



**NOTICE OF MEETING**

<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Planning Committee</b>
<b>Date and Time:</b>	<b>Wednesday 10 November 2021 7.00 pm</b>
<b>Place:</b>	<b>Council Chamber</b>
<b>Telephone Enquiries to:</b>	<b>Committee Services Committeeservices@hart.gov.uk</b>
<b>Members:</b>	<b>Ambler, Blewett, Cockarill, Delaney, Kennett, Oliver (Chairman), Quarterman, Radley, Southern, Wheale and Worlock</b>

Joint Chief Executive

CIVIC OFFICES, HARLINGTON WAY  
FLEET, HAMPSHIRE GU51 4AE

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**AGENDA**

**This Agenda and associated appendices are provided in electronic form only and are published on the Hart District Council Website.**

**Please download all papers through the Modern.Gov app before the meeting.**

- At the start of the meeting, the Lead Officer will confirm the Fire Evacuation Procedure.**
- The Chairman will announce that this meeting will be recorded and that anyone remaining at the meeting has provided their consent to any such recording.**

**1 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (Pages 3 - 6)**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 13 October to be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

## **2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

To receive any apologies for absence from Members\*.

**\*Note:** Members are asked to email Committee Services in advance of the meeting as soon as they become aware they will be absent.

## **3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

To declare disclosable pecuniary, and any other, interests\*.

**\*Note:** Members are asked to email Committee Services in advance of the meeting as soon as they become aware they may have an interest to declare.

## **4 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

## **5 DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS (Pages 7 - 12)**

To consider the planning reports from the Head of Place, and to accept updates via the Addendum.

## **6 20/03185/FUL - CHOSLEY FARM, BIDDEN ROAD, NORTH WARNBOROUGH, HOOK RG29 1BW (Pages 13 - 38)**

## **7 21/00552/FUL - BUNKERS HILL FARM, READING ROAD, ROTHERWICK, HOOK RG27 9DA (Pages 39 - 66)**

**Date of Publication: Tuesday, 2 November 2021**

## **PLANNING COMMITTEE**

**Date and Time:** Wednesday 13 October 2021 at 7.00 pm

**Place:** Council Chamber

**Present:**

Ambler, Blewett, Cockarill, Delaney, Kennett, Oliver (Chairman), Radley, Southern and Worlock

**In attendance:**

Quarterman

**Officers:**

Daryl Phillips	Joint Chief Executive
Steph Baker	Development Management & Building Control Manager
Peter Lee	Planning Team Leader
Miguel Martinez	Principal Planning Officer
Tola Otudeko	Shared Legal Services
Sabrina Cranny	Committee Services Officer

### **42 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 8 September 2021 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

### **43 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

None

### **44 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None

### **45 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There is a site visit taking place on the 22 October to Bramshill. Members to confirm with Planning department whether they will attend.

There is an urgent item on the Addendum regarding works and operations taking place outside of approved working hours at Hawley Park Farm. Members voted unanimously in support of the Officers decision to draft and serve a Temporary Stop Notice together with a Breach of Condition Notice on the site.

### **46 DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS**

The planning reports from the Head of Place were considered and the updates via the Addendum were accepted.

**47 21/02051/FUL - 28 FINNS BUSINESS PARK, BOWENHURST LANE, CRONDALL, FARNHAM GU10 5HP**

Members discussed:

- That the application was discussed at length in January
- The SANG contribution

Members voted to amend the reasons for refusal by removing item three:  
*The site is located within 5km of the Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) which forms part of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA). In the absence of any evidence that the test of no alternatives under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 can be satisfied, or evidence that there are grounds of overriding public interest, the proposed development, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, would be likely to have a significant adverse effect on the SPA. As such the proposal is contrary to Policy NBE3 of the Hart Local Plan (Strategy and Sites) 2016-2032, saved policy NRM6 of the South East Plan and Paragraphs 181-182 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021).*

**DECISION** – That the Head of Place be authorised delegated authority to take the application to Full Council as a departure with a recommendation to GRANT permission subject to conditions.

**48 20/03140/HOU - LAUNDRY FARM HOUSE, WEDMANS LANE, ROTHERWICK, HOOK RG27 9BX**

Members discussed:

- That Laundry Farm House should be a habitable and functional family home otherwise it will fall to ruins.
- That Laundry Farm should be suitable for modern living.
- The types of harm found by conservation officers and the need to categorise them
- Whether the proposed works at Laundry Farm would cause harm.
- Whether any harm caused was substantial harm meaning the total loss of fabric and/or less than substantial harm indicating an impact on the character or setting.
- The design including roof suitability
- That Climate change includes planning decision too such as energy efficient buildings.
- That insulation in a listed building is tricky to integrate
- The possibility of documenting the fabric of the building as it is removed.

Members voted to Refuse which was not carried.

Members voted unanimously to Grant subject to conditions agreed with the Planning department, Chairman and Ward member.

**DECISION** – recommendation to authorise the Head of Place to agree conditions with the Chairman and Ward member and then to **GRANT** the application subject to those conditions.

*Notes:*

*Councillor Wort spoke for the Parish Council for the application.*

*Mr Andy Partridge spoke for the application.*

**49 20/03141/LBC - LAUNDRY FARM HOUSE, WEDMANS LANE, ROTHERWICK, HOOK RG27 9BX**

This item was considered and discussed in conjunction with 20/03140/HOU.

Members voted unanimously to Grant subject to conditions agreed with the Planning department, Chairman and Ward member.

**DECISION** – recommendation to authorise the Head of Place to agree conditions with the Chairman and Ward member and then to **GRANT** the application subject to those conditions.

**50 21/00608/FUL - LAND EAST OF READING ROAD, HOOK**

Members discussed:

- The lack of sufficient justification
- The greenfield site
- The site location and boundaries
- The guidance provided to the applicant earlier in the year has not been taken into consideration
- Policy H4 which allows development on greenfield sites

**DECISION – REFUSE** as per Officer recommendation.

*Notes:*

*Mrs C Randall spoke against the application.*

*Councillor Kirkham spoke for the Parish Council against the application.*

*Mr Andrew Ryley spoke for the application.*

**51 21/01048/OUT - OWENS FARM, NEWNHAM ROAD, HOOK RG27 9NG**

Members discussed:

- The greenfield site
- The lack of property management plans
- The many objections from statutory consultees

**DECISION – REFUSE** as per Officer recommendation.

*Notes:*

*Councillor Kirkham spoke for the Parish Council against the application.*

*Ms S Mesher spoke against the application.*

The meeting closed at 8.40 pm



**HEAD OF PLACE**  
**REPORT TO THE PLANNING COMMITTEE OF**  
**2021**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

This agenda considers planning applications submitted to the Council, as the Local Planning Authority, for determination

**2. STATUS OF OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATIONS AND COMMITTEE'S DECISIONS**

All information, advice, and recommendations contained in this agenda are understood to be correct at the time of preparation, which is approximately two weeks in advance of the Committee meeting. Because of the time constraints, some reports may have been prepared before the final date for consultee responses or neighbour comment. Where a recommendation is either altered or substantially amended between preparing the report and the Committee meeting or where additional information has been received, a separate "Planning Addendum" paper will be circulated at the meeting to assist Councillors. This paper will be available to members of the public.

**3. THE DEBATE AT THE MEETING**

The Chairman of the Committee will introduce the item to be discussed. A Planning Officer will then give a short presentation and, if applicable, public speaking will take place (see below). The Committee will then debate the application with the starting point being the officer recommendation.

**4. SITE VISITS**

A Panel of Members visits some sites on the day before the Committee meeting. This can be useful to assess the effect of the proposal on matters that are not clear from the plans or from the report. The Panel does not discuss the application or receive representations although applicants and Town/Parish Councils are advised of the arrangements. These are not public meetings. A summary of what was viewed is given on the Planning Addendum.

**5. THE COUNCIL'S APPROACH TO THE DETERMINATION OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

When considering development proposals, the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

It will always work proactively with applicants jointly to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area. This means that any discussions with applicants and developers at both pre-application and application stage will be positively framed as both parties work together to find solutions to problems. This does not necessarily mean that development that is unacceptable in principle or which causes harm to an interest of acknowledged importance, will be allowed.

The development plan is the starting point for decision making. Proposals that accord with the development plan will be approved without delay. Development that conflicts with the development plan will be refused unless other material considerations indicate otherwise.

Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date the Council will seek to grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise – taking into account whether:

- Any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Local Plan taken as a whole; or
- Specific policies in the development plan indicate that development should be restricted.

Unsatisfactory applications will however, be refused without discussion where:

- The proposal is unacceptable in principle and there are no clear material considerations that indicate otherwise; or
- A completely new design would be needed to overcome objections; or
- Clear pre-application advice has been given, but the applicant has not followed that advice; or
- No pre-application advice has been sought.

## **6. PLANNING POLICY**

The relevant development plans are:

- Hart Local Plan (Strategy and Sites) 2032, adopted April 2020
- Saved Policies from the Hart Local Plan (Replacement) 1996-2006 (updated 1st May 2020)
- Policy NRM6 (Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area) of the South East Plan (adopted May 2009)
- Hampshire, Portsmouth, Southampton, New Forest National Park and South Downs National Park Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2013
- 'Made' Neighbourhood Plans for the following Parishes: Crondall; Crookham Village; Dogmersfield; Fleet; Hartley Wintney; Hook; Odiham and North Warnborough; Rotherwick; Winchfield.

Although not necessarily specifically referred to in the Committee report, the relevant development plan will have been used as a background document and the relevant policies taken into account in the preparation of the report on each item.

## **7. THE NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK AND PLANNING PRACTICE GUIDANCE**

Government statements of planning policy are material considerations that must be taken into account in deciding planning applications. Where such statements indicate the weight that should be given to relevant considerations, decision-makers must have proper regard to them.

The Government has also published the Planning Practice Guidance which provides information on a number of topic areas. Again, these comments, where applicable, are a material consideration which need to be given due weight.

## **8. OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Material planning considerations must be genuine planning considerations, i.e. they must be related to the purpose of planning legislation, which is to regulate the development and use of land in the public interest. Relevant considerations will vary from circumstance to circumstance and from application to application.

Within or in the settings of Conservation Areas or where development affects a listed building or



its setting there are a number of statutory tests that must be given great weight in the decision making process. In no case does this prevent development rather than particular emphasis should be given to the significance of the heritage asset.

The Council will base its decisions on planning applications on planning grounds alone. It will not use its planning powers to secure objectives achievable under non-planning legislation, such as the Building Regulations or the Water Industries Act. The grant of planning permission does not remove the need for any other consents, nor does it imply that such consents will necessarily be forthcoming.

Matters that should not be taken into account are:

- loss of property value
- land and boundary disputes
- the impact of construction work
- need for development (save in certain defined circumstances)
- ownership of land or rights of way
- change to previous scheme
- or matters that are dealt with by other legislation, such as the Building Regulations (e.g. structural safety, fire risks, means of escape in the event of fire etc.). - The fact that a development may conflict with other legislation is not a reason to refuse planning permission or defer a decision. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure compliance with all relevant legislation.
- loss of view
- matters covered by leases or covenants
- property maintenance issues
- the identity or personal characteristics of the applicant
- moral objections to development like public houses or betting shops
- competition between firms,

The Council will base its decisions on planning applications on planning grounds alone. It will not use its planning powers to secure objectives achievable under non-planning legislation, such as the Building Regulations or the Water Industries Act. The grant of planning permission does not remove the need for any other consents, nor does it imply that such consents will necessarily be forthcoming.

## **9. PLANNING CONDITIONS AND OBLIGATIONS**

When used properly, conditions can enhance the quality of development and enable development proposals to proceed where it would otherwise have been necessary to refuse planning permission, by mitigating the adverse effects of the development. Planning conditions should only be imposed where they are:

- necessary;
- relevant to planning and;
- to the development to be permitted;
- enforceable;
- precise and;
- reasonable in all other respects.

It may be possible to overcome a planning objection to a development proposal equally well by imposing a condition on the planning permission or by entering into a planning obligation. In such cases the Council will use a condition rather than seeking to deal with the matter by means of a planning obligation.

Planning obligations mitigate the impact of unacceptable development to make it acceptable in planning terms. Obligations should meet the tests that they are:

- necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms,
- directly related to the development, and
- fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind.

These tests are set out as statutory tests in the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations

2010. There are also legal restrictions as to the number of planning obligations that can provide funds towards a particular item of infrastructure.

## 10. PLANNING APPEALS

If an application for planning permission is refused by the Council, or if it is granted with conditions, an appeal can be made to the Secretary of State against the decision, or the conditions. Reasons for refusal must be:

- Complete,
- Precise,
- Specific
- Relevant to the application, and
- Supported by substantiated evidence.

The Council is at risk of an award of costs against it if it behaves “unreasonably” with respect to the substance of the matter under appeal, for example, by unreasonably refusing or failing to determine planning applications, or by unreasonably defending appeals. Examples of this include:

- Preventing or delaying development which should clearly be permitted, having regard to its accordance with the development plan, national policy and any other material considerations.
- Failure to produce evidence to substantiate each reason for refusal on appeal.
- Vague, generalised or inaccurate assertions about a proposal’s impact, which are unsupported by any objective analysis.
- Refusing planning permission on a planning ground capable of being dealt with by conditions risks an award of costs, where it is concluded that suitable conditions would enable the proposed development to go ahead.
- Acting contrary to, or not following, well-established case law
- Persisting in objections to a scheme or elements of a scheme which the Secretary of State or an Inspector has previously indicated to be acceptable.
- Not determining similar cases in a consistent manner
- Failing to grant a further planning permission for a scheme that is the subject of an extant or recently expired permission where there has been no material change in circumstances.
- Refusing to approve reserved matters when the objections relate to issues that should already have been considered at the outline stage.
- Imposing a condition that is not necessary, relevant to planning and to the development to be permitted, enforceable, precise and reasonable in all other respects, and thus does not comply with the guidance in the NPPF on planning conditions and obligations.
- Requiring that the appellant enter into a planning obligation which does not accord with the law or relevant national policy in the NPPF, on planning conditions and obligations.
- Refusing to enter into pre-application discussions, or to provide reasonably requested information, when a more helpful approach would probably have resulted in either the appeal being avoided altogether, or the issues to be considered being narrowed, thus reducing the expense associated with the appeal.
- Not reviewing their case promptly following the lodging of an appeal against refusal of planning permission (or non-determination), or an application to remove or vary one or more conditions, as part of sensible on-going case management.
- If the local planning authority grants planning permission on an identical application where the evidence base is unchanged and the scheme has not been amended in any way, they run the risk of a full award of costs for an abortive appeal which is subsequently withdrawn.

Statutory consultees (and this includes Parish Council’s) play an important role in the planning system: local authorities often give significant weight to the technical advice of the key statutory

consultees. Where the Council has relied on the advice of the statutory consultee in refusing an application, there is a clear expectation that the consultee in question will substantiate its advice at any appeal. Where the statutory consultee is a party to the appeal, they may be liable to an award of costs to or against them.

## **11. PROPRIETY**

Members of the Planning Committee are obliged to represent the interests of the **whole** community in planning matters and not simply their individual Wards. When determining planning applications, they must take into account planning considerations only. This can include views expressed on relevant planning matters. Local opposition or support for a proposal is not in itself a ground for refusing or granting planning permission unless it is founded upon valid planning reasons.

## **12. PRIVATE INTERESTS**

The planning system does not exist to protect the private interests of one person against the activities of another, although private interests may coincide with the public interest in some cases. It can be difficult to distinguish between public and private interests, but this may be necessary on occasion. The basic question is not whether owners and occupiers of neighbouring properties would experience financial or other loss from a particular development, but whether the proposal would unacceptably affect amenities and the existing use of land and buildings that ought to be protected in the public interest. Covenants or the maintenance/protection of private property are therefore not material planning consideration.

## **13. OTHER LEGISLATION**

Non-planning legislation may place statutory requirements on planning authorities or may set out controls that need to be taken into account (for example, environmental legislation, or water resources legislation). The Council, in exercising its functions, also must have regard to the general requirements of other legislation, in particular:

- The Human Rights Act 1998,
- The Equality Act 2010.

## **14. PUBLIC SPEAKING**

The Council has a public speaking scheme, which allows a representative of the relevant Parish Council, objectors and applicants to address the Planning Committee. Full details of the scheme are on the Council's website and are sent to all applicants and objectors where the scheme applies. Speaking is only available to those who have made representations within the relevant period or the applicant. It is not possible to arrange to speak to the Committee at the Committee meeting itself.

Speakers are limited to a total of three minutes each per item for the Parish Council, those speaking against the application and for the applicant/agent. Speakers are not permitted to ask questions of others or to join in the debate, although the Committee may ask questions of the speaker to clarify representations made or facts after they have spoken. For probity reasons associated with advance disclosure of information under the Access to Information Act, nobody will be allowed to circulate, show or display further material at, or just before, the Committee meeting.

