

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

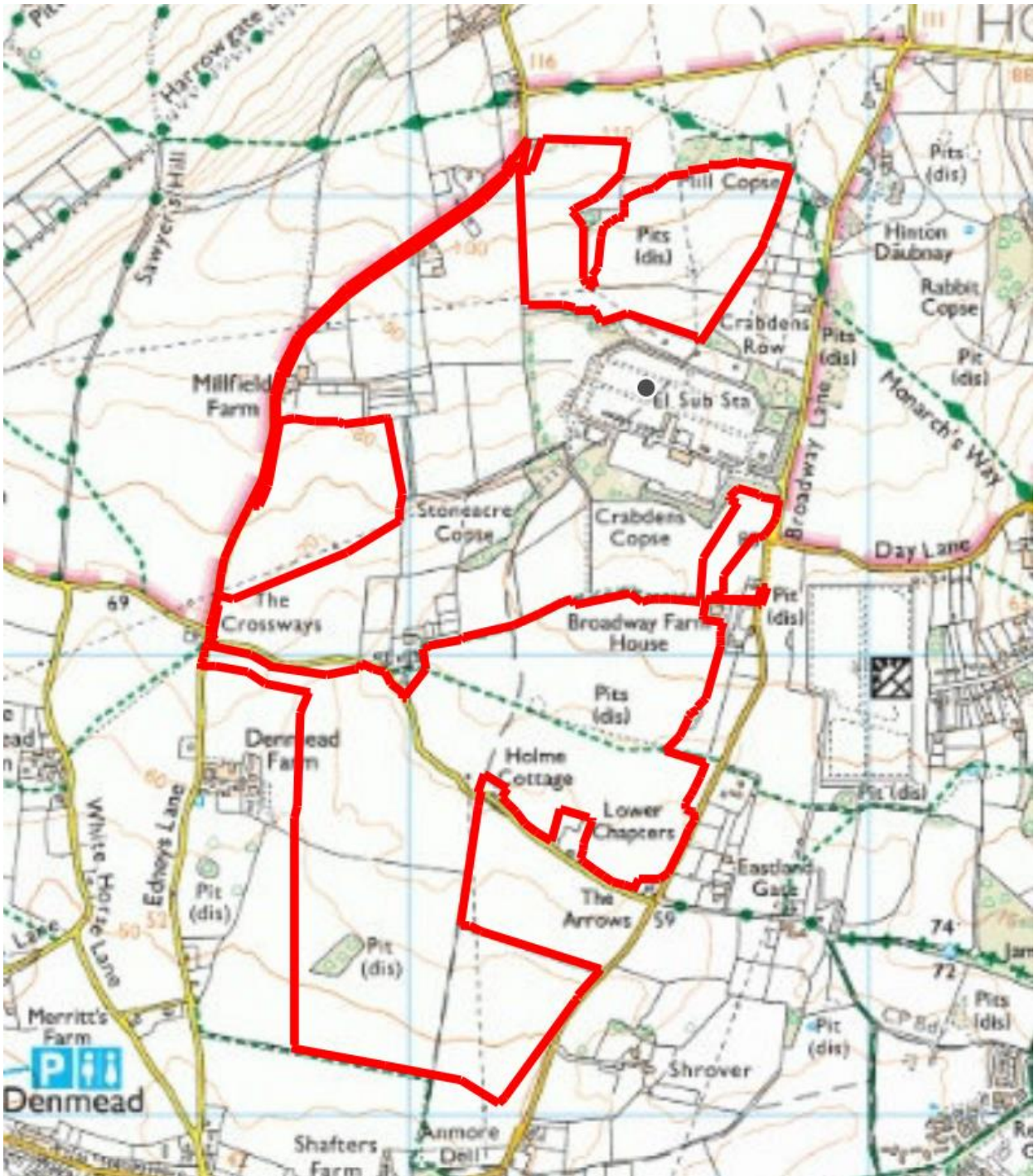
Case No: 22/00447/FUL
Proposal Description: Establishment of solar farm facility with supporting development, on 4 separate parcels of agricultural land located to the north, south and west of the National Grid Lovedean substation and which also straddles the district boundary between Winchester City Council and East Hampshire District Council (EIA Development)
(AMENDMENTS RECEIVED (December 2022)- Revised Plans and Reports; Additional Information and Revised Chapter 6 in Environment Statement (Landscape and Visual Impact).
(FURTHER AMENDMENTS RECEIVED (October 2023)- Revised Plans and Reports; Additional Information including Removal of battery storage facility; Reduction to area of solar panels; Revised ES Non-Technical Summary; Additional Landscaping; Creation of Permissive Footpath; Addition of Passing Bays in Day Lane. (May Affect Public Rights of Way & May Affect Setting of Listed Buildings) (Revised Description & Revised Details).

Address: Denmead Farm, Edneys Lane, Denmead. Waterlooville, Hampshire
Parish, or Ward if within Winchester City: Denmead Parish Council
Applicants Name: Lovedean Green Limited
Case Officer: Mr Stephen Cornwell
Date Valid: 18 February 2022
Recommendation: Permit
Pre Application Advice No

Link to Planning Documents

Link to page – enter in reference number 22/00447/FUL
<https://planningapps.winchester.gov.uk/online-applications/search.do?action=simple>

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE



© Crown Copyright and database rights Winchester City Council Licence 100019531

Case No: 22/00447/FUL

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

Reasons for Recommendation

The proposal results in the introduction of an important renewable energy development. The development does not wholly comply with the policies of the development plan having regard to its landscape and visual impacts (policies MTRA4, CP20 & DM23) and its relationship with the South Downs National Park (SDNP) (policy CP19) There is also a conflict with policy CP20 regarding less than substantial harm to heritage assets. The proposal complies with other policies of the development plan and no adverse harm is raised regarding other matters including protection of residential amenity, assessment of glint & glare, highways, biodiversity and drainage considerations amongst others. An assessment in line with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) has been completed which confirms the harm is outweighed by the public benefits associated with the proposal.

Other material considerations, including the NPPF, support the grant of planning permission and material planning considerations do not indicate that an alternative approach should be taken.

General Comments

The application is reported to Committee because it is a major application accompanied by an Environmental Statement. It has attracted objections from several consultees (Denmead Parish Council, the WCC Landscape Officer & South Downs National Park Authority). It has also attracted a large number of representations from the public, some that are contrary to the Officer's recommendation.

The application site extends across the Winchester City Council (WCC) boundary into the East Hampshire District Council area. The applicant has made individual applications to each authority using one set of combined planning documents. Both Councils are responsible for the determination of that element of the application that lies within their respective districts. The nature of the application is such that it is a single scheme and would require both parts to be approved for the development to operate. Due regard has been given to the potential impacts of the development on land, property and the population of East Hampshire in the assessment of this application.

Amendments to Submitted Plans and other Supporting Documents

The application was first registered in March 2022. It was subject to a full consultation exercise using consultation letters, multiple site notices and a press advert.

In December 2022, the applicant submitted several revised documents to supplement those already submitted. New plans were submitted showing a reduction in the area of panels and additional landscaping. These were presented in response to a range of questions raised in the first consultation exercise and in response to feedback from officers. The application description was adjusted to reflect the additional detail, and a full re-consultation exercise was undertaken.

In October 2023, the applicant submitted further documents in response to the additional consultation responses and objections raised during the second consultation exercise and in response to points raised by officers. As part of this response, the applicant deleted the battery energy storage facility. A revised Flood Risk Assessment and Sustainable Urban
Case No: 22/00447/FUL

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

Drainage assessment, an updated Biodiversity Management Plan and an updated Glint and Glare assessment were submitted. The revised plans also show further adjustments to the area of panels and additional areas of planting throughout the site. The application description was amended again to reflect the above changes. In October 2023 a third full re-consultation exercise was undertaken.

Since October 2023, in response to specific questions, the applicant has provided answers, which have also involved making minor changes to some of the submitted documents and plans. These responses, minor changes and clarifications are not considered to be of a magnitude individually or collectively that would require any further public consultations. These responses have been posted on the application web site.

The additional information submitted in October 2023 has only superseded parts of the original submission and elements of the original and first revised details remain part of the application under consideration.

In August 2024, the applicant made some minor adjustments to the red lined application site that ensured no part of the application site included land that was part of the South Downs National Park. The adjustments related to the application boundaries on the north side of Day Lane and on the west side of Old Mill Lane. In both of these locations, the change moved the site boundary in from the field boundary to the edge of the metalled surface of the road. On Day Lane, the changes also involved altering the arrangement of the passing places. On Old Mill Lane, which is the part of the application site within the Winchester District, the change was an adjustment of around 1m. Having considered the nature of the change and after reviewing the guidance on re-consultations, the alteration was considered to be so minor in nature that no party was impacted or placed at any disadvantage. Accordingly, no additional advertisement exercise was undertaken by WCC. Regarding East Hampshire, as the change also affected the arrangement of the passing places, they did undertake further consultations.

Site Description

The site description section of the report will firstly offer a general overview of the entire application site with references to the position of the district boundary before going on to describe in more detail those specific parts that fall within the Winchester District area.

Overall Description

The red lined application site totals 92.06 hectares of predominantly extensive arable land lying 400m northeast from the edge of Denmead and 1km west of the Horndean/Lovedean residential area. Appendix A shows the general location of the application site in the wider area. The application site lies within a block of land roughly confined by Denmead Hill Lane to the north, Anmore Road to the south, Broadway Lane/Anmore Lane to the east and Old Mill Lane/Edneys Lane to the west. This "block" is approximately 2.6km from north to south and 1.2km from east to west. As can be seen from the plan attached as appendix B, the red lined application site does not adjoin these roads at all points, but stands off them in certain locations.

The application site is not one contiguous piece of land but consists of 5 elements separated by other land and/or roads.

These are:

- A northern parcel.

Case No: 22/00447/FUL

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

- A western parcel.
- A central parcel.
- A strip down Old Mill Lane linking the above three parcels.
- A southern parcel.

Whilst open countryside in character, the dominant feature in the area is the National Grid Substation on the west side of Broadway Lane north of its junction with Day Lane. A series of overhead power lines radiates out from this facility, some crossing parts of the application site. The area exhibits scattered residential properties, farms, and a number of commercial activities. The South Downs National Park (SDNP) surrounds the site on three sides, occupying land beyond the perimeter roads listed above to the north, east and west. The SDNP boundary is shown in yellow on the attached plan appendix B.

There is a gentle fall in ground levels from north to south. The general character of the area is one of large fields with hedgerows and isolated areas of woodland such as Mill Copse and Stoneacre Copse. These features vary in quality, with some showing signs of little management. The general road network in the area consists of rural lanes mainly of single width. Crossways Road (also referred to as the unnamed lane) which runs east – west separates the northern, western and central parcels from the southern parcel. The lanes are flanked by a range of features from hedgerows to post and wire fences whilst others are open with low banks. The precise nature of these features dictates the strength of views from the roads into the adjoining fields and beyond. Two Public Rights of Way (PRoW) (Horndean FP No.4 & Horndean FP No.28) cross the central parcel of the site from Broadway Lane before converging and passing through the yard at Little Denmead Farm and then out onto Crossways Road. A third PRoW (Horndean FP No.13) runs just outside the defined application site along its southern boundary and links Edneys Lane to Anmore Lane. A section of the Monarchs Way which is a long-distance path from Worcester to Shoreham on Sea, runs along part of Denmead Hill Lane north of the site and then crosses the fields touching the extreme northeast corner of the application site before using a short part of Broadway Lane and then running off to the southeast across open fields to Lovedean Lane. These PRoW are shown on Appendix B in green.

The application site also includes a 1.45km section of Old Mill Lane from the field gate south of Windy Right to The Crossways junction. The red line boundaries are the western edge of the metalled road and the hedgerow on the eastern side of the road.

The Aquind Interconnector Development Consent Order application site includes not just blocks of land which would house the proposed Converter Station, but also includes various field boundary features. The intention is that Aquind would retain and maintain these features as part of the landscape screening to the Converter Station. The solar farm applicant has sought to avoid any overlap. Consequently, north of Crossways Road the red line site boundary to this application often stands out into the field several metres away from the existing field boundary.

The district boundary follows a north-south hedgerow in the southern part of the site. North of Crossways Road, it then follows a notional line across a large arable field before skirting around the southern edge of Stoneacre Copse and then running through the Lovedean Sub Station. To the north of the substation, the district boundary follows a field boundary. The plan attached as appendix B shows the district boundary in blue and how it splits the red lined application site between the two local planning authorities. Figures

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

provided by the applicant show that 60.05 hectares of the 92.06 ha site lie within Winchester City Council and 32.01ha in East Hampshire. Approximately a 2/3 and 1/3 split.

Those Specific Parts of the Site that Fall Within the Winchester District area.

Members should refer to the plan attached as appendix B which displays the Area numbers 1-7 that are referred to below and used throughout the report.

The Northern Parcel: Areas Nos1 & 2

This parcel consists of Areas 1 & 2. They are located north of the Lovedean Sub-Station, Area 1 lies to the west & Area 2 to the east, split by the presence of a small copse. Combined they cover a total of 16.16ha. The field boundaries are formed by hedgerows and trees. Excluding the boundary to Mill Copse on the northern boundary, a very small section of the eastern boundary and a section of the western boundary, the application site boundary does not follow any physical feature on the ground, but a notional line set inside the field boundaries. The application red line also shows a standoff from the central copse strip. The plan attached as appendix C shows the relationship of the red line to the field boundaries for Areas 1 & 2.

Beyond the irregular field boundary to the north is an arable field and then at a distance varying from 100-200m is the single width Denmead Hill Lane. The National Park lies to the north of this road. An overhead power line runs north-south over Area 2 emerging to the west of Mill Copse. The presence of these lines means that the vegetation underneath on the northern field boundary is reduced in height to avoid the risk of any earthing. To the east of Area 2, beyond the district boundary, the land is used for horse grazing and displays typical features and character associated with that type of activity. In the northwest corner of Area 1, the field abuts onto the rear of several residential properties fronting Old Mill Lane. An existing farm gate just south of these properties provides the only means of vehicle access to both Areas. The rest of the western field boundary of Area 1 abuts onto open fields. Its southern section is crossed by overhead power lines. Beyond the southern field boundaries of both Areas is a short strip of open ground and then the Lovedean substation or land that would be used to extend the substation facilities. Whilst there is a general fall in ground levels from north to south, there is a section of Area 2 where the ground falls towards the eastern field boundary before rising up towards Broadway Lane.

The Monarchs Way and Broadway Lane offer views into the eastern part of Area 2. Views from Denmead Hill Lane and a section of the Monarchs Way towards Area 2 are opened up through the gap under the overhead lines adjacent to Mill Copse. From openings in the roadside boundary on the eastern side of Old Mill Lane, a part of the land that makes up Area 1 can be seen over intervening hedgerows.

The Western Parcel: Area No 3

This land is 9.31 ha in size, it consists of the northern part of a large arable field that lies east of Old Mill Lane. The field is bounded to the north, west and east by existing hedgerows and trees. The nearly unbroken 3m hedgerow to Old Mill Lane offers a barrier to views excluding a gap adjacent a passing place and the section occupied by the double gates which forms the access into the field. The red lined application site boundary lies inside the field boundaries. The plan attached as appendix D shows the relationship of the red line to the field boundaries for Area 3. The southern boundary to this Area is a notional line running east-west across the field just south of the existing national grid

Case No: 22/00447/FUL

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

transmission line. Opposite Area 3 on the western side of Old Mill Lane is an arable field which is within the South Downs National Park (SDNP). To the north of Area 3 is Mill View Farm. The land to the south of the notional line would be part of the Aquind site. A wider belt of trees forms the field boundary to the east beyond which is an arable field that would also be part of the Aquind scheme. A weakness in the hedgerow on the corner of Old Mill Lane and Crossways Road offers views across the field towards the application site.

The Central Parcel: Part of Area No 4 & the Whole of Area 5

Both Areas which total 5.66ha are the western part of an extensive arable field. This large field is bounded to the north by a hedgerow, to the south by Crossways Road and to the west by hedgerows. The boundary to Crossways Road is open, offering views northward across the field. To the east for Winchester CC, the application site boundary is the district boundary although the application site red line extends beyond that line for some distance through to the Broadway Farm buildings. See the plan attached as appendix B. PRoW Horndean FP No.4 runs alongside the northern hedgerow whilst PRoW Horndean FP No.28 runs through the centre of the field before merging with FP No 4 and then entering Little Denmead Farmyard. This farmyard and a small number of residential properties lie to the west of Areas 4 & 5. As they cross the open field, both footpaths offer walkers extensive open views to the south through to Portsdown Hill some 7.5km away. Of the two paths, Horndean FP No.4 is considered to offer the better views reflecting its more elevated position.

The strip down Old Mill Lane linking the above three parcels.

The application site includes a 1.45km section of the road from the entrance gate to Area 1, down to a position just beyond the crossroads of Old Mill Lane and Crossways Road. This section of the application site is part of the public highway. It is a single width road. The northern part of the road is flanked on both sides by hedgerows with overhanging trees. In the southern section whilst there is a strong hedgerow on the eastern side, the western roadside boundary is a low hedge or open boundary to another extensive arable field. The western side of this road also denotes the National Park boundary. A number of properties/businesses are served by this road.

The Southern Parcel: Area No 6

The red line application site of 11.38ha consists of the majority of a large arable field (see Appendix B). The northern boundary is a hedgerow of varying condition to Crossways Road which does offer views through into the field. An overhead power line brushes the NE corner of the field which also marks the location of the existing field gate access. The southern boundary is a hedgerow beyond which is Area 7. The eastern field boundary hedgerow is the application site boundary. An open field that is not within the whole application site lies beyond. This eastern hedgerow represents the district boundary. The western boundary to the field is not the application site boundary. The red line follows a notional line (north-south) through the field approximately 90m into the field from the edge of the group of buildings that forms Denmead Farm. The corridor this creates to the west is part of the proposed Aquind cable route. In the northwest corner of Area 6 the red line reaches out in a strip 40-56m wide across the field to Old Mill Lane. As it does so, it crosses the intended Aquind cable route.

Several residential properties lie on the north side of Crossways Road close to the NE corner of Area 6. There is a further group of properties around the entrance to Little Denmead Farm on Crossways Road north of Area 6. Denmead Farm which consists of a

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

farmhouse and agricultural buildings lies to the west. Both the farmhouse and an adjacent Granary building are listed grade 2.

The Southern Parcel: Area No 7

This land measuring 15.04ha consists of most of a large arable field (see appendix B), bounded to the north and east by strong hedgerows. The eastern hedgerow is the district boundary. Beyond to the north is Area 6, whilst to the east is Area 8 which is part of the application site that is to be considered by East Hampshire. Area 8 extends through to Broadway Lane. On the eastern side of Broadway Lane approximately 380m from the WCC application site is a group of properties known as Shrover. Whilst the western field boundary is a hedgerow, the western application site boundary is a notional line running north-south at a variable distance (60-250m) off the field boundary. The corridor this creates is part of the proposed Aquind cable route. Several properties lie to the west of Area 7 on the east side of Edneys Lane at a distance of approximately 200m from the application site. One of these, Barn Cottage is a grade 2 listed building. A post and wire fence marks the southern edge of the field and also represents the application site boundary. A PRoW (Horndean FP No.13) runs east-west on the south side of this fence line. The footpath offers extensive views over the open ground to the north. An open field lies to the south with residential properties lying some 200m away on Edneys Lane and Anmore Road. Part of this group is The Lower Garden and the Barn at Shafers Farm which are both grade 2 listed buildings. A large overgrown dry pit lies in the middle of Area 7. This area of vegetation provides a distinctive "island" feature in the surrounding arable field.

Proposal

The applicant has submitted an application and all supporting documents relating to a single scheme. To assist members in the determination of this application, an overview of the whole scheme will be set out below followed by a more detailed description of that part of the scheme that falls within the WCC area. Where appropriate, the description of the proposal will identify which of the two local planning authorities the elements of the application fall within. However, the focus is on those parts of the application which fall within the WCC area, and which will be determined by this committee.

Overall Proposal

When originally submitted, the application was proposing to establish a solar farm with a capacity of 49.9MW. Despite a reduction in the area to be covered with panels, the applicant is maintaining this power output with higher specification panels. This is possible as a result of improvements in panel technology since the application was first submitted. The application proposes the installation of 91,840 panels with the "candidate" power output from each panel of 540W. The precise panel to be used would be agreed by a condition compliance submission. The scheme would operate for a period of 40 years, after which time all the infrastructure would be removed and the land returned to agriculture. The power generated by the individual panels would be converted from Direct Current to Alternating Current by the inverters and then stepped up in its rating by the transformers. The power output from the entire solar farm would be directed to a substation to be located in the northeast corner of Area 7, where its power rating is further raised before it is then exported via an underground cable to the Lovedean National Grid Substation. From here, the power would be directed to wherever the demand existed within the national grid system.

Case No: 22/00447/FUL

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

Attached as appendix E is the overall site Landscape Master Plan. Whilst this plan is focusing on the presentation of landscaping details, it also shows the footprint of the solar arrays and the extent of the open space around the panels and within the application site generally.

The application details show the intention to access the site along a nominated HGV route from the motorway. Day Lane would be temporarily improved with several passing bays. The site would utilise the existing Broadway Farm access off Broadway Lane. A compound would be located close to the access point. All the above would take place in the East Hampshire part of the site.

The site access would lead to an internal road network that would serve the central and southern parts of the site. During the construction phase, access to the southern areas would be via a new temporary crossing of Crossways Road, positioned west of the existing field crossing point that is located west of Holme Cottage. At the end of the construction phase, the temporary access would be closed, and the roadside hedges reinstated. For the operational phase, the existing farm gate crossing would be used.

The movement of materials to the northern and western parcels (Areas 1, 2 & 3) would be via tractor and trailer units with loads having first been delivered to the main compound to be broken down for onward transshipment. The road route would be north up Broadway Lane, then west on Denmead Hill Lane and down Old Mill Lane. Vehicles would return via the same route.

The application was accompanied by an Environmental Impact Statement. Based on the screening response the EIS was limited principally to the consideration of Landscape and Visual Impact and cumulative impact assessment.

The following information has been taken from the submitted documents:

- PV Panels fixed on frames at angle of 15-30 degrees.
- Typical distance between arrays 3-6m.
- Top edge max 3m above ground and 0.8m at lowest end.
- Posts pushed into ground, no concrete.
- Surrounding security fence height of 2.1m.
- CCTV cameras on posts up to 3m tall.
- Ground between and beneath panels managed with sheep.
- Management of other open ground to promote biodiversity.
- Inverter units located across site (units 12m x 2.4m x 3.5m). Plan shows units siting on 0.6m plinths. Transformer units also located within inverter containers.
- Substation to be located in northeast corner of Area 7.
- Construction period of 7 months.
- Construction hours Monday to Friday 0800 to 1800hrs and Saturday 0800 to 1300hrs.
- Vehicle movements co-ordinated to avoid am peak time of 0800-0900hrs and pm peak of 1700-1800hrs.
- 60-70 construction workers on average per day.
- Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) proposals increase in habitat units of 53.10% and hedgerow units of 56.30% (based on use of BNG metric at time details submitted).

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

In the covering letter accompany the November 2022 amendments, the applicant highlighted the following changes:

- Additional hedgerows scrub planting and woodland.
- Removal of panels.
- New photomontages.
- Increased offsets to PRow to a minimum of 20m and greater.
- Amendments to route of internal roadways.
- Change in approach to landscaping near/under overhead lines.
- Reintroduction of historic hedgerows within southern parcels.
- Replacement Environmental Statement chapter 6 and new Landscape Design Evolution report.
- Updated Outline Traffic Management Plan (OTMP).
- Revised Flood Risk details.
- Dark Skies assessment submitted.
- New underground cable drawing.
- Updated Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (OCEMP)
- Update to Glint & Glare assessment reflecting changes to landscape screening.
- Updated BNG calculation based upon amended landscaping proposals.

In the covering letter accompany the October 2023 amendments, the applicant highlighted the following changes:

- Additional trees, scrub planting and woodland blocks.
- Reduction in area of solar panels.
- Removal of the Battery Storage Facility.
- Further increased offsets to the PRow.
- Inclusion of a permissive footpath linking two existing FPs in local network.
- Inclusion of passing bays in Day Lane within red lined application site.
- Addendum to ES and updates to Landscape Master Plan.
- Replacement of Non Technical Summary.
- Updated Outline Construction Traffic Management Plan (OCTMP).
- Updated Flood Risk and Drainage Strategy Addendum.
- Updated BNG calculation based on changes to landscape master plans.
- Landscaping Heads of Terms provided.
- Updated Noise Assessment Report.
- Note from Public Information Event (August 2023).

In October 2023 the applicant also included responses on a range of topics raised by consultees and third parties. These topics include:

- Location choice.
- Brown field availability.
- Risk of pollution if panel broken.
- Local road flooding.
- Date BNG to be achieved.
- Issue of low hum noise.
- Planning policy update
- Ecology within former pit.
- Landscape Legacy.
- Electro Magnetic Field.
- Frequency and nature of maintenance activities during operational phase.

Case No: 22/00447/FUL

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

More recently, the applicant has provided clarification on a number of matters which has resulted in the following information coming forward:

- That they anticipate achieving target of moderate condition for grassland within standard time target of 4 years from current arable land.
- That a typical solar farm with output of 49.9MW will need around 100 hectares of land. Applicant refers to two other example of solar farm they are involved in of this output: Bramley 85 ha and Gunthorpe Road 78.64 ha. Generally, site area for projects of this output in range of 80-100ha.
- At Denmead significant amount of land (approximately 33%) outside fence line and even within fence line not all land covered with panels.
- Application site area split is approximately 66% WCC and 33% EHDC.
- Out of total of 4,565 metres of new hedgerow 3,315 metres (3.3km) in WCC (approximately 73%)
- Out of total of 4.53 hectares of new woodland 3.42 hectares (34,200sqm) in WCC (approximately 75%)
- Modern solar panels have life expectancy of at least 40 years, typical warranty period of a panel now 30 years.
- Any replacement expected to be on ad hoc basis. Not expecting to need mass replacements.

The WCC Specific Proposals

The principal elements of the scheme that would be located within the WCC administrative area and which this committee will determine are:

- An extensive area of PV Panels in Areas 1, 2, 3, part of Area 4, Areas 5, 6 & 7. These would be enclosed on the ground by security fencing.
- A substation located in Area 7.
- Underground cable connections from Areas 1,2 and 3 down Old Mill Lane, across Area 6 and into Area 7 to the substation facility.
- Other sections of underground cabling feeding the power from all Areas (including that from the East Hampshire part of the site) to the on site substation.
- The first part of an underground export cable feeding power from the onsite substation to the National Grid Substation.
- Extensive landscape screening.
- Most of the new permissive footpath.

The applicant has supplied a breakdown of the Areas which provides the following data for the WCC part of the site:

Area 1	Size 5.4 ha	Fenced off Area 3.42ha. (63%)	Generating capacity 3.07MW
Area 2	Size 10.76ha	Fenced off Area 5.84ha. (54%)	Generating capacity 4.90MW
Area 3	Size 9.31ha.	Fenced off Area 7.36ha. (79%)	Generating capacity 7.60MW
Area 4	Size 2.28ha.	Fenced off Area 0.83ha. (36%)	Generating capacity 0.70MW
Area 5	Size 3.38 ha.	Fenced off Area 1.81ha. (53%)	Generating capacity 1.59MW
Area 6	Size 11.38ha.	Fenced off Area 8.74ha. (76%)	Generating capacity 8.74MW
Area 7	Size 15.04ha.	Fenced off Area 12.99ha.(86%)	Generating capacity 10.69MW

Note: Area 4 figures are only for that part of Area 4 within the WCC area.

Area 5 excludes the 11.05ha to be retained in agricultural use.

Case No: 22/00447/FUL

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

The above approximate figures show a red lined area within WCC of 57.55ha, a fenced off area of 41ha (71%), with 16.55ha (29%) of open ground. The total power generation figure for the combined WCC land area is 37.29 MW.

Areas 1 & 2 would accommodate PV arrays supported by two inverter units and a weather station to be located in Area 2 at the end of the service road. Appendix F shows the PV layout, open ground and landscaping proposals for the two Areas. Vehicle access would utilise the existing field access off Old Mill Lane. The access road is shown as curved through new planting which over time would restrict any direct line of sight into the field. Behind the properties on Old Mill Lane that abut the site, the security fencing is 50m off the common boundary. A 19m wide woodland tree belt and seeded meadow occupies this gap. Further planting belts varying from 11 to 14m wide are shown around the western and northern boundaries of Area 1. On the eastern side of Area 2, the edge of the panel area has been pulled back from the field boundary creating an extensive triangular shaped area of meadow grassland with an offset distance of 140m at the northern end. A 28.5m woodland tree belt with a scrub margin on the side to the arrays will also be created alongside the eastern security fence line. Mature plant stock would be used to create the woodland reflecting the desire to establish this tree belt as rapidly as possible. This scrub belt extends around the northern side of Area 2 under the pylon lines. This would be restricted to a maximum height of 3m growth due to the presence of the overhead lines. Once clear of the restriction area, an 18m wide woodland belt would be formed linking up with the existing copse woodland strip that separates Areas 1 & 2. A new hedge would be planted in the southern part of Areas 1 & 2 linking the scrub planting in the SE corner of Area 2 to the scrub planting in the SW corner of Area 1. The presence of just a hedge here reflects the absence of any views from public vantage points towards this boundary.

Area 3 would accommodate solar panels with two inverter units and a weather station located at the end of a roadway in the centre of the site. Appendix G shows the panel layout, open space and the proposed landscaping for this Area. The access would utilise the existing double gates with the roadway curved through planting which would over time develop and prevent a direct line of sight into the field. A new hedgerow would be planted on the outside of the security fencing behind the existing roadside hedge with individual trees planted in front of the new hedge in a strip of seeded ground. In the northwest corner, a triangular woodland and scrub area (maximum width 39m) would be planted. A new hedgerow would run along the northern fence line with a seeded grassland strip in front of it up to the edge of the site. No new planting is shown on the eastern boundary. A 6m wide belt of scrub planting would be formed along the southern boundary, limited in height to 3m, reflecting the constraint imposed by the proximity to the overhead line.

Areas 4 and 5 would accommodate solar panels. The plan attached as appendix H shows the array layout, open space and the landscaping proposals. The district boundary is shown in blue. North of Holme Cottage, the district boundary does not follow any feature across the field. Approximately half of the western part of Area 4 which is split off from the main part of Area 4 by a roadway, is located within the Winchester district. It would consist of solar panels within a fenced off area. The area of panels crosses the district boundary. These panels are served by inverter units and a weather station located within the East Hampshire part of Area 4. A hedgerow would be planted around the northern, western and southern sections of the security fence. The fence line would be approximately 34-40 m from the PRoW (Horndean FP No.4) which lies to the north. The intervening space is shown as meadow grassland which continues around the western side of Area 4 into a

Case No: 22/00447/FUL

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

110m wide open area. The first 30m of this space adjacent the fence will be planted with scrub and some mature stock woodland trees. On the southern side of the fenced off area a 20m gap is left for the PRoW Horndean FP No.28 to pass through.

Area 5 would consist of solar panels and two inverter units located in its northeast corner. Area 5 stands as an irregularly shaped “circular” fenced off enclosure with open grassland all around. See appendix H. The standoff to Crossways Road would be approximately 16m at its narrowest and 50m to the western site boundary. Hedgerows using mature stock plants would be established around the northern, western and southern sides of the fence line with additional scrub and woodland planting to the western and northwestern sides. A section of roadway runs just inside the eastern section of the security fencing. The fence offers a bare face to the adjoining meadow grassland. To the east, on the outer edge of the meadow grassland would be a new north-south hedgerow with a new permissive footpath running on the other side of the hedge linking Crossways Road to the PRoW Horndean FP No.28.

Area 6 would accommodate a large number of solar panels. (see appendix I). A single inverter unit is located in the centre of the Area at the head of a service road. A temporary construction access would be formed across Crossways Road west of the existing field gate that would provide access during the operational phase. A woodland tree belt varying from 10-17m in depth would be established on the northern and western sides of the fenced off area. A strip of meadow grassland would be formed on the outside of the tree belt up to the application site boundary. The operational phase would use the existing field access to service the site. This roadway would follow a curved alignment into the field which combined with scrub planting would obscure any direct line of sight into the Area from Crossways Road over the gate, once the vegetation becomes established. This scrub planting would continue down the eastern boundary but leaving a corridor for the permissive footpath to follow.

Area 7 would accommodate an extensive area of panels and the substation that would serve the overall site (see appendix I). Hedgerows would be planted on the outside of the security fence line on the southern and western sides of Area 7. Mature stock would be used to establish the new southern hedgerow with mature stock individual trees. A 30m strip of open meadow grassland would be formed between the existing post and wire fence that defines the southern edge of the field and the security fence. A new east-west hedgerow approximately 295m long would be planted in the southern part of this field just south of the existing pit. A further new hedgerow approximately 145m long running north-south would form a link from the security fence hedge up to the new east-west hedge. Further woodland planting is shown around the pit, linking it to the perimeter hedge on the western side, with a meadow strip of variable width between the new woodland and the solar arrays. On the northern edge of this field, the plans show the intention to plant a new hedge several metres into the field parallel to the existing field boundary hedgerow. This would create an east-west wildlife corridor with the existing hedge forming the other arm of this feature. On the eastern side, a new permissive footpath would run north-south in the space between the security fence and the existing field boundary hedgerow which is shown as being reinforced with a new line of plants alongside the existing hedgerow. This new footpath would link Horndean FP No.13 to Crossways Road and then continuing northward to eventually link up with Horndean FP No.28.

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

Area 7 is shown as accommodating 5 inverter units, two adjacent its northern boundary and 3 close to the eastern boundary. These units would manage the power generated from Area 8 which lies on the East Hampshire side of the district boundary. The site substation would be established in the northeast corner of Area 7. It would contain a control building, a substation building, two storage containers and a weather station. This facility will service the whole development. A woodland planting belt is shown around the western and southern sides of the substation compound. The area of ground that was originally proposed to accommodate the battery storage units (no longer part of the proposal) is shown as seeded open ground.

