

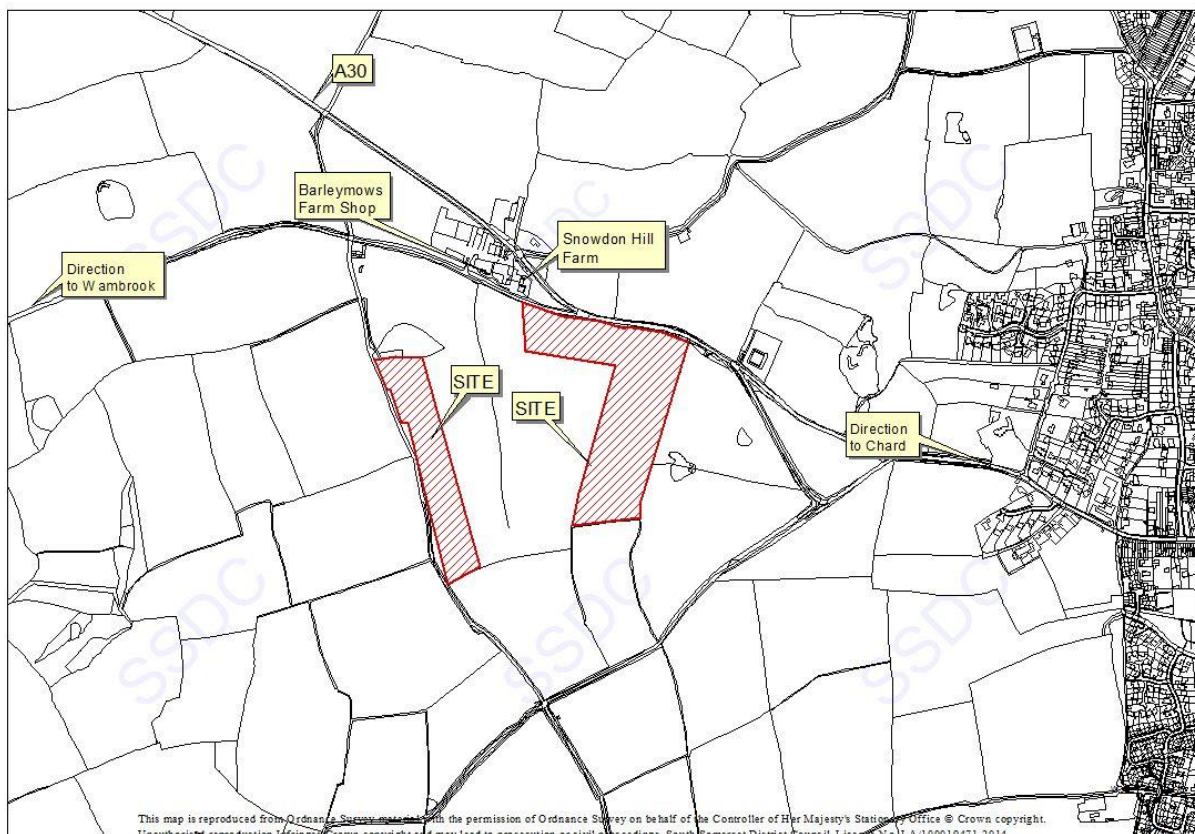
Officer Report On Planning Application: 14/03678/FUL

Proposal:	Installation of 4.08MW solar farm, access, associated infrastructure and landscaping (GR 330614/108791)
Site Address:	Land Part Of Wambrook Farm Weston Road Wambrook
Parish:	Wambrook
BLACKDOWN Ward (SSDC Member)	Cllr R Roderigo
Recommending Case Officer:	Linda Hayden Tel: 01935 462534 Email: linda.hayden@southsomerset.gov.uk
Target date:	12th November 2014
Applicant:	Sunsave 19 (Wambrook) Ltd
Agent: (no agent if blank)	Miss Debbie Marriage Suite S10 Waterside Centre North Street Lewes East Sussex BN7 2PE
Application Type:	Major Other f/space 1,000 sq.m or 1 ha+

REASON FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE

The size of the proposed development is such that under the Scheme of Delegation the application must be determined by Committee.