## **15. LATE REPRESENTATIONS**

To make sure that all documentation is placed in the public domain and to ensure that the Planning Committee, applicants, objectors, and any other party has had a proper opportunity to consider further, or new representations no new additional information will be allowed to be submitted less than 48 hours before the Committee meeting, except where to correct an error of fact in the report. Copies of individual representations will not be circulated to Members.

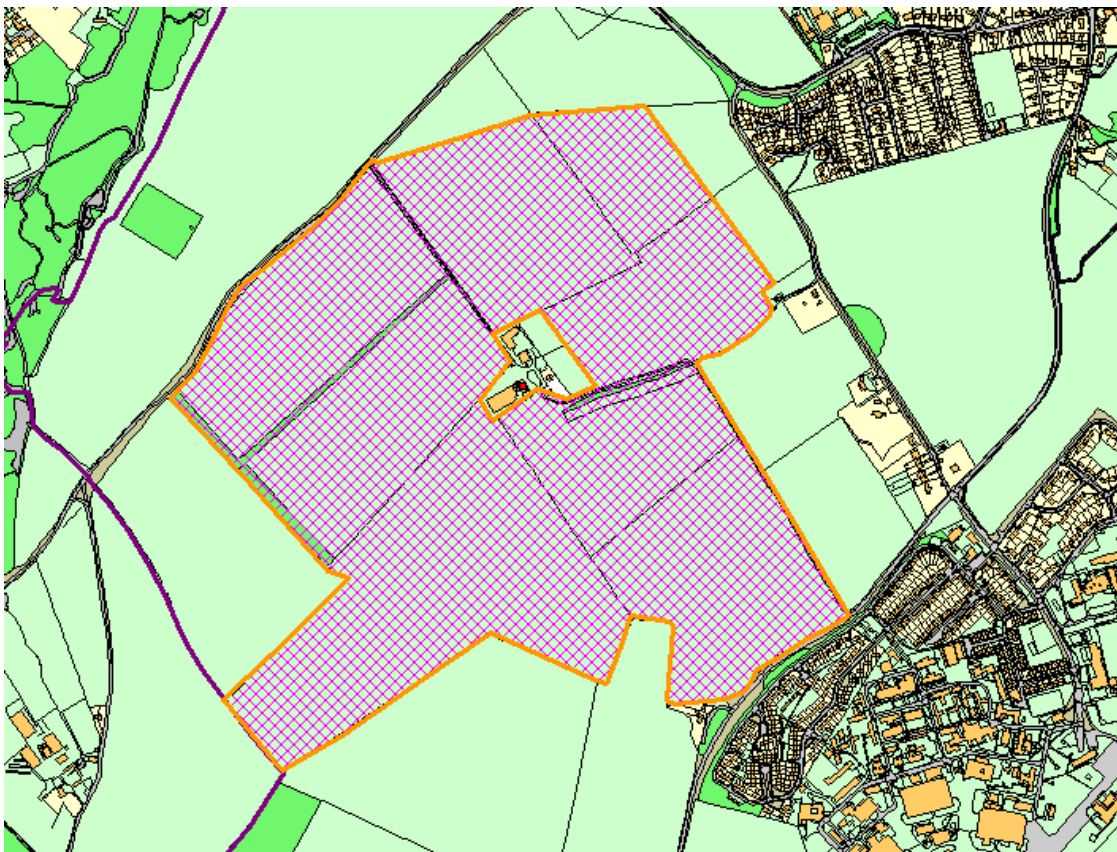
## 16. INSPECTION OF DRAWINGS

All drawings are available for inspection on the internet at [www.hart.gov.uk](http://www.hart.gov.uk)

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## COMMITTEE REPORT ITEM NUMBER: 01

APPLICATION NO.	20/03185/FUL
LOCATION	<b>Chosley Farm Bidden Road North Warnborough Hook Hampshire RG29 1BW</b>
PROPOSAL	Erection of a Solar Photovoltaic Farm with an output capacity not to exceed 49.9MW of energy, with associated battery storage and supporting infrastructure including inverters and a transformer, fencing, CCTV installation and landscaping works
APPLICANT	Mr Digby Willoughby
CONSULTATIONS EXPIRY	27 September 2021
APPLICATION EXPIRY	22 April 2021
WARD	Odiham
RECOMMENDATION	<b>Grant subject to conditions</b>



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## **BACKGROUND**

1. This planning application is brought to Planning Committee at the discretion of the Head of Place Service.

## **DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE**

2. The site extends to 95.47 hectares (ha) of agricultural land (land agricultural quality graded 3a and 3b) currently partitioned into 8 arable fields that are demarcated by hedgerows. It includes land to the south of Bidden Road surrounding Chosley Farm and extends south of the farm to meet Alton Road. The site is positioned between a number of settlements; North Warnborough to the north-east, Odiham to the east, RAF Odiham to the south-east and Greywell to the north-west.
3. The site contains small areas with the potential for Archaeological remains and is within the 1500m buffer zone of the Basingstoke Canal Conservation Area. A Public Right of Way (PRoW) - no.1 runs adjacent the northernmost boundary section of the site.
4. Greywell Fen, a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is located approximately 350m northwest of Bidden Road.

## **PROPOSAL**

5. Planning permission is sought for the installation of solar photovoltaic panels and auxiliary equipment on the land for a limited period of 40 years.
6. The photovoltaic panels (PVP) would be spaced between 4 and 9 metres apart, tilted at 15-25 degrees and oriented to face south. They would be mounted on a steel frame 1 metre above ground level and the highest section of the PVP would be 3 metres above the ground level.
7. There would be 9x hubs on the site, each provided with 12x DC-DC converters with a cabinet each, 1x inverter/transformer and 2x battery storage containers. Each hub would have 2x shipping containers (12.2m long x 2.43m deep x 2.46m high) where the batteries and part of the equipment would be securely stored.
8. The proposal would have a maximum output of 49.9MW that could be exported to the National Grid. To put this output into context, the proposal would be capable of powering 22,000 electric vehicles or 17,500 homes annually.
9. Perimeter metal mesh fencing to a maximum height of 2m and 3m-high columns to carry CCTV cameras are also proposed.

## **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

10. None.

## **RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY**

11. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) requires applications for planning permission to be determined in

accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

12. The relevant adopted Development Plan for the District includes the Hart Local Plan (Strategy and Sites) 2016-2032 (HLP32), the saved policies of the Hart District Local Plan (Replacement) 1996-2006 (HLP06) and the Odiham and North Warnborough Neighbourhood Plan 2014-2032. Adopted and saved policies are up-to-date and consistent with the NPPF (2021).

#### Hart Local Plan (Strategy & Sites) 2016-2032 (HLP32):

- Policy SD1 - Sustainable Development
- Policy NBE1 - Development in the Countryside
- Policy NBE2 - Landscape
- Policy NBE4 - Biodiversity
- Policy NBE5 - Managing Flood Risk
- Policy NBE8 - Historic Environment
- Policy NBE9 - Design
- Policy NBE10 - Renewable and Low Carbon Energy
- Policy NBE11 - Pollution
- Policy INF3 - Transport

#### Hart District Local Plan (Replacement) 1996-2006 'saved' policies (HLP06):

- Policy GEN1 - General Policy for Development
- Policy CON7 - Riverine Environments
- Policy CON8 - Trees, Woodland & Hedgerows: Amenity Value
- Policy CON10 - Basingstoke Canal
- Policy CON23 - Development Affecting Public Right of Ways

#### Odiham and North Warnborough Neighbourhood Plan 2014-2032 (ONWNP):

- Policy 1 - Spatial Plan for Parish
- Policy 2 - Housing Development Sites
- Policy 4 - Housing Mix
- Policy 5 - General Design Principles
- Policy 7 - North Warnborough Conservation Area
- Policy 8 - Basingstoke Canal Conservation Area
- Policy 12 - The Natural Environment

#### Other relevant planning policy documents

- National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (NPPF)
- National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)
- Hart Landscape Assessment (1997)
- Hart Landscape Capacity Study (2016)
- Hart Parking Provision Interim Guidance (2008)

#### **CONSULTEE RESPONSES** (summarised)

##### **Odiham Parish Council**

13. Objection
14. Substantial adverse impact would not be prevented by the small mitigation factors introduced in revised information.
15. Proposal contrary to policies 5 and 12 of the Odiham Neighbourhood Plan.
16. Proposal would give an industrial character to this rural location.
17. Land classified 3a should not be prioritised for development.
18. Policy NBE2 requires no adverse impact, not negligible impact to visual amenity and scenic quality of landscape.
19. Impacts to SSSI (Greywell Fen and Basingstoke Canal) caused by drainage and biodiversity issues. Introduction of small ecological area would not solve them.
20. Further comments have been received from the Parish Council on 27.10.2021 stating:
21. "Odiham Parish Council wishes to express its concern that the current district plan fails to satisfy the requirements stipulated in the NPPF to set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and quality of development including for energy developments.
22. The district plan merely refers to "an energy opportunities plan within the North Hants renewable energy study" which is 10 years old and does not focus upon solar, nor does it give any indication for preferred sites or criteria for site selection within the area.
23. As a result, vulnerable areas of landscape importance in the district are exposed to opportunistic developers who, in the absence of a coherent strategy within the HDC district plan, are submitting multiple schemes which, if approved, will cause lasting and significant damage to the many residents' and visitors' enjoyment of our district.
24. The Parish Council is particularly concerned that four of the proposals coming forward will be centered upon the Whitewater Valley, hence the impact will be greatly increased by four such sites in close proximity. The accompanying large transformer and battery storage units with their associated noise generation require protection from damage and therefore sites have to be protected by security fencing and CCTV cameras which add to the disfiguring effect of any solar installation.
25. We urge the council to tackle the omission in the district plan, meanwhile refusing to grant permission for any installations until a properly evaluated study is in a position to propose areas suitable for solar which avoid the damage posed by the 5 sites currently under threat."

### **Greywell Parish Council**

26. Objection
27. Revisions to proposal do not represent any significant improvement upon the overall negative impacts.
28. The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) submitted does not accurately portray the adverse visual impact of the proposal on Hart's cherished villages.
29. Visibility of the proposal from The Street, Greywell.
30. Panoramic photos submitted to address impacts on these views are utterly unrepresentative of the actual views.
31. The LVIA ignores the reality of spring, autumn, and winter months' views.

### **Upton Grey Parish Council**



- 32. Objection
- 33. Poor site selection for this proposal. Due to siting on the flank of a large hill, it will give rise to multiple issues of harm reaching a significant distance.
- 34. Alien, highly intrusive and inappropriate feature to the setting surrounding villages with an adverse impact visible from key locations in their conservation areas.
- 35. It would destroy the landscape character and result in loss of 3a agricultural land.
- 36. Hart Local Plan does not identify the site for industrial development.
- 37. Landscape Assessment fails to demonstrate there is no impacts to landscape.
- 38. Excessive extent and scale, comparable to built-up areas surrounding it.
- 39. Cumulative effects
- 40. Continuous view of proposal along 1km stretch of the Three Castles Path.
- 41. Ecology impacts
- 42. Poor community engagement
- 43. Construction Traffic

### **South Warnborough Parish Council**

- 44. Objection
- 45. Landscape/visual impacts are incompletely presented in application documents.
- 46. Development to affect unspoilt rural character.
- 47. Site is clearly visible from many more locations to those listed.
- 48. Planting proposal is too limited.
- 49. Archaeological impacts.
- 50. Pollution of Whitewater River.
- 51. Amended plans do not address our concerns. The proposed mitigation appears inadequate to respect and enhance the landscape or avoid harm to public views/vistas.
- 52. Dominant scale of development
- 53. Submitted documents admit screening cannot mitigate against visibility and would change perceived openness.
- 54. Proposal does not enhance current landscape.

### **Farnborough Airport Manager**

- 55. No objection.

### **County Archaeologist**

- 56. No objection, subject to planning conditions to secure:
- 57. Full Geophysical survey/results
- 58. Targeted trial trenching in agreed locations
- 59. Archaeological recording (locations to be agreed) and groundworks watching brief and publication of results if appropriate

### **County Rights of Way Group**

- 60. No objection to the proposals. If permission is granted, we request the applicant is aware Hampshire County requirements through informative conditions.

### **Environmental Health Officer (Internal)**

- 61. No objection, subject to planning conditions to secure:

62. A Limit in noise emissions from plant and equipment.
63. Avoidance of audible noise with tonal characteristics at any residential receptor.

#### **Landscape Architect (Internal)**

64. Objection to scheme as originally submitted however Officers' Response to additional information submitted is that the upgraded landscaping proposals are considered to have mitigated the impact of the proposed development to the minimum practicable level.

#### **Conservation/Listed Buildings Officer (Internal)**

65. No objection.

#### **Hampshire County Council (Highways)**

66. No objection, subject to the following planning conditions to secure:
67. Provision of access for construction purposes
68. Construction Method Statement

#### **Defence Infrastructure Organisation**

69. No objection. There are no safeguard issues with the proposal.

#### **Historic England**

70. Do not wish to offer any comments.

#### **HCC Lead Local Flood Authority**

71. No objection subject to the following conditions to secure:
72. Implementation of the drainage and flood risk information as submitted.
73. Surface water drainage system long -term maintenance arrangements.

#### **Natural England**

74. No objection, the proposal would unlikely have significant impacts on the natural environment.

#### **Environment Agency Thames Area**

75. Have confirmed they do not wish to comment on this application.

#### **Chief Planning Officer (Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council)**

76. Objection
77. By virtue of the location and scale of the proposal, it would have an adverse impact upon the landscape character and visual amenity of the countryside as viewed/experienced from within the Basingstoke and Deane Borough.

### **Tree Officer (Internal)**

78. Officer's final comments: additional tree planting has subsequently been proposed to provide replacement planting and greater variation of species of an appropriate size. Retention of hedgerows and trees a positive element of the scheme.

### **Ecology Officer (Internal)**

79. No objection on biodiversity grounds.
80. Supportive of additional areas of habitat, off site bird management areas, hedgerow retention and enhancement/provision of ecological features, monitoring and longer-term management plan.
81. Support the revised reports and conditions suggested.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

82. The statutory requirements for publicity, are set out in the Development Management Procedure Order 2015 (as amended) and the Council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). To publicise this application, neighbour letters were posted to relevant addresses, a site notice displayed, and a local press notice was advertised in the newspaper providing interested parties with a minimum of 21 days to comment.
83. At the time of writing this report there have been 87 public representations received. Of these, 77 raise objection, 5 were made in support and 5 were neutral comments. They include objections from Ward Councillor Ken Crookes, the Odiham Society, the Campaign to Protect Rural England Northeast Hampshire District Group and the Whitewater Valley Preservation Society.
84. The grounds of objection to the development are summarised below.
  - Loss of agricultural land grade 3a
  - Development better suited to brownfield land
  - Excessive scale of development
  - Impacts to biodiversity /ecology
  - Impact on archaeology
  - Impacts on visual amenity and quality of the landscape
  - Impacts to SSSI - Grey Moor
  - Impacts to highly used Public Rights of Way (PRoWs)
  - No guarantees of the land returning to agricultural use
  - Solar panels are visually detrimental
  - Detrimental to historic significance of Odiham
  - Increase in traffic
  - Urbanisation of countryside
  - Poor siting/position of solar panels
  - Contrary to Local Plan and Odiham Neighbourhood Plan policies
  - Landscaping will not hide the solar farm
  - Highly prominent/visible
  - Loss of privacy by CCTV installation
  - No public engagement occurred prior to submission

- No evidence of landscape visual assessment methodology agreed with HDC
- Photos of viewpoints are misleading

## **CONSIDERATIONS**

1. Principle of Development
2. Landscape and Visual Impacts
3. Heritage Impacts
4. Impacts upon Amenity
5. Highway Safety, Access and Parking
6. Flood Risk and Drainage
7. Ecology, Trees and Landscaping
8. Climate Change and Equality
9. Other Planning Considerations
10. Planning Balance

## **PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT**

85. The application site is located within the open countryside as designated within the Local Plan inset maps. Policy NBE1 of the HLP32 seeks to manage development in the countryside and contains 14 separate criteria where development is deemed to be acceptable. None of these criteria specifically provide for development of a solar farm. However, this policy seeks to only permit development when it is demonstrated that a countryside location is both necessary and justified.
86. The nature and scale of the proposed development would realistically make it difficult to be delivered within any of the settlements of the District. It is well known that solar farms are delivered on countryside land for operational reasons. The HLP32 is not silent about this type of development, however the main considerations of the proposal would fall under other adopted policies.
87. Policy NBE10 of the HLP32 sets out that proposals for energy generation from renewable resources will be supported provided that any adverse impacts are satisfactorily addressed. The criteria at NBE10(a-f) are considered to be relevant and assessed later in this report.
88. There are no specific policies relating to renewable energy in the ONWNP however Policy 12(iv) states that, inter alia, development proposals which contain measures that will help to mitigate the impacts of, and adapt to, climate change will be supported.
89. The NPPF 2021 supports renewable energy (para. 152). It advises that Local Planning Authorities should not require applicants to demonstrate the overall need for renewable energy and to approve applications if impacts are (or can be made) acceptable (para. 158).
90. Accordingly, there is in-principal support for the proposal in the development plan and NPPF 2021, subject to impacts arising being appropriately addressed.

