

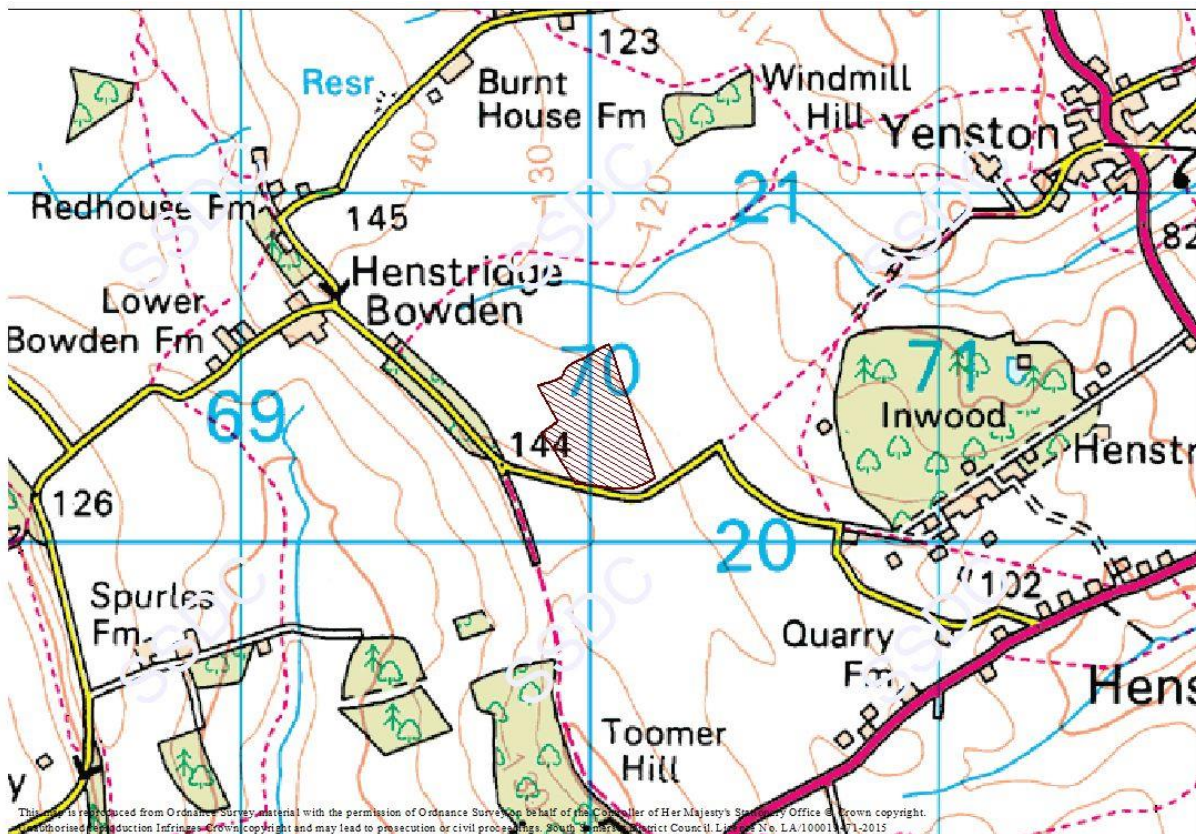
## **Officer Report On Planning Application: 15/02718/FUL**

