to a level that meets or exceeds the New Zealand Government's national target for renewable electricity generation.	The proposal includes the construction and operation of a solar farm across two sites and will provide for a new source of renewable electricity generation. The proposal will contribute to increasing the proportion of New Zealand's electricity that is generated from renewable energy sources, and will directly give effect to the Objective of the NPS-REG.
A. Recognising the benefits of renewable electricity generation activities	
Policy A Decision-makers shall recognise and provide for the national significance of renewable electricity generation activities, including the national, regional and local benefits relevant to renewable electricity generation activities. These benefits include, but are not limited to: a) maintaining or increasing electricity generation capacity while avoiding, reducing or displacing greenhouse gas emissions; b) maintaining or increasing security of electricity supply at local, regional and national levels by diversifying the type and/or location of electricity generation; c) using renewable natural resources rather than finite resources; d) the reversibility of the adverse effects on the environment of some renewable electricity generation technologies; e) avoiding reliance on imported fuels for the purposes of generating electricity.	As discussed above, the proposal is to construct and operate a solar farm, which will establish a new source of renewable electricity generation that create regional and local benefits with respect to: • Increasing electricity generation capacity; • Avoiding and reducing greenhouse gas emissions; • Utilising a renewable natural resource for electricity generation; • As set out in the AEE and supporting technical reports, the proposal will avoid and mitigate its potential adverse effects on the environment; and • Avoiding reliance on imported fuels.
B. Acknowledging the practical implications of achieving New Zealand's target for electricity generation from renewable resources	

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Policy B Decision-makers shall have particular regard to the following matters: a) maintenance of the generation output of existing renewable electricity generation activities can require protection of the assets, operational capacity and continued availability of the renewable energy resource; and b) even minor reductions in the generation output of existing renewable electricity generation activities can cumulatively have significant adverse effects on national, regional and local renewable electricity generation output; and c) meeting or exceeding the New Zealand Government's national target for the generation of electricity from renewable resources will require the significant development of renewable electricity generation activities.	The following comments are noted with respect to Policy B: • The proposal will contribute to increasing electricity generation output by renewable sources; and • The proposal will contribute to increasing the proportion of New Zealand's electricity generated from renewable energy sources.
C. Acknowledging the practical constraints associated with the development, operation, maintenance and upgrading of new and existing renewable electricity generation activities	
Policy C1 Decision-makers shall have particular regard to the following matters: a) the need to locate the renewable electricity generation activity where the renewable energy resource is available; b) logistical or technical practicalities associated with developing, upgrading, operating or maintaining the renewable electricity generation activity; c) the location of existing structures and infrastructure including, but not limited to, roads, navigation and telecommunication structures and facilities, the distribution network and the national grid in relation to the renewable electricity generation activity, and the need to connect renewable electricity generation activity to the national grid; d) designing measures which allow operational requirements to complement and provide for mitigation opportunities; and e) adaptive management measures.	The following comments are noted with respect to Policy C1: • The solar farm sites are suitable for the proposed activity given it is a large expansive piece of land and relatively flat in topography; and • The proposal provides for the grazing of livestock below the new solar panels, which will mitigate potential adverse effects on existing soils and rural character and amenity, while also reducing the potential for reverse sensitivity effects between other rural production activities within the surrounding rural environment; and • Upon maturity, all buffer planting proposed within the sites will be viewed as a shelterbelt which will be in keeping with the surrounding rural context.

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Policy C2 When considering any residual environmental effects of renewable electricity generation activities that cannot be avoided, remedied or mitigated, decision-makers shall have regard to offsetting measures or environmental compensation including measures or compensation which benefit the local environment and community affected.	N/A - as detailed in the AEE, the proposal's potential effects with respect to visual landscape and amenity, ecology, traffic, construction, noise and vibration, infrastructure servicing, and stormwater can be avoided or mitigated to be less than minor. On this basis, the proposal will not result in significant adverse effects or create any residual environmental effects that are required to be offset or compensated.
D. Managing reverse sensitivity effects on renewable electricity generation activities	
Policy D Decision-makers shall, to the extent reasonably possible, manage activities to avoid reverse sensitivity effects on consented and on existing renewable electricity generation activities.	While the proposal is not for a sensitive activity that could constrain other renewable electricity generation activities, the proposed solar farms will minimise the potential for reverse sensitivity effects from other sensitive activities by creating physical and visual separation with adjacent residential activities through the proposed site layout and landscaping strategy.

2.2 National Policy Statement on Freshwater Management 2020

Provision	Response
Objective: The objective of this National Policy Statement is to ensure that natural and physical resources are managed in a way that prioritises: (a) first, the health and well-being of water bodies and freshwater ecosystems (b) second, the health needs of people (such as drinking water) (c) third, the ability of people and communities to provide for their social, economic, and cultural well-being, now and in the future.	The Ashbourne Development prioritises the health and well-being of freshwater ecosystems by restoring and enhancing the Waitoa River corridor, incorporating indigenous planting, naturalised stormwater treatment, and protecting remnant wetland features. These measures support improved water quality, habitat connectivity, and ecosystem resilience. The development also protects human health needs by avoiding contamination of freshwater sources, managing stormwater discharge effectively, and ensuring safe separation from sensitive receiving environments. Specifically, the solar farm component of the project contributes to long-term social, economic, and cultural well-being by supporting renewable energy generation in a low-impact manner. The location of the solar farm avoids adverse effects on water bodies, and where located near waterways, the layout includes

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	setbacks and planting that protect water quality. This integration of renewable energy helps future-proof community resilience in alignment with broader climate and sustainability goals.
Policy 1: Freshwater is managed in a way that gives effect to Te Mana o te Wai.	Te Mana o te Wai is a concept that refers to the fundamental importance of water and recognises that protecting the health of freshwater bodies protects the health and well-being of the wider environment. The Ashbourne development, including the solar farm proposal has been designed and planned to embody the principles of Te Mana o te Wai through integrated land and water management, ecological restoration, and cultural engagement. The proposal includes substantial riparian restoration and wetland enhancement along the Waitoa River and associated tributaries, improving water quality, ecosystem health, and hydrological function. These efforts restore the mauri of the waterway and reflect the principles of kaitiakitanga, as informed by engagement with tangata whenua. The development applies a water-sensitive urban design approach, including natural stormwater filtration systems, minimising impervious surfaces, and avoiding direct discharges to freshwater. This protects both ecosystem and human health, aligning with the hierarchy of obligations under Te Mana o te Wai. The solar farm component is strategically located to avoid adverse effects on water bodies. Where it is near freshwater features, it includes setbacks, vegetated buffers, and minimal ground disturbance, ensuring freshwater values are not compromised. Additionally, by supporting local renewable energy generation, the solar farm contributes to the long-term resilience and well-being of communities, consistent with the integrated, holistic intent of Te Mana o te Wai. Overall, this project supports Objective 1 through prioritising freshwater through the careful and considered engineering and design of the residential area. This is supported by the Assessment of Ecological Effects, included at **Appendix 1I**.
Policy 2: Tangata whenua are actively involved in freshwater management (including decision making processes), and Māori freshwater values are identified and provided for.	Tangata whenua have been involved and consulted to this point of the project, which will continue to occur. The project has incorporated cultural values, using tangata whenua expertise to integrate their values and cultural heritage to the

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	design aspects related to stormwater and waterbody protection. This is supported by the Cultural Impact Assessment, included as **Appendix 1H**.
Policy 3: Freshwater is managed in an integrated way that considers the effects of the use and development of land on a whole-of-catchment basis, including the effects on receiving environments.	The Ashbourne development applies an integrated, whole-of-catchment approach to land use, stormwater, and ecological design. Located within the Waitoa River sub-catchment, which connects to the Waikato River, the proposal recognises its role in upstream water quality and ecosystem health. Land use is proposed to be concentrated in a compact, staged urban approach, avoiding dispersed development that could fragment catchment hydrology or overwhelm infrastructure. Stormwater is managed through naturalised systems, including detention basins, and vegetated swales that filter and slow runoff before it reaches freshwater receiving environments. The development avoids direct discharges into the Waitoa River, and riparian margins are restored to improve and enhance ecological function and reduce sediment and nutrient loading which can support tangible improvements to downstream environments. The solar farm component is designed with minimal earthworks, limited impermeable surfaces, and setbacks from sensitive areas. Where located near natural water bodies, it incorporates vegetated buffers and low-impact land management practices, ensuring that it contributes positively to water quality and catchment outcomes. Overall, the project ensures that the effects of the development on the whole-of-catchment basis are responded to. This is supported by the Infrastructure Report, included at **Appendix 3F**.
Policy 4: Freshwater is managed as part of New Zealand's integrated response to climate change.	The Ashbourne Development integrates freshwater management into a broader climate-resilient and low-emissions development strategy. Stormwater systems are designed to respond to increased rainfall intensity and flood risks associated with climate change by incorporating green infrastructure through the greenway and other measures such as swales, and detention basins that help support a reduction in pressure on freshwater receiving environments. Flood-prone areas adjacent to the Waitoa River are retained as undeveloped green space, enhancing floodplain function and climate resilience. These systems reduce reliance on hard infrastructure and contribute to long-term infrastructure resilience by lowering future upgrade and maintenance demands.

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	The solar farm component of the proposal directly contributes to New Zealand's climate change mitigation goals by enabling local, renewable energy generation and reducing reliance on fossil fuels. The solar farms are sited and designed to avoid adverse effects on freshwater and includes low-impact construction methods and vegetated buffers to manage runoff and support catchment stability.
Policy 5: Freshwater is managed (including through a National Objectives Framework) to ensure that the health and well-being of degraded water bodies and freshwater ecosystems is improved, and the health and well-being of all other water bodies and freshwater ecosystems is maintained and (if communities choose) improved.	The Ashbourne developed actively contributes to the improvement of degraded freshwater bodies and the maintenance of broader water quality within the Waitoa River sub-catchment through targeted interventions. The development replaces modified rural land with a greenway system designed to treat stormwater before it reaches the Waitoa River—currently considered to be in a degraded state due to surrounding land use. This system enhances water quality through sediment filtration, nutrient uptake, and flow moderation. Stormwater is managed using low-impact, treatment-focused design, including swales and detention areas that filter contaminants and slow runoff, helping to improve water quality in the catchment. These measures contribute to enhancing the health and well-being of degraded water bodies, in line with the NPS-FM's National Objectives Framework. Additionally, riparian enhancement and native replanting will also help stabilise stream banks, reduce thermal loading, and restore ecological functions. For water bodies in a healthier state, such as minor headwater tributaries within the site, the proposal seeks to maintain the well-being and overall health maintains through the use of setbacks and non-intrusive land uses. The solar farm component is designed to have a minimal hydrological footprint, avoiding discharge to or modification of waterways. It includes vegetated buffers and low-disturbance construction methods, ensuring that the health of adjacent freshwater systems is maintained or enhanced. Collectively, these measures ensure degraded systems are improved and other water bodies are safeguarded, consistent with the intent of Policy 5.
Policy 6: There is no further loss of extent of natural inland wetlands, their values are protected, and their restoration is promoted.	N/A – as the Ecological Assessment (refer to **Appendix 1I**) confirms, there are six natural wetlands within the wider Ashbourne site context. However, none of the

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	natural inland wetlands are located within the solar farm sites and as such there will be no less of natural inland wetland extent.
Policy 7: The loss of river extent and values is avoided to the extent practicable.	The Ashbourne development avoids the loss of river extent and actively works to protect and enhance the values of river systems within the site. The development is situated adjacent to the Waitoa River and includes several minor tributaries and ephemeral flow paths, all of which are being retained and incorporated into a greenway network. These features are protected through setbacks, indigenous riparian planting, and exclusion of built development from their margins. No culverting, piping, or reclamation of waterways is proposed, and natural hydrological patterns are preserved, thereby avoiding loss of river extent. In areas where historic land use has degraded river values, the project promotes ecological and hydrological restoration, including bank stabilisation, water quality improvements, and habitat enhancement. The solar farm component is located outside of waterway corridors and avoids direct modification or encroachment on any river or stream features. Its design includes vegetated buffers and erosion control measures, ensuring that river values are maintained or improved.
Policy 8: The significant values of outstanding water bodies are protected.	The Ashbourne Development, including the proposed solar farm, is consistent with Policies 8 and 9 of the NPS-FM through its protection and enhancement of freshwater habitats and avoidance of adverse effects on any outstanding water bodies or their significant values. While no officially classified "outstanding water bodies" are located within the solar farm sites, the development sits within the Waitoa River catchment, which connects downstream to the Waikato River—a water body of national significance. The proposal incorporates a restorative approach to riparian margins and wetland remnants within the site, delivering water quality improvements and biodiversity benefits that help support the values of the wider freshwater system. The development protects and enhances the habitats of indigenous freshwater species through targeted ecological restoration, including indigenous planting and the retention of small waterways and wetland features. Stormwater is

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	managed using design solutions that improve runoff quality and protect freshwater environments. The Ecological Assessment (refer to **Appendix 1I**), confirmed the presence of habitat features suitable for indigenous species, and the proposal responds appropriately with measures to maintain and improve habitat connectivity and function. Specifically, the solar farm component avoids any direct interaction with freshwater bodies or their habitats. Its design includes buffer zones, erosion control, and vegetated edges, ensuring that nearby water bodies and ecological corridors remain undisturbed and protected. Long-term ecological monitoring will be implemented to assess the success of these habitats in supporting native species re-establishment. The protection and restoration of freshwater environments is summarised in the Assessment of Ecological Effects, included as **Appendix 1I**. Collectively these measures ensure that significant values of connected freshwater systems are upheld and indigenous freshwater habitats are maintained and enhanced, meeting the intent and requirements of both Policies 8 and 9 of the NPS-FM.
Policy 9: The habitats of indigenous freshwater species are protected.	As above.
Policy 11: Freshwater is allocated and used efficiently, all existing over-allocation is phased out, and future over-allocation is avoided.	N/A – the proposal does not involve any new water takes.
Policy 12: The national target (as set out in Appendix 3) for water quality improvement is achieved.	The national target is to increase proportions of specified rivers and lakes that are suitable for primary contact (that is, that are in the blue, green and yellow categories) to at least 80% by 2030, and 90% no later than 2040, but also to improve water quality across all categories. The majority of stormwater runoff from the solar farm will clean water runoff due to the nature of the solar panels, and runoff from new access roads will be appropriately treated through proposed swales. This will ensure that the proposed solar farm contributes to improving water quality outcomes.

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Policy 13: The condition of water bodies and freshwater ecosystems is systematically monitored over time, and action is taken where freshwater is degraded, and to reverse deteriorating trends.	It is considered that by responding to existing freshwater degradation within the Waitoa River catchment and embedding actions to improve overall water quality and ecological condition the proposal is consistent with Policy 13. The site's existing water bodies, including degraded tributaries and modified wetland features, have been assessed through comprehensive ecological and hydrological investigations (refer to **Appendix 1I and 1N**), which informed the design and management of the development. As outlined in the Assessment of Ecological Effects, included as **Appendix 1I** ongoing monitoring will take place to ensure the condition of water bodies and freshwater ecosystems is not degraded. A draft Ecological Management Plan is appended to the Assessment of Ecological Effects, included at **Appendix 1J**. The solar farm component has negligible freshwater impact and incorporates buffer planting and erosion control to ensure no deterioration of water bodies occurs.
Policy 15: Communities are enabled to provide for their social, economic, and cultural wellbeing in a way that is consistent with this National Policy Statement.	The Ashbourne development enables the Matamata community to grow in a way that supports social, economic, and cultural wellbeing, while remaining fully consistent with the environmental outcomes of the NPS-FM. The proposal delivers on housing and retirement living outcomes, integrated open spaces, and community-focused design. It supports economic wellbeing by creating local employment opportunities during construction and through the inclusion of a small neighbourhood commercial centre, while also promoting long-term sustainability through the development of a solar farm, contributing to regional renewable energy supply. This is further supported by the Economic Assessment included at **Appendix 1K.** Cultural wellbeing is reflected through active engagement with tangata whenua, who have been involved from the early stages of the development of this proposal. Discussions with tangata whenua have ensured the incorporation of mātauranga Māori in landscape design and water management. All components of the development including stormwater systems, riparian restoration, and infrastructure design are aligned with the NPS-FM's hierarchy of obligations under Te Mana o te Wai, ensuring freshwater health is prioritised.