## **LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACTS**

91. Policy NBE2 of the HLP32 seeks to achieve development proposals that respect

and wherever possible enhance the special characteristics, value, or visual amenity of the District's landscapes. This policy contains five criteria to assess development proposals in relation to landscape impacts. It also states that, where appropriate, proposals will be required to include a comprehensive landscaping scheme to ensure that the development would successfully integrate with the landscape and surroundings.

92. Policy 12 of the ONWNP states that development proposals will be supported provided they comply with other statutory, local and Neighbourhood Plan Policies. There are principles to comply with set out in the policy concerning the protection of wildlife areas, improvement of biodiversity, SSSI's, locally designated sites and Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC), landscape character and public views/vistas, the need to protect/enhance PRoWs and sustainable drainage.
93. Each criterion from Policy NBE2 of the HLP32 are dealt with in turn below and these comments also capture the principles of the ONWNP referred to in the previous paragraph.

*a) Impacts to landscape qualities identified in landscape character assessments.*

94. According to the Hart Landscape Capacity Study (2016), the site lies within landscape area GR-01. The study area is broader than the site and its immediate surroundings but nonetheless exhibits typical landscape qualities evident across the whole of GR-01. This study area was determined to have a medium/high visual sensitivity, high landscape sensitivity and a medium/high landscape value. The area (including the application site) is therefore categorised to have a low overall landscape capacity, which means the area is highly sensitive to new development and as such development of small scale may be possible to be accommodated without causing a significant adverse impact on the landscape character.
95. The landscape qualities of the area, relevant to the application site and surroundings within the landscape area are:
- Typical undulating topography
  - Regular, medium-large scale field pattern with hedgerows often in straight lines
  - RAF Odiham (adjoining landscape area to east) influences
  - Scattered farms and occasional rural cottages; and
  - Riverside grazing fields, tree lined tributaries
96. It was previously mentioned that the application site consists of 8 separate fields which are typically demarcated through low-level hedging. The proposal would not alter the undulating topography of the site, the PVP and associated equipment would be installed following the topography of the land. They would also be accommodated in the different fields so as not to intervene with the hedgerow structure of the application site.
97. The site displays a weak hedging structure in certain sections of its perimeter (such as along the B3349 and Bidden Road, north of the site access). It is noted that as part of the proposal there would be some tree removal (35 individual trees and one group of 96 existing trees and ash trees that show signs of ash die back) However, this removal would be replaced and the sections of weak hedgerow structure would be reinforced as part of a comprehensive landscaping strategy,

discussed later in this report under planning consideration no. 7 – Ecology/ Trees/ Landscaping.

98. The development would result in some intervention to the landscape characteristics of the landscape area which contribute to the rural character. The objection from Upton Grey Parish Council is acknowledged which raises concern regarding achievable views from the Three Castles Path, which stretches 60 miles from Windsor to Winchester. In this respect no concerns have been raised by the Council's Landscape Officer and the application documents demonstrate a suitable landscaping strategy to mitigate visual impacts to an acceptable degree.
99. As proposed, it aims to reduce conflicts with the landscape characteristics of the site and the landscape area as a whole but it would not fully remove them. As such, there would be an impact caused to the landscape quality of the site and wider area however there would be adequate mitigation proposed to compensate and enhance the landscape features of the application site and in this manner minimise any effects.

*b) the visual amenity and scenic quality of the landscape.*

100. According to Hart's Landscape Assessment (1997), the application site falls within the 'Hart Downs' Character Area. The main distinguishing features consist of chalk scenery with rolling landforms, dominance of intensive arable fields, strong hedgerows structure to the south of the character area, shallow slopes/hilltops with predominantly open landscape, views and exposure and scattered woodland blocks. It is a rural character with few detracting influences (apart from Odiham airfield, the B3349 and overhead power lines).
101. The Landscape Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) submitted by the applicant states that a visual appraisal was undertaken in April 2020 to determine the relationship and visibility of the site with the surroundings, suitability of the site for development and visual characteristics of the area.
102. The analysis identifies a baseline of principal viewpoints at short range (0-200m), medium range (201m-1.5km) and long range (1.5km and above) and contains 34 site context photographs to illustrate how the development would affect visual amenity and quality of the landscape in the wider character area.
103. The proposal would be partially visible from vantage points in long range views along the Greywell footpath when looking in a northeast direction. A similar situation would be experienced when traveling north along Bidden Road, but the views here would be at a medium range. Furthermore, the submitted information also depicts the partial exposure of the site for PRow users, as the footpath adjoins the northern boundary of the site and at the eastern end of the site adjoins the B3349 and the site slopes upwards away from this road.
104. The partial visual exposure of the development is mainly due to the undulating nature of the parcels of land that comprise the landscape in the Hart Downs character area, as such there would be achievable views of some of the parcels containing the PVP. It is noted, however, that they are neither constant nor consistent views from these public highways. There are glimpses of the subject fields at particular points or short stretches, however when looking at the site from

a long-range view (1.5km +), the discernibility of the PVP in the landscape would not be immediately apparent, particularly as they would be seen in context with the tree/hedgerow structure of the area as a whole.

105. The medium range views (201m - 1.5k) that would be achieved, similarly at vantage points from surrounding fields or public highways, would be the ones affected as they would potentially allow identifying the PVP and the regular arrangement as opposed to having a green field in its entirety. Again, the development would be visible following the undulating grounds of the site and in between hedge/tree structures of the wider landscape.
106. In terms of the short-range views (0 - 200m) of the proposal in the landscape, as part of these views there would be a rather constant intervention of landscaping between the site and surrounding fields and public highways, as a result of the hedging/tree structure in the locality that separates/demarcates arable fields to the southwest/south/southeast of the application site. The topography itself also intervenes in the potential views that are achieved from the application site as one travels downwards south on the B3349 from RAF Odiham towards South Warnborough and the views of the site are not readily apparent. Inevitably, the closer to the perimeter of the application site the more noticeable the development would become, for example for the PRow users, as the site adjoins this route and the PVP would be at close range from this route.
107. The applicant submitted additional revised landscape information seeking to address initial concerns raised by the Landscape Officer and third-party representations received, all raising strong concerns about the viewpoints submitted and their analysis. They also made reference to additional viewpoints at long range.
108. Moreover, the Council also commissioned an independent appraisal of the submitted LVIA by the applicant. This third-party appraisal advised the following (in summary):
  - The design has sought to assimilate the development into the landscape by removing panels west of Bidden Road and PRow 1(northern corner of the site).
  - The size of the site allows the opportunity for landscape scale enhancements to be delivered, bringing multiple benefits.
  - The scheme seems to have been led by a mitigation approach with an emphasis on screening
  - Removal of PVP from western areas of the site would reduce potential impacts to visual receptors, where the majority of visibility of the site exists, including users of PRow.
  - Clarifications from the applicant are required with regards to methodology and technical matters such as the Zone of Theoretical Visibility, the provision of photomontages according to latest guidance and the re-running of the LVIA to ensure conclusions are robust.
  - Provision of a more ambitious landscape scale strategy and delivery of a greater biodiversity net gain above 12.39% for habitats is required.
109. The independent appraisal of the LVIA states that the document displays transparency, clarity and that the analysis process is sound. The LVIA clearly identifies the levels of effects and appropriate consideration of viewpoints.

110. The proposed development was further revised in light of the independent appraisal of the LVIA. Removal of PVP from the western end of the site along with a stronger landscaping buffer of that site's edge is now proposed to further obscure views of the proposal. There has also been an overall improvement to the landscaping strategy, which would deliver a greater biodiversity gain.
111. To conclude on this matter, the character and visual appearance of the arable fields comprising the application site would change as a result of the proposed development, and as such there would be an impact of moderate significance on the visual amenity and scenic quality of the landscape of the Hart Downs Character Area. The impacts discussed are neither negligible nor significantly adverse to the overall landscape of the area, however there would be a harm of moderate significance, as the application site is currently free of development. This weighs negatively against the proposal.
112. It is worth pointing out that the proposal is a non-permanent invasive development, as the construction of the development does not require deep excavation or permanent sizeable features to remain on site in perpetuity. Most of the elements comprising the proposal would rest on the ground, with the exception of the PVP mounts that would have to be securely fixed to the ground and a proportion of the cabling required that would be shallow buried. The development therefore is largely reversible at the end of the proposed period or when the need for the energy generated ceases.

*c) Impacts to historic landscapes, parks, gardens, and features.*

113. Neither the site nor the adjoining parcels of land have any historic significance or are designated as such. Therefore, no concerns are raised in this respect. Other heritage aspects are considered below as part of the main assessment under planning consideration no. 3 - Heritage Assets.

*d) important local, natural and historic features such as trees, woodlands, hedgerows, water features e.g., rivers and other landscape features and their function as ecological networks.*

114. The proposed development would mainly result in removal of trees, as previously discussed. However, the trees do not benefit from any statutory protection, and it has been noted that a number are diseased. The landscaping strategy proposed would enhance the current landscaping conditions along the perimeter of the site and also in between the different parcels of land that form it. The proposal would also deliver ecological improvements and the Council's Ecology Officer has raised no concerns to the revised ecological information submitted, as discussed below in consideration no. 10 – Biodiversity/ Trees/ Landscaping.

*e) it does not lead to the physical or visual coalescence of settlements, or damage their separate identity, either individually or cumulatively with other existing or proposed development.*

115. The proposal would not lead to any physical or visual coalescence. The objection from Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council is noted, which raises concern with impacts upon landscape character and visual amenity from the visual receptors



within the adjacent Borough. The above landscaping assessment addresses the immediate and wider visual impacts and mitigation of the development appropriately.

116. Given the above, a harm of moderate significance to the visual amenity and landscape/scenic quality of the Hart Downs Landscape Character Area is considered to arise which would present a conflict with one of the requirements of Policy NBE2 of the HLP32, Policy 12 of the ONWNP and the NPPF. This harm is weighed in the planning balance later in this report.

## HERITAGE IMPACTS

117. Policy NBE8 of the HLP32 states that development proposals should conserve or enhance heritage assets and their settings, taking account of their significance.
118. Paragraphs 195, 199, 200, 202 and 203 of the NPPF are of relevance for determining the significance of a Heritage Asset (HA), assessing the impact on significance and the need to weigh harm, including for non-designated HA's.
119. The Council's Conservation Team have raised no objection in terms of heritage assets as they have considered the implications of the proposal, their considerations are summarised below as follows:
- There would be a neutral impact on the setting of North Warnborough, Odiham and Basingstoke Canal Conservation Areas and the listed buildings within them.
  - There may be a glimpse of the development from within the Greywell Conservation Area, but these would be limited by the existing trees and hedgerows to the extent that the impact on setting of the Conservation Area and the listed buildings within it would not harm their significance.
  - There would be no impact on the setting of Grade II Listed Buildings Stratford Lodge and Dunley Thornfields Westfields located between the Odiham and North Warnborough Conservation Areas c.770 m from the boundary of the application site.
  - There is no intervisibility between the site and Down Farm c. 470m from the south boundary and Ford Farm c. 330m from the southwest boundary of the application site each include 3 Grade II Listed Buildings. The impact on the setting of these designated heritage assets is likely to be neutral.
  - Walnut Tree Cottage is a Grade II Listed Building which lies outside the North Warnborough Conservation Area and 120 m from the application site boundary. The impact of the proposed development on its setting is likely to be neutral.
120. Therefore, on this basis the proposal would not represent a conflict with with Policies NBE8 and NBE9 of the HLP32, Policy GEN1 of the HLP06 or the NPPF in this respect.

## IMPACTS UPON AMENITY

121. Policy NBE11 of the HLP32 supports development which does not give rise to, or would not be subject to, unacceptable levels of pollution. Saved policy GEN1 of the HLP06 supports development that, amongst other requirements, causes no

material loss of amenity to adjacent properties.

122. Paragraph 130 of the NPPF 2021 advises that planning decisions should ensure that developments achieve a high standard of amenity for existing and future users and also do not undermine quality of life for communities. The only properties that would be directly affected by the proposal would be nos.1 and 2 Chosley Farm Cottages which are surrounded by, but excluded from, the application site.
123. The main impacts anticipated would be the visual change to the fields surrounding these properties, potential noise that may arise from the ancillary equipment required for the transfer/conversion of solar energy from the PVP into transformers/batteries, perceived loss of privacy as a result of any CCTV posts proposed and an increase in traffic as a result of the maintenance or other operational requirements of the solar farm.
124. With regards to the impacts on visual change and potential outlook from these dwellings, the proposed PVP and ancillary equipment would not be sited immediately adjacent to the boundary of the residential curtilages of these properties. The distances between the PVP and the curtilage of these properties, at the closest, would vary but it would be in the range of 25m - 100m. Some of the subject fields that adjoin this agricultural/residential land are partly screened by established landscaping and buildings/barns standing on the land owned by these adjoining properties.
125. These properties are sited on a portion of land that is higher than the different parcels of the application site. The main views of the development would be achieved, in the long term, from the upper windows of the properties. At ground level, considering the landscaping scheme proposed, the views of the proposal would be significantly reduced in the long term. The occupiers of these dwellings would experience a material change to the outlook they currently enjoy from the upper floor windows, as they would be capable of viewing a portion of the PVP. In this respect, loss of views is not a material planning consideration.
126. With regards to noise, the Environmental Health Officer (EHO) did not raise concerns in this respect. It is also noted that 1 of the 12 hubs proposed (transformers/ batteries/ cabinets) would be closest to this adjoining land, at a distance of approximately 145m from the front elevation of the cottages. However, there is a large barn which would separate the equipment from the properties. The EHO requested that conditions be imposed to mitigate any noise impacts, in order to ensure that noise levels anticipated in the submitted information are not exceeded for the protection of these residential receptors.
127. The loss of privacy, which was raised by the residents of these cottages, is due to the fact that the development would contain CCTV cameras mounted on 3 metre high columns. Occupiers have raised concerns that these would impinge on their privacy. The specific position of all the columns and direction of view of the CCTV is not part of this submission. However, they could be strategically positioned/directed to prevent any invasion of the privacy and amenity of the occupiers of these cottages and a condition could be included to secure the details of the position of the CCTV.
128. Finally with regards to traffic, the main impacts in this respect would be during the

construction period (approx. 5 months) as there would be movements of articulated lorries delivering the PVP and associated equipment (42 no. two-way daily vehicle movements accessing the site from Bidden Road). This increase in traffic and potential noise arising as a result of the construction is acknowledged however it would only be temporary and would not warrant the refusal of the application on this ground.

129. The information submitted states that after construction and at the operational stage, the only vehicles coming into the site would be one vehicle (white van or 4x4) for monitoring and maintenance on an occasional basis. With regards to other residential properties, they are a greater distance away from the application site and whilst glimpses may be achieved of the proposals through gaps in landscaping or whilst the proposed landscaping is established, no material impacts are anticipated to their residential amenity.
130. On the basis of the above, no concerns are raised in terms of any demonstrable detrimental impacts upon residential amenity such as to materially conflict with the objectives of saved policy GEN1 of the HLP06 or the NPPF in this regard.

#### HIGHWAY SAFETY, ACCESS AND PARKING

131. Policy INF3 of the HLP32 states that development should promote the use of sustainable transport modes prioritising walking and cycling, improve accessibility to services and support the transition to a low carbon future.
132. Saved policy GEN1 of the HLP06 supports developments that do not give rise to traffic flows on the surrounding road network which would cause material detriment to the amenities of nearby properties and settlements or to highway safety.
133. Paragraph 111 of the NPPF 2021 advises that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.
134. In terms of impacts arising from the development to the operation of the highway network, any potential impact arising would be during the construction stage only, as these types of developments, when completed would only attract 1 or 2 vehicles once a month. The construction of the proposal would take approximately 20 weeks and would attract HGV movements. A 6-day operation per week would attract approximately 11 HGV deliveries and 10 staff vehicles (cars/vans) per day, which would amount to 42 two-way movements per day.
135. The Local Highway Authority (LHA) has analysed the traffic generation of the proposal and current traffic conditions on local roads and have confirmed that it is unlikely that a severe impact would be caused to the local highway network.
136. In terms of access, the proposal would make use of the existing concrete track from which Chosley Farm is accessed. The track at this road intersection is wider to allow turning in/out. However, as one moves away from the intersection the track narrows to 3.2m. The track is approximately 470m long and there is an electric gate 75m into the track. The existing width is not enough for two vehicles to pass side by side and it is noted that there is a passing point approximately

160m into the track.