Regarding the import or export cable runs, little detail is presented on this other than offering an indication of the general route down Old Mill Lane to its junction with Crossways Road at which point the cable would then enter the field and run into Area 6. A plan indicates the anticipated depth of the cable within the road to be 0.9m below the surface whilst in the fields it would vary between 1m and 1.2m. The broad strip of land linking Area 6 to Old Mill Lane would accommodate the cable run but there is no precise detail of the exact route. Nor is there any detail on the cable route through Areas 6 & 7 down to the sub-station compound, such as how it would negotiate the hedgerow between the two Areas. No details are presented of the export route or how it would negotiate various features up to whatever point it passes from the WCC area into East Hampshire before proceeding up to the National Grid substation.

Relevant Planning History

Application site:

21/01356/SCREEN: A request for a screening opinion was submitted in May 2021. A response was issued in July 2021. The conclusion of the assessment was that the development falls under Schedule 2 of the regulations and that a limited EIA addressing the specific issue of Landscape and Visual Impact was required and cumulative impact due to the possible Aquind scheme.

21/02206/SCOPE: A scoping request was submitted in August 2021 and a response issued in November 2021.

Other Relevant Schemes:

58038: A Development Consent Order (DCO) was submitted in December 2020 for a scheme which is generally known as the Aquind Interconnector. This is a proposal to form an underground electricity link between England and France with a landfall in Portsmouth and the cables laid up the A3 and along the B2150 before striking north across the countryside to Lovedean. The land to the west of the Lovedean Substation is proposed to accommodate the Converter Station. An access roadway would be formed off Broadway Lane to serve this facility. The power cables would run south in the fields east of Old Mill Lane. The Aquind site also includes a number of field boundaries and woodland features in the surrounding area that would be managed to aid in screening the Converter Station.

Although the Aquind application was refused by the Secretary of State in January 2022, that decision was quashed in the High Court and the scheme is currently back with the SoS for re-determination. In the situation of a re-determination, there is no timetable or date for the final decision to be announced.

Case No: 22/00447/FUL

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

The following application is not within the WCC area but within East Hampshire

EHDC 54495/001 - Solar farm on site to south of Day Lane - Permission 24/12/12. This development has been built out.

Consultations

Context:

For clarification, with the application straddling the district boundary, WCC has reached out to consultees and residents beyond the WCC area, offering them the opportunity to comment. East Hampshire has been given the opportunity to comment on any part of the scheme located within Winchester that may have an impact within the East Hampshire district. External consultees have all responded generally, sending the same response to both authorities.

This application has been the subject of a full advertisement exercise on three occasions. The application was first advertised in March 2022. Following the receipt of revised details and plans that superseded some, but not all of the original documents, a second consultation exercise was undertaken in December 2022.

In response to the comments received, further amendments were made to the application consisting of the following:

- removal of the battery storage facility.
- Additional landscaping and biodiversity measures.
- Introduction of the section of permissive footpath.
- Further supporting text.

A third full consultation exercise was undertaken in October 2023.

On the basis some of the original documents continue to form part of the application now under consideration, the original comments made during the first and second consultation exercises remain relevant. Accordingly, all three sets of comments are set out below. The terms “first consultation response” “second consultation response” and “third consultation response” are used to differentiate between the three sets of comments. As a point of clarification, any comments received before the subsequent consultation exercises are reported under the heading of the consultation that was relevant at that time.

The application descriptions used in the second and third consultation exercises referred to the additional information. As part of the package of changes that formed the basis for the third consultation exercise, the applicant withdrew the Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) that formed one element of the scheme. This had proved to be a controversial element of the proposal and attracted significant comments. As it was no longer part of the scheme to be determined, and to avoid distracting members from the remaining elements of the proposal, as part of the third consultation exercise, all parties were advised that any previous or proposed comment on the BESS would not be reported. Accordingly, comments referring directly to the BESS received from any party are not reported below as this aspect of the scheme is no longer for consideration and determination.

Case No: 22/00447/FUL

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

Denmead Parish Council:

First Consultation Response:

Objection.

- Environmental grounds that footpaths and hedges to be removed.
- Proposal will influence amenity of residents in area.
- Visual amenity of surrounding listed buildings will be affected.

Second Consultation Response:

Objection.

- A lot of unanswered questions following presentation to Parish Council.
- Overall reduction in size of site not known.
- Number of concerns discussed including fire risk, damage to countryside, effect on public rights of way, loss of tranquillity, cumulative impact of solar farms in area, lack of restoration plan and potential contamination to water sources.
- Emergency services would block roads to residents, this not addressed by applicant.
- Noted although there are risks associated with project, there are also risks associated with not addressing climate emergency and meeting renewable energy targets.
- Applicant not addressed risks adequately.
- Report sent by Rural Campaign to Protect England (CPRE) states UK Warehouse Association identified warehousing sector has sufficient roof space to generate up to 15 gigawatts of new solar power and therefore capacity to deliver the UK requirement by 2030 as forecast by National Grid.
- Warehouses are already brownfield developed sites and should be prioritised over Greenfield sites.
- Wish to raise **STRONG OBJECTION** with request proposal put before WCC committee on following grounds:
- Significant health & safety risk to residents should fire occur.
- Application proposes to sacrifice large area of valued grade 3 agricultural land to industrial plant, damaging countryside for short term gain and worsening food insecurity crisis. National Policy advises grade 3 agricultural land should not be used for industrial purposes.
- Little assessment of effect on biodiversity should habitat be removed or if land made impassable to migrating wildlife.
- Will affect setting of Monarch Way, a nationally important long-distance path and of other Rights of Way.
- Loss of tranquillity in a rural area close to South Downs National Park.
- Cumulative impact if industrial application should be considered in this rural setting already blighted by an existing solar farm.
- Carbon footprint life cycle of project including production of panels not been made clear and transparent.
- No restoration plan provided to assure residents of how land will be restored, instead relying on applicant that insurance is in place.

Third Consultation Response

Objection.

- Noted changes to scheme. Permissive footpath is for benefit of Aquind Interconnector.
- Application is industrialisation on a very large scale of a very rural area of Denmead.

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

- Loss of agricultural land, loss of food production and impact on food security leading to increase in food imports (and increased carbon).
- Significant impact on nature. A particular concern is for local deer population who will no longer be able to access land due to fencing.
- Solar panels imported from China and not recyclable. Concern is for whole life carbon impact of project which has not been considered by applicant.
- Solar panels contain toxic chemical which pose risk to underlying aquifer.
- Loss of historic lanes with addition of several passing places. Lanes typical of area and passing places not beneficial or necessary.
- No respect in application for current field boundaries, it is permanent alteration of landscape.
- Application affecting setting to National Park. Planning Policy requires that setting should be considered.
- Noise pollution from cooling fans on inverters. No details provided on what is to be installed. Without detail not possible to provide noise assessment.
- Loss of local businesses to rural economy. Several B&Bs in area would be adversely affected.
- No benefit to Denmead.
- Cumulative effect from existing substation, solar farm and proposed Aquind project.
- Supporters not local.
- Loss of public amenity and detrimental effect on wellbeing of residents.
- No information on decommissioning. A bond should be required either on land or on company that sets up project.
- Parish Council wish to support Officer comment that application would cause significant harm to landscape.
- Wise to raise STRONG OBJECTION with request that if officer minded to support that application considered by the Planning Committee on above grounds.

Hambledon Parish Council

First Consultation Response:

Object.

- Whilst supportive of solar energy as way to mitigate climate change, note that level of intrusion into National Park will be very considerable.
- Two footpaths will be affected in our parish.
- National Park should be consulted.
- Many of issues have common theme with Aquind development. Cumulative effect on visual amenity will be very considerable.
- Question if WCC can wait for Aquind decision so context is fully understood.

Second Consultation Response:

None Received.

Third Consultation Response:

Object.

- Support reasoning of SDNP, WCC Landscape Officer and Denmead PC.
- Parish Council particularly concerned over risk however small to ground water as expressed by Portsmouth Water.
- If Aquind approved, cumulative effect would turn a tranquil part of Hampshire into an industrial one.
- Effect on National Park, its approach and roads leading into our parish need to be considered.

Case No: 22/00447/FUL

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

- Application should be refused.

Health & Safety Executive

First Consultation Response:

Advisory Note.

- Solar Farms usually not relevant development in relation to land use planning in vicinity of major hazard sites and major accident hazard pipelines. This because they do not introduce people into area.
- HSE's planning advice mainly concerned with potential risks posed by major hazard sites and major accident hazard pipelines to populations at new developments.
- If site within a safeguarding zone for a major hazards site, an explosives site zone or over major accident hazard pipeline further consideration required.
- If development involves a substation or storage of electrical energy such as in a large battery storage unit and in vicinity of a nuclear site or a COMAH site, then further consultation required.

Second Consultation Response:

Advisory Note.

Advice is repeat of first response.

Third Consultation Response:

Advisory Note.

- Advice is repeat of first response.

Historic England

First Consultation Response:

Advisory Note.

- Presented guidance note setting out circumstances in which Historic England must be consulted or notified. Notification trigger includes effect on setting of grade I or II* listed building, effect on scheduled monument, effect on any battlefield or grade I or II* park or garden of special historic interest and certain developments within a Conservation Area.

Second Consultation Response:

None Received.

Third Consultation Response:

Advisory Note.

- On basis of information available to date, our view no need to notify or consult us on this application under relevant statutory provisions, details of which are attached.

WCC Archaeology Officer

First Consultation Response:

No objection subject to conditions.

- Although some omissions in Historic Environment Desk Based Assessment, concur with its conclusions that archaeological remains present within site of local or regional significance and that nationally significant assets requiring preservation in situ not expected to be present.
- Concur with mitigation measures set out in assessment which can be secured by conditions.
- Pre commencement conditions required to ensure archaeological works agreed and implemented prior to any disturbance of archaeological deposits.

Second Consultation Response:

No objection subject to conditions.

- Further to revised plans and additional information, have no further comments to make.
- Advice and recommendations in previous comment stand.

Case No: 22/00447/FUL

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

Third Consultation Response:

No objection subject to conditions.

- Have looked at revised proposals. My previous comments and recommendations for conditions stand. No further comments to make.

WCC Ecology Officer:

First Consultation Response:

Requests Conditions.

- Raise a number of questions.
- Information on potential impacts of proposal on surface water, groundwater and pollution prevention should be provided.
- Have reviewed submitted documents which includes suitable recommendations that should be adhered to.
- BNG calculated to deliver 56% gain in habitat units and 85% gain in hedgerow units, 60ha of new grassland between solar panels and 21ha of diverse meadow grassland around margins replacing arable land.
- Land management suggested via sheep grazing. Cable protection should be employed to protect infrastructure.
- Application indicates benefits to birdlife.
- Long-term monitoring and management needs to ensure all these benefits delivered. LPA needs to be involved in long term reviews.
- Lighting needs to be strictly controlled.

Second Consultation Response:

None Received.

Third Consultation Response:

No Objection Subject to Further Information and Suggested Conditions

- Scheme supported because it is likely to provide significant benefits for biodiversity.
- BNG calculation shows 53% gain for habitat units and 56% gain for hedgerow units across entire site.
- Further information required on three aspects:
 - Needs reference to protection of sensitive ecological areas including Crabden Row SINC and ancient woodland in CEMP with 30m buffer zone.
 - Biodiversity Management Plan needs reference to target habitat conditions including monitoring timescales. Plan needed to show position of mammal gates, bat boxes bird boxes and hibernacula.
 - Breeding bird survey completed 2021. Update undertaken outside breeding season. Breeding skylarks likely to be present on site. Margins and grasslands between arrays not considered suitable for breeding skylarks due to proximity to fences trees and solar arrays. Which can be used by predators. Skylark mitigation plots should be secured through S106 agreement.
- Suggest conditions that secure recommendations within Ecological Assessment Report, Updated Baseline Survey Report & Biodiversity Management Plan, details of any external lighting and securing biodiversity monitoring reports at regular intervals.
- Include 30m buffer area for any badger sett.

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

WCC Environmental Protection:

First Consultation Response:

Recommend Condition.

- Have reviewed noise assessment provided and no adverse comment to make.
- Have reviewed CEMP and generally happy with methodology.
- More detailed CEMP required covering following:
 - Working hours
 - Contact details for site managers
 - Public communication strategy
 - Dust suppression.
 - Noise reduction measures and hours
 - Use of fences and barriers to protect land footpaths and highways
 - Details parking and traffic management
 - Avoidance of light spillages
 - Pest Control
- Recommend pre commencement condition and note to applicant.

Second Consultation Response:

Recommend Conditions.

- Have reviewed submitted documents.
- No change to position of any equipment so previous comments still apply.
- Have reviewed outline CEMP, generally happy with construction methodologies employed although note reference to piling. Proposals and controls over this operation needed in final version.
- Further details on construction hours and contact details also needed.
- Recommend condition to secure CEMP imposed on any decision to grant permission.

Third Consultation Response:

Recommend Conditions.

- Have reviewed the submitted acoustic report.
- Agree with findings in acoustic report and recommend condition.

The following comment was received with regard to the applicants Technical Note on Low Frequency Noise.

- Have reviewed acoustic report with colleagues, have no concerns regarding low frequency noise.
- Cannot support comments from East Hampshire in respect of low frequency noise.

WCC Glint and Glare Assessment:

(Undertaken by external consultations (Mabbetts) acting for WCC)

First Consultation Response:

N/A.

Second Consultation Response:

N/A.

Third Consultation Response:

- Have undertaken an independent review of the Glint & Glare assessment prepared by Neo Environmental and submitted in support of application.
- Additional supplementary analysis undertaken to consider and address comments by third party relating to the Glint & Glare assessment.

Case No: 22/00447/FUL

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

- Neo Environment Glint & Glare Assessment has considered potential impacts on surrounding sensitive receptors including roads, residential dwellings, railways and aviation infrastructure.
- Neo Environment used Forge Solar for modelling which is an industrial accredited tool for evaluating PV glare.
- Overall methodology used in assessment including receptor selection process considered appropriate.
- Assessment used study area of 1km which is in line with best practice.
- Assessment modelled residential effects at 2m height and 1.5m height for road users on the 8 local roads assessed within the study area. No railways in this area. Used 30km zone to consider aviation impacts.
- After modelling and once other factors such as line of sight, topography and vegetation factored in, low impact predicted at 3 of the 60 dwellings assessed.
- After modelling and once other factors such as line of sight, topography and vegetation factored in, high impact predicted at 3 of the 58 assessed receptors.
- Aviation, no impacts predicted.
Recommend hedgerow planting on boundary to Anmore Lane established at least 3m tall to screen out impacts.
- Reviewed third party comments and found nothing of substance.

WCC Historic Environment

First Consultation Response:

Less than Substantial Harm.

- Development is going to have impact on rural surroundings in which it is set and also on the setting of several grade II listed heritage assets. (Denmead Farmhouse, Granary at Denmead Farm, Barn Cottage, The Lower Garden and the Barn at Shafters Farm).
- Denmead Farmhouse, the Granary and barn at Shafters Farm due to historic function surrounded by farmland.
- This significant and site integral to setting of these three buildings. Without farmland no farm and necessary buildings relating to function of surrounding landscape.
- Wider farmland setting contributes positively to significance of these three buildings.
- Introducing non rural industrial function with alien appearance to field within setting of these listed buildings is going to cause unavoidable harm to their setting and significance.
- Slight gap between Denmead Farmhouse and site reduces harm to a small degree and harm further mitigated by screen planting. However, mitigation does not totally remove harm.
- Gap between Shafters Farm and site is greater but countryside is open and development will still nevertheless have negative impact on wider settings resulting in some less than substantial harm.
- Development would also have adverse impact on wider setting of Barn Cottage and The Lower Garden. These originally built in rural surroundings and traditional rural landscape forms positive part of wider setting.
- These cottages do not appear to share same relationship with farmland. However proposed development will have negative impact on their wider settings resulting in less than substantial harm at a lower level to both cottages.
- Conclusion is harm generated by proposal would be less than substantial level.

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

- Application would be contrary to Section 66(1) of Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Section 16 of NPPF and policies DM29 and DM23 of LPP 2.
- This harm needs to be balanced against public benefit in accordance with paragraph 202 of NPPF 2021. (*now para 208 of the NPPF 2023*).

Second Consultation Response:

Less than Substantial Harm.

- Note additional planting and slight buffer zone on southern boundary and more planting on western boundary. These on sides nearest listed buildings.
- Additions would mitigate very slightly the less than substantial harm already identified.
- Previous comments still largely relevant.
- As before harm generated would be less than substantial and harm needs to be balanced against public benefit in accordance with paragraph 202 of the NPPF 2021. (*now para 208 of the NPPF 2023*).

Third Consultation Response:

Less than Substantial Harm.

- Having reviewed the latest submission, the comment issued previously that there would be some less than substantial harm to the wider setting of the listed buildings still relevant.
- As before, planting around the solar farm mitigates impact slightly.
- Recognised there is a level of public benefit in the installation of these farms, so the less than substantial harm identified would need to be weighed against public benefit.

WCC Landscape Officer:

Objection.

(First consultation response)

- Site within the Hambledon Downs Landscape Character Area.
- Two pertinent policies are DM23 (Rural Character) and CP20 (Heritage and Landscape Character).
- Existing solar farm to east.
- Winchester District Landscape Character Assessment 2004 identifies character of area as tranquil rural character with no major roads and varying degrees of visual enclosure with arable fields interspersed with copses and pasture.
- Advice in strategy is to “Conserve and enhance the rural agricultural character and mosaic of landscape features which create the contrasting scale of open and enclosed areas of downs”.
- Site in open countryside east of dense urban areas of Horndean/Lovedean/Waterlooville and north of Denmead.
- Existing detractors in area including electricity substation and overhead power lines.
- Despite above, overriding character is rural farmland with sense of tranquillity with long views to south and Portsdown Hill, and views into the National Park from roads surrounding northern part of site.
- Application site is large in comparison to size of Denmead, the existing solar farm and to average size of a farm in southeast.
- In terms of landscape as a resource, proposal would have substantial effect on farming character of the area. Whilst use reversible it would change character for 40 years which is considerable period of time.

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

- Visual Study areas limited to 2km with claim impacts beyond are minor. Effects are considered to extend beyond this limit to views from Portsdown Hill at 5.6km. Impact from this distance needs testing.
- Scheme cannot be seen in its entirety from any one location, however views are present from number of public access locations including from roads and footpaths.
- Views out of and across site important as these give sense of scale and distance.
- Northern part site bounds National Park. Number locations offering significant views of site including from Monarchs Way, Broadway Lane, PRoW through centre of site, PRoW along southern edge of site, junction Old Mill Lane and Unnamed lane, views on parts of unnamed lane and views from number residential properties.
- Scheme as it stands at odds with DM23 and CP20.
- A certain number of solar panels would be possible without significant negative effects but in current form, in conflict with policy.
- Application considered to underplaying significance of landscape as a resource.
- Question if layout landscape led.
- Cumulative impact should be taken into account.
- In its current form, proposal difficult to support on landscape grounds.

Second Consultation Response:

Objection.

- Comments augment those previously submitted.
- Note changes to scheme with reduction in area of panels.
- Dispersed layout of arrays makes it challenging to screen as views from multiple angles and through varying thicknesses of hedge and trees, gaps and gateways, from different elevations and where roads are unhedged.
- Panels could be screened given time but from certain locations screening will curtail views.
- May be difficult to screen without a significant period of time to allowed for plant growth.

- Site reading as six individual arrays rather than one solar farm, making screening planting more extensive.
- Strong sense of tranquillity and rurality in location.
Landscape Character Assessment recognises character area key issues and notes constraints and problems associated with area.
- LCA identifies an historic, sensitive landscape with cultural and recreational value that is vulnerable to changes.
- Views from many PRoWs will change to some degree.
- Scheme would seem counter to LCA aims of conserving rural agricultural character.
- Some views difficult to screen satisfactorily.
- LVIA thought to underestimate cumulative impact of potential Aquind scheme of the existing solar farm and those in wider area of Hampshire Basin (between Portsdown Hill and SDNP) including Southwick solar farm.
- Would result in significant change from farmland to quasi-industrial landscape.
- Proposal appears counter to requirements in policy DM23 (Rural Character) and MTRA4 (Development in the Countryside).
- In summary, note reduction in area of panels however, scheme large scale and cumulative effects will on balance result in significant harm to key characteristics of landscape.

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

Third Consultation Response:

Objection.

- Further planting added to landscape plan to screen and buffer solar arrays.
- Changes helpful in responding to some of issues., but difficult to see how further amendments could significantly ameliorate effects of solar panels that would cover extensive area.
- Any further steps would need reduction in area of panels.
- Cannot be said that scheme has negligible effect on landscape. (see previous comments).
- Incremental improvements made. However, on a large multi location site change that would occur would still be substantial.
- Advice here confined to effects on landscape and remain as previously stated that application likely to have harm effect on character and tranquillity of landscape.

WCC Sustainability Officer

First Consultation Response:

Support.

- From carbon reduction/climate perspective key requirement is for Environmental Statement to consider Green House Gas (GHG) emissions and vulnerability of project to climate change.
- Note intention to connect to transmission grid rather than distribution network. Accordingly, they need a site close to Nat Grid substation with spare capacity.
- Would like to see more detail on waste disposal from construction, on transport emissions associated with construction and a sustainable transport plan for deliveries.
- Cannot see assessment of embedded carbon in construction relating to materials or activity.
- Lack detail measuring impact of proposal on climate change.
- Given contribution of proposal to decarbonisation of District support application.

Second Consultation Response:

None Received.

Third Consultation Response:

Support.

- Key requirement in Environmental Statement is consideration of impact on climate (GHG emissions) and vulnerability to climate change.
- Application welcome as significantly increasing renewable energy generation potential within district.
- Noted grid is severely constrained in Hampshire area. This site will connect to grid at National Grid substation.
- Geospatial analysis of land suitable for solar PV within district has identified this land as particularly suitable for large scale solar PV.
- Recommended applicant commits to full recycling of panels at end of life through a scheme such as PV CYCLE as part of the S106 agreement.
- In line with Governments Energy Security Strategy of 70GW target solar deployment by 2035.
- Support application.

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

WCC Planning Policy

First Consultation Response:

- Limited potential in district outside SDNP for other renewable energy schemes.
- No current specific policies.
- Application should be assessed against CP12 of LPP1 and any relevant landscape policy.
- Should be guided by other specialist teams regarding landscape, heritage and ecology in terms of whether scheme appropriate in this location.

Second Consultation Response:

None received.

Third Consultation Response:

None received.

WCC Principal Tree Officer:

First Consultation Response:

None received.

Second Consultation Response:

Recommend condition.

- Not able to fully comment as cannot see any layout drawings that show location of trees.
- Without detail unable to assess whether there will be any future pressures for tree pruning or reduction because of shading of panels.
- If case officer minded to support recommend tree protection conditions.

Third Consultation Response:

None Received.

East Hampshire District Council:

Third Consultation Response:

Drainage Officer:

No Objection in Principle.

- No Objection in Principle subject to satisfactory drainage design.

Landscape Officer:

- Have considered site as a whole with regard to all residents regardless of which Authority they live in.

Archaeology Officer:

Support Mitigation through Condition.

- Took into account data sets that covered whole site.
- Broadly support assessment and conclusion.
- Support Recommended Approach to Mitigation secured through condition.

Conservation Officer:

No Objection.

- Few designated heritage assets in East Hampshire in vicinity of proposed development.
- Ludmore Cottages Grade II listed located to NE of an area of proposed panels.
- Given considerable distance from panels and intervening land uses, including woodland, impact on setting of this building would be minimal and not considered to be harmful.

Case No: 22/00447/FUL

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

- Further to south Nos 226, 224 & 203 Lovedean Lane are listed grade II but by virtue of distance from proposed panels and screening provided by intervening residential development along New Road impact on these heritage assets would be negligible.
- Recommended archaeology consulted to establish impact on any ancient monuments in vicinity.

Environmental Protection Officer:

Request Conditions.

- Regarding any noise generating equipment located within WCC, request that if permission granted, it is conditioned in accordance with the acoustic report and that CEMP condition includes restriction on construction hours and dust control measures.

Environment Agency:

First Consultation Response:

No Objection with conditions.

- No objection provided conditions attached to any planning permission that is granted.

Second Consultation Response:

Seeks Further Information.

- Highlight extreme sensitivity of site in relation to groundwater due to location within Source Protection Zone 1.
- A strategically important water supply.
- Highly karstic nature of underlying chalk means that contamination can be extremely mobile.
- Given above highest levels of safeguards generally required for any development in area.

A further letter received:

- Writing to confirm letter from Portsmouth Water dated 27 March 2023 is accurate reflection of inter-agency discussions following additional information from H&IoW Fire and Rescue Service.

Third Consultation Response:

Requests Conditions.

- Removal of battery storage facility removes our principal area of concern.
- No further comments but seek conditions as set out in original response of April 2022.

Hampshire County Council (Flood Authority)

First Consultation Response:

Request Further Information.

- Have reviewed submitted proposals to manage surface water through swales and an infiltration soakaway channel.
- No information to show that infiltration is feasible. Request test result submitted.
- No information whether any use of pond (pit) is appropriate.
- Swales and soakaways not proposed to service whole site but only part of it. No information to justify that approach.
- Request additional information at this stage.

Second Consultation Response:

Request Further Information.

Case No: 22/00447/FUL

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

- Requested further information when first consulted.
- Have reviewed additional details but cannot see that applicant has addressed matters raised in our initial response.

Third Consultation Response:

No Objection seek Conditions.

- Have reviewed further information and documents.
- Information provided sufficient to address our comments and as such we have no objection to application.
- Happy for same condition to be applied as recommended to East Hampshire in comment to them.

**Hampshire County Council
(Highway Authority)**

First Consultation Responses:

**Need further information before any
consideration without which
recommendation would be refusal.**

- Note site overlaps with the Aquind Interconnector proposal.
- No assessment undertaken if the two schemes were both implemented at same time. As the Aquind scheme would maximise use of HGV traffic capacity on Day Lane and Broadway Lane it would not be acceptable for the construction of both schemes to take place at the same time.
- No Personal injury accident data provided.
- Noted a number of PRoW running through site and one (FP119) meets Broadway Lane at proposed point of access.
- Existing Broadway Lane access used by agricultural traffic and small number of domestic vehicles.
- Other accesses off Old Mill Lane are agricultural use only.
- Need visibility splays, tracking data, safety audit, surface details and how walkers and traffic will be managed for Broadway Lane access.
- Need visibility splays, impact on hedgerows, tracking data, surface details and how traffic will be managed for both of the Old Mill Lane accesses.
- Need more detail on the traffic survey undertaken on the unnamed road and visibility splays of road crossing.
- Need more background detail on general traffic surveys that have been undertaken.
- Contents of the Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) need revising to include delivery hours, avoiding peak periods, more detail on number of employees on site, greater clarity on maximum number of HGV movements, clarity on location of main compound.
- Need commitment that deliveries will avoid peak periods.
- Content of CTMP contradicts detail elsewhere in application regarding presence of a wheel washing facility and this needs correcting.
- Clarify presence of any temporary roads and their construction.
- Need clarification of management of Footpaths during construction phase
- Reference to pre-construction condition survey of local roads but no detail on which roads.
- Reference to call in system but no details of how this would operate.
- More detail required on general approach of HGV construction traffic.

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

- More detail needed on the movement of material around to the satellite sites from main compound.
- Plans appear to show lack of contractor parking. More detailed Travel Plan required.
- More detail on management of vehicles on site needed.

Second Consultation Response:

Requests Further Information.

- Applicant sought to address concerns raised in first response.
- Further amendments required to supporting documentation along with additional plans and details before a positive recommendation can be made.

Third Consultation Response:

No objection subject to conditions and obligations.

- Applicant sought to address concerns set out in two previous comments.
- The Highway Authority raise no objection to the proposals subject to the conditions and obligations.

In response to an exchange of emails on the potential impact resulting from glint and glare on traffic using Anmore Lane and the Shrover access road, the highway engineer asked for further clarification. This was submitted as a technical note by the applicant and the Highway engineers subsequent email response was “no concerns regarding changes to glint and glare”.

**Hampshire County Council
(Public Rights of Way):**

First Consultation Response:

Holding Objection pending further information.

- Application does not contain sufficient information to demonstrate development does not have unacceptable impact on Public Right of Way network.
- Further information requested on proposed interaction and safeguarding of traffic and walkers at proposed access off Broadway Lane and were internal roads cross footpaths.
- PRoW users experiences are of an open rural landscape, mitigation proposed would greatly and permanently alter that experience. Enclosure may also affect surface condition of paths. Further information required.
- Seek reasonable improvements to local PRoW network to compensate for impacts of proposed development. This discussion needs to take place.
- If LPA minded to permit application, request contribution and commuted sum to compensate for impacts to PRoW network and imposition of conditions and informatives.

Second Consultation Response:

Holding Objection pending further information.

- Note changes to scheme.
- Unclear on a number of points relating to interaction of walkers and development traffic and impacts on PRoW from the development.

Third Consultation Response:

No Objection Recommends Conditions.

- Further documents provided.
- Noted applicant will produce final version of CTMP if planning permission approved and PRoW Management Plan will be part of that.

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

- Note permissive footpath connecting FP13 in south with Junction FP4 and FP19 in centre of site.
- In principle, welcome enhancement of network, however further details required to ensure that the two PRoW at either end not adversely affected.
- Applicant not addressed 5 points of concerns raised in last response. These can be addressed in finalising CTMP and PRoW Management Plan.

Hampshire and IoW Fire and Rescue Service

First Consultation Response:

None Received.

Second Consultation Response:

Recommends further information Required.

- HIWFRS does not consider it appropriate to either support or object to planning applications. Comments generally restricted to advisory comments intended to make applicant aware of certain legislative duties as well as advisory comments on any issue that may hinder or impact our ability to respond in an emergency.
- Primary intention to provide information to applicant and LPA in order that better informed decision made.
- No legislative requirement that we actively engage in firefighting, where doing so may place persons or the environment at risk.
- Up to incident commander on arrival at site to undertake dynamic risk assessment.
- If engaging in firefighting activities considered to worsen situation, decisions may be taken not to do anything and site allowed to burn itself out.
- Any negative impact from resulting fire or smoke on local environment sole responsibility of site operator.
- Understood site with a Source Protection Zone for public water supply.
- Unless risk from contaminated water effectively eliminated, unlikely water would be applied to any fire.
- Reasonable access for emergency vehicles does not appear to be part of layout. Roadways capable of supporting 26 tonne vehicles required.
- Service willing to work with applicant on tactical response plan.
- Application still lacks detail.

Third Consultation Response:

Advisory Comments.

- Access and facilities should be in accordance with Approved Document D5 of Building Regulations.
- Access roads should be in accordance with Building Regulations.
- Additional water supplies for firefighting may be necessary. Applicant should contact Water Management Team to discuss proposals.

National Grid Asset Protection

First Consultation Response:

Holding Objection.

- Site in close proximity to High Voltage Transmission Overhead Lines
- Need to review safety implications and future access/maintenance issues posed by proposal.

Subsequent email exchange referred to easement in place, restricting any structure within 5.3m of conductors, restriction on planting under assets within a distance of 50m either side of centre of overhead line and need to access by vehicle or by foot.

Second Consultation Response:

No Response.

Case No: 22/00447/FUL

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

Third Consultation Response:

Holding objection.

- Need to overlay protective feature CAD files to application plans.
- No National Gas Transmission Assets affect in this area.

Natural England:

First Consultation Response:

No objection.

- Based on plans submitted, consider proposed development will not have significant adverse impacts on designated sites and protected landscapes.
- Under TCP (Development Management Procedure) Order 2015 Natural England is a statutory consultee on development that would lead to loss of over 20ha of Best and Most Versatile (BMV) agricultural land.
- BMV defined as grade 1, 2 and 3a under Agricultural Land Classification.
- From description of development, application likely to affect 95.4 ha of BMV agricultural land.
- Consider proposal unlikely to lead to significant long-term loss of BMV as a resource for future generations. This because of limited ground disturbance and facility could be removed in future with no permanent loss of agricultural land quality. Any permanent impact will be limited to small areas.
- However, during life of proposed development likely there will be a reduction in agricultural productivity over the whole development area.
- LPA should consider if this is an effective use of land in line with planning guidance.
- Weight attached to a particular consideration is for the LPA as decision maker.
- Draw your attention to planning practice guidance for Renewable and Low Carbon Energy (March 2014) and guidance note on protecting soils during development.
- Conditions should be used to secure appropriate agricultural land management and or biodiversity enhancement, decommissioning and restoration to former condition when any planning permission expires.
- Any BNG should be in addition to any mitigation to compensate for impacts.

Second Consultation Response:

No objection.

- Advice provided in previous response applies equally to this amendment.
- No need for further re-consultation unless scheme changes materially.

Third Consultation Response:

None Received.

Portsmouth Water

First Consultation Response:

Suggests Conditions.

- Site located in a Source Protection Zone One for two essential public water supply sources and is highly sensitive with Principal Aquifer underlying site.
- Superficial head deposits do not protect groundwater.

Second Consultation Response:

Request additional information.

- Underlying chalk is designated Source Protection Zone 1 providing drinking water for approximately 250,000 people including Portsmouth and Havant area. Also to be used to fill Havant Thicket Reservoir which will be a regionally important water resource asset.
- Nature of chalk would allow rapid pathways from surface into groundwater at depth.

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

Third Consultation Response:

No Objection.

- No objection, as removal of Battery Storage Facility has significantly reduced risk to groundwater which is used as a public drinking water supply.
- However, do seek further information.
- Revised Environmental Statement and its addendum do not recognise site located within groundwater Source Protection Zone One.
- ES makes reference to substation. Request clarification on whether any hydrocarbons or chemicals would be contained within substation as this located in area where surface water to be discharged into old pit.
- No objection in principle to infiltration drainage or use of Old Pit but noted this type of feature has been observed to hold potential sources of contaminants such as old drums. Request Old Pitt thoroughly checked and tested prior to any use.
- Also request flow rate into pit is controlled so soil sediments not flushed into pit and aquifer.
- CEMP should include measures to prevent sediment loss into the pit.

South Downs National Park

First Consultation Response:

Objection.