SITE DESCRIPTION AND PROPOSAL



This application is seeking planning permission to erect a 4.08Mw solar farm on two sites (Field 1 (runs alongside Palfrey's Lane; Field 2 runs south from the A30 with a field in between) with a combined area of 7.62 hectare site to generate electricity to feed into the national grid over a 25 year period, after which time the infrastructure will be removed and the land restored. The plans have been amended to reduce the size of the array; the original plans proposed a solar farm capable of generating 6.8Mw. The access has also been altered in order to address the concerns of the County Highway Authority. The application sites lie 1km to the east of Chard town centre, to the south-west of the A30. The Blackdown Hills AONB sits directly across Palfrey's Lane from Field 1. There is a farm to the north of the sites (across Weston Road) but other than that the sites are surrounded by fields.

The scheme seeks to erect photovoltaic panels to be mounted on metal posts driven into the ground with a maximum overall height of 2m, orientated to face south and arranged into rows aligned in a west to east direction. The ground beneath will be left to grass over to allow the land to be grazed. Other associated infrastructure includes inverters and transformers, security fencing, and maintenance track.

The application site covers agricultural fields (Grade 3b agricultural land), 7.62 hectares in area and is in an isolated open countryside location remote from any defined development areas with access currently derived via an existing farm access from Weston Road.

This application is supported by the following documents:

- Design and Access Statement
- Planning and Statement
- Landscape and Visual Assessment
- Ecological Survey and Biodiversity Management Plan
- Flood Risk Assessment
- Agricultural Land Classification Report
- Farm Diversification Justification
- Construction Traffic Management Plan
- Statement of Community Involvement
- Tree and Hedge Report

RELEVANT HISTORY

14/03219/EIASS: Request for screening opinion from proposed ground based photovoltaic solar farm. Determined no EIA required 4/8/2014.

14/02420/EIASS: Request for screening opinion - ground based photovoltaic solar farm. Determined no EIA required 17/6/2014.

POLICY

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 repeats the duty imposed under S54A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and requires that decision must be made in accordance with relevant Development Plan Documents unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

For the purposes of determining current applications the Local Planning Authority considers that the relevant development plan primarily comprises the saved policies of the adopted South Somerset Local Plan (2006). However, the emerging Local Plan which will replace the adopted Local Plan is in an advanced stage of adoption. The proposed 'Submission South

Somerset Local Plan (2006 - 2028)' was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for Independent Examination in January 2013. A series of Examination Hearing Sessions were held during May and June 2013, which resulted in the Inspector issuing a Preliminary Findings Letter to the Council outlining some issues of concern. The Examination resumed in June 2014 following additional work being undertaken by the Council to address the Inspector's concerns. It is anticipated that the emerging Local Plan will be ready for adoption early in 2015. Having regard to the advanced stage in the adoption of the emerging Local Plan, emerging policies can be afforded some weight in determining the application.

Saved Policies of the Local Plan 2006:

ST3 - Development Areas

ST5 - General Principles of Development

ST6 - The Quality of Development

EC1 - Protecting the Best Agricultural Land

EC2 - Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

EC3 - Landscape Character

EC8 - Protected Species

EH1 - Development Proposals Affecting the Setting of Listed Buildings

Policies of Submission South Somerset Local Plan (2006 - 2028)

EQ1 - Addressing Climate Change in South Somerset

EQ2 - Design

EQ3 - Biodiversity

International and European Policy Context

There are a range of International and European policy drivers that are relevant to the consideration of renewable energy developments. Under the Kyoto Protocol 1997, the UK has agreed to reduce emissions of the 'basket' of six greenhouse gases by 12.5% below 1990 levels by the period 2008-12.

Under the Copenhagen Accord (2010), the UK, as part of the EU, has since agreed to make further emissions cuts of between 20% and 30% by 2020 on 1990 levels (the higher figure being subject to certain caveats). This agreement is based on achieving a reduction in global emissions to limit average increases in global temperature to no more than 2°C.