137. The proposal would not raise concerns in terms of access during the operational stages of the development, as vehicle movements would be low and would be mainly small vehicles. However, the main consideration is during the construction stage as the track would not currently be able to accommodate the HGV movements to and from the site.
138. The applicant has therefore proposed to increase the width of the track by 0.50m for a stretch of approximately 75m. The LHA has accepted that the alterations to the track would be sufficient for the size and number of vehicles during the construction stage. No concerns have been raised about forward visibility along the track.
139. However, a construction management plan would be required to secure access management details during construction as the applicant acknowledges that the track is currently well used by other vehicles, likely associated with Chosley Farm. Therefore, to avoid/reduce potential conflicts between vehicles using the same track a planning condition in this respect would be suggested if the Council supports this application.
140. It is noted that the LHA also has requested the applicant to enter into a Section 278 agreement under the Highways Act to undertake alterations at the intersection of the track and Bidden Road to comply with turning standards for construction vehicles. An informative would be suggested to remind the applicant of his obligations under this separate legislative framework.
141. With regards to car parking, the proposal would not require formal provision at the operational stage. Any maintenance vehicle would be able to move around the PVP to reach the hubs that contain the ancillary equipment for maintenance purposes.
142. Therefore, the proposed development would not conflict with the objectives of Policy INF3 of the HLP32, saved policy GEN1 of the HLP06 or paragraph 111 of the NPPF 2021.

#### FLOOD RISK AND DRAINAGE

143. Policy NBE5 (Managing Flood Risk) of the HLP32 sets out five criteria when development would be permitted, in this case the applicable criteria are:
144. Over its lifetime it would not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere and will be safe from flooding;
145. If located within an area at risk from any source of flooding, now and in the future, it is supported by a site-specific flood risk assessment and complies fully with national policy including the sequential and exceptions tests where necessary.
146. Within Causal Areas (as defined in the SFRA) all development takes opportunities to reduce the causes and impacts of flooding.
147. Policy 12 of the ONWNP also requires development proposals to include sustainable design features to manage surface water flooding.

148. Flood mapping indicates that the application site falls within Flood Zone 1 which has the lowest risk of fluvial flooding. The proposal was accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment, which has been analysed by the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA). The surface water drainage system proposed has been accepted by the LLFA and subject to planning conditions requesting compliance with the details and submission of long-term maintenance details, they have raised no objection.
149. On this basis, the application is acceptable and in compliance with the objectives of Policy NBE5 of the HLP32, Policy 12 of the ONWNP and the aims of the NPPF in this regard.

### ECOLOGY, TREES AND LANDSCAPING

150. With regards to biodiversity, Policy NBE4 of the HLP32 states that in order to conserve and enhance biodiversity, new development will be permitted provided where:
- a) It will not have an adverse effect on the integrity of an international, national or locally designated sites.
  - b) It does not result in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats, including ancient woodland and the loss of aged or veteran trees found outside ancient woodland, unless the need for, and benefits of, the development in that location clearly outweigh the loss;
  - c) opportunities to protect and enhance biodiversity and contribute to wildlife and habitat connectivity are taken where possible, including the preservation, restoration and re-creation of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species populations. All development proposals will be expected to avoid negative impacts on existing biodiversity and provide a net gain where possible.
151. It is acknowledged that the Odiham Parish Council comments raise concern regarding potential impacts to the SSSI (Greywell Fen and Basingstoke Canal) caused by drainage and biodiversity issues. The Council's Ecologist has not raised concerns in this respect and the Officer view is that the mitigation proposals are acceptable.
152. It is also noted that the South Warnborough Parish Council raised objection concerning pollution impacts to the river Whitewater. In this respect, there is no anticipated pollution from the development and the Officer view is that there would be a net reduction in pollution with the transition from an agricultural use considering the potential run-off of fertiliser, pesticides and/or animal slurry.
153. The Council's Ecologist assessed the ecological information submitted and originally raised concerns in terms of bat activity monitoring, hedgerow protection, provision of habitat and their management, as well as the management period. The applicant has subsequently submitted revised ecological information and a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment to address the concerns initially raised by the Council's Ecologist.

154. The revisions now include an ecological mitigation/enhancement area to the north of the site, adjoining the PRoW. The Council's Ecologist is now satisfied that, subject to planning conditions, the proposal would lead to ecological enhancements. As such, the proposal would meet the objectives of Policy NBE4 of the HLP32, Policy 12 of the ONWNP and the NPPF in this regard.
155. In terms of trees and landscaping, saved policy CON8 of the HLP06 states that where development is proposed which would affect trees, woodlands or hedgerows of significant landscape or amenity value planning permission will only be granted if these features are shown to be capable of being retained in the longer term or if removal is necessary new planting is undertaken to maintain the value of these features and that planning conditions may be imposed to require the planting of new trees or hedgerows to replace those lost.
156. Policy NBE2 of the HLP32 also requires, where appropriate, proposals to include a comprehensive landscaping scheme to ensure that the development would successfully integrate with the landscape and surroundings.
157. It is noted that there have been revisions to the landscape proposals which are welcome. However, it is noted that the tree specimens proposed would not have the girth advised by the tree officer (16cm -18cm) as they are proposed at 8cm-10cm.
158. The above requirement could be secured via a planning condition, to ensure that specimens that are planted on site are of sufficient size. As such, the landscaping of the development, subject to planning conditions, would not raise concerns and would comply with Policy NBE2 of the HLP32, Policy 12 of the ONWNP and the NPPF in this regard.

#### CLIMATE CHANGE AND EQUALITY

159. On 29<sup>th</sup> April 2021 Hart District Council agreed a motion which declared a Climate Emergency in Hart District. Policy NBE9 of the HLP32 requires proposals to demonstrate that they would reduce energy consumption and incorporate renewable or low carbon energy technologies, where appropriate.
160. The submitted application fully addresses the requirements of this adopted policy as it would convert solar energy into electricity. This would be stored on site via batteries and transformers to then be able to transport the energy around the site or to the point of connection with the national grid. The proposal would contribute significantly to address climate change as it would be capable of supplying clean, renewable electricity to 17,500 homes per annum and would result in an offset of approximately 23,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions every year.
161. The proposal therefore fully meets the requirements of Policy NBE9 of the HLP32, Policy 12 of the ONWNP and the NPPF in terms of sustainability/renewable or low-carbon energy technologies to address climate change.
162. With regard to equality, the Council has a duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote good relations between people who share protected characteristics and those who do not under the Equalities Act. The

application raises no concerns about equality matters.

## OTHER PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

### - Loss of Agricultural Land

163. Paragraph 174 of the NPPF requires, among other requirements, that planning decisions should contribute to enhance the natural and local environment by recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services - including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland.
164. The applicant's agricultural land classification report identifies the site as good to moderate agricultural land (a soil mixture of Grade 3a (Good Quality) (51% of the site) and 3b (Moderate Quality) (46%) and acknowledges that in terms of the 3b soil areas, they would be low yielding for arable crops due to summer droughts.
165. From the agricultural classification submitted with this application, and comments made in the representations received in this regard, the site does not appear to have any particular agricultural attribute which would give an overriding and unusually high value. The loss of agricultural land use for the operational period of 40 years, when considering the current agricultural activity on the site and its contribution to food supply, would appear to be a negligible impact.
166. Natural England were consulted as a statutory consultee on this issue as the site area involved exceeds 20 hectares, but no objection was raised.
167. The limited conflict with the NPPF in this regard would be regarded immaterial in this respect.

### - Glint and Glare

168. The submission states that proposed PVP would not cause issues in this respect as their surface is not reflective. The applicant states that the PVP would be compatible with sensitive locations where civilian and military flying activities take place. In addition it is noted that no objection to the proposal was raised by the Defence of Infrastructure Organisation consulted on this application. On this basis therefore no concerns are raised in this regard.

### - District-wide approach to renewable energy development

169. The updated Odiham Parish Council comments are noted in respect of the Council's strategic approach to solar developments. This is not a matter for consideration under this individual application and requires dialogue with Council's Planning Policy Team in this respect.

## PLANNING BALANCE

170. Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 ("TCPA 1990") provides that the decision-maker shall have regard to the provisions of the development plan, so far as material to the application. Section 38(6) of the Planning and

Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

171. It is important to note the public benefits which would arise from this proposal, and these are as follows:

- Social benefits would arise as a result of the generation of electricity as it can be exported to the national grid which can then be used at local, regional or national level and would be capable of supplying 17,500 homes for a year;
- Economic benefits attracted by the proposal would be employment and local expenditure during the construction of the development and, to a limited extent, following provision at operational stages.
- Environmental benefits arising would result from the production of renewable energy that would offset approximately 23,000 tonnes of Carbon Dioxide Emissions each year and through the biodiversity gain which would result due to the soft landscaping proposals incorporated within the development.

172. The dis-benefits and harm identified above are:

- The proposal would cause a harm of moderate significance to the visual amenity and landscape/scenic quality of Hart Downs Landscape Character Area.
- The amenities for occupiers of adjacent dwellings to the site would be affected as a result of the temporary construction works.
- The proposal would result in the temporary loss of agricultural land which is some of the best and most versatile agricultural land (BMV) of Grade 3a (Good Quality).

173. The proposal would deliver substantial public benefits on a scale such as to outweigh the limited harm identified.

174. The proposal, therefore, along with the mitigation strategies proposed, would not materially conflict with policy objectives of the HLP32 or the ONWNP in relation to the principle of the development, heritage, neighbouring amenity, biodiversity/ecology/landscape, flood risk/drainage, highways and sustainability. The application is also in accordance with the aims of the NPPF in these respects.

175. The substantial public benefits carry such weight in the decision-making process to indicate that the development should be granted.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

176. The application has been assessed against the development plan and all relevant material considerations and it is recognised that it would result in some harm, most notably in respect of visual landscape. However, the substantial benefits arising from this proposal would outweigh the harm and overall, the proposed solar farm



would accord with the objectives of the development plan.

177. As such this application is recommended for approval subject to conditions.

## **RECOMMENDATION - Grant**

### **CONDITIONS**

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

REASON: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

2. The development hereby permitted shall be fully implemented in accordance with the following plans/documents (including any mitigation/enhancement recommended therein):

#### Plans:

D06 (Location Plan)  
CSF 06 Rev. A (Tree Survey)  
CSF 07 (Tree Schedule)  
CSF 08 Rev. D (Site Layout Plan)  
CSF 09 Rev. A (Fence and Gate Detail)  
CSF 10 Rev. E (Planting Plan)  
CSF11 Rev. C (Tree Protection Plan)  
CSF 12 Rev. C (Eco Mitigation and Enhancement Plan)  
CSF 13 Rev. C (Site Block Plan)  
CSF 14 Rev. C (Bird Management Plan)  
CSF 15 Rev. C (Off-site Ecological Mitigation and Enhancement Plan)  
HA5038- 1PD- 001 Rev. A (Site Access Arrangement)  
0023.01 Rev. A (Panel Elevations)  
0024 Rev. A (Metal Container – Battery Storage)  
0026 Rev. A (CCTV Column Elevation)  
0027 Rev. A (Cabinet Elevations)  
MVPS40-046 Rev.1 - Sheet 1 and 2 (Metal Container - Equipment)

#### Documents:

Planning, D & A Statement produced by DLP Planning Ltd (December 2020)  
Design Strategy produced by Clearstone  
Heritage Desk Based Assessment produced by Cotswold Archaeology (December 2020)  
Geophysical Survey Report produced by Magnitud Surveys (December 2020)  
Landscape and Ecological Management Plan Rev. B produced by Weddle Landscape Design (July 2021)  
Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Rev. D produced by Weddle Landscape Design (July 2021)

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal produced by Weddle Landscape Design (dated April 2020)

Ecological Impact Assessment Rev. C produced by Weddle Landscape Design (July 2021)

Ecological Information Review produced by BSG Ecology (May 2021)  
Biodiversity Net Gain Report Rev. C produced by Weddle Landscape Design (July 2021)  
Breeding Bird Survey produced by Weddle Landscape Design (July 2020)  
Badger Survey Rev. A produced by Weddle Landscape Design (June 2020)  
Noise Impact Assessment – Ref: 13182.01.v3 produced by Noise Assess Ltd (April 2021)  
Flood Risk Assessment/ Drainage Strategy produced by DLP Planning Ltd (December 2020)  
Flood Risk and Drainage Technical Note -Ref: HA5038PD-TN01 (August 2021)  
Transport Statement Rev. A produced by DLP Planning Ltd (December 2020)  
Stopping Sight Distance Calculations  
Speed Report Bidden Road, Hook - ATC Results Ref: 539001  
Agricultural Quality Report produced by Land research Associates (July 2020)  
Response to HDC Landscape Comments (March 2021)  
Response to HDC Ecologist Comments (April 2021)

REASON: To ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved details and in the interest of proper planning.

3. This permission shall be for a limited period of 40 years, starting from the date when electricity is first exported to the National Grid (First Export Date). Written confirmation of the First Export Date shall be submitted in writing to the Local Planning Authority within one month. No later than 40 years after the First Export Date all operations and/or activities on site shall cease, with exception of the electric substation hereby approved.

REASON: In the interests of the landscape and scenic quality of the area and to limit development in the countryside for a timescale when it demonstrates a benefit in sustainability terms and/or is contributing towards reducing the reliance on fossil fuels and offsetting the associated environmental impacts at that time. In accordance with Policies NBE1 and NBE2 of the Hart Local Plan (Strategy and Sites) 2016-2032, saved policy GEN1 of the Hart District Local Plan 1996-2006, Policy 12 of the Odiham and North Warnborough Neighbourhood Plan 2014-2032 and the aims of the NPPF 2021.

4. Any operational development carried out above, on, or underground to enable the solar farm hereby approved, shall be removed together with any equipment, structures or paraphernalia and the land restored to its former condition/use as agricultural land on or before the 10th of November 2061.

REASON: In the interests of the landscape and scenic quality of the area and to limit development in the countryside for a timescale when it demonstrates a benefit in sustainability terms and/or is contributing towards reducing the reliance on fossil fuels and offsetting the associated environmental impacts at that time. In accordance with Policies NBE1 and NBE2 of the Hart Local Plan (Strategy and Sites) 2016-2032, saved policy GEN1 of the Hart District Local Plan 1996-2006, Policy 12 of the Odiham and North Warnborough Neighbourhood Plan 2014-2032 and the aims of the NPPF 2021.

5. No later than 12 months prior to the expiry of the limited period referred to in condition

no.3, or 12 months prior to the permanent cessation of operations of the development hereby approved, whichever is soonest, a de-commissioning method statement together with a restoration plan for the land shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Once agreed, the de-commissioning method statement and a restoration plan for the land shall be fully implemented as per the details submitted and within the timescales agreed.

REASON: In the interests of the landscape and scenic quality of the area and to limit development in the countryside for a timescale when it demonstrates a benefit in sustainability terms and/or is contributing towards reducing the reliance on fossil fuels and offsetting the associated environmental impacts at that time. In accordance with Policies NBE1 and NBE2 of the Hart Local Plan (Strategy and Sites) 2016-2032, saved policy GEN1 of the Hart District Local Plan 1996-2006, Policy 12 of the Odiham and North Warnborough Neighbourhood Plan 2014-2032 and the aims of the NPPF 2021.

6. No development shall commence until details of a construction environmental management plan are submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and shall include but not limited to the following:

- i) Construction worker and visitor parking;
- ii) anticipated number, frequency and size of construction vehicles;
- iii) dust and Noise/Vibration mitigation measures;
- iv) dust suppression measures;
- v) Site security;
- vi) vehicle manoeuvring/ turning and measures to avoid conflicts along the site access track with vehicles not associated with the construction of the development;
- vii) locations for the loading/unloading and storage of plant, building materials and construction debris and contractors offices;
- viii) procedures for on-site contractors to deal with complaints from local residents;
- ix) measures to mitigate impacts on neighbouring highways; and
- x) details of wheel water spraying facilities;
- xi) Protection of pedestrian routes during construction;
- xii) how construction activities would be controlled /managed to avoid adverse impacts on surrounding SSSI, SINCS, RVEIs and retained trees/hedgerows within/adjacent the site.

The details approved shall be fully implemented and retained for the duration of the works.

REASON: To protect the amenity of local residents, the ecology networks of the area and to ensure adequate highway and site safety in accordance with Policies NBE4, NBE11 and INF3 of the Hart Local Plan (Strategy and Sites) 2016-2032 and the aims of the NPPF 2021.

7. No development shall commence until the modifications to the access track shown in approved plan no. HA5038-1PD-001 Rev. A are implemented and fully completed.