- Draw attention to section 176 of NPPF (*now para 182 NPPF 2023*) relating to duty to conserve and enhance landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks. Conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage also important considerations and should be given great weight.
- Comments relate to impact on setting of National Park (NP).
- Development within setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on designated areas.
- SDNP object to proposal on landscape grounds.
- Land use change would bring about fundamental change in character from rural to quasi industrial especially when considered in association with existing infrastructure.
- Layout not demonstrably landscape led. Applicant should be able to demonstrate how evidence of field pattern, woodland patterns, rights of way and key views into, out and through site have all influenced layout and design.
- Have concerns over technical detail within submitted LVIA. NP element in appendices and not main body of report.
- Role site plays in setting of NP should be reflected in values and sensitivity of receptors assessed within main report.
- Assessment fails to define setting or contribution site currently makes to NP.
- No assessment of dark skies or landscape elements as receptors
- If council minded to support application suggest layout is reworked to minimise harm and maximise benefits. Long-term commitment needed to extensive conservation grazing to retain working agricultural feel.
- Suggest soil tests needed so mitigation can be designed and delivered. Restoration/decommissioning plan also advised.

Second Consultation Response:

Objection.

- Comments relate to impact of proposal on setting of National Park.
- LVIA now moved but section not considered to be fully integrated.

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

- Landscape forms part of recreational gateway to National Park for residents living to south.
- Narrow roads and PRow pass through area. These very rural with attractive views provide setting to NP.
- Proposal will industrialise landscape and screen views for walkers cyclists horse riders and drivers.
- Site boundaries in two of the four locations (western & southern) bare little relationship to rural field patterns with boundaries finishing halfway across fields.
- Southern area particularly insensitive as it follows edge of a north south ridgeline. This does not respect landscape character or historic field patterns.
- Environmental Statement addresses effects on the seven Special Qualities of the National Park as defined in Management Plan 2020-2025. ES concludes only 2 affected, tranquillity and diversity.
- ES does not address effects of construction phase with traffic using very narrow lanes at access sites. Traffic will pass directly through the NP and along roads that form boundary to park.
- Of particular concern are potential changes to visual and aural environment during construction phase. Large vehicles on single track roads including Denmead Hill Lane, Old Mill Lane, Broadway Lane and Day Lane. First three of these form boundary to NP whilst Day Lane runs through NP.
- Direct effect on NP.
- Proposal will not conserve and enhance the relative tranquillity of the area.
- Will also affect feeling of peace and quality of life in this area.
- Increase in traffic along rural lanes would erode tranquillity and affect experiential qualities of wider landscape.
- Also necessary to consider secondary effects of noise, light pollution and impacts on highway eroding rural character.
- Application does not address local plan policy SD21 to protect historic highways during construction phase. Day lane will see passing places created and loss of vegetation at access and to provide visibility splays.
- Application should identify if roads are historic rural roads and consider potential impact on them.
- Potential noise from inverters significant concern. If noise barriers required these visually unacceptable.
- Scale of development will have direct effect on setting of NP. Application concludes that views of panels very limited and this acknowledged. However potential impact over long distance from reflection. Impact on dark skies should be clarified.
- If application is supported suggest harm to setting of NP is minimised.

Third Consultation Response:

Objection.

- This comment should be read in conjunction with previous comments.
- Latest plans show significant areas of screen planting and areas of native meadow added to proposed scheme, reduced area of panels, removal of Battery Storage Facility and new permissive footpath.
- Straight permissive footpath between industrial style fencing with solar panels on both sides even with addition of hedgerows is a change to character of landscape.
- Whilst changes add to tree and scrub cover, landscape character is quite open with large fields. This reflects character found within adjacent National Park. Therefore, proposal would change landscape within setting to National Park.

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

- Passing Bays on Day Lane will impact on character of this route.
- Changes do not address fundamental issue of scale and siting on the boundary to the National Park.
- Most of issues raised as an objection to this scheme remain and further changes unlikely to overcome them.
- Application will be harmful to setting of NP due to impacts on Landscape Character and impacts on tranquillity and historic rural road network.
- If Council minded to support development suggest harm to setting is minimised.

Representations:

Aquind

First Consultation Response:

Seeking Clarification on certain matters.

- Aquind is a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project in recognition of its national benefits.
- Support principle of development of a solar farm.
- Essential LPA fully satisfied any consent would not adversely impact on delivery or operation of Aquind project.
- Have been in discussion with applicant, landowner and farmer to minimise any conflict between the two schemes.
- Aware red line drawn to avoid overlap but some overlaps would occur.
- Identified 6 overlaps, (three in each district) and make recommendations that LPA should consider.
- Landscape cumulative impact should be considered in more detail.
- Should consider cumulative impacts for other non Environmental Statement topics of:
 - traffic,
 - Ground conditions and contamination
 - Noise
- Should consider potential Glint & Glare impact on Aquind buildings which are to contain temperature sensitive equipment.
- Should consider implications of surface water runoff on land within the Order.

Second Consultation Response:

Seeking Clarification on Certain Matters.

- Have progressed discussions with applicant to resolve matters raised.
- Still need to see details/information to resolve all issues.
- Additional information in revised LVIA on cumulative assessment still leaves matter open. Aquind preparing a document.
- Consideration of cumulative noise issue not yet addressed.
- Some progress on Glint & Glare issue but still not fully resolved.

Third Consultation Response:

Request Conditions.

- Ask that LPA impose condition on cable depth and route.
- That LPA impose condition to ensure no above ground development or landscaping above Aquind cable route.
- Regarding cumulative assessment, up to LPA to consider if this has been fully addressed.
- Cumulative noise issue remains outstanding.

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

- Glint and Glare remain outstanding. Aquind seeks non reflective condition on panels.

Further Submission

A further letter dated 23 April 2024 has been submitted to reflect the latest position following recent discussions between the applicant and Aquind. The agreement to a joint approach to traffic movements is noted. The following represent outstanding issues:

- No update on cable arrangements drawing regarding overlap with Aquind cables so this remains an outstanding issue. Request condition to address this.
- Request condition to ensure no above ground development in Aquind cable corridor.
- It is for the LPA to decide if cumulative LVIA has been adequately addressed through submissions.
- Applicant not produced cumulative noise assessment to address potential situation of concurrent construction.
- No progress on concern of reflection from panels heating up Converter Station building. Note applicants glint & glare assessment undertaken on assumption panels with anti-reflective coating will be used. Ask that this secured through a condition.
- Notwithstanding inclusion of an Anti-Reflective Coating condition, there remains a risk of light reflection heating up converter station and this affecting its operation. Seek information this will not happen.

CPRE: Hampshire

Objection.

First Consultation Response:

- Solar arrays should be located on brownfield sites and on roofs rather than land used for agriculture.
- Where countryside location deemed essential, an acceptable scale and location is vital if scheme to be acceptable.
- Cumulative impact with other solar farms must be considered.
- Best and most versatile agricultural land (grade 3a and above) should not be used.
- At 92 ha generating 49.9MW this is very large scale.
- Site adjoins South Downs National Park so issue of setting must be considered. Paragraph 176 of NPPF 2021 applies (*now para 182 of NPPF 2023*). This requires a development to be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise impacts on designed area. Difficult to see how this scheme could meet those requirements.
- Notwithstanding substation and pylon lines, landscape of area is essentially rural in character with historic narrow winding roads. Has strong sense of place.
- Road network regularly used by walkers cyclists and horse riders.
- Views from road into site will result.
- Character and appearance of area would be markedly changed with serious adverse impact on visual amenity and tranquillity.
- Impact worse in winter with no leaves on vegetation.
- Question biodiversity improvements of ground under panels.
- Scheme should be refused on ground of impact on setting of National Park and contrary to Policies CP19 and DM23.
- If Council minded to allow application, important to ensure maximum use made of landscape mitigation to minimise visual impact, restore hedgerows, avoid tunnel

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

effects on PRow, no lighting, exclude grade 3a land and means for removal of equipment at end of life.

- Unlikely to object to a much smaller scheme located within landscape away from roads and PRow.

Second Consultation Response:

None Received.

Third Consultation Response:

Continue to Object.

- Note changes to scheme.
- Accept they help reduce visual impact.
- However, scheme remains very large scale and agree with comments of WCC Landscape Officer that scheme will have harmful effect on character and tranquillity of landscape.
- Landscape planting will take years to become effective.
- Agree with SDNPA that scheme will affect setting to NP and amendments do not change that.
- Accordingly, stand by views expressed in earlier letter.

Friends of the Earth

First Consultation Response:

None received.

Second Consultation Response:

Support.

- Support views of WinACC.
- Need radical shift from fossil fuels and need urgent action.
- Offshore wind cannot achieve objectives alone.
- Winchester District has high level of energy usage and community cannot offset emissions onto someone else.
- Many kinds of infrastructure place burdens on communities where these facilities are located.
- Rural communities rightly value their landscape; urban areas bear traffic pollution resulting from concentration of activity.
- Energy developers should enable local communities to obtain tangible benefits from schemes.

Third Consultation Response:

None Received.

Lovedean Village Residents Association

Third Consultation Response:

Objection.

- Conflicts with criteria in policies CP19 and CP12.
- Deleterious effect on beauty of landscape and significant visual impact in countryside given proximity to National Park.
- Denmead Neighbourhood Plan silent on solar farm developments, this must mean application in direct conflict with plan. If a proposal not in plan the NPPF presumption to refuse should take precedent.
- Inadequate community engagement. Public exhibition not in Denmead but in nearby village hall.
- Application should be refused.

Case No: 22/00447/FUL

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

Monarchs Way Association

First Consultation Response:

Objection.

- Application will be extremely intrusive along route of Monarchs Way.
- The 625 mile long Monarchs Way closely follows route used by Charles II to escape after defeat at battle Worcester in 1651.
- Walkers on Monarchs Way will look down on site from higher ground.
- Agree with comments of SDNP and those in public representations.
- Site is open and any planting will take years to screen it. Any planting then needs support for life of solar farm.
- Understand 15years been referred to before vegetation established.
- Question why panels have to be so close to Monarchs Way.
- Association has been publicising route to increase interest and usage.
- Question if sufficient consideration given to disposal of surface water as Association seen flash flooding problems arise at another solar farm site.
- Request application refused.

Second Consultation Response:

None Received.

Third Consultation Response:

None Received.

Ramblers

Third Consultation Response:

Welcome New Footpath.

- Welcome introduction of additional footpath connecting existing paths.
- This meets requirements in NPPF paragraph 100 (*now para 104 of NPPF 2023*) regarding protecting and enhancing PRoW.
- Note proposal is for a permissive footpath. These do not carry as much weight as a dedicated PRoW and ask that new FP dedicated as permanent PRoW.

Winchester Action on Climate Change

First Consultation Response:

Support.

- Visited site, attended local event and satisfied benefits will significantly outweigh effects.
- Fivefold increase in solar by 2035 proposed in 2022 British Energy Security Strategy.
- Application also consistent with UK Net Zero Strategy.
- Assuming 75% of installation located within Winchester District, it will supply 6% of districts current electricity demand.
- Output of all local installed renewable energy only meets 16% of electricity demand in Winchester District. This project will boost two decades of sluggish growth in local renewable energy in district by more than a third.
- Based on average system capacity of 3.75kW would need over 14,000 domestic rooftop solar systems to match output of this solar farm.
- Above figures present compelling evidence of public benefit.
- Would deliver much needed momentum towards goals of WCC Carbon Neutrality Action Plan.

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

- A key obstacle to finding new solar sites is time and cost of upgrading National Grid capacity to make connections. This site has rare advantage of sharing site with NG substation.
- Existing presence of large 400kV substation considered to moderate impact of solar farm on landscape character.
- Note concerns of SDNP but also note that NP boundary specifically drawn right up to existing substation. If substation impact on setting of NP acceptable when that boundary drawn surely solar farm should also be acceptable.
- 86% land classified as grade 3b.
- Scheme offering 56% net gain in habitat units and 85% in hedgerow units by far most impressive amongst the 4 solar farm applications submitted in last two years in Winchester District.
- All impacts temporary as development will be decommissioned after 40 years.
- UK committed to decarbonisation of electricity grid by 2035. This cannot be achieved without ground based solar schemes. Every parish and district has a part to play.

Second Consultation Response:

Support.

- Reduction in area of panels designed to soften visual impact.
- Dramatic reduction of 10 ha not a token exercise and a response to concerns over scale of solar farm.
- Reiterate strong support.
- Escalation of energy crisis since application first submitted, strengthened case for supporting large renewable energy projects.
- Growing public acceptance of onshore wind and solar in national energy security.

Third Consultation Response:

None received.

Letters of Objection from the Public

First Consultation Response:

Twenty letters from sixteen households.

One letter submitted by a Planning Consultant on behalf of 16 households.

(Main points summarised):

- Will change views from FPs across open countryside especially FP that runs through a corridor within panels.
- Contradicts Denmead Neighbourhood Plan.
- Panels manufactured using toxic material that would contaminate soils and release carcinogenic chemicals. Would render soils unfit for agriculture.
- Landscape will not return to original state after 40years.
- Landscape and biodiversity benefits unrealistic and inadequate.
- Noise and radiation levels will be unacceptable in rural area.
- Contradicts government policy on protecting agricultural land for food production.
- Will blight area for next 40 years.
- 40 years not considered temporary.
- Panels, inverters and perimeter fencing all tall structures.
- Council should require use of panels that comply with RoHS (Restriction of Hazardous Substances).
- Landscape mitigation will take 15 years to establish which is 40% life of site.

Case No: 22/00447/FUL

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

- No community benefit, no local employment opportunities.
- Conflicts with WCC planning policies DM23, CP13, CP19, CP20, MTRA4 & T4.
- Conflicts with NPPF para 7.
- Will have negative impact on rural tranquillity.
- In a fire solar panels can be highly toxic and a danger to humans.
- Large solar farms should not be located near 50 residential properties or National Park.
- Limited information on display at village hall.
- Proposal will be double height of Day Farm panels.
- Difficult or impossible to screen from Broadway Lane.
- Glint and Glare maximum impact will be on Broadway Lane properties and on road safety.
- Site lies within domestic water protection zone.
- Question impacts of manufacturing panels in China.
- Solar technology will be redundant in ten years.
- Question if any future operators will have knowledge to operate site safely.
- Question noise disturbance to wildlife.
- Concerned wildlife will get trapped in perimeter fencing or disorientated by shiny panels.
- Broadway Lane single width, unsuitable for HGVs.
- Low hum will impact residents. Believe Day Lane solar farm had this problem for 2 years.
- Noise assessment highly flawed.
- Radiation level needs cumulative assessment.
- Area suffers from ground water flooding.
- Energy Security Strategy promotes panels on rooftops and avoidance of green fields.
- Fails PPG para 13 guidance on site selection and criteria.
- Aquind scheme still pending.
- Wish to see height of panels lowered to same height as those at Day Lane site.
- Concerned over disruption to local roads during construction.
- Would adversely impact on setting of grade II buildings that rely on their agricultural settings.
- Site open to view from Monarchs Way.
- Middle section split by footpath. Enjoyment of FPs harmed by presence of panels. Will create tunnel effect.
- Will have adverse impact on deer population.
- Reduces land that could be available for horses.
- Site contains 12 ha of grade 3a agricultural land.
- Dell in southern most section is home to deer.
- WCC should have guide to assist in decision making.
- Modelling used in noise assessment and in Glint and Glare assessment severely flawed.
- Glint and Glare will impact on our property and road users.
- Even based on flawed assessment our property calculated to experience 94 hrs of glare per year. This 3 times threshold for high rating.
- This impact resolved through planting but that will take years to establish. Also anticipates retention of trees in our own garden which applicant has no control over.

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

- References to carbon benefits ignore manufacturing in China and shipping.
- Majority of noise will be tonal low frequency that will annoy residents and wildlife.
- Claim noise assessment used wrong frequency weightings that reduce impact. Needs both day and night modelling.
- Until actual equipment identified, source of noise will be unknown.
- Trust Members of Planning Committee will undertake background reading of documents to be fully informed of proposal.
- Most of Hampshire agricultural land is grade 3 and wheat is predominant crop.
- Day Lane solar farm stopped using sheep to graze under panels.
- Thriving equine community in area uses road for riding. Concerned panels could spook horses.

Second Consultation Response:

Thirty-seven comments from thirty-one households.

One additional letter submitted on behalf of 43 residents from 28 households.

One letter submitted by a Planning Consultant on behalf of 16 households.

(Main points summarised):

- Loss of valuable arable land which produces good crops every year.
- Solar Farm in view from every direction including Portsdown Hill, with minimal cover creating blight on countryside.
- Solar farms should be on less viable and visible land.
- Whilst solar power is positive, the location and impacts this site poses forces me to object.
- Area has thriving population of deer, badgers foxes red kites etc.
- Presence of panels will have negative impact on walkers using footpaths.
- Area has number of equine sites. Concerned for horse riders as reflection from panels could spook horses.
- Better solution is to build small modular reactors.
- In vicinity of Waterlooville and other towns are number of brown field sites that provide better locations. Also, roofs of warehouses, superstores, car parks and central reservations on motorways.
- See no improvement to proposal.
- Large scale solar farm not appropriate for rural area on southern edge of SDNP.
- Still too close to residential properties.
- Panels produced in China under poor conditions.
- Changes to landscape proposals will take 15 years to mature.
- Panels will cast significant shadows, ground underneath unlikely to absorb water running off them. Ground will become waterlogged.
- Denmead has unresolved localised flooding.
- Woody dell in southernmost area occupied by deer and will be inaccessible to deer as fenced off.
- BNG a desk-based exercise with empty promises.
- No answers to concerns over impact to health from EM radiation, low frequency hum, lead cadmium leaching into soil if a panel breaks.
- Remain convinced glint and glare an issue.
- After 40 years what confidence site will be decommissioned correctly? Sceptical land will return to agriculture.
- How will panels be disposed of?
- Disturbance during construction.

Case No: 22/00447/FUL

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

- Construction access needs nominating.
- Applicant not taken advantage of discussing changes with local community.
- Believe community would support a well planned safe non-polluting project. Amendments fall short of this.
- Despite reduction in area of panels, still industrialising a rural area with 3m panels and security fence.
- Existing hedgerows will not offer necessary protection as suggested.
- Lower foot path still goes through site of panels.
- Little said of risk of contamination to soil and watercourses from panels themselves once they are broken releasing lead and cadmium.
- Little offered to mitigate noise from air conditioning unit in BESS and inverters.
- Area already has number of energy facilities but still maintains a rural and tranquil appearance.
- Site is grade 3a and 3b farmland.
- Denmead Neighbourhood Plan emphasises retaining rural nature and gaps between conurbations. Proposal contradicts plan.
- Will not generate any local employment.
- Contrary to policies DS1, WT1, WT2, WT3, SH1, SH2, SH3, SH4, MTRA1, MTRA2, MTRA4, CP5, CP7, CP15, CP13, CP14, CP16, CP18, CP19, CP20, DM15, DM19, DM20 DM21` & DM23.
- Too many residential properties around site (approx. 50) that would be affected.
- Broadway Lane & Anmore Lane already affected by flooding, proposal will exacerbate problem.
- Height panels double that of Day Lane site.
- Question if sheep grazing will take place.
- Government Ministerial statement made clear not question of accepting solar panels at any cost to environment.
- Additional planting not great if overall size of site considered.
- Question limit of Glint & Glare assessment to 1km study area and 2m height limit.
- Glint and Glare will not be resolved by suggested planting.
- Broadway lane has 60mpgh speed limit and is narrow in vicinity of access.
- Site will generate low frequency hum that will carry for miles.
- Noise assessment flawed.
- Will have considerable impact on long distance views.
- Seek more time to review details.
- Contravenes Section 15 of NPPF, Rural Communities Act 2006 & CROW Act 2000.
- Contrary to NPPF para 185 & 174 and PPG.
- Transitory animals like deer have route blocked.
- Panels can disorientate wildlife.
- Applicant has no experience in running a solar farm.
- Even after 15years vegetation will not screen site from elevated positions like Portsdown Hill.
- No compensation for community for any impacts.
- Scheme will discourage use of footpaths and lanes.
- Site vital green space separating Lovedean and Denmead.
- Need ground for food production. UK only 54% self-sufficient.
- Do not accept soil will be in better condition after 40years and believe fertility will be worse.

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

- Solar may be a redundant technology in ten years.
- Limited evidence on why site chosen.
- If supported, need decommissioning bond to secure decommissioning.
- HCC publication says most farmland is grade 3 which is good quality. Predominant crop type is wheat (38%), spring barley (17%) and oil seed rape (17%).
- Do not consider 40 years to be temporary.
- Health risk from Electro Magnetic Radiation (EMR) and Electro Magnetic Field (EMF) and cancer risk need to be assessed.
- Responsibilities and liabilities for health and safety reside with applicant, designers and installers.
- Will result in loss of ancient trees.
- Site is natural extension to National Park and could easily have been part of it.
- Will deter tourists.
- No change in views expressed originally and in some cases more concerned.
- Applicant not addressed carbon footprint question.
- Glint and Glare report does not consider impact on properties at Shrover. These properties on higher ground than application site.
- What management monitoring undertaken to ensure panels not damaged as that would release pollution into groundwater.
- Anmore Road lacks pavement, concerned glint and glare on traffic will create traffic risk to school children & other walkers on road.
- Question what time in life of solar farm it would achieve the BNG targets.
- How will site stay below 50MW output threshold above which it would be an NSIP.
- PPG notes negative impact large scale solar farms can have on rural environment.
- Scheme will diminish setting of three listed heritage assets, Denmead Farm, Barn Cottage and Barn at Shifters Farm all grade II.
- Will materially harm enjoyment of Monarchs Way.
- Does not accord with government guidance on renewables or the NPPF.
- Solar panels should be located on brownfield sites or on rooftops.
- Adverse impacts unlikely to be made acceptable so in conflict with Government objectives for renewables.

Third Consultation Response:

Sixty comments from thirty households.

Main points summarised:

- Application does not provide conclusive evidence will not breach DM20.
- Specific numerous failings in noise assessment.
- Question if equipment will not run overnight.
- Challenge methodology and modelling of noise assessment on multiple levels.
- Area highly sensitive regarding ground water.
- Solar panels contain toxic elements. If protective glass layer gets cracked rainwater can leach these substances into soil and then aquifer.
- High risk of breakages around handling at delivery, installation operation, decommissioning and incorrect disposal.
- No current safe recycling of panels.
- Residents wish to see RoHS compliant panels. Applicant denies availability of RoSH compliant panels. These concerns compounded by applicants lack of experience.

Case No: 22/00447/FUL

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

- Applicant should be required to provide financial security to cover pollution risk and decommissioning. Section 106 agreement should be used to back up measures. If applicant unwilling to enter agreement application should be refused.
- Proposal contrary to policies DM13, DM15, DM20, DM23 and Denmead Neighbourhood Plan.
- Site important green gap separating Denmead and Lovedean.
- Proposal will affect holiday rental business at Shrover Hall. Two other B&Bs adjacent site at Lower Chapters and Lovedean Granary.
- Will degrade rural use and enjoyment of this beautiful area, blighting environment and wildlife.
- Loss of good arable land.
- Road safety hazards from Glint & Glare.
- Residents will experience Glint and Glare.
- Will significantly increase electromagnetic radiation.
- Agree with WCC Landscape Officers view scheme contrary to CP13.
- Will take 10-15 years for screening to mature.
- Proposed footpath will run along metal fence.
- Need to consider cumulative impact, existing solar farm, possible Aquind scheme and close to SDNP.
- Noise will impact on FP users.
- Food production as important as energy production.
- Solar should be on rooftops, commercial buildings and brownfield land.
- No benefits or opportunities for local employment,
- Misalignment with national and local policy.
- Anmore Lane narrow and used as back lane. Unsited to heavy traffic. No consideration of walkers cyclist's or horse riders.
- Welcome removal of batteries, concerned applicant will try and reinstate them later. Need legal agreement to stop this.
- Still object.
- Maximum height of panels should be 1.5m.
- Cumulative Electro Magnetic Radiation (EMR) has health impacts on population. No impact considered. Request independent EMR study conducted by council.
- Metal frames, panels and containers would be eye sore for village and rural area.
- Panels will leach toxins into ground. This demonstrated in number of academic papers.
- Leaching can occur through micro cracks that are not visible.
- No safe level of toxins in ground. WHO declared no safe level for lead.
- Applicant declined to use RoHS compliant panels which are toxin free.
- Applicant not declared what noise generating equipment will be used. Concerned level will exceed 50 up to 85 decibels. Application should be refused.
- No evidence applicant considered alternative locations.
- Do not believe BNG can be achieved.
- Fencing will stop migrating animals.
- Landscaping insufficient and will take 15 years to mature.
- Site will be in view from many points in area including National Park.
- Noise will result 14-16 hrs a day from cooling fans, inverters and transformers.
- Will irrevocably change character of landscape.
- Impact not just on residents but on visitors.

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

- Contrary to spatial vision in LPP1, para 6.1, 6.1, MTRA4, DM15, DM19, DM20, DM21, & DM23.
- Contrary to NPPF para 185, 174 and to PPG.
- Loss of productive Agricultural land, 14.1% is BMV grade A. This in breach of guidelines.
- Planning Ministers statement of 2014 says no reason for solar farms in wrong place.
- Area susceptible to flooding.
- Question if construction will affect water table.
- Anmore Lane and Broadway Lane operate at national speed limit but 5m wide and narrower. Use of HGVs will increase risk to other users.
- All traffic routes are local lanes.
- Glint and Glare distraction to drivers.
- Noise from existing Day Lane solar farm took years to resolve.
- If character of area changes, concerned will attract more fly tipping.
- Concerned over hospitality business at Shrover Hall.
- Proposal will affect setting of Barn Cottage and other listed buildings in area.
- Dell in southern end of site home to deer. Request fencing realigned to exclude this area.
- Reiterate earlier objections.
- UK overdelivered on carbon reduction targets.
- Impact on PRow particularly FP crossing area 4.
- UK only 54% self-sufficient in food.
- Solar Farm will damage food production.
- Object to sharing access to our property for 7-9 months during building programme with 50 HGV movements per day + other vehicles.
- Broadway Lane has bends to north and south. Insufficient space to pass. No lights or pavements.
- Planting should include mature trees.
- Character of area being destroyed by housing developments, expansion to substation and Aquind still possibility.
- Aquind should be taken into account.
- Impact on former bronze age settlement at Hinton Daubnay.
- Carbon balance should include manufacturing, construction upkeep and final disposal of panels.
- Solar is particularly inefficient use of land for power generation. Solar worst of all forms of energy generation.
- Request applicant uses actual measurements and not theoretical noise levels.
- Procedurally this application should have been an NSIP. Quoted at 49.9MW capacity but this figure not controllable. Applicant avoiding greater scrutiny. A clear point of challenge under a Judicial Review.
- Certain reports are self-certification statements by applicant. Statements should be properly verified.
- Red line does not correctly matchup with all drawings. Not clear landscaping all within application boundaries. This risks enforceability of any conditions.
- LPA should take active interest in operational life and decommissioning funded by a Management Contractor.
- Note comments of East Hampshire Environmental Health Officer (EHO), believe issue of Low Frequency Noise applied to both authorities.

Case No: 22/00447/FUL

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

- EHO correct that impact of Low Frequency Noise (LFN) from transformers not addressed.
- Have raised this issue on behalf of residents.
- Note East Hants EHO recommendation that acoustic assessment specifically demonstrates how low frequency noise will not exceed Criterion Curve described in DEFRA funded University of Salford guidance document.
- Have reviewed this document and make following comments:
 - Guidance should become best practice for solar farm applications.
 - Enso need to use real world acoustic measurements from other comparable sites or model the data. If modelling, must include penalties laid out in BS4142 for tonal nature of transformer noise.
 - Effective conditions needed with proper oversight and enforceability particularly during operational phase when transformers get noisier due to deterioration of equipment to ensure declared noise levels not breached.
 - Concerned noise consultant does not set out practical experience in Technical Note on LFN.
 - Troubled omission of correct frame of reference in use of term dB in Technical Note.
 - East Hants EHO recommendation to apply Criterion Curve not followed.
 - Applicant failed to provide analysis of Low Frequency Noise.
- Note recent changes to application, when will new documents be posted in WCC web site so I can comment. Note EHDC allowing people to comment, is this because amendments only relate to changes within East Hampshire?
- Importance of sustainable rural tourism explicitly emphasized in NPPF, Denmead Neighbourhood plan and Winchester District Plan. East Hants also committed to tourism especially in connection with SDNP.
- Range of tourism accommodation available from Shrover Hall, to converted barns to shepherds' huts.
- Denmead ideal stop over location close to Winchester and as entry point to National Park. One days walk from Winchester.
- Proposal will be crippling; unlikely operators of tourist accommodation will return after 40yr operation of site.
- Impact on accommodation also felt by other local businesses that visitors use.
- Question how members can support such an impact on local economy and wellbeing of Denmead residents.

Letters in Support from the Public

First Consultation Response:

Twenty letters from twenty households. Main points summarised:

- Totally in favour.
- Understand local disruption during construction but then it ceases.
- A much-needed resource in area and nationally.
- Already have very unobtrusive solar farm at Day Lane.
- Important contribution to future energy needs.
- Excellent proposal, need more like this as soon as possible.
- Solar PV is highly effective and safe. Power is pollution free.
- Will contribute significantly to UK energy security and to meeting legally binding targets.
- Applicant has justified choice of this location.

Case No: 22/00447/FUL

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

- Need to share responsibility across district to accept solar schemes.
- Necessary to power high energy consumption of modern lifestyles.
- Solar is part of way forward, not whole answer but a necessary part.
- This ideal site.
- Relatively small area yet will provide power for large population.
- Whilst scheme will have impact on immediate locality, area already contains prominent electricity infrastructure.
- Must accept that scheme cannot be totally hidden and accept consequences.
- Economic and social benefits more than offset negative issues.
- Solar is less obtrusive than wind turbines and markedly less than pylons.
- Hampshire has low percentage of renewable when compared across UK.
- Sheep grazing could take place under panels.
- Will provide revenue for local farmer and local economy.
- Has all factors to make this a good choice of site.
- Scheme supports biodiversity on intensively farmed fields.

Second Consultation Response:

Thirty-nine letters from thirty-eight households. Main points summarised:

- Need such types of renewable energy to meet UK legal commitment to get to net zero.
- Effects of climate chaos already making themselves felt in UK.
- Need to stop using fossil fuels, as we are way off reduction targets.
- Fully support application to establish solar farm.
- Urgently need low-cost renewable energy to address climate emergency and deliver UK energy security.
- Revisions address previous concerns.
- No more impact on landscape of SDNP than current infrastructure.
- Will boost WCC goal of carbon neutrality by 2023.
- Impacts on environment low and not incompatible with biodiversity.
- Appearance of panels comparable to monocultures and polytunnels.
- No scarcity of agricultural land in UK so no impact on food production.
- Extensive worldwide experience of safely operating solar farms.
- Existing solar farms outside Alresford and along A34 are low impact and not caused fires or contamination.
- Cannot see how we will achieve a carbon neutral district without renewable developments like this.
- Suitable sites in very short supply.
- Site choice adjacent substation is sensible approach.
- Solar has important role on reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- Need more local power generation.
- Site screening will develop reducing any impact.
- Noted objections but believe developer has built in suitable mitigation to minimise impacts.
- Scheme with 40-year life offers valuable stop gap while other technologies brought forward.
- Accentuate every observation made in comments from April 2022.
- Since first submission, case for development has become overwhelming due to international energy issues

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

- This a sunny region of UK.
- Rooftop solar cannot meet the demand.

Third Consultation Response:

Sixty-eight letters from sixty-six households. Main points summarised:

- Totally in favour, landscape design seems well considered to moderate impact on surroundings.
- Will create source of energy without carbon emissions.
- Climate crisis having serious impact everywhere. Requirement we do what we can to address this.
- Since application first submitted National Energy Security Plan (Powering up Britain) published.
- In last 4 years total of 7.2MW of roof top solar created in Winchester District. This application for 50MW deliverable within 18 months.
- We need both rooftop and solar farms.
- Case for solar overwhelming, only temporary structures, will be decommissioned at end and land returned to farming with soil in better health.
- Developer has responded to all consultees by amending plans. Extent of changes are considerable.
- Presence of electrical infrastructure in area one reason why this suitable for solar farm.
- Modest sized area, largely grade 3b agricultural land does not represent significant loss of agricultural output for nation. Yet can make very significant contribution to renewable energy and through impressive BNG figure.
- Need more renewables to meet climate change emergency.
- From experience know any noise will be minimal.
- There is worldwide experience of operating solar panels safely.
- Any impacts localised.
- Need to significantly increase pace of renewable developments.
- Winchester District currently falling short of contribution it should be making.
- Key challenge is finding suitable sites and projects that are viable.
- This scheme will make meaningful contribution with minimal detrimental impact.
- Solar is cheapest source of electricity.
- Accept that National Park issue has some weight, but main point is protection of land within NP. This site not protected.
- Solar provides valuable stop gap whilst other technologies brought forward.
- Wish to see Winchester District become leader in local renewable generation.
- Winchester experiencing unprecedented flooding and heat wave means more urgent action required to transition to cleaner energy sources.
- Unfortunate BESS removed.
- Hopeful Mabbetts review reassured local residents.
- Application must have specific conditions on screening and effective monitoring and replacement where necessary. Trees should be planted at start and not end of development. Tree size and watering important.
- Question SDNP view that this an open arable landscape. This view does not equate with actual view and noise from 400kV substation and 45m pylons.
- Government commitment to 5-fold increase in solar by 2035.

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

Letters neither Objecting nor Supporting from the Public

First Consultation Response

One letter received. Main points summarised:

- Concern is height of panels. Seek assurance screening will consist of mature trees/hedges that can screen panels within 12 months.