The draft European Renewable Energy Directive 2008 states that, in 2007, the European Union (EU) leaders had agreed to adopt a binding target requiring 20% of the EU's energy (electricity, heat and transport) to come from renewable energy sources by 2020. This Directive is also intended to promote the use of renewable energy across the European Union. In particular, this Directive commits the UK to a target of generating 15% of its total energy from renewable sources by 2020.

National Policy Context

At the national level, there are a range of statutory and non-statutory policy drivers and initiatives which are relevant to the consideration of this planning application. The 2008 UK Climate Change Bill increases the 60% target in greenhouse gas emissions to an 80% reduction by 2050 (based on 1990 levels). The UK Committee on Climate Change 2008, entitled 'Building a Low Carbon Economy', provides guidance in the form of recommendations in terms of meeting the 80% target set out in the Climate Change Bill, and also sets out five-year carbon budgets for the UK. The 2009 UK Renewable Energy Strategy (RES) provides a series of measures to meet the legally-binding target set in the aforementioned Renewable Energy Directive. The RES envisages that more than 30% of UK

electricity should be generated from renewable sources.

The 2003 Energy White Paper provides a target of generating 40% of national electricity from renewable sources by 2050, with interim targets of 10% by 2010 and 20% by 2020. The 2007 Energy White Paper contains a range of proposals which address the climate change and energy challenge, for example by securing a mix of clean, low carbon energy sources and by streamlining the planning process for energy projects. The Planning and Energy Act 2008 is also relevant in that it enables local planning authorities (LPAs) to set requirements for energy use and energy efficiency in local plans.

UK Solar Strategy Part 2: Delivering a Brighter Future (April 2014)

Sets out advice in relation to large scale ground-mounted solar PV farms and suggests that LPAs will need to consider:-

- encouraging the effective use of land by focusing large scale solar farms on previously developed and non-agricultural land, provided that it is not of high environmental value;
- where a proposal involves greenfield land, whether (i) the proposed use of any agricultural land has been shown to be necessary and poorer quality land has been used in preference to higher quality land; and (ii) the proposal allows for continued agricultural use where applicable and/or encourages biodiversity improvements around arrays.
- that solar farms are normally temporary structures and planning conditions can be used to ensure that the installations are removed when no longer in use and the land is restored to its previous use;
- the proposal's visual impact, the effect on landscape of glint and glare and on neighbouring uses and aircraft safety;
- the extent to which there may be additional impacts if solar arrays follow the daily movement of the sun;
- the need for, and impact of, security measures such as lights and fencing;
- great care should be taken to ensure heritage assets are conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, including the impact of proposals on views important to their setting. As the significance of a heritage asset derives not only from its physical presence, but also from its setting, careful consideration should be given to the impact of large scale solar farms on such assets. Depending on their scale, design and prominence, a large scale solar farm within the setting of a heritage asset may cause substantial harm to the significance of the asset;
- the potential to mitigate landscape and visual impacts through, for example, screening with native hedges;
- the energy generating potential, which can vary for a number of reasons including, latitude and aspect.

National Planning Policy Framework

Part 1 - Building a strong, competitive economy

Part 3 - Supporting a prosperous rural economy

Part 7 - Requiring good design

Part 10 - Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change

Part 11 - Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Part 12 - Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

The NPPF outlines that local planning authorities should recognise the responsibility on all communities to contribute to energy generation from renewable or low carbon sources. They should:

- have a positive strategy to promote energy from renewable and low carbon sources;
- design their policies to maximise renewable and low carbon energy development while ensuring that adverse impacts are addressed satisfactorily, including cumulative landscape and visual impacts;
- consider identifying suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy sources, and supporting infrastructure, where this would help secure the development of such sources; and
- identify opportunities where development can draw its energy supply from decentralised, renewable or low carbon energy supply systems and for collocating potential heat customers and suppliers.