2.3 National Policy Statement on Urban Development 2020

Provision	Response
Objective 1: New Zealand has well-functioning urban environments that enable all people and communities to provide for their social, economic, and cultural wellbeing, and for their health and safety, now and into the future.	The Ashbourne Development supports the delivery of a well-functioning, masterplanned urban environment that supports the social, economic, cultural, and environmental wellbeing of the Matamata community. The proposal includes a diverse mix of housing, a retirement precinct, a neighbourhood commercial centre, and an integrated open space network, providing for a range of community needs, lifestyles, and ages. The layout promotes walkability, safety, and connectivity, with active transport links, safe street design, and access to parks and natural features. The development is infrastructure-ready, with staging aligned to water, wastewater, stormwater, and transport networks, ensuring it is both efficient and resilient. Ecological and cultural values are respected through restoration of the Waitoa River margins, protection of wetland features, and ongoing engagement with mana whenua, incorporating mātauranga Māori and kaitiakitanga principles into the design. Importantly, the inclusion of the solar farms supports climate resilient outcomes within the urban environment, contributing to renewable energy generation and reducing the community's carbon footprint. Together, these elements create a healthy, inclusive, and future-focused urban environment, fully aligned with the outcomes sought under Objective 1 of the NPS-UD.
Objective 2: Planning decisions improve housing affordability by supporting competitive land and development markets.	The wider Ashbourne Development will deliver a large-scale residential development that significantly increases housing supply and diversifies housing typologies in Matamata. The development includes approximately 1,000 new dwellings, offering a mix of standalone homes, medium-density housing, and a retirement precinct, broadening market options and helping to meet demand across different price points and life stages. By bringing a substantial, well-serviced land parcel to market in a staged and coordinated way, the proposal increases land availability in a location where

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	housing demand is rising, as identified in the Waikato Housing and Business Capacity Assessment. This contributes to a more competitive development market, helping to moderate price pressures and reduce housing supply constraints over time. While the solar farm component does not directly contribute to housing supply, it supports long-term affordability and resilience by promoting clean, locally generated energy which is an important factor in reducing household operational costs and future-proofing infrastructure delivery.
Objective 4: New Zealand's urban environments, including their amenity values, develop and change over time in response to the diverse and changing needs of people, communities, and future generations.	The Ashbourne development assists with delivering a future-focused, adaptable urban environment that responds to the evolving needs of Matamata's community. The development offers a diverse mix of housing types, a retirement precinct, commercial amenities, and extensive open space, enabling a range of lifestyles and age groups to be accommodated. It reflects a shift toward more compact, walkable, and sustainable communities, while still respecting the local character and identity. The project also recognises that amenity values change over time, and it supports this by integrating green infrastructure, active transport networks, and high-quality urban design that enhances long-term liveability. The inclusion of a solar farm reflects broader generational shifts toward climate-conscious development and supports regional goals for renewable energy and resilience.
Objective 5: Planning decisions relating to urban environments, and FDSs, take into account the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi (Te Tiriti o Waitangi).	The Ashbourne development has actively incorporated the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi through early, ongoing, and meaningful engagement with tangata whenua. This engagement has informed key aspects of the project, including the protection and restoration of freshwater ecosystems, the recognition of cultural values, and the integration of mātauranga Māori and kaitiakitanga into land and water management. The project enables tangata whenua to exercise their role as kaitiaki, particularly through the enhancement of the Waitoa River corridor, retention of remnant wetland features, and the application of cultural monitoring and protocols during development. These actions support a partnership-based approach and reflect

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	Treaty principles of participation, protection, and partnership in urban development decision-making. The inclusion of the solar farm component further aligns with mana whenua aspirations around environmental sustainability and intergenerational wellbeing, supporting the transition to a low-emissions future in a way that is consistent with iwi values and long-term planning goals.
Objective 8: New Zealand's urban environments: (a) support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions; and (b) are resilient to the current and future effects of climate change.	The Ashbourne development supports both emissions reduction and climate resilience through its land use, design, and infrastructure approach. The proposal promotes a compact, walkable urban form, reducing reliance on private vehicles and enabling active and public transport modes. Mixed housing typologies, a neighbourhood centre, and integrated open space encourage low-carbon living by bringing daily needs closer to residents. A key contributor to emissions reduction is the inclusion of solar farms, which supports the transition to renewable energy generation at a local scale. This enhances energy resilience and aligns with national and regional decarbonisation goals, helping to reduce the carbon footprint of both the development and the surrounding community. The project is also designed to be resilient to the effects of climate change, incorporating low-impact stormwater management, strategic floodplain protection, and green infrastructure that mitigates urban heat and manages more intense rainfall events. Development is carefully set back from flood-prone areas, preserving natural hydrology and enhancing ecological function.
Policy 1: Planning decisions contribute to well-functioning urban environments, which are urban environments that, as a minimum: (a) have or enable a variety of homes that: i. meet the needs, in terms of type, price, and location, of different households; and ii. enable Māori to express their cultural traditions and norms; and (b) have or enable a variety of sites that are suitable for different business sectors in terms of location and site size; and	Policy 1 is linked to and reinforces the direction set in Objective 1 of the NPS-UD – refer to response above. The project is consistent and delivers on the concept of a well-functioning urban environment in the following ways: • It provides a diverse mix of housing typologies, including standalone homes, medium-density housing, and a retirement precinct which collectively have been designed to meet the needs of different households in terms of type, price, and location. Engagement with tangata whenua has informed the urban design, ensuring it enables Māori to express cultural traditions and

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(c) have good accessibility for all people between housing, jobs, community services, natural spaces, and open spaces, including by way of public or active transport; and (d) support, and limit as much as possible adverse impacts on, the competitive operation of land and development markets; and (e) support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions; and are resilient to the likely current and future effects of climate change.	norms, particularly through green space connections, planting, and restoration of waterways. • The inclusion of a small neighbourhood commercial centre provides for a variety of business opportunities, offering appropriately sized and located sites to support small-scale retail and services that serve the local population without detracting from Matamata's town centre. • The development has been designed to be highly accessible, with integrated street networks, cycling and walking paths, and connections to nearby community services and natural open spaces. This design supports active transport and contributes to a more inclusive and connected community. • By bringing a large, serviced area of development-ready land to the market in a strategically planned location, Ashbourne increases land supply and market competition, contributing to improved housing affordability and choice. • The proposal supports the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions through compact land use, reduced private vehicle dependence, and critically, the inclusion of the solar farms, which enables renewable energy generation and supports broader decarbonisation goals. • The development is climate-resilient, with infrastructure designed to manage weather events through protection of flood-prone areas via green corridors, and restoration of riparian areas to improve ecological function and stormwater performance. Together, the above demonstrate that the broader Ashbourne development is fully aligned with the definition of a well-functioning urban environment, as required by Policy 1 of the NPS-UD.
Policy 2: Tier 1, 2, and 3 local authorities, at all times, provide at least sufficient development capacity to meet expected demand for housing and for business land over the short term, medium term, and long term.	The Ashbourne development contributes significant, feasible, and serviced development capacity to meet both housing and business land demand in Matamata. The proposal delivers approximately 1,000 new dwellings, with a mix of typologies that respond to market demand identified in the Waikato Housing and Business Development Capacity Assessment (HBA) and the Future Proof

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	Strategy. The site is located immediately adjacent to existing urban zones and is partially within the Eldonwood South Structure Plan area, aligning with Matamata-Piako District's planned growth areas. In addition to housing, the development includes a neighbourhood commercial node, providing for small-scale business and service activities that meet local needs without undermining the town centre. This ensures that land for business use is also accounted for in a way that supports a self-sustaining, well-serviced community. The solar farm component supports long-term growth by improving the resilience and sustainability of infrastructure and energy supply, helping to reduce servicing costs and supporting future urban development in a climate-aligned manner.
Policy 6: When making planning decisions that affect urban environments, decision-makers have particular regard to the following matters: (a) the planned urban built form anticipated by those RMA planning documents that have given effect to this National Policy Statement (b) that the planned urban built form in those RMA planning documents may involve significant changes to an area, and those changes: i. may detract from amenity values appreciated by some people but improve amenity values appreciated by other people, communities, and future generations, including by providing increased and varied housing densities and types; and ii. are not, of themselves, an adverse effect (c) the benefits of urban development that are consistent with well-functioning urban environments (as described in Policy 1) (d) any relevant contribution that will be made to meeting the requirements of this National Policy Statement to provide or realise development capacity the likely current and future effects of climate change.	The Ashbourne development reflects and supports the planned urban built form for Matamata set out in the Eldonwood South Structure Plan and broader strategic growth documents, including the Future Proof Strategy. The proposal includes increased housing density and diversity, with a mix of typologies that respond to changing community needs and intergenerational preferences. While this change may alter existing amenity values for some, it enhances liveability and housing choice for others, consistent with clause (a) of the policy. The development provides clear benefits aligned with a well-functioning urban environment (Policy 1), including walkable design, access to open space, local services, and transport connectivity. It also makes a substantial contribution to development capacity, with approximately 1,000 new dwellings and commercial land in a location that is infrastructure-ready and consistent with long-term urban growth directions (clause c). Critically, the project addresses the current and future effects of climate change (clause d) through low-impact stormwater design, floodplain protection, and the inclusion of a solar farm, which directly contributes to renewable energy generation, emissions reduction, and energy resilience.

2.4 National Policy Statement on Highly Productive Land 2022

Provision	Response
Objective: Highly productive land is protected for use in land-based primary production, both now and for future generations.	Although the proposed solar farm is not a land-based primary production activity, the proposal will provide for the grazing of livestock below the solar panels. This is considered to be in keeping with the intent of the NPS-HPL with respect to maintaining the productive capacity of land.
Policy 1: Highly productive land is recognised as a resource with finite characteristics and long term values for land-based primary production.	As outlined above.
Policy 2: The identification and management of highly productive land is undertaken in an integrated way that considers the interactions with freshwater management and urban development.	The Ashbourne Development has been informed by a detailed Land Use Capability Classification Assessment (**Appendix 1L**).
Policy 4: The use of highly productive land for land-based primary production is prioritised and supported.	The use of the solar farm sites will support the grazing of livestock which is considered to be in keeping with the intent of this Policy.
Policy 5: The urban rezoning of highly productive land is avoided, except as provided in this National Policy Statement.	The proposal does not include rezoning or the development of the sites for an urban activity.
Policy 6: The rezoning and development of highly productive land as rural lifestyle is avoided, except as provided in this National Policy Statement.	The proposal does not include rezoning or the development of the sites for rural lifestyle living.
Policy 7: The subdivision of highly productive land is avoided, except as provided in this National Policy Statement.	The proposal does not include any subdivision to the existing land titles.
Policy 8: Highly productive land is protected from inappropriate use and development.	The proposed solar farm is considered to be an appropriate use and development of the land for the following reasons: • The solar farm activity proposed meets the definition of 'specified infrastructure' in the NPS-HPL and therefore is consistent with Clause 3.9(2)(j)(i) of the NPS-HPL; • The proposed activity will provide for the grazing of livestock within both sites, which will maintain the productive capacity of the existing live stock resource and is considered to be an appropriate use of highly productive land; and

	• The activity is provided for in the Rural zone under the Matamata Piako District Plan.
Policy 9: Reverse sensitivity effects are managed so as not to constrain land-based primary production activities on highly productive land.	The proposed solar farm is not considered to be a sensitive activity that could constrain other land-based primary productive activities, and the use of the land for livestock grazing is considered to be in keeping with the activities that are anticipated within the surrounding rural context.

2.5 National Policy Statement on Indigenous Biodiversity 2023

Provision	Response
Objective The objective of this National Policy Statement is: (a) to maintain indigenous biodiversity across Aotearoa New Zealand so that there is at least no overall loss in indigenous biodiversity after the commencement date; and (b) to achieve this: i. through recognising the mana of tangata whenua as kaitiaki of indigenous biodiversity; and ii. by recognising people and communities, including landowners, as stewards of indigenous biodiversity; and iii. by protecting and restoring indigenous biodiversity as necessary to achieve the overall maintenance of indigenous biodiversity; and iv. while providing for the social, economic, and cultural wellbeing of people and communities now and in the future.	Overall, it is considered that the proposal will give effect to the Objective for the following reasons: • The Ecological Assessment concludes that the solar farm areas are of low to negligible ecological value in terms of vegetation, bird habitat, and freshwater features; The Ashbourne development has recognised the mana of tangata whenua as kaitiaki, including of indigenous biodiversity, as further set out in the Consultation Report at **Appendix 1D** and the Cultural Impact Assessment at **Appendix 1H**; • The proposed landscaping strategy for the sites will achieve a net gain in ecological values through enhancement measures proposed, contributing to restoring indigenous biodiversity; • The solar farm avoids significant indigenous bird habitat and includes mitigation such as native planting and pest control, supporting the maintenance and potential enhancement of indigenous bird biodiversity; • Potential impacts on copper skinks are addressed through a Lizard Management Plan, including salvage, habitat creation, and long-term monitoring, ensuring no net loss and contributing to restoration. • The effects on long-tailed bats are acknowledged and managed through a Bat Management Plan, including Department of Conservation protocols and lighting design to avoid disruption; and

	• In addition to improvements to indigenous biodiversity, the proposed solar farm will provide for the social, economic, and cultural wellbeing of people and communities by providing a renewable source of energy that will benefit both present and future generations.
Policy 1: Indigenous biodiversity is managed in a way that gives effect to the decision making principles and takes into account the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi.	Extensive consultation with Tangata Whenua has been undertaken as part of the Ashbourne Development, as further detailed in the Consultation Report at **Appendix 1D**. A Cultural Impact Assessment and Letters of support have been provided by Ngāti Hauā, Raukawa, and Ngāti Hinerangi. Overall, it is considered that the proposal gives effect to Treaty principles by partnering with tangata whenua and providing genuine, practical opportunities for iwi and hapū to exercise kaitiakitanga over indigenous biodiversity within and around the development site. This supports both environmental outcomes and cultural wellbeing.
Policy 2: Tangata whenua exercise kaitiakitanga for indigenous biodiversity in their rohe, including through: (a) managing indigenous biodiversity on their land; and (b) identifying and protecting indigenous species, populations and ecosystems that are taonga; and (c) actively participating in other decision-making about indigenous biodiversity.	The project aligns with Policies 1 and 2 of the NPS-IB through the early and ongoing engagement with tangata whenua that has been undertaken and the delivery of a masterplan and associated management plans that actively provides for their role as kaitiaki. Tangata whenua have been engaged through the planning stages of the project, consistent with the principles of partnership, participation, and protection under Te Tiriti o Waitangi. The project team recognises iwi and hapū as Treaty partners and continues to provide opportunities for input into ecological restoration, landscape design, and the expression of cultural values through place-making and naming. With respect to the solar farm sites, future opportunities for tangata whenua to participate in ongoing management and monitoring of biodiversity outcomes (e.g., through planting days, cultural education signage, or co-governance models) are being explored.
Policy 3: A precautionary approach is adopted when considering adverse effects on indigenous biodiversity.	The proposal is considered to be in keeping with this policy as all vegetation and ecological values on the site have been identified and assessed through the Assessment of Ecological Effects included at **Appendix 1I**, which is consistent with adopting a precautionary approach with respect to considering adverse effects of the proposal on indigenous biodiversity.