REASON: In the interests of highway safety in accordance with Policy INF3 of the Hart Local Plan (Strategy and Sites) 2016-2032, saved local policy GEN1 of the Hart

District Local Plan 1996-2006 and the aims of the NPPF 2021.

8. No development shall commence until an updated badger survey and mitigation measures during construction works are submitted to and approved in writing by the Local planning Authority (notwithstanding any information submitted with this application). The mitigation approved shall be fully implemented and retained for the duration of the works.

REASON: To minimise impacts on the badger population in the site and locality, in accordance with Policy NBE4 of the Hart Local Plan (Strategy and Sites) 2016-2032 and the NPPF 2021.

9. No development shall commence until full archaeological reports have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, in consultation with the County Archaeologist, prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved. The reports shall contain:
  - Full archaeological survey
  - Targeted trial trenching results (at agreed locations with the County Archaeologists)
  - Recording of Archaeological remains
  - Archaeological watching brief, reporting and publication of results if appropriate.

REASON: To mitigate the effect of groundworks associated with the development upon any heritage assets and to ensure that information regarding these heritage assets is preserved by record for future generations in accordance with the objectives of Policies NBE8 and NBE9 of the Hart Local Plan (Strategy and Sites) 2016-2032, saved local policy GEN1 of the Hart District Local Plan 1996-2006 and the aims of the NPPF 2021.

10. Notwithstanding any information submitted with this application, prior to installation of any CCTV columns, cameras or associated works, the details of the exact positioning of CCTV equipment and columns shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Once approved, the development shall proceed in accordance with the agreed details.

REASON: In the interests of visual and residential amenity in accordance with Policies NBE1 and NBE2 of the Hart Local Plan (Strategy and Sites) 2016-2032, saved local policy GEN1 of the Hart District Local Plan 1996-2006 and the aims of the NPPF 2021.

11. Prior to the installation of any lighting, full details of a lighting scheme shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Once approved, the development shall be carried out in accordance with the agreed details.

REASON: To minimise impacts of light pollution on bats and other protected species sensitive to lighting, in accordance with Policy NBE4 of the Hart Local Plan (Strategy and Sites) 2016-2032 and the aims of the NPPF 2021.

12. Prior to the First Export Date mentioned in Condition 3 above, details of the long-term maintenance arrangements for the surface water drainage system shall be submitted

to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The details shall include:

- i) maintenance schedules for each drainage feature type and ownership; and
- ii) protection measures.

Once approved, the development shall be carried out in accordance with the agreed details, fully implemented prior to the operational stage of the development and complied with for the lifetime of the development.

REASON: To ensure that the proposed development would not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere, be safe from flooding and to satisfy Policy NBE5 of the Hart Local Plan (Strategy and Sites) 2016-2032 and the aims of the NPPF 2021.

13. Noise levels arising from fixed plant and equipment hereby approved shall not exceed the following noise levels when measured at the boundaries of the site:

- Inverters (day): 59 dB(A) at 10m
- Inverters (night): 54 dB(A) at 10m
- Battery Storage Units: 47dB(A) at 10m

REASON: In the interests of residential amenity in accordance with Policy NBE11 of the Hart Local Plan (Strategy and Sites) 2016-2032, saved local policy GEN1 of the Hart District Local Plan 1996-2006 and the aims of the NPPF 2021.

14. Notwithstanding any information submitted with this application, the tree specimens hereby approved as part of the landscaping strategy and shown in approved plan no. CSF10 Rev. E shall have a minimum DBH/ girth of 16-18cm at the time of planting.

REASON: In the interests of the landscape/ scenic quality of the area, in accordance with Policies NBE1 and NBE2 of the Hart Local Plan (Strategy and Sites) 2016-2032, saved local policy GEN1 of the Hart District Local Plan 1996-2006, Policy 12 of the Odiham and North Warnborough Neighbourhood Plan 2014-2032 and the aims of the NPPF 2021.

15. The landscape strategy hereby approved shall be implemented in the first planting season following the commencement of the development and any vegetation which dies, becomes diseased or damaged or otherwise defective within the five-year period following the completion of the development, shall be replaced not later than the end of the following planting season, with planting of similar size, species, number and positions.

REASON: To ensure the development is adequately landscaped in the interest of visual landscape and the character of the surrounding countryside, in accordance with Policy NBE2 of the Hart Local Plan (Strategy and Sites) 2016-2032, policy GEN1 of the saved Hart District Local Plan (Replacement) 1996-2006 and the aims of the NPPF 2021.

16. No development, construction work or delivery of materials shall take place at the site except between 08:00 hours to 18:00 hours on weekdays or 08:00 to 13:00 hours on Saturdays. No development, demolition/construction work or deliveries of materials shall take place at any time on Sundays or Public Holidays.

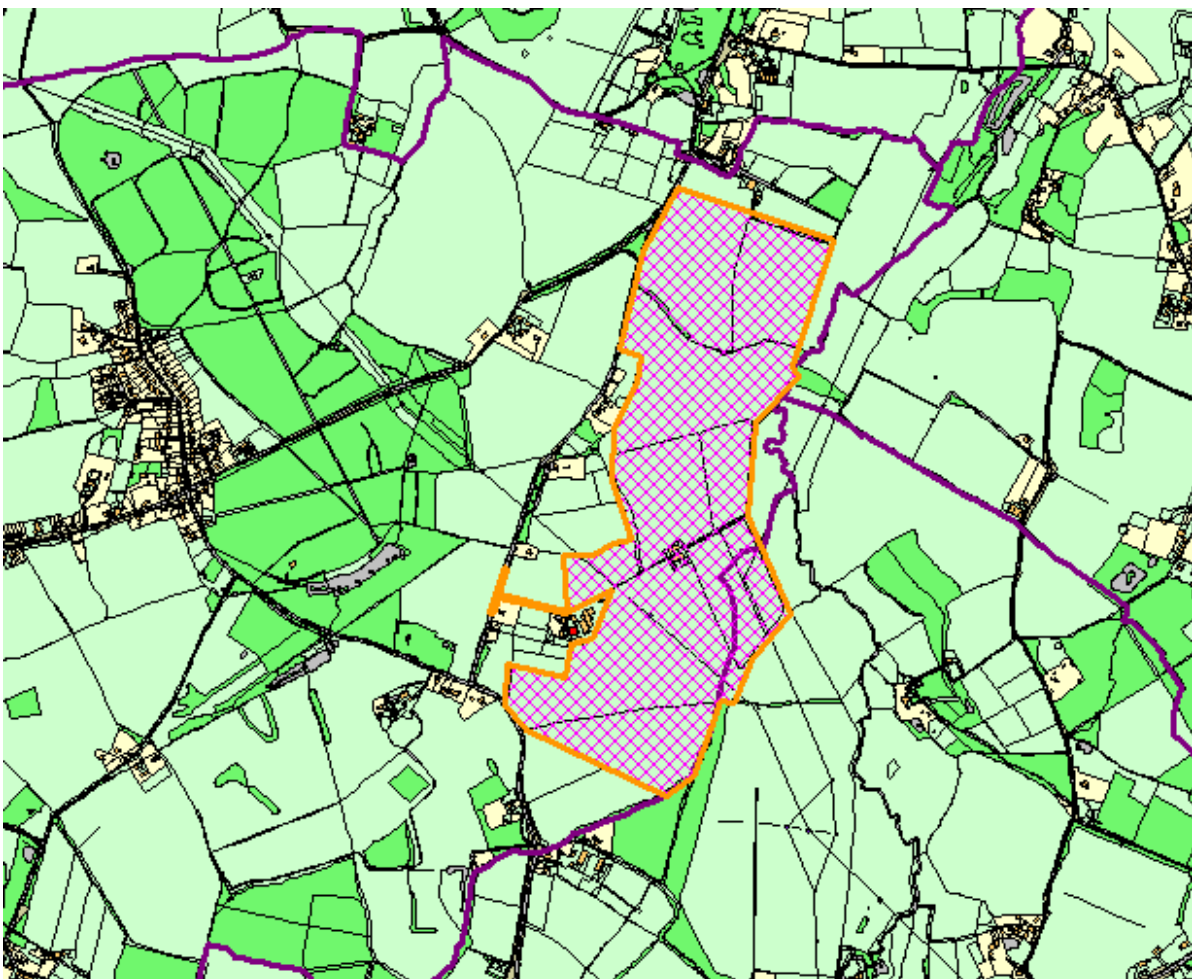
REASON: To protect the residential amenity of adjacent/nearby residential occupiers and to satisfy Policy NBE11 of the Hart Local Plan (Strategy and Sites) 2016-2023, saved local policy GEN1 of the Hart District Local Plan 1996-2006 and the aims of the NPPF 2021.

## INFORMATIVES

1. The Council works positively and proactively on development proposals to deliver sustainable development in accordance with the NPPF. In this instance, the applicant was advised of the necessary information needed to process the application and revisions were accepted to address concerns raised, once received, further engagement with the applicant was required and the application was subsequently made acceptable.
2. The applicant is reminded that to comply with condition no.6 above, engagement with the Local Highway Authority would be required in advance of any highway or access works in order to put in place an agreement under Section 278 of the Highways Act 1980 (as amended).
3. With regards to the Public Right of Way (PRoW) adjoining the site to the north, the applicant is reminded the following:
  - Nothing connected with the development, or its future use should have an adverse effect on the right of way, which must remain available for public use at all times.
  - There must be no surface alterations to a PRoW without the consent of Hampshire County Council as Highway Authority. To carry out any such works without this permission would constitute an offence under Section 131 of the Highways Act 1980 (as amended)
  - No builders or contractors' vehicles, machinery, equipment, materials, spoil or anything associated with the works should be left on or near the PRoW so as to obstruct, hinder or provide a hazard to users.

**COMMITTEE REPORT  
ITEM NUMBER: 102**

APPLICATION NO. 21/00552/FUL  
LOCATION **Bunkers Hill Farm Reading Road Rotherwick Hook  
Hampshire RG27 9DA**  
PROPOSAL Construction of solar farm and battery stations together with  
all associated works, equipment and necessary  
infrastructure.  
APPLICANT Ms Laura Tyrrell  
CONSULTATIONS EXPIRY 28 October 2021  
APPLICATION EXPIRY 7 June 2021  
WARD Hook  
RECOMMENDATION **Grant subject to conditions**



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## **BACKGROUND**

1. This planning application is brought to Planning Committee at the discretion of the Head of Place.

## **DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE**

2. The site extends to 70.09 hectares (ha) of agricultural land, currently partitioned into 5 arable fields. The perimeter of the site is demarcated by hedgerows, and hedgerows separate some of the field parcels. The site is located to the east of Reading Road (B3349) in Hook and is accessed from this road. Bunker's Hill Farmhouse is located centrally within the site but is excluded from the application site. However, the associated farm buildings and access tracks in proximity to the farmhouse form part of the application site.
3. The site is positioned near to the settlements of Rotherwick (located west of the site) and Hook (located south of the site). There are Public Rights of Way (PRoW) crossing the site (Footpath nos. 17 and 23) and in close proximity to the northern and eastern boundary (Footpath no. 16).
4. Sections of the Whitewater River, which is designated as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) are in close proximity to the eastern boundary of the site. The majority of the site falls within Flood Zone 1, which has the lowest risk of fluvial flooding, with the exception of small sections of the site along its eastern boundary, in proximity to the Whitewater River, which fall in Flood Zones 2 and 3 (high risk of river flooding).
5. Several Grade II Listed buildings are situated in close proximity to the application site, including Bunkers Hill Farmhouse, Bunkers Hill Barn, Bartletts Farm House, Bunkers Hill Cottage and Stokers Farm.

## **PROPOSAL**

6. Planning permission is sought for a period of 40 years (from the date of first exportation of electricity from the site) for the installation of solar photovoltaic panels and auxiliary equipment on the land, with the exception of an electricity substation which is intended to be retained on a permanent basis as it would become part of the local electricity distribution network.
7. The proposal would have a maximum output of 49.9MW that could be exported to the National Grid.
8. The photovoltaic panels (PVP) would be spaced between 4 and 6.5 metres apart, tilted at 20 degrees and orientated in a southerly direction. They would be mounted on a steel frame 0.8m above the ground and the highest section of the PVP would be a maximum of 3 metres above ground level.
9. There would be metal containers sited on the land (12.4m long by 2.4m wide by 3.2m high) with main hubs located in centralised sections of the site in the northern half of the area. In the southern half of the site the permanent substation is proposed, along with other equipment hubs along the PVP area's eastern perimeter.



10. The containerised equipment required by the proposal would be 9x central inverter units, 33x battery compounds (22x batteries, 11x inverters, 110x DC-CD units), 2x storage units, 1x switch gear unit, 1x control room and the 132kV substation. In addition, there would be a need to install underground cabling to connect the PVP to the proposed substation.
11. The proposal includes the construction of 4-metre-wide crushed aggregate tracks to access the different hubs and stations. There would also be perimeter fencing to a maximum height of 2 metres. CCTV cameras on 3metre-high columns are also proposed around the site.

## **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

12. None.

## **RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY**

13. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) requires applications for planning permission to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
14. The relevant adopted Development Plan for the District includes the Hart Local Plan (Strategy and Sites) 2016-2032 (HLP32), the saved policies of the Hart District Local Plan (Replacement) 1996-2006 (HLP06) and the Rotherwick Neighbourhood Plan 2016-2032. Adopted and saved policies are up-to-date and consistent with the NPPF (2021).

### Hart Local Plan (Strategy & Sites) 2016-2032 (HLP32):

- Policy SD1 - Sustainable Development
- Policy NBE1 - Development in the Countryside
- Policy NBE2 - Landscape
- Policy NBE4 - Biodiversity
- Policy NBE5 - Managing Flood Risk
- Policy NBE8 - Historic Environment
- Policy NBE9 - Design
- Policy NBE10 - Renewable and Low Carbon Energy
- Policy NBE11 - Pollution
- Policy INF3 - Transport

### Hart District Local Plan (Replacement) 1996-2006 'saved' policies (HLP06):

- Policy GEN1 - General Policy for Development
- Policy CON7 - Riverine Environments
- Policy CON8 - Trees, Woodland & Hedgerows: Amenity Value
- Policy CON23 - Development Affecting Public Right of Ways

### Rotherwick Neighbourhood Plan 2016-2032 (RNP):

- Policy SP01 - Sense of Place

- Policy SP02 - Location and Nature of Development
- Policy SP03 - Countryside Features
- Policy SP04 - Quality of Life
- Policy NE02 - Rural Features
- Policy NE03 - Biodiversity and Nature Conservation
- Policy NE04 - Rights of Way
- Policy BE01 - Design
- Policy CP01 - Rural Nature

#### Other relevant planning policy documents

- National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (NPPF)
- Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)
- Hart's Landscape Assessment (1997)
- Hart's Landscape Capacity Study (2016)
- Hart Parking Provision Interim Guidance (2008)

### **CONSULTEE RESPONSES**

#### **Rotherwick Parish Council**

15. Objection
16. Development to affect unspoilt rural character.
17. Site is clearly visible from many more locations than those listed.
18. Loss of agricultural land
19. Loss of amenity of public footpaths
20. Negative impact on wildlife
21. Increased flood risk
22. Noise
23. Concerns of how the scheme will be ensured to be temporary

#### **Mattingley Parish Council**

24. Objection
25. Impact on Countryside
26. Negative impact on ecology and biodiversity
27. Off-site ecological mitigation should be considered
28. Provision of small area as ecological mitigation is insufficient
29. Proposal contains minimum buffer zones from important natural features, but they are insufficient to mitigate the harm to the landscape/amenity
30. Not policy complaint in terms of landscape and integration with its surroundings

#### **Hook Parish Council**

31. Neutral comments
32. Hook Parish Council is content that comments it made during public consultation in relation to particular elements of the scheme have been incorporated in the submitted application by the applicant.
33. Protection of Whitewater River and its environs from runoff, its ecological value and organic populations is essential
34. Location of access requires substantial consideration as this stretch of the B3349 is a dangerous black spot with history of road accidents

- 35. Attention is drawn to the terminus of PRow no.23 as it bisects the southern portion of the land and must be retained as open and available for public use.
- 36. Modelling of vantage points would enable stakeholders to assess how the scheme would appear on the landscape
- 37. Glint and glare present a valid concern. Modelling should be provided to understand impacts on nearby dwellings.

### **Hartley Wintney Parish Council**

- 38. Neutral comments
- 39. There is a balance to be drawn
- 40. Parish Council supports Government and Hart District Council on green energy strategies
- 41. The HWPC embraces new technology/energy conservation initiatives
- 42. All these are set against the various issues such as the temporary loss of countryside for 40 years, agricultural land, natural habitats, noise pollution, impacts on views from the PRowS crossing the site.