The NPPF further advises that when determining planning applications, local planning authorities should:

- not require applicants for energy development to demonstrate the overall need for renewable or low carbon energy and also recognise that even small-scale projects provide a valuable contribution to cutting greenhouse gas emissions; and
- approve the application if its impacts are (or can be made) acceptable. Once suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy have been identified in plans, local planning authorities should also expect subsequent applications for commercial scale projects outside these areas to demonstrate that the proposed location meets the criteria used in identifying suitable areas.

The NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should aim to:

- avoid noise from giving rise to significant adverse impacts on health and quality of life as a result of new development;
- mitigate and reduce to a minimum other adverse impacts on health and quality of life arising from noise from new development, including through the use of conditions; and
- identify and protect areas of tranquillity which have remained relatively undisturbed by noise and are prized for their recreational and amenity value for this reason.

In determining applications, the NPPF states that local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this assessment into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

It is considered that the main thrust of the NPPF is to positively support sustainable development, and there is positive encouragement for renewable energy projects. However the NPPF reiterates the importance of protecting important landscapes, especially Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, as well as heritage and ecology assets.

Other Material Considerations

South Somerset Sustainable Community Strategy:

Goal 1 - Safe and Inclusive

Goal 3 - Healthy Environments

Goal 4 - Quality Public Services

Goal 5 - High Performance Local Economy

Goal 7 - Distinctiveness
Goal 8 - Quality Development
Goal 10 - Energy
Goal 11 - Environment

South Somerset Carbon Reduction and Climate Change Adaption Strategy 2010- 2014

CONSULTATIONS

Wambrook Parish Meeting:

No comments received.

Tatworth and Forton Parish Council (adjoining Parish):

Recommended refusal of both the original and amended plans due to the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

County Highway Authority:

In response to the amended plans, the County Highway Authority has confirmed that they have no objection to the application subject to the imposition of conditions relating to; the Construction Traffic Management Plan; a requirement that the access be perpendicular; and cleaning of highway during construction.

Landscape Officer:

The Landscape Officer objected to the original application due to concern about possible visibility from sensitive receptors to the west. The Landscape Officer has now considered the amended plans which reduced the size of the array in Field 1 and has commented:

'You will know that I considered the landscape case of the initial scheme to be finely balanced. In the final assessment it was the sensitivity afforded the site due to its Blackdowns setting, adding weight to the adverse character impact - as viewed from sensitive receptors within the AONB - that tipped the balance toward advising there to be sufficient landscape case upon which to base an objection. The main effects arising from the changes indicated by the amended plan (which shows the Field 1 array layout restricted to the lower land within that field) is to make the scheme less visible in the landscape, such that it is only elevated land to the northwest of the application site that potentially has view of the proposed array. The cumulative effect of the array and the aerobic digesters at Snowden Hill Farm is also reduced - albeit marginally.

The proposed changes do not dispense with the landscape and visual impacts noted in my initial response, but I do consider the adverse effects of the proposed development to potentially be partially reduced by this amended layout. However, if we can also agree some additional landscape treatment at the north edge of the array, then I believe we may arrive at a scheme where the landscape balance is no longer weighted against this application. To that end, I would suggest additional tree and shrub planting is undertaken all around the head of the disused quarry site (and within its upper sides if conditions allow) to provide a substantive woody feature in the landscape, which will heighten screening potential as viewed from the north and northwest, and provide a landscape feature that assists the separation of this site from the Snowden Hill ADs to the north.

If the applicant is agreeable to these landscape works, in tandem with the amended layout,

then the landscape case is no longer so substantive as to provide over-riding grounds for objection.'

Blackdown Hills AONB Partnership:

Comment that given the close proximity of the site at one of main gateways to the Blackdown Hills, seen in association with the AONB that it is quite appropriate to consider this application in relation to its impact on the AONB. They consider the application in light of the relevant policies of the Blackdown Hills Management Plan 2014-19 and advise:

'It appears that the location and siting has been considered by the applicants in order to minimise visual impact and the impact on landscape character, being self-contained units within the established field pattern, surrounded by mature hedges, hedgerow trees and small copses. The introduction of industrial, urban features into open countryside will inevitably have some impact on local character, however the reduction in size and extent of the array in Field 1 would seem to reduce the appearance and visibility of the arrays from public viewpoints, and together with the filtering effects of topography and vegetation it is considered that the impact on the AONB would ultimately be of limited extent.'