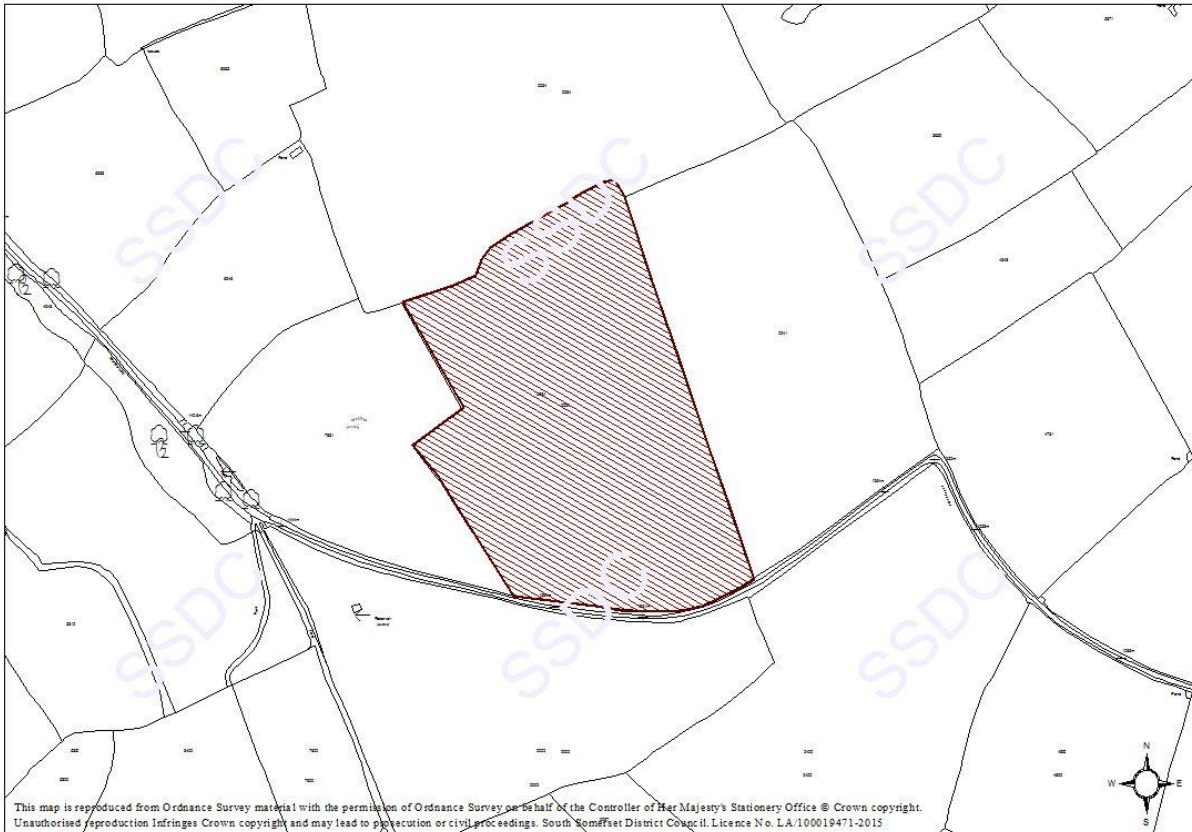
<b>Proposal :</b>	Construction of a Photovoltaic Park with associated equipment including access track and cable route (GR: 370008/120305)
<b>Site Address:</b>	Land OS 0034 Bowden Lane Henstridge
<b>Parish:</b>	Henstridge
<b>BLACKMOOR VALE Ward (SSDC Member)</b>	Cllr T Inglefield Cllr W Wallace
<b>Recommending Case Officer:</b>	Nicholas Head Tel: (01935) 462167 Email: nick.head@southsomerset.gov.uk
<b>Target date :</b>	15th September 2015
<b>Applicant :</b>	Bowden Lane Solar Park Ltd
<b>Agent: (no agent if blank)</b>	Mark Cullen Alder King Planning Consultants Pembroke House 15 Pembroke Road Clifton Bristol BS8 3BA
<b>Application Type :</b>	Major Other f/space 1,000 sq.m or 1 ha+

### **REASON FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE**

The application relates to a 'large scale' major development which, due to its size, must be referred to Committee for determination if the case officer is recommending approval of the application, which is the case in this instance.

### **SITE DESCRIPTION AND PROPOSAL**





The 9 Ha site is located 1.8Km to the south-west of the village of Templecombe, and 1.9Km north-west of Henstridge in open countryside. It comprises a single large field currently under arable cultivation. The nearest dwellings to the north and north-west are more than 500m from the site edges. The land slopes gently northwards from the highway access onto Bowden Lane, which forms the southern boundary. On three sides, the site is bounded by mature hedging.