Relevant Government Planning Policy and Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework 2023

- Section 2 Achieving Sustainable development
- Section 4 Decision Making
- Section 6 Building a Strong, Competitive Economy
- Section 9 Promoting Sustainable Development
- Section 10 Supporting High Quality Communications
- Section 14 Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
- Section 15 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
- Section 16 Conserving and enhancing the historic environment
- Annex 2 Glossary

National Planning Practice Guidance

- Biodiversity Net Gain
- Brownfield land register
- Climate Change
- Consultation and pre-decision matters
- Environmental Impact Assessment
- Flood Risk and Coastal Change
- Historic Environment
- Light Pollution
- Natural Environment
- Noise
- Planning Obligations
- Renewable and Local Carbon Energy
- Travel Plans, Transport Assessments and Statements
- Use of Planning Conditions
- Water Supply, Wastewater and Water Quality

National Policy Statements

National Policy Statement: Overarching NPS for Energy (EN-1) (January 2024)

National Policy Statement: Renewable Energy Infrastructure EN-3 (January 2024)

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

Relevant Local Development Plan Policies and Guidance

Winchester Local Plan Part 1 – Joint Core Strategy (LPP1)

- DS1 Development Strategy and Principles
- MTRA1 Development Strategy Market Towns and Rural Areas
- MTRA4 Development in the Countryside
- CP10 Transport
- CP12 Renewable and Decentralised Energy
- CP13 High Quality Design
- CP14 The Effective Use of Land
- CP15 Green Infrastructure
- CP16 Biodiversity
- CP17 Flooding Flood Risk and the Water Environment
- CP19 South Downs National Park
- CP20 Heritage and Landscape Character
- CP21 Infrastructure and Community Benefit

Winchester District Local Plan Part 2 – Development Management and Site Allocations

- DM1 Location of New Development
- DM15 Local Distinctiveness
- DM16 Site Design Criteria
- DM17 Site Development Principles
- DM18 Access and Parking
- DM19 Development and Pollution
- DM20 Development and Noise
- DM21 Contaminated Land
- DM22 Telecommunications, Services and Utilities
- DM23 Rural Character
- DM24 Special Trees, Important Hedgerows and Ancient Woodlands
- DM25 Historic Parks and Gardens
- DM26 Archaeology
- DM29 Heritage Assets
- DM31 Locally Listed Heritage Assets

Denmead Neighbourhood Plan 2011-2031. (made April 2015)

- Policy 1 – (A Spatial Plan for the Parish)

Other relevant documents

Supplementary Planning Document

- Climate Emergency Declaration carbon neutrality action plan 2020-2030
- Statement of Community Involvement 2018 and 2020
- Landscape Character Assessment March 2004 and emerging LCA December 2021
- Biodiversity Action Plan 2021
- Historic England Guidance
- English Heritage: Conservation Principles Policies and Guidance 2008
- Historic England: The Setting of Heritage Assets: Good Practice Advice Planning Note 3 (2nd Edition) December 2017.

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

- Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: 4 Published 30 June 2020.
- Ancient Woodland, Ancient Trees and Veteran Trees: Advice for Making Planning Decisions (January 2022).

Planning Considerations

For the avoidance of any doubt, the impacts arising from any of the issues set out below are not only considered with regard to those elements of the scheme that are located within the WCC area, but where appropriate, they will be set in the context of the whole scheme and their impact on the surrounding area and properties. This will include the consideration of any potential impact or relevant planning considerations irrespective of the position of the district boundary. In making that assessment, it is acknowledged that elements of the proposal located in one district may have impacts that extend across the administrative boundary into the other district and vice versa. It is proposed this report has regard to the policies of East Hampshire as a material planning consideration and also those of the NPPF which together with the specific WCC policies will set the general policy framework for the consideration of any element of the development.

Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and paragraph 47 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2023) requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

For the purposes of the statutory test, it is necessary to consider all relevant policies of the Development Plan and determine whether the development accords with the Development Plan as a whole and, if there is a conflict with the plan as a whole, whether there are other material considerations which are of such weight that planning permission should nonetheless be granted.

In the following section, consideration will be given to whether the development accords with policy in principle before going on to consider the need for a general countryside location for the solar arrays before then reviewing the process through which the applicant identified this specific site. This will be followed with an assessment against individual issues.

LPP1 policy DS1 (Development Strategy and Principles) sets an overview that all development should seek to comply with, reflecting the fundamental principles of sustainability, positive engagement, and a positive outcome. It is considered by officers that the application under consideration has the potential to achieve all these objectives providing it complies with other more issue specific local plan policies.

Policy CP12 (Renewable and Decentralised Energy) offers general support to the generation of renewable energy. Whilst the policy does not specifically refer to solar farms, they are embraced within the policy under the generic term “development of large-scale renewable energy developments”. Seven criteria are outlined that need to be considered when applying this policy. Those specifically relevant to this application are:

- impact on areas designated for their local, national or international importance, such as Gaps and the South Downs National Park, conservation areas and heritage assets, including their setting;

Case No: 22/00447/FUL

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

- contributions to national, regional & sub-regional renewable energy targets and CO2 savings;
- potential to integrate with new or existing development whilst avoiding harm to existing development and communities;
- benefits to host communities and opportunities for environmental enhancement;
- proximity to biomass plants, fuel sources and transport links;
- connection to the electricity network;
- effect on the landscape and surrounding location.

All these criteria will be considered below.

Regarding national policy, whilst this application does not (in total) cross the 50MW threshold that would classify the application as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project, both EN-1 and EN-3 are material considerations. The National Policy Statement (NPS) for Energy (EN-1) indicates that the Government is committed to meeting a legally binding target to cut greenhouse gas emissions by at least 80% by 2050, compared to 1990 levels. As a general statement of the Government's objective, this is considered material notwithstanding it is contained within an NPS. EN-1 also states that wind and solar are likely to be the main contributors to achieving a secure, reliable affordable & net zero electricity system by 2050. EN-3 the NPS for Renewable Energy Infrastructure, includes a specific section on Solar Photovoltaic Generation. It sets out a series of issues that should be considered. These issues will be addressed below. As a general statement of the Government's objective, these targets are considered material, notwithstanding they are contained within an NPS. EN-1 also states that wind and solar are likely to be the main contributors to achieving a secure, reliable affordable & net zero electricity system by 2050.

The Climate Change Act commits the UK government by law to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by at least 100% of 1990 levels (net zero) by 2050. In 2021 the Government committed to decarbonising the UK electricity system by 2035 in advance of the more general target date outlined above. Increasingly, the need for a move away from fossil fuel and towards renewable sources of energy production is supported for reasons of energy security and reduced greenhouse gas emissions. This position has only been strengthened by more recent government publications and guidance such as the Energy White Paper (Powering our Net Zero Future) and the Energy Security Strategy that refers to a fivefold increase in solar, which must rely heavily on ground mounted provision.

The NPPF contains sections that are considered as supportive of solar farm schemes and sections that indicate caution in terms of the need to consider the impacts on the natural and manmade environments. Chapters 6 (Building a Strong, competitive Economy), Chapter 14 (Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change), Chapter 15 (Conserving & Enhancing the Natural environment) and Chapter 16 (Conserving & Enhancing the Historic Environment) all contain relevant factors (for and against) to be taken into consideration.

This theme of competing factors is set out in Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) on Renewable and Low Carbon Energy paragraph 013 (March 2015) and in the 25 March 2015 statement from the then Secretary of State. When referring to the provision of solar farms, the PPG sets out 9 matters for consideration. These are:

Case No: 22/00447/FUL

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

- encouraging the effective use of land by focussing 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.

The March 2015 statement from the then Secretary of State includes the following:

“The National Planning Policy Framework includes strong protections for the natural and historic environment and is quite clear that local councils when considering development proposals should take into account the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land. Yet, some local communities have genuine concerns that when it comes to solar farms insufficient weight has been given to these protections and the benefits of high-quality agricultural land. As the solar strategy noted, public acceptability for solar energy is being eroded by the public response to large-scale solar farms which have sometimes been sited insensitively.

Meeting our energy goals should not be used to justify the wrong development in the wrong location and this includes the unnecessary use of high-quality agricultural land. Protecting the global environment is not an excuse to trash the local environment. When we published our new planning guidance in support of the Framework, we set out the particular factors relating to large scale ground mounted solar photovoltaic farms that a local council will need to consider. These include making effective use of previously developed land and, where a proposal involves agricultural land, being quite clear this is necessary and that poorer quality land is to be used in preference to land of a higher quality.

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

We are encouraged by the impact the guidance is having but do appreciate the continuing concerns, not least those raised in this House, about the unjustified use of high quality agricultural land. In light of these concerns we want it to be clear that any proposal for a solar farm involving the best and most versatile agricultural land would need to be justified by the most compelling evidence. Of course, planning is a quasi-judicial process, and every application needs to be considered on its individual merits, with due process, in light of the relevant material considerations”

In May 2024 the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero issued a statement entitled Solar and Protecting our Food Security and Best and Most Versatile (BMV) Land. This statement reinforced the need for the planning system to consider food production and protecting the best and most versatile land when considering planning applications for solar farms. This duty will be met within this assessment.

All the matters outlined in these documents will be considered in reaching any decision. The above does indicate that there is potential in principle for a solar farm to be supported subject to the consideration of more detailed policies.

Turning now to the question of whether a countryside location is justified, the application site lies within open countryside where LPP1 Policy MTRA4 states that development will be limited to a small number of categories. None of these categories explicitly refers to the provision of a solar farm, although the first category does refer to “development with an operational need for a countryside location, such as agriculture, horticulture or forestry”. The use of the words “such as” implies there are other activities beyond those listed, that could be consider for a countryside location if they can present an operational need. However, it should be noted that MTRA4 does include a final element that indicates even if a development proposal is acceptable under this policy, it should not cause harm to the character and landscape of the area or neighbouring uses or create inappropriate noise/light and traffic generation.

Alternatives to a countryside location such an installation on roofs or brown field land, are not considered to offer the applicant practical options. The extent of brown field land within the district is limited and under pressure for housing development. An expectation on the developer to co-ordinate sufficient roof area with the appropriate orientation and entering agreements with individual property owners is considered too onerous. Roof mounted solar panels can provide a useful contribution towards renewable energy generation and it does have a role to play, but this is likely to come forward as a result of individual initiatives and not at the scale that could substitute schemes of this size.

Reference has been made in the comments received, to the Denmead Neighbourhood Plan and to the land forming part of a strategic gap. Furthermore, that as the Plan makes no reference to a solar farm in this location the presumption should be to reject the scheme. The site does not form part of a designated strategic gap which is identified in the development plan. Regarding the interpretation that should be given to the silence of the Plan on solar farm developments, it is not correct that the inference should be to reject any application which relates to a form of development not referred to in the plan. Policy 1 within the Neighbourhood Plan does indicate that development outside the settlement boundary and within the countryside should “conform to development policies in respect of the control of development in the countryside”. This is a reference to the polices contained within the WCC local plan. This requirement will be meet within the report.

Case No: 22/00447/FUL

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

When considering the above, this solar farm is considered to have an operational need that justifies a countryside location under the first part of policy MTRA4, subject to the acceptability of the scheme in the context of further policies and the application of the final part of MTRA4.

In conclusion, at both the national and local level, there is support in principle for renewable energy proposals in the countryside, but a recognition that this support is not unqualified and must take account of the wider impacts of any scheme on the local environment. Every application needs to be considered on its individual circumstances and merits, in the light of the relevant development plan policies and other material considerations that apply.

The remaining sections in this assessment will firstly consider the background behind the selection of this site and then move on to consider the individual circumstances of this development and how these relate to the development plan and other policies, as well as all other material considerations to which the application gives rise.

Following an assessment of all relevant matters, a planning balance and conclusion is reached at the end of the report.

Assessment under 2017 EIA Regulations.

The applicant submitted a screening request in May 2021. The development does not fall under Schedule I of the 2017 Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations, but the developments does fall within Schedule II of the regulations. Having assessed the implications and potential impacts likely to arise from the development, an opinion was issued in June 2021 that a limited Environmental Impact Statement was required as part of any submission. An EIA Scoping Opinion Request was made to the Council in August 2021. A response was issued in August 2021. The same conclusion regarding the need for an EIS was reached upon submission of the application.

As the application has been amended during its consideration, any changes that reflected on the submitted parts of the Environment Statement have also been updated. These revisions are not considered to have required a second screening or scoping of the proposal.

Factors Influencing Site Selection and the Consideration of Alternatives

On the basis that a requirement for a countryside location is accepted under the first part of MTRA4, it is appropriate to consider the factors that influence the choice of this specific site within the countryside. National Policy Statement EN-3 on Renewable Energy Infrastructure and Paragraph 013 of the PPG on Renewable and low carbon energy offer a range of factors that would influence site selection. These include:

- South facing aspect and site topography.
- Network connection.
- Proximity of site to dwellings.
- Agricultural land classification and land type
- Continued agricultural use and/or encourages biodiversity.
- Temporary in duration.
- Glint and glare

Case No: 22/00447/FUL

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

- Protection of heritage assets
- Accessibility.
- Public Rights of Way.
- Security and lighting.
- Mitigating Landscape and visual impacts by screen planting.
- Energy generation potential

All of the above criteria are relevant and will be considered in the planning assessment. The applicant has submitted information relating to the site selection procedure that was followed and which resulted in them choosing this site. This is set out in the Design and Access Statement and in the supporting letter dated 5 October 2023.

The applicant proposes to connect to the transmission system rather than the distribution network. This means focusing on available connection points at National Grid substations and not to the Distribution Network. The applicant engaged with National Grid to identify sub stations within England and Wales which has spare capacity and Lovedean was identified with an available connection and capacity to handle the power generated by the scheme. An agreement to make the connection has been signed with the National Grid. Based on this agreement a search area of 5km was then used to look for a suitable site using the following factors:

- As short a cable route as possible.
- Consideration of environmental and planning constraints.
- Consideration of geographical and topographical features.
- Exclusion of land within National Park.
- Desire to keep away from the built-up areas of Waterlooville, Horndean and Denmead.
- Desire to avoid agricultural land with small fields or land in recreational use such as golf courses.
- Engagement with landowners within the 5km search area

Having applied the above site selection criteria, the application site has come forward with a willing landowner.

Members will note the comment from the Sustainability Officer who indicates that connection points to the grid are limited in the district. The implication of this comment is that where available connections exist, then they need to be subject of careful consideration. It is acknowledged that connections to a National Grid substation will restrict the opportunities to make a connection. The desire not to encroach into the National Park precludes searching the land to the north, east and west. Keeping away from residential areas also excludes a large part of any search area to the south and east. Moving south, would also enter the strategic gap between Denmead and Waterlooville. South would also bring any site closer to the existing Southwick solar farm and closer to the viewpoints on Portsdown Hill. Regarding the issue of agricultural land quality, this is considered in more detail below, but it can be noted that land within the Winchester part of the application site is grade 3b which is not one of the categories considered to be best and most versatile and which should be avoided for the provision of a solar farm. A solar farm can therefore be acceptable on this type of ground subject to other considerations. Whilst the agricultural use would cease for the life of the solar farm, it would result in biodiversity benefits which are outlined in more detail below.

Case No: 22/00447/FUL

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

The level of detail applied to the consideration of alternatives is a matter that has featured in a number of recent planning appeal decisions including a recent High Court case (Bramley Solar Farm Residents Group v SSLUHC & Ors [2023]). This confirmed that a strict sequential test is not required but that a review of alternatives is appropriate. In conclusion, it is considered that the applicant has undertaken a pragmatic and proportionate review and explanation of the factors that have resulted in the selection of this site. This is accepted by the local planning authority as a satisfactory exercise.

Impact on character and appearance of area, including impacts on recreational users of surrounding area.

LPP1 policy MTRA4 (Development in the Countryside) seeks to limit development outside built-up areas. Of the four types of development that are envisaged as potentially being acceptable in the countryside, the only one that could apply to a solar farm is that they have an operational need for such a location based on the extent of the land take required. However, that situation must still meet the other more general tests in terms of not causing harm to the character and landscape of the area or neighbouring uses or create inappropriate noise/light and traffic generation. Moreover, other development plan policies also need to be considered when addressing these impacts. LPP2 policy DM23 (Rural Character) supports development which does not have an unacceptable effect on rural character as a result of visual intrusion, the introduction of incongruous features, destruction of locally characteristic rural assets or by impacts on tranquillity. The policy then lists a number of factors to be taken into account when considering the effect on rural character and sense of place.

This includes keeping visual intrusion to a minimum, not having an unacceptable impact on tranquillity, not detracting from the enjoyment of the countryside from public rights of way and assessing the type and number of vehicles associated with any development. LPP1 policy CP20 (Heritage and Landscape Character) seeks to link the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment with the protection and enhancement of landscape and heritage assets and their settings. Landscape impacts do not stop at the district boundary and The East Hampshire Local Plan has similar protective policies whilst the NPPF provides an overarching layer of protection in Section 15.

Within the Winchester Landscape Character Classification, the site forms part of the Hambledon Downs Landscape Character Area. This is an extensive area extending from Soberton in the west through to the district boundary and Horndean in the east (approximately 8km) and from Denmead in the south to Combe in the north (approximately 9km). The site lies within the Chalk and Clay Farmland Landscape Type sub area. The key characteristics of value and sensitivities for this area are identified as:

- Tranquil rural nature with no major routes passing through the area (the main one being the B2150). Routes consist of an intricate network of ancient minor roads, lanes and drove roads. These are mainly winding and narrow with some high hedgerows.
- Some long views from higher ground towards Portsdown ridge and occasional panoramic views south and north towards the South Downs.

The key issues that are occurring in the area are identified as the following:

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

- Declining farmland birds, due to historic loss of downland and more recent changes in agricultural practices, particularly winter cropping.
- Subdivision of large fields by fencing
- Harsh rectilinear shape of some woodland planting
- Impact of horsiculture around Anthill, including subdivision of fields to form paddocks
- Risk of continued intensive farming practices causing chemical pollution to chalk aquifer and downstream water courses
- Risk of continued ploughing of steep downland slopes causing further loss of topsoil and consequent siltation of downstream water courses
- Impact of commuter traffic on the B2150 and the network of narrow lanes
- Presence of large electricity substation in eastern section with high incidence of pylons; both causing visual and aural intrusion and threat of additions to this infrastructure.
- Ash dieback prevalent in the area which will continue to result in loss of tree cover.
- Pressure for urban fringe related activities and recreational pressures.

The application site is considered to exhibit some, but not all of the key issues listed above.

The application is supported by several documents including a revised Landscape Design Evolution (Chapter 6 in the EIS).

The following points are taken from these documents:

- November 2022 revision is complete replacement of Feb 2022 chapter.
- Landscape and visual effects assessed separately. Landscape are physical changes to character of landscape. Visual effects relate to those on specific views or on visual amenity more generally.
- Both assessments followed recognised processes.
- Have considered effects on landscape character designations, heritage designations, residential receptors, recreational receptors & road receptors.
- Study area identified at 2km with further review out to 6km.
- LVIA taken precautionary approach.
- Considered effects during construction year 1 and year 15.
- Also considered cumulative effects.
- Have used 23 viewpoints to assess effect on range of receptors.
- Also supplied some year 5 photomontages to show progression of growth of landscape mitigation.
- Site does not carry any landscape designations.
- Looked at range of receptors (residential, heritage assets, recreational & roads).
- Landscape mitigation to include retention, protection, enhancement of existing trees, hedgerows and woodlands. New tree belts and hedgerows.
- New area of scrub planting under 400kV pylons to provide visual filter where trees and woodlands cannot be planted.
- Provision of scattered planting to break up mass of proposal.
- Provide areas of more mature vegetation to provide additional short-term filtering of proposals from selected nearby residential properties.

Case No: 22/00447/FUL

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

- Around site boundary margins create area of species rich grassland.
- Under panels create species rich grassland suitable for grazing by livestock.
- Existing and proposed native hedgerows managed to 3m+.
- Ongoing landscape management of planting during life of solar farm.
- No landscape mitigation proposed outside site boundaries.
- Considered impact on both Landscape Character and on Visual Amenity.
- Projected effect on Hambledon Down LCA year 1 moderate to minor and year 15 moderate to minor. Overall, significant effect to landscape character. Some improvement over time reducing to no significant effect in longer term.
- Would introduce manmade feature into predominantly agricultural landscape. When considered in context of electricity infrastructure already in area, predicted proposal would not give rise to any significant effects.
- No significant effects on surrounding LCAs including those within SDNP.
- Some inevitable effect on visual amenity during construction and early years on number of residential properties.
- Effect on residential and recreational receptors (roads & FPs) significant in year 1 to not significant by year 15.
- No significant effects on either landscape character or visual amenity in relation to National Park, on its special qualities or setting.
- Effect on SDNP rated as not significant years 1 & 15.
- Conclusion is any effects on landscape character or visual amenity confined to surrounding local areas reducing over time due to retention of existing vegetation and proposed mitigation planting.
- Localised and limited effects. Development can be accommodated without undue harm to character and visual amenity.
- Have considered cumulative and in-combination effects of proposal and Aquind scheme and Statkraft Battery Storage proposal.

To further assist the assessment the applicant has submitted a number of photomontages showing the site at years one, ten and fifteen. Whilst these show the views to be softened over time, from certain locations, sections of the panels would still be in view after year fifteen and the overall landscape would change.

The scheme has attracted a large number of objections with regard to its impact on landscape character and on visual amenity. The Service Lead – Natural Environment (Landscape) and The South Downs National Park Authority have also objected. The basis for these objections are set out in detail above in the representations section. Both of these consultees have maintained an objection throughout the determination of this application. The potential impact on the National Park is considered separately below and accordingly, the remainder of this section will focus on the potential impact on the area outside of the National Park.

The site is not a designated landscape, nor is it considered to be a valued landscape in the meaning set out in NPPF para 180 (a). However, it is acknowledged that it does have value in terms of its character and appearance. All countryside has character traits that need to be considered when making a decision.

Policy DM23 (Rural Character) sets out 6 factors to consider when assessing the effect of any development on rural character. The sixth factor relates to domestic extensions

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

which does not apply in this instance. The following considers each factor in turn setting out the policy reference and then responding to it:

1. *Visual intrusion and the effect on the setting of settlements, key features in landscape or on heritage assets should be minimised and cumulative impacts considered:*

The extent of the application site and its segmented nature results in a variation in the level of impact that will be experienced both in terms of the impact on landscape character and the effect on visual amenity. An additional factor is the applicant's approach to defining the red line to the northern part of the application site where the red line does not follow the field boundary feature, but is set back inside the field. This applies with regard to Areas 1, 2 & 3, which means they share a distinct issue that justifies them being treated together for the purposes of this report. Areas 4, 5, 6 & 7 will then be considered.

Views from the north into Areas 1 & 2 are currently limited by the presence of the existing field hedgerow boundaries and by Mill Copse. The Monarch Way footpath does bring people closer to the site as it traverses the land between Denmead Hill Lane and Broadway Lane. The majority of Area 1 is separated from Old Mill Lane by an open field. Limited views are possible into the site over the intervening hedgerows. The eastern half of Area 2 is more open to views from Broadway Lane and from a section of the Monarch Way reflecting the changes in ground level. Without the hedgerows on the boundaries to the fields containing Areas 1 & 2, the proposed fence line and the PV arrays would be exposed.

With regard to Area 3, the majority of views of the site from Old Mill Lane are screened by the roadside hedge. Without this hedgerow, the fence line and panels that would be positioned some 14m in from the roadside boundary, would be open to view. The plans show that this roadside hedgerow is not within the red line to the application site.

On all the red line application site boundaries that face north, west and east for Areas 1 & 2 and on the western facing boundary of Area 3, significant planting is shown with new hedgerows or tree belts to be established inside the existing field boundaries referred to above. However, it is acknowledged that these would take approximately 10 years to form effective screen barriers. It also has to be acknowledged that the action of setting the red line application site boundaries inside the field boundaries in the northern part of the site does mean that those features which are presently screening a large part of the site in Areas 1, 2 & 3 cannot be conditioned for retention at the present time. The application does in essence seek to establish a second line of screening behind the primary field boundaries. In the event that the nearby Aquind scheme is approved and implemented, the existing field boundaries would be protected. That would result in the establishment of a double set of screening features. However, if the Aquind scheme does not go ahead, the existing field boundaries, would be unsecured and therefore vulnerable to alteration or loss and although there is no specific reason to believe this would take place, it could not be prevented. Potentially, their removal or reduction in height could open up views into the areas of panel for those years until the new line of planting behind them becomes established. However, to address the general concern, it is sensible to apply a worst-case scenario of assuming loss of existing boundary features when considering the potential visual impact on the surrounding area when considering the potential impact of the development within Areas 1, 2 & 3.

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

When reviewing the potential impact of the fence and panels to views from the north into Areas 1 & 2, the separation distance from public vantage points on Denmead Hill Lane varies from 110m to 200m. This means that even if the hedgerows were removed the degree of impact is not considered to be significant. Whilst the Monarch Way does bring people closer to the site as it strikes off in a southeasterly direction from Denmead Hill Lane, the presence of Mill Copse and the fact that the area of panels has been drawn back from the NE corner of Area 2, limits any line of sight and a distance of approximately 200m is still maintained. This creates an adequate separation distance to prevent significant harm

Whilst the western boundary of Area 1 is also not within the applicant's control, the separation distance from any vantage point on Old Mill Lane increases from zero at the field entrance, to over 200m further south down the lane. This creates an adequate separation distance to prevent significant harm. The Eastern boundary of Area 2 is also outside the applicant's control. Mitigating factors include that this hedgerow lies in a depression so its effectiveness is reduced in comparison to vantage points on the Monarch's Way and Broadway Lane and that the area of panels has been drawn back into the site, maintaining a 200m separation distance. The proposal for new planting abutting the eastern facing security fence line to Area 2 is the location that will provide the most effective screening once it is established. Any potential visual impact that would exist is also considered to be localised to the immediate area.

Regarding Area 3, the fence and panels lie 14m inside the field from the road. This means if the roadside hedge was removed then the fence and panels would form part of the field of vision of someone on that section of Old Mill Lane and any impact would be localised. A viewpoint from a PRoW crossing an arable field to the west of Old Mill Lane that lies within the National Park has been included, but with the separation distance, the presence of the solar panels in Area 3 are not considered to have a harmful impact on the outlook from that position.

There is no reason to believe that the existing field boundary features which judging by their condition, have evidently been in place for some considerable time, will be removed. Regarding the field boundary feature to the north of Areas 1 & 2 this also represents a change of land ownership. Some feature to mark this change is therefore likely to be retained. Concerning Area 3, the hedge forms a boundary with the public highway and again some feature to define this separation is likely to be retained. Accordingly, the fact that the field boundary features with regard to Areas 1, 2 and 3 are not part of the application site is not considered critical.

Turning to the remaining Areas that form the application site, the part of Area 4 that lies within WCC is in an open field with views from both of the PRoW that run to the north (35-40m away) and to the south. The plans show the PRoW to the south running through a 20m wide gap. There are no existing hedgerows that filter any line of sight. Area 4 pays no regard to the district boundary and would be viewed on the ground as a single large expanse of solar arrays. The submitted plans show that the Area will be surrounded by a new hedgerow with further tree planting to the west. The west facing section of hedgerow would be planted using mature stock. A stand-off from an existing hedgerow ranging from 34-80m in depth would be created to the north. This would be sown with a meadow grass mix. To the south the majority of the Area 4 would open out onto an open field that would run down to Crossways Road. Both PRoW offer views south towards Portsdown Hill. These would be retained although the arrays would be

Case No: 22/00447/FUL

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

present in the foreground for one of the PRoW.

Area 5 lies to the east of Little Denmead Farm and north of Crossways Road. It would be in view from FP Horndean No 28 and from the road particularly where there is no roadside hedge which is the majority of the section between Holme Cottage and Little Denmead Farm (approximately 225m). At present, the absence of a hedge on the north side of the road opens up extensive views across the arable field. Area 5 is 16m into the field from the roadside boundary. The plans show an intention to use mature stock to plant the hedgerow on the southern and western side of Area 5. The southern section of planting will be set back from the roadside boundary. This is intended to retain the open aspect of the road.

Area 6 lies south of Crossways Road and east of Denmead Farm. It occupies the majority of an open field. There are views through the existing roadside hedge to Crossways Road particularly where gaps exist. There are no views from Old Mill Lane except for a very fleeting view through the group of buildings that forms Denmead Farm. The plans show new hedge planting in the gaps and individual tree planting along the northern boundary to reinforce the existing hedgerow where the section adjoining the PV arrays does lie within the application site. A woodland band 10m wide would be created down the western boundary of the application site. A new scrub belt would be planted inside the eastern field hedgerow.

The limited views from Crossways Road are a result of the screening provided by the existing hedge. It is therefore appropriate for this feature to be retained together with the existing hedge on the eastern boundary which is secured by condition 24. The gap planting will repair the breaks in this hedgerow.

Area 7 occupies the majority of a large arable field. It lies south of Area 6 and is approximately 200m east of Old Mill Lane. There are no views from any of the surrounding roads except for the very short view through the driveway entrance and across the front garden of Barn Cottage. The main view into the site would be from PRoW Horndean No 13 which runs south of the application site on the northern edge of the adjoining field. The field boundary is a post and wire fence. The view would continue for the section of the path east and west of the application site. The view northward is across the open field broken only by the vegetation growing in the large pit that is located in a south-central position in the field. The proposed security fence line is to be located 30m into the field, so it does not dominate the PRoW. In recognition of the open nature of the views northward, the applicant is proposing to use mature stock to plant a new hedgerow adjacent the fence line. A further action is to create two new hedgerows to create a visual barrier to the view northward. A new east-west hedgerow would be planted just south of the pit approximately 180m north of the PRoW and is intended to reflect the presence of a hedge in this approximate position before it was removed. A further section of new hedgerow would link the new east-west hedgerow with the new fence line hedgerow. Further woodland planting would take place on the southern, western and northwest sides of the pit linking the existing pit vegetation to the new east-west hedgerow and the new hedgerow that will be planted on the western site boundary. New hedgerows will also be planted on the field side of the existing northern and eastern field hedgerows.

It is accepted that there will be a change to landscape character and visual amenity in certain part of the site. This is acknowledged in the applicant's viewpoint assessment where significant effects would result in views from PRoW and from Crossways Road.

Case No: 22/00447/FUL

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

However, these are considered to be localised and the combination of mitigation through planting including the use of mature stock and/or the separation distance from public vantage points means that any impact would be reduced over time as the planting established.

2. Physical impacts: The scheme would see the installation of a number of roadways, solar array frames and panels, container type structures on plinths/slabs and large sections of security fencing. Excluding the removal of a small section of hedgerow to create space for the internal roadway between Areas 6 & 7 and small sections to thread the security fencing between these two Areas, the proposal does not require the removal of any other vegetation to be implemented. The scheme would see the introduction of new hedgerows on the outside of the security fencing to define the area of panels in what are presently open fields. These will dramatically change views from the PRow (which cross the application land) within the wider landscape from what is presently a uniform cultivated expansive area to one that is more contained and fragmented. However, this will only be for the temporary life of the scheme. The majority of the new planting is focused on the perimeter. As this is reinforcing existing vegetation, it is not considered to change the character of the area in any significant way. It is however unavoidable that the landscape character will change particularly during the operational life of the solar farm with the introduction of the planting around the fenced off areas containing the solar arrays. This concern over the change in character forms part of the objection raised by the landscape officer.

3. Tranquillity: This factor refers to the introduction of lighting, sources or activities which could affect the quiet nature of the environment. No lighting is proposed for the development beyond limited lights that would be restricted to use only in emergencies. Noise is considered elsewhere but generally is considered acceptable from a rural tranquillity perspective. Tranquillity is also considered in the context of the enjoyment that a person would experience of walking through open and undeveloped countryside. It is acknowledged elsewhere in this report that the views and experience of users of the surrounding area and PRows will change, but that has to be balanced against the reinforcement of existing vegetation and the increase in overall habitat through new areas of hedgerow and woodlands. These actions are likely to enhance the overall biodiversity of the area which will attract more wildlife, thereby contributing to the enjoyment of the countryside.

4. The Development should not detract from the enjoyment of the countryside:

Construction activity will be evident particularly to people using the PRow network that crosses or runs adjacent to the site. The applicant has committed to keeping the network open during construction. Activity in the fields in terms of the presence of vehicles, equipment or people will be more intense than if the land remained in agricultural use but this will only be for the 7-month construction period. Conditions are proposed to minimise any impact on walkers. The benefit of walkers is that they can soon separate themselves from any construction activity by moving out of the site. Once the construction phase is completed, the proposal does not include any activity or moving parts that may attract attention, and due to the static nature of the use it is not considered that significant noise is generated to result in harm to the enjoyment of the countryside. Any impacts that may occur to people using those PRow that cross the application site would only be of a short duration. Visits made by technical staff are infrequent during the operation of the scheme and are not considered to disrupt the enjoyment of the countryside by others.

Case No: 22/00447/FUL

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

The lengths of PRow that run through the WCC part of the site are limited. Horndean No.4 hugs the hedgerow to the north of Area 4 from Broadway Lane through to Little Denmead Farm. A section of this PRow approximately 80m in length runs to the north of Area 4. An open meadow grassland gap of 40m would be created between the PRow and the fencing around Area 4. To the west of this section of the PRow, the plans show an open area of meadow grassland with individual trees. In this area, the distance from the PRow to Area 5 to the south is approximately 110m. Both offsets provide for the retention of long-distance views. A section of PRow Horndean No.28 runs between Areas 4 & 5 in a 20m wide gap. However, this is limited to a distance of 80m along a PRow with a total length of 650m between Anmore Lane and Little Denmead Farm. West of this corridor, the open ground to either side of the PRow opens out for the remaining 120m, although this does not offer the full open views to the south that currently exist. However, when it is considered that a 400m section of this PRow that lies to the east will retain the full open view to the south, then the change in character to this western section is not considered to create an adverse impact on the enjoyment of walkers. Horndean FP No.13 runs in an east-west orientation south of the application site. A revision to the layout has seen the fence line and panels set back 30m from this path. When walking onto the PRow from Old Mill Lane the existing view to the north is across a rising open arable field with the trees in the former pit providing the only relief. This would change. The proposal would see new planting including the creation of a visual barrier across the southern part of Area 7. The proposal would also include the creation of a permissive footpath linking FP13 to FP 28. This will improve general accessibility for walkers in the area. Whilst there are positive and negative impacts on the enjoyment of the countryside associated with the proposal, on balance the outcome is considered by officers to be neutral.

5.Traffic levels should not result in harm to rural character. The construction phase will see the largest number of traffic movements associated with the development. These will be restricted to an agreed route on the main roads. In the immediate locality of the access, Banksmen will be used and whilst their main concern will be securing safe traffic movements their actions should also help protect rural character through the controlled management of construction vehicles in the area. The transhipment of material around to Areas 1, 2 and 3 will be by tractor and trailer units limited to an average of 2 movements per day. Employees would be moved by minibus. At this level, it is not anticipated that harm to the rural character would result. For the majority of the life of the site, only occasional maintenance visits are anticipated. In the operational phase, traffic generation will be acceptable and would have no negative impact on rural character. Concerns on traffic levels have been raised by the South Downs National Park Authority, this is considered within the relevant section of the report.

