

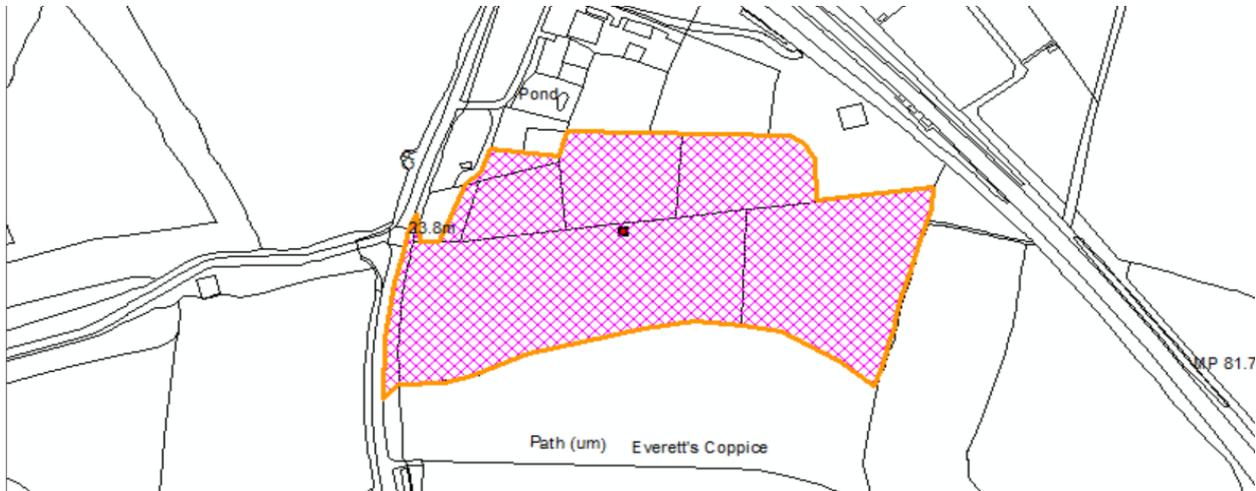
WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

Case No: 24/02818/FUL
Proposal Description: Erection of Battery Energy Storage Facility including creation of new vehicular access along with landscaping and all associated engineering works
Address: Land Adjacent Titchfield Lane Wickham Hampshire
Parish: Wickham And Knowle
Applicants Name: Grenergy Renewables UK
Case Officer: Nicola Martin
Date Valid: 3 January 2025
Recommendation: PERMIT
Pre Application Advice Yes

Link to Planning Documents

24/02818/FUL

<https://planningapps.winchester.gov.uk/online-applications/search.do?action=simple>



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Reasons for Recommendation

The proposed development is in accordance with the Development Plan as it has been demonstrated by the Applicant that there is an operational need for the development to be located on the Application Site. Furthermore, the development design has sought to minimise and (where appropriate) mitigate impacts upon the local environment having regard to landscape character, local residential amenity, highways and biodiversity.

The proposed development also accords with national policy objectives which seek to facilitate infrastructure associated with renewable energy. This includes energy storage, which is needed to reduce the costs of the electricity system and increase reliability by

Case No: 24/02818/FUL

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

storing surplus electricity in times of low demand to provide electricity when demand is higher.

Because the proposal will enable energy to be used more flexibly and de-carbonise the energy system cost-effectively, it will also contribute towards the transition to net zero by 2050.

General Comments

Wickham Parish Council have requested for the application to be determined by Planning Committee, based upon material planning considerations. The WPC submission is presented as Appendix 1.

Amendments to Plans Negotiated

Amended plans and additional information were submitted to the City Council and uploaded 11 March 2025. These documents were submitted in order to address various consultee comments and comprised the following:

- Revised Flood Risk Assessment and Surface Water Drainage Strategy
- Revised Construction Traffic Management Plan
- Risk Management Plan
- Letter from Acoustic Consultant in response to comments from WCC Environmental Protection Officer
- Revised Lighting Impact Assessment and External Lighting Design
- Revised Fire Strategy Plan
- Revised Site Layout Plan (showing extended acoustic fence along the south of the BESS compound)
- Emergency Response Plan
- Acoustic Mitigation Fence Drawing (height increased from 3 metres to 3.5 metres)
- LUX Plan

These documents were re-publicised for a period of 21 days.

Amended site layout plans were submitted on 27 June and 2 July to address some minor inconsistencies between layout and detailed drawings and to provide clearer identification of the various components of the scheme. These plans were not formally re-publicised as they did not significantly alter the character or scale of the development or the nature of its operation and were requested primarily for the purposes of clarification.

Following on from this, updated further information was submitted which included ecological survey reports; updated BNG information and clarification relating to surface water drainage.

Given the specialist nature of these documents and the fact that their main purpose was to provide additional information, they were not formally re-publicised. However, the views of specialist officers and consultees were sought.

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

Site Description

The proposed development site amounts to approximately 2.6 hectares in size and lies within open countryside. There is currently no built development within the site at present, and it comprises an area of rough grazing land, identified within the Agricultural Land Classification dataset as 'non agricultural'. Electricity pylons currently cross the site on an approximate east-west alignment. The land within the site rises gradually to the east away from Titchfield Lane and much of the site is elevated above the level of the highway.

The site is currently accessed from Titchfield Lane (a C classified highway) to the west via an unmade track which runs from a neighbouring dwelling to the north (Thumpers). This property lies approximately 100 metres to the north of the site. There are no other dwellings within 150m of the site, with Lone Cottage lying 130m to the south on the opposite side of Titchfield Lane.

The site forms part of a wider network of small fields which are set amongst extensive areas of woodland. This includes the Botley Wood and Everett's and Mushes Copses Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) (ancient woodland) which directly adjoins the south and east boundaries of the site. A mainline railway lies close to the east boundary of the site (just over 10 metres away). The wider landscape comprises areas of irregular fields and woodland on fairly undulating ground with isolated dwellings set within fairly spacious plots.

Proposal

Consent is sought to construct a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) of 50 MW which would connect into the local Distribution Network Operator (DNO) via an underground cable to the substation provided by the DNO on the site. The underground cable does not form part of this application as it will be laid and owned by the DNO through Permitted Development rights.

Alongside the main BESS and associated compound, a new vehicular access would be formed off Titchfield Lane. This would necessitate the removal of some roadside trees and vegetation. The proposed access road would comprise an asphalt surface.