Permission is sought for the installation of a solar array across most of the field, aimed at generating 5 MW of power to be connected to the general electricity grid, together with associated inverter stations, switch housing, access track, security fencing and cameras.

### **SUBMITTED DOCUMENTS**

The following documents were submitted with the application:

- Planning Design and Access Statement
- Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
- Archaeological and Heritage Assessment
- Ecological Assessment
- Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy
- Construction Traffic Management Plan
- Agricultural Land Classification Report

### **HISTORY**

15/01771/EIASS - Request for screening opinion in respect of proposed Photovoltaic Park - EIA Not Required

## **POLICY**

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004), and Paragraphs 2, 11, 12, and 14 of the NPPF states that applications are to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

For the purposes of determining current applications the local planning authority considers that the adopted development plan comprises the policies of the South Somerset Local Plan 2006 2028 (adopted March 2015).

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

SD1 - Sustainable Development

TA5 - Transport Impact of New Development

TA6 - Parking Standards

EQ1 - Addressing Climate Change in South Somerset

EQ2 - General Development

EQ3 - Historic Environment

EQ4 - Biodiversity

EQ7 - Pollution Control

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 4 - Promoting sustainable transport

Chapter 7 - Requiring good design

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

Chapter 11 - Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Chapter 12 - Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

Technical Guidance to the National Planning Policy Framework - Flood Risk

The NPPF 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 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 Relevant Guidance and Material Considerations:

The UK Renewable Energy Strategy (July 2009)  
**National Planning Practice Guidance** - Department of Communities and Local Government, 2014:

Climate change  
Conserving and enhancing the historic environment  
Design  
Determining a planning application  
Environmental Impact Assessment  
Flood Risk and Coastal Change  
Light pollution  
Local Plans  
Minerals  
Natural Environment  
Noise  
Renewable and low carbon energy  
Use of Planning Conditions

South Somerset Sustainable Community Strategy(2008-2026):

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**

**Henstridge Parish Council:** The PC supports the application.

**Milborne Port Parish Council:** *No Objection. However, the Parish Council is growing increasingly concerned about the amount of proposed Photovoltaic Parks in a small area. There are two applications currently in, and a third soon to be considered. The Parish Council are concerned about the visual impact this will have on the local area and the potential loss of visual amenity.*

**North Dorset District Council:** No objection.

**Highways Authority:** No objection, subject to conditions.

**SSDC Highways Consultant:** *I would recommend the production of a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) within which all the transport and highways issues can be investigated, assessed and mitigation measures proposed to facilitate the development. That way the measures and highway improvements within the CTMP can be secured by condition or made the subject of a legal agreement.*

**SSDC Environmental Protection Officer:** No comment.

**SSDC Landscape Officer:** *This application is sited within open farmland, circa 2km west of Henstridge Ash and circa 1 km north of the A30 at Toomer Hill. It lays at a general elevation of 135 metres AOD, toward the head of a watershed ridge that separates the Yeo and Cale catchments. A local lane linking Henstridge Bowden and Inwood runs along the site's south boundary.*

*The proposal seeks consent for a 5 MW solar array over an area of 8.63ha. and I consider the prime landscape concerns to be;*

- 1) the impact upon landscape character, particularly relative to the scale and pattern of the local landscape;*
- 2) the potential visibility of the proposal, especially as viewed from sensitive receptors;*
- 3) the potential for cumulative impacts to arise, and;*
- 4) achieving a site layout and design that is landscape-sympathetic.*

*This application includes a detailed landscape and visual appraisal (LVA) which considers the extent of likely landscape and visual impacts that may arise from the installation of the array upon its context. Turning to the proposal detail, and with the LVA to hand;*