	Furthermore, the following comments are made in relation to the identification and management of uncertain or potential effects: • Long-tailed bats were detected. Despite limited survey timing, the project assumes potential roosting and commuting use and applies full Department of Conservation Bat Roost Protocols and lighting mitigation. • Although no lizards were found, the presence of copper skinks is assumed. A Lizard Management Plan is in place, including salvage, relocation, and habitat enhancement. • While no threatened species were recorded, the project assumes potential nesting and applies seasonal clearance restrictions and nest checks. Overall, the Ashbourne solar farm proposal applies a precautionary approach by assuming presence and vulnerability of indigenous species, implementing robust management plans and mitigation measures and avoiding high-risk areas and enhancing ecological values.
Policy 4: Indigenous biodiversity is managed to promote resilience to the effects of climate change.	N/A. The integration of biodiversity enhancement into climate adaptation strategies across the wider Ashbourne Development is further assessed at **Appendix 4K and 5N**.
Policy 7: SNAs are protected by avoiding or managing adverse effects from new subdivision, use and development.	N/A – the Ecological Assessment (refer to **Appendix 1I**) confirms there are no SNAs within the solar farm sites.

Policy 8: The importance of maintaining indigenous biodiversity outside SNAs is recognised and provided for.	Although the Ashbourne site, and specifically the proposed solar farm sites do not contain any identified SNAs, the Ecological Assessment (refer to **Appendix 1I**) demonstrates that the project recognises and provides for the importance of indigenous biodiversity across the wider landscape. This includes:
	• Recognition of biodiversity values outside SNAs
	  o Identification of long tailed bats using the site for commuting and foraging
	  o Identification of copper skinks likely present in low numbers
	  o Identification of native birds such as pūkeko, silvereye, and welcome swallow, which are common but still part of the indigenous avifauna
	• The provision of specific management plans for species and habitats outside SNAs including for bats, lizards and birds.

	• Habitat enhancement is proposed through native planting, pest control, and creation of refugia, contributing to long term biodiversity gains. • The avoidance of high-value habitats such as wetlands and riparian zones through the solar farm sitings. • Minimisation of earthworks, and retention of pasture under the solar panels, reducing habitat disturbance. Based on the above, it is considered that the wider project gives practical effect to Policy 8 by actively maintaining and enhancing indigenous biodiversity outside of identified SNAs. The proposed solar farm sites have been historically used for intensive farming and lacks significant remaining indigenous vegetation. Despite this, the proposal adopts a proactive approach by re-establishing indigenous biodiversity in degraded areas in order to deliver ecological and habitat enhancements.
Policy 10: Activities that contribute to New Zealand's social, economic, cultural, and environmental wellbeing are recognised and provided for as set out in this National Policy Statement.	The development of the solar farm and a renewable energy source within site will contribute to New Zealand's social, economic, cultural, and environmental wellbeing, and is considered to be in keeping with this Policy.
Policy 13: Restoration of indigenous biodiversity is promoted and provided for.	The proposed solar farms at Ashbourne promotes and provides for the restoration of indigenous biodiversity. The project incorporates a range of restoration-focused initiatives that enhance ecological values across the landscape. These include extensive native planting along the solar farm boundaries and within the wider development, which will increase indigenous vegetation cover and improve habitat connectivity. The project also includes the restoration and enhancement of degraded wetland areas, particularly oxbow and pasture wetlands adjacent to the Waitoa River, with plans to expand their extent and improve their ecological integrity through planting and pest control. In addition, species-specific restoration measures are embedded in the design, such as the creation of refugia for copper skinks and the implementation of bat-sensitive lighting to support long-tailed bat activity. These actions are supported by a comprehensive Ecological Management Plan (refer to Appendix 1J) that ensures long-term maintenance and monitoring. Collectively, these measures reflect a proactive and integrated approach to restoring indigenous biodiversity, consistent with the intent of Policy 13.

Policy 14: Increased indigenous vegetation cover is promoted in both urban and nonurban environments.	As above.
Policy 15: Areas outside SNAs that support specified highly mobile fauna are identified and managed to maintain their populations across their natural range, and information and awareness of highly mobile fauna is improved.	As identified above, a proactive and precautionary approach has been taken to identify and support areas that may provide habitat or movement corridors for highly mobile indigenous fauna outside of SNAs. The Ecological Assessment prepared (refer to Appendix 1I) has considered the potential for the area to support highly mobile fauna commonly found in peri-urban and riparian environments. Specifically, the Ecological Assessment confirms the presence of long-tailed bats, a nationally critical and highly mobile species, using the site for commuting and foraging. Their activity was recorded across multiple locations, particularly along the Waitoa River corridor, which is likely to serve as a movement pathway through the landscape. In response, the proposal includes a comprehensive Bat Management Plan that incorporates Department of Conservation protocols for identifying and protecting potential roost trees, as well as measures to mitigate the effects of artificial lighting through bat-sensitive design standards. These actions directly support the maintenance of bat populations across their natural range. Furthermore, the Ecological Assessment contributes to improved awareness of long-tailed bats by documenting their presence and ecological context, and by integrating species-specific management into the project design. While lizards such as copper skinks are not typically classified as highly mobile fauna under the NPSIB, the project nonetheless includes a Lizard Management Plan to ensure their protection and habitat enhancement. Similarly, although most bird species recorded on site are not considered highly mobile in the context of the NPSIB, the proposal includes measures to avoid harm during nesting seasons and enhance habitat through native planting. Through these targeted measures, the solar farm proposal demonstrates a proactive and informed approach to managing habitat for highly mobile indigenous fauna outside SNAs, in alignment with Policy 15.

3.0 Waikato Regional Policy Statement

Objective / Policy	Comment
Part 2: Resource Management Overview	
Integrated Management	
Objective IM-O1 – Integrated Management Natural and physical resources are managed in a way that recognises: 1. the inter-relationships within and values of water body catchments, riparian areas and wetlands, the coastal environment, the Hauraki Gulf and the Waikato River; 2. natural processes that inherently occur without human management or interference; 3. the complex interactions between air, water, land and all living things; 4. the needs of current and future generations; 5. the relationships between environmental, social, economic and cultural wellbeing; 6. the need to work with agencies, landowners, resource users and communities; and 7. the interrelationship of natural resources with the built environment.	The proposed solar farm recognises the inter-relationships between environmental, social, economic and cultural well-being. In particular: • The solar farm will support renewable energy generation in a low-impact manner; • All earthworks are undertaken in accordance with Waikato Regional Council's Erosion and sediment control guidelines to manage erosion and sediment effects on land and waterbodies; • Any stormwater runoff is clean water runoff due to the nature of the solar panels and runoff from new access roads will be treated through the proposed road swales; and • Where located near waterways, the layout includes setbacks and planting that protect water quality.
Objective IM-O4 – Health and wellbeing of the Waikato River The health and wellbeing of the Waikato River is restored and protected and Te Ture Whaimana o Te Awa o Waikato (the Vision and Strategy for the Waikato River) is achieved.	Although not located directly on the Waikato River, the site lies within the Waikato River catchment and contributes to its overall health and wellbeing. The solar farm component of the proposal is considered to be consistent with and supports the objectives and principles of Te Ture Whaimana o Te Awa o Waikato for the following reasons: • Early engagement has occurred with iwi to ensure a holistic and integrated approach which allowed for iwi input into the design of the project; • The project avoids any direct discharge into sensitive freshwater environments;

	• Appropriate management of risks and adverse effects through a series of Management Plans through the project construction phase; and • Extensive landscape planting and ecological restoration along the Waitoa River, a tributary of the Waikato River. The planting will improve the ecological integrity of the water body and reconnect people with the awa in line with the Vision and Strategy. Collectively, these actions enhance mauri and improve ecosystem functioning.
Objective IM-O5 – Climate Change Land use is managed to: 1. avoid the potential adverse effects of climate change induced weather variability and sea level rise on: (a) amenity; (b) the built environment, including infrastructure; (c) indigenous biodiversity; (d) natural character; (e) public health and safety; and (f) public access. 2. support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions within urban environments and ensure urban environments are resilient to the current and future effects of climate change.	The proposed solar farm will act as a direct contributor to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and supporting a transition to renewable energy generation within the district. This enhances energy resilience and aligns with national and regional decarbonisation goals, helping to reduce the carbon footprint of both the development and the surrounding community. In terms of potential flood hazards, overland flows within the Southern Solar Farm site will be directed to the new roads which will flow to the proposed Greenway. The proposal will result in a negligible increase in flood depth across the Northern Solar Farm. Modelling contained in the Infrastructure Report included at **Appendix 3F** shows that all potential ponding can be contained on site and therefore will not increase the risk of flood hazards on neighbouring properties.
Objective IM-O7 – Relationship of tangata whenua with the environment The relationship of tangata whenua with the environment is recognised and provided for, including: 1. the use and enjoyment of natural and physical resources in accordance with tikanga Māori, including mātauranga Māori; and 2. the role of tangata whenua as kaitiaki.	The relationship of tangata whenua with the environment has been recognised and provided for in the Ashbourne proposal, with extensive consultation (**Appendix 1D**) and provision of a Cultural Impact Assessment (**Appendix 1H**). The proposed residential development provides for kaitiakitanga and cultural values through screen planting located at strategic locations to assist with visual screening and mitigate potential visual effects, minimising earthworks, which are largely proposed to form access roads, and the implementation of erosion and sediment controls in accordance with the Waikato Regional Council's Erosion and sediment control guidelines to manage erosion and sediment effects on land and waterbodies.

	Further assessment of the Ashbourne development against Objective IM-O7 is contained in **Appendix 4K** and **Appendix 5N**.
Objective IM-O8 – Sustainable and efficient use of resources Use and development of natural and physical resources, excluding minerals, occurs in a way and at a rate that is sustainable, and where the use and development of all natural and physical resources is efficient and minimises the generation of waste.	The proposed solar farm will directly contribute to the sustainable use of natural and physical resources to support renewable energy production and the minimisation of waste.
Objective IM-O9 – Amenity 1. The qualities and characteristics of areas and features, valued for their contribution to amenity, are maintained or enhanced; and 2. Where intensification occurs in urban environments, built development results in attractive, healthy, safe and high-quality urban form which responds positively to local context whilst recognising that amenity values change over time in response to the changing needs of people, communities and future generations, and such changes are not, of themselves, an adverse effect.	A comprehensive landscaping strategy is proposed to ensure that the proposed solar farm maintains the existing rural and urban character of the surrounding environment, and includes: • Buffer planting consisting of shrubs and larger trees at boundaries ranging in depth from 3m-7m, with the wider locations at interfaces with existing residential units; and Larger trees at the southern boundary of each solar farm. This will address shadowing effects onto adjacent solar farms, however, will also contribute to softening the proposed development within the wider rural landscape.
Policy IM-P3 – Tangata Whenua Tangata whenua are provided appropriate opportunities to express, maintain and enhance the relationship with their rohe through resource management and other local authority processes.	As identified above, the project has actively provided for meaningful involvement of tangata whenua in the planning and design process, and by enabling opportunities to participate in the design and environmental management considerations: • Tangata whenua have been engaged from an early stage, with opportunities to provide input into planning, cultural values assessments, and the identification of opportunities for cultural expression within the development. • The development respects tangata whenua relationships with land and water by enhancing the Waitoa River corridor, incorporating mātauranga Māori in landscape design, and exploring opportunities for cultural naming, signage, and interpretation. The process for Ashbourne has been structured to allow tangata whenua voices to be heard, acknowledged, and embedded into decision-making, consistent with the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

Policy IM-P5 – Maintain and enhance areas of amenity value Areas of amenity value are identified, and those values are maintained and enhanced. These may include: 1. areas within the coastal environment and along inland water bodies; 2. scenic, scientific, recreational or historic areas; 3. areas of spiritual or cultural significance; 4. other landscapes or seascapes or natural features; and 5. areas adjacent to outstanding natural landscapes and features that are visible from a road or other public place.	As identified above, the proposed solar farms will maintain existing amenity values associated with the character of the surrounding rural environment through the implementation of the comprehensive landscaping strategy. In particular, upon maturity, all buffer planting will be viewed as a shelterbelt which will be in keeping with the surrounding rural context.
Part 3: Domains and Topics	
Land and freshwater	
Objective LF-O1 – Mauri and values of fresh water bodies Maintain or enhance the mauri and identified values of fresh water bodies including by: 1. maintaining or enhancing the overall quality of freshwater within the region; 2. safeguarding ecosystem processes and indigenous species habitats; 3. safeguarding the outstanding values of identified outstanding freshwater bodies and the significant values of wetlands; 4. safeguarding and improving the life supporting capacity of freshwater bodies where they have been degraded as a result of human activities, with demonstrable progress made by 2030; 5. establishing objectives, limits and targets, for freshwater bodies that will determine how they will be managed; 6. enabling people to provide for their social, economic and cultural wellbeing and for their health and safety; 7. recognising that there will be variable management responses required for different catchments of the region; and 8. recognising the interrelationship between land use, water quality and water quantity.	The proposal includes the discharge of stormwater to ground, and is considered to be in keeping with Objective LF-O1 for the following reasons: • Water quality will be maintained as stormwater runoff from the proposed solar panels is considered to be clean water, and runoff from the new access roads will be treated by the proposed road swales, contributing to maintaining the overall quality of freshwater within the Waikato Region; and • Flow volumes can be managed to be comparable to pre-development flows, such that there would be negligible changes to the stormwater runoff for the post-development scenario. This will contribute to safeguarding ecosystem processes, any habitats of indigenous species, and the life supporting capacity of freshwater bodies that are located within the ultimate receiving environment.

Objective LF-O2 – Allocation and use of fresh water The allocation and use of fresh water is managed to achieve freshwater objectives (derived from identified values) by: 1. avoiding any new over-allocation of ground and surface waters; 2. seeking to phase out any existing over-allocation of ground and surface water bodies by 31 December 2030; 3. increasing efficiency in the allocation and use of water; and 4. recognising the social, economic and cultural benefits of water takes and uses.	N/A - based on the Hydrological Assessment (refer to **Appendix 1N**), the project does not require any new water takes.
Objective LF-O3 – Riparian areas and wetlands Riparian areas (including coastal dunes) and wetlands are managed to: 1. maintain and enhance: (a) public access; and (b) amenity values. 2. maintain or enhance: (a) water quality; (b) indigenous biodiversity; (c) natural hazard risk reduction; (d) cultural values; (e) riparian habitat quality and extent; and (f) wetland quality and extent.	N/A – the Ecological Assessment (refer to **Appendix 1I**) confirms there are six natural inland wetlands within the wider Ashbourne site context, however there are no riparian areas or wetlands within the proposed solar farm sites.
Objective LF-O4 – Values of soil *The soil resource is managed to safeguard its life supporting capacity, for the existing and foreseeable range of uses.*	The detailed soils assessment (refer to **Appendix 1L**), confirms the site is of limited productive capacity. Despite this, the solar farms proposed will allow for and support the continued grazing of livestock, therefore protecting a portion of the wider Ashbourne site for primary production purposes.
Objective LF-O5 – High class soils *The value of high class soils for primary production is recognised and high class soils are protected from inappropriate subdivision, use or development.*	
Policy LF-P2 – Outstanding fresh water bodies and significant values of wetlands	This assessment is provided based on the Assessment of Ecological Effects included at **Appendix 1I**.

Ensure that the outstanding values of a fresh water body that result in that water body being identified as an outstanding fresh water body, and the significant values of wetlands, are protected and where appropriate enhanced.	For context, the solar farms proposed avoids adverse effects on any identified outstanding freshwater bodies or wetlands, and the broader Ashbourne development enhances the values of the local freshwater environment within the Waikato River catchment. There are no identified outstanding freshwater bodies or significant wetlands within the solar farm sites.
Policy LF-P3 – All fresh water bodies *Manage the effects of activities to maintain or enhance the identified values of fresh water bodies and coastal water including by:* *1. reducing:* *(a) sediment in fresh water bodies and coastal water (including bank instability) that is derived from human based activities;* *(b) accelerated sedimentation of estuaries;* *(c) microbial and nutrient contamination;* *(d) other identified contaminants; and* *2. Where appropriate, protection and enhancement of:* *(a) riparian and wetland habitat;* *(b) instream habitat diversity;* *(c) indigenous biodiversity; and* *3. providing for migratory patterns of indigenous freshwater species up and down rivers and streams and to the coastal marine area where practicable; and* *4. avoiding:* *(a) physical modification of fresh water bodies where practicable; and* *(b) inappropriate development in flood plains; and* *5. managing:* *(a) groundwater and surface water flow/level regimes, including flow regime variability;* *(b) linkages between groundwater and surface water; and* *(c) pest and weed species where they contribute to fresh water body and coastal water degradation.*	N/A – the Ecological Assessment (refer to Appendix 1I) confirms there are six natural inland wetlands within the wider Ashbourne site context, however there are no riparian areas or wetlands within the proposed solar farm sites.