The main BESS development itself would comprise the following elements:

- 40 Bess units (2.6 metres in height)
- Inverter units (2.6m in height)
- Switchgear building (4.5m in height)
- Three Auxiliary Transformers (just over 2 metres in height)
- Welfare/monitoring / warehouse building (2.6m in height)
- Distribution Network Operator substation (5m in height)
- Monitoring Office (2.3 metres in height)
- Two parking spaces
- Acoustic mitigation fence (3.5 metres in height and approximately 170 metres in length)

The whole compound would be enclosed by security fencing (2.4m palisade fencing.) CCTV / lighting poles are also proposed around the perimeter of the compound, and these would measure approximately 4.3 metres in height.

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

To facilitate the development, changes are also proposed to ground levels. This would involve the lowering of ground levels in the eastern part of the site and the formation of a bank of 2m height between the main BESS compound and the substation at the west of the site, effectively stepping the site down across two levels. The Agent has confirmed that there would be the requirement to import approximately 30 cubic metres of soil to facilitate the ground works.

The main development footprint (including compound and access roads) would amount to approximately 1.1 hectares (occupying just under half of the Application Site).

The development design also includes landscape enhancements alongside a biodiversity enhancement area in the north section of the site.

Planning permission is sought for the proposed development for a temporary period, time-limited to 35 years. After this time, it is stated that all development and infrastructure related to the BESS will be decommissioned and removed from the site.

During the operation period, the system would be fully automated, with an operative required to visit once to twice per week to check the facility and infrastructure on site and to undertake general maintenance.

Relevant Planning History

Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) - 24/01656/SCREEN – EIA not required
03.09.2024

Consultations

Service Lead – Engineering (Drainage) – Make the following comments:

- No objections to the proposal in relation to flood risk, subject to the implementation of a suitable and sustainable surface water drainage system (low probability of fluvial and pluvial flood risk)
- Comments received from the Lead Local Flood Authority should be given full consideration
- Foul drainage is not applicable to this application

Service Lead – Sustainability and Natural Environment (Ecology)

- Protected species reports have been updated and are acceptable
- Pre-development BNG metric is acceptable. Whilst there are concerns re. the post development calculation, these can be addressed at discharge of condition stage.

Service Lead – Sustainability and Natural Environment (Landscape) – No adverse comments to make:

- The proposal is a large development which is not particularly attractive but agree with the conclusion in the submitted Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) that the site is largely screened from wider viewpoints due to the surrounding

Case No: 24/02818/FUL

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

woodland framework and that any views of the development would be confined to close viewpoints from Titchfield Lane

- Close range views would be largely screened as a result of the intervening roadside vegetation, even during the winter.
- The proposed development would be viewed obliquely to the receptor's direction of travel, set within a well vegetated and highly contained setting
- The landscape mitigation plan consists of the planting of 91 trees at Extra Heavy size, native hedgerow and thicket mixes and this plan should be conditioned if the LPA was minded to permit
- In terms of cumulative impact, there would be no intervisibility between this application site and 24/02804/FUL, nor any opportunities for the public to view both developments at the same time. Both developments are within heavily treed landscapes with a strong sense of enclosure, with the capacity to absorb development more effectively than other areas of the district.

Service Lead – Sustainability and Natural Environment (Trees) – Make the following comments:

- The proposal is acceptable from an arboricultural perspective, subject to the implementation of the recommended tree protection and mitigation measures (to be secured through conditions)
- Offsite woodland to the east and south boundary is designated as ancient and semi-natural woodland
- The submitted Tree Report has identified the crown and root constraints associated with the existing trees on and adjacent to the site
- Trees to be removed are low quality (category C) and it is recognised that replacement planting is proposed
- All trees within the designated ancient and semi-natural woodland on the eastern and southern boundaries are to be retained and protected
- Some aspects of construction, including access routes and the proximity of infrastructure to buffer zones, may temporarily require encroachment into the buffer areas. Where this occurs, mitigation measures, including arboricultural supervision and temporary ground protection are proposed
- The AIA and accompanying tree protection plan comply with the relevant British Standard
- The replacement planting scheme should include appropriate species selection to align with the site 's ecological and visual context.

Service Lead – Public Protection (Environmental Health) – Make the following comments:

- Having regard to the additional information provided by the Applicant and the increase in height and specification of the proposed acoustic barrier, there are no remaining concerns from a noise amenity impact regarding human receptors
- As the noise is predicted to increase the immediate background noise levels and is of a different acoustic character, there will be some potential tranquillity impacts
- Because technological changes advance rapidly, it is recognised the detailed specification of the units cannot be finalised at this stage
- Therefore, conditions should be imposed to secure this information and to ensure the noise levels assumed in the acoustic assessment are comparable or less and that the height of the noise sources within the BESS units is no greater than that

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

modelled within the acoustic report i.e. 1.5 meters (to ensure the effectiveness of the acoustic barrier)

- Consideration should also be given to requesting a noise validation report to demonstrate that measured noise levels at sensitive receptors would be lower than predicted

Service Lead – Public Protection (Contaminated Land) – No objections subject to contaminated land conditions being imposed

Hampshire County Council (Flood Authority) – No objections following receipt of additional information demonstrating that there is sufficient capacity within the existing culvert to accept flows without causing activation of the area of flood risk within the site.

Hampshire County Council (Highway Authority) – No objections subject to conditions:

- There are no clusters of accidents within the vicinity of the proposed development with the potential to be exacerbated by the development
- Proposed access arrangements and visibility are acceptable
- Any works on the highway must be approved via a Section 278 Agreement
- Tracking shown is acceptable
- The volume of traffic associated with the construction phase will not result in any severe impact on the local highway network which is considered acceptable
- During the construction phase, it is expected that all traffic will travel to and from the site from the south via the A27 Southampton Road, which is the most direct route to the strategic road network and is therefore considered acceptable
- The quantum of parking during the operational phase would not result in any overspill parking on the local highway network.
- Note that appropriate signage will be implemented aiming to direct the drivers to the site entrance as well as alert the road users about the construction traffic
- Requests that the applicant ensures that the provided parking spaces during construction will be suitable for the maximum number of personnel and no contractor parking should occur on the highway
- Deliveries to the site should avoid the local network peak hours and school opening/closing times which should be reflected within the CTMP
- State that ongoing monitoring should take place between the Applicant and HCC to ensure that additional measures to prevent mud and debris being transferred onto the highway remain adequate
- Revised Construction Traffic Management Plan is considered acceptable

Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service – No objections, subject to conditions securing details relating to the fire safety measures (in the form of a battery safety management plan)

Natural England – No objections, subject to appropriate mitigation being secured in relation to the Botley Wood and Everett's and Mushes Copses Site of Special Scientific Interest and therefore recommend:

- A robust Battery Safety Management Plan
- A robust setup for controlling any potential firewater runoff, in the event of tackling a fire, to prevent polluted firewater discharging into the SSSI to the South
- An approved Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP)

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

- A plan for a Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS) including the appropriate management and maintenance
- All environmental impacts and opportunities should be fully considered, and relevant local bodies are consulted

Southern Water – Make the following comments:

- The Council's technical staff and the relevant authority for land drainage consent should comment on the adequacy of the proposals to discharge surface water to the local watercourse.
- Where a SuDS scheme is to be implemented, the drainage details submitted to the Local Planning Authority should:
 - Specify the responsibilities of each party for the implementation of the SuDS scheme
 - Specify a timetable for implementation
 - Provide a management and maintenance plan for the lifetime of the development

National Grid – No objections to the proposal, which is in close proximity to a High Voltage Transmission Overhead Line, provided the statutory clearance is maintained and our guidance information is followed at all times

Network Rail – Do not wish to comment on the proposal

Naturespace - Make the following comments:

- Great crested newts are unlikely to be present and impacted by the proposed works
- Following reasonable avoidance measures would be appropriate for this site
- Recommend that these measures are secured by a compliance condition

Environment Agency – No objections raised

Representations:

Wickham Parish Council: Objection raised:

- Harmful impact upon Botley Wood and Everett's and Mushes Copses SSSI / ancient woodland contrary to NPPF Para 193 (b) and (c)
- Concerns over safety / fire risk
- Contrary to LPP1 Policy MTRA4 the proposal does not have an operational need to be in open countryside
- Proposal does not consider potential use of brownfield land
- Harmful increase in light pollution
- Insufficient information relating to means of disposal of surface water
- Harmful increase in noise impacts / unclear how effective noise mitigation will be
- Harmful loss of rural character through visual, physical and tranquillity impacts
- Insufficient survey work undertaken in relation to great crested newts
- Harmful impacts from construction traffic movements in combination with other developments
- Titchfield Land is inadequate for anticipated number of traffic movements

Case No: 24/02818/FUL

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

- Request that Hampshire Highways review Titchfield Lane with consideration of all energy projects that are being planned

Four Objections from same address raising the following concerns:

Planning Policy / development Principle

- Inappropriate development in countryside / contrary to WCC Policy MTRA4.
- The proposal should not be considered as a form of renewable energy
- There are no National Policy Statements which address BESS development
- UK and SSEN area BESS capacity already exceeds UK Gov targets for 2030 and 2035
- Long period until implementation means development fails MTFA4 due to lack of need

Project deliverability

- The published National Energy System Operator (NESO) grid connection date for this site is 06/12/2036.
- Premature to grant permission if development cannot be implemented for 10 years and therefore no realistic prospect of delivery

Fire Safety

- The proposal will result in a significant fire safety risk
- Fires are more common at BESS sites than stated by the applicant
- The LPA must consider major accident prevention and mitigation and appropriate safety distances
- The applicant has not provided any details of the battery capacity – which will make a major difference to the risks of thermal runaway/explosion etc
- Battery chemistry is not stated
- A future battery safety plan does not adequately address these concerns
- The safety standards referred to by the Applicant have significant limitations
- Revised guidance on separation distances for container separation distances have been produced indicating insufficient spacing between container units within the proposed development
- The plans indicate that clusters of batteries are separated but within clusters batteries are situated close together
- No details of fire compression system
- Inadequate access for emergency vehicles – the site should have two vehicular access points
- No facilities for containing water during firefighting or firewater attenuation pond
- Close proximity to high voltage overhead power lines – which may limit the scope to use water in the event of fire
- The application documents should acknowledge and prepare for the necessity of an Industrial Installation Permit

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

- Given that the battery lifespan is generally thought to be 8-10 years – then the issue of transportation – not just for the construction period but also for regular battery replacement needs to be considered
- The Applicant is downplaying the risk of thermal runaway
- The applicant's credentials in planning, constructing and operating a BESS are not stated
- Fire safety is a pre-determination matter and the proposed conditions are unenforceable

Pollution / hydrology

- Potential for environmental contamination from water used to douse fires
- If the penstock valve relies on manual operation there is the potential that the valve will not be closed. Details of how the valve will close automatically are needed

Battery replacement /Waste

- Battery replacement required every 5-8 years – detailed battery lifecycle and waste management plan is required

One supporting representation received on behalf of Denewulf and Fareham West Scout Districts making the following comments:

- Our site is primarily used at weekends, and some evenings by young people with adult support for activities and camping
- The site is fully protected by an SSSI
- Additional trees should be planted by Grenergy along their south boundary to further mask the installation
- An audible sounder indicating if a fire starts on site (to allow the leaders of the young people to quickly make arrangements to vacate the site)
- The management of increased run-off water which currently flows across the north corner of the proposed site into our coppice and on to the River Meon via a culvert under the railway line (requires regular maintenance)
- Access to the site for maintenance of trees and hedgerows

Relevant Government Planning Policy and Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024)

Chapter 2 – Achieving Sustainable Development

Chapter 8 – Promoting Healthy and Safe communities

Chapter 9 – Promoting Sustainable Transport

Chapter 11 – Making Effective Use of Land

Chapter 12 – Achieving Well Designed Places

Chapter 14 – Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change

Chapter 15 – Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment

National Planning Practice Guidance

Case No: 24/02818/FUL

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

Biodiversity Net Gain 2024
Climate Change 2019
Effective Use of Land 2019
Light Pollution 2019
Noise 2019
Natural Environment 2024
Renewable and Low Carbon Energy 2023

Winchester Local Plan Part 1 – Joint Core Strategy (2013) (LPP1):