*(1) The application site lays toward the head of a gently sloping east-facing dip slope, and is a single, broadly rectilinear field within an agricultural surround. The nearest dwelling lays at least 0.5km from the site, and there is minimal development form in the vicinity. The field is defined by managed hedgerows to 3 sides (the east boundary aside) which offer a degree of enclosure, and is typical of the general scale and open-ness of the field network on this raised ground, to go some way toward enabling the site's assimilation into the local landscape pattern.*

*The form of the proposal disrupts neither the fabric nor the pattern of the landscape, and the few landscape components within and defining the site will remain undisturbed. By laying at a comparable level to its surround, the array reposes within the hedgerow framework without disruption of landform, or encroachment into a different landscape type. There is also the general point that an array is a passive element in the landscape, generating neither sound nor movement, and I view these elements of the proposal as positive. However, PV panel forms and associated structures can be viewed as being 'industrial' in character, and such character is at variance with its host landscape setting, which has a strong rural character - as expressed by the pattern of the hedgerow network; the open farmland; and the lack of a development presence. The scattered farmsteads within the local landscape are typically of agricultural scale, hence there is some incongruity of development scale when considered alongside this 8.63 ha array area.*

*(2) I have reviewed the findings of the visual assessment, with which I concur. The LVA indicates a visual envelope (fig 7) that indicates contained intervisibility to the west, whilst theoretical visibility elsewhere is noted by the assessment to be primarily limited by the undulating landform, and enclosure provided by mature woody vegetation in both the immediate and wider landscape. The visual effect upon local settlement and individual properties is evaluated to be neutral. It is primarily from the local footpath network to the north and northeast where there is low-trajectory and limited vantage toward the site, with the raised*

ground of Windmill Hill (v/point 3, fig.11) to the northeast having the greatest prospect. From this receptor, the likely magnitude of effect is evaluated as moderate, reducing to medium-low once mitigation is in place.

To counter the effects of array presence, the LVA proposes a mitigation package that includes a new hedgerow to provide containment of the east boundary; a woodland copse to the north corner to provide screening from adjacent rights of ways; and a heightened management regime for the containing hedgerows, as the prime mitigation items, which I consider commensurate and appropriate.

(3) A planning application for a similarly-scaled array is current on land to the west of this application site, below East Hill at Milborne Port, little more than 1.75km distant. Whilst in close proximity, the sites are separated by the parallel ridges associated with East and Toomer Hills, and are located in separate catchments, hence they will not be seen in association with each other. Whilst not formally evaluated, I do not envisage a sense that array proliferation within the locality is at a point where it is adversely impacting upon local character, and given the topographic and visual separation of the sites, it is not anticipated that cumulative impact will be an issue with this application.

(4) Turning to site detail, I note that the array will stand circa 2.4 metres max height above ground level, a little above the current elevation of hedge height prevalent in the locality. The intent to raise the profile of the hedge to better effect screening is noted. PV mounting is limited to a steel support frame with its toes driven into the ground. A 2.00 metre deer fence along with imaging cameras (but no lighting) provides site security. Transformer and similar structures are located adjacent the site boundaries, and are to be finished in suitable dull tones to thus minimise visual impact. Grid connection is relatively local. The field surface will continue as grassland, management by sheep grazing is inferred but not specific. With the correct use of materials and finish tones, I consider this PV installation to be capable of being accommodated without undue impact upon the site's fabric and landscape context.

National planning policy supports the development of renewable energy projects, providing there is no unacceptable adverse impact upon the landscape. Recent appeal decisions within the district have placed an emphasis upon containment of the visual profile of solar sites when determining the appeals. Looking at this application overall, whilst the array is at a raised elevation, it is well-contained by the local landscape network of hedgerows and woods; will have minimal visibility once mitigation takes effect; and is at a scale that relates to the landscape pattern. Whilst there is a clear incongruity of character in the appearance of solar panels within rural fields, given the lack of visual impact, and the negligible impact upon the fabric of the site's surrounds, I do not consider the landscape/visual impact to be sufficiently weighty to enable a landscape objection to provide a basis for refusal.

**SSDC Ecologist:** No objection, subject to a condition relating to provision of a scheme of measures for wildlife enhancement.