Policy LF-P6 – Allocating fresh water *Manage the increasing demand and competition for water through the setting of allocation limits, efficient allocation within those limits, and other regional plan mechanisms which achieve identified freshwater objectives and:* 1. *maintain and enhance the mauri of fresh water bodies;* 2. *retain sufficient water in water bodies to safeguard their life-supporting capacity and avoid any further degradation of water quality;* 3. *enable the existing and reasonably justified foreseeable domestic or municipal needs of people and communities and an individual's reasonable animal drinking water requirements to be met (with discretion to consider additional allocations for those particular uses in fully and over-allocated catchments);* 4. *avoid any reduction in the generation of electricity from renewable electricity generation activities, including the Waikato Hydro Scheme; and* 5. *recognise that lawfully existing water takes (including those for regionally significant industry and primary production activities supporting that industry) contribute to social, economic and cultural wellbeing and that significant investment relies on the continuation of those takes.*	N/A – the proposal does not involve any new water takes.
Policy LF-P7 – Efficient use of fresh water *Ensure that the allocated water resource is used efficiently.*	N/A – the proposal does not involve any new water takes.
Policy LF-P8 – Maintain or enhance the life supporting capacity of the soil resource *Manage the soil resource to:* 1. *minimise sedimentation and erosion;* 2. *maintain or enhance biological, chemical and physical soil properties; and* 3. *retain soil versatility to protect the existing and foreseeable range of uses of the soil resource.*	The proposed solar farms will largely retain existing soil resources within the sites (with the exception of metalled access roads), and will include provision for lifestyle grazing to occur during operation. With respect to erosion, the proposed have been minimised to works required to form access and drainage onsite and controls will be implemented prior to construction to minimise soil erosion effects.
Policy LF-P9 – Soil contaminants	The site investigation confirmed that while some contaminants associated with historical rural activities (e.g., pesticides, fertiliser use, and possible lead-based

Ensure that contaminants in soils are minimised and do not cause a reduction in the range of existing and foreseeable uses of the soil resource. Particular attention will be given to the potential for effects on: 1. *human health;* 2. *animal health;* 3. *suitability of soil for food production;* 4. *micro-nutrient availability;* 5. *soil ecology; and* 6. *groundwater.*	paint) were detected, all results were below the relevant human health and ecological soil guideline values set under the NES for Contaminants in Soil (NESCS). Importantly, no asbestos or PAHs were detected, and the elevated heavy metal levels (notably cadmium, lead, and zinc) were below NESCS thresholds and therefore do not pose a risk to human or animal health, food production suitability, or groundwater. The investigation was undertaken by a Suitably Qualified and Experienced Practitioner (SQEP) and concluded that the site does not meet the definition of contaminated land under the Waikato Regional Plan. A controlled activity consent under Regulation 9(3) of the NESCS is recommended to manage any future soil disturbance, ensuring full regulatory compliance. Soil contaminants, specifically with regard to human health, are being managed as outlined in the Detailed Site Investigated, included as Appendix 1R, to minimise the potential effects of this contamination. Remediation is proposed to mitigate this.
LF-P11 – High Class Soils *Avoid a decline in the availability of high class soils for primary production due to inappropriate subdivision, use or development.*	The proposal will retain existing soils within the sites and will include livestock grazing. Further, as solar farms are a permitted activity under the Matamata Piako District Plan, it is considered that the proposal represents an appropriate activity within the Rural Zone.
Ecosystems & Indigenous Biodiversity	
Objective ECO-O1 – Ecological integrity and indigenous biodiversity The full range of ecosystem types, their extent and the indigenous biodiversity that those ecosystems can support exist in a healthy and functional state.	The proposal is consistent with Objective ECO-O1, seeking to ensure that the full range of ecosystem types, their extent, and the indigenous biodiversity they support exist in a healthy and functional state. Although the site is currently dominated by modified agricultural land with limited indigenous vegetation, the project incorporates a suite of ecological restoration and enhancement measures that will contribute to the recovery and long-term functionality of local ecosystems. The solar farm sites avoid areas of high ecological value and instead integrates restoration into its design. This includes the retention of pasture beneath solar panels to support agrivoltaic land use, and the implementation of extensive native planting along site boundaries and within the adjacent esplanade reserve.

	These plantings will enhance habitat connectivity and structure, supporting a broader range of indigenous flora and fauna. The project also includes the restoration and expansion of degraded wetland areas, particularly oxbow and pasture wetlands along the Waitoa River, which are rare and ecologically significant in the region. These efforts will improve hydrological function, water quality, and habitat availability for wetland-dependent species. Furthermore, the project includes targeted management plans for indigenous fauna, including long-tailed bats (nationally critical), copper skinks (At Risk – Declining), and native birds. These plans include measures such as bat-sensitive lighting, lizard salvage and habitat enhancement, and bird nesting protocols, all of which support the health and resilience of local biodiversity. Collectively, these actions demonstrate a commitment to maintaining and enhancing the ecological integrity of the site and its surroundings, thereby supporting the objective of ensuring that ecosystem types and the biodiversity they support remain healthy and functional across the region.
Policy ECO-P1 – Maintain or enhance indigenous biodiversity Promote positive indigenous biodiversity outcomes to maintain the full range of ecosystem types and maintain or enhance their spatial extent as necessary to achieve healthy ecological functioning of ecosystems, with a particular focus on: 1. working towards achieving no net loss of indigenous biodiversity at a regional scale; 2. the continued functioning of ecological processes; 3. the re-creation and restoration of habitats and connectivity between habitats; 4. supporting (buffering and/or linking) ecosystems, habitats and areas identified as significant indigenous vegetation and significant habitats of indigenous fauna; 5. providing ecosystem services;	The proposed Ashbourne solar farms are considered to be consistent with Policy ECO-P1. The Ecological Assessment (refer to **Appendix 1I**) outlines a comprehensive suite of measures that directly support the ten focus areas of this policy as follows: • No Net Loss of Indigenous Biodiversity: The solar farm avoids areas of high ecological value and incorporates restoration initiatives, including wetland enhancement and native planting, which are expected to result in a net gain in biodiversity at the site level, contributing to regional-scale outcomes. • Continued Functioning of Ecological Processes: The retention of pasture under the solar panels supports agrivoltaic land use, maintaining soil processes and hydrological function. Restoration of wetlands and riparian margins enhances nutrient cycling and water filtration.

6. the health and wellbeing of the Waikato River and its catchment; 7. contribution to natural character and amenity values; 8. tangata whenua relationships with indigenous biodiversity including their holistic view of ecosystems and the environment; 9. managing the density, range and viability of indigenous flora and fauna; and 10. the consideration and application of biodiversity offsets.	• Re-creation and Restoration of Habitats and Connectivity: The project includes the restoration of degraded oxbow and pasture wetlands, planting of native vegetation along boundaries, and creation of refugia for lizards and bats, improving habitat connectivity across the landscape. • Supporting Significant Indigenous Vegetation and Fauna Habitats: While no SNAs are present on site, the project supports nearby significant habitats through buffering and linkage, particularly along the Waitoa River corridor, which is used by long-tailed bats. • Provision of Ecosystem Services: Wetland restoration and riparian planting will enhance water quality, flood attenuation, and carbon sequestration, contributing to ecosystem services. • Health and Wellbeing of the Waikato River and Catchment: The project includes stormwater management and wetland enhancement measures that reduce sediment and nutrient runoff into the Waitoa River, a tributary of the Waikato River. • Contribution to Natural Character and Amenity Values: Native planting and wetland restoration will improve the visual and ecological character of the site, contributing positively to amenity values. Tangata Whenua Relationships: The Ecological Assessment (refer to Appendix 1I) acknowledges the importance of indigenous biodiversity to tangata whenua and incorporates restoration and protection of native species and habitats in a manner consistent with a holistic view of ecosystems. • Managing Density, Range, and Viability of Indigenous Flora and Fauna: The project includes targeted management plans for long-tailed bats, copper skinks, and native birds, supporting their viability and ecological roles. • Consideration and Application of Biodiversity Offsets: While offsets are not required due to the low level of residual effects, the project includes proactive restoration and enhancement measures that exceed standard mitigation, aligning with the intent of biodiversity offsetting. In addition, offsetting will occur in relation to the loss of a pasture wetland which will result in enhanced wetland and ecological outcomes across the site.

Policy ECO-P2 – Protect significant indigenous vegetation and significant habitats of indigenous fauna Significant indigenous vegetation and the significant habitats of indigenous fauna shall be protected by ensuring the characteristics that contribute to its significance are not adversely affected to the extent that the significance of the vegetation or habitat is reduced.	The proposed solar farm at Ashbourne protects significant indigenous vegetation and significant habitats of indigenous fauna by ensuring that the characteristics contributing to their significance are not adversely affected to the extent that their significance is reduced. The Ecological Assessment (refer to **Appendix 1I**) confirms that no areas of significant indigenous vegetation or formally identified SNAs are present within the solar farm site footprints. However, the site does support long-tailed bats, a species classified as "Threatened – Nationally Critical," which are known to use the area for commuting and foraging, particularly along the Waitoa River corridor. This qualifies parts of the site as significant habitat for indigenous fauna under the criteria of the Waikato Regional Policy Statement. To ensure the protection of this habitat, the proposal includes a comprehensive Bat Management Plan (BMP) that incorporates the Department of Conservation's Bat Roost Protocols. These protocols require pre-clearance surveys, ecologist supervision during tree removal, and the use of bat-aware arborists to inspect potential roost trees. Additionally, the development will implement bat-sensitive lighting design to avoid disrupting bat movement and foraging behaviour. These measures are specifically designed to avoid adverse effects on the characteristics that make the site significant for long-tailed bats—namely, the availability of roosting and commuting habitat and the integrity of dark corridors along the river. Furthermore, the solar farm sites avoid the oxbow wetlands and other high-value freshwater habitats identified in the Ecological Assessment, which are also considered ecologically significant due to their rarity and the presence of longfin eel, an "At Risk – Declining" species. These areas will not be disturbed by the solar farm, and their ecological values will be enhanced through restoration

	planting and pest control as part of the wider development's ecological management strategy.
Energy, Infrastructure & Transport	
Objective EIT-O1 – Energy Energy use is managed, and electricity generation and transmission is operated, maintained, developed and upgraded, in a way that: 1. increases efficiency; 2. recognises any increasing demand for energy; 3. seeks opportunities to minimise demand for energy; 4. recognises and provides for the national significance of electricity transmission and renewable electricity generation activities; 5. recognises and provides for the national, regional and local benefits of electricity transmission and renewable electricity generation; 6. reduces reliance on fossil fuels over time; 7. addresses adverse effects on natural and physical resources; 8. recognises the technical and operational constraints of the electricity transmission network and electricity generation activities; and 9. recognises the contribution of existing and future electricity transmission and electricity generation activities to regional and national energy needs and security of supply.	The proposal is considered to be consistent with Objective EIT-O1 for the following reason: • It will provide for a renewable source of electricity generation, it will increase efficiency, recognise increasing demand, and contribute to energy needs and security of supply; • It recognises the benefits of electricity transmission; • It will contribute to a reduction on fossil fuel reliance over time; and • The proposal is underpinned by a suite of technical assessments that provide a robust understanding of potential adverse environmental effects. As further detailed in the Assessment of Environmental Effects (AEE), the proposal's adverse effects will be less than minor.
Policy EIT-P1 – Significant infrastructure and energy resources Management of the built environment ensures particular regard is given to: 1. that the effectiveness and efficiency of existing and planned regionally significant infrastructure is protected; 2. the benefits that can be gained from the development and use of regionally significant infrastructure and energy resources, recognising and providing for the particular benefits of renewable electricity generation, electricity transmission, and municipal water supply; and	The proposal directly recognises the benefits of renewable electricity generation. With respect to locational and technical practicalities, the solar farm is located across large and extensive land holdings that are predominantly flat, which recognises the locational and technical practicalities associated with renewable electricity generation.

3. the locational and technical practicalities associated with renewable electricity generation and the technical and operational requirements of the electricity transmission network.	
Hazards & Risks	
Objective HAZ-O1 – Natural hazards The effects of natural hazards on people, property and the environment are managed by: 1. increasing community resilience to hazard risks; 2. reducing the risks from hazards to acceptable or tolerable levels; and 3. enabling the effective and efficient response and recovery from natural hazard events.	As identified in the Infrastructure Report at **Appendix 3F**, the proposal will result in a negligible increase in flood depth across Northern Solar Farm. Within the Southern Solar Farm, increases in levels of ponding will be diverted to the proposed access roads which will flow to the proposed Greenway. This approach will ensure that the risks for flood hazards can be appropriately reduced in accordance with Objective HAZ-O1(2). The site is not subject to any other natural hazards.
Policy HAZ-P1 – Natural hazard risk management approach Natural hazard risks are managed using an integrated and holistic approach that: 1. ensures the risk from natural hazards does not exceed an acceptable level; 2. protects health and safety; 3. avoids the creation of new intolerable risk; 4. Reduces intolerable risk to tolerable or acceptable levels; 5. enhances community resilience; 6. is aligned with civil defence approaches; 7. prefers the use of natural features over man-made structures as defences against natural hazards; 8. recognises natural systems and takes a 'whole of system' approach; and 9. seeks to use the best available information/best practice.	As outlined above.
Policy HAZ-P2 – Manage activities to reduce the risks from natural hazards *Subdivision, use and development are managed to reduce the risks from natural hazards to an acceptable or tolerable level including by:* *1. ensuring risk is assessed for proposed activities on land subject to natural hazards;*	

2. *reducing the risks associated with existing use and development where these risks are intolerable;* 3. *avoiding intolerable risk in any new use or development in areas subject to natural hazards;* 4. *minimising any increase in vulnerability due to residual risk;* 5. *avoiding the need or demand for new structural protection works; and* 6. *discouraging hard protection structures and promoting the use of alternatives to them, including natural defences in the coastal environment.*	
HAZ-P3 – High impact, low probability natural hazard events The risks associated with high impact, low probability natural hazard events such as tsunami, volcanic eruptions, earthquakes and debris flows are considered, having particular regard to: 1. personal health and safety; 2. damage and/or disruption to essential community services; 3. the ability of a community to respond and recover; and 4. civil defence readiness, response and recovery planning.	
HAZ-P4 – Contaminated land Identify and manage contaminated land to ensure human, plant and animal health, and water, air and soil quality are protected from unacceptable risk.	As noted above, contaminated land is being managed as in accordance with the Detailed Site Investigation recommendations, included at **Appendix 1R**, to minimise the potential effects of the contamination. This is in accordance with NES-CS and best practice.
Historical & Cultural Values	
Objective HCV-O1 – Historic and cultural heritage Sites, structures, landscapes, areas or places of historic and cultural heritage are protected, maintained or enhanced in order to retain the identity and integrity of the Waikato region's and New Zealand's history and culture.	In accordance with maps published by Matamata Piako District Council, it is considered the project site does not contain any identified sites or items of historic heritage value. Any works to date have not identified any historic or archaeological discoveries, and the landowners are not aware of any. This is supported by the Cultural Impact Assessment, included as **Appendix 1H.**
HCV-P2 – Relationship of Māori to taonga Recognise and provide for the relationship of tangata whenua and their culture and traditions with their ancestral lands, water, sites, wāhi tapu and other taonga.	