Policy DS1 – Development Strategy and Principles
Policy MTRA1 - Development Strategy Market Towns and Rural Area
Policy MTRA4 - Development in the Countryside
Policy CP10 – Transport
Policy CP11 - Sustainable Low and Zero Carbon Built Development
Policy CP12 – Renewable and Decentralised Energy
Policy CP13 – High Quality Design
Policy CP14 – The Effective Use of Land
Policy CP15 – Green Infrastructure
Policy CP16 – Biodiversity
Policy CP17 – Flooding, Flood Risk and the Water Environment
Policy CP20 – Heritage and Landscape Character

Winchester District Local Plan Part 2 – Development Management and Site Allocations (2017) (LPP2):

Policy DM1 – Location of New Development
Policy DM10 – Essential Facilities & Services in the Countryside
Policy DM15 – Local Distinctiveness
Policy DM16 – Site Design Criteria
Policy DM17 – Site Development Principles
Policy DM18 – Access and Parking
Policy DM19 – Development and Pollution
Policy DM20 – Development and Noise
Policy DM21 – Contaminated Land
Policy DM22 – Telecommunications, Services and Utilities
Policy DM23 – Rural Character
Policy DM24 – Special Trees, Important Hedgerows and Ancient Woodlands

Winchester District Proposed Submission Local Plan (Regulation 19) 2020-2040

Strategic Policy SP1 Vision and Objectives
Strategic Policy SP2 Spatial Strategy and Development Principles
Strategic Policy SP3 Development in the Countryside
Strategic Policy CN1 Mitigating and adapting to Climate Change
Policy CN5 Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Schemes
Policy CN7 Energy Storage
Strategic Policy D1 High Quality, Well designed and inclusive places
Policy D6 Previously Developed land and making the best use of land
Policy D7 Development Standards

Case No: 24/02818/FUL

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

Policy D8 Contaminated land
Strategic Policy T1 Sustainable and Active Transport and Travel
Policy T2 Parking for New Developments
Policy T3 Enabling Sustainable Travel Modes of Transport and the Design and Layout of Parking for new developments
Policy T4 Access for new developments
Strategic Policy NE1 Protecting and Enhancing Biodiversity and the Natural Environment in the District
Policy NE4 Green and Blue Infrastructure
Policy NE5 Biodiversity
Policy NE6 Flooding, Flood Risk and the Water Environment
Policy NE8 South Downs National Park
Policy NE8 Landscape Character
Policy NE14 Rural Character
Policy NE15 Special Trees, Important Hedgerows and Ancient Woodlands
Policy E9 Economic Development in the rural area
Policy E10 Farm Diversification

Supplementary Planning Documents:

National Design Guide 2019
High Quality Places 2015
Landscape Character Assessment 2022
Wickham and Knowle Village Design Statement 2001

Other relevant documents

Climate Emergency Declaration, Carbon Neutrality Action Plan 2020-2023.
Nature Emergency Declaration.
WCC Technical Guidance for Noise 2022
Statement of Community Involvement 2018, 2020 and 2024
Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1)

Planning Considerations

Principle of development

Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and paragraph 48 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2024) requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Policy DS1 of the LPP1 is consistent with the NPPF which states in paragraph 11 that decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development and that for decision taking this means approving development proposals that accord with an up to date development plan without delay.

LPP1 Policy DS1 sets out the overarching Development Strategy for the district. Amongst various other requirements this policy states that development proposals will be expected to make efficient use of land within existing settlements and prioritise the use of previously developed land in accessible locations in accordance with the development strategies set out in Policies WT1, SH1 and MTRA1. This strategy is continued within the LPP2 by Policy DM1 which states that development that accords with the Development Plan will be

Case No: 24/02818/FUL

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

permitted within the defined boundaries of the settlements it refers to. It states that outside of these areas, countryside policies will apply and only development appropriate to a countryside location will be permitted.

In this case the proposed development falls within open countryside and would therefore fall to be assessed primarily against LPP1 Policy MTRA4. This policy seeks to limit development to that which development which has (*inter alia*) an operational need for a countryside location.

Within the Regulation 19 emerging local plan, the overarching development strategy for the district is set out within policy SP2, with development within countryside locations addressed by policy SP3 with similar criteria for acceptable development, although it is noted that policy emerging policy SP3 specifically includes 'essential infrastructure' within the list of types of development which have an operational need for a countryside location. As emerging policy SP3 is included within the list of policies to which modifications have been proposed and which has recently undergone public consultation, it is afforded moderate weight.

LPP2 Policy DM22 (which includes electricity related infrastructure) broadly reflects the criteria within the policies referred to above and states that the development of communications and other infrastructure is desirable where it has benefits for economic growth or provides essential services for a community. It states that the local planning authority will seek to facilitate such development, whilst having regard to its effect on the environment.

Given that the proposal relates to supporting infrastructure for renewables, LPP1 Policy CP12 is also relevant as this supports the development of larger-scale renewable energy developments, especially where there is a strong degree of community benefit. It sets out a number of criteria which should be considered which include connections to the electricity network and contributions to national, regional & sub-regional renewable energy targets and CO2 savings. It also states that proposals should consider potential to integrate with new or existing development, whilst avoiding harm to existing development and communities.

Within the emerging Regulation 19 Local Plan, the policy that might appear most relevant to this application is emerging policy CP7, which within the Regulation 19 emerging local plan, is entitled 'Energy Storage', however it is noted that following the Examination of the Reg 19 local plan, this policy is subject to a proposed modification, in particular, that the emerging policy now refers to 'Community Energy Storage' rather than commercial developments, and specifically relates to schemes of substantially smaller scale than this proposed development.

As such, within the Regulation 19 emerging local plan, the policy that is most comparable to LPP1 policy CP12 and LPP2 policy D6 is emerging policy C5 which relates to renewable energy and low carbon development. Whilst neither the text of the policy, nor the supporting text specifically relates to commercial energy storage development, the Planning Practice Guidance on Renewable and Low Carbon Energy explicitly includes Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) which indicates that they may be considered to be a low carbon energy development. This policy states renewable energy and low carbon schemes will be supported and that they must demonstrate that they achieve the requirements of a number of criteria including impact on heritage assets; landscape character; capacity for connection; external lighting; loss of best and most versatile

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

agricultural land; biodiversity effects; emergency measures; and restoration plan. These will be discussed in greater detail in later sections of this report. It is noted however that following the Examination of the Reg 19 local plan, emerging policy CN5 is subject to proposed modification (recently consulted upon) and is therefore afforded moderate weight.