**SSDC Conservation Manager:** I have no reason to disagree with the findings of the Heritage Assessment although I have not visited the site to verify its conclusions. It appears that any intervisibility between the site and heritage assets is quite minor and would not have any impact upon their significance.

**SSDC Climate Change Officer:** No objection. The UK has a target to meet 20% of energy needs from renewables by 2020. Currently, installed and permitted renewable electricity installations in the district will be generating 16 % of the districts electrical requirement on an annualised basis. This proposed large PV array will be one of several installed in the district recently making a significant impact on reducing carbon dioxide emissions.



*The site chosen is very suitable because it lies almost equidistant between Templecombe and Henstridge with a total of around 1500 households. This will minimise grid losses and is just the type of application that this council should encourage.*

*I calculate that the installation will generate over the course of a year, electricity equivalent to that used by 1014 households, based on the average household consumption of 4961 kWh/yr per household for the district (DECC statistical report 2012), which is around two thirds of the two adjacent parishes household demand.*

**Lead Local Flood Authority (Somerset County):** No objection.

**Environment Agency:** No comment (outside of the EA's consultation list as the site is in Flood Zone 1).

**Natural England:** No comments.

**Somerset Wildlife Trust:** No objection is raised. The ecological report submitted with the application is supported, and measures for wildlife enhancement are recommended.

**MOD:** No safeguarding objections.

**County Archaeologist:** A field evaluation (geophysical survey) was required. Details have been submitted and considered by the County Archaeologist, who advises that *The geophysical survey results indicate that there are likely to only be limited archaeological remains on the site. There is a need to investigate these features but this can be dealt with through trenching either just prior to, or even during development of the site.* . Subject to a condition.

**County Minerals and Waste Officer:** The site falls within a Minerals Safeguarding Area. However, the proposal would not have a harmful impact on the viability of mineral resources. No objection.

**Wessex Water:** It is pointed out that there is a water main crossing the site. After discussion with the applicant, Wessex Water is satisfied that the scheme can be implemented without harm to the water main.

## **REPRESENTATIONS**

Two letters of representation have been received, objecting to the application. The following main issues are raised:

- Government renewable targets have been substantially met
- ministerial statements are referred to, suggesting that solar farms were unwelcome and subsidies likely to change
- solar power is inefficient and costly
- the site is of exceptional character on which the intrusion of a solar park would have a negative impact

## **CONSIDERATIONS**

This application is seeking planning permission to erect a 5 MW solar farm on a 8.63 hectare site comprising a single agricultural field in the open countryside. The solar farm comprises the erection of solar arrays, inverter stations, switch housing, access track, security fencing and cameras and is sought for a 25-year period.

The main considerations for this application are considered to relate to landscape character and visual amenity, impact upon ecology, residential amenity of nearby residential properties, impact upon archaeology, flooding and drainage and highway safety.

### **Principle of Development**

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".

The application site is greenfield, agricultural land (graded partially 3b, partially 4) located in the open countryside. The solar park is sought for a 25 year period after which time the site will be restored to its former status. The applicant refers to the potential, during this time, of the site becoming an important habitat for wildlife and small animals, although the potential to graze sheep is a possibility. On this basis it is accepted that the proposal will not result in the significant loss of best and most versatile agricultural land and is broadly in compliance with the Renewable and Low Carbon Planning Practice Guidance paragraph 013 (Reference ID: 5-013-20150327). As such the proposal is considered to be acceptable in principle.

### **Landscape Character and Visual Amenity**

The application site comprises a single agricultural field bounded on three sides by native hedgerows and other vegetation. There are few local developments. The Council's Landscape Officer has submitted a detailed assessment of the landscape impact (see above) and forms the view that the proposed development is well contained by the local landscape network of hedgerows and woods; will have minimal visibility once mitigation measures take effect; and is at a scale that relates well to the landscape pattern. Subject to appropriate conditions, therefore, the proposal is considered acceptable from a landscape and visual amenity point of view.