Natural Character	
Objective NATC-O1 – Natural character The natural character of the coastal environment, wetlands, and lakes and rivers and their margins are protected from the adverse effects of inappropriate subdivision, use and development.	N/A – as identified in the Assessment of Ecological Effects included as **Appendix 1I**, there are no waterbodies located within the site, including natural inland wetlands and rivers or streams. In addition, the site is located outside of the coastal environment.
Policy NATC-P1 – Preserve natural character Ensure that activities within the coastal environment, wetlands, and lakes and rivers and their margins are appropriate in relation to the level of natural character and: 1. where natural character is pristine or outstanding, activities should avoid adverse effects on natural character; 2. where natural elements/influences are dominant, activities should avoid significant adverse effects and avoid, remedy or mitigate other adverse effects on natural character; 3. where man-made elements/influences are dominant, it may be appropriate that activities result in further adverse effects on natural character, though opportunities to remedy or mitigate adverse effects should still be considered; 4. promote the enhancement, restoration, and rehabilitation of the natural character of the coastal environment, wetlands and lakes and rivers and their margins; and 5. regard is given to the functional necessity of activities being located in or near the coastal environment, wetlands, lakes, or rivers and their margins where no reasonably practicable alternative locations exist.	As above.
Urban Form & Development	
Objective UFD-O1 – Built environment Development of the built environment (including transport and other infrastructure) and associated land use occurs in an integrated, sustainable and planned manner which enables positive environmental, social, cultural and economic outcomes, including by:	The proposed solar farm will achieve the following built environment outcomes, which are considered to be in keeping with Objective UFD-O1: • The solar panels are designed with a low built form to reduce dominance effects of the surrounding natural landscape and the surrounding environment;

1. promoting positive indigenous biodiversity outcomes; 2. preserving and protecting natural character, and protecting outstanding natural features and landscapes from inappropriate subdivision, use, and development; 3. integrating land use and infrastructure planning, including by ensuring that development of the built environment does not compromise the safe, efficient and effective operation of infrastructure corridors; 4. integrating land use and water planning, including to ensure that sufficient water is available to support future planned growth; 5. recognising and protecting the value and long-term benefits of regionally significant infrastructure; 6. protecting access to identified significant mineral resources; 7. minimising land use conflicts, including minimising potential for reverse sensitivity; 8. anticipating and responding to changing land use pressures outside the Waikato region which may impact on the built environment within the region; 9. providing for the development, operation, maintenance and upgrading of new and existing electricity transmission and renewable electricity generation activities including small and community scale generation; 10. promoting a viable and vibrant central business district in Hamilton city, with a supporting network of sub-regional and town centres; and 11. providing for a range of commercial development to support the social and economic wellbeing of the region.; and 12. strategically planning for growth and development to create responsive and well-functioning urban environments, that: (a) support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and are resilient to the current and future effects of climate change; (b) improve housing choice, quality, and affordability; (c) enable a variety of homes that enable Māori to express their cultural traditions and norms;	• The proposal can be appropriately serviced by infrastructure, including for water supply necessary for firefighting purposes, and will ensure that land use development is integrated with infrastructure provision; • The proposal provides for the development and operation of a renewable electricity generation activity and will support a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions; and • The proposal minimises the potential for reverse sensitivity effects by creating physical and visual separation with adjacent residential activities through the proposed site layout and landscaping strategy.

(d) ensure sufficient development capacity, supported by integrated infrastructure provision, for identified housing and business needs in the short, medium and long term; (e) improves connectivity within urban areas, particularly by active transport and public transport; (f) take into account the values and aspirations of hapū and iwi for urban development.	
Objective UFD-O2 – Housing bottom lines for the Future Proof area The housing bottom lines for sufficient, feasible, reasonably expected to be realised development capacity for housing in the Future Proof area are met, in accordance with the requirements of the National Policy Statement on Urban Development (NPS UD) 2020.	N/A – the proposal does not include new residential units or activities.
Policy UFD-P1 – Planned and co-ordinated subdivision, use and development Subdivision, use and development of the built environment, including transport, occurs in a planned and co-ordinated manner which: 1. has regard to the principles in APP11; 2. recognises and addresses potential cumulative effects of subdivision, use and development; 3. is based on sufficient information to allow assessment of the potential long-term effects of subdivision, use and development; and 4. has regard to the existing built environment.	As identified above, the proposal is underpinned by a suite of technical assessments that provide a robust understanding of the long-term effects and cumulative impacts in accordance with APP11, and will support the adoption of sustainable design technologies. The proposed solar farms have regard to the existing built environment and adopt compact planting buffers ranging from 3m-7m in width to manage the transition at site boundaries with surrounding residential areas and the rural landscape and mitigate potential visual effects.
Policy UFD-P2 – Co-ordinating growth and infrastructure Management of the built environment ensures:	

Area	Housing bottom lines (number of dwellings)		
	Short to Medium (2020-2030)	Long term (2031-2050)	Total
Future Proof Sub-Region	25,300	46,800	72,100

(a) the nature, timing and sequencing of new development is co-ordinated with the development, funding, implementation and operation of transport and other infrastructure, in order to: (b) optimise the efficient and affordable provision of both the development and the infrastructure; (c) maintain or enhance the operational effectiveness, viability and safety of existing and planned infrastructure; (d) protect investment in existing infrastructure; and (e) ensure new development does not occur until provision for appropriate infrastructure necessary to service the development is in place; (f) the spatial pattern of land use development, as it is likely to develop over at least a 30-year period, is understood sufficiently to inform reviews of the Regional Land Transport Plan. As a minimum, this will require the development and maintenance of growth strategies where strong population growth is anticipated or as required for tier 3 local authorities as set out in UFD-P18 and its associated methods; (g) the efficient and effective functioning of infrastructure, including transport corridors, is maintained, and the ability to maintain and upgrade that infrastructure is retained; and (h) a co-ordinated and integrated approach across regional and district boundaries and between agencies; and (i) that where new infrastructure is provided by the private sector, it does not compromise the function of existing, or the planned provision of, infrastructure provided by central, regional and local government agencies.	
Policy UFD-P4 – Energy Demand Management Development should minimise transport, energy demand and waste production, encourage beneficial re-use of waste materials, and promote the efficient use of energy.	The proposed solar farm will directly contribute to the efficient use of energy.
Policy UFD-P13 – Commercial Development in the Future Proof Area Management of the built environment in the Future Proof area shall provide for varying levels of commercial development to meet the wider community's social	N/A – the proposal does not include commercial development in the Future Proof Area.

and economic needs, primarily through the encouragement and consolidation of such activities in existing commercial centres, and predominantly in those centres identified in Table 37 (APP12). Commercial development is to be managed to: 1. support and sustain the vitality and viability of existing commercial centres identified in Table 37 (APP12); 2. support and sustain existing physical resources, and ensure the continuing ability to make efficient use of, and undertake long-term planning and management for the transport network, and other public and private infrastructure resources including community facilities; 3. recognise, maintain and enhance the Hamilton Central Business District as the primary commercial, civic and social centre of the Future Proof area, by: (a) encouraging the greatest diversity, scale and intensity of activities in the Hamilton Central Business District; (b) managing development within areas outside the Central Business District to avoid adverse effects on the function, vitality or amenity of the Central Business District beyond those effects ordinarily associated with trade competition on trade competitors; and (c) encouraging and supporting the enhancement of amenity values, particularly in areas where pedestrian activity is concentrated. 4. recognise that in addition to retail activity, the Hamilton Central Business District and town centres outside Hamilton are also centres of administration, office and civic activity. These activities will not occur to any significant extent in Hamilton outside the Central Business District in order to maintain and enhance the Hamilton Central Business District as the primary commercial, civic and social centre; 5. recognise, maintain and enhance the function of sub-regional commercial centres by: (a) maintaining and enhancing their role as centres primarily for retail activity; and (b) recognising that the sub-regional centres have limited non-retail economic and social activities;	

6. maintain industrially zoned land for industrial activities unless it is ancillary to those industrial activities, while also recognising that specific types of commercial development may be appropriately located in industrially zoned land; and 7. ensure new commercial centres are only developed where they are consistent with (1) to (6) of this policy. New centres will avoid adverse effects, both individually and cumulatively on: (a) the distribution, function and infrastructure associated with those centres identified in Table 37 (APP12); (b) people and communities who rely on those centres identified in Table 37 (APP12) for their social and economic wellbeing, and require ease of access to such centres by a variety of transport modes; (c) the efficiency, safety and function of the transportation network; and (d) the extent and character of industrial land and associated physical resources, including through the avoidance of reverse sensitivity effects. recognise that in the long term, the function of sub-regional and town centres listed in Table 37 may change.	
Policy UFD-P14 – Rural-residential Development in Future Proof Area Management of rural-residential development in the Future Proof area will recognise the particular pressure from, and address the adverse effects of, rural-residential development in parts of the sub-region, and particularly in areas within easy commuting distance of Hamilton and: 1. the potential adverse effects (including cumulative effects) from the high demand for rural-residential development; 2. the high potential for conflicts between rural-residential development and existing and planned infrastructure and land use activities; 3. the additional demand for servicing and infrastructure created by rural-residential development; 4. the potential for cross-territorial boundary effects with respect to rural-residential development; and has regard to the principles in APP11.	N/A – the proposal does not include rural-residential development in the Future Proof Area.

Policy UFD-P18 – Tier 3 Local Authority Areas Outside the Future Proof Strategy New urban development in tier 3 local authority areas shall be managed in a way that: 1. recognises and provides for the intended urban development pattern as set out in any agreed council-approved growth strategy or equivalent council-approved strategies and plans; 2. contributes towards sufficient development capacity required to meet expected demand for housing and for business land over the short term, medium term, and long term as set out in the National Policy Statement on Urban Development; 3. focuses new urban development in and around existing settlements; 4. prevents a dispersed pattern of settlement and the resulting inefficiencies in managing resources that would arise from urban and rural residential development being located in the rural environment outside of identified urban growth areas; 5. avoids the cumulative effect that subdivision and consequent fragmented land ownership can have on the role of identified urban growth areas in providing a supply of land for urban development; 6. ensures that any development is efficient, consistent with, and supported by, appropriate infrastructure necessary to service the area; 7. has particular regard to the principles in APP11; 8. recognises environmental attributes or constraints to development and addresses how they will be avoided or managed including those specifically identified in UFD-M8, high class soils as identified in LF-M41, and planning in the coastal environment as set out in CE-M1; 9. in relation to urban environments: (a) concentrates urban development through enabling heights and density in those areas of an urban environment with accessibility by active or public transport to a range of commercial activities, housing and community services, and where there is demand for housing and business use;	N/A – the proposal does not include new urban development.

(b) provides for high-quality urban design which responds positively to local context whilst recognising and allowing for amenity values of the urban and built form in areas planned for intensification to develop and change over time, and such change is not, in and of itself, an adverse effect; (c) enables a diverse range of dwelling types and sizes to meet the housing needs of people and communities, including for: i. households on low to moderate incomes; and ii. Māori to express cultural traditions and norms; (d) enables a variety of site sizes and locations in urban environments suitable for different business sectors; supports reductions in greenhouse gas emissions including through providing for an increasingly compact urban form that supports less carbon intensive transport modes such as active and public transport.	

4.0 Waikato Regional Plan

The following chapters are not considered relevant, and are not assessed:

- Chapter 1 (Approaches to Resource Management) is administrative and does not include objectives and policies.
- Chapter 6 (Air Module) is not relevant to this application as resource consent is not required for discharge to air.
- Chapter 7 (Geothermal Module) is not relevant to this application as no activities are proposed in relation to geothermal activities.

Objective / Policy	Comment
Chapter 2: Matters of Significance to Māori	
2.3 Tangata Whenua Relationship with Natural and Physical Resources	
Objective 2.3.2	Extensive consultation with Tangata Whenua has been undertaken as part of the Ashbourne Development, as further detailed in the Consultation Report at

1. Uncertainty for all parties regarding the relationship between tangata whenua and resources for which they are Kaitiaki minimised. 2. Tangata whenua able to give effect to kaitiakitanga	Appendix 1D. A Cultural Impact Assessment and Letters of support have been provided by Ngāti Hauā, Raukawa, and Ngāti Hinerangi. Memorandum of understandings with regards to matters such as earthworks, accidental discovery protocol and planting schedules will be prepared as a condition of consent. On this basis, it is considered that the overall Ashbourne Development will be in keeping with the intent of Objective 2.3.2.
Chapter 3: Water Module	
3.1 Water Resources	
Objective 3.1.2 The management of water bodies in a way which ensures: (a) That people are able to take and use water for their social, economic and cultural wellbeing (b) Net improvement of water quality across the Region (c) The avoidance of significant adverse effects on aquatic ecosystems (d) The characteristics of flow regimes are enhanced where practicable and justified by the ecological benefits (e) The range of uses of water reliant on the characteristics of flow regimes are maintained or enhanced (f) The range of uses of water reliant on the characteristics of flow regimes are maintained or enhanced (g) Inefficient use of the available ground surface water resources is minimised (h) An increase in the extent and quality of the Region's wetlands (i) That significant adverse effects on the relationship tangata whenua as Kaitiaki have with water and their identified taonga such as waahi tapu, and native flora and fauna that have customary and traditional uses in or on the margins of water bodies, are remedied or mitigated (j) The cumulative adverse effects on the relationship tangata whenua as Kaitiaki have with water their identified taonga such as waahi tapu, and native flora and fauna that have customary and traditional uses that are in or on the margins of water bodies are remedied or mitigated	The proposal includes the discharge of stormwater, and is considered to be in keeping with Objective 3.1.2 for the following reasons: • Water quality will be maintained as stormwater runoff from the proposed solar panels is considered to be clean water, and runoff from the new access roads will be treated by the proposed road swales, contributing to maintaining the overall quality of freshwater within the Waikato Region; and • Flow volumes can be managed to be comparable to pre-development flows, such that there would be negligible changes to the stormwater runoff for the post-development scenario. This will contribute to safeguarding ecosystem processes, any habitats of indigenous species, and the life supporting capacity of freshwater bodies. • The site does not contain any existing natural inland wetlands or streams. In addition, it is noted that there are no natural waterbodies present within the solar farm sites.

(k) The management of non-point source discharges of nutrients, faecal coliforms and sediment to levels that are consistent with the identified purpose and values for which the water body is being managed (l) The natural character of the coastal environment, wetlands and lakes and rivers and their margins (including caves), is preserved and protected from inappropriate use and development (m) Ground water quality is maintained or enhanced and ground water takes managed to ensure sustainable yield (n) Shallow ground water takes do not adversely affect values for which any potentially affected surface water body is managed (o) Concentrations of contaminants leaching from land use activities and non-point source discharges to shallow ground water and surface waters do not reach levels that present significant risks to human health or aquatic ecosystems (p) That the positive effects of water resource use activities and associated existing lawfully established infrastructure are recognised, whilst avoiding, remedying or mitigating adverse effects on the environment. (q) Refer to Objective 3.A.1.	
3.2 Management of Water Resources	
Policy 3.2.3.1 Management of Water Bodies Manage all water bodies to enable a range of water use activities, whilst ensuring that a net improvement in water quality across the Region is achieved over time through: (a) Classifying and mapping water bodies based on the characteristics for which they are valued and implementing the classification through a mixture of regulatory and non-regulatory methods. (b) Maintaining overall water quality in areas where it is high, and in other water bodies, avoiding, remedying or mitigating cumulative degradation of water quality from the effects of resource use activities. (c) Enhancing the quality of degraded waterbodies.	As outlined above.