The proposed development would introduce a significant new element of built development into the open countryside (on a site where no buildings currently exist). Furthermore, the nature of the proposal is such that it is not directly linked to the need for a countryside location, as required by LPP1 Policy MTRA4 or emerging Regulation 19 local plan policy SP3, and also does not fall within any of the listed exceptions under these policies. Notwithstanding this, it would be necessary to have regard to whether there is a demonstrated need for the proposal to be located at the Application Site (in recognising the need to ensure the countryside is protected from unwarranted development, to justify the location of the development and to ensure the objectives of policies MTRA4 and SP3 would be met). To this end, the application has been accompanied by supporting information which includes an Alternative Site Assessment. This documentation makes the case that a grid connection is the primary consideration for site selection. This is required to allow both the import of electricity (load) and export of electricity (generation) – as this is stated to determine efficiency of connection.

It is recognised that in undertaking energy development, it is necessary for developers to ensure that there will be necessary infrastructure and capacity within an existing or planned transmission or distribution network to accommodate the electricity generated. Policy CP12 and emerging policy CN5 both highlight the capacity to connect to the electricity grid network. In this instance, it is stated by the Applicant that there are limited points of connection close to the site. At the time that the application was submitted, it was confirmed by the District Network Operator (DNO), Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks (SSEN) that the Botley Wood Substation (1km from the site) is one of a limited number of substations in the region that has capacity to both export and import large quantities of electricity.

A 3km radius was set from this substation within which to search for potential sites. A number of areas within the search area have been ruled out due to various constraints including land designated for employment use, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), flood zones, and heritage assets. Six sites were assessed in total, which were not affected by the above constraints, all of which were in open fields and in close proximity with various other energy developments. A number were stated to be non-commercially viable due to site ownership / other committed energy developments. The Application Site was selected as the land is shown to be commercially available, close to a point of connection, and because there is no conflicting use occupying the land and also there is a willing landowner.

It is noted that the SSEN map showing Generation Availability ([Network Maps](#)) now indicates that Botley Wood Grid Supply Point is now constrained and a concern has been raised that NESO published data indicates that the potential date for connection for the proposed site would be 2038. However, it is understood that the process by which electricity generation and storage projects may connect to the grid has recently been amended by Ofgem and the National Energy Systems Operator (NESO). The new approach is described as “first ready, first connected” and allows projects to be fast tracked if they can be operational quickly and are needed to hit the government’s clean power targets for 2030. Projects cannot be fast-tracked without a planning permission. Previously

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

developers applying for a connection, had that capacity held until they were ready to connect (e.g. planning permission gained). The current situation is that a developer must demonstrate that they are ready to connect, at which point NESO will confirm a connection date. Officers understand that this means that the ability to connect to any capacity within the grid is dependent on planning permission (and other consents) being in place rather than planning permission being dependent on local grid capacity.

Given the above, it is considered that the Applicant's assessment has adequately demonstrated the need for the development to be located on the Application Site, having particular regard its proximity to the Botley Wood Substation. Furthermore, it should also be recognised that the rural location of the development is justifiable as it would contribute to the regularisation of the energy generated at nearby renewable energy schemes.

With regards to community benefits, the Applicant makes reference to the proposal contributing to delivering renewable energy and energy security alongside biodiversity and landscape enhancements. Whilst these are benefits of a more generalised nature (as opposed to more specific measures such as community funds or rights of way enhancements) it is recognised that LPP1 Policy CP12, or Reg 19 emerging policy CN5, does not rule out development which does not deliver strong community benefits.

With regards to potential contributions to national, regional & sub-regional renewable energy targets and CO2 savings, the Applicant has advised that the proposed 50 MW site could potentially power 166,000 homes in a single hour. This is stated to be of regional significance which is a significant wider benefit which weighs in favour of the development.

With regards to other material considerations, paragraph 161 of the NPPF states that the planning system should support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure. Paragraph 168 states that when determining planning applications for all forms of renewable and low carbon energy developments and their associated infrastructure, local Planning Authorities should not require applicants to demonstrate the overall need for renewable or low carbon energy, and should give significant weight to the benefits associated with the proposal's contribution to a net zero future.

The NPPF is supplemented by Planning Practice Guidance which recognises that electricity storage can enable energy to be used more flexibly and de-carbonise the energy system cost-effectively – for example, by helping to balance the system at lower cost, maximising the usable output from intermittent low carbon generation (e.g. solar and wind), and deferring or avoiding the need for costly network upgrades and new generation capacity.

Paragraph 3.3.26 of the Overarching National Policy Statement for energy (EN-1) advises that storage is needed to reduce the costs of the electricity system and increase reliability by storing surplus electricity in times of low demand to provide electricity when demand is higher. Paragraph 3.3.27 states that storage can provide various services, locally and at the national level. These include maximising the usable output from intermittent low carbon generation (e.g. solar and wind), reducing the total amount of generation capacity needed on the system, providing a range of balancing services to the Distribution Network Operators (DNOs) to help operate the system and reducing constraints on the networks, along with helping to defer or avoid the need for costly network upgrades as demand increases.

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

Information which accompanies the application indicates that the BESS would operate by taking electricity from the National Grid at times of low energy demand, storing it in batteries, and then releasing it back to the National Grid when demand for energy is high. The proposal is therefore designed to improve the efficiency of existing energy production facilities, particularly from renewables where production is intermittent and based on external conditions. The Applicant states that BESS facilities are effectively an alternative to the more conventional peaking plants / standby flexible generation sites which are stated to operate on standby, only producing energy at times of peak demand (which have no ability to import and store excess energy from the grid and typically rely on natural gas). The proposal is therefore clearly aligned with the above policy requirements as it would reduce the costs of the electricity system and increase reliability.

Overall, it is concluded that the general principle of the development is established through LPP1 policy CP12, Regulation 19 emerging local plan policy CN7, alongside paragraphs 161 and 168 of the NPPF and also that the need for the proposal to be located on the application site has been adequately demonstrated (in having regard to the objectives of policy MTRA4 and policy SP3). The proposal would also deliver wider benefits through reducing 'lost energy' and providing increased efficiency to the grid, reducing reliance on fossil fuels and therefore reducing carbon emissions and also enhancing the reliability of renewable power and the grid generally.

Alongside ensuring compliance with all other relevant development plan policies, it would be necessary to have regard to these benefits in the overall planning balance (considered at the end of this report).

Assessment under 2017 EIA Regulations.