They request that consideration be given to the use of dark hues for all structures; avoidance of lighting; a landscaping management plan; locally characteristic hedgerows; and establishment of a local community fund.

Natural England:

Raised no objection and have referred to their standing advice and Technical Information Note with regard to Solar Parks

Ecologist (SSDC):

'I'm satisfied with the submitted ecological survey report and I don't have any particular concerns. I've also noted comments from the RSPB and the revised Biodiversity Management Plan. I recommend its implementation should be required by condition.'

RSPB:

No comments on updated plans. (Officer Note: The fencing has been relocated and the Biodiversity Management Plan updated in order to address the comments of the RSPB)

Archaeology:

Having received the results of a geophysical survey of the site the County Archaeologist confirms that given the largely negative results they do not require any further archaeological investigations in the area.

Environment Agency:

No objection but recommends imposition of informatives.

Climate Change Officer:

Supports the application.

NATS:

No safeguarding objection.

MOD:

No safeguarding objections.

Area Engineer:

Confirms that there are no drainage issues with regard to the proposal.

REPRESENTATIONS

20 representations have been received: 14 in support with 6 responses objecting to the development. The supporting responses make the following comments:

- Proposal is environmentally friendly; renewable energy is essential to safeguard the future
- Proposal will not be seen by any local residents
- Without solar panels, huge electric power stations would increase which is worse for the environment.
- Proposal is well hidden and not near any houses.
- Solar is the greenest form of energy
- The land is of poor quality (Grade 3) and can be returned to agricultural use
- Other solar farm on A303 is more visible and near a house
- Little traffic will enter and exit the site once development is complete.
- Solar generation of electricity is part of government policy; it is clean, does not monopolise land on which it stands and is benign
- Have no objections to the bio digester which is close to application site and AONB and visible from the village - this has been passed by planning.

The objectors make the following comments:

- Misuse of agricultural land with a long tie - 30 years; the grazing of sheep for a few weeks of each year does not constitute agricultural use.
- There are no immediate benefits to the community ; the power will be sold to the usual providers and any employment will be short term (construction)
- Biodiversity and environmental claims are very optimistic and unlikely.
- Approval would create a precedent for the continuing nibbling away at agricultural land close to towns/villages.
- Appalled at the offer of £25,000 by Vogt Solar for the use of the village - this surely constitutes a bribe. Suggest the money is unnecessary.
- Suggest that the views expressed in the LVIA (Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment) are different than those who live and work in the vicinity. Disagree with the LVIA that the impact is insignificant. Deciduous planting will offer only limited screening during a significant part of the year.
- Believe that the plan has an adverse impact upon the integrity of the Landscape Character of the Blackdown Hills AONB. The proposal erodes the existing landscape character and so paves the way for similar projects.
- South Somerset does not yet have a Renewable Energy Strategy or Local Development framework - without one in place it is hard to measure the contribution this proposal would make to renewable energy targets.
- The proposal will make Palfrey's Lane a no go zone for horse riders in the area.

- Suggest the use of brown field sites and roofs of industrial buildings are preferable as suggested by the CPRE.
- Request that adherence to a habitat management programme is written into the permissions
- Do not believe that the benefits of the scheme outweigh the impact upon the landscape.
- Proposal is adjacent to an existing agro-industrial area which is unsightly with no screening in place. A survey of residents showed a majority (70%) were opposed to the Vogt proposal.
- A change in legislation could allow for the extension of the 25 years or the re-classification of the land as a 'brown field' site.
- The landowner has rejected the idea of the community buying an equal share of the land to ensure restoration of the site.
- The Statement of Community Involvement contains false and misleading information.
- A drawing submitted as part of the original application has been manipulated to make the arrays look further apart than they are.
- Community benefit offered by the developer is low when compared with the industry norm. Community benefits have not been maximised.
- The Planning Statement uses transparently false argument to claim that less than 4% of land is lost to the solar farm and contains numerical errors.
- The Biodiversity Management Plan gives a completely misleading impression
- The Design and Access Statement is unfit for purpose.
- Some of the supporting documents are deficient in accuracy and content.
- Covering agricultural land with pv panels is another example of misguided government policy.