(d) Providing for the mitigation and remediation of adverse effects in accordance with Section 1.3.3 of the Waikato Regional Policy Statement. (e) Recognising the positive benefits to people and communities arising from use or development of water resources and by taking account of existing uses of water and the associated lawfully established infrastructure.	
Policy 3.2.3.2 Manging Degraded Water Bodies Enhance the quality of degraded water through improved management of activities that affect water bodies so that: (a) For activities controlled by rules in the Plan: (i) discharges to water will not further degrade water quality with respect to those parameters of the relevant class(es) for that water body that are not currently met (ii) land-based treatment systems will be promoted where soil type and drainage will allow, and where adverse effects are less than the adverse effects of direct discharges into water (iii) water allocation takes into account the additional adverse effect of reduced flow in degraded waters on aquatic ecosystems and human uses and values. (b) For activities covered by non-regulatory methods in the Plan, promote: (i) land management methods that reduce non-point source discharges (ii) riparian management that mitigates the effect of non-point source discharges on water bodies.	With respect to activities controlled by rules in the Plan, the proposed stormwater discharge will consist primarily of clean water, and runoff from new access roads will be managed by road swales to provide water quality treatment on site. This will ensure that stormwater discharges from the site will not contribute to further degrading water quality of the Waitoa River, being the ultimate receiving environment.
Policy 3.2.3.3 Natural Character Recognise, and where relevant provide for, the following characteristics when considering the preservation of the natural character of lakes and rivers and their margins and the protection of them from inappropriate use and development: (a) Diversity and composition of aquatic and riparian habitat. (b) Topography and physical composition of river and lake beds and the course of the river.	N/A – the solar farm sites does not contain any lakes or rivers.

(c) The natural flow characteristics and hydraulic processes (such as sediment transport) of rivers and streams or the pattern and range of water level fluctuations that occur naturally in rivers and lakes. (d) Any significant natural features of the lakes and rivers and their margins.	
Policy 3.2.3.4 Waikato Region Surface Water Class Enable the use of all surface water bodies in the Region, provided that: (a) Any significant adverse effects on existing aquatic ecosystems are avoided, remedied or mitigated. (b) Intake structures are designed to minimise fish entrapment. (c) Any conspicuous change in visual colour or clarity is avoided, remedied or mitigated. (d) The water body is not tainted or contaminated to the extent that it is unpalatable or unsuitable for consumption by humans after treatment (equivalent to coagulation, filtration and disinfection). (e) The water body is not tainted or contaminated to the extent that it is unsuitable for irrigation or stock watering.	N/A – the proposal does include activities on the surface of water.
3.3 Water Takes	
Objective 3.3.2 (a) Giving effect to the overarching purpose of the Vision and Strategy to restore and protect the health and wellbeing of the Waikato River for present and future generations. (b) The availability of water to meet the existing and the reasonably justified and foreseeable future domestic or municipal supply requirements of individuals and communities and the reasonable needs for an individual's animal drinking water requirements. (c) The recognition of the significant community benefits that derive from domestic or municipal supply takes. (d) The efficient allocation and the efficient use of water. (e) No further allocation of water that exceeds the primary allocation in Table 3-5 that reduces the generation of electricity from renewable energy sources.	N/A – the proposal does not involve any new water takes.

(f) The recognition that existing water takes contribute to social and economic wellbeing and in some cases significant investment relies on the continuation of those takes, including rural-based activities such as agriculture, perishable food processing and industry. (g) The continued availability of water for cooling of the Huntly Power Station. (h) Sufficient water is retained instream to safeguard the life supporting capacity of freshwater, including its ecosystem processes and indigenous species and their associated ecosystems. (i) That decisions regarding the allocation and use of water take account of the need to avoid the further degradation of water quality, having regard to the contaminant assimilative capacity of water bodies. (j) Subject to Objectives a) to h) above, the availability of water to meet other future social, economic and cultural needs of individuals and communities (including rural-based activities such as agriculture, perishable food processing and industry). (k) Refer to Objective 3.A.1.	
3.3 Efficient Use of Water	
Policy 3.4.3.1 Manage the Use of Water *Manage, through permitted activities and resource consents, the use of water, any associated discharge of water onto or into land in a manner that ensures that:* *(a) The overarching purpose of the Vision and Strategy to restore and protect the health and wellbeing of the Waikato River for present and future generations is given effect to* *(b) The further degradation of water quality is avoided* *(c) Any adverse changes to natural flow regimes are avoided as far as practicable and otherwise mitigated* *(d) Adverse effects on the relationship tangata whenua as Kaitiaki have with water are avoided, remedied or mitigated* *(e) Adverse effects on in-stream ecological values are avoided, remedied or mitigated*	The proposed discharge is considered to be in keeping with Policy 3.4.3.1 for the reasons set out at Objective 3.1.2.

(f) Adverse effects on wetlands that are habitats for significant indigenous vegetation and significant habitats for indigenous fauna are avoided, remedied, or mitigated *(g) Adverse effects on groundwater quality are avoided as far as practicable and otherwise mitigated* *(h) Does not result in an adverse effect relating to the objectives in Chapter 5.2 of this plan* *(i) The benefits to be derived from the efficient take and use of water for reasonably foreseeable future uses, and in particular for domestic or municipal supply, are maintained and/ or enhanced.*	
Policy 3.4.3.2 Efficient Use of Water Ensure the efficient use of water by: (a) Requiring the amount of water taken and used to be reasonable and justifiable with regard to the intended use and where appropriate: (i) For domestic or municipal supplies is justified by way of a water management plan. (ii) For industry, implementation of industry good practice, in respect of the efficient use of water for that particular activity/industry. (iii) For irrigation, the following measures in relation to the maximum daily rate of abstraction, the irrigation return period and the seasonal or annual volume of the proposed take: - A maximum seasonal allocation reliability of up to 9 out of 10 years - A minimum application efficiency of 80 percent (even if the actual system being used has a lower application efficiency), or on the basis of a higher efficiency where an application is for an irrigation system with a higher efficiency (b) Requiring consideration of water conservation and minimisation methods, such as leak detection and loss monitoring as integral parts of water take and use consent applications to ensure no significant wastage of water resources	N/A – the proposal does not involve any new water takes.

(c) Raising awareness amongst the regional community about water efficiency issues and techniques (d) Facilitating the transfer of water take permits, provided the transfer does not result in effects that are inconsistent with the purpose of the relevant Water Management Class, as identified by the policies in Section 3.2.3 and the water classes in Section 3.2.4 (e) Promoting investigation of alternatives to the water take, alternative water sources, water harvesting (excluding the Waikato River catchment above Karapiro Dam) and seasonal storage, as an integral part of water take and use consent applications. (f) Promoting shared use and management of water through water user groups or other arrangements where there is increased efficiency in the use and allocation of water.	
3.5 Discharges	
Objective 3.5.2 Discharges of contaminants to water undertaken in a manner that: (a) does not have adverse effects that are inconsistent with the water management objectives in Section 3.1.2 (b) does not have adverse effects that are inconsistent with the discharges onto or into land objectives in Section 5.2.2 (c) Ensures that decisions regarding the discharge of contaminants to water do not reduce the contaminant assimilative capacity of the water body to the extent that allocable flows as provided for in Chapter 3.3 are unable to be utilised for out of stream uses.	N/A – the proposal does not include the discharge of contaminants to water.
Policy 3.5.3.4 Discharges to Land Ensure that the discharge of contaminants onto or into land maximises the reuse of nutrients and water contained in the discharge.	N/A – the proposal does not include the discharge of contaminants onto or into land.

Policy 3.5.3.5 Ground Water Minimise the adverse effects of discharges onto or into land on ground water quality by ensuring that they: a. do not compromise existing or reasonably foreseeable uses of ground water b. avoid adverse effects on surface water bodies that are inconsistent with the policies in Section 3.2.3 of this Plan as far as practicable and otherwise, remedy or mitigate those effects c. are not inconsistent with the policies in Section 3.8.3 that manage the effects of drilling and discharges associated with drilling on ground water quality.	The proposed stormwater discharge will comply with permitted activity rule 3.5.11.5 Discharge of Stormwater Onto or Into Land and will not adversely affect ground water quality or surface waterbodies.
Policy 3.5.3.6 Tangata Whenua Uses and Values Ensure that the relationship of tangata whenua as Kaitiaki with water is recognised and provided for to avoid significant adverse effects and remedy or mitigate cumulative adverse effects on: (a) the mauri of water (b) waahi tapu sites (c) other identified taonga.	Extensive consultation with Tangata Whenua has been undertaken as part of the Ashbourne Development, as further detailed in the Engagement and Consultation Summary Report at **Appendix 1D**. Letters of support have been provided by Ngāti Hauā, Raukawa, and Ngāti Hinerangi. Based on the proposed stormwater management approach within the solar farm sites and for the wider Ashbourne Development, it is considered that the proposal will avoid and mitigate cumulative adverse effects on water quality, including that of the Waitoa River, which will receive flows via the proposed Greenway.
Policy 3.5.3.7 Stormwater Discharges Encourage at-source management and treatment of stormwater discharges to reduce water quality and water quantity effects of discharges on receiving waters.	The proposed stormwater management approach includes discharge to land and the treatment of stormwater discharges on site where this is required.
3.6 Damming and Diverting	
Objective 3.6.2 Damming and/or diverting of water undertaken in a manner that: (a) Does not have adverse effects that are inconsistent with the water management objectives in Section 3.1.2. (b) Does not have adverse effects that are inconsistent with the river and lake bed structures objectives in Section 4.2.2.	N/A – the proposal does not include the damming or diversion of waterbodies.

(c) Does not obstruct fish passage where it would otherwise occur in the absence of unnatural barriers, so that trout or indigenous fish can complete their lifecycle. (d) Results in no increase in the adverse effects of flooding or land instability hazards. (e) Results in no loss of existing aquatic habitats as a consequence of channelisation of rivers. (f) Increases the use of off-stream dams for water supply purposes as an alternative to dams in perennial streams. (g) ensures that decisions regarding the damming and diverting of water take account of the consequent loss of water quality and any associated reduction in contaminant assimilative capacity, minimum flows and allocable flows for out of stream uses as provided by Section 3.3.3 Policy 1 and Table 3-5 of Chapter 3.3. (h) Refer to Objective 3.A.1.	
Policy 3.6.3.1 Off-Stream Dams and Dams or Diversions on Ephemeral Systems Enable through permitted activity rules the use of off-stream dams, or dams and diversions on ephemeral streams where: (a) Adverse effects on surface water bodies that are inconsistent with the policies in Section 3.2.3 of this Plan are avoided. (b) The use, erection, reconstruction, placement, alteration or extension of structures on the beds of lakes or rivers associated with the activity avoid adverse effects that are inconsistent with the policies in Section 4.2.3. (c) The damming and diversion does not increase the adverse effects of flooding or erosion on neighbouring properties. (d) Changes in the catchment and sediment transport processes have no significant adverse effects on water quality, aquatic habitat and flow regimes in perennial streams. (e) Any significant adverse effect on cave systems are avoided or mitigated.	N/A – the proposal does not include the damming or diversion of waterbodies.

(f) Any adverse effects on wetlands that are areas of significant indigenous vegetation and/or significant habitats of indigenous fauna are avoided, remedied or mitigated in accordance with Policies 1 and 2 of Chapter 3.7. (g) Existing legal public access to and along lakes and rivers is maintained where appropriate.	
Policy 3.6.3.3 Tangata Whenua Uses and Values Ensure that the relationship of tangata whenua as Kaitiaki with water is recognised and provided for, to avoid significant adverse effects and remedy or mitigate cumulative adverse effects on: (a) the mauri of water, (b) waahi tapu sites, (c) other identified taonga.	N/A – the proposal does not include the damming or diversion of waterbodies. The effects of the proposed stormwater management approach on matters identified under Policy 3.6.3.3 is assessed above.
Policy 3.6.3.4 Wetlands and Peat Lakes Enhance or maintain the extent and quality of the Region's wetlands by encouraging activities that will either maintain or reinstate agreed water levels in wetland areas or peat lakes.	N/A – the proposal does not include the damming or diversion of waterbodies.
3.7 Wetlands	
Policy 3.7.3.1 Control Land Drainage in Areas Adjacent to Identified Wetlands and Within Wetlands Ensure that land drainage activities within wetlands that are areas of significant indigenous vegetation and/or significant habitats of indigenous fauna, or immediately adjacent to wetlands identified in Section 3.7.7, are undertaken in a manner that avoids changes in water level that lead to: (a) shrinking or loss of the wetland, or (b) accelerated dewatering and oxidation, or (c) significant adverse effects on tangata whenua values of the wetland, or (d) adverse effects of flooding on neighbouring properties, or (e) significant adverse effects on the relationship tangata whenua as Kaitiaki have with the wetland, or (f) adverse effects on the natural character of wetlands or	N/A – no land drainage activities are proposed within any wetlands.

(g) adverse effects on the ability to use the wetlands for recreational purposes and remedy or mitigate otherwise.	
Chapter 5: Land and Soil Module	
5.1 Accelerated Erosion	
Objective 5.1.2 A net reduction of accelerated erosion across the Region so that: (a) soil productivity, versatility and capability is maintained (b) there are no adverse effects on water quality, aquatic ecosystems and wetlands that are inconsistent with Water Management Objective 3.1.2 (c) there is no increase in the adverse effects of flooding or land instability hazards (d) accelerated infilling of lakes, estuaries, rivers, wetlands and cave systems is avoided and the rate of infilling of artificial watercourses, excluding structures designed to trap sediment, is minimised (e) significant adverse effects on the relationship tangata whenua as Kaitiaki have with their identified ancestral taonga such as ancestral lands, water and waahi tapu are avoided (f) cumulative adverse effects on the relationship tangata whenua as Kaitiaki have with their identified taonga such as ancestral lands, water, waahi tapu are remedied or mitigated. (g) significant adverse effects on natural character and ecological values associated with land and the coastal environment including dune systems is avoided (h) there are no adverse effects on air quality that are inconsistent with Air Quality Objective 6.1.2, Objectives 2 and 3 (i) damage to property and infrastructure is avoided	All earthworks will be undertaken in accordance with Waikato Regional Council's Erosion and sediment control guidelines, which will ensure potential effects of soil erosion and sedimentation on water quality can be appropriately managed.
Policy 5.1.3.2 Managing Activities that Cause or Have the Potential to Cause Accelerated Erosion and Encouraging Appropriate Land Management Practices	As outlined above.

Through permitted activities and non-regulatory methods manage activities that cause or have the potential to cause accelerated erosion, with particular regard to: (a) the potential for the activity to adversely affect the purpose of the water management classes as identified in the policies in Section 3.2.2, and the coastal marine area (b) the risk of downstream sedimentation leading to accelerated infilling of lakes, estuaries, artificial watercourses, rivers, wetlands and caves (c) the erosion potential of soil when it is disturbed or vegetation is cleared (d) the potential to increase the adverse effects of flooding (e) the potential to adversely affect waahi tapu and archaeological sites or other identified sites of importance to tangata whenua as Kaitiaki (f) the potential to adversely affect natural character of the coastal environment and the margins of rivers, lakes and wetlands and areas of significant indigenous vegetation and significant habitats of indigenous fauna (g) the potential to compromise air quality objectives as identified in Module 6 Air (h) the potential to damage property and infrastructure.	
Policy 5.1.3.3 Promote Good Practice Promote, through environmental education, good practice guides and incentives, soil and land management practices that avoid adverse effects on soil productivity, capability and versatility and the off-site effects of sediment discharge, and remedies or mitigates these effect if they do occur.	As outlined above.
5.2 Discharges Onto or Into Land	
Objective 5.2.2 Discharges of wastes and hazardous substances onto or into land undertaken in a manner that: (a) does not contaminate soil to levels that present significant risks to human health or the wider environment	N/A – the proposal does not include the discharge of wastes or hazardous substances to land.