The development comprises an industrial installation as identified by Schedule 2, Column 1, 3 (a) of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 and exceeds 0.5 hectares in size. The proposal has therefore been subject to a screening opinion (reference 24/01656/SCREEN). It was subsequently concluded that in screening the development in accordance with Regulations 4 and 5, the proposal does not constitute EIA development, and an Environmental Statement is not required to accompany any planning application in accordance with the 2017 Regulations (as amended).

Impact on character and appearance of area

In considering visual and landscape impacts, LPP2 Policy DM22 states that the number, size, location and appearance of the facilities and services and associated development should minimise visual impacts and that existing buildings, structures, apparatus and/or sites should be shared where technically possible and where such sharing would minimise visual harm. It also states that where viable, all cables and pipelines should be placed underground, having regard to any archaeological or ecological constraints.

With regards to renewable and decentralised energy schemes, LPP1 Policy CP12 states account will be taken of the 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. It also sets out the need to consider the potential to integrate with new or existing development, opportunities for environmental enhancement and the effect on the landscape and surrounding location.

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

Regulation 19 emerging local plan policy CN5 relating to renewable and low carbon energy and requires schemes have significant adverse impact on the landscape character or visual amenity having regard to any mitigation, by undertaking a Landscape Visual Appraisal or a Landscape Visual Impact Assessment;

With regards to development in open countryside, planning policy acknowledges that when considering the impacts of development it is necessary to have regard to both visual impacts alongside wider impacts upon tranquillity (such as noise and light pollution). These factors are recognised, by LPP2 policy DM23 and Regulation 19 emerging policy NE14, as essential components of rural character. The supporting text to both these policies states that the introduction of urban elements, such as large gates, lighting and security measures can detract from the special qualities of the countryside and also highlights that noise and lighting pollution may be more noticeable in rural areas due to the relative tranquillity of the surroundings. It is noted that following the examination of the Regulation 19 local plan, emerging policy NE14 was not subject to any proposed modifications and is thus afforded substantial weight.

A number of policies including LPP1 policy CP20, LPP2 policy DM15 and Regulation 19 emerging local plan policy NE9 seek to ensure development proposals conserve local distinctiveness, especially in terms of characteristic materials, trees, built form and layout, tranquillity, sense of place and setting. It is noted that following the examination of the Regulation 19 local plan, emerging policy NE9 was not subject to any proposed modifications and is thus afforded substantial weight.

LPP1 Policy MTRA4 (and Reg 19 emerging policy SP3) is also relevant in that it seeks to ensure proposals which are not located within defined settlements should not cause harm to the character and landscape of the area or neighbouring uses, or create inappropriate noise/light and traffic generation. Concerns have been raised by Wickham Parish Council in relation to compliance with this policy.

The Application Site does not lie within any settlement gap designation and does not impact upon any heritage assets. Impacts on the South Downs National Park are considered separately below.

With regards to the potential to integrate with new or existing development, the Applicant's Alternative Suitable Sites Assessment considered a site immediately north of the M27 and an adjacent industrial development (Site 6) along with three different locations within Solent Business Park. Site 6, however, would necessitate a cable length of 4km which is stated to be unviable from a grid viability perspective. The three sites within Solent Business Park were ruled out as one falls within National Highways ownership and is required for their purposes (and lies on steep ground), whilst the other 2 sites are committed to employment (mixed use) development in accordance with the relevant development plan allocations. For these reasons the only viable sites (including the Application Site) are stated to be in open fields which contain no notable built form.

The Winchester Landscape Character Appraisal (LCA) places the site within the Lower Meon Valley Character Area where it states that Titchfield Lane runs along the skyline forming a visual horizon to the river valley to the west of the railway line. It describes the area as having a sparse pattern of development with the wooded valley slopes contributing to its riparian character. It also makes reference to a strong sense of tranquillity and some remoteness. Key issues identified within the LCA include the cumulative effects of

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

infrastructure amongst various other forms of development.

The Application Site is broadly reflective of the characteristics identified above and contributes to the rural character of the area. Whilst the proposal would not impact directly upon any views from public rights of way, filtered views of the site are possible from Titchfield Lane (currently partially screened by vegetation) and the land slopes upwards towards the east. As identified above, there is no built development within the site at present, although there is some urbanising influence from the electricity pylons which cross the site on an approximate east west alignment, alongside the presence of other energy related development in the locality, the substation and the mainline railway.

The proposal would necessitate the regrading of the land and would result in the introduction of areas of new hardsurfacing, fencing, and buildings / structures up to a height of up to 7 metres (in the case of the substation infrastructure in the western part of the site). The proposed new access would also open up views into the site and would therefore notably alter views towards the site from a section of Titchfield Lane. The industrial form of the development itself would also not be characteristic of the locality and would have the potential to undermine its rural appearance and public views towards the site.

The application has been accompanied by a Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) which concludes that *“the proposals would be small scale and afforded a good degree of containment by the combination of mature woodland, roadside vegetation and residential built form along Titchfield Lane.”* It refers to the additional screening which would be offered by the proposed landscape scheme and also states that *“The greatest effects on landscape character would be within the Site itself, introducing new BESS infrastructure, small scale buildings and access tracks into a pastoral field.”* The LVA does, however, acknowledge impacts upon views from Titchfield Lane.

The WCC Landscape Officer has reviewed the proposals and advises that whilst the proposal would be unattractive and of a significant scale, the site is largely screened from wider viewpoints due to the surrounding woodland framework. It is recognised that any views of the development would be confined to close viewpoints from Titchfield Lane. These views would be largely screened, as a result of the intervening roadside vegetation, even during the winter. The proposed development would be viewed obliquely by those travelling along Titchfield Lane and would be set within a well vegetated and highly contained setting. Any visual impacts associated with the proposal would therefore be localised.

There are no public rights of way (PROWs) within or adjacent to the site. The closest PROW lies approximately 200 metres from the proposed development, and this is separated from the site by Titchfield Land along with various elements of built form. On completion, the LVA concludes that the majority of the proposed development would be screened from view by the intervening vegetation and built form along Titchfield Lane, even during the winter. Although the proposed mitigation planting would not have matured enough during the early operation phase to provide additional screening, it is considered that the dense nature of the existing intervening vegetation would contain views of the proposals in the short term. Once the mitigation planting has matured by the later operational phase, this would further aid in screening any remaining glimpses.