It is accepted that the development would change the character of the site and its immediate area and by implication its contribution to the local landscape. The applicant is seeking to soften the visual impacts by the provision of an extensive planting scheme which has been added to at each stage in the revision of the application. Whilst the generally accepted approach of planting new hedgerows on the outside of the security fencing is present in this scheme, the concept adopted has been to reinforce perimeter features. This has the benefit of enhancing existing features and reinforcing the linkages between them from both a landscape and biodiversity perspective. It is also anticipated that much of this reinforcement will remain after the solar farm is decommissioned

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

thereby providing a long-term landscape benefit. Notwithstanding the above, the establishment of the proposed planting will take a number of years to become effective. Even after establishment, it is likely that some degree of views of the panels and other facilities will remain. This will be intermittent localised and limited in duration. Nevertheless, the change to landscape character will be evident from day one and would remain throughout the life of the scheme.

In conclusion, the potential impact on landscape character and on visual impact has attracted objections from members of the public, from CPRE, from the WCC Landscape Officer and from the SDNP. The East Hampshire Landscape Officer does not object to the proposal. Any impact is considered to be localised in extent. In its early years before the landscape planting becomes established the scheme would have an adverse impact on landscape character in terms of impacting on the fundamental characteristics that make up the area. Even as the planting becomes established, a degree of impact will remain. The visual impact which is how the landscape is viewed and felt by people would also be impacted particularly for those people using the PRoW that would now run between the fenced off areas. This section most affected is limited in length. The change for walkers is from an open arable landscape to one that is more enclosed by the presence of the security fencing but with screen vegetation, tree planting and enhanced biodiversity.

When considering the harm prior to the establishment of strategic landscaping and mitigation, and the views of the proposal from public viewpoints which cannot be mitigated or removed in the long term, the proposal would not be in complete accordance with CP20 (Heritage and Landscape Character), LPP2 policy DM23 (Rural Character) and the final paragraph of policy MTRA4 (Development in the Countryside) of the LPP1. The degree of negative landscape impact is considered to have great weight in the decision-making process. With the landscape impact identified, it is important that this is taken into account alongside all relevant factors. A conclusion is reached on this in the Planning Balance section of this report.

Development affecting the South Downs National Park

Government policy relating to National Parks is set out in English National Parks and the Broads: UK Government Vision and Circular 2010 and The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) updated 2023. The Circular and NPPF confirm that National Parks have the highest status of protection, and the NPPF states at paragraph 182 that great weight should be given to “conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in national parks and that the conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage” are also important considerations and should be given great weight in National Parks.

Paragraph 182 also addresses the presence of development near a National Park when it says, ‘development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated area’.

At the local level, policy CP19 of the Local Plan Part 1 notes that:

“Development within and adjoining the South Downs National Park which would have a significant detrimental impact to the rural character and setting of settlements and the landscape should not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that the proposal is of
Case No: 22/00447/FUL

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

overriding national importance, or its impact can be mitigated”.

CP19 was written at a time when the Local Plan Part 1 was also the Development Plan for the South Downs National Park area, prior to the adoption of its own Local Plan in 2019. The first paragraph of the policy is therefore broad and relates to developments within the National Park, however the aim of the policy is to ensure that the statutory purposes of the National Park are not harmed, either directly or when taking account of its setting. A detailed assessment of the impact on the National Park and its setting has therefore been undertaken due to the proximity of the site to the boundary, and its location within the Park’s setting.

The Potential for development to have an impact on designated areas such as the National Park and its setting and the need for this to be recognised and taken into consideration is included within policy CP12 (Renewable and Decentralised Energy).

The National Park boundary runs up Old Mill Lane on the western side, along Denmead Hill Lane to the north and down Broadway Lane to the east before then running eastward on Day Lane. The result of this alignment leaves out of the National Park a block of land that includes the National Grid substation, the concentration of the supporting pylons and the land immediately to the north, west and south of the substation. No part of the application site lies within the National Park (NP), but Area 3 and the access to Areas 1 & 2 does lie adjacent to it. Other parts of the site (Area 1 and 2) lie within close proximity to the NP. The National Park boundary and its relationship to the application site is shown on the plan attached to this report as appendix B.

The National Park Authority (NPA) objected to the application when it was first submitted and despite the revisions, they have maintained this position throughout the re-consultation exercises. The NPA refer to concerns over the impact on the setting of the national park as a result of changes to the character of the area from its current condition of an open arable landscape to an enclosed landscape, on tranquillity and dark skies, on impacts during the construction phase and the impact on local roads. The NPA asks that if the application is supported then harm to the NP should be minimised, that there is a commitment to long term grazing under the panels, that the soil is tested to that the applicant shows that the land can be grazed and not cropped and that there is a restoration/decommissioning plan.

Accepting that the application site forms part of the area immediately adjacent to the National Park for the reasons set out in the previous section of this report, it is acknowledged that the proposal will change the character of that area to a degree. However, the extent of the impact will vary depending on whether the view is from the perimeter roads where the site has a minor contribution towards the overall view that includes land which forms part of the NP, or from the PRoW network that cross the site where the view out is more restricted in the direction of the NP.

Regarding the change to landscape character, when travelling along Old Mill Lane in the vicinity of Area 3, the peripheral view to the west will include land within the national park. However, the peripheral view to the east is terminated by the substantial roadside hedge. There are no views into Area 3 except over the break in the hedge that accommodated the access gates and one point where the hedge is weak. The proposal is to establish a
Case No: 22/00447/FUL

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

new hedge line behind the existing roadside hedge. The view over the gates is to be mitigated by the creation of a curved access road into the field running through a newly planted tree block. This means as the new planting grows, the line of sight will be obscured by the vegetation. The same approach will be adopted at the entrance to Area 1 & 2 further up the lane. When travelling along Denmead Hill Lane on foot or by vehicle with the NP to the north, only fleeting views of the interior of the site can be seen. Broadway Lane, which again is just outside the NP, does offer a partial view of the eastern section of Area 2. The set back of the panels in Area 2 mitigates this although in the early years they will be in view at a distance of approximately 240-260m. However, that view includes overhead power lines and a pylon. Furthermore, it is over the horse paddocks which as foreground do not make a positive contribution to landscape character. The view along Broadway Lane in the vicinity of the Monarch Way are confined by the trees to the west (although sparse ground vegetation does allow a view through the trees) and by the wall around Hinton Daubnay and its grounds to the east. The road forms the eastern boundary to the NP.

Whilst it has already been acknowledged that any countryside even that not carrying any designation has character, it must also be acknowledged that the application site forms part of a block of land area that was excluded from the National Park designation. The features within this area (namely the large Lovedean substation and overhead powerlines) must be acknowledged as a negative impact on landscape character and consequently adversely impacting on the existing approach to the NP. As noted elsewhere in this report, the impacts on users of the lanes arising from the development in Areas 1,2, 3, part 4, 5, 6 and 7 are limited. If any adverse impact results, it would be on people walking on parts of the PRow network that cross the site heading towards the NP. However, those routes do not offer extensive views out of the site and into the NP. It is suggested that the current feeling of wellbeing from walking the PRow which cross the site must be impacted to a degree by the nature of the surrounding agricultural activity both in terms of the mono-cropping and the management of the field boundary features which result in a lack of enjoyment for the walker in their surroundings. The feeling is one of wide spaces but little else in terms of enjoyment due to the features in the area. The current landscape is considered to predominantly result from modern agricultural practices and shows little regard to the historic field patterns of the past. This would be replaced with more of an enclosed landscape. Whilst the development would change the environment through which people walk, it will retain the distant views, and the biodiversity enhancement measures will create a richer biodiversity which should raise the enjoyment factor. The proposal to create a section of permissive footpath linking FP13 to FP28 creates a gain and would offer people an alternative to walking along Old Mill Lane.

Concerning the impact on tranquillity, the SDNP website section on landscape character has an assessment of tranquillity and dark skies. The tranquillity level is rated so that a higher score equates to greater tranquillity. The ratings do extend across the NP boundary to include the application site and offer the following results. The south and southwestern part of the site has a negative score (-11.11), but the central part of the site has a score of 2.10. The northern part of the site has a score of -5.40 improving to 0.93 to the west as it overlaps the NP boundary and to 63.00 in the NW corner again overlapping the NP boundary. The score generally improves in a north westerly direction reflecting the less developed area. Conversely, away to the south and east the tranquillity score is a negative figure. The overall trend is that the further away from roads or development then the higher the tranquillity score. This indicates that the application

Case No: 22/00447/FUL

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

site already has a low tranquillity score.

On the issue of dark skies, the National Park is a dedicated Dark Skies Reserve and an assessment on the potential risk of disrupting this status is required. The NP web site shows that the application site lies adjacent to a zone classified as a Transition Zone. Beyond this into the NP is a buffer zone with the core area north of the Clanfield to Hambledon Road. The development will not result in any source of light impacting on dark skies. It is not proposed to use lighting during the construction phase. In the operational phase the only light sources would be lights to be used in the case of an emergency/urgent work in the event of an equipment failure. This limitation will be secured by condition. The proposal is not considered to introduce any permanent light emissions and does not harm the National Park's status as a Dark Skies Reserve.

A concern was expressed by the NP Authority with regard to traffic impacts on the local road network. The designated traffic route towards the main access would be along Day Lane which is on the southern edge of the NP area. No part of the application site lies within the NP. A number of temporary passing places would be created to ease any passing problems on Day Lane. These temporary passing bays replicate measures proposed under the Aquind scheme. At the end of the construction phase, they would be removed and the ground reinstated. Traffic movements are proposed to bring materials and employees around from the main compound to Areas 1, 2 & 3 where the access points to these parts of the application site lie off Old Mill Lane. It is proposed to use tractor and trailer units for these movements which are projected to be at a level of 2 movements per day to each of the two work areas. Employees would be taken by minibus to the work sites. The route to these sites would involve the use of narrow lanes, essentially single vehicle widths that form the boundary to the national park. Traffic currently using the lanes is a mix of both general vehicles, vehicles associated with local businesses and farm related traffic. When considering the type of vehicle to be used, the low level of vehicle movements proposed and the use of marshals to help minimise the risk of any construction related traffic and any other general road users meeting on the single width lanes that might result in congestion or damage to the roadside banks, it is not considered that an unacceptable level of impact on the NP would occur. The applicant has also offered to undertake pre and post road surveys and then undertake repairs as necessary. The operational traffic movements of one periodic visit undertaken by a 4x4 is not envisaged to make any noticeable difference.

In conclusion, the NPA has objected to the proposal on a number of grounds. These have been reviewed in detail above. In this instance, a significant detrimental impact to the rural character and setting of the Park has not been identified, and secured mitigations play a role in reducing any impact further in the long term. The proposed conditions put forward by the NPA in the event the application is supported, are included except the need for a soil analysis which is considered unnecessary. Whilst the transition from an arable crop to grassland may take some time to accomplish, the periodic reviews of the LEMP can monitor that progression.

It is acknowledged that there is a degree of harm created by the change to landscape character that impacts on the setting of the NP and to a degree the approach to the NP particularly when using the PRoW that cross the application site. However, this is severely limited and none of the PRoW exit from the site directly into the NP. The degree of harm given the local characteristics and the relationship between the NP and the

Case No: 22/00447/FUL

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

application site on the ground means that any negative impact on the NP is of moderate weight. This has therefore been taken into account in the planning balance section alongside other considerations.

Cumulative Impact

The submitted LVIA and Environmental Statement has considered other developments in the vicinity of the site which are currently in planning, or consented but yet to be constructed, as part of an assessment of the potential for cumulative effects to arise. The only other development which it is considered would have the potential for significant cumulative effects is the Aquind Interconnector project.

The application site adjoins the site of the proposed Aquind interconnector converter buildings, which would be located to the western side of Lovedean Substation. This Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP), forms an application for a Development Consent Order (DCO) for an Interconnector with a nominal net capacity of 2,000MW between Great Britain and France with underground cables between Portsmouth and Lovedean substation. The DCO examination process closed on 8th March 2021 and the Examining Authority issued its recommendations to the Secretary of State on 8th June 2021. Whilst the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project was refused by the Secretary of State on 20th January 2022 this was challenged in the High Court by Judicial Review. The decision was quashed on 24th January 2023 and the application has now been returned to the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, for re-determination. The Secretary of State has invited comments from Interested Parties and is currently considering the comments made including those from the Ministry of Defence.

That application in respect of the electric power transmission link between England and France proposes the siting of a Converter Station on land between Area 3 and the Lovedean National Grid Substation. Underground HVDC cables would run west of Areas 6 & 7. A Converter Station, covering a footprint of approximately 200 metres by 200 metres, with buildings up to 26 metres high is proposed. The scheme also includes buildings and equipment including transformers, reactors, generator and cable termination equipment up to 15 metres high. Lighting columns up to 15 metres high are proposed. There are also lightning masts located on site, 4 metre higher than the tallest building.

The Aquind project includes a Converter Station located within an identified 'Converter Station Area' which lies immediately to the west of the existing Lovedean substation. The LVIA states that it is this element of the project in particular which has the potential to give rise to cumulative effects in association with the proposed development. There is no reason to disagree with this assessment.

Indicative landscape mitigation plans accompany the Converter Station Area, in which the intention is to reduce potential landscape and visual effects and create new habitats as well as improving connectivity and creating links to existing ancient woodland. In assessing the cumulative impacts, the LVIA comments that it is assumed that the landscape mitigation shown on these plans would be implemented as part of the Aquind scheme if it were to be granted consent. The proposed solar farm development is not reliant on the landscape mitigation included as part of the Aquind scheme as it includes its own mitigation and enhancement proposals

Case No: 22/00447/FUL

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

The solar farm LVIA comments that the Aquind scheme LVIA identified the potential for the scheme to bring about significant effects during its operational phase on landscape character in parts of the landscape in and around the proposed development. These were noted to reduce with time, as the mitigation planting associated with the scheme matures, but would remain significant around the location of the Converter Station. The LVIA reviews that, if the Aquind scheme were already present in the baseline there would be an existing significant effect on the local landscape character and the presence of infrastructure associated with energy generation. In that context, the potential for the solar farm development to bring about significant effects on landscape character would be reduced when compared with that set out in the main assessment, as the Converter Station would already serve to partially characterise this part of the landscape.

The LVIA acknowledges, that the collective impact on landscape character from the two schemes, should they both be consented, would be greater than each scheme individually. However, noting the extent to which the mitigation proposed with the two schemes would serve to notably reduce impacts on landscape character in future years, it is not considered that there would be any significant cumulative effects on landscape character above those identified in the main assessment. The mitigation planting associated with the two proposals is not relied upon as part of the proposed development.

Historic Environment

Relevant Legislation and Policy

The preservation of the special architectural/historic interest of listed buildings and their settings is addressed in a range of documents: (S.66 P(LBCA) Act 1990; Policy DM29 & DM30 of the Winchester District Local Plan Part 2 Adopted 2017; Policy CP20 Winchester District Joint Core Strategy; NPPF (2023) Section 16. East Hampshire also has similar protective policies within its own Local Plan.

Section 66 sets out the requirement on an LPA when considering an application that affects a listed building or its setting to have “special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses”. Section 16 of the NPPF notes amongst other matters that heritage assets are “irreplaceable assets” and that they should be “conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance”. The guidance also sets out the approach to considering potential impacts. The local plan policies recognise the importance of protecting heritage assets, but they do not offer the level of detail in the assessment as that contained in the NPPF.

The consideration and assessment of due regard is required in relation to the relevant legislation and guidance as outlined within the Historic Environment/Archaeology consultation response. Case law has established that where an authority finds that a development proposal would harm the setting of a listed building, it must give that harm “considerable importance and weight”.

The historic environment section of the Planning Practice Guidance further outlines the role of the Local Planning Authority in considering the effects of new development that are in the vicinity of or affect the setting of listing buildings and heritage assets. Paragraph 205 of the NPPF advises that great weight should be given to the conservation of a heritage asset in considering the impact of a proposal on its significance (and the more important

Case No: 22/00447/FUL

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance. Paragraph 206 states that any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. Paragraph 208 states that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

Policy CP20 of LPP1 and Policy DM29 of WDLPP2 ensure that development preserves and enhances heritage assets and their settings. However, it is noted that a conflict with policy DM29 is triggered only where an 'unacceptable level of harm to the special interest of heritage assets or their setting' is found. Therefore, whilst DM29 is engaged, it does have a higher test if it is to be considered in conflict with the proposal. This will be returned to in the conclusion. The WCC Heritage Officer has referred to both DM29 and DM23 in his comment as being engaged in the assessment of this application. DM23 is the Rural Character policy and it is the planning officers view that CP20 (Heritage and Landscape) is the more appropriate policy to apply along with DM29 in the assessment below.

The applicant has submitted a Historic Environment Desk Based Assessment. The following points are taken from this document and refer to the consideration of designated heritage assets:

- Assessment draws on available archaeological, historic, topographic and land use information to clarify heritage significance and archaeological potential of study area. Site visit also undertaken.
- Used 500m study area.
- Moderate potential for Medieval and post Medieval archaeological findings or features to be present.
- Low potential for remains from other periods.
- Excavations revealed Medieval and post Medieval agricultural activity in area. Similar features likely to be encountered on this site.
- Archaeology not considered to present a design constraint on development.
- Anticipate programme of archaeological evaluation to be agreed through planning condition.
- Total of 15 listed buildings identified within the study area.
- Proposal has potential to have effect on 6 designated heritage assets. These are Ludmore Cottages, Denmead Farmhouse, Granary building at Denmead Farm, Barn Cottage, The Lower Garden and Barn at Shafters Farm. All these buildings are designated grade II.
- Following more detailed assessment, proposal has theoretical potential to have indirect impacts on three of these grade II buildings. These are: Denmead Farmhouse, Barn Cottage and the Barn at Shafters.
- Proposal considered to have minor adverse effect on contribution to wider setting that these make.
- Appropriate screening and planting could reduce or mitigate any effect.
- Effect considered to be less than substantial harm and level of harm low within the less than substantial range.

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

Due to the proximity of the proposals from listed buildings, no direct impact to the historic interests of the building (via direct damage to historic fabric for example) is identified. Consideration will now be focused on the impact on the setting of the listed buildings, with the impact on archaeological assets considered as a separate matter below. Regarding the impact on the setting of listed buildings, the four-step approach to proportionate decision making set out in the Historic England Good Practice Advice in Planning Note No 3. (2nd edition) December 2017 is considered by officers to be an appropriate way of examining the impact on designated heritage assets.

This approach recommends the following steps:

1. Identify the heritage asset that would be affected.
2. Assess the value of setting.
3. Assess the degree of impact.
4. Explore ways to maximise enhancement and avoid or minimise harm.

In the context of this application, regard has been taken by officers of all the above contributions.

1. Identifying the heritage assets that would be affected.

There are 6 grade II listed buildings within the 500m study area which are the following distances away from the application site:

- Ludmore Cottages is 250m from NE corner of Area 2
- Denmead Farmhouse is 150m from western boundary to Area 6
- Granary at Denmead Farm is 170m from western boundary of Area 6
- Barn Cottage is 230m from western boundary to Area 7
- The Lower Garden is 188m from SW corner of Area 7
- Barn at Shafters is 315m from southern boundary of Area 7

The East Hampshire Conservation Officer has referred not only to Ludmore Cottages but made reference to three properties on Lovedean Lane. These form part of the ribbon development along that road. They are all over 1km from any Area that forms part of the application site. To ensure an all-embracing assessment these 3 properties will also be considered.

2. Assessing Value of Setting

On the basis that the proposal does not physically impact directly onto any of the listed buildings, the main focus must be on their setting. The focus should be on the contribution the application site makes to their setting. The setting of a heritage asset is defined in the glossary of the NPPF as follows:

“The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral”.

The Historic England good practice note 3 The Setting of Heritage Assets provides guidance on understanding how the concept of setting should be considered. It notes that

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

whilst the extent and importance of setting is often expressed by reference to visual considerations, setting is also influenced by other environmental factors and by the understanding of the historic relationship between places. It also reminds readers that the contribution of setting is not dependent on their being any public right or ability to access or experience the setting. Accordingly, it is appropriate to consider it from locations on private land.

The official listing entry refers to the six buildings listed above as all sharing the same character traits of architectural and historic interest in the reason for their listing. The applicant's assessment is further refined to focus on three properties. These are Denmead Farmhouse, Barn Cottage and the barn at Shafters. These are considered to have a stronger association with parts of the application site in terms of intervisibility or the site functioning as the background to the listed building.

The official listing entry for Ludmore Cottages on the Historic England website refers to the architectural details of the two properties. It is clearly a representation of late C17 and late C18 rural cottages. Their rural setting makes a positive contribution to their significance. The application site may have had some historic connection with these cottages, but the site has restricted visual connections with them.

Denmead Farmhouse and the Granary have a group value as part of an 18th century farmhouse and associated building. Whilst the official listing entry on the Historic England website refers to architectural features, the farmhouse and Granary clearly have a relationship with the surrounding land in terms of their form and function. The farmhouse is the residence of the farmer managing the current landholding of which the application site is a part. Accordingly, the application site makes a positive contribution to the significance of the two buildings. Later more modern additions to the buildings that make up the farm complex have eroded the visual association between the heritage assets and the land to the east.

The official listing entry for Barn Cottage on the Historic England website refers to the architectural details of the property. It is a representation of a C16 cottage. Its rural setting makes a positive contribution to its significance. The application site does contribute towards the setting of the cottage. It may have had some historic connection with the application site in the past.

The official listing entry for The Lower Garden on the Historic England website refers to the architectural details of the property. It is a representation of a C16 or C17 cottage. Its rural setting makes a positive contribution to its significance, but intervening vegetation limits any contribution of the application site towards the setting of the cottage. It may have had some historic connection with the application site in the past.

The official listing entry for the Barn at Shafters on the Historic England website refers to the architectural details of the property and also for its historic interest as part of a farmstead. Its rural setting makes a positive contribution to its significance. It is not known if any part of the application site formed parts of the farmstead. The Barn is one of a small group of buildings served off a private access on the north side of Anmore Road. The use of the farmstead as a children's home has seen a number of developments over time. The application site does contribute towards the setting of the listed property. It may have had some historic connection with the application site in the past.

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

Regarding the three properties on Lovedean Lane, No 203 The Old Thatched Cottage was listed because of its architectural interest and for its historic interest as one of a group of scattered properties that contributed to the historic development of Lovedean. The official listing entry for the other two listed buildings (nos. 224 & 226 (a pair of cottages) only contains architectural detail.

3. Assessing the Degree of Impact

The WCC Heritage Officer considers that all five buildings within the WCC area would be impacted and focused on 3 buildings which are the Farmhouse, the Granary and the Barn at Shafters. The Heritage Officer considers that all the application site is significant and integral to their setting as without the farmland they are not required. The Granary is a building lying just to the west of Denmead Farmhouse. Its very nature exhibits its strong associations with agriculture and the surrounding farmland. It is considered to hold the same associations with the application site as Denmead Farmhouse. The WCC Heritage Officer's view is that the introduction of the non rural/industrial function with an alien appearance into the fields within the setting of these listed buildings is going to cause unavoidable harm to their setting and significance. The gap between the farmhouse and the development reduces the harm to a small degree and harm is further mitigated by screening and planting, but the adverse visual impact on their wider setting is not removed. The level of impact on the setting of these two listed buildings is rated at less than substantial.

The gap between the barn at Shafters and the application site is greater, but the countryside is open, and the development will still have a negative impact on its wider setting resulting on less than substantial harm.

The proposal is considered to also have an adverse visual impact on the wider setting of Barn Cottage and The Lower Garden. However, these two buildings do not share the same relationship with the farmland as the three buildings considered above. Nevertheless, a negative impact on their wider setting would occur resulting in a less than substantial harm at a lower level to both cottages.

Ludmore Cottages which lies on the west side of Broadway Lane 250m from the northeast corner of Area 2 is within the East Hampshire area and consequently the WCC Heritage Officer has not given any consideration to the impact on the setting of that property. The East Hants Conservation Officer has responded to the consultation request. He notes the relationship of the application site to Ludmore Cottages and to three other listed buildings on Lovedean Lane. In his view the potential impacts are considered to be minimal and not harmful for Ludmore Cottages and negligible for nos 226, 224 & 203 Lovedean Lane. These latter buildings form part of the ribbon development along Lovedean Lane. They are all over 1km from any Area that forms part of the WCC application site and have other properties between them and the application site.

4. Exploring Ways to Maximise Enhancement and avoid or minimise Harm

It is acknowledged that even a rating of less than substantial harm still implies a degree of impact. However, the comprehensive landscaping scheme would result in the establishment of hedgerows and trees between the application site and the heritage assets. As those features develop over time they will provide a backdrop to the heritage assets, creating a more natural feature where those limited views exist. It is therefore

Case No: 22/00447/FUL

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

considered that the planting that will be secured through conditions 26 & 32 would help to minimise any harm. It is noted that both Heritage Officers do not suggest any further mitigation measures could be utilised.

Regarding archaeological matters, the applicant has provided sufficient details that offers a level of confidence that the scheme can proceed based on further investigation before any construction work begins. This approach is the one recommended by the WCC Archaeological officer in their comments on the scheme. East Hampshire rely on the HCC Archaeological officer to comment on archaeological matters. They support the same approach to imposing conditions as that put forward by the WCC officer. On this basis, officers consider that the scheme complies with the general policy framework and specifically WCC policy DM26 of LPP2.

One local resident has raised a question regarding the impact of the proposal on what is referred to as a Bronze age settlement at Hinton Daubnay. Following an approach to Hampshire County Council, no Heritage Environment Record of this settlement has been found. In addition, the source of that comment has been contacted and asked to provide clarification, but no response has been received. Accordingly, officers have been unable to verify this claim or to investigate it further.

In conclusion, the site does not contain any listed buildings, and the proposal does not directly impact upon the fabric of any listed building. Whilst the application site is not considered to be located within the core setting of any of the surrounding listed buildings it is considered to be part of their wider rural setting. As a consequence, the presence of a solar farm would have some effect on the contribution that the wider area makes to the significance of those listed buildings. That effect is considered to be a less than substantial impact. Whilst screening may mitigate this impact to a degree, it has to be acknowledged that the very presence of the planting itself represents a change to the character of the wider area. Even a ranking of less than substantial harm for the WCC listed buildings, or minimal but not harmful for Ludmore Cottages or negligible for the Lovedean Lane properties still represents a negative outcome.

Based on the assessments outlined above, the proposal is considered to be in conflict with policy CP20 (Heritage and Landscape Character) by virtue of the less than substantial harm to the surrounding listed buildings, but not with policy DM 29 (Heritage Assets) as this policy refers to unacceptable harm.

Policy CP20 (Heritage and Landscape Character) does not contain any reference to the less than substantial test which is set out in paragraph 208 of the NPPF or to balancing "less than substantial harm" against the "public benefits" of the proposal also set out in paragraph 208 of the NPPF. In that context the policy only offers the options of "in accordance" or "in conflict". Accordingly, the proposal should be seen in conflict with CP20. However, the more recent approach as outlined in the NPPF should be used and the issue of weighing the harm against the public benefit (in accordance with paragraph 208) will be undertaken in the planning balance below.

With regard to the protection of archaeological assets, there is sufficient confidence that they will be protected, and that position is supported by the WCC Archaeological Officer on the basis that appropriate conditions are imposed. This approach is also supported by the East Hampshire archaeological comment. Accordingly, from the perspective of this aspect
Case No: 22/00447/FUL

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

alone, the proposal is considered to comply with the general policy framework and specially WCC policy DM26 regarding archaeological matters. Conditions 08, 09, 10 & 11 secure the site investigation, recording and protection as requested by the Archaeological Officers.

Neighbouring amenity

LPP2 policy DM17 (Site Development Principles) seeks to ensure that any development does not have an unacceptable adverse impact on adjoining properties by reason of overlooking, overshadowing or being overbearing. Policy DM20 (Development and Noise) seeks to protect residential amenity from noise that may result from a development. The East Hampshire Local Plan has similar protective policies and the NPPF provides an overarching layer of protection in Section 15.

The character of this area is one of scattered residential properties with the occasional cluster of dwellings such as the one around Little Denmead Farm or at Shrover. The largest numbers of properties lie to the south on Anmore Road. It is well established that the loss of a view is not a material planning consideration. However, it is necessary to consider if the development may impinge unacceptably on the living conditions and environment of the occupants of any property close to the site or impact on the more general amenities of an adjoining land use. Windy Ridge and The Reach are single storey properties that adjoin the northwest corner of Area 1. There are already trees on the rear boundary of these properties to the application site. The Ranch has a number of buildings between the main house and the rear boundary whilst Windy Ridge aspects more in a southerly direction than to east. The proposal would see a tree belt established on the edge of the field to these properties. There is also a separation distance before the security fence and the panels. Given the existing outlook that they benefit from, the presence of the panels or the additional planting is not considered to result in any adverse impact on the living environment of either property.

The nearest residential property to Area 3 is at The Crossways approximately 100m away with the intervening area consisting of several hedgerows and a road. The proposal is not considered to result in any adverse impact on the living environment of that property.

The closest property to Area 4 is approximately 100m away to the west and is part of the group around Little Denmead Farm. The farm buildings lie closest to the site boundary. When considering the position and orientation of the residential properties, the proposal is not considered to result in any adverse impact on the living environment of these dwellings.

Area 5 which lies north of Crossways Road, is 50m off the boundary to a bungalow to the west and approximately the same distance off Holme Cottage to the east. The proposal is not considered to result in any adverse impact on the living environment of these dwellings.

These properties and Highfield Cottage have views towards Areas 6 & 7 at a distance of 80m. No unacceptable adverse impact will be experienced on the living conditions of these properties. Denmead Farmhouse is 180m to the west of Area 6. Barn Cottage and Saltbox Barn on Edneys Lane are over 200m from the eastern boundary of Area 7. At these distances, no unacceptable adverse impact will be experienced on the living conditions of these properties.

Case No: 22/00447/FUL

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

The group of properties at Shrover are over 350m from Area 7, whilst those to the south off Anmore Road and Anmore Lane are over 280m from the southern boundary of Area 7. At these distances, no unacceptable adverse impact will be experienced on the living conditions of these properties.

Concerning the issue of noise disturbance, the application contains details of indicative equipment that would be installed. Concern has been expressed by third parties that the specific equipment should be nominated at this time so its noise output can be fully evaluated at this time. The applicant's response is that it is not possible to know so far in advance the precise equipment in terms of the manufacturer and specification that will be used. The applicant has used candidate equipment to set a threshold below which any noise output would be expected to keep once the specific equipment is chosen at the detailed design stage. The main focus of interest in terms of noise generations relates to the inverters and transformers. The inverters convert the Direct Current output from the panels to Alternating Current whilst the transformers increase the voltage to facilitate its connection to the grid. The application is seeking to place this equipment as far away from residential properties as possible. Regarding the separation distances of the inverter units and residential properties the following relationships would exist.

Area 1:	N/A (does not contain any inverters)
Area 2:	360m to The Haven and Hillcrest (to the west), 360m to Windy Ridge and The Ranch (to the NW) Old Mill Lane. Approximately 600m to Hinton Daunbnay (to the east).
Area 3:	330m to Kimberley House (off to the SW) The Crossways Old Mill Lane
Area 4:	N/A (does not contain any inverters in WCC part)
Area 5:	150m to Holme Cottage (off to the south) on the unnamed lane.
Area 6:	200m to Holme Cottage (off to the NE) on the unnamed lane.
Area 7:	400m to Shrover (off to the east) on Broadway Lane.

Regarding the proposed substation facility in Area 7, the separation distance between this facility and the nearest residential property (Highfield Cottage) is 170m to the north. The applicant is supported by a revised Noise Assessment Report (October 2023). The following points are taken from the documents:

- Assessment considers potential noise generation from plant associated with proposed development with respect to existing sound levels in area.
- Used BS 4142 2014.
- Sound monitoring survey undertaken adjacent closest noise sensitive receptors. Recorded daytime and nighttime levels.
- 20 receptors considered as part of assessment.
- Total of 14 inverters/transformer units and ancillary plant distributed throughout the entire site.
- All equipment likely to run for approximately an hour after sunset. Earliest equipment to start running from 0430hrs. These hours worst case scenario.
- To achieve below maximum noise levels low noise inverters should be employed or inverters to be fitted with noise reduction kits with acoustic baffles to air inlets and outlets.
- Three-dimensional noise modelling exercise undertaken.
- Candidate design noise levels established for inverter/Transformer units of 75LwA(dB) sound power level per unit and 47LpA(dB) for sound pressure level at

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

10m and for the Auxiliary Transformer of 71LwA(dB) sound power level per unit and 43LpA(dB) sound pressure level at 10m.

- Low noise inverters should be used to achieve above figures. Mitigation may be required to assist in reaching levels.
- Noise from transformers lower than that from inverters.
- No penalty rating has been included in assessment.
- No uncertainty budget has been considered in the assessment.
- A +2dB has been considered in the assessment for calculation uncertainty.
- Proposed development predicted to have rating sound levels well below prevailing background sound levels at nearest noise sensitive receptors during the day.
- Proposed development predicted to have rating sound levels that do not exceed prevailing background sound levels at nearest noise sensitive receptors during the night.
- Low impact predicted.

The applicant's assessment demonstrates that the development will give rise to noise impacts that would be categorised as: No observed Adverse Effect Level. This is defined as noise that can be heard but does not cause any change in behaviour attitude or other physiological response. It can slightly affect acoustic character of area but not such that there is a change in quality of life.

The WCC Environmental Protection Officer has accepted the approach adopted in the applicant's noise assessment report and its conclusions. The East Hampshire Environmental Health Officer also wishes to see conditions imposed if the application is supported. Concerns raised by third parties have prompted further discussions with the applicant and a two staged approach to the noise conditions was worked up. The first stage would see the submission of the equipment to be installed together with the manufactures noise ratings. The second stage would be that once the equipment is installed, that a further review is undertaken and submitted to the LPA. This second stage submission would confirm that the threshold levels set at stage one are not being exceeded in practice. The WCC Environmental Health Protection Officer views the above two stage approach as "a reasonable approach to ensuring that the development does not cause material harm to nearby residents".

Residents have sought a third stage that consisted of continuous monitoring throughout the life of the site. However, this is not supported by the WCC Environmental Protection Officer and is viewed as too onerous to impose as a planning condition. If an issue arose at some point in the future, then it would be investigated and dealt with as appropriate at the time.

A more recent concern by one objector relates to equipment generating a low hum. This concern may well have been triggered by a response from the East Hampshire Environmental Health Officer posted on the East Hampshire web site. The applicant has responded to this concern by producing, a short technical paper prepared by the applicants qualified noise specialists. The following points are taken from the conclusions in that note:

- Primary source of noise generation from solar farm projects is fans serving inverters.
- No elements of plant which could result in low frequency bias at any receptor.
- Given above, no rating penalty correction should be applied.