### **County Rights Of Way Group**

- 43. Objection
- 44. We would like to see Public Rights of Way no. 17 and 23 diverted for the benefit of the public and ease of access to straight lines across the site. Plans should be amended to reflect this, and full details of the widths should be provided.
- 45. *Officers' Response: Amended details have subsequently been submitted detailing the diversion of the footpaths as requested.*

### **Environmental Health Officer (Internal)**

- 46. No objection, further information required through planning conditions:
- 47. Typical daytime and night-time background sound levels representative of conditions expected at Stoke Farm.
- 48. Expected typical noise levels during the morning and evening peak hours.

### **Landscape Architect Consultant**

- 49. Concerns raised to address:
- 50. Enhanced vegetation along south-eastern boundary to screen substation and battery storage areas.
- 51. Boundary offset treatments, and offsets to PRow to be enhanced
- 52. The extension of the field of view in some photo panels to include the whole of the Site and inclusion of a viewpoint representative of Open Access Land to the north.
- 53. Production of different data utilising more precise proposed development heights.
- 54. Photomontages from VP 4 and 5 for Year 1 and Year 15
- 55. Submission of a Landscape Environmental Management Plan
- 56. *Officers' Response: Amended details have been submitted to address these issues.*

### **Conservation/Listed Buildings Officer (Internal)**

- 57. Less than substantial harm identified. The Council would have to weigh this harm against public benefits. Planning conditions suggested are:
- 58. Colour of security fencing

59. Long term maintenance of the fencing
60. Landscape management plan

### **Hampshire County Council (Highways)**

61. Objection to the scheme as submitted, additional information requested:
62. Vehicle speed survey
63. Construction workers travel plan
64. A plan showing the construction site layout showing staff parking, material storage areas and vehicle turning facilities as well as wheel washing facilities
65. Further information regarding management of access
66. Additional accident details from Hampshire Constabulary
67. *Officers' Response: Additional information was received and has been the subject of consultation with the Highway Authority. A response is currently awaited and will be reported in the Addendum paper.*

### **HCC Lead Local Flood Authority**

68. No objection subject to conditions to secure:
69. Implementation of the drainage and flood risk information as submitted.
70. Surface water drainage system long -term maintenance arrangements.

### **Natural England**

71. No objection, the proposal would unlikely have significant impacts on the natural environment.

### **Environment Agency Thames Area**

72. No objection subject to a condition to secure:
73. A protection scheme for Undeveloped Buffer Zones alongside/around Whitewater River, the Dorchester Stream, the Great Sheldon's Stream, ditches and ponds.

### **Tree Officer (Internal)**

74. No objection, subject to conditions to secure:
75. Implementation of Arboricultural Method Statement
76. An improved and robust landscaping scheme

### **Ecology Officer (Internal)**

77. No objection, but further information required through planning conditions relating to:
78. Implementation of mitigation in Ecological Appraisal submitted
79. Construction environment management plan
80. Landscape Environmental Management Plan (including proposed locations of habitats features)
81. Lighting strategy must ensure no light spill on the hedgerows
82. Site surveys to establish or rule out presence of dormouse and mitigation strategy. (Prior to determination)

## **National Grid (Plant Protection Team)**

83. No objection subject to the following criteria being met:
84. Fencing at a minimum 10m standoff from NG towers with adequate earthing every 5m up to 30m from NG towers
85. CCTV poles/ CCTV feed/ Weather Stations at a minimum 30m standoff from NG towers to prevent potential transient faults.
86. No permanent structures shall be built directly beneath overhead lines with a safety of less than 7.6m to ground and 8.1 to a road surface.

## **Planning Policy (Internal)**

87. No objection in principle.
88. Whilst the local plan and national policy encourage renewable energy development, they must be at suitable locations where any negative impacts are outweighed by the positive benefits of renewable energy generation. These will tend to be, by their nature, in the countryside and so one cannot object to the principle of this proposal. However, it is emphasised that not all locations or proposals will be suitable, and a judgement needs to be reached in each case.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

89. The statutory requirements for publicity, are set out in the Development Management Procedure Order 2015 (as amended) and the Council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). To publicise this application, neighbour letters were posted to relevant addresses, a site notice displayed, and a local press notice was published in the newspaper providing interested parties with a minimum of 21 days to comment.
90. At the time of writing this report there have been 329 public representations received. Of these, 291 raise objections and 38 were in support. They include representations from Councillor Jonathan Glen (objection), Blackwater Friends of the Earth (in support) and the Whitewater Valley Preservation Society (objection).
91. The grounds of objection to the development are summarised as follows:
  - Impact on countryside
  - Contrary to neighbourhood plan
  - Overdevelopment
  - Visual impact
  - Impact on wildlife
  - Loss of agricultural land
  - Noise impact to surrounding dwellings
  - Impact on historic buildings
  - The applicant's Landscape Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) is flawed
  - No amount of landscaping can screen the industrial effect of the proposal
  - The LVIA acknowledges major adverse effect on PRoW nos.17 and 23 in the short term, reducing to moderate in the long term.
  - Heritage Statement submitted is flawed, heritage assets have been inadequately assessed
  - The landscape itself is of historic value and would be subject to severe adverse impact
  - The proposal would impact on protected species
  - Cumulative effects of solar farms should be considered

## 92. CONSIDERATIONS

1. Principle of Development
2. Landscape and Visual Impacts
3. Heritage Impacts
4. Impacts upon Amenity
5. Highway Safety, Access and Parking
6. Flood Risk and Drainage
7. Ecology and Trees
8. Climate Change and Equality
9. Other Planning Considerations
10. Planning Balance

### PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT

93. The application site is located within the open countryside as designated within the Local Plan proposals maps. Policy NBE1 of the HLP32 seeks to manage development in the countryside and contains 14 separate criteria where development is deemed to be acceptable. None of these criteria specifically provide for development of a solar farm. However, this policy seeks to only permit development when it is demonstrated that a countryside location is both necessary and justified.
94. The nature and scale of the proposed development would realistically make it difficult to be delivered within any of the settlements of the District. It is well known that solar farms are delivered on countryside land for operational reasons. The HLP32 is not silent about this type of development, however the main considerations of the proposal would fall under other adopted policies.
95. Policy NBE10 of the HLP32 sets out that proposals for energy generation from renewable resources will be supported provided that any adverse impacts are satisfactorily addressed. The criteria at NBE10(a-f) are considered to be relevant and assessed later in this report.
96. There are no specific policies relating to renewable energy in the Rotherwick Neighbourhood Plan (RNP). The NPPF supports renewable energy (para. 152). It advises Local Planning Authorities not to require applicants to demonstrate the overall need for renewable energy and to approve applications if impacts are (or can be made) acceptable (para. 158).
97. Accordingly, there is in-principal support for the proposal in the development plan and the NPPF, subject to any impacts arising being appropriately addressed.

### LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACTS

98. Policy NBE2 of the HLP32 seeks to achieve development proposals that respect and wherever possible enhance the special characteristics, value, or visual amenity of the District's landscapes. This policy contains five criteria to assess development proposals in relation to landscape impacts. It also states that, where appropriate, proposals will be required to include a comprehensive landscaping scheme to ensure that the development would successfully integrate with the landscape and surroundings.

99. Policies SP01 and SP02(d) of the RNP state that development proposals will be supported provided they maintain a strong sense of place through their location, design, density and scale, retaining the distinctive local character of Rotherwick Parish. Also, they require that development does not have a significant detrimental effect on the character and setting of the countryside by virtue of its siting, design, size and prominence in the landscape. There are landscape requirements set out in Policy SP02 regarding the impact of development on the openness and character of the countryside between settlements (Rotherwick, Hook and Mattingley, in this case) and the landscape between them.
100. Each criterion from Policy NBE2 of the HLP32 is dealt with in turn below which also capture the landscape/countryside requirements of the RNP policies referred to in the previous paragraph.
- a. Impacts to landscape qualities identified in landscape character assessments.*
101. According to the Hart Landscape Capacity Study (2016), the application site lies within landscape area HO-02. The study area is broader than the site and its immediate setting. This study area was determined to have a medium/high visual sensitivity, landscape sensitivity and landscape value. The area (including the application site) is therefore categorised to have a low to medium overall landscape capacity, which essentially means that a minimal amount of development could be accommodated in limited situations, providing it has regard to the character and the sensitivity of the adjacent character areas.
102. The landscape qualities of the area, relevant to the application site and surroundings within the landscape area are set out as:
- Distinctly riparian character of the north-south River Whitewater valley floor with riverside pastures, sometimes well-treed riverbanks and flood meadows.
  - To the east and west of this relatively narrow section of the River Whitewater valley, the land rises in shallow undulations.
  - A mosaic of grazing fields and reasonably intense arable cultivation throughout, medium to large scale in places.
  - Less robust hedgerow network on the west side of the river with some evidence of past hedgerow removal.
  - Occasional small/medium woodland blocks, more prevalent to the east of the river.
  - High levels of tranquillity on the valley floor close to the river.
  - Overhead power lines and pylons (overhead) dominate the sky.
103. The application site consists of arable fields and some of them are partitioned by way of hedgerows. The topography of the application site is generally flat however there are a minority of areas where it displays a gentle slope where the ground can be seen slightly higher on central sections when compared to the edge along Reading Road. Also, a strip along the eastern perimeter of the site features a gentle slope downwards, towards the Whitewater River. The parcel of land with the river along its eastern side features a more undulating nature sloping upwards away from the application site.
104. The hedgerow structure on the site is reasonably strong along Reading Road with a minor number of sections where visibility of the site is achieved along the road.

The southern and northern boundaries of the application site and the central section of the eastern perimeter of the site do not feature established hedgerows and therefore the site is far more exposed on these edges.

105. It is noted that the installation of the PVP and associated equipment would be carried out following the topography of the site. They would also be accommodated in the different fields set in from the site's perimeter to allow landscaping reinforcement, peripheral access/ circulation to the different parcels with PVP and electrical equipment hubs within the metal containers proposed.
106. The Landscape Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) submitted with the application discusses impacts to landscape features, elements of the site and immediate surroundings. It identifies there are a total of 41 individual trees, 27 groups of trees, 8 hedgerows and 3 woodland blocks that are relevant. These would be considered part of the landscape qualities of the character area. The LVIA confirms the proposal would not require tree removal and only tree works consisting of minor trimming and lifting of canopies to facilitate perimeter fencing installation and access improvements would be necessary.
107. The proposal would be accommodated therefore within the landscape characteristics and qualities of the site and the area as a whole as listed above. The proposal would inevitably interrupt the pattern of arable fields that can be viewed from different vantage points along or near the perimeter of the site, the PRowS or from adjacent parcels of land to the east of the Whitewater River. However, the introduction of the proposed development on these arable fields would also attract robust landscape works to reinforce sections of weak hedgerow and strategic tree planting along the perimeter of the site, as well as between the parcels that adjoin the PRowS.
108. It is also noted that the countryside to the west of Reading Road (B3349) forms a different landscape character area (HO-01). However, the application site would not conflict with its landscape features.
109. As such, the impact that would be caused to the landscape quality, features of the site and immediate surroundings, whilst material, would not be adverse. The landscape mitigation proposed to reinforce the existing landscape features of the site to blend and integrate it with the wider character area would contribute to maintaining the positive attributes of the landscape area HO-02 of the Hart Landscape Capacity Study (2016), as summarised above.

*b) the visual amenity and scenic quality of the landscape.*

110. According to Hart's Landscape Assessment (1997), the application site falls within the 'Whitewater Valley' Character Area. The main distinguishing features consist of a riparian character with flat, low-lying valley floor, riverside pastures and willow lined watercourses, gentle and open valley sides or denuded in character, pastoral/rural character overall. The document acknowledges there are detracting influences/features in the character area (overhead power lines in the northern section of the character area and sparse pattern of settlement with roads/buildings on higher ground to avoid the wet valley floor). The landscape in the locality is graded, overall, as category B landscape, defined as landscape in 'good/fair' condition.



111. The LVIA submitted by the applicant assesses the visual/scenic landscape qualities of the area surrounding the site as open and pleasant landscape, which largely concurs with the category B grade the Hart's Landscape Assessment assigns to the wider character area. The LVIA also acknowledges the openness of the application site and the more robust landscape found in adjoining parcels of land (tree/hedge belts and woodland blocks) around the site which to some extent enclose it from the wider character area.
112. The LVIA considers 10 viewpoints from public footpaths to assess the impacts on the visual landscape arising from the development, all contained within a 2km radius from the application site. Six of these are to the east of the site (located northeast, east and southeast), two viewpoints to the west (located north and south of the site where long range views are likely to be more open and there are limited woodland blocks intervening) and two more from PRowS at the boundary of the site.
113. The Council commissioned an independent appraisal of the submitted LVIA by the applicant.
114. This third-party appraisal advised the following (in summary):
- The LVIA methodology is broadly in accordance with required guidance.
  - Clear understanding and separate assessment of landscape character and
    - visual effects.
  - There is inconsistency in relation to reporting of effects, (i.e., not all year 5 effects are reported), and lack of clarity in terms of extent of effects in places.
  - Value of the landscape and visual resources has been appropriately addressed and criteria to inform sensitivity and magnitude are clearly and objectively defined.
  - Viewpoint selection is proportionate and appropriate and focuses on PRowS. Viewpoints are illustrated as Baseline Panoramas and Photoviews.
  - LVIA identifies receptors and likely effects.
115. However, this independent analysis also made several recommendations, which in summary are:
- A viewpoint is provided from Open Access Land southwest of Diple Road which may allow views of the site.
  - The judgements of impacts should be reconsidered based on a year 15 scenario for viewpoints 4 and 5.
  - Photomontages from viewpoints 4 and 5 and sections through the southern and northern boundary and PRowS that traverse the Site to better understand and demonstrate effects in views and public amenity.
  - Width of PRowS through the site to be 5m at either side to reduce funnelling effects.
  - A more robust landscaping proposal (further planting of trees (woody species) / hedging, better plant mix), particularly around the substation.
  - A Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (LEMP) should be submitted as part of the application.
116. Revised information has been submitted to address the above matters and it is currently under consultation with the Council's Landscape Architect, which in summary responds to the above points as follows:

- Open Access viewpoint: It is well treed and is characterised by strong sense of enclosure, views out are screened or considerably restricted. PRow follows eastern edge of open access but does not offer views towards the site.
- Viewpoints 4 and 5 based on a year 15 scenario have been submitted
- Photomontages of viewpoints 4 and five have been submitted
- PRows would be re-aligned in a straight line through the site with a width of 6m, in response to Hampshire Countryside Planning comments.
- Enhancements and further reinforcement to landscaping proposal along the perimeter and PRows, which includes a small scale copse area.
- LEMP to be secured by a planning condition if proposal is acceptable

117. Initially, Council Officers identified that the landscape views from PRows which would be mainly affected would be those achieved at close to medium range (400m-450m) from the east (viewpoint 4 and 5). This is because there are currently views of the site between tree and hedge lines located along and/or adjoining the Whitewater River together with some along the B3349. It is also noted that the views from the PRows crossing the site (viewpoints 8 & 9) would be affected as any PRow user crossing the site currently has unrestricted 360-degree views of the surrounding landscape as the site is arable land devoid of any landscaping. The remaining views analysed from the PRow network would largely remain unaffected due to the topography and landscaping of the character area.

118. The additional information submitted and summarised above does not change the original Officer assessment which determined that visibility of the proposal from viewpoints 4 and 5 would be achieved through existing vegetation. However, it is considered that the revised landscaping scheme would contribute positively to the landscape of the wider area whilst screening the development further as one approaches the site from east to west. These visual landscape and scenic changes would be localised in nature, as opposed to wide ranging, and only small sections of the development would be partly exposed through the landscape. As such, the harm to the visual amenity and scenic quality would not be significant.

119. The changes to the PRows crossing the site as users currently experience it would also materially change. The long-range views of the surrounding landscape would be reduced due to the 6m landscape corridor in which they would be located, however it would be flanked by hedgerows and woodland blocks at the eastern and western end of the site where PRows intersect it, and meadow planted areas (these are currently devoid of or contain minimal landscape features flanking them). Therefore, PRow users would experience a more well-treed/hedged character with a sense of intimacy and enclosure when crossing the site which are positive characteristics of the wider landscape character area. As such, the material changes to the amenity of the PRows when crossing the site would be altered but harm would be at a moderate level only.

120. To conclude on this matter, the character and visual appearance of the arable fields comprising the application site would change as a result of the proposed development. Views of the proposal would be largely limited to those at specific points along the B3349, achieved at close/medium range from land to the east of the Whitewater River and the views from and landscape character change of the PRows. The landscape strategy proposed would mitigate the effects of these changes, but it would not address the effects in their entirety. As such there would

be limited harm of a moderate level on the visual amenity and scenic quality of the landscape of the Whitewater Valley Character Area as a whole. This weighs negatively against the proposal.