The Eastleigh to Fareham Railway Line runs on an approximate north-west to south-east alignment and lies approximately 20m from the Site at its closest point. The LVA identifies that the route is defined by a strong woodland and mature tree belt which would restrict

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

views towards the proposed development to transient glimpses, during the winter only.

With regards to the steps taken by the Applicant to mitigate any visual impacts associated with the development, the development design has sought to minimise visual harm by lowering ground levels within the site; setting the development back from the highway; running cables underground; and retaining existing boundary screening where possible. It is also acknowledged that the proposed landscape scheme would introduce new native hedgerows, native trees, grassland and native thicket planting to the site and along its boundaries. These measures are shown on the Landscape Mitigation Plan which provides for substantial planting buffers along the south and east boundaries along with supplementary planting along the west and north boundary.

With regards to construction impacts, it is recognised that the activity and movement associated with the construction phase will be visible along Titchfield Lane, albeit partially screened and filtered by the intervening existing roadside vegetation. However, this impact would be localised and limited to a short stretch of Titchfield Lane. Any views from the PROW in this location would be heavily filtered by the combination of roadside vegetation along Titchfield Lane and the intervening dwellings located to the north of the Site. It is also recognised that these impacts would be temporary (for a period of approximately 7 months) at the beginning (construction) and end (decommissioning) of the 35 year development.

With regards to cumulative impacts, it is acknowledged that planning applications have been submitted / approved for other energy related developments along Titchfield Lane as follows:

24/02804/FUL	Installation, operation and decommissioning of renewable energy generating station comprising ground-mounted photovoltaic solar arrays together with transformer stations, site accesses, internal access tracks, security measures, access gates, other ancillary infrastructure, landscaping and biodiversity enhancements. temporary permission for 40 years.	Land at Titchfield Lane	Permitted 24/09/2025
HCC/2024/0503	Proposed revised landform modifications to enable the construction of a 10.5 MW Solar Photovoltaic PV_ Farm and Gas Management System with associated works	Funtley Refuse Tip (Former), Titchfield Lane, Wickham, Fareham	Pending decision
23/01106/FUL	Development of a battery energy storage facility, construction of access and soft landscaping proposals (amendment to 21/03089/HCS)	Land South Of Ash Farm, Titchfield Lane, Wickham, Hampshire	Permitted 19.02.2025

With regards to the battery energy storage facility on land at Ash Farm, this site lies approximately 370 metres to the south of the current Application Site and there is no intervisibility directly between due to the topography and the presence of the significant belt of ancient woodland.

In 2001 the County Council consented a 10.5 MW solar photovoltaic (PV) farm and gas

Case No: 24/02818/FUL

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

management system with associated works (Reference 21/03089/HCS). However, this site lies over 1km away and would therefore not give rise to any significant cumulative visual impacts when considered alongside the current proposal.

With regards to the solar development site (reference 24/02804/FUL) it is recognised that the red line boundary for this scheme (specifically Parcel 10) lies just over 60m to the east of the current application site (80 m from the proposed solar development itself). Parcel 10 of 24/02804/FUL is within the 'Mixed Farmland and Woodland' landscape type, whereas the current proposal is within the 'Mixed Farmland and Woodland - *Enclosed*' landscape type. Both types are heavily treed and have a strong sense of enclosure, but the 'Enclosed' type is more enclosed. The LCA describes these areas as 'small scale enclosed landscapes with great variety and contrast'. The numerous woodlands limit views and hedgerows and give the 'Enclosed' areas a secluded character. With this in mind, it is considered that these landscapes have the capacity to absorb development more effectively than other areas of the district. This is particularly the case as neither project is proposing to remove significant areas of hedges trees or woodland.

In considering the nature of the proposed schemes, the layout for the adjacent solar development includes additional hedge tree planting along south-west boundary of Parcel 10, and also areas of neutral grassland along the field margins between the solar areas' perimeter fences and the site boundary. The LVIA that accompanied that planning application stated that, on completion, intervening vegetation (proposed as part of the landscape mitigation) would be likely to screen most views towards the proposed development from dwellings off Titchfield Lane. That assessment acknowledged that, there may be middle-distance views towards the upper parts of structures in the DNO substation compound glimpsed from some upper-storey windows. The LVIA for the solar scheme states that views in combination or succession with the proposal are not likely due to the screening of views in the direction of Parcels 9 and 10 by intervening tree vegetation from any areas where there are likely to be views towards the BESS and Ash Farm schemes. On that basis, it concluded that the cumulative visual effect arising from those sequential views would be medium to small in magnitude, with a moderate to minor and adverse significance, reducing to a negligible magnitude and significance in the medium and long-term following the establishment of the landscape mitigation proposals.

It is recognised that although Parcel 10 of the solar development forms only a relatively small part of the wider solar scheme, the LVIA which supports the solar application states that there would still be a noticeable increase in the influence of energy-related infrastructure on the landscape, arising from parcel 10 of that solar development in conjunction with the current BESS development (and Ash Fam scheme). However, the assessment states that indirect cumulative landscape effects arising from views towards solar development in Parcel 10 in combination, succession or sequence with either the current BESS proposal or the Ash Farm schemes within the landscape character area would be unlikely.

This is supported by the assessment of the WCC Landscape Officer who has advised that in terms of cumulative impact there would be no intervisibility between this application and 24/02804/FUL, nor any opportunities for the public to view both developments at the same time. Both developments are within heavily treed landscapes with a strong sense of enclosure, with the capacity to absorb development more effectively than other areas of the district.

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

The low number of traffic movements which would be associated with the current proposal would also ensure that, once operational, the proposal would not lead to significant cumulative impacts from increased traffic movements. It is acknowledged that battery storage developments can also give rise to additional noise impacts. However, the distance between the site and neighbouring developments is such that significant cumulative impacts from noise are unlikely to arise. Consideration of noise is addressed in later sections of this report.

Having regard to the above points, it is concluded that whilst some limited cumulative impacts would result from the current proposal in combination with the nearby solar development, subject to mitigation being secured, the nature and degree of these impacts (which would reduce in the longer term) would not justify refusal in this case.