CONSIDERATIONS

This application is seeking planning permission to erect a 4.08MW solar farm on two sites totalling 7.62 hectares comprising agricultural fields in the open countryside, remote from any development areas, directly abutting the Blackdown Hills AONB. The solar farm comprises the erection of solar arrays (arranged in rows from west to east and orientated to face south), inverter housing, transformer, communications and switchgear buildings, security fencing, and maintenance track. The development is sought for a 25 year period, after which time the infrastructure will be removed and the land restored.

The main considerations for this application are considered to relate to the principle of the development, landscape character and visual amenity, impact on ecology, impact on archaeology and highway safety.

Principle:

Part 10 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that local authorities should "have a positive strategy to promote energy for renewable and low carbon sources" and "design their policies to maximise renewable and low carbon energy development while ensuring that adverse impacts are addressed satisfactorily, including cumulative landscape and visual impacts". Additional supplementary guidance National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG), published in March, accompanies the NPPF and is referred to in the policy section above.

In terms of the land classification, the site is designated as Grade 3b agricultural land and therefore is not considered to be the 'best and most versatile' land. A planning condition restricting the development to 25 years is considered to be reasonable and conditions can also be imposed to require appropriate restoration and continued agricultural use of the land.

In any event, the array could be removed before then should the landowner wish to revert to agriculture or use of the array to generate electricity cease.

The applicant has confirmed that during the operating lifetime of the solar farm the site will be available for grazing and it is acknowledged that the scheme incorporates additional landscape planting and biodiversity enhancements. In this regard the development is considered to comply with the aims and objects of the NPPF and its accompanying practice guidance and to be acceptable in principle.

Landscape character and visual amenity:

The Landscape Architect has carried out a thorough assessment of the proposal and assessed the submitted Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment and, in his view, with the proposed landscape mitigation the proposal will not result in such a significant adverse impact as to justify a refusal on landscape grounds. The Landscape Officer notes that the application sites occupy a hilltop location with both sites being physically and visually divorced from Chard, which is the nearest settlement. Field 1 (to the west) falls gently to the west and as such inclines toward the AONB whose boundary runs along the site's west edge. Field 2 (east) lies over relatively level ground at the head of the plateau. The Landscape Officer comments that both fields are broadly typical of the scale and openness of the fields that lay over the heads of the Blackdowns' dissected plateau, characteristically defined by managed hedgerows that correspond in most part to a rectilinear field pattern. The Landscape Officer further comments that the hedges of Field 2 offer a substantive degree of enclosure, due to the site's plateau head situation and specimen trees within the hedgerow but enclosure of Field 1 is less due to the site's falling ground. The plans were therefore amended to reduce the size of the array on Field 1.

In the view of the Landscape Officer, the proposals disrupt neither the fabric nor the pattern of the landscape, and landscape components within and defining the site will remain in evidence. The array will be a passive element within the landscape as it does not generate sound or movement. Whilst it is accepted that the PV panels can be viewed as industrial in nature and therefore at variance with the rural context, it is accepted that the panels will be set low in the ground and with the existing on site hedging and tress and the additional planting that is proposed they can be accommodated in the landscape without undue landscape impact. The Landscape Officer concludes that the amended scheme will be less visible in the landscape such that it is only elevated land to the north-west of the application site that potentially has view of the proposed array. With the additional planting that has been agreed the Landscape Officer advises that the landscape case is no longer so substantive as to provide over-riding grounds for objection.

Therefore, subject to the imposition of conditions to secure appropriate landscape proposals and secure restoration of the site the proposal is not considered to raise any substantive landscape or visual amenity concerns.