*c) Impacts to historic landscapes, parks, gardens, and features.*

121. Neither the site nor the adjoining parcels of land have any historic significance or are designated as such. However, it is noted that a narrow strip of woodland to the west of the site, located within the Street End Copse Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) is also part of the Tylney Hall Registered Park and Garden (RPG). This designated land is approximately 115m away from the western boundary of the site at the closest point.
122. There is no direct visual landscape interaction between this section of the RPG and the application site. Additionally, there are other intervening features in between the two, such as the B3349 and a minor number of residential and commercial buildings along the road.
123. It is also noted the Conservation Officer did not raise the RPG as a heritage asset that would be affected by the proposal. Other heritage considerations are set out below as part of the main assessment under planning consideration no. 3 - Heritage Assets.

*d) important local, natural and historic features such as trees, woodlands, hedgerows, water features e.g., rivers and other landscape features and their function as ecological networks.*

124. The proposed development would not result in the removal of trees or hedgerows, as previously discussed, they would be robustly reinforced by the additional planting proposed. The landscaping strategy proposed would enhance the current landscaping conditions along the perimeter of the site and also in between the different parcels of land that accommodate the PRoWs. The proposal would also deliver ecological improvements and the Council's Ecology Officer has raised no concerns with the stated biodiversity net gains, as discussed below in consideration no. 10 – Biodiversity/ Trees.

*e) it does not lead to the physical or visual coalescence of settlements, or damage their separate identity, either individually or cumulatively with other existing or proposed development.*

125. The proposal would not lead to any physical or visual coalescence between settlements.
126. Given the above, limited harm of a moderate level to the visual amenity and landscape and scenic quality of Whitewater Valley Landscape Character Area would result which would present a conflict with one of the requirements of Policy NBE2 of the HLP32, Policies SP01, SP02 and NE02 of the RNP and the NPPF.

## HERITAGE IMPACTS

127. Policy NBE8 of the HLP32 states that development proposals should conserve or enhance heritage assets and their settings, taking account of their significance.

128. Paragraphs 195, 199, 200, 202, 203 of the NPPF are of relevance for determining the significance of a Heritage Asset (HA), assessing the impact on significance and the need to weigh harm, including for non-designated HAs.
129. The Council's Conservation Team have confirmed that the Heritage Assets affected by the proposal are largely those immediately adjacent to and surrounding the application site, which comprise Grade II listed buildings Bunkers Hill Farmhouse, Bunkers Hill Barn, Bartletts Farmhouse, Bunkers Hill Cottage and Stokers Farm.
130. The designated heritage assets comprise five vernacular buildings all associated with the former agricultural economy of the area. The buildings are modest in scale and constructed of local materials including timber framing, local brick and generally have plain tiled roofs of traditional gabled and hipped forms. The buildings are characteristic of historic domestic and agricultural buildings and appreciation of their significance is enhanced by the rural character of their landscaped setting where it survives. That setting has changed over time with changed boundaries and larger fields characteristic of more modern agricultural activity.
131. The heritage information submitted identifies a less than substantial harm at the bottom of the spectrum of harm set out in the NPPF as a result from the change in character of the landscape setting of the listed buildings. It would not result in the heritage assets becoming visually isolated or severed from the agricultural and rural character of the wider landscape, as such Council Officers concur with the applicant's heritage assessment.
132. The revisions proposed to the scheme were submitted to minimise harm to heritage assets and the wider landscape to the east, however, given the nature and scale of the proposal it is not possible to avoid harm altogether. Therefore, given the identification of harm that would result from the scheme, it is necessary for the submission to demonstrate that the proposal is able to secure the delivery of public benefits at a level which would outweigh the level of harm caused to the heritage asset/s.
133. The proposal is a non-permanent invasive development, the only feature to remain on site in perpetuity would be the electricity substation, however this is of a minor scale and would be regarded as national infrastructure. Most of the elements comprising the proposal would rest on the ground, with the exception of the PVP mounts which must be securely fixed to it and a proportion of the cabling required that would be buried. The development therefore is largely reversible at the end of the proposed period or when the need for the energy generated ceases.
134. Therefore, due to the less than substantial harm generated at the lower level of the spectrum, the proposal would not strictly accord with Policies NBE8 or NBE9 of the HLP32 or Policy GEN1 of the HLP06 in this respect. The NPPF sets out that heritage harm can in some instances be outweighed by public benefits within the balancing exercise and this assessment is undertaken later at section 10.

## IMPACTS UPON AMENITY

135. Policy NBE11 of the HLP32 supports development that does not give rise to, or would be subject to, unacceptable levels of pollution. Saved policy GEN1 of the HLP06 supports development that, amongst other requirements, causes no material loss of amenity to adjacent properties.
136. Paragraph 130 of the NPPF 2021 advises that planning decisions should ensure that developments achieve a high standard of amenity for existing and future users and that developments do not undermine quality of life for communities.
137. The closest properties that would be affected by the proposal would be those located along either side of the B3349. Some of those to the eastern side share a boundary with the application site. Bunkers Hill Farmhouse is sited off the B3349 and also shares a boundary with the application site.
138. The main impacts anticipated would be the visual change to the fields adjoining these properties, potential noise that may arise from the ancillary equipment required for the transfer or conversion of solar energy from the PVP into transformers and batteries, loss of privacy as a result of any CCTV posts proposed and any increase in traffic as a result of maintenance or other operational requirements of the solar farm.
139. With regards to the impacts on visual change and potential outlook from these dwellings (other than Bunkers Hill Farm), the proposed PVP and ancillary equipment would not be sited immediately adjacent to the boundary of the residential curtilage of these properties. The distances between the PVP and the curtilage of residential properties, at the closest, would vary but it would be approximately 33 metres. Also, there are hedging and trees within the residential curtilages in addition to the landscaping proposed along the perimeter of the site, both of which would reduce the visual impacts of the proposal. In some cases, there are also intervening green fields between neighboring dwellings and the proposal site which increase the distance of the PVP from the houses significantly.
140. In the case of Bunkers Hill Farm, this adjoining property is the one site closely located to PVP areas. However, it is noted that the farmhouse and its agricultural curtilage features several barns and ancillary buildings, mainly sited east of the farm which would disrupt some of the views of the proposed development.
141. The main views of the development would be achieved from the upper windows of the properties. At ground level, considering the landscaping scheme proposed, the views of the proposals would be significantly reduced. The occupiers of these dwellings would experience a material change to the current views they currently enjoy from the upper floor windows, as they would be capable of viewing sections of the PVP areas proposed. In this respect, loss of views is not a material planning consideration.
142. With regards to noise, the Council's Environmental Health Officer (EHO) requested details of the characterisation of typical day/nighttime background noise levels expected at Stokers Farm (east of site). Also, it was requested that the applicant provide typical noise levels during the morning/evening peak hours.
143. The applicant provided the information clarifying that the initial noise assessment was based upon indicative background noise levels, as the assessment was

carried out during a period of lockdown, when noise levels would have been atypical. However, it has since been possible to undertake baseline noise monitoring at Stokers Farm and at positions representative of the other potentially most affected properties to establish the actual noise levels and principal sources of noise at these locations.

144. The positions assessed were at the northern boundary, western boundary (section shared with Stokers Farm) and the southwestern boundary. The background noise levels fluctuated but only the lowest are listed below:
- Daytime (07:00 – 19:00 hours): 42 dB LA90,15 min
  - Evening (19:00 – 23:00 hours): 37 dB LA90,15 min
  - Night-time (23:00 – 05:30 hours): 26 dB LA90,15 min
  - Early Morning (05:30 – 07:00 hours): 35 dB LA90,15 min
145. The revised noise assessment is based upon the worst-case operating conditions for the plant and equipment, to provide a worst-case assessment for both the day and night-time periods. It states that the DC-CD inverters/converters would be the main source of noise of the proposed equipment, and it is proposed to house them within containers which would provide a substantial noise reduction.
146. The highest noise levels, which have been calculated, would only occur during the mid-daytime periods whilst the solar panels were operating at full capacity, with the highest noise levels attributable to the operation of the battery stations during periods of peak charging or
147. discharging. There are large distances between the inverters/ converters and neighbouring properties, any high frequency components of the noise would be effectively mitigated, as the higher frequencies attenuate at a higher rate over distance.
148. Noise levels from the equipment over the background noises listed above would be categorised as a low level of impact, they are as follows:
- Daytime (07:00 – 19:00 hours): - 10 dB (from dB value above)
  - Evening (19:00 – 23:00 hours): -5 (from dB value above)
  - Night-time (23:00 – 05:30 hours): +3 dB (from dB value above)
  - Early Morning (05:30 – 07:00 hours): -3 dB (from dB value above)
149. The noise levels at the properties attributable to the operation of the plant and equipment would remain well below a level which would result in a potential adverse impact, with the exception of the battery stations at night-time, which would be marginally over the background noise. It is, however, unlikely internal residential amenity is significantly affected and impacts on external spaces would be minimal. Overall, therefore, the operation of the solar farm would generate low noise levels at surrounding properties both during the day and night-time periods.
150. The loss of privacy arising from the CCTV 3 metre high columns proposed can be addressed by strategically positioning or directing them to prevent any invasion to the privacy and amenity of the occupiers of adjacent dwellings. However, they could be strategically positioned/directed to prevent any invasion of the privacy and amenity of the occupiers of these cottages and a condition could be included to secure the details of the position of the CCTV.

151. Finally with regards to traffic, the main amenity impacts in this respect would be during the construction period (approx. 5 months) as there would be vehicular movements of articulated lorries delivering the PVP and associated equipment. The increase in traffic and potential for noise impacts during construction is noted however the impacts would only be temporary, they can be mitigated via the imposition of conditions and as such they would not warrant the refusal of the application.
152. On the basis of the above, no concerns are raised as there would be no demonstrable detrimental impacts upon residential amenity such as to materially conflict with the objectives of saved policy GEN1 of the HLP06 or the NPPF in this regard.

#### HIGHWAY SAFETY, ACCESS AND PARKING

153. Policy INF3 of the HLP32 states that development should promote the use of sustainable transport modes prioritising walking and cycling, improve accessibility to services and support the transition to a low carbon future.
154. Saved policy GEN1 of the HLP06 supports developments that do not give rise to traffic flows on the surrounding road network which would cause material detriment to the amenities of nearby properties and settlements or to highway safety.
155. Paragraph 111 of the NPPF 2021 advises that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.
156. In terms of impacts arising from the development to the operation of the highway network, the Local Highway Authority (LHA) requested additional information comprising a vehicle speed survey, further information regarding management of access and additional accident details from Hampshire Constabulary, a construction workers travel plan and a construction management plan (construction site layout, staff parking, material storage areas and vehicle turning and wheel washing facilities).
157. The speed survey and accident details provided from Hampshire Constabulary would simply assist on the stopping sight distances and any potential safety measures at the access point. The required visibility spays stated by the LHA could be secured via planning condition together with details of a construction management plan condition. Subject to condition, it is considered that the construction of the proposal would not result in severe impacts to the safety of the highway network. The temporary highway impacts can be effectively addressed through planning conditions.
158. Once at an operational stage, the impacts of the development on the highway would be negligible as the proposal would not result in high number of vehicle movements to and from the site, with the exception of occasional maintenance and monitoring.
159. With regards to car parking, the proposal would not require formal provision at the

operational stage. Any maintenance vehicle would be able to move around the PVP to reach the hubs that contain the ancillary equipment for maintenance purposes.

160. Therefore, the development would comply with the objectives of Policy INF3 of the HLP32, saved policy GEN1 of the HLP06 and paragraph 111 of the NPPF 2021.

### FLOOD RISK AND DRAINAGE

161. Policy NBE5 of the HLP32 sets out five criteria when development would be permitted, in this case the applicable criteria for this proposal are:
162. Over its lifetime it would not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere and will be safe from flooding;
163. If located within an area at risk from any source of flooding, now and in the future, it is supported by a site-specific flood risk assessment and complies fully with national policy including the sequential and exceptions tests where necessary;
164. Within Causal Areas (as defined in the SFRA) all development takes opportunities to reduce the causes and impacts of flooding.
165. Policy NE03 of the RNP also requires development proposals to incorporate robust and effective flood alleviation and mitigation measures for management of rainwater run-off and flooding risks from all sources. Where appropriate, developments should employ Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) for water quality and quantity management purposes.
166. Environment Agency flood mapping indicates that the application site falls entirely within Flood Zone 1, which has the lowest risk of fluvial flooding. The proposal was accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment, which has been assessed by the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA). The surface water drainage system proposed has been accepted by the LLFA and subject to planning conditions requesting compliance with the details and submission of long -term maintenance details, they have raised no objection.
167. On this basis, the proposal is acceptable and complies with the objectives of Policy NBE5 of the HLP32, Policy NE03 of the RNP and the aims of the NPPF in this regard.

### ECOLOGY/ TREES

168. With regards to biodiversity, Policy NBE4 of the HLP32 states that: 'In order to conserve and enhance biodiversity, new development will be permitted provided:
- a) It will not have an adverse effect on the integrity of an international, national or locally designated sites.
  - b) It does not result in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats, including ancient woodland and the loss of aged or veteran trees found outside ancient woodland, unless the need for, and benefits of, the development in that location clearly outweigh the loss;



- c) opportunities to protect and enhance biodiversity and contribute to wildlife and habitat connectivity are taken where possible, including the preservation, restoration and re-creation of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species populations. All development proposals will be expected to avoid negative impacts on existing biodiversity and provide a net gain where possible'.
169. Policy NE03 of the RNP also requires that development proposals conserve or enhance biodiversity by incorporating measures to sustain and improve biodiversity, protecting local watercourses and protecting or enhancing wildlife habitats and wildlife corridors, including Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation and those of high ecological value.
170. The Council's Ecologist assessed the ecological information submitted and considered it necessary to require additional technical documentation, which can be secured through the imposition of planning conditions if this proposal is supported by the Council. The information requested (as listed in the consultee section above) is not necessary at the application determination stage, with the exception of the clarification about the potential presence of dormice on site.
171. The applicant has provided clarification on this point stating that the default position is considering there could be a presence of dormice on site in the limited habitat provided by the site. As such, they recommend that habitat removal is undertaken under a precautionary working methods statement (PWMS) and with an ecological clerk of works (ECoW) present to give a toolbox talk, undertake a hand search of all removed vegetation and to supervise all works. Should a dormouse, signs of dormice or a nest be found, works would stop and the appropriate licence be obtained from Natural England. This is considered to be a suitable approach to the potential presence of dormice on the site. An informative could also be imposed to remind the applicant of their obligations under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).
172. As such the proposal would meet the objectives of Policy NBE4 of the HLP32, Policy NE03 of the RNP and the aims of the NPPF in this regard.
173. In terms of trees and landscaping, saved policy CON8 of the HLP06 states that where development is proposed which would affect trees, woodlands or hedgerows of significant landscape or amenity value planning permission will only be granted if these features are shown to be capable of being retained in the longer term or if removal is necessary new planting is undertaken to maintain the value of these features. Planning conditions may be imposed to require the planting of new trees or hedgerows to replace those lost.
174. Policy NBE2 of the HLP32 also requires, where appropriate, that proposals should include a comprehensive landscaping scheme to ensure that the development would successfully integrate with the landscape and surroundings.
175. The submitted tree planting proposal has been revised during the course of the application and comprises additional tree planting together with a small woodland

copse which is welcome. The Council's Tree Officer did not raise concerns in respect of the development as it would not result in any tree removal.

176. As such, there is no objection to the proposal in landscaping terms and subject to planning conditions it would comply with Policy NBE2 of the HLP32, saved policy CON8 of the HLP06, Policies SP03 and NE02 of the RNP and the aims of the NPPF in this regard.

#### CLIMATE CHANGE AND EQUALITY

177. On 29<sup>th</sup> April 2021 Hart District Council agreed a motion which declared a Climate Emergency in the District. Policy NBE9 of the HLP32 requires proposals to demonstrate that they would reduce energy consumption through sustainable approaches and incorporate renewable or low carbon energy technologies, where appropriate.
178. The submitted application fully addresses the requirements of adopted policy as it would convert solar energy into electricity. This energy would be stored on site via batteries/ transformers that would export to the National Grid. The proposal would contribute significantly to addressing climate change. The supporting information submitted with the application outlines that it would be capable of supplying electricity to 10,731 homes and would result in a saving of 827,605 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions every year.
179. The proposal therefore fully meets the requirements of Policy NBE9 of the HLP32, Policy SP02 the RNP and the aims of the NPPF in terms of sustainability/renewable or low-carbon energy technologies to address climate change.
180. With regard to equality, the Council has a duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote good relations between people who share protected characteristics and those who do not under the Equalities Act. The application raises no concerns about equality matters.