(b) does not have adverse effects on aquatic habitats, surface water quality or ground water quality that are inconsistent with the Water Management objectives in Section 3.1.2 (c) does not have adverse effects related to particulate matter, odour or hazardous substances that are inconsistent with the Air Quality objectives in Section 6.1.2 (d) is not inconsistent with the objectives in Section 5.1.2 (e) avoids significant adverse effects on the relationship that tangata whenua as Kaitiaki have with their taonga such as ancestral lands, water and waahi tapu (f) remedies or mitigates cumulative adverse effects on the relationship that tangata whenua as Kaitiaki have with their identified taonga such as ancestral lands, water and waahi tapu.	
5.3 Contaminated Land	
Objective 5.3.2 Discharges of contaminants from contaminated land shall be managed so that they: (a) do not present significant risk of chronic or acute toxic effects on human health, flora or fauna due to the contamination of soil and ground or surface water (b) do not have adverse effects on water quality or aquatic ecosystems that are inconsistent with the water management objectives in Section 3.1.2 (c) there are no adverse effects on air quality that are inconsistent with air quality objectives in Section 6.1.2 (d) avoid significant adverse effects on the relationship that tangata whenua as Kaitiaki have with their identified taonga such as ancestral lands, water and waahi tapu (e) remedy or mitigate cumulative adverse effects on the relationship that tangata whenua as Kaitiaki have with their identified taonga such as ancestral lands, water and waahi tapu.	A Preliminary Site Investigation and Detailed Site Investigation have been undertaken for the site. The investigations confirmed that while some contaminants associated with historical rural activities (e.g., pesticides, fertiliser use, and possible lead-based paint) were detected, all results were below the relevant human health and ecological soil guideline values set under the NES for Contaminants in Soil (NESCS). Importantly, no asbestos or PAHs were detected, and the elevated heavy metal levels (notably cadmium, lead, and zinc) were below NESCS thresholds and therefore do not pose a risk to human or animal health, food production suitability, or groundwater. The investigation was undertaken by a Suitably Qualified and Experienced Practitioner (SQEP) and concluded that the site does not meet the definition of contaminated land under the Waikato Regional Plan. A controlled activity consent under Regulation 9(3) of the NESCS is recommended to manage any future soil disturbance, ensuring full regulatory compliance. Soil contaminants, specifically with regard to human health, are being managed as outlined in the Detailed Site Investigated, included as **Appendix 1R**, to minimise the potential effects of this contamination. Remediation is proposed to mitigate this.
Policy 5.3.3.1 Priorities for the Management of Contaminated Land	As outlined above.

List and prioritise land uses that present significant risk of contamination and give priority to managing those with the greatest risk.	
Policy 5.3.3.3 Remediation Through rules in this Plan and resource consent processes, enable the remediation of contaminated land where the technology to be used and associated discharges are unlikely to have adverse effects that are inconsistent with the objectives or the requirements of the RMA.	As outlined above.

5.0 Matamata-Piako District Plan

Objective / Policy	Comment
Part A 2.4 Sustainable Management Strategy	
2. Controlling Activities	
O1. To manage activities in a manner that gives certainty to the public as to the potential location and effects of activities.	The proposal will be consistent with this objective as the proposed solar farm is a permitted activity under Section 8.3.1 and is therefore an activity that is anticipated to occur.
O2. To sustainably manage the natural resources of indigenous biodiversity for ecological, landscape, heritage and natural feature value.	As identified in the Ecological Assessment included at **Appendix 1I**, the proposed solar farms will have low to positive effects on ecological values following the implementation of proposed mitigation measures. The proposal seeks to sustainably manage indigenous biodiversity through careful site selection, avoiding significant ecological areas, and implementing robust ecological management plans. These include measures to protect long-tailed bats and copper skinks, restore wetland and riparian habitats, and enhance landscape values through native planting. Collectively, these actions support the ecological, landscape, and natural feature values of the site while enabling renewable energy generation. On this basis, the proposal is considered to be in keeping with Objective 2.
O3. To recognise that the rural environment is primarily a place for rural production activities while also providing for a variety of other activities,	While solar farms are not a rural production activity, the scale at which they are proposed under this application is provided for in the Rural Zone. In this case,

including rural lifestyle, intensive farming, rural based industry and significant infrastructure networks and sites, which are dependent on a rural location.	the extensive amount of land required to enable the activity is also considered to be dependent on a rural location.
P1. To implement effective separation between incompatible activities while recognising that some existing activities may not be able to provide effective separation within their sites.	The proposed landscaping strategy and placement of the solar panels will achieve separation between the solar farm activity and adjoining residential activities, including existing activities and those proposed as part of the wider Ashbourne Development.
P2. To recognise the effect activities may have on indigenous vegetation and habitat of indigenous fauna.	The Ecological Assessment and AEE demonstrates that the solar farms will not adversely affect indigenous vegetation or the habitat of indigenous fauna. The potential impacts on indigenous fauna such as long-tailed bats and copper skinks are also acknowledged and addressed. Through targeted management plans, including bat-sensitive lighting, lizard salvage and relocation, and native planting, the proposal actively mitigates adverse effects and enhances habitat values. These measures reflect a clear recognition of ecological sensitivities and a commitment to responsible environmental stewardship. In addition, the proposed greenway proposed as part of the broader Ashbourne development will contribute positively to ecological values.
P3. Activities should not establish in rural areas unless they are able to be undertaken without constraining the lawful operation of existing activities.	As identified above and in the AEE, the solar farm is designed with a dual-use agrivoltaic model, allowing continued agricultural activity (specifically grazing) beneath the solar panels. This approach ensures that the productive capacity of the land is retained and that existing rural land uses are not displaced or constrained. Furthermore, it is considered that the solar farm sites are appropriately located and integrated into the wider development, with landscaping and security measures to mitigate reverse sensitivity effects. The solar farms have been designed to ensure it will not interfere with neighbouring rural operations, and its design actively avoids fragmentation or disruption of surrounding land-based primary production.
3. Tangata Whenua	
O1. To maintain and encourage kaitiaki responsibility (guardianship) of Maori by implementing a partnership approach to the sustainable management of the District's natural and physical resource.	Extensive consultation with Tangata Whenua has been undertaken as part of the Ashbourne Development, as further detailed in the Engagement and Consultation Summary Report at Appendix 1D. A Cultural Impact Assessment and Letters of support have been provided by Ngāti Hauā, Raukawa, and Ngāti Hinerangi. A memorandum of understanding will be progressed as a condition of

	the resource consent with iwi in relation to matters such as earthworks, accidental discovery protocol and landscaping / planting schedules.
6. Integrated Land-use and Infrastructure	
Land-use, subdivision and infrastructure are planned in an integrated manner that: • Does not compromise the function, operation, maintenance, upgrading or development of infrastructure, including regionally significant infrastructure; • Recognises the need for the provision of infrastructure; and subdivision, land-use and development to be coordinated; and • Ensures the sustainable management of natural and physical resources while enabling people and communities to provide for their economic, social, and cultural wellbeing.	The proposal is considered to be in keeping with this objective as the solar farms are a permitted activity in the Rural Zone and can be appropriately serviced by infrastructure. In particular, they will, as a source of renewable energy, provide for the sustainable management of natural and physical resources while providing for the economic, social, and cultural wellbeing of people and communities.
P1. Rezoning, new development, and expansion/intensification of existing development shall take place where: • The operation, maintenance, upgrading, or development of infrastructure, including regionally significant infrastructure, is not compromised; • There is sufficient capacity in the infrastructure networks to cope with the additional demand, or where the existing networks can be upgraded cost-effectively to meet that demand; • The networks have been designed to carry the type of service including the type and volume of traffic required to support the development; and • Adverse effects on the natural and physical environment can be appropriately avoided, remedied, and mitigated.	N/A – the proposal does not include rezoning, expansion, or intensification, and is provided for as a permitted activity.
P2. Land use and infrastructure must be coordinated so that: • Development can be appropriately serviced by infrastructure in a cost effective manner; • Land use change does not result in adverse effects on the functioning of infrastructure networks; and • Development does not adversely affect the efficiency and effectiveness of infrastructure networks.	As outlined above.

P3. Subdivision and development which result in the uneconomic expansion of existing infrastructure shall be avoided.	The proposal does not involve development that will result in the uneconomic expansion of existing infrastructure.
P4. The increased demand on infrastructure is managed by requiring subdivision and development to be coordinated with the provision of infrastructure and integrated with the transport network and the District's road hierarchy.	The proposal does not include development that would create increased demand on existing infrastructure.
P5. The role of sustainable design technologies such as rainwater harvesting, rain gardens and grey water recycling in reducing pressures on, and the cost of providing, maintaining, and upgrading infrastructure networks, is recognised.	The proposal does not result in the need to upgrade existing infrastructure networks.
8. Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Generation	
O1. Energy demand is met in a sustainable manner that: • Maximises the efficient use of energy; and • Enables the operation, maintenance, upgrading and development of renewable energy generation activities and associated electricity transmission.	As the proposal is for renewable energy generation that will provide energy for up to 7,000 homes, it will directly give effect to this objective.
P1. The national significance of renewable energy generation activities (including their contribution to the national renewable electricity generation target), and the national, regional, and local benefits of these activities are recognised.	As outlined above.
P2. Investigation into, operation, maintenance, upgrading, and development of new and existing renewable energy generation activities (including small and community scale renewable electricity generation) and their connections to the electricity transmission grid are enabled while managing: • Significant adverse effects on the environment and ensuring that any residual environmental effects which cannot be avoided remedied or mitigated can be offset or compensated to benefit the affected community or the region; and: • The potential for conflict with existing land uses/natural and physical resources.	As detailed in the AEE, the proposal's potential effects with respect to visual landscape and amenity, ecology, traffic, construction, noise and vibration, infrastructure servicing, and stormwater can be avoided or mitigated to be less than minor. On this basis, the proposal will not result in significant adverse effects or create any residual environmental effects that are required to be offset or compensated.
P3. The practical constraints associated with the operation, maintenance, upgrading, and development of renewable electricity generation activities and associated electricity transmission are recognised.	The proposed solar farm is consistent with this Policy and in particular, the solar farm is located on large land parcels that are relatively flat.

P4. Efficiency in the use of energy is encouraged as far as is practicable having regard to: • The energy requirements of urban form, subdivision patterns and site orientation; • The design, location and orientation of buildings; • Transport modes and patterns; • Use of energy saving technologies; and: • Waste recovery and reuse.	N/A – the proposal does not include subdivision or development or urban form, however the solar farm will directly contribute to the efficient use of energy.
Part A 3.1.2 Environment – Natural Environment and Heritage	
1. Landscape Character	
O1. To retain and enhance the varied landscape qualities of the District.	While there are no identified outstanding or significant natural features or other protected items within the site, the proposal includes a comprehensive landscaping strategy to address potential visual and amenity effects on the existing landscape character.
P1. The scale, location and design of buildings, structures and activities in outstanding landscape types of the District should: • Preserve the elements which contribute to its natural character. • Not detract from the amenity values of the landscape.	The proposed solar panels will have a height of 2.5m above ground when fully tilted, and are considered to be an appropriate scale. Furthermore, it is noted that solar farms are a permitted activity that can be anticipated in the Rural Zone.
2. Natural Environment	
O1. To protect and enhance the natural resources within the District that are valued for their intrinsic, scientific, educational and recreational values.	Overall, the proposed Ashbourne Development will result in a net positive ecological outcome for the site, including through limited ecological disturbance and ecological uplift through the design of the greenway system.
O2. Trees that have significant value to the community in terms of amenity, ecological and historical values are recognised and protected.	There are no protected trees located within the site. Notwithstanding, the proposed landscaping strategy seeks to retain existing mature trees where practicable to recognise the amenity values of these trees.

P1. Recreational use of wetlands and bush and the surface of rivers and streams will be allowed where such use is consistent with the conservation objectives of that area. Council may exclude access to some areas of high ecological quality.	N/A – the proposal does not include the recreational use of wetlands, bush, or the surface of waterbodies.
P2. To avoid, remedy or mitigate the adverse effects of activities that have the potential to compromise, damage or destroy significant areas of indigenous vegetation and habitats of indigenous fauna.	N/A – there is no indigenous vegetation located within the site.
P3. Outstanding natural features, areas of indigenous vegetation or habitats of indigenous fauna are to be permanently protected at the time of subdivision, use and development.	N/A – there are no outstanding or significant natural features or indigenous vegetation located within the site.
P4. To maintain and enhance ecosystems with their essential values and qualities.	As outlined above.
3. Heritage	
O1. To recognise, protect and enhance significant heritage resources which are valued as part of the District's heritage.	N/A – there are no identified heritage sites within either of the sites.
Part A 3.2.2 Environment – Natural Hazards	
1. Flooding	
O1. To minimise the risks of flooding affecting people and property in the District.	As identified in the Infrastructure Report at Appendix 3F, the proposal will result in a negligible increase in flood depth across Northern Solar Farm. Within the Southern Solar Farm, increases in levels of ponding will be diverted to the proposed access roads which will flow to the proposed Greenway. This approach will ensure that the risks of flooding and the potential effects on people and property in the District can be avoided.
P1. To ensure that all future development does not increase the flood risk for existing buildings and activities.	As outlined above.
P2. To avoid building development below a known risk factor of 1% annual return flood levels.	As outlined above.
P3. To ensure new developments and subdivision take cognisance of overland flow paths in their design to avoid adverse effects.	As outlined above.

P4. To utilise public open space as natural floodways and ponding areas where this does not adversely affect protected natural environments and heritage features.	Flows from the Southern Solar Farm will ultimately be directed to the proposed Greenway in accordance with the intent of this policy.
P5. To provide an acceptable degree of protection to settlements and productive rural land from the adverse effects of flooding.	As outlined above.
2. Fire Hazard	
O1. To minimise fire hazard for people and property in the District.	The sites are not identified as a Fire Line Edge or within the Fire Hazard Buffer on the planning maps.
3. Wind Hazard	
O1. To minimise wind hazards for people and property in the District.	The sites are not located on an exposed ride and is not subject to known wind tunnelling effects.
4. Land Movements	
O1. To minimise hazards for people and property caused by erosion, slipping, slumping and land instability.	The sites are not located within a known instability area of subject to peat soil. The Geotechnical Report included at Appendix 1M confirms that the sites are suitable for the proposed development from a geotechnical perspective.
P1. To ensure that future development does not aggravate instability or erosion problems.	As outlined above.
P2. To avoid development in areas subject to high risk of land movement.	As outlined above.
5. Earthquake Hazard	
O1. To minimise the risks of earthquakes affecting people and property in the District as far as practicable.	The sites are not located within area subject to known earthwork risk.
Part A 3.3.2 Environment – Land and Development	
1. Sustainable Activities	
O1. To maintain and enhance the District's land resource to enable activities that do not threaten the life supporting capacity of the soil and consequently water and ecosystems.	As previously assessed, the proposed stormwater management strategy will appropriately manage stormwater quality and quantity to ensure that the proposal does not adversely affect the life supporting capacity of soils, water, or ecosystems.