The site is approximately 1.75km from another solar installation being considered near Milborne Port. There are no other solar park sites within a reasonable distance. The Landscape Officer has again dealt with this issue, and it is considered that there is no concern relating to a possible cumulative impact of multiple solar parks raised by this application.

Connection to the grid will be by underground cable across the Lane and private land to a point south of the site.

The proposed development is considered to raise no substantial landscape or visual amenity concerns that would indicate a refusal of the application.

### **Impact on Residential Amenity**

The closest residential properties are located more than 0.5Km from the site. Given the relatively low profile of the proposed development and inanimate nature of the development it is not anticipated that the proposal will cause any demonstrable harm to amenity of nearby residents. The Council's EPU Officer raises no objection.

### **Access and Highway Safety**

Whilst traffic generation in association with the solar park will be very limited once it is

operational it is anticipated that the initial construction phase will result in some traffic that could cause disruption and possible highway safety issues. The Highways Officer, and the Council's Highway Consultant have given the proposal detailed consideration, and recommend measures to control the traffic generated by construction traffic, so as to minimise disruption, dust, noise and any highway safety issues.

Access to the site will be via the existing farm access point, off Bowden Lane, which carries low levels of traffic.

Whilst the level of construction traffic will exceed normal traffic activity on these roads, the highway authority is satisfied that the local road network can accommodate this level of traffic without resulting in significant highway safety concerns. This level of traffic would only apply for the brief construction phase with little traffic arising once the development is operational. It is therefore considered that the impact it will have upon the rural amenities of the local area will be limited and that this element of the proposal is acceptable.

### **Ecology**

Natural England has raised no concerns. The council's Ecologist is satisfied with the findings and conclusions of the submitted ecological appraisal, but points out the general requirement in the NPPF for developments to deliver some enhancement in relation to biodiversity (e.g. native species planting, bird and bat boxes). Subject to a condition requiring this, the proposal is considered to be acceptable from an ecological point of view.

### **Archaeology**

A geophysical survey of the site has been undertaken, and the County Archaeologist is satisfied that there are limited remains of significance on the site. It is his view that development can proceed, subject to a condition requiring a written scheme of investigation of the site prior to commencement.

### **Drainage and Flooding**

The site falls within Flood Zone 1, and there is no inherent serious flood risk. The proposal has been considered by the Lead Local Flood Authority (Somerset County) which raises no objection. The proposal is not considered to raise any surface water drainage harm.

### **Concerns Raised by Parish Council**

Milborne Port PC has raised a concern about cumulative impact. The concern is noted, and is well covered by policy advice and in this Authority's general approach to large solar farm installations. It has been considered in this instance (see above) and discounted as a possible reason for refusal.

### **Letters of Representation**

It is not agreed that the letters submitted represent an accurate account of current Government policy - which is set out in detail in the body of the report. The opposition to the proposal, and to solar power in general, whilst noted, is not considered to carry significant weight in reaching a recommendation on this application. The landscape impact is assessed in detail and is not considered to be a reason to refuse the application.

### **EIA Regulations**

The site was the subject of a Screening Opinion under the EIA Regulations, and it was determined that an impact assessment was not required.

## **Conclusion**

The proposed solar farm accords with the government objective to encourage the provision of renewable energy sources and raises no substantive amenity, landscape harm or other concerns. In all other respects the proposal is considered to be acceptable and, notwithstanding two letters of objection, it is recommended for approval.

## **S.106 AGREEMENT**

Not relevant.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Grant permission.

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 the proposal will have on the local landscape character. As such the proposal accords with the aims and objectives of Policies SD1, TA5, TA6, EQ1, EQ2, EQ3, EQ4 and EQ7 of the South Somerset Local Plan and the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework.

## **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: the drawings ref. 1253 numbers 0201-01, 0204-00, 0205-03, 0206-09, 0207-16, 0207-40, 0208-10, 0208-54 and 0208-71.