Case No: 22/00447/FUL

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

- Technical report prepared and reviewed by competent consultants. Good practice followed and sufficient evidence provided.
- It is asserted that noise including low frequency noise whether it be during day or nighttime periods meets guidelines and does not present a reason to prevent the approval of the proposed development.

Further representation has been received from a local resident indicating they are speaking on behalf of other residents and responding to the Technical Note, questioning its approach. The objector still expresses a view that the noise assessment is based on predictive modelling and not on real world experiences, that they have not used the correct frame of reference when using the terms dB and not applied the Criterion Curve. Overall, they maintain that the applicant has not addressed the issue of low frequency noise. The applicant's position is set out clearly above. It should be noted that both the applicants noise consultant and the WCC Environmental Protection Officer (EPO) question the use of the Criterion Curve when considering a planning application. They maintain it is only intended for use in dealing with noise complaints. Both the WCC and East Hampshire EPOs have reviewed the application details and seen the comments by the local residents. They both accept the applicants' submitted details and raise no objection to the proposal based on the use of the two noise conditions as set out above.

In conclusion, the applicant has presented sufficient information from which it is possible to make a suitable assessment of the potential impact from the development on nearby residential properties wherever they are located. The conclusion of that assessment is that the scheme is acceptable based on the situation presented by the applicant. The proposed two stage approach to establishing noise levels and the separation distances to the nearest noise sensitive receptors will ensure no unacceptable adverse impact from noise. This will be secured through the conditions. The proposed CEMP will cover the other aspects referred to by the EPO to control impacts during the construction phase including potential dust concerns. The potential noise disturbance from construction traffic has been considered. The presence of the temporary crossing of Crossways Road means the onsite haul route is positioned away from the residential properties of Holme Cottage and Highfield Cottage. On this basis, officers consider that the scheme complies with the general policy framework and specifically policy DM17 of LPP2. Conditions 16 (CEMP), 28 (Noise) & 29 (Noise) are intended to secure and protect residential amenity.

On a related matter to amenity, third parties have raised a concern that the scheme may on its own, or in combination with other sources in the area, create Electro Magnetic Radiation (EMR) that could be harmful to people. The other potential sources are the existing Lovedean substation and the overhead power lines. The Aquind proposal would be another potential source if it was built. The applicant has responded to these concerns and made the following points:

- All electrical equipment produces an Electro Magnetic Field.
- EMFs are greater with higher voltage.
- Predominant source in area are existing overhead lines.
- EMF produced by relatively low voltage panels, cables, inverter and transformer units very unlikely to be readily perceptible a few metres away from source.
- Any EMF produced by solar farm at a level significantly below that experienced due to presence of overhead lines.
- All parts of solar farm expected to have public exposure level below that set by the International Commission on nonionizing radiation protection 1998 guidelines.

Case No: 22/00447/FUL

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

- This applies even if Aquind scheme approved, and levels assessed in combination.

The Council has obtained the following guidance on this matter from the UK Health Security Agency.

In the case of solar farms, the highest levels of EMF levels tend to occur within the compounds, close to the transformers, inverters and other equipment that make up the panels and these tend to fall off rapidly with distance such that the recommended guidelines are not exceeded in areas to which the general public have access. The outgoing electricity cables and overhead lines may also be sources of EMFs and, again, these should tend to comply with the guidelines.

As noted above when considering the issues of potential noise impacts, the potential sources of EMR are located well away from residential properties. In several sections of the site, it is noted that overhead lines are located between the potential sources of EMR that form part of this application and residential receptors. Accordingly, there is not considered to be an unacceptable risk to public health from EMR that might arise from the proposed development.

Impact Resulting from Glint and Glare

LPP2 policies DM17 (Site Development Principles) and DM19 (Development & Pollution) contain criteria that seek to protect residents and quality of life generally from light intrusion or pollution. The East Hampshire Local Plan has similar protective policies and the NPPF provides an overarching layer of protection in Section 15.

Following a request by officers, the applicant has submitted a glint and glare assessment. That report was prepared by a consultant commissioned by the applicant (Neo Environmental), and it addresses the question whether any harmful reflection of sunlight will occur. For general information, glint is a momentary flash of bright light whilst glare is a continuous source of bright light. The Glint and Glare report was updated in November 2022 to reflect the additional landscaping that was incorporated into the scheme.

The following points are taken from the applicant's submission:

- Assessment based on use of panels with anti-reflective coating.
- Report considers the potential impact on roads, rail, residential dwellings, and aviation assets.
- 1km study area but 30km for aviation.
- Observation height 2m at dwellings and 1.5m for road users.
- Rankings for impacts used following:
 - High over 30hrs per year or over 30mins per day
 - Medium 20-30hrs per year or 20-30mins per day
 - Low up to 20hrs per year or up to 20mins per day
 - none
- Within study area 10 residential receptors including one residential area.
- 35 road receptors.
- 2 residential and 8 road receptors dismissed as located within no reflection zones.
- 26 aerodromes located within 30km study area of which 2 (Southampton & Farley Farm) require detailed assessment.
- No rail within 1km so scoped out.

Case No: 22/00447/FUL

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

- Can ignore green glare when assessing impact on residential dwellings.
- Solar reflection possible at 2 of 8 residential receptors. Once actual visibility factored into impact reduced to none.
- Solar reflection possible at 17 of 27 road receptors. Once actual visibility impact applied this reduced to 1 receptor.
- Regarding aviation, green glare at Runway 06 approach at Farley Farm. None predicted at Southampton or ACT.
- No mitigation required.
- Glint & Glare affects analysed and predicted to be low or none. Therefore, no significant effects.

In a joint exercise with East Hampshire, WCC has commissioned an external specialist consultancy to review the submitted document. In the instruction to the external specialist, they were asked to have regard to the points raised by third parties concerning the accuracy of the modelling used to produce the report, that the assessment of Glint & Glare at Shrover was high which means an impact over 30hrs per year or over 30mins per day, that the assessment relies on "our" (Shrover) own trees to screen properties from glint & glare and trees at risk from ash dieback, that panels in field west of Anmore Lane will result in glint and glare and finally that vehicle drivers on Anmore Lane will be affected by glint and glare thereby adding to dangers of pedestrians who have to walk in road. Extracts from the objectors letter were passed onto the specialist consultancy engaged by the Council so they had the full text of the objector's concerns. Regarding the review of the Neo Environmental Assessment, the Council's consultant makes the following observation:

- Applicants' assessment does not follow same approach as Mabbetts would have applied, but no challenge to methodology.
- Do recommend at very least modelling undertaken for both air traffic control towers and pilots on final approach as per US FAA guidance.
- Results should be shared with relevant safeguarding authorities at assessed aerodromes.
- Do not agree with statement green glare can be ignored in assessment of impact on residential dwellings. Issue here is one of impact on amenity (annoyance) and threshold likely to be lower than one for a safety issue.
- Mabbetts agree with conclusion that impact on road receptors reduced to none. However, this on condition that surrounding vegetation is maintained.
- Given the topographical difference between the Residential Dwelling 5 and the Proposed Development additional evidence (such as site photographs) should be provided to justify the conclusion that vegetation will obstruct all line of sight towards the residential dwellings.
- Where intervening vegetation does not block the line of sight, consideration of other factors (such as cloud cover and additional on-site planting) should be presented as additional mitigating evidence.
- Review of the planting plan indicates that a hedgerow is proposed for the east boundary between the panels and the Proposed Development. However, due to the elevated topography at Residential Dwelling 5, the Proposed Development is likely to still be visible. Further glare modelling analysis should be provided by Neo Environmental of the mitigation potential provided by the proposed hedgerow.
- If the hedgerow does not provide a suitable reduction in predicted glare, taller woodland planting may need to be considered.

Case No: 22/00447/FUL

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

Regarding the responses to the third-party concerns, the specialist consultant did not find questions over the modelling to withstand closer examination. Concerning the level of impact to be experienced the desire to see the landscape screen established on the western side of Anmore Lane is proposed to address that concern. On the claim that the objectors own trees have been used to justify the assessment, it is confirmed that the model used by the applicant did not include any obstacles (natural or manmade) in its assessment. Finally on the issue of traffic safety on Anmore Lane the gappy nature of the existing screen vegetation on the western side of Anmore Road is noted. The Specialist consultants advise that in their experience, the impact on drivers is considered to be influenced by a number of factors. These are, type of road, origin of the glare, length of road affected and obstruction to the line of sight. The Specialist Consultants recommend that the local highway authority was consulted to ascertain the road safety impacts associated with the use of the Shrover and Anmore Lane junction. This approach was to seek confirmation that the classification of Anmore Lane as a low trafficked road was correct.

As part of the work to clarify the outstanding matters relating to the impact on traffic at the Shrover/Anmore Lane junction and to address the concerns of the Highway Engineer, in June 2024 the applicant commissioned a technical note from their consultants which contained the following information:

- Neo Environmental specialists in field of glint and glare assessments
- This note produced in response to HCC concerns and having regard to Mabbetts peer review.
- Methodology used in assessment stood test of peer reviews and follows best industrial practice.
- Model uses “bare earth”, it has no regard for any existing obstructions to line of sight.
- In assessment in worst case scenario, identified that glare from southern parcel of solar farm may result between March and October in periods 5pm to 7pm and be experienced by road users of Anmore Lane if there is no intervening screening.
- However, with presence of eastern boundary screening to PV array 5 and with impacts likely to occur outside field of view of drivers as they travel along Anmore Lane, no impact on drivers.
- Noted directly opposite Shrover access road is mature roadside vegetation which will screen any views, further mitigation also provided with eastern boundary planting.
- Amended Landscape Master Plan (May 2024) will screen all views of Anmore Lane and Shrover access road where potential glare could occur.

- Closer assessment means the high categorisation given to potential for yellow glare is reduced to none given existing and proposed vegetation which provides obstruction.
- Conclusion is glint and glare assessment in combination with Landscape Master Plan provides enough evidence/mitigation to ensure Anmore Lane and Shrover access road or users of Shrover access road will not encounter adverse impacts or compromise road safety.

The HCC highway engineer has accepted the conclusions of the technical note.

In conclusion, the applicant has submitted a Glint and Glare assessment in support of the application. This has been independently reviewed on behalf of the Council and found to

Case No: 22/00447/FUL

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

be acceptable. A further technical note has clarified the concern of the highway engineer with regard to potential impact of glare on road users on Anmore Lane and on the Shrover access. Action is required to secure the landscape planting that is referred to in the comments from Mabbetts and which also forms part of the further detail set out in the technical note. It is proposed to secure this through the legal agreement as the planting would take place within the East Hampshire part of the site.

Under these circumstances, it is considered that the scheme complies with the general policy framework and specifically policy LPP2 policy DM17 (Site Development Principles) and DM19 (Development & Pollution) have been complied with. As the assessment took place on the basis it assumed an Anti-Reflective Coating to the panels then this should be conditioned. It will be addressed through condition 21 which requires the specification of the panels to be installed.

Sustainable Transport

Policy CP10 (Transport) and policy DM18 (Access and Parking) both seek to ensure that any development has a safe means of access off and onto the highway. The East Hampshire Local Plan Joint Core Strategy has similar policies and the NPPF provides an overarching layer of protection in Section 9. Whilst the main site access arrangements would be located within the East Hampshire part of the site, it is appropriate that WCC has regard to the general approach to accessing the site.

The applicant intends to use the existing road network from the A3(M) to access the site. This involves using the B2149, Portsmouth Road (A3) Lovedean Lane, Day Lane and then Broadway Lane to approach the existing vehicle access to Broadway Farm. This access is shared with a number of residential properties and the Horndean FP No4. To service Areas 1,2 & 3 off Old Mill Lane, the intention is to deliver to the main compound and then break up loads and move them onward via Tractors and Trailers. These would follow a route northward along Broadway Lane, along Denmead Hill Lane and down Old Mill Lane to enter the Areas via the existing agricultural field accesses. To access Areas 6 & 7 during the construction phase a new temporary crossing will be formed across Crossways Road. This will be removed at the end of the construction phase and the existing field gates used to drive from Area 5 into Area 6.

The application is accompanied by an Outline Construction Traffic Management Plan from which the following points have been taken:

- Final CTMP based on principles in this document will be agreed prior to construction commencing.
- Applicant and Aquind committed to work together and resolve any HGV movement overlap.
- Construction traffic to follow designated route from A3(M) to site.
- Procedure to be in place to hold HGVs away from site to avoid congestion.
- Will implement pass-by bays in Day Lane if requested.
- All construction traffic will access site via Broadway Lane agricultural access.
- Banksmen to be used to assist in vehicle movements as visibility not up to full standard. Local traffic held up for maximum of 90 seconds.

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

- Access is shared with Horndean FP No4 which will remain in use throughout construction phase.
- Two main work areas linked by new crossing over unclassified road.
- Temporary access can achieve visibility splay.
- After construction temporary access closed and for operational phase will use existing field gates crossing the unnamed lane (Crossways Road).
- 20m of roadway up to access to be bonded surface.
- In compound equipment unloaded onto smaller vehicles (tractors and trailers) for movement around to Old Mill Lane sites.
- Can make manoeuvre and access sites off Old Mill Lane via existing access points.
- Traffic management scheme to be in place for entire construction period.
- PRow will remain open during construction work.
- Procedure to be adopted where a vehicle crosses a PRow. This PRow Management Plan to be part of the final CTMP.
- Will implement Traffic Management Strategy to control vehicle movements.
- Project maximum of 15 two-way movements per day during 1st month.
- Project one tractor and trailer trip per day (2 movements). People to be positioned at critical positions to stop traffic.
- Approximately 60-70 construction workers on average day. May increase at peak work.
- Envisage majority workers stay local get minibus to site.
- Envisage 35 spaces to park on site.
- Construction Workers Travel Plan will be implemented.
- Internal access roads completed during initial stages so temporary haul routes not necessary.
- Wheel washing facilities to be provides.
- Will use smallest delivery vehicle possible.
- Total 983 HGV deliveries= 7 per day.
- Small peak in traffic number in early part of construction phase.
- No more than 15 HGV deliveries per day over first 4 weeks.
- In last 4 weeks of construction phase as work site dismantled another rise to no more than 10 HGV arrivals.
- Smaller LGV arrivals at site up to 13 per day (26 two-way movements).
- Projected 130 tractor & Trailers to service Areas 1 & 2 and 80 to service Area 3, Equates to one per day to each site.
- Will work with Aquind to secure agreement on cap of maximum number of 71HGV deliveries (142 movements) per day using Broadway Lane.
- Series of mitigation measures to be put in place.
- Pre and post construction road condition survey to be undertaken.
- Methodology for cable installation down Old Mill Lane to be agreed once contractor in place. Estimate work to take a month. Will obtain Section 50 Licence from HCC.
- Will notify local community ahead of any work commencing.

The Highway engineer did have some initial concerns regarding a range of issues associated with this scheme. Officers' have participated in discussions over the traffic issues with colleague from East Hampshire, HCC and the applicant. Following receipt of additional information in the form of a revised Outline CTMP, the Highway Engineer raises no objection to the proposal subject to a range of matters being addressed in the final CTMP.

Case No: 22/00447/FUL

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

The conditions below reflect the matters of interest which can legitimately be addressed by WCC. Accordingly, they do not deal with matters such as the provision of the passing bays in Day Lane or the Broadway Farm access. However, to ensure that the site is serviced by an access off the public highway a clause within the legal agreement is proposed that refers to the attainment of a safe access to the site before any development is commenced in the WCC part of the site.

The applicant has committed to keeping the existing footpaths open during the construction phase. The precise management tools to secure this and keep any walkers safe are to be detailed in the final CTMP. Opportunities to improve on the PRoW network are encouraged and the applicant has included a proposal to create a permissive footpath linking FP No 13 in the south to FP No28 which runs through the middle of the site from Broadway Lane to Little Denmead Farm and out onto Crossways Road. This addition would be in place for the life of the solar farm. Existing footpaths within and adjoining the site are tending to run east-west. In that context, this route does provide a useful north-south link as an alternative to using a section of Old Mill Lane. The Ramblers whilst supportive of the principle of the new route wish to see it as a permanent addition to the network. This is not part of the offer being made by the applicant and it is not appropriate for officer to impose a permanent right of way on what is a temporary consent. The creation of the permissive footpath is welcome and considered to accord with the broad intentions of improving the PRoW network. The HCC Rights of Way Team having initially expressed some concerns over a lack of detail have concluded that they raise no objection subject to conditions.

Objections have been received expressing concern over the potential impact on the Monarchs Way. These include comments from the Monarchs Way Association. This long-distance path extends for 625 miles and follows the escape route of Charles II after the battle of Worcester in 1651. It runs along a section of Denmead Top Road and then crosses a field touching the extreme NE corner of Area 2 before rising to join Broadway Lane. This latter more elevated part of the path offers views westward into Area 2. Since the original comments from the Monarchs Way Association were made, the area of panels has been drawn back into the site and additional screening proposed on the northern side of Area 1 and northern and eastern flanks of Area 2. Neither the application site nor any of the immediately nearby properties carries any historic association to the king's escape. The revisions to the scheme are considered to have improved the relationship of the proposed development to anyone walking the path. The level of traffic associated with the proposals that walkers of the Monarch Way would meet on the short section of Denmead Top Road is considered to be low. On that basis, there is not considered to be any significant adverse impact on users of the path.

When the Aquind Interconnector was going through the Examination Stage, the Highway Engineer raised a concern over traffic numbers and a maximum threshold was proposed. This issue has arisen during the consideration of this application in the event the maximum threshold would be exceeded if HGV traffic associated with both Aquind and the solar farm were seeking to access their respective sites at the same time. Clearly that scenario would require both schemes to be approved and for their construction phases to coincide. In the event such an overlap did occur, the intention is that the solar farm developer and Aquind would agree that their combined total of HGV movements would not exceed 142 HGV movement per day. That undertaking will be secured under condition 12 (Limitation on Combined Traffic Movements).

Case No: 22/00447/FUL

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

In conclusion, as the application has progressed, the applicant has provided further detail on highway related matters. This is reflected in the progression shown in the Highway Authority's comments to the final position where the imposition of a condition (No. 11) is proposed to secure the contents of the revised CTMP. This condition, together with the other traffic related conditions, will ensure that the requirements set out in the policies of the NPPF and local plan are met.

It is also considered that the proposal complies with the general policy framework and specifically with LPP1 policy CP10 and policy DM18 of LPP2. Conditions 03 (Temporary Permission & Decommissioning), 04 (Early Cessation), 11 (CTMP), 12 (Limitation on Combined Traffic Movements) & 13 (Restriction on Traffic Movements to/from Areas 5&6) reflect the Highway Authority's requests and other matters identified by officers to secure safe provision of access to and from the site. Condition 19 would secure the permissive right of way. The Highway Engineers reference to a legal agreement relates to a S278 agreement that would address various road matters and would be completed between the applicant and the Highway Authority outside any planning permission.

Ecology and Biodiversity

LPP1 policy CP16 (Biodiversity) seeks to ensure that any development maintains, protects and enhances biodiversity. The East Hampshire Local Plan has similar protective policies and the NPPF provides an overarching layer of protection in Section 15. The WCC policy also looks for the delivery of Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) although it does not quote specific a specific figure. For clarification, the BNG requirement (+10%) promoted within the Environment Act does not apply to any application made before 12 February 2024. Nevertheless, in this instance, the applicant has from the initial submission, included as part of the overall application an intention to offer BNG on the application site.

The application is accompanied by various documents that address biodiversity. These are:

- Ecological Assessment Report.
- Biodiversity Management Plan.
- Tree Survey.
- Breeding Bird Survey.
- Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Calculator.
- Update to Bird Survey and Ecological Assessment.

The following points are taken from these documents and reflect the latest proposals:

- Extended Phase 1 habitat survey undertaken.
- Breeding bird survey undertaken.
- Preliminary bat roost assessment undertaken.
- No part of site designated for its nature conservation value.
- Site predominantly arable fields with field boundary hedgerows and small pockets of deciduous woodland.
- Existing habitat offers negligible opportunities for hazel dormice.
- No ponds within site.
- 3 bird surveys undertaken. 31 breeding species recorded of these 12 notable, 9 on amber list and 3 on red list.
- No ground nesting birds found on site during surveys.
- Owls found in area but none found nesting on site.

Case No: 22/00447/FUL

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

- Brown hare observed during surveys.
- No trees removed, only three short sections of hedgerow (total 20m) to be removed to accommodate fence lines and access.
- When considering ploughing practices, a solar farm will create greater undisturbed ground adjacent hedgerows and better protection for root systems.
- Ecologically large pit in Area 7 has poor species diversity but could provide more interesting habitat.
Habitat enhancement proposed through new planting and extensive grazing grassland areas under panels and limestone/chalk grassland outside the fenced off areas.
- Grassland controlled by use of sheep.
- Habitat monitoring report and management will be undertaken in years 1,3 5 and 10.
- Hedges kept at 3m or above.
- Any site clearance should be undertaken outside bird breeding season 1 March to 31 August inclusive, unless situation checked by qualified ecologist.
- No lighting proposed during construction. During operational phase site not lit unless engineer present.
- Bat check on trees to be undertaken before any work commences.
- Pre commencement badger checks to be undertaken.
- Gates to be installed in fence lines to allow small mammals access into fenced off area.
- Update confirms no changes to baseline condition of site.
- Noted multiple presence of roe deer but these not a protected species.
- Proposals likely to increase foraging opportunities. May allow for ground nesting such as skylarks.
- BNG net change of +53% habitat units and + 56% hedgerow units for the whole site.

As with many arable fields, the most interesting parts of the site from a biodiversity perspective are the field perimeters and they will be protected during the construction phase. The pits also offer some habitat value, and those will also be protected. Their value could be enhanced as part of the overall site management plan. The extent of the landscape enhancements is listed above and in the Landscape section. Whilst the primary motivation has been to improve the landscape screening around and within the site, this has resulted in raising the potential habitat value of the site. As part of the negotiations with the applicant, the emphasis has been on improving and reinforcing the perimeter vegetation and improving habitat corridors., There will be sections of new hedgerow planted around the security fencing and areas of scrub and woodland planting. Individual trees will also be planted throughout the site.

The extensive areas of grassland to be created both within the security fencing and outside will also contribute to raising the habitat value of the site.

The positive BNG figures of +53% habitat units and + 56% hedgerow units are indicative of this significant enhancement. These figures relate to the whole 92 ha site, reflecting the applicants approach to treating the site as a single entity. No individual BNG figure is available for the WCC part of the site. As this scheme was first submitted in early 2022 when the BNG requirement was not in force, the proposal is not required to show any improvement. Accordingly, the absence of a precise BNG figure for the WCC part of the site is not a critical omission. From the level of detail that shows reinforcement and new

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

planting in the WCC part of the site, it is clear that a significant increase in habitat will occur.

The following breakdown is based on figures provided by the applicant:

BNG Feature	WCC	EHDC	Total
Hedgerow	3,315 m	1,250 m	4,565 m
Woodland	3.42 ha	1.11 ha	4.53 ha
Scrub	-	-	1.55 ha
Grassland (meadow)	-	-	17.28 ha
Grassland (within fence)	-	-	52.54 ha

There are no areas of ancient woodland or individual veteran trees within the site. The nearest ancient woodlands are Stoneacre Copse, Crabden Copse and Crabden Row. Of these, Crabden Row lies adjacent the southeast corner of Area 2. The proposed security fence lies 15m from the woodland with the first panels 20m from the woodland. The guidance (Ancient Woodland, Ancient Trees and Veteran Trees: Advice for Making Planning Decisions January 2022) requires a separation distance of 15m for development off ancient woodland. The proposal achieves that separation distance. When considering that the fence line will be created without any foundations to the posts then ground disturbance will be minimised. The CEMP should be used to secure the avoidance of any activity in the 15m offset zone.

The Ecology officer raises no objection to the scheme and notes the biodiversity benefits that will be brought forward. Regarding the Ecology Officers request for further information, the matters raised can be secured through the conditions (C16 CEMP) (C17 Fence & Gate detail) (C24 Arboricultural method statement) (C26 Landscaping) (C27 BMP) (C32 LEMP) and via the proposed legal agreement. The Ecology Officers support for skylark mitigation is noted and will be taken forward through the proposed legal agreement.

Some residents have expressed a concern that the fence lines will stop the movement of deer through the area. The intention is to exclude deer from the fenced off areas and the animal gates will not be designed to accommodate deer. Whilst deer are acknowledged under the overall protection of wildlife, they are not a specifically protected species and by some parties they are viewed as a pest as their numbers increase. The fenced off areas will change current deer migration patterns. However, there is still open ground to the north, centre and south of the various Areas that can be used. It should be noted that the enhancement of the site through the biodiversity actions should enhance the retention and promotion of specific species that are officially protected. Accordingly, low weight is given to the issue of the potential to stop deer movement.

The site is considered to support skylarks and accordingly a strategy is sought to address the loss of open nesting sites. As the land identified for the creation of the replacement nesting plots lies within the East Hampshire part of the application site, the view has been taken that this should be secured through a clause in a legal agreement.

Case No: 22/00447/FUL

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

With a life of 40 years, officers have considered how the BNG enhancements will be delivered, maintained and monitored throughout the life of the solar farm. These can be secured through a Landscape Enhancement Management Plan (LEMP). The applicant has suggested a review every three years starting from year 3 and ending at year 36. This means a total of 12 review events. The BNG enhancements are projected to be achieved by year 10, but it is important that they are maintained throughout the life of the solar farm. The rolling review outlined above will secure this. The intention is that a review report (looking back on progress and forward in terms of future management) will be submitted to the LPA for approval after each review. Discussions have taken place with the applicant and an agreement reached that they will fund the reasonable cost of the Council's involvement in the review process throughout the life of the site. This will be secured via a legal agreement. Given the unusual extent of monitoring, which is required for this development, this contribution to the Council's costs is considered necessary and reasonable.

As the proposal does not involve the creation of any overnight residential accommodation or is within proximity to any European Protected Site (Solent SAC and SPA, the River Itchen SAC or Ramsar Sites), there is no need to consider any requirement for Nitrates or Phosphates mitigation or the need for an Appropriate Assessment under the Conservation of Habitats & Species (Amendment) Regulations 2011.

In conclusion, the scheme will result in significant improvements to the biodiversity value of the site as a result of the additional planting and the creation of the grassland areas. The outcome is that the scheme is acceptable subject to the imposition of conditions and the completion of a legal agreement. Therefore, the proposal complies with the general policy framework and specifically policy CP16 of the LPP1. Conditions 03 (Operational Life & Decommissioning), 04 (Early Cessation), 16 (CEMP), 17 (Fencing), 24 (Arboriculture) 25 (Lighting), 26 (Landscaping), 27 (Biodiversity Management Plan) & 32 (LEMP) together with the legal agreement will secure the existing and enhanced biodiversity on site.

Water Management

LPP1 policy CP17 (Flooding, Flood Risk and the Water Environment) requires development to avoid flood risk to people and property by following four specific actions. The policy also requires that any development does not cause an unacceptable deterioration to water quality and again lists four actions to achieve this. The East Hampshire Local Plan Joint Core Strategy has similar protective policies and the NPPF provides an overarching layer of protection in Section 14.

Water management responsibilities are split between the Environment Agency and HCC who act as the Lead Local Flood Authority. The Environment Agency has responsibility for watercourses, whilst the HCC through their Surface Water Management Team (SWMT) are responsible for other matters. As the site has no watercourses within it or on its boundaries, then the main interest in this matter comes from the HCC SWMT.

The site is located within Flood Zone one which is at low risk from flooding. However, the site is located over part of the Water Protection Zone which is a source for drinking water. Accordingly, an extra layer of protection is required in terms of vetting any proposal which could be considered to threaten that resource.

Case No: 22/00447/FUL

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

The application has been accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment & Drainage Strategy and two further addendums. The following points are taken from those documents and reflect the latest position:

- Site wholly within Flood Zone One.
- Risk of surface water in some parts of site up to 0.3m deep within most of western and southern areas.
- Scheme has minimal impermeable area of 65m³.
- Infiltration tests confirm ground likely to absorb water except for southern parcel.
- Drainage scheme divided into two northern and southern.
- Drainage proposals updated to reflect this.
- Infiltration drainage not appropriate in southern parcel due to under laying clay soils.
- Proposal to discharge surface water into large pit in Area 7.
- Depth of pit indicates previous excavations have broken through the clay layer into soils below that are suitable for infiltration. Further testing to take place at detailed design stage secured by condition.
- Proposed drainage strategy to south to provide storage volume of 460M³. This greater than any volume of additional run off created by impermeable buildings (15m³).
Above may alleviate historic flooding to Anmore Road.
- Area below panels will be grass and site infiltration rate will not change. SW will drip off panels onto ground below.
- Total impermeable area north is 306.9m², in south area is 243.2m²,
- SUDs feature will be installed during the construction phase. Swales to be planted to protect against erosion.
- Scheme will consist of 7 soakaway channels and two swales in overall site.
- Any scheme will be maintained throughout the life of the site.

The nature of the proposed development as a solar farm means its operation will not result in the generation of any new wastewater. The construction workforce will be serviced by a series of portaloos located in the construction compound. That waste will be removed from the site for disposal.

Regarding surface water, the submitted details show the potential for surface flooding to occur in the western and southern part of the site to a depth of 0.3m. This reflects the topography of the ground in these locations. Local residents have indicated concerns over flooding in Anmore Lane as result of water shedding off the whole site. Section 14 of the NPPF and the PPG on Flood Risk advice is that the inappropriate development should be directed away from areas at risk of flooding. The proposal will see solar panels installed within those areas at risk of flooding within the application site. The installation will be the supporting posts and the application indicates that the lower end of the panels will be 0.8m above ground. This means that in the event of any water settling beneath them they would not obstruct any flow or be at risk of damage.

The development will not result in any additional surface water being generated but consideration is required of whether any surface water may be concentrated and if so, how it is disposed of. The applicant's revised assessment has identified a need for the installation of soakaways along the southern edges of the Areas and the creations of two swales down the western edges of Area 6 & 7. The soakaway in Area 7 runs across the land alongside the pit which enables a drain to be laid from the end of the soakaway into

Case No: 22/00447/FUL

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

the pit. A pipe would also link the swale on the western edge of Area 7 to the pit. The details have been reviewed by the relevant consultees and are considered acceptable subject to conditions that would see the precise details agreed and measures put in place to maintain the integrity of the ground water source from the risk of pollution or soil in suspension being carried into the pit.

Concerns have been expressed by third parties that surface water from the site contributes to flooding issues experienced on Anmore Lane adjacent Area 8. The applicant has indicated a belief that their proposals to manage surface water runoff as set out above will help to mitigate the runoff onto the road.

On an issue related to the protection of water quality, residents have questioned if the applicant should not be required to use a certain type of solar panel that is RoHS compliant. This refers to the Restriction on Hazardous Substances Directive that placed restrictions on the use of certain hazardous substances in electrical and electronic equipment. Solar Panels are exempt from compliance with the regulations. However, some solar panel manufacturers do make panels that conform with the regulations. The objector's concern is that in the event of a breakage of any panel, hazardous materials may fall onto the ground and find its way into the soil and then be washed into the groundwater. Alternatively, the objectors are concerned that any crack in a panel may allow rainwater to enter the panel and pick up trace elements of toxic materials before dripping onto the ground. The applicant has responded to this issue by making the following points:

- Applicant not able to specify panel as technology is changing so rapidly.
- All plant and equipment installed will be in full compliance with all required laws and standards at the time.
- Currently in GB photovoltaic panels not covered by RoHS regulations. Some of associated equipment such as inverters do comply.
- Basic structure of a solar panel encapsulates all elements within a glass fronted panel. Panel layers are bonded such that even with extensive destructive force component parts remain intact and will not separate.
- Even with very significant physical damage modules will not leak chemicals or other material onto ground or thereafter leech into groundwater due to basic layering design and high melting points. Design ensures environment protected.
- Typical damage is result of vandalism and only affects front glass panel which means elements below not affected. Rainwater ingress would not occur.
- Any broken panels identified through monitoring and replaced. Any glass shards from damage to front would be collected and removed.
- Note Day Lane solar farm site operating without an issue above aquifer protection zone.
- Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment obligations would apply.

The opportunity has been taken to raise this matter with Portsmouth Water who have been supplied with details of the third-party concerns and the applicant's information outlined above. Portsmouth Water have not asked for additional restrictions that would nominate the type of solar panel to be imposed on the development. In the absence of any support from the formal consultee it is not considered that such a requirement would meet the tests of a planning condition.

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

In conclusion, it is considered that any risk of harm to surrounding properties of public infrastructure from flooding can be managed to ensure that any discharges off the site are improved or certainly no worse than exist at present. Measures are proposed to accommodate on site surface water generation within the confines of the site. Concerns over the risk of groundwater pollution have been raised and the applicant has responded to these concerns in detail. The statutory consultees have not raised any concerns in this respect. Overall, the proposal is acceptable and accordingly, the scheme is considered to be in accordance with the general policy framework and specifically policy CP17 of WCC LPP1. Conditions 6 (Surface Water) and 07 (Karstic Solution Features) secures the details required.

Fire Safety

WCC LPP2 policy DM18 (Access & Parking) seeks to ensure that the emergency services can gain access to and within a new development.

There is a need for the site to be accessible to emergency vehicles and for them to be able to use the internal road network to reach the area of panels or any of the support infrastructure. Contrary to the view of the Fire Service, this matter would not be addressed through the Building Regulations and needs to be considered at this stage under planning.

As the site is not occupied, the emergency services also need access to certain details in the event of an incident. This information includes matters such as the contact details for the operator so the whole site or part of it can be isolated; precise details of what equipment and materials are on site together with their location and if there are any hazardous materials on site. This can be addressed through the provision on site of information boards or Premises Information Box (PIB) The precise details including their locations can be approved through a condition compliance submission.

A condition can be imposed to ensure that the internal roadways can accommodate an emergency vehicle. The provision of an access capable of accommodating an emergency vehicle means that the proposal would comply with the requirements of policy DM18, whilst the provision of information boards or Premises Information Boxes will ensure there is an appropriate level of information available to the emergency services to ensure they are best positioned to respond in the event of an incident. Under these circumstances it is considered that policy DM 18 of LPP2 is complied with. The Fire and Rescue Service have responded to the latest consultation approach and no longer have any concerns relating to the proposal.