#### OTHER PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

- Loss of Agricultural Land
181. Paragraph 174 of the NPPF requires, among other requirements, that planning decisions should contribute to enhance the natural and local environment by recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services - including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland.
182. The appellant's agricultural land classification report identifies the site as moderate agricultural land as it acknowledges that the site comprises soil falling within the 3b classification. Thus, the site would not contain soil within the top 2 grades of agricultural land.
183. From the agricultural classification submitted with this application, and comments made in the representations received in this regard, the site does not appear to

have any particular agricultural attribute that would give an overriding and unusual high value. The loss of agricultural land use for the operational period of 40 years, when considering the current agricultural activity on the site and its contribution to food supply, would appear to be a negligible impact.

184. The limited conflict with the NPPF in this regard would be regarded immaterial in this respect.

- Glint and Glare

185. The proposal was accompanied by a glint and glare study, which advises that no detailed assessment is recommended or necessary for Blackbushe Airport and Farnborough Airport due to the separation distances of at least 7.5km and 12.8km from the proposed development. Also, solar reflections towards approaching aircraft would have a 'low potential for temporary after image' in the worst case.

186. The study also advises that solar reflections are only geometrically possible towards 23 out of the 34 assessed road receptors along the B3349 and towards 36 out of the 90 assessed dwelling receptors. Most of the potential solar reflections would not be experienced in practice due to the landscape screening. In addition, the panels would be coated with a thin film of silicon nitride or titanium oxide to reduce reflectivity. On this basis therefore no concerns are raised in this regard.

## PLANNING BALANCE

187. Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 ("TCPA 1990") provides that the decision-maker shall have regard to the provisions of the development plan, so far as material to the application. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

188. It is important to note the public benefits which would arise from this proposal, and these are as follows:

- Social benefits would arise as a result of the generation of electricity which can be exported to the National Grid which can then be used at local, regional or national level and would be capable of supplying electricity to 10,731 homes for a year.
- Economic benefits attracted by the proposal would be employment and local expenditure during the construction of the development and, to a limited extent, during the operational stage.
- Environmental benefits arising would result from the production of renewable energy that would offset approximately 827,605 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per year.
- Biodiversity net gain as a result of the soft landscaping proposals associated with the development.

189. The dis-benefits and harm identified above are:

- The proposal would cause limited harm of moderate significance to the visual amenity and landscape/scenic quality of the Whitewater Valley Landscape Character Area and the amenity of the PRoWs that cross through and run along the perimeter of the site.
  - The amenities for occupiers of adjacent dwellings to the site would be affected as a result of the temporary construction works.
  - The proposal would result in less than substantial harm (bottom of the scale) to designated heritage assets as a result of the change to their landscape and agricultural settings, on a temporary basis.
  - The proposal would result in the temporary loss of agricultural land.
190. Considering the benefits stated above against the harm identified and taking into account the advice on heritage assets in paragraphs 195, 199, 200 and 202 of the NPPF, the proposal would deliver substantial public benefits on a scale such as to outweigh the limited harm identified.
191. The proposal would not conflict with the policy objectives of the HLP32 or the RNP taken as a whole in relation to the principle of the development, heritage, neighbouring amenity, biodiversity/ ecology/ landscape, flood risk/ drainage, highways and sustainability. The application is also in accordance with the aims of the NPPF in these respects.
192. The substantial public benefits carry such weight in the decision-making process to indicate that the development should be granted.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

193. The application has been assessed against the development plan and all relevant material considerations and it is recognised that it would result in harm in some areas, most notably in respect of visual landscape and PRoW amenity and less than substantial harm to heritage assets.
194. However, the substantial public benefits arising from this proposal would outweigh the harm and overall, the proposed solar farm would accord with the objectives of the development plan.
195. As such this application is recommended for approval subject to conditions.

## **RECOMMENDATION – Grant subject to conditions.**

### **CONDITIONS**

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

REASON: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

2. The development hereby permitted shall be fully implemented in accordance with the following plans/documents (including any mitigation/enhancement recommended

therein):

Plans:

23052-0200 Rev. P1 (Substation layout – General Arrangement)  
23052-0300 Rev. P1 (Substation Elevations)  
23052-0400 Rev. P1 (DNO Control Room)  
23052-0401 Rev. P1 (Customer Switch Room)  
Typical PV Table Front View Rev. A  
Typical PV Table Side View Rev. A  
Typical Battery Station Details Rev. A  
Typical Spares Container Details Rev. A  
Typical Inverter Details Rev. A  
Typical Trench Sections Details Rev. A  
Typical Fence, Track & CCTV Rev. A  
P20-0535\_06 Rev. K Sheets 1-5 (Landscape Strategy)

Documents:

Planning Statement produced by Pegasus Group (February 2021)  
Design and Access Statement produced by Pegasus Group (February 2021)  
Heritage Statement produced by Pegasus Group (February 2021)  
Geophysical Survey Report produced by Archaeological Surveys Ltd (October 2020)  
Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment produced by Pegasus Group (February 2021)  
Rebuttal to 'Landscape Visual Assessment by LDA Design' produced by Pegasus Group (October 2021)  
Photomontages Viewpoints 5 and 5 (existing, year 1 & year 15)

Ecological Appraisal produced by Tyler Grange (February 2021)  
Hazel Dormice Applicant's Email dated 15.06.2021  
Arboricultural impact Assessment produced by Tyler Grange (February 2021)  
Noise Impact Assessment produced by LF Acoustics (April 2021)  
Solar Photovoltaic Glint and Glare Study produced by Pagerpower (February 2021)

Flood Risk Assessment produced by PFL Consulting (February 2020)  
Construction Traffic Management Plan Rev. A produced by Pegasus Group (October 2021)  
Construction Worker Travel Plan Statement produced by Pegasus Group (September 2021)  
Agricultural Land Classification produced by Amet Property (February 2021)

REASON: To ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved details and in the interest of proper planning.

3. This permission shall be for a limited period of 40 years, starting from the date when electricity is first exported to the National Grid (First Export Date).

Written confirmation of the First Export Date shall be submitted in writing to the Local Planning Authority within one month. No later than 40 years after the First Export Date all operations and/or activities on site shall cease, with exception of the electric substation hereby approved.

REASON: In the interests of the landscape/ scenic quality of the area and to prevent

the retention of a development in the countryside when there is no longer a benefit in sustainability terms and/or contribution towards reducing the reliance on fossil fuels and offsetting the associated environmental impacts in accordance with Policies NBE1 and NBE2 of the Hart Local Plan (Strategy and Sites) 2016-2032, saved local policy GEN1 of the Hart District Local Plan 1996-2006, Policies SP01, SP03 and NE02 of the Rotherwick Neighbourhood Plan 2016-2032 and the aims of the NPPF 2021.

4. Any operational development carried out above, on, or underground to enable the solar farm hereby approved, shall be removed together with any equipment, structures or paraphernalia and the land restored to its former condition/use as agricultural land on or before the 10th of November 2061.

REASON: In the interests of the landscape and scenic quality of the area and to limit development in the countryside for a timescale when it demonstrates a benefit in sustainability terms and/or is contributing towards reducing the reliance on fossil fuels and offsetting the associated environmental impacts at that time. In accordance with Policies NBE1 and NBE2 of the Hart Local Plan (Strategy and Sites) 2016-2032, saved policy GEN1 of the Hart District Local Plan 1996-2006, Policies SP01, SP03 and NE02 of the Rotherwick Neighbourhood Plan 2014-2032 and the aims of the NPPF 2021.

5. No later than 12 months prior to the expiry of the limited period referred to in condition no.3, or 12 months prior to the permanent cessation of operations of the development hereby approved, whichever is soonest, a de-commissioning method statement together with a restoration plan for the land shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

The decommissioning method statement and a restoration plan for the land shall be fully implemented as per details agreed.

Any operational development above or underground carried out to enable the solar farm hereby approved, shall be removed and the land restored to its former condition/use as agricultural land on or before 40 years after the First Export Date.

REASON: In the interests of the landscape/ scenic quality of the area and to prevent the retention of a development in the countryside when there is no longer a benefit in sustainability terms and/or contribution towards reducing the reliance on fossil fuels and offsetting the associated environmental impacts in accordance with Policies NBE1 and NBE2 of the Hart Local Plan (Strategy and Sites) 2016-2032, saved local policy GEN1 of the Hart District Local Plan 1996-2006, Policies SP01, SP03 and NE02 of the Rotherwick Neighbourhood Plan 2016-2032 and the aims of the NPPF 2021.

6. No development shall commence until details of a construction environmental management plan are submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and shall include but not limited to the following:

- i) Construction Worker Travel Plan, parking layout details (including visitors);
- ii) anticipated number, frequency and size of construction vehicles;
- iii) dust and Noise/Vibration mitigation measures;
- iv) dust suppression measures;
- v) Site security;
- vi) vehicle manoeuvring/ turning and measures to avoid conflicts along the site access track with vehicles not associated with the construction of the development;
- vii) locations for the loading/unloading and storage of plant, building materials and

- construction debris and contractors offices;
- viii) procedures for on-site contractors to deal with complaints from local residents;
- ix) measures to mitigate impacts on neighbouring highways; and
- x) details of wheel water spraying facilities;
- xi) Protection of pedestrian routes during construction;
- xii) Vehicle speed surveys and stopping sight distance calculations
- xiii) Swept path analysis based on a 16.5m length articulated lorry
- xiv) Hampshire Constabulary Accident Data – previous 5-year period
- xv) how construction activities would be controlled /managed to avoid adverse impacts on surrounding SINC's, retained trees/hedgerows within/adjacent the site.

The details approved shall be fully implemented and retained for the duration of the works.

REASON: To protect the amenity of local residents, the ecology networks of the area and to ensure adequate highway and site safety in accordance with policies NBE4, NBE11 and INF3 of the Hart Local Plan (Strategy and Sites) 2016-2032, Policies SP01, SP03 and NE02 of the Rotherwick Neighbourhood Plan 2016-2032 and the aims of the NPPF 2021.

7. No development shall commence until a protection scheme for the undeveloped Buffer Zones alongside/around Whitewater River, the Dorchester Stream, the Great Sheldon's Stream, ditches and ponds is submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall contain:

- Plans detailing extent/layout of buffer zone
- Planting with native species to create a mosaic of different habitats
- Details to eradicate non-native species from the site (Himalayan Balsam)
- Details of buffer zone protection during construction and long-term management
- Details of any fencing or footpaths
- Details of Nature Conservation enhancements to the river channel morphology and bankside habitats

The protection scheme shall be fully implemented as approved, and the buffer zone shall remain free from built development, lighting and formal landscaping.

REASON: In the interest of nature conservation and enhancement to riverine environments, in accordance with Policy NBE4 of the Hart Local Plan (Strategy and Sites) 2016-2032, saved local policy CON7 of the Hart District Local Plan 1996-2006 and the aims of the NPPF 2021.

8. The positioning of CCTV columns shall be implemented in accordance with approved plan no. P20-0535\_06 Rev. K Sheets 1-5 and in use before the development is first operational. Prior to installation of any further CCTV columns, cameras or associated works, the details of the exact positioning of CCTV equipment and columns shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Once approved, the development shall proceed in accordance with the agreed details.

REASON: In the interests of visual and residential amenity in accordance with Policies NBE1 and NBE2 of the Hart Local Plan (Strategy and Sites) 2016-2032, saved local policy GEN1 of the Hart District Local Plan 1996-2006 and the aims of the NPPF 2021.

9. Notwithstanding any information submitted with this application, details of the security fencing enclosure for the substation along with a hedge planting enclosure scheme shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Once approved, the development shall proceed in accordance with the agreed details before the substation is operational.

REASON: In the interests of the landscape/ scenic quality of the area in accordance with Policy NBE2 of the adopted Hart Local Plan (Strategy and Sites) 2016-2032, saved local policy GEN1 of the Hart District Local Plan 1996-2006, Policies SP01, SP03 and NE02 of the Rotherwick Neighbourhood Plan 2016-2032 and the aims of the NPPF 2021.

10. A detailed Landscape Management Plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before the development becomes first operational. The Landscape Management Plan shall include (but not be limited to) long term landscape/habitat monitoring and proposed locations of habitat features.

The Landscape Management Plan shall be fully implemented in accordance with the approved details before the development becomes first operational and for the lifetime of the development.

REASON: In the interest of biodiversity and ecology, in accordance with Policy NBE4 of the Hart Local Plan (Strategy and Sites) 2016-2032, Policy NE02 of the Rotherwick Neighbourhood Plan 2016-2032 and the aims of the NPPF 2021.

11. Prior to the installation of any lighting, full details of a lighting scheme shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Once approved, the development shall be carried out in accordance with the agreed details.

REASON: To minimise impacts of light pollution on bats and other protected species sensitive to lighting, in accordance with Policy NBE4 of the Hart Local Plan (Strategy and Sites) 2016-2032 and the aims of the NPPF 2021.

12. Details of the long-term maintenance arrangements for the surface water drainage system shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The details shall include:

- maintenance schedules for each drainage feature type and ownership; and
- protection measures.

The details approved shall be fully implemented prior to the operational stage of the development and complied with for the lifetime of the development.

REASON: To ensure that the risk of flooding elsewhere is not increased by the development and for the development to be safe from flooding and to satisfy Policy NBE5 of the Hart Local Plan (Strategy and Sites) 2016-2032 and the aims of the NPPF 2021.

13. Notwithstanding any information submitted with this application, 2.4m x 160m visibility splays at the site access shall be provided and maintained during both the construction of the development and its de-commissioning.



REASON: In the interests of highway and site safety in accordance with Policy INF3 of the Hart Local Plan (Strategy and Sites) 2016-2032, Policy D04 of the Rotherwick Neighbourhood Plan 2016-2032 and the aims of the NPPF 2021.

14. Noise levels arising from fixed plant and equipment hereby approved shall not exceed the following noise levels when measured at the boundaries of the site:

- Inverters (day): 59 dB(A) at 10m
- Inverters (night): 54 dB(A) at 10m
- Battery Storage Units: 47dB(A) at 10m

All the DC-CD converters shall be accommodated within containers at each battery station.

REASON: In the interests of residential amenity in accordance with Policy NBE11 of the Hart Local Plan (Strategy and Sites) 2016-2032, saved local policy GEN1 of the Hart District Local Plan 1996-2006 and the aims of the NPPF 2021.

14. The landscape strategy hereby approved shall be implemented in the first planting season following the commencement of the development and any vegetation which dies, becomes diseased or damaged or otherwise defective within the five-year period following the completion of the development, shall be replaced not later than the end of the following planting season, with planting of similar size, species, number and positions.

REASON: To ensure the development is adequately landscaped in the interest of visual landscape and the character of the surrounding countryside, in accordance with Policy NBE2 of the Hart Local Plan (Strategy and Sites) 2016-2032, policy GEN1 of the saved Hart District Local Plan (Replacement) 1996-2006 and the aims of the NPPF 2021.

15. No development, construction work or delivery of materials shall take place at the site except between 08:00 hours to 18:00 hours on weekdays or 08:00 to 13:00 hours Saturdays. No development, demolition/construction work or deliveries of materials shall take place at any time on Sundays or Public Holidays.

REASON: To protect the residential amenity of adjoining/nearby residential occupiers and to satisfy Policy NBE11 of the Hart Local Plan and Sites (2016-2032), saved local Policy GEN1 of the Hart District Local Plan 1996-2006 and the aims of the NPPF 2021.

## **INFORMATIVES**

1. The Council works positively and proactively on development proposals to deliver sustainable development in accordance with the NPPF. In this instance, the applicant was advised of the necessary information needed to process the application and revisions were accepted to address concerns raised, once received, further engagement with the applicant was required and the application was subsequently made acceptable.
2. The applicant is reminded that engagement with the Highway Local Authority would be required to carry out road access alterations and an agreement under Section 278 of the Highways Act 1980 (as amended) would have to be in place before undertaking any works.

3. With regards to the realignment of the Public Right of Way no.17 and 23 crossing the site, the applicant is reminded that notwithstanding this planning permission the following is required:
- Nothing connected with the development, or its future use should have an adverse effect on the right of way, which must remain available for public use at all times.
  - There must be no surface alterations to a PRow without the consent of Hampshire County Council as Highway Authority. To carry out any such works without this permission would constitute an offence under Section 131 of the Highways Act 1980 (as amended)
  - No builders or contractors' vehicles, machinery, equipment, materials, spoil or anything associated with the works should be left on or near the PRow so as to obstruct, hinder or provide a hazard to users.
4. The applicant is reminded that to that notwithstanding this planning permission the following National Grid requirements need to be met:
- Fencing at a minimum 10m standoff from National Grid towers with adequate earthing every 5m up to 30m from National Grid towers.
  - CCTV poles/ CCTV feed/ Weather Stations at a minimum 30m standoff from National Grid towers to prevent potential transient faults.
  - No permanent structures shall be built directly beneath overhead lines with a safety of less than 7.6m to ground and 8.1 to a road surface.