O2. To manage all activities in a manner that maintains and enhances the District's high quality soils and to ensure that the productive capability of rural land is not compromised.	While the proposed solar farms are not a rural production activity, the proposal is a permitted activity. In addition, the sites will also provide for the grazing of livestock following the completion of construction, which will providing for the ongoing productive use of the land.
O3. To safeguard the life-supporting capacity of the District's high quality soils by preventing inappropriate further fragmentation of rural land titles.	The proposal does not include any subdivision to the existing land titles.
P1. To maintain and enhance the soil cover and soil values including: water holding capacity, soil structure and organic components necessary to support a diversity of vegetation.	As outlined above.
P2. To avoid, remedy or mitigate any adverse effects on the intrinsic values of the land from the disposal of solid and liquid wastes and or stormwater.	The proposed discharge of stormwater will not adversely affect the intrinsic values of the land. No solid or liquid wastes are proposed to be disposed of within the sites.
P3. To avoid, remedy or mitigate the adverse effects of land use practices on the land resource in a way that avoids any potential for soil erosion and sedimentation of waterways.	All earthworks will be undertaken in accordance with Waikato Regional Council's Erosion and sediment control guidelines, which will ensure potential effects of soil erosion and sedimentation on water quality can be appropriately managed.
P4. Subdivision, use or development must minimise the coverage of good quality soils.	Further assessment of the Retirement Living proposal against the relevant provisions of the HPS-HPL is included at the table above.
P5. To limit fragmentation of rural land by limiting opportunities for residential or rural-residential subdivision in the Rural zone to conserve the land for the use of future generations.	N/A – the proposal does not include subdivision that would fragment the existing land titles or residential or rural-residential activities.
P6. To avoid, remedy or mitigate the effects of development through the consideration of the natural and physical resources including roading, drainage, conservation, any hazards, and effects incompatible with other activities.	It is considered that the wider Ashbourne development incorporates a carefully considered design strategy to respond to existing natural and physical resources. This is further outlined in the Urban Design Assessment included as Appendix 1Q and at Appendices 4K and 5N.
P7. To ensure that the productive potential of high quality soils in the Rural zone is retained by promoting large lot sizes that provide for a range of productive rural uses.	The proposal does not include any subdivision to the existing land titles.
Environment – Amenity	
1. Development Standards	

O1. To maintain and enhance a high standard of amenity in the built environment without constraining development innovation and building variety.	The proposed landscaping strategy, which includes the implementation of a planting buffer around the solar farms will be in keeping with the existing character of the surrounding rural area. On this basis, it is considered that the standard of amenity can be maintained.
O2. To minimise the adverse effects created by building scale or dominance, shading, building location and site layout.	The proposed solar panel structures will comply with the bulk and location development controls. While the panels meet the definition of a building and exceed the maximum permitted coverage of 10%, it is considered that the low height profile of the panels, in combination with the provision for grazing activities in between solar panels will mitigate potential visual effects from dominance and shading.
P1. To ensure that development in residential and rural areas achieves adequate levels of daylight admission, privacy and open space for development sites and adjacent properties.	The potential effects of the proposal on adjacent properties will be minimised due to separation distances, intervening topography, and the proposed buffer planting.
P2. To minimise the effects created by building scale, overshadowing, and building bulk in business, industrial and recreational areas.	N/A – the proposal is not located in a business, industrial, or recreational area.
P3. To maintain the open space character of residential and rural areas by ensuring that development is compatible in scale to surrounding activities and structures.	Upon maturity, the proposed buffer planting will be viewed as a shelterbelt around the site boundaries, in keeping with the existing rural and rural-residential context and character.
P4. To recognise that the lowdensity urban form in the District's towns contributes to the amenity and character of the area.	As outlined above.
P5. To provide for development within the District in a manner that encourages flexibility and innovation in design and variety in the built form while achieving the anticipated environmental results.	The proposal is considered to be in keeping with this policy as potential visual effects of the proposed solar farm can be avoided and mitigated to achieve the anticipated environmental results within the Rural Zone.
2. Design, Appearance and Character	
O1. To ensure that the design and appearance of buildings and sites is in keeping with the character of the surrounding townscape and landscape.	Upon maturity, the proposed buffer planting will be viewed as a shelterbelt around the site boundaries, in keeping with the existing rural and rural-residential context and character.
O2. To recognise and promote the special urban character of Te Aroha and Matamata and to develop the urban character of Morrinsville.	N/A – the sites are outside of the areas identified in Objective 2.

O3. To ensure that the design of subdivisions and the potential future development maintains or enhances the rural character, landscape and amenity of the zone and the surrounding area.	N/A – the proposal does not include subdivision.
P1. To encourage a high standard of on-site amenity in residential, business, recreational and industrial areas.	N/A – the proposal does not include occupiable buildings.
P3. To recognise and enhance the open space "garden city" character of the built form at Matamata.	N/A – the sites are located outside of the urban area.
P4. To achieve a compatible and consistent urban form through the utilisation of design guidelines for special character areas.	N/A – the sites are located outside of the urban area and are not located within a special character area.
P5. To encourage a varied and interesting built form by supporting initiatives and providing development amenity incentives for comprehensive and innovative subdivision and development design.	N/A – the proposal does not include occupiable buildings.
P6. To maintain and enhance the predominant domestic character of residential areas.	N/A – the sites are located outside of the urban area and is not within the Residential Zone or Rural Residential Zone.
P7. To ensure that the rural landscape, character and amenity values are maintained by avoiding inappropriate adverse effects, including cumulative adverse effects, from subdivision and potential future development.	As identified above, the proposed solar farms will maintain existing character and amenity values associated with the surrounding rural environment through the implementation of the comprehensive landscaping strategy. In particular, upon maturity, all buffer planting will be viewed as a shelterbelt which will be in keeping with the surrounding rural context.
P8. To ensure that the placement of new lots and/or building platforms are not located on prominent ridgelines or hillside faces where the visibility of future development can adversely affect the rural landscape and character.	N/A – no new lots or building platforms will be created.
P9. Subdivision, use and development that is not primarily related to productive rural activities or requiring a rural location shall occur predominately in urban areas.	The proposal does not include subdivision within the Rural Zone. In addition, solar farms of the proposed scale area provided for as a permitted activity.
3. Nuisance	
O1. To ensure that residences are free from the effects of unreasonable and excessive noise, odour, dust, glare and vibration.	As assessed in the Acoustic Assessment at Appendix 3G, both solar farms can operate within the permitted noise levels. As assessed in the Glint and Glare Reports included at Appendix 3D and Appendix 3E, glare from the proposed solar farms will not affect neighbouring sites.

O2. To provide healthy and safe working, living and recreational environments by avoiding and mitigating the effect of excessive noise, vibration, odour and dust.	As outlined above.
O3. To recognise the existing character of rural areas and acknowledge that some adverse effects will arise from rural activities that may require management.	N/A – the proposal does not include any rural activities.
O4. To ensure that lawfully established activities which generate minor nuisance effects are not unreasonably compromised by the proximity or action of neighbouring land-users or non-rural activities.	N/A – the proposal does not include any existing lawfully established activities.
O6. To ensure that subdivision and land use activities are located and sited in a manner that recognises existing and planned infrastructure networks and avoids, remedies, or mitigates any potential reverse-sensitivity effects on those infrastructure networks.	The proposal is not for a sensitive activity and will not create the potential for reverse sensitivity effects on existing infrastructure networks.
P1. To protect residential and rural amenity by the use of performance standards for noise, glare, odour, particulates and vibration control which generally ensure that generated effects do not exceed background or ambient levels.	As outlined above.
P2. To ensure that activities in business, rural, industrial and recreational areas avoid, remedy or mitigate generated effects to maintain and enhance a healthy, safe and pleasant environment and take all reasonable steps to internalise any nuisance effects.	N/A – the proposal is not located in a business, industrial, or recreational area.
P3. To reinforce existing mitigation measures, and to encourage those who generate the nuisance effect to maintain and enhance those measures, including separation between industry, public or designated works or intensive farming operations and Residential zones and the notional boundaries about rural residences.	The proposed landscaping strategy and placement of the solar panels will achieve separation between the solar farm activity and adjoining residential activities, including existing activities and those proposed as part of the wider Ashbourne Development. The proposed buffer planting will also mitigate potential visual effects when the developed is viewed beyond the boundaries of the sites.
P4. To avoid, remedy or mitigate significant adverse noise, odour, dust, glare and vibration effects generated by rural activities and other activities in rural areas.	N/A – the proposal is not for a new rural activity.

P5. To maintain rural amenity while acknowledging that lawfully established activities in the rural area may generate effects such as odour, noise, dust and vibration which are generally not anticipated in urban areas.	As detailed above, it is considered that the proposed solar farms will maintain rural amenity values, including values associated with visual effects and noise generation.
P6. To ensure that appropriate buffers and other mitigation measures are established between incompatible activities and zones.	The proposed landscape buffers will mitigate potential visual effects between the sites for the solar farms and adjoining activities in the Residential and Rural zone which have the potential to be more sensitive.
Environment – Works and Network Utilities	
1. Community Infrastructure	
O1. The safe, efficient, and reliable provision of works and network utilities essential for the wellbeing of the community is enabled and protected, while the associated adverse effects are appropriately managed.	The proposal will enable the construction and operation of a renewable energy source that will contribute to the social, economic, and cultural wellbeing of the community. The proposal is also underpinned by a suite of technical assessments that provide a robust understanding of potential adverse environmental effects. As further detailed in the Assessment of Environmental Effects (AEE), the proposal's adverse effects will be less than minor.
O2. Development is planned, and works and network utilities are provided, in an integrated and coordinated manner.	N/A – the proposal is not required to be serviced by other infrastructure or network utilities.
P2. To protect works and network utilities from incompatible development, use or subdivision.	The proposal minimises the potential for reverse sensitivity effects by creating physical and visual separation with adjacent residential activities through the proposed site layout and landscaping strategy.
P3. To ensure that works and network utilities are considered having regard to: • The environment as it exists; • The duration, timing and frequency of the adverse effect; • The impact on the network and levels of service if the new work is not undertaken; • The need for the work in the context of the wider network or in the context of the provision of alternative infrastructure; • The avoidance, remediation or mitigation of anticipated adverse environmental effects to the extent practicable; • The demand for/benefits of existing and future services/facilities;	The proposal is considered to be consistent with this policy for the following reasons: • As detailed in the AEE, the proposal's potential effects with respect to visual landscape and amenity, ecology, traffic, construction, noise and vibration, infrastructure servicing, and stormwater can be avoided or mitigated to be less than minor; • The construction and operation of the solar farm will contribute to the social, economic, and cultural wellbeing of people and communities; and • The sites are suitable for the proposed activity given it is a large expansive piece of land and relatively flat in topography.

• The route, site, and method selection process; and: • The technical and locational constraints.	
P4. Where applicable, to encourage new infrastructure to be located within road reserves.	N/A – the proposal is not establishing new infrastructure within road reserves.
P6. The nature, timing, and sequencing of land-use, development and subdivision must: • Priorities the development of identified growth areas and areas with existing infrastructure capacity in order to achieve the efficient use of existing infrastructure • Be co-ordinated with the funding, implementation, and operation of the associated requirements for works and network utilities; • Optimise the efficient and affordable provision of works and network utilities; • Maintain and enhance the operational efficiency, effectiveness, viability and safety of works and network utilities; • Protect investment in existing works and network utilities; • Ensure new development does not occur until appropriate infrastructure services are in place or alternative infrastructure has been provided by the development; and: • Retain the ability to maintain and upgrade works and network utilities.	N/A – the proposal is not required to be serviced by other infrastructure or network utilities.
P7. Provision of works and network utilities occurs in a planned and coordinated manner which recognises and addresses potential cumulative effects and is based on sufficient information to allow assessment of the potential long-term effects on the environment.	As identified above, the proposal is also underpinned by a suite of technical assessments that provide a robust understanding of potential adverse environmental effects. As further detailed in the Assessment of Environmental Effects (AEE), the proposal's adverse effects will be less than minor.
P8. Provision of works and network utilities adopts, where appropriate, sustainable design technologies such as the incorporation of energy-efficient design, rain gardens, rainwater harvesting, and grey-water recycling.	The proposed solar farms will contribute to the design of efficient energy generation within the district, and is considered to be in keeping with this policy.
P9. Stormwater is managed having regard to a total catchment management approach and low impact design methods.	Based on the proposed stormwater management approach within the solar farm sites and for the wider Ashbourne Development, it is considered that the proposal will avoid and mitigate cumulative adverse effects on water quality, through a total catchment management approach. While there is limited need

	to incorporate low impact design methods within the solar farms due to the nature of stormwater runoff, low impact design methods have been incorporated within the residential and retirement village developments.
Part A 3.8.2 Environment – Transportation	
1. Transportation	
O1. The strategic importance of significant transport infrastructure is recognised.	N/A – the proposal does not include significant transport infrastructure.
O2. A safe, efficient, integrated, and environmentally sustainable transport network that ensures our social, economic, and cultural wellbeing.	The vehicle movements to each solar farm site will be minimal (2 per day per site) once the solar farms are operational, and can be accommodated within the public road network. On this basis, it is considered that the proposal will maintain the safety and efficiency of the transport network.
O3. The avoidance, remediation or mitigation of the adverse effects of transportation.	As identified above, adverse effects of the solar farm on the surrounding transport network can be avoided.
O4. To ensure that those activities that place demands on the roading network contribute fairly to any works considered necessary to meet those demands.	As outlined above.
O5. To protect residential amenity from the effects of excessive traffic generation.	As outlined above.
O6. To maximise safety and convenience for pedestrians and vehicular traffic on all sites.	N/A – no pedestrian use is anticipated.
O7. Provision for parking and loading is adequate to ensure the safety and efficiency of the road network, without stifling development or leading to inefficient use of land.	While formalised parking and loading is not required for the operation of the solar farm, sufficient space is available to accommodate this within the boundaries of the sites.
O8. To encourage the provision of alternative transportation networks where it is clearly demonstrated that the provision of such networks will positively benefit and enhance the environment and community which they serve.	N/A
P1. Subdivision, use and development shall be managed to recognise, enable, and protect: • The primary function of significant transport infrastructure as inter-regional connectors; and	The proposal will not compromise the primary function of significant transport infrastructure.

• The local, regional, and national benefits of significant transport infrastructure.	
P2. The District's road hierarchy shall recognise and manage significant road corridors as the highest order of road.	N/A
P3. Subdivision, use and development shall enable a safe, integrated, efficient, and well-connected transport network that provides for all modes of passenger and freight transport in a manner that: • Ensures land-use and transportation successfully interface with each other; • Manages the adverse environmental effects of the network, and the effects of other activities on the network (i.e. reverse-sensitivity effects); • Considers the transport needs of an ageing population; and: • Ensures route security across all modes of travel.	As identified above, the vehicle movements to each solar farm site will be minimal (2 per day per site) once the solar farms are operational, and can be accommodated within the public road network. On this basis, it is considered that the proposal will not generate any adverse effects on the transport network.
P4. The road network shall be hierarchical, differentiating between roads according to their primary function thereby assisting in the planning and management of the network and surrounding land-uses.	N/A
P5. To ensure that access points and intersections meet safe sightline and spacing standards for the class of road within the hierarchy and are formed to appropriate design standards.	As assessed in the Integrated Transport Assessment included at Appendix 1P, sufficient sightlines can be obtained at the site accesses to both solar farm sites.
P6. To manage the location of subdivision and land use activities to avoid compromising road intersection and railway level crossing safety sightlines.	As above. The proposed access will not compromise road intersection sightlines.
P7. To ensure that the safety and efficiency of the state highways and district road networks are not compromised by proposed subdivision and/or development and the cumulative effect of subdivision and/or development.	As outlined above.
P8. To promote appropriate roading connections within and between land being subdivided to ensure our towns are well connected.	N/A
P9. To implement measures to avoid, or mitigate reverse-sensitivity effects on land near significant transport infrastructure, and at the Matamata airport.	N/A – the proposal is not for a sensitive activity and is not located near significant transport infrastructure.
P10. To ensure that traffic safety is maintained by carefully managing the location and design of any signs visible from state highway and District roads.	As outlined above. The proposed access will not compromise road intersection sightlines.

P11. Subdivision, use and development shall be managed in a way that takes into account the planning and availability of funding for transport infrastructure.	N/A – the proposal is not reliant on new transport infrastructure. Access associated with the Ashbourne residential development will be funded by the applicant.
P12. To ensure that subdivision and development takes into account the existing and proposed capacity and design of the transportation networks and that any adverse effects are avoided, remedied or mitigated.	N/A – the proposal will not generate significant new traffic volumes, and can be accommodated within the existing transport network.
P13. To manage unrelated through traffic on local roads to maintain and enhance the amenity values of the locality.	N/A
P14. To require landscaping within the transportation facilities or corridors where appropriate.	N/A
P15. To avoid dust and noise nuisance by requiring formation, sealing and screening of parking and loading areas and access ways in residential, business and Industrial zones and Kaitiaki (Conservation) zones that adjoin an urban area.	N/A
P16. Parking and loading facilities must be designed to ensure safe manoeuvring of vehicles and safe movement of pedestrians and cyclists.	While formalised parking and loading is not required for the operation of the solar farm, sufficient space is available to accommodate this within the boundaries of the sites without adversely affecting the safety of other vehicles, pedestrians, or cyclists.
P17. Outside "shopping frontage" areas, development shall provide adequate loading facilities on-site, for foreseeable future needs.	N/A
P20. To establish and maintain service lanes and public carparks which assist in reducing traffic congestion on surrounding streets.	N/A
P21. To encourage alternative transport modes by making provision for cycleways and walkways.	N/A
P22. To provide for the transportation needs of an ageing population and the mobility impaired.	N/A
P23. To require the retention of all roads, including paper roads, where alternative public access to the District's rivers is not available.	N/A – the sites are not located adjacent to any rivers which require public access to be provided by way of public roading.