Condition 15 (Roadway Construction Detail) & condition 30 (Provision of Information for Emergency Services) secures the details required.

The Effect on and Potential Loss of Agricultural Land

On the question of the agricultural land classification and food production, best and most versatile (BMV) land is defined in the glossary to the NPPF as land of grades 1, 2 and 3a. When originally submitted, the application site (WCC+EHDC) consisted of 12.5 ha (14.1%) grade 3a and 75.9 ha (85.9%) grade 3b land. Following a reduction in the area of panels in Area 5 (land north of Lower Chapters) these figures have been reduced to 7.3 ha (7.9%) grade 3a and 84.7Ha (92.1%) grade 3b. Based on these figures, the reference in the Natural England comment to the scheme affecting 95.4 ha of BMV land is not correct. Excluding one sample point in Area 3 and one in Area 7, all the samples taken in the Winchester part of the site were grade 3b. The applicant has made the point that these

Case No: 22/00447/FUL

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

fields have been farmed on the basis of their overall quality which is grade 3b. Consideration has been given to the fact that the solar farm would be a temporary use and that all the proposed elements would be removed on the decommissioning of the facility, allowing the land to return to agriculture. The forty-year break would also allow the soil to rest and improve its health. A condition is proposed that requires a soil management plan (C18). This is supported by the applicant. Information from the applicant indicates that the land has been used to grow oil seed rape, wheat and barley over the last 5 years. Regarding the impact on food production, the amount of land concerned is relatively insignificant. In the southeast of England there are 1.114 million hectares of arable land under cultivation. These are all considered to be relevant matters.

Following discussions, the applicant has now committed to sheep grazing of the land under the panels and within the fenced off areas. This does retain a link to agricultural although it must be acknowledged that the land would not be as productive than previously.

On 15 May 2024 the Energy Security Secretary issued a statement entitled “Solar and Protecting our Food Security and Best and Most Versatile (BMV) Land” The following points have been taken from the statement:

- Food security an essential part of national security
- Important best agricultural land is protected and food production prioritised.
- Energy security threats mean need to deploy renewable energy.
- Planning system needs to balance these considerations of protecting local environment & food production against need to deliver secure clean green energy.
- NPS outlines preference for use of previously developed or brownfield land.
- If agricultural land to be proposed, need to avoid use of best and most versatile.
- Statement sets out details on how policy on balancing competing priorities is intended to apply.
- Applicants should seek to minimise use of BMV (grades 1, 2 & 3a)
- Highest quality agricultural land least appropriate for solar developments.
- Important to consider not just impacts of individual proposals but also whether there are cumulative impacts from several schemes in same locality.

In conclusion, the issues highlighted within the statement on food security and the agricultural land classification have been considered. The Winchester application site is virtually 100% grade 3b land which means there is considered to be minimal conflict with national guidance on the protection of the best and most versatile land. Removing the island of grade 3a land from the scheme would present difficulties in farming that ground productively. It is appropriate to note the overall site classification and breakdown. Again, the only other part of the overall site that is grade 3a is a section close to the Broadway Road farm buildings which would also represent a relatively small area of ground to cultivate if it was removed from the application site. Furthermore, the proposal will be for 40 years, after which time it will be cleared, and the land will revert back to its former agricultural use.

Whilst noting the guidance on the degree of impact agricultural land classification should have on any decision, taking the above factors into consideration there is no objection to the temporary loss of agricultural land in this instance. Condition 18 (Soil Management Plan) will ensure that the soil remains in good health and is capable of reverting back to agricultural use after the scheme is decommissioned.

Case No: 22/00447/FUL

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

Other Topics

Relationship with the Aquind Interconnector Scheme

The proposers of the Aquind Interconnector scheme, which is a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project, have asked that a range of issues are taken into account. As the Aquind letter covers the whole scheme some of the comments relate to matters outside the WCC part of the site and the numbering system used below reflects this fact and that other issues from the original list of 14 recommendations have been resolved:

Aquind Recommendation No2: Issues around the location where the two sets of cables will overlap.

Aquind have a concern that the solar farm cable route from Areas 1, 2 & 3 down to the on site substation will prejudice the laying of the Aquind cables as they cross each other on land east of Old Mill Lane in Area 6.

LPA Response: The need to avoid any risk to the implementation of a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (if approved) is recognised. It is proposed to address this in condition 23 (Cable Installation).

Aquind also request that to safeguard their cable corridor the Council imposes a condition excluding any above ground development.

LPA Response: The submitted plans do not show any above ground development associated with this proposal within the Aquind Cable corridor. If the solar farm scheme is approved, it is proposed to impose a condition that ties the approval to the submitted plans. On that basis, it is not considered necessary to add a further restriction to reinforce what is already evident from the plans.

Aquind Recommendations No 8 Control over maximum number of HGV movements.

Aquind have sought an assurance that in the event both schemes are approved, and they are both under constructions at the same time, that the maximum number of HGV movements on the local road network does not exceed the limit proposed for their use alone and discussed in the NSIP process.

LPA Response: This matter has been the subject of discussion between the parties concerned. In a letter dated 28 April 2023 to the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, WCC set out a proposed condition that would cover this matter. This is included in condition 13 (Limitation on Combined Traffic Movements).

Aquind Recommendation 10: Question if the issue of Cumulative LVIA has been fully addressed in the application,

LPA Response: This issue is covered in the report above.

Aquind Recommendation 11: Question the absence of a cumulative impact assessment on construction noise.

LPA Response: Whilst an operational noise assessment does form one of the supporting documents to the application, it does not cover construction noise. A Construction

Case No: 22/00447/FUL

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

Environment Management Plan condition is proposed and part of that would address noise levels. Having considered and recognising the nature of the Ensor development and the difficulties in nominating specific construction plant and equipment at this stage in the process, it is considered that the CEMP (condition 16) is a sufficient mechanism to control construction noise. It should also be evident at that time if any construction overlap would occur, and further consideration on this matter could be applied at that time if required.

Aquind Recommendation No13: Aquind have a concern that the sunlight reflection from the panels could heat up the proposed Converter Station building if the panels are not covered with an anti-reflective coating (AFC). Furthermore, even if Anti Reflective Coating panels, are used, Aquind still maintain a concern that light reflection will heat up the Converter Station building, and they ask for further details and examination of this matter.

LPA Response: As noted by Aquind, the applicant's Glint and Glare Assessment states that the study is based on the assumption that Anti-Reflective Coating panels are to be installed. For this reason alone, before even considering the merits of the Aquind concern, it is felt appropriate to impose a condition (No. 21) that includes a stipulation that only this type of panel is used on site. Any subsequent replacements panels during the life of the solar farm should also conform to this specification.

Regarding the Aquind request that even if Anti Reflective panels are used, further detail is still required to show that heating up of the Converter Station building will not occur, without some clear evidence to support this claim, the LPA is not minded imposing such a condition. Aquind have been asked to support this claim with some empirical evidence if they wish the LPA to consider this matter further. If additional information is submitted, then it will be considered. To date, nothing further has been submitted.

Based on the exchange of messages with Aquind it is considered that all the recommendation they have put forward have been addressed or responded to.

Economic Impact

There is reference within submitted documents to the employment of 60-70 construction workers on an average day during the 7-month construction period. There will be range of roles required during the construction phase, some of which could result in local employment opportunities. It is accepted that the PV panels and other specialist equipment is unlikely to be sourced locally. Whilst the installation is also likely to be undertaken by fitters from the supplying company, there is potential for these workers to be staying in the local area and spending money in the local economy during the 7-month construction phase. There are other elements of the work that could benefit local firms such as the ground works and the substantial planting and its ongoing maintenance which will stretch into the 40-year operation phase.

To maximise local opportunities, it is proposed to seek a planning condition (Condition 20) that would require an Employment and Skills plan from the developer. This is a mechanism through which the applicant would set out actions to favour local companies, apprentices, or develop links with educational facilities. Links to educational institutes also offer the potential for students to gain an understanding of renewables and the economics and locational requirements of solar farms to be disseminated to future generations.

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

The applicant has confirmed that the farm holding remains a viable operation. The application will result in a new income stream to the farm business. There is the potential for the farm to be engaged in the future management of the solar farm managing the sheep grazing or in the planting and management of the landscaping. The provision of the skylark plots on another part of the farmland is small in size and not considered to represent a significant secondary impact on future arable farming.

Third parties have raised a concern that the presence of a solar farm would have an adverse impact on the viability of a number of Bed & Breakfasts that operate within the area. Reference has been made to activities at Shrover Hall, Lower Chapters Crossways Road and Lovedean Granary on the corner of Broadway Lane and Crossways Road. None of these operations lie immediately adjacent any of the areas of panels that are under consideration. Shrover lies 350m from Area 7 (WCC) and 160m from Area 8 (EHDC), Lower Chapters is 200m from Area 6 and Lovedean Granary is 480m from Area 4. Lovedean Granary is part of the cluster of properties around the Broadway Farm entrance off Broadway Lane so would share the access for the 7-month construction period.

As noted in this report, the presence of the panels will change the character of the immediate area, but no adverse impact is considered to result to the living environment or amenities of residents at any of the properties referred to above. The NPPF part 6 includes a section on supporting a prosperous rural economy through diversification and the retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities. Given the separation distance and the absence of any persuasive evidence of harm, it is not considered that the presence of the solar farm would have an adverse impact on the business. In the absence of any persuasive evidence to the contrary, this matter is afforded limited weight.

Matters Raised by Objectors or Supporters Not Considered Above.

National Grid have been offered the opportunity to comment on the application. Their most recent comment in response to the third consultation round was to seek the overlay of their plans outlining the exclusion zones around their assets (pylons & lines) to ensure they maintained easements and access, as well as controlling nearby planting. National Grid were placed in direct contact with the applicant to resolve any outstanding issues. No further comment has been received and the applicant has confirmed this has been resolved.

The application has attracted a substantial number of letters of objection. The scheme has also attracted a large number of letters in support. All the matters raised in the letters have been reviewed and considered when forming the recommendation. Some points remain outstanding and will be addressed below.

Some objectors have asked that the decommissioning is secured through a financial bond and if this is not forthcoming that the application is refused. There is no national or local policy to support such an action. If an issue did arise at the decommissioning stage, the approach to be adopted at the time would be to seek a remedy from the applicant and if that does not result in the desired outcome, then the Council could seek a resolution from the landowner. Having reviewed the request, it is not considered appropriate to seek a decommissioning bond.

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

Disposal of the panels will be undertaken in accordance with the relevant regulatory background at the time.

One objector has raised the question if this scheme should be treated as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP). This would mean it should be determined under the procedures set out in the Planning Act 2008, with the final decision made by the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero and not by the two district councils. It is also questioned how the scheme will be kept below the threshold in the future. The point when a scheme must be considered as an NSIP is 50MW and this scheme at 49.9MW falls below that threshold. Accordingly, WCC and East Hants are the correct determining bodies in this instance. Regarding the concern that the power output from the site may increase in the future and go above the threshold, this is addressed in the Planning Balance and Conclusion section below with a proposal to apply a limitation on output.

Some objectors have listed large numbers of planning policies from both LPP1 and LPP2 which they state the proposal is in conflict with. These are outlined in the objector's part of the representation section of this report. Many issues referred to in one policy can also appear in other policies so a high degree of cross referencing exists. Officers are content that the full range of issues has been covered in this report and that all the relevant policies have been taken into account in reaching the decision. Other objectors have referred to the scheme being in conflict with the Rural Communities Act 2006 and the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, but no references are offered to the relevant sections of these acts where the conflict is said to exist. The Council is content that the relevant planning policies have been applied to the determination of this application.

Other points raised by objectors include questioning the veracity of the supporting documents, a lack of community engagement, that the panels are made in China and their manufacturing and transportation are not included as part of any carbon benefit calculation, that solar technology will be redundant in 10 years, questions over how the panels will be disposed of, that a legal agreement is needed to stop reinstatement of any battery storage element, that wildlife might mistake panels for water and finally, that the red line does not match up with all the drawings and it is not clear if the landscaping is all within the application site.

In response, the supporting documents and reports have been prepared by competent people and at the last consultation round none of the formal consultees questioned the content of any document. The applicant has run two community engagement events, one before the application was first submitted and the last one before the submission of the final revised plans. Regarding the manufacture of the panels, it is not part of the planning process to nominate sources of materials or equipment. In the event the technology does become redundant in ten years, then it will be up to the operator to decide if they wish to prematurely cease the use of the site. In the event of an early cessation, the decommissioning condition will be triggered and the site return to agricultural use earlier than anticipated. Concerning disposal of panels, that will be covered by the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment recycling regulations in force at that time. On the question of a legal agreement to stop the reinstatement of the battery storage element, there is no justification to remove from the applicant or landowner the ability to apply for a battery storage scheme in the future. If such an application were made, it would be subject to the relevant policy considerations at that time. Regarding the concern over birds mistaking the reflection of panels as water and diving into them, a 2017 Natural England study (Evidence review of the impact of solar farms on birds, bats and general ecology)

Case No: 22/00447/FUL

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

reported that the risk of bird collision with panels is very low. A 2021 Wildlife Society article on this subject found limited evidence to support the contention that birds are diving into solar panels.

Concerning the point made about the red line and a question over whether the landscaping is all within the application site, no inconsistency in the red line and the landscaping has been identified. The offset of the red line from the field boundaries at the northern end of the site has been noted and forms part of the assessment undertaken by officers.

One objector has expressed a concern about sharing the access with the development off Broadway Lane. The existing farm entrance is also shared with a number of residential properties. Any dispute over a shared access is a civil matter between the relevant parties.

Supporters of the proposal have put forward that the scheme will provide 6% of the district's electricity demand and that the district has a high level of energy use, so it does need to make a contribution to power generation. They also draw attention to the WCC goal of carbon neutrality and the contribution this will make.

Equality

Due regard should be given to the Equality Act 2010: Public Sector Equality Duty. Public bodies need to consciously think about the three aims of the Equality Duty as part of the process of decision-making. The weight given to the Equality Duty, compared to the other factors, will depend on how much that function affects discrimination, equality of opportunity and good relations and the extent of any disadvantage that needs to be addressed. The Local Planning Authority has given due regard to this duty and the considerations do not outweigh any matters in the exercise of our duty.

Planning Balance and Conclusion.

Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and paragraph 47 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2023) requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

In accordance with paragraph 47 of the NPPF (2023), the consideration of the local planning policy framework has shown that there is general support in principle for this type of renewable energy proposal subject to the consideration of other relevant planning policies. This position is also supported by the government targets relating to carbon reduction and the production of renewable energy. When considering the locational requirements for a scheme of this size, it is considered that a case is made for a countryside location and the applicant has provided information that shows the selection of this site is based on a sound and realistic assessment of alternatives. The deliverability of the scheme in terms of the connection agreement and the broader context of the push for renewable energy generation means that this should be afforded substantial weight in any decision.

Although the application site is located within the countryside, there are scattered residential properties in the surrounding area. The proposal has no tall structures or

Case No: 22/00447/FUL

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

moving parts that could adversely overwhelm any of the nearby properties. Accordingly, the nature of the proposal and the separation distances mean that there is no adverse impact on the living environment of these properties. The site does contain equipment with the potential to generate noise but the separation distances and the intention to impose noise conditions mean there is no unacceptable adverse impact on any noise sensitive receptor. Additional concerns have been raised over the potential impact from low frequency noise but the advice from the formal consultees is that an adverse impact will not result.

A glint and glare analysis has been undertaken which concluded that no adverse impact will result from the development. This analysis has been reviewed for the Council by a consultant. The consultant's review considered the methodology to be sound but sought clarification on several points. The applicant has responded, and the Council's consultant has accepted the response based on the current approach adopted by the industry. One of the action points was to seek a view from the Highway Engineer on the limited duration for potential for glint and glare impact on traffic at the junction of the Shrover access road and Anmore Lane. The applicant commissioned a review by their consultant who confirmed that any impact could be mitigated by the proposed planting on the land to the west of Anmore Lane. The Highway Engineer has accepted this resolution. As that land lies within the East Hampshire part of the site, WCC will need to secure this screen planting through the 106 agreement. Given the assessment as outlined above, general impacts on residential amenity are rated as neutral in the decision.

The general issues relating to transport have been considered within the report. An Outline Construction Traffic Management Plan accompanies the application. A routing strategy is proposed for HGVs to keep traffic off the local roads except those nominated sections. Works to create passing bays on Day Lane form part of the application under consideration by East Hampshire. Banksmen will be used on the last section as HGVs approach the farm access off Broadway Lane. Loads to the satellite sites of Areas 1 2 & 3 will be by tractor and trailer units using the local roads. Workmen will be transported by minibus. Areas 4, 5 6 & 7 will be served by an internal roadway. A temporary roadway across Crossways Road will be formed to service Areas 6, 7 & 8. Having sought some clarification and received additional detail in the form of a revised Outline Construction Traffic Management Plan (OTCMP), the Highway Engineer raises no objection subject to the submission of a final CTMP and then implementing the actions set out in that document. There will be additional traffic movements on local roads and whilst these can be managed in an acceptable way, the presence of additional vehicle movements must have a small impact on existing road users. This factor has limited negative weight in any decision.

The proposal to bring forward a permissive footpath for the life of the scheme is a positive action. Whilst the permissive footpath does offer a new link to the local footpath network it must be acknowledged that the route is more functional in nature and does not offer as positive a benefit as it would if walking in a more open environment. The provision of the permissive footpath is afforded limited positive weight.

A safe and satisfactory means of access from the public highway to serve the site must be established. The vehicle access to serve the whole site is to be formed within the East Hampshire part of the application site and will require certain works to operate safely. As WCC cannot condition this, it is proposed that a general clause is contained within the

Case No: 22/00447/FUL

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

legal agreement that the approved access is formed before any work commences within the WCC part of the site.

The current use of the site as part of an intensive arable rotation limits its contribution to biodiversity. The field boundaries presently form the most interesting elements, although some of these are not within the red lined application site. These boundary features do not exhibit any signs of active management to enhance their value beyond general maintenance. The submitted detail notes the current activity of farming right up to the field boundaries. Excluding a section of hedgerow approximately 10m long to be removed to form an access between Areas 6 & 7, and the work to establish the temporary crossing over Crossways Road, the field boundaries within the red lined application site are to be retained and to remain untouched with any hedgerow gaps planted up. Significant planting is proposed around the boundaries of the main site with the ground under the panels seeded with a wildlife mix to promote its biodiversity value. The land within the fenced off areas will be sown with a Special Old Fashioned grazing mixture and managed by grazing with sheep. The ground outside the fenced off areas will be managed in a way that reflects its conservation status. Further planting is proposed around the location of the substation.

Figures provided by the applicant show an improvement in biodiversity for the whole site of a 53% increase in habitat units and a 56% increase in hedgerow units. (based on use of metric 4.0). A breakdown of these figures shows that 73% or 3.3km of the new hedgerows and 75% or 3.42ha of the new woodland would take place within the WCC part of the application site. The reinforcement to the perimeter vegetation is considered to have the potential to represent a long-term improvement to landscape character. The applicant has agreed to contribute to the resources needed to monitor the Landscape Environment Management Plan that would guide actions on site over the life of the development and ensure the targeted improvements are reached. This would be secured through a legal agreement. Given the circumstances outlined above, the positive biodiversity outcomes associated with the scheme are given significant weight in the decision.

The development is not occupied so no foul water generation will arise. Nor will the site generate any additional clean wastewater flow from the site. Questions over water management in terms of ensuring measures to regulate the flow of surface water off the site have been addressed and the relevant consultee raised no objection. Initial concerns over pollution risk of the underlying drinking water supply have been addressed through the removal of the battery energy storage system. Residents still raise concerns over this matter and seek further safeguards by nominating the type of PV panels to be installed on the site. However, the relevant consultee does not support such an action and in light of their advice there is considered to be no justification for the LPA to impose such a condition on the applicant. It is proposed to use conditions to ensure that any surface water entering the ground does not add to the risk of contaminating the underlying water aquifer. Measures to deal with surface water are considered to offer the potential to help mitigate local flood issues. Overall, the groundwater/drainage issue is considered to be neutral in the planning balance.

The proposed site access and roadways will be capable of accommodating an emergency vehicle and the provision of information boards or Premises Information Boxes will provide essential information in the event of an incident. This issue is afforded neutral weight in the planning balance.

Case No: 22/00447/FUL

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

The definition of Best and Most Versatile (BMV) land is set out in the NPPF as grades 1, 2 and 3a. Within the WCC part of the site the land has been given the overall assessment as containing only grade 3b land. This does ignore two small pockets of grade 3a ground. However, the point has been made by the applicant that the fields are farmed on the basis of their overall quality. Accordingly, the assessment of the WCC part of the site on the basis it is grade 3b is justified. The amount of land lost to food production in the wider context is considered low and acceptable. Both of these issues have been accorded due weight in the context of the recent government statement on protecting the best agricultural land. They are rated as neutral in the planning balance.

Turning to heritage matters, there are a number of grade II listed buildings in the locality and they have a relationship with their surrounding agricultural landscape, which does include their settings. For the reasons set out above in the main body of the report the proposal is in conflict with policy CP20 (Heritage and Landscape Character). However, the NPPF and more recent caselaw sets out a scale for the consideration of impacts on heritage assets. For those listed buildings within the WCC area, the Heritage Officer's assessment of the overall impact resulting from the proposal is considered to be at less than substantial harm. Ludmore Cottages which lies to the north east of Area 2 lies within East Hampshire and their Conservation Officer assesses the degree of impact as minimal. The East Hampshire Conservation Officer also refers to the presence of three other listed buildings on Lovedean Lane and rates the impact of the development on them as negligible. Given the separation distances from these listed buildings to any part of the WCC application site and in the case of the three properties on Lovedean Lane, the presence of intervening buildings and landscape features, it is considered appropriate to apply the same overall impact of the development on these listed buildings that is applied to those in the Winchester district which is less than substantial harm.

The conclusion of the level of harm to the listed buildings is at a level of less than substantial. This is at the bottom of the scale of impact. This does not mean that no impact would occur, and it carries substantial weight in decision making. The requirement is to make a judgement on the scale of the impact. When the impact is classified at less than substantial, NPPF paragraph 208 allows the harm to be weighed against the public benefit of the proposal. That judgement will be undertaken below.

Whilst the site is recognised as potentially containing archaeological evidence, it is considered that the development could proceed following an appropriate site investigation before any other work is undertaken. This approach is recommended by the Archaeological officer from WCC and supported by their colleague at HCC who commented on behalf of East Hampshire. This will be secured by condition. This issue is afforded neutral weight in the planning balance.

The scheme is considered to attract limited economic benefits. Concerns have been raised over the potential impact on local B&B businesses. The nature of the scheme and public attitudes to the presence of solar farms are reflected in the level of representation received both for and against the application. When considering the separation distance and other factors, there is not considered to be any persuasive evidence to support the concern regarding the potential impact on the businesses. On the positive side, the Employment and Skills Plan will secure the opportunity for local firms and educational establishments to benefit from the scheme. When considering there are benefits and potential negative

Case No: 22/00447/FUL

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

impacts relating to the economic benefits, this issue is given moderate positive weight in the planning balance.

The site does not lie within any landscape designated area. Nevertheless, it does have some character traits which are set out in the Landscape Character Assessment document. Part of the site lies adjacent to the South Downs National Park. Other parts of the site are not contiguous to the NP but lie in close proximity to its boundary. NPPF paragraph 183 sets out that “development within the setting of a National Park should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas”.

It is accepted that the scheme will change the character of the site itself, its immediate surroundings and affect the visual amenity that people experience when crossing the area. The main impact on people is considered to occur to those using the PRoW network but an assessment of this impact is considered to result in limited impact within the WCC part of the site. Views from the surrounding road network are limited into the site or when the site would also be seen as part of a wider view that includes elements of the National Park. Even after the proposed planting is established, a degree of change will still be evident. The exclusion of the field boundary features as part of the red line application site in Areas 1, 2 & 3 is not considered fundamental.

The site does lie in close proximity to the National Park. As such any change in its character would have a negative impact on the setting of the National Park. However, as evident from the National Park Authority’s own website it must be acknowledged that the immediately surrounding land is not ranked as high quality in terms of tranquillity or dark skies. The localised impact means that any harm will be confined to the immediate site itself and the very close surrounding area.

The identified harm to the landscape in general and to the setting of the NP means the scheme does not comply with the final part of LPP1 policy MTRA4 (Development in the Countryside), CP19 (South Downs National Park), CP20 (Heritage and Landscape Character). and LPP2 policy DM23 (Rural Character). This must be given significant weight and importance when reaching a decision.

The use is temporary and the whole site would revert back to agriculture after 40 years. Furthermore, the decommissioning conditions do seek to retain any element of the new planting (which will have matured by that time) which are considered to reinforce landscape character.

The public benefits from the proposal are considered to be the contribution made towards renewable energy generation that would assist in reaching the UK’s Carbon reduction target.

The Council also has its own zero carbon target of 2030, following the declaration of a Climate Emergency in June 2019. However, that goal is not supported at the present time by any adopted planning policy. The scheme would also reinforce home security of energy supply and secure significant biodiversity enhancements. Securing renewable energy from scheme of this size is considered to justify a rating of positive substantial weighting and the biodiversity enhancements are considered to carry significant positive weight in the final decision.

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

The assessment of heritage assets, paragraph 208 of the NPPF indicates that the ranking of less than substantial harm should be weighed against public benefits which are considered to include the securing of renewable energy and the biodiversity gains. The goal of carbon reduction in energy generation is viewed as an important national target to prevent the negative impacts of climate change on society. This is considered to afford substantial weight in support of the scheme. It is also recognised that the land will revert back to an agricultural use at the end of the life of the solar farm with the soil having rested from the intensive arable use for the intervening period. When the clear and substantial positive public benefits of the scheme are weighed against the landscape impacts at both the local level and those on the setting of the National Park, as well as against the less than substantial harm to heritage assets, the balance is considered by officers to favour support for the application. This is notwithstanding the acknowledged conflict with landscape policies MTRA4 (Development in the Countryside), CP20 (Heritage and Landscape Character) and DM23 (Rural Character) and the conflict with Heritage policy CP20 (Heritage and Landscape Policy). The following conditions are proposed to support the assessment and outcome of the planning balance as outlined above: 03 (Operational Life and Decommissioning), 04 (Early Cessation), 12 (CEMP), 18 (Soil Management Plan), 26 (Landscape), 27 (Biodiversity Management Plan), 32 (LEMP) and the legal agreement.

This assessment is reached having taken full account of information submitted as part of application which includes the Environmental Statement, Section (a) of para 180 of the NPPF (2023), Policy MTRA4, Policy CP19 & CP20 of WDLPP1 and policy DM23 of WDLPP2 and having regard to the comments made by the Denmead Parish Council, the Council's Landscape and Historic Environment Officers, the South Downs National Park Authority and external parties.

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 Section 38(6) requires that a determination is made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The development complies with a number of development plan policies, as identified above. There is a conflict with policies MTRA4 CP19, CP20 and DM23 as a result of the impact on the landscape, the National Park and heritage assets referred to above but, given the outcome of the assessment recommended in the NPPF and the consideration of all the benefits of the scheme set out above it is considered that there are material considerations which outweigh the non-compliance with some policies of the development plan. Therefore, whilst this conflict has been considered, it does not warrant refusal of the application in this instance. Accordingly, when making the planning balance, and after consideration of the application against the full extent of the policy framework, the application is considered acceptable. As such the officer's recommendation is to grant planning permission.

Use of Planning Conditions and Planning Obligations/Agreements

The planning conditions have been worked up drawing on the comments of the consultees and following discussions with the applicant and with colleagues at East Hampshire DC. The fact that the scheme straddles the district boundary adds a further layer of consideration if the application is supported. Matters to be considered include the following:

- whether there are aspects associate with the scheme which need to be secured through a legal agreement or by the use of a planning condition.

Case No: 22/00447/FUL

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

- whether there are certain conditions that should only be applied to the Winchester part of the site.
- whether there any issues/impacts on the Winchester side that need to be addressed through the imposition of restrictions in any permission issued by East Hampshire.
- Whether WCC needs to apply any restrictions to parts of the proposal within its area to safeguard from impacts arising within the East Hampshire part of the application site.

Having regard to the guidance on the use of a legal agreement it is considered that the following matters should be secured through a legal agreement:

1. The framework for the long-term monitoring of the LEMP that is intended to achieve the Biodiversity Net Gain within the site and the financial contribution towards this work

It is also proposed to secure the LEMP through the legal agreement and a contribution towards the resources necessary to participate in the ongoing monitoring of the performance of the LEMP over the life of the site. The applicant accepts the need for the arrangements to secure the long-term monitoring and a payment for the WCC time over the 12 review events in the life of the site. The possibility of a one-off single payment has been raised rather than a series of individual payments after each review.

2. That the export capacity of the overall solar farm does not exceed the 49.9MW threshold set out in the regulations.

A scheme above this level should be considered as an NSIP and not determined by the local planning authorities. The applicant has submitted information to indicate they will operate below this threshold and so a decision can be made by the respective LPAs. The application refers to a scheme with a maximum output of 49.9MW. This is effectively a ceiling. Information submitted as part of the application shows the number of panels and the output of the candidate panel that could be used. Multiplying these two together (91,840 x 540W) comes out with a figure of 49.59MW. It is important that the 49.9MW level is not exceeded. As this figure applies to the whole site it is considered that the most appropriate way to achieve this is through a joint legal agreement between WCC, EDHC and the applicant. The maximum combined capacity of installed inverters (measured in Alternating Current) should not result in the export of electricity above the level of 49.9MW.

A planning condition can also be used to lock in the capacity of the PV panels and the AC output capacity of the individual inverters to be installed. This means higher capacity units cannot then be installed which would raise the overall capacity above the threshold.

3. That the Day Lane temporary improvement works and the main vehicle access off Broadway Lane are established before any work is commenced within any part of the site that is located within the WCC part of the application site.

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

As noted within the application, WCC does not have control over the location of the highway improvement works on Day Lane or the main vehicle access into the site on Broadway Lane. Both of these are in the East Hampshire area. It would not be appropriate for WCC to approve a scheme which does not have a satisfactory and safe vehicle access. It is therefore proposed to require through the legal agreement that the connection to the public highway is established before any development is commenced on that part of the site which falls within the WCC area.

4 The creation of 4 Skylark plots

There is strong evidence to believe that skylarks are present on the site. The provision of mitigation via the creation of skylark plots is possible on a part of the site which lies north of Crossways Road and is no longer shown as accommodating any panels. As this land is within East Hampshire, it is not possible for WCC to use a planning condition to bring this forward and the provision needs to be secured through the legal agreement.

5 The planting on the west side of Anmore Lane as shown on Pegasus Environment drawing entitled Figure 6.6 Landscape Master Plan Sheet 5 drawing number P21-0899.009 Revision Q 22 May September 2024.to mitigate the impact from Glint and Glare on road users and on residents at Shrover. The planting to take place at the earliest opportunity

As outlined in the section above on Glint and Glare, there is one elements of the scheme within the WCC area that requires mitigation planting on land which falls within East Hampshire. It would be beneficial if this planting took place at the earliest opportunity. The applicant considers that this planting can be secured through a condition applied by East Hampshire for the same reasons as outlined above with regard to the skylark mitigation, it would not be appropriate to rely on East Hampshire covering this via a condition and it needs to be secured through the legal agreement.

In seeking the planning obligation to cover the issues outlined above, the Local Planning Authority has had regard to the tests laid down in para 57 of the NPPF and CIL regulation 122 which requires the obligations to be necessary; relevant to planning; directly related to the proposed development; fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the proposed development and reasonable in all other respects.

Regarding the use of conditions, the Local Planning Authority has had regard to the guidance on the use of conditions laid down in Section 70 (1) (a) of the Act, and the 6 tests set out in paragraph 56 of the NPPF.

Both the draft set of conditions and the proposed contents of the legal agreement have been discussed with the applicant and shared with colleagues at East Hampshire. A number of the consultees have asked for conditions to be imposed if the application is granted. Officers have used these requests as a foundation to development the set of recommended condition set out below.

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

Recommendation:

Permit subject to:

(a) The completion of a legal agreement to secure the following:

1. The LEMP as set out in condition 26 and the recovery of costs associated with the monitoring of the LEMP every five years, (after Establishment) over the 40-year life of the development.
2. The combined maximum inverter capacity measured in Alternating Current (AC) shall not allow the export of electricity from the entire application site above the level of 49.9MW.
3. That no development commences within the WCC part of the application site until the applicant has implemented the improvements to Day Lane and the access proposals off Broadway Lane.
4. Securing the implementation, maintenance, and retention for the life of the scheme the planting along Anmore Lane to minimise the potential for glint and glare impact on the road users and the properties at Shrover.
5. Skylark plot mitigation.

And (b) the following conditions:

Conditions

Time Period

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

Reason: comply with the provisions of Section 91 (1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

Approved Plans

02. Unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority, the development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:
- Enso Energy drawing entitled Site Location Plan': drawing number LN-01-P01 Revision 02 - Sheet 1 of 2 dated 5 July 2024.
 - Cero/Enso Energy drawing entitled Proposed Site Plan drawing numbers
 - DM2.0 Rev 13A Sheet 1 of 3
 - DM2.0 Rev 13A Sheet 2 of 3 and
 - DM2.0 Revision 13A Sheet 3 of 3,all dated 5 March 2024.
 - Pegasus Environment drawing entitled Figure 6.6 Landscape Master Plan Sheets 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5 drawing number P21-0899.009 Revision Q dated 22 May 2024.
 - Cero/Enso Energy drawing entitled PV Elevations drawing number DM3.0 Revision 02, dated 10th October 2021.
 - Cero/Enso Energy drawing entitled Inverter Transformer Stations drawing number DM4.0 Revision 01, dated 5th August 2021.