Residential amenity:

There are no residential properties immediately adjoining the site, those to the north of site are considered to be sufficient distance away as to not be adversely impacted by the proposal.

Access and highway safety:

The plans have been amended to alter the access to the site; use will now be made of an existing access further along Weston Road to ensure that construction vehicles will not be

held up near the A30. This will require the crown lifting of a beech tree adjacent to the access along with coppicing of the hedgerow. A Tree and Hedge Report has been submitted to ensure that the works will not affect the long term health of either the tree or the hedgerow.

The County Highway Authority has now confirmed that it is content with the proposals and as such it is not considered that the proposal will adversely impact upon highway safety. Whilst it is clear that there will be a significant number of movements connected with the construction of the site, once the works are completed the site will generate very few movements as only minimal maintenance is required.

Ecology:

The Ecologist has assessed the Ecological Appraisal that accompanies the application and broadly agrees with its conclusion. In order to minimise any potential risk to secure biodiversity enhancements the council's Ecologist has recommended a condition to require the implementation of the Biodiversity Management Plan. On this basis the proposal is not considered to raise any substantive ecology related issues.

Other matters:

Environmental Impact Assessment - The proposal falls within the scope of Schedule 2, sub-section 3a of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011 requiring that a formal screening decision be carried out. This was carried out prior to the submission of this current application when it was concluded that an Environmental Impact Assessment was not required.

Conclusion:

Government advice is clear. Planning Authorities should approve applications for renewable energy projects where impacts are (or can be made) acceptable (NPPF Para 98). The current application has raised some concerns in relation to highway safety, visual amenity, landscape character, archaeology and ecology. A thorough assessment of the potential impacts of the development indicates that, for the most part, they are acceptable - or can be made acceptable by appropriate mitigation measures - in the context of Government advice and the clear need for renewable energy sources. Where impacts can be overcome by way of pre-commencement or other conditions (i.e. archaeology, ecology, landscaping) appropriate conditions are recommended. Subject to the appropriate controls set out in conditions, it is considered that the impacts of the proposal can be considered 'acceptable' as set out in Government guidance. Notwithstanding the objections received, the proposal is considered to represent sustainable development.

RECOMMENDATION

Approve

01. Notwithstanding local concerns it is considered that the benefits in terms of the provision of a renewable source of energy, which will make a valuable contribution towards cutting greenhouse gas emissions, outweigh the limited impact of the proposed PV panels on the local landscape character and adjacent Blackdown Hills AONB. As such the proposal accords with the Government's objective to encourage the provision of renewable energy sources and the aims and objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework, the National Planning Practice Guidance and Policies ST3, ST5, ST6, EC1, EC2, EC3, EC8 and EP3 of the South Somerset Local Plan 2006.

SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING:

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

Reason: To accord with the provisions of section 91(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

02. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans Drawing No.'s:

2162.AP.001.0.E Rev E received 17/10/2014
2162.AP.003.1.B Rev B received 16/9/2014
2162.AP.007.4 Rev B received 16/9/2014
2162.AP.004.2 received 12/8/2014
2162.AP.009.2 received 12/8/2014
2162.AP.010.2 received 12/8/2014
2162.AP.006.3 received 12/8/2014
2162.AP.008.4.0 received 12/8/2014
5595/101 received 17/10/2014

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

03. The development hereby permitted shall be removed and the land restored to its former condition before 31/12/2039 or within six months of the cessation of the use of the solar farm for the generation of electricity whichever is the sooner in accordance with a restoration plan to be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The restoration plan will need to include all the works necessary to revert the site to open agricultural land including the removal of all structures, materials and any associated goods and chattels from the site.

Reason: In the interests of landscape character and visual amenity in accordance with Policies ST3, ST5, ST6 and EC3 of the South Somerset Local Plan.

04. The supporting posts to the solar array shall not be concreted into the ground.

Reason: In the interests of sustainable construction and to accord with Part 10 of the NPPF.