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 within 25 years of the date of this permission 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 the aims of the NPPF and Policies SD1, EQ1 and EQ2 of the South Somerset Local Plan.

04. No development hereby permitted shall be commenced unless a site management plan for tree, hedge and grass maintenance of the site has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Such management plan, once agreed, shall be

fully implemented for the duration of the use hereby permitted, unless any variation is agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and to safeguard the character and appearance of the landscape in accordance with the aims of the NPPF and Policy EQ2 of the South Somerset Local Plan.

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 and planting, 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 completely carried out within the first available planting season from the date of commencement of the development. For the duration of this permission the trees and shrubs shall be protected and maintained, and any trees or plants which 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.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and landscape character in accordance with the aims of the NPPF and Policy EQ2 of the South Somerset Local Plan.

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

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and to safeguard the character and appearance of the landscape in accordance with the aims of the NPPF and Policies EQ2 and EQ7 of the South Somerset Local Plan.

07. No CCTV equipment or other cameras shall be installed on the site other than that shown on the submitted layout plan ref. 1253-0201-01, in accordance with the CCTV design details submitted with the application.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and to safeguard the character and appearance of the landscape in accordance with the aims of the NPPF and Policy EQ2 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 interests of amenity and to safeguard the rural character of the setting in accordance with the aims of the NPPF and Policies EQ2 and EQ7 of the South Somerset Local Plan.

09. No development hereby permitted shall be commenced unless details of the means of connection to the electricity grid from the site have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To safeguard the character and appearance of the area in accordance with the aims of the NPPF and Policy EQ2 of the South Somerset Local Plan.

10. No development hereby permitted shall be commenced unless a Construction Traffic Management Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning

Authority. Such Plan shall seek to regulate, in terms of best practice, hours of operation, deliveries, and impacts of noise, dust, fumes, vibration, traffic, delivery routes etc., during construction, in the interests of traffic management and amenity. Any alterations to the vehicular access shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority (and Local Highway Authority) and fully implemented in accordance with the approved details, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety, traffic management and amenity, in accordance with the aims of the NPPF and Policies EQ2 and TA5 of the South Somerset Local Plan.

11. 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 start of construction, and thereafter maintained for the duration of the construction phase.

Reason: In the interest of highway safety to accord with TA5 of the South Somerset Local Plan.

12. Prior to the commencement of development, details of measures for the benefit of wildlife (e.g. bat and bird boxes, wildflower sowing and management) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved scheme shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details unless otherwise approved in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: For the enhancement of biodiversity in accordance with NPPF and Local Plan Policy EQ4.

13. No works in respect of the solar park hereby permitted unless details of the finished colour of the security fencing and the finished colour and position of the CCTV equipment has been submitted to and agreed in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the agreed details.

Reason: In the interest of landscape character and visual amenity in accordance with Policy EQ2 of the South Somerset Local Plan.

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

Reason: In the interest of sustainable construction and to accord with part 10 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

15. No development hereby approved shall take place until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the local planning authority.

Reason: To safeguard archaeological remains on the site and to accord with the NPPF and Policy EQ3 of the South Somerset Local Plan.

16. No development hereby permitted shall be commenced unless details of the access to the site, including visibility splays, layout and surfacing materials, have been submitted

to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Such details shall be fully implemented prior to commencement of the installation of solar panels and equipment, and shall thereafter be retained and maintained for the lifetime of the permission.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety, and to accord with the NPPF and Policy TA5 of the South Somerset Local Plan.

**Informatives:**

01. The applicant is advised to contact the Highway Authority with a view to carrying out condition surveys of the roads in the vicinity of the site to be used for access purposes during construction, and to agree the scope of repairs required. Section 59 of the Highways Act 1980 allows the Highway Authority to recover certain expenses incurred in maintaining highways, where the average cost of maintenance has increased by excessive use. The condition survey will be used as evidence should damage to the highway network occur during the construction phase of the development.

The Area Highway Office in Yeovil can be contacted on 0845 3459155 to arrange for the condition survey to be carried out.