Case No: 22/00447/FUL

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

- Cero/Enso Energy drawing entitled Internal Access Road Detail drawing number DM5.0 Revision 01, dated 5th August 2021.
- Cero/Enso Energy drawing entitled Fence and Gate Elevations drawing number DM6.0 Revision 01, dated 5th August 2021
- Cero/Enso Energy drawing entitled Storage Container Elevations drawing number DM13.0 Revision 01 dated 5 August 2021.
- Cero/Enso Energy drawing entitled Weather Station Detail drawing number DM7.0 Revision 01, dated 5th August 2021.
- Cero/Enso Energy drawing entitled Substation Elevations drawing number DM8.0 Rev 01, dated 5th August 2021.
- Cero/Enso Energy drawing entitled Control Room Elevations drawing number DM9.0 Rev 01, dated 5th August 2021.
- Cero/Enso Energy drawing entitled Auxiliary Transformer drawing number DM10.0 Revision 01, dated 5th August 2021.
- Cero/Enso Energy drawing entitled CCTV Elevations drawing number DM11.0 Rev 02, dated 10th October 2021.
- Cero/Enso Energy drawing entitled Storage Container Elevations 40ft drawing number DM13.0 Revision 01, dated 5th August 2021.
- Cero/Enso Energy drawing entitled Cable Arrangement drawing number LN-01-P15, dated 11th November 2022.
- Cero/Enso Energy drawing entitled Permissive Footpath Plan & Cross Section drawing number LN-01-P17 Revision 01 dated 7 September 2023.
- Transport Planning Associates drawing entitled New Crossing Of Unnamed Road (Construction Phase) drawing number SK02 Revision D dated 18 July 2023.
- Transport Planning Associates drawing entitled Proposed Site Access Arrangement- Old Mill Lane (Northern Access) drawing number SK03 revision E dated 18 July 2023.
- Transport Planning Associates drawing entitled Proposed Site Access Arrangement- Old Mill Lane (Southern Access) drawing number SK04 revision D dated 18 July 2023.
- Transport Planning Associates drawing entitled Existing Operational Access Crossing of Unnamed Road Near Highfield Cottage drawing number SK08 revision A dated 23 August 2023.
- Cero/Enso Energy drawing entitled Area Plan drawing number LP-01-P18 dated 12 February 2023.

For the avoidance of any doubt, any residual presence of any superseded plan or superseded detail in any document does not imply any consent for the detail shown on that plan.

For the avoidance of any doubt, the extent of the footprint of PV panels approved under this permission is that confined to within the fenced off areas as shown on the approved proposed site plans listed above.

For the avoidance of any doubt, the use of the term "Areas" in any condition refers to the fields or parts of field annotated as Areas 1 to 8 on the approved plans.

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

Reason: For certainty and to ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans and details.

Operational life and Decommissioning

03 The development hereby permitted shall cease on or before the expiry of a 40-year period from the date of the first export of electricity. The land shall thereafter be restored to its former condition in accordance with a scheme of decommissioning work (the 'Decommissioning Scheme'). The Decommissioning Scheme shall include:

- The removal of the solar panels and all associated above ground works.
- The management and timing of the work.
- A traffic management plan to address likely traffic impact issues during the decommissioning period.
- An archaeological management plan including a methodology to confirm that any features identified in the application or during the pre-commencement review and field work, are also protected during any decommissioning works.
- An environmental management plan to include details of measures to be taken during the decommissioning period to protect wildlife and habitats and elements of the planting/habitat to be retained.
- Details of site restoration and aftercare.
- An implementation timetable.

The Decommissioning Scheme shall be submitted no later than 39 years and 6 months from the date of the first commercial export of electricity and subsequently implemented as approved.

Reason: To ensure that the site is restored in the long-term interests of the visual character of the surrounding area to comply with policy DM23 of the Winchester District Local Plan Part 2 and that the effects of site decommissioning on the highway network is mitigated in the interests of highway safety in accordance with policy DM18 of the Winchester District Local Plan Part 2.

Early Cessation

04 In the event the Solar Farm ceases to generate electricity for commercial export to the grid for a continuous period of 12 months prior to the end of the 40 year operational period (Condition 3), and unless otherwise agreed in writing with the local planning authority, a scheme of early decommissioning works (the 'Early Decommissioning Scheme') shall be submitted to the local planning authority within 3 months of the end of the 12 month cessation period. The Early Decommissioning Scheme shall include:

- The removal of the solar panels and all associated above ground works.
- The management and timing of the work.
- A traffic management plan to address likely traffic impact issues during the decommissioning period.
- An archaeological management plan including a methodology to confirm that any features identified in the application or during the pre-commencement review and field work, are also protected during any decommissioning works.

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

- An environmental management plan to include details of measures to be taken during the decommissioning period to protect wildlife and habitats and elements of the planting/habitat to be retained.
- Details of site restoration and after care.
- An implementation timetable.

The Early Decommissioning Scheme shall subsequently be implemented as approved.

Reason: To ensure that the site is restored in the long-term interests of the visual character of the surrounding area to comply with policy DM23 of the Winchester District Local Plan Part 2 and that the effects of site decommissioning on the highway network is mitigated in the interests of highway safety in accordance with policy DM18 of the Winchester District Local Plan Part 2.

Notification of First Commercial Export Date

05. Notification of the date of first commercial export of electricity shall be given in writing to the local planning authority within 1 month of the date of first commercial export occurring.

Reason: To ensure that the trigger time for other actions is recorded.

Surface Water

06. No development shall commence until such time as a surface water drainage scheme (the 'Drainage Scheme') based on sustainable drainage principles and the Outline SuDs Design Drawing NEO00909_002I_B Rev C dated 6th September 2024, has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. The Drainage Scheme shall include:

- Infiltration test results undertaken in accordance with BRE365.
- Detailed drainage plans to include type, layout and dimensions of drainage features.
- Detailed drainage calculations to demonstrate existing runoff rates are not exceeded and there is sufficient attenuation for storm events up to and including 1:100 + climate change.
- Confirmation that sufficient water quality measures have been included to satisfy the methodology in the Ciria SuDS Manual C753.
- Exceedance plans demonstrating the flow paths and areas of ponding in the event of blockages or storms events exceeding design criteria.
- Details of how the scheme shall be maintained and managed after completion of construction for the operational life.

The Drainage Scheme shall subsequently be implemented prior to the first commercial export of electricity generated and maintained as approved.

Reason: To ensure that any surface water drainage arrangements do not harm the ground water resource, the inner Source Protection Zone for the strategically significant Bedhampton and Havant Springs public water supply abstraction. This water supply is of high strategic significance, and to comply with policies DM17 & DM19 of the Winchester District Local Plan Part 2.

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

Karstic Solution Features

07. No development shall commence until such time as an assessment for the potential presence of karstic solution features on site and the associated risk to groundwater has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. No building or structure, including surface water drainage infrastructure, shall be located within a 10 m buffer zone surrounding any identified karstic solution feature, unless appropriate mitigation measures are provided. The development shall be implemented in accordance with any agreed mitigation measures.

Reason: The ground water resource underlying the site is the strategically significant Bedhampton and Havant Springs public water supply abstraction. Numerous karstic solution features have been identified in the zone. To maintain the integrity of the water supply an investigation is necessary to sure that there are no higher risk features in proximity to a Karstic solution features and to comply with policies DM17 & DM19 of the Winchester District Local Plan Part 2.
sk features in proximity to a Karstic solution features and to comply with policies DM17 & DM19 of the Winchester District Local Plan Part 2.

Archaeology

08. No development or any works of site preparation shall take place until the applicant or their agents or successors in title have implemented a programme of archaeological assessment (comprising trial trenching) in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation that has been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority in writing.

Reason: To assess the extent, nature and date of any archaeological deposits that might be present and the impact of the development upon these heritage assets. Policy DM26 Winchester District Local Plan Part 2; Policy CP20 of the Winchester District Joint Core Strategy

Archaeology

09. No development or any works of site preparation shall take place until the applicant or their agents or successors in title have implemented a programme of archaeological mitigation works, based on the results of the trial trenching, in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation that has been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority in writing. No development or site preparation shall take place other than in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation approved by the LPA. The Written Scheme of Investigation shall include:
- The programme and methodology of site investigation and recording.
 - Provision for post investigation assessment, reporting and dissemination
 - Provision to be made for deposition of the analysis and records of the site investigation (archive)
 - Nomination of a competent person or persons/organisation to undertake the works set out within the Written Scheme of Investigation.
 - Reason: To mitigate the effect of the development upon any heritage assets and to ensure that information regarding these heritage assets is preserved

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

by record for future generations. Policy DM26 Winchester District Local Plan Part 2; Policy CP20 of the Winchester District Joint Core Strategy.

Archaeology

10. Following completion of all archaeological fieldwork, within 12 months (unless
- otherwise agreed in writing) a report will be produced in accordance with an approved programme including where appropriate post-excavation assessment, specialist analysis and reports and publication. The report shall be submitted to and approved by the local authority.

Reason: To ensure that evidence from the historic environment contributing to our knowledge and understanding of our past is captured and made publicly available. Policy DM26 Winchester District Local Plan Part 2; Policy CP20 of the Winchester District Local Plan Part 1 Joint Core Strategy.

Protection of Archaeological Assets

- 11 Details of mitigation measures as needed for the preservation in situ of archaeological features identified in the application or during pre-commencement archaeological assessment and phases of intrusive site investigations should be submitted for written approval prior to the commencement of construction or other enabling works within the development area or other associated compensatory works. A management plan for the ongoing protection of these features for the life of the consent should also be submitted for written approval prior to the commencement of works.

Reason: To protect in situ heritage assets and to comply with Policy DM26 Winchester District Local Plan Part 2; Policy CP20 of the Winchester District Joint Core Strategy.

Full Construction Traffic Management Plan

12. No development shall commence until such time as a final Construction Traffic Management Plan (the 'final CTMP'), based upon the Outline Construction Traffic Management Plan, dated July 2024, has been submitted to, and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The full Construction Traffic Management Plan shall include:
- The methodology for a road condition survey.
 - Confirmation of the proposed Construction Vehicle Routing.
 - Methodology and details for the Recording of HGV movements.
 - Proposed HGV delivery hours and methodology for their recording.
 - A Construction Worker Travel Plan.
 - Setting out a maximum number of staff expected to work on site.
 - Setting out a maximum number of HGV movements per working day.
 - Details of construction vehicle delivery management including restriction times during the working day on the movement of construction vehicles.
 - Details of the proposed temporary construction signage and the location where the signs will be displayed.
 - Details of wheel washing provision and locations.
 - Location of the site compound including facilities for vehicles to park, turn and enter the highway in a forward gear.
 - Location of satellite compounds.

Case No: 22/00447/FUL

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

- Location of onsite parking provision.
- Areas for storage of plant and materials used in constructing the Development.
- Arrangements for the installation and removal of the temporary construction access over the unnamed road as shown on Drawing SK02 Rev D including the timing for these actions and the reinstatement of the roadside hedgerows.
- Details for the establishment of the Old Mill Lane Northern and Southern access arrangements as shown on drawings SK03 Rev E and SK04 Rev D. This detail to include any improvements to the surfacing or kerbing of the accesses.
- Surface treatment of those sections of the PRow in those locations where the PRow is crossed by the internal traffic route during the construction and operational phases.
- Details of the internal site traffic management during the construction phase including the identification of those locations where construction traffic may interact with users of the PRow network.
- Details of the vehicle type, numbers, routes and traffic management to be adopted to move materials to Areas 1, 2 & 3 from the main site compound.
- Management details for the Public Rights of Way network within the Site having regard to the maintenance of unobstructed rights of way, vegetation management alongside the PRow and any drainage impacts on the network resulting from the development.
- An Implementation timetable for all the listed actions.

The development shall be implemented in accordance with the approved final CTMP.

Reason: To manage construction traffic in the interests of highway safety and in accordance with policy DM18 of the Winchester District Local Plan Part 2.

Limitation on Combined Traffic Movements

13 In the event that the AQUIND Interconnector DCO is granted, no commencement of the Solar Farm development hereby permitted shall be undertaken until a construction traffic management plan which provides for the joint arrangements for construction traffic management for both the development authorised by this planning permission and the AQUIND Development Consent Order, is submitted to and agreed in writing with the local planning authority.

The submission can take the form of a separate document or form part of the general CTMP required under condition 12 above.

The joint arrangements will set out the details and methodology for joint co-ordinated action that will ensure that the maximum number of HGV traffic movements (set out below) is not exceeded. The approved details shall be complied with thereafter at any time when the construction periods for the development of the solar farm and the AQUIND Interconnector overlap. The combined maximum number of HGV traffic movements from both the development of the solar farm and the Aquind Interconnector that may take place on any one day shall not exceed 71 two-way HGV movements (142 in total) of which those from the

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

Solar Farm development shall not exceed more than 15 two-way HGV movements (30 in total) per day

The development shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To manage construction traffic in the interests of highway safety and in accordance with policy DM18 of the Winchester District Local Plan Part 2

Restriction on Traffic Movements To/From Areas 5 & 6.

- 14 No vehicles of any type associated with the construction or operational phases of the development hereby permitted shall enter or exit directly from/to area 5 or 6 off or onto the unnamed lane (sometimes known as Crossways Lane). Access to and from Area 6 shall only be achieved via Area 5 and crossing the unnamed lane (sometimes known as Crossways Lane).

Reason: In the interests of Highway safety and in accordance with policy DM18 of the Winchester District Local Plan Part 2.

Roadway Construction Detail

- 15 Before development is commenced on any of the Areas, details of the internal road construction including any drainage measures shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The road construction details shall show that the surfaces are capable of accommodating a fire engine of 26 tonnes weight. The roadways shall then be constructed in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that the internal road network can function satisfactorily and to ensure that it can accommodate emergency vehicles.

Final Construction Environmental Management Plan

16. No development shall commence until such time as a final Construction Environmental Management Plan (the 'final CEMP') based upon the Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan, dated November 2022, has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. The final CEMP shall include:
- Pollution mitigation measures to be deployed during construction.
 - Details of the storage of any hazardous materials, chemicals and hydrocarbons on site during construction.
 - Details of the induction process or employee briefing to be undertaken daily, to ensure that staff are made fully aware of the sensitivity of the underlying ground conditions to the risk of pollution and of the contents of the Pollution and Emergency Management Plan.
 - Details of any temporary drainage infrastructure required during construction to manage overland runoff and prevent sediment movement or loss, having specific regard to any water entering the pits located within the site.
 - Details of the final piling methodology or any other foundation construction (using penetrative methods) to be used during construction. The methodology statement to include details of equipment, methodology, noise

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

mitigation measures, grout, control measures and monitoring to ensure no increase in risk to controlled waters or drinking supplies.

- Details relating to the establishment and removal of the site compounds to be established across the site including the timetable for their establishment and removal.
- Construction working hours.
- Details of dust suppression, mitigation and avoidance measures to be deployed during construction.
- Construction plant noise reduction measures, including if required detailed for the use of acoustic screens and enclosures, to be deployed.
- Storage of construction materials/chemicals and equipment.
- Details of the type of construction plant and equipment to be used.
- Details for the use of fences and barriers to protect adjacent land, footpaths and highways if required.
- Details setting out the methodology for those locations where cable laying crosses a PRow and how unobstructed use of the PRow will be maintained during any work.
- Details of the measures to be adopted in Area 2 to secure a minimum exclusion zone of 15m from the ancient woodland.
- Any actions required in respect of badger activity or presence on site or within the immediate vicinity.
- Details of the measures to be adopted to secure a minimum exclusion zone of 30m from any badger set.
- Details of waste storage and collection during construction.
- Means of pest control.
- Measures to protect the existing biodiversity of the site including any pre commencement meetings.
- A public communication strategy, including complaints procedure.

The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that all construction work in relation to the application does not cause materially harmful effects on nearby land, properties, businesses, and the wider environment.

Fencing and Gate Detail and Installation

- 17 Before any sections of the security fencing are installed, details of the fence gauge and the proposed location/spacing of the gates to be installed along the fence to allow larger mammals to enter and leave the fenced off areas shall be submitted to an approved in writing by the local planning authority. The location of the gates shall have regard to any existing animal runs that are evident. The submitted details shall also include a methodology regarding the construction of the security fencing with the objective of excluding any construction activity outside the fenced off areas to minimise any disturbance to the land and nearby hedgerows or trees.

Reason: To assist in the delivery of the landscape enhancements and the biodiversity net gain promoted as part of the scheme and to comply with policy DM23 of the Winchester DM26 Winchester District Local Plan Part 2 and policy CP16 of the Winchester District Local Plan Part 1 Joint Core Strategy.

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

Soil Management Plan

18. No development or other operations (including site preparation and any groundworks) shall commence until a Soils Management Plan has been submitted to and been approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The plan should set out the means to be used to protect soils during construction, operation, maintenance and decommissioning of the solar farm such that the objectives of the Landscape and Ecological Management Plan required by Condition 26 are not compromised and crop growing agricultural operations may resume following the operational life of the solar farm.

Reason: To ensure that the condition of the soil is retained, maintained and enhanced through the various phases in the life of the solar farm development and into its restoration at the cessation of the use.

Permissive Footpath Management Plan

19. No development shall commence until such a time as a Permissive Footpath Management Plan based on Drawing LN-01-P17 Rev 01, dated 7th September 2023, has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. The Permissive Footpath Management Plan shall include details of the precise routing, construction of any gates or similar, offsets, signage, surfacing, drainage and maintenance arrangements, together with a timetable for the provision of the permissive footpath following the first commercial export date. The approved Permissive Footpath Management Plan shall thereafter be implemented as approved and retained for the lifetime of the development.

Reason: To ensure that the proposed permissive footpath is delivered and maintained over the life of the solar farm and to comply with the intentions of policy CP10 of LPP1.

Employment and Skills Plan

20. No development shall commence until such time as an Employment and Skills Plan has been submitted to, and approved by, the local planning authority based upon the Winchester City Council Employment and Skills Template. The employment and skills plan will identify opportunities for access to work experience, employment, training and apprenticeships both directly and within the wider supply chain and the means for publicising such opportunities alongside engagement to be undertaken with educational institutions. The approved Employment and Skills Plan shall subsequently be implemented as approved.

Reason: To maximise economic, employment and engagement opportunities for the population of the district and to comply with the intentions of policy CP8 of LPP1.

Panel and Inverter Specification

- 21 Before any of the PV panels or Inverters are first installed within the site, the final manufacturer specifications including details of the maximum output (Watts) of the proposed panels to be installed including the dimensions of individual panels and the maximum output capacity of the inverters (AC) shall be submitted to and approved by the local planning authority. As part of the submitted details, confirmation shall be included to confirm only panels which have an anti-reflective coating shall be installed. Only the approved equipment shall be installed. Any

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

future replacements shall not exceed the nominated capacities. Any replacement panels must also have an anti-reflective coating.

Reason: To ensure that the site does not exceed its approved power output and to ensure that the panels installed within the site are those on which the Glint and Glare assessment was based.

Colour of Structures

22. Before any structure, equipment or infrastructure including the supporting frames for the PV panels is first brought onto the site, details of the intended finish colour shall be submitted to and approved in writing with the local planning authority. The items shall be finished in this colour and shall be retained in this finish hereafter.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory visual relationship between the new development and the surrounding area to comply with the intentions of policy DM23 of the Winchester District Local Plan Part 2.

Cable Installation

23. All cables linking any of the generating Areas to the onsite substation and from there to the connection point to the grid, (insofar as that section lies within the Winchester City Council district) shall be installed underground.

Before any trenching is opened up for the installation of cable runs, details of the locations of the proposed cable runs together with a methodology for the installation works shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The methodology shall set out:

- (a) measures to be adopted for the avoidance of any harm to adjoining vegetation and root protection areas,
- (b) where appropriate measures to minimise any impact on residents living on Old Mill Lane and on general road users.
- (c) where practical, measures to maintain a through route for pedestrians on Old Mill Lane during cable laying.
- (d) a notification strategy for residents/businesses in the area to ensure people are aware of when the cable laying in Old Mill Lane is taking place and the duration of the work involved.
- (e) when crossing agricultural land, measures to ensure that the work does not degrade the soil quality within the application site.
- (f) In the event that the Aquind Interconnector DCO is still an active scheme, (undetermined, under challenge or approved) the installation procedure to be followed were the solar farm cables cross the Aquind cable corridor east of Old Mill Lane, to ensure an appropriate separation distance would be achieved between the two sets of cables.

The installation work shall then be undertaken in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that the development has minimal impact on the existing hedges and trees within the application site to comply with the intentions of policy CP16 of LPP1, to protect soil quality and to ensure that the solar farm scheme does not inhibit the delivery of a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project.

Case No: 22/00447/FUL

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

Arboriculture & Proposed Arboricultural Method Statement

24. Before any development is commenced within any of the Areas that make up the application site, an Arboricultural Method Statement shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Excluding those identified sections of hedgerow to be removed to facilitate the development, all other existing hedgerows and trees shall be retained. The development hereby approved shall then be carried out in accordance with the approved Arboricultural Method Statement and the Arboricultural Impact Assessment, dated February 2022 (including the Tree Retention, Removal & Protection Plan (Drawings BHA_4330_02 Sheet 1 of 4, BHA_4330_02 Sheet 2 of 4, BHA_4330_02 Sheet 3 of 4, BHA_4330_02 Sheet 4 of 4)). Any deviation from the approved works prescribed or methods shall be agreed in advance in writing with the local planning authority.

Reason: To ensure that the development has minimal impact on the existing hedges and trees within the application site and to comply with the intentions of policy CP16 of LPP1.

Lighting

25. Notwithstanding the submitted Dark Skies Assessment, dated November 2022, no external lighting/floodlighting shall be installed on the Site until details have been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. The submitted details shall set out the position, power, shielding to prevent light spillage, the circumstances under which it would be used and having regard to the Guidance Note 08/23 produced by the Bat Conservation Trust and Institute of Lighting Professionals. The lighting shall be installed, operated and maintained in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To protect the character and appearance of the countryside, to ensure that the ecological value of the site is not adversely impacted upon by the development and to comply with the intentions of policy DM17 of LPP2.

Landscape

26. The landscape enhancement detailed within 'Figure 6.6 Landscape Masterplan' Drawings P21-0899.009 Rev Q Sheet 1 of 5, P21-0899.009 Rev Q Sheet 2 of 5, P21-0899.009 Rev Q Sheet 3 of 5, P21-0899.009 Rev Q Sheet 4 of 5 and P21-0899.009 Rev Q Sheet 5 of 5, all dated 22 May 2024 shall be implemented within the first planting season following the first commercial export date. Any trees, shrub or plants which, within a period of 5 years after planting, are removed, die or in the opinion of the local planning authority, become seriously damaged or defective, shall be replaced as soon as is reasonably practicable in the next planting season with others of the same species, size and number as originally approved unless a suitable alternative species has otherwise been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. Details of a schedule for proposed plant watering shall be submitted to and approved by the local planning authority before any planting takes place. The schedule to be adhered to, until the plants are established.

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

Reason: To ensure that the landscape character of the site and its contribution to the wider area is maintained and to comply with the intentions of policy DM23 of the Winchester District Local Plan Part 2.

Biodiversity Management Plan

27. The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with Section 4 (Ecological Enhancement Measures), Section 5 (Habitat Management) and Section 6 (Ecological Monitoring) of the Biodiversity Management Plan, dated February 2022.

Reason: To deliver the landscape enhancements and the biodiversity net gain promoted as part of the scheme and to comply with policy DM23 of the Winchester DM26 Winchester District Local Plan Part 2 and policy CP16 of the Winchester District Local Plan Part 1 Joint Core Strategy.

Noise (Submission of Details Before Any Installation)

28. Before any plant or equipment is first installed within the site, details of the type and manufacturing details of the items including the manufactures specifications for noise output, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The plant and equipment shall be chosen to achieve a cumulative rating operational noise level no greater than the existing prevailing background sound level at the closest noise-sensitive receptors when assessed in accordance with the methodology and guidance set out within BS4142:2014+A1:2019 as detailed within the Noise Assessment Report, dated October 2023.

Reason: In the interests of amenity and the protection of the local environment and to comply with the intentions of policy DM20 of the Winchester District Local Plan Part 2.

Noise (Submission of Details Post Installation)

29. Within 3 months of the first commercial export date, a post installation noise assessment shall be carried out and submitted for approval in writing to the local planning authority. This submission shall verify that the cumulative rated noise level from the plant and equipment forming the Solar Farm is no greater than the prevailing background sound level (as set out in Condition 28) at the most sensitive period when the plant and equipment is being operated (e.g. evening, nights and weekends). The post installation noise assessment shall be carried out by a suitably qualified acoustic consultant/engineer and be undertaken in accordance with BS4142:2014+A1:2019 (or superseding guidance) for "Methods for rating and assessing industrial and commercial sound". If the noise criteria has not been met it will be necessary to identify and install noise mitigation measures within 3 months of the assessment being completed and a further post completion noise assessment undertaken so to demonstrate the noise criteria has been met. Any mitigation measures installed, shall be retained hereafter. Any replacement equipment/plant shall also attain the same cumulative noise levels.

Reason: In the interests of amenity and the protection of the local environment and to comply with the intentions of policy DM20 of the Winchester District Local Plan Part 2.

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

Provision of Information for Emergency Services

Emergency Services

30. Prior to the first export of any electricity generated by the development hereby permitted, details for the provision and display of emergency information shall be installed within the site at appropriate locations. The details of the information, the nature of the display (Premises Information Box or board) and the proposed locations that would hold or display the information shall be submitted to and approved in writing with the local planning authority. The submitted information shall include but not be limited to: a plan of the site, identifying the structures that are located within it, the point of connection to the grid, the method to isolate the panels, contact details for parties and details of any inflammable substances or hazardous substances on site.

The approved information shall be placed in the agreed locations before any electricity is exported from the site and retained so long as electricity is generated by the site. The details shall be reviewed and updated as required.

Reason: To ensure that Emergency Services has adequate access and information of the layout of the site and its contents before entering the facility and to comply with the intentions of policy DM18 of LLP2.

Operational Traffic Management Plan

31. Prior to the first export date, an Operational Traffic Management Plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The Operational Traffic Management Plan shall include:
- Details of any resurfacing work to the PRow network.
 - Details of the expected onsite vehicle movements during the operational phase.
 - The appropriate management of the access points to ensure safe and appropriate use of the highway.
 - Arrangements for bringing the operational accesses, shown on Drawing SK08 Rev A, dated 23rd August 2023, off the unnamed road into use.
 - Evidence that appropriate access for emergency vehicles is provided to the site.
 - Details for the access of emergency vehicles to the areas.
 - A timetable for the implementation of any actions.

The development shall be implemented in accordance with the approved Operational Traffic Management Plan.

Reason: To manage construction traffic in the interests of highway safety and in accordance with policy DM18 of the Winchester District Local Plan Part 2

Landscape and Ecological Management Plan

32. Within one month of the first export of any power, a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP), (drawing on the contents of the Biodiversity Management Plan and the Ecological Assessment Report shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The LEMP will address the post landscape scheme establishment and long-term commitments to manage the red

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

lined application site to ensure that it delivers on the proposed landscape and biodiversity enhancements. The content of the LEMP shall include the following:

- (a) Aims and objectives of management to achieve or exceed the contribution that will be made within the WCC part of the application site towards the overall Biodiversity Net Gain figures of a 53.10% increase in habitat units and 56.30% increase in hedgerow units.
- (b) Description and evaluation of existing features including the retention of the existing vegetation, its reinforcement where necessary the height it is to be maintained at and the intentions regarding its long terms management.
- (c) Ecological trends and constraints on site that might influence management.
- (d) Appropriate management options for achieving aims and objectives.
- (e) Prescriptions for management actions.
- (f) Purpose and conservation objectives for the proposed enhancement measures;
- (g) Proposed management of the roadside hedgerows (including minimum heights to be maintained) to ensure they continue to provide an effective screen to the application site.
- (h) Sheep grazing of the seeded areas inside the security fence as shown on drawing Pegasus Environment drawing entitled Figure 6.6 Landscape Master Plan Sheets 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5 drawing number P21-0899.009 Revision Q dated 22 May 2024. The intended management regime to be adopted with regard to the seeded areas outside the security fence as shown on drawing. Pegasus Environment drawing entitled Figure 6.6 Landscape Master Plan Sheets 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5 drawing number P21-0899.009 Revision Q dated 22 May 2024.
- (i) Replacement planting or seeding in the event of loss after the 5-year establishment period.
- (j) Preparation of an annual work schedule for the implementation of management actions.
- (k) Details of the body or organisation responsible for implementation of the plan.
- (l) Details of the timetable for monitoring and review of management actions, that will then influence successive management action and the role of the local planning authority within that process.
- (m) Details of a schedule for proposed plant watering. The schedule to be adhered to until the plants are established.

The LEMP shall also set out (where the results from monitoring show that conservation aims and objectives of the LEMP are not being met) how contingencies and/or remedial action will be identified, agreed and implemented so that the development still delivers the fully functioning landscape and biodiversity objectives of the originally approved scheme. The monitoring of the LEMP will also include any proposed changes to the management regime of any part of the site. The LEMP will be implemented in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To deliver the landscape enhancements and the biodiversity net gain promoted as part of the scheme and to comply with policy DM23 of the Winchester

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

DM26 Winchester District Local Plan Part 2 and policy CP16 of the Winchester District Local Plan Part 1 Joint Core Strategy.

Grazing Management Plan

33 Within one year of the first commercial export of electricity from the site, a Grazing Management Plan (GMP) shall be submitted in writing to the Local Planning Authority. The GMP shall detail which parts of the site shall be used for the grazing of livestock, during which months of the year, what animals or poultry are to be grazed there, the number of animals to be accommodated within each Area and it shall set out details of how the grazing and/or mowing regime is to be managed. Any changes to the GMP during the lifetime of the permission shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval and shall not be carried out except in accordance with that approval. The grazing scheme shall then be implemented in accordance with the approved detail.

Reason: To deliver the landscape enhancements and the biodiversity net gain promoted as part of the scheme and to comply with policy DM23 of the Winchester DM26 Winchester District Local Plan Part 2 and policy CP16 of the Winchester District Local Plan Part 1 Joint Core Strategy.

Informatives:

1. In accordance with paragraph 38 of the NPPF, Winchester City Council (WCC) takes a positive and proactive approach to development proposals, working with applicants and agents to achieve the best solution. To this end WCC:

- offer a pre-application advice service and,
- update applicants/agents of any issues that may arise in the processing of their application, where possible suggesting alternative solutions.

In this instance pre application discussions took place, numerous meetings have been held with the agent to clarify matters and discuss whether objections to the scheme could be overcome. The proposed conditions have also been discussed with the applicant.

2. The Local Planning Authority has taken account of the following development plan policies and proposals:

Winchester Local Plan Part 1 – Joint Core Strategy (LPP1).

- 1 DS1 Development Strategy and Principles
- 2 MTRA1 Development Strategy Market Towns and Rural Areas
- 3 MTRA4 Development in the Countryside
- 4 CP10 Transport
- 5 CP12 Renewable and Decentralised Energy
- 6 CP14 The Effective Use of Land
- 7 CP15 Green Infrastructure
- 8 CP16 Biodiversity
- 9 CP17 Flooding Flood Risk and the Water Environment
- 10 CP19 South Downs National Park
- 11 CP20 Heritage and Landscape Character

Winchester District Local Plan Part 2 – Development Management and Site Allocations

- DM1 Location of New Development

Case No: 22/00447/FUL

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

- DM15 Local Distinctiveness
- DM16 Site Design Criteria
- DM17 Site Development Principles
- DM18 Access and Parking
- DM19 Development and Pollution
- DM20 Development and Noise
- DM21 Contaminated Lane
- DM23 Rural Character
- DM24 Special Trees, Important Hedgerows and Ancient Woodlands
- DM25 Historic Parks and Gardens
- DM26 Archaeology
- DM29 Heritage Assets
- DM31 Locally Listed Heritage Assets

3. This permission is granted for the following reasons:

An assessment has been undertaken having regard to Policies and Proposals of the Development Plan set out above including the NPPF and other material considerations. The conclusion of that assessment is that there is insufficient weight to justify a refusal of the application. In accordance with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, planning permission should therefore be granted.

4. Where allegations of noise from works are substantiated by the Environmental Protection Team, a Notice limiting the hours of operation under The Control of Pollution Act may be served.

5. During Construction, no materials should be burnt on site. Where allegations of statutory nuisance are substantiated by the Environmental Protection Team, an Abatement Notice may be served under The Environmental Protection Act 1990. The applicant is reminded that the emission of dark smoke through the burning of materials is a direct offence under The Clean Air Act 1993.

6. Please be respectful to your neighbours including those along the access route and the environment when carrying out your development. Ensure that the site is well organised, clean and tidy and that facilities, stored materials, vehicles and plant are located to minimise disruption. Please consider the impact on your neighbours by informing them of the works and minimising air, light and noise pollution and minimising the impact of deliveries, parking and working on public or private roads. Any damage to these areas should be remediated as soon as is practically possible.

For further advice, please refer to the Construction Code of Practise

<http://www.ccscheme.org.uk/index.php/ccs-ltd/what-is-the-ccs/code-of-consideratepractice>

7. Further information and guidance for developers on construction good practice can be found on the Winchester City Council website:

<http://www.winchester.gov.uk/environment/pollution/construction-sites/>

8. Assistance in formulating the response to the Employment and Skills Plan condition may be found on the following WCC website:

<https://www.winchester.gov.uk/business/employment/employment-and-skills-plans?>

Case No: 22/00447/FUL

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

9. Any planning permission approval does not grant the applicant access rights to the site over PROW Horndean 4. Separate permission will need to be sought if the applicant does not have an existing legal easement.
10. There must be no surface alteration to a Public Right of Way without the consent of Hampshire County Council as Highway Authority. To carry out such work without this permission would constitute an offer under Section 131 of the Highways Act 1980.
11. The Highway Authority is seeking a Section 278 Agreement with the applicant to cover arrange of highway related works that fall outside the scope of this permission.
12. Elements of the proposed development will require the applicant to apply for a *Temporary Traffic Regulation Order (TTRO)*, details of which can be found at: <https://www.hants.gov.uk/landplanningandenvironment/rightsofway/definitivemap/temporaryclosures>
13. Due to the sensitivity of the location, use of cleaning products for solar panels should be kept to a minimum; they must not pollute groundwater and must not contain any hazardous substances.
14. All precautions must be taken to avoid discharges and spills to the ground both during and after construction. Guidance on pollution prevention for businesses can be found on the gov.uk website here – <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/pollution-prevention-for-businesses>.
In the event of a pollution incident, all works should cease immediately, and the Environment Agency should be contacted via our incident hotline 0800 80 70 60 (24-hour service).
15. The applicant's attention is drawn to the following information: it is an offence under S148 and S151 of the Highways Act 1980 to transfer or deposit mud and debris on the public highway. The applicant must make every effort to prevent this occurring.

END