05. The development hereby permitted shall not be commenced until there has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority a scheme of landscaping, which shall include indications of all existing trees and hedgerows on the land, and details of any to be retained, together with measures for their protection in the course of the development, as well as details of any changes proposed in existing ground levels; all planting, seeding, turfing or earth moulding comprised in the approved details of landscaping shall be carried out in the first planting and seeding season following the occupation of the building or the completion of the development, whichever is the sooner; and any trees or plants which within a period of five years from the completion of the development die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species, unless the Local Planning Authority gives written consent to any variation. The scheme of landscaping shall include additional tree and shrub planting around the head and upper sides of the disused quarry site.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity in accordance with Policy ST6 of the South Somerset Local Plan (2006).

06. No means of external illumination/lighting shall be installed without the prior written consent of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interest of visual amenity and to safeguard the rural character of the area to accord with Policies EC3, ST6 and EP3 of the South Somerset Local Plan.

07. No CCTV equipment shall be installed on the site unless agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: In the interest of visual amenity and to safeguard the rural character of the area to accord with Policies EC3, ST6 and EP3 of the South Somerset Local Plan.

08. No form of audible alarm shall be installed on the site without the prior written consent of the local planning authority.

Reason: In the interest of residential amenity and the rural amenities of the area to accord with Policy ST6 of the South Somerset Local Plan.

09. All existing hedges or hedgerows shall be retained, unless shown on the approved drawings as being removed. All hedges and hedgerows on and immediately adjoining the site shall be protected from damage for the duration of works on the site to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority in accordance with the recommendations in British Standard 5837 1991. Any part(s) of hedges or hedgerows removed without the Local Planning Authority's consent or which die or become, in the opinion of the Local Planning Authority, seriously diseased or otherwise damaged within five years following contractual practicable completion of the approved development shall be replaced as soon as is reasonably practicable and, in any event, by not later than the end of the first available planting season, with plants of such size and species and in such positions as may be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To protect legally protected species of recognised nature conservation importance in accordance with NPPF and Policy EC8 of the South Somerset Local Plan 2006, The Habitats Regulations 2010, and The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

10. The management plan and ecological mitigation measures for the site, as detailed within the Biodiversity Management Plan by Dr John Feltwell of Wildlife Matters dated 23/09/2014, shall be fully implemented for the duration of the use hereby permitted, unless any variation is agreed by the local planning authority.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and landscape character in accordance with policies ST5, ST6 and EC3 of the South Somerset Local Plan.

11. Prior to the commencement of the development hereby permitted, an amended Construction Traffic Management Plan (amended in accordance with the County Highway Authority's comments of 31st October 2014) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be delivered in accordance with the approved Construction Traffic Management Plan.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and in accordance with Policy ST5 of the South Somerset Local Plan (2006).

12. Prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved, the site access track shall be constructed so that it is perpendicular to Weston Road and its surface properly consolidated, not loose stone or gravel, for the first 20m of its length from the carriageway edge.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and in accordance with Policy ST5 of the South Somerset Local Plan (2006).

13. The applicant shall ensure that all vehicles leaving the site are in such condition as not to emit dust or deposit mud, slurry or other debris on the highway. In particular (but without prejudice to the foregoing), efficient means shall be installed, maintained and employed for cleaning the wheels of all lorries leaving the site, details of which shall have been agreed in advance in writing by the Local Planning Authority and fully implemented prior to construction, and thereafter maintained until construction is complete.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and in accordance with Policy ST5 of the South Somerset Local Plan (2006).

14. The construction of the works hereby approved shall take place in full accordance with the Arboricultural Method Statement Tree prepared by B.J. Unwin Forestry Consultancy received 24 October 2014 unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and landscape character in accordance with policies ST5, ST6 and EC3 of the South Somerset Local Plan.

Informatives:

01. The Applicant is advised that the Highway Service Manager for South Somerset Area at The Highways Depot, Mead Avenue, Houndstone Business Park, BA22 8RT Tel: 0845 345 9155, email: countyroads-southsom@somerset.gov.uk must be consulted with regard to the proposed temporary signage.
 02. Please be aware of the comments set out within the Environment Agency's letter dated 05/09/2014.
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