With regards to impacts upon tranquillity, it is recognised that Wickham Parish Council have raised concerns over potential light pollution. The site (and also the immediate locality) is currently unlit and the nature of the proposed development is such that it would necessitate the introduction of new external lighting for the purposes of safety and security. The application has been accompanied by a Lighting Assessment which states that a pole-top mounted LED light is planned at the entry junction, to provide visibility on the access. LED lights mounted on CCTV column brackets are proposed along the northern side of the internal road, with additional pole-top floodlights further along the internal roadway. These would be positioned at a height of four metres. Those on the southern and eastern boundaries would be fitted with directional shields to prevent light spill and ensure focus in a single direction. Wall-mounted downlights are also proposed for the switchgear building.

The lights are stated to be motion sensors (programmed to activate only in response to security triggers). The applicant has clarified that the lights would not be triggered by small creatures, and the compound would be secure preventing access by larger animals such as deer. The lighting would be triggered by presence detectors and so they illuminate when maintenance staff visit (once or twice per week), however staff would typically only be on site during daytime working hours, and so lighting would not be in use frequently or for long durations. Having regard to this, it is concluded that subject to conditions controlling the specification and amount of external lighting, the proposal would not result in a significant harmful impact as a result of increased light pollution.

With regards to noise and impact to tranquillity, the NPPF (paragraph 198) states that planning decisions should ensure that new development is appropriate for its location taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of (*inter alia*) pollution on the natural environment, and that in doing so such decisions should protect tranquil areas which have remained relatively undisturbed by noise. This is supplemented by Planning Practice Guidance which advises that the protection of tranquillity is justified in areas which are relatively undisturbed by noise from human sources, for example, areas which provide a sense of peace and quiet or a positive soundscape where natural sounds predominate (Paragraph: 008 Reference ID: 30-008-2019072). Whilst noise levels at the Application Site are relatively low, traffic on Titchfield Lane currently has some influence on background noise levels in the wider area and the locality is not entirely free from noise from human sources. The development itself would also not give rise to a significant increase in vehicular activity once operational.

The proposed inverter units (20 proposed in total), battery container units (40 proposed in total) and substation would generate a source of noise. The Environmental Protection Officer has therefore identified that because the noise resulting from the development is

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

predicted to increase the immediate background noise levels, it would be of a different acoustic character and could therefore impact upon tranquillity. However, any impacts would be relatively localised (and well distanced from public rights of way) and would also be mitigated by the proposed 3.5m height acoustic barrier which would lie to the north, west, east and south-western parts of the main BESS compound. Whilst the proposal would be audible in close proximity to the development, such impacts would not unacceptably detract from the special qualities of the wider countryside having regard to the presence of other urbanising influences in the area and the distance from sensitive receptors such as public rights of way.

Overall, it is concluded that, whilst the character of the site itself would be significantly altered as a result of the proposed development (and that cumulative impacts would also occur) it is concluded that the majority of visual impacts associated with the development would be localised and would reduce in the longer term as landscape planting matures. Impacts upon public or longer-range views would be limited subject to retaining and enhancing boundary screening. The proposal would therefore not impact upon recreational enjoyment of the open countryside to an unacceptable degree. As required by LPP1 Policy MTRA4 and Regulation 19 emerging local plan policy SP3, the proposal would therefore not cause harm to the character and landscape of the area or neighbouring uses, or create inappropriate noise/light and traffic generation subject to appropriate mitigation being in place.

Although some loss of tranquillity would result from the proposal, these impacts would not unacceptably undermine the rural character to the extent that refusal would be justified on these grounds. It is also recognised that steps have been taken to ensure the layout and design of the development would minimise visual intrusion, preserve local distinctiveness within and surrounding the site as required by LPP2 Policies DM15, DM16 and DM23 and Regulation 19 emerging local plan policies D7 and NE14.

Development affecting the South Downs National Park

The application site is located 1.5 miles from 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 2024. The Circular and NPPF confirm that National Parks have the highest status of protection, and the NPPF states at paragraph 189 that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and National Landscapes which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues.

In addition, section 245 of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act amends the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 in respect of the duty on relevant authorities in relation to their functions which affect land in (*inter alia*) National Parks, in England. Relevant authorities must now 'seek to further' the statutory purposes of Protected Landscapes. This replaces the previous duty on relevant authorities to 'have regard to' their statutory purposes.

LPP1 Policy CP19 and Regulation 19 emerging local plan policy NE8 both state that new development should be in keeping with the context and the setting of the landscape and settlements of the South Downs National Park. It states that the emphasis should be on small-scale proposals that are in a sustainable location and well designed. Proposals which

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

support the economic and social well-being of the National Park and its communities will be encouraged, provided that they do not conflict with the National Park's purposes. It is noted that following the examination of the Regulation 19 local plan, emerging policy NE8 is the subject of a proposed modifications (recently the subject of public consultation) and is thus afforded moderate weight.

Due to the distance between the site and the National Park, the height of the development and the presence of intervening features there would be no intervisibility between the two areas.

In conclusion therefore the development will not affect any land within the National Park and is in accordance with Section 11a of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949.

Historic Environment

Listed Buildings:

The preservation of the special architectural/historic interest of the listed building and its setting (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; Regulation 19 emerging local plan policies HE1, HE2, HE3 and HE8; NPPF (2024) Section 16.

Conservation areas:

The preservation or enhancement of the character or appearance of the conservation area (S.72 P(LBCA) Act 1990; Policies DM27 & DM28 of the Winchester District Local Plan Part 2 Adopted 2017; Policy CP20 Winchester District Joint Core Strategy; Regulation 19 emerging local plan policies HE1, HE2, HE3 and HE10; NPPF (2024) Section 16.

The proposed development does not affect nor is it near to a statutory listed building or structure including its setting, a Conservation Area, Archaeology or Non-designated Heritage Assets including setting. Therefore, no impact is demonstrated.

Neighbouring amenity

There would be a distance of just over 100 metres between the proposed compound for the development and the closest neighbouring property, Thumpers, which lies to the north of the site. The only other neighbouring property in the locality is Lone Cottage, which lies 130 metres to the south and is separated from the site by Titchfield Land and an extensive area of protected woodland. Having regards to the nature and scale of the development, the distance from neighbouring properties and the presence of intervening features it is considered that no significant adverse impacts from visual intrusion, overlooking or loss of light would occur.

It is recognised that the nature of the proposed development is such that it could give rise to harmful impacts upon neighbouring residential amenity through potential light intrusion and increased noise levels. It is also recognised that the Parish Council raise concerns that levels of noise may be above the acceptable levels as set out by Significant Observed Adverse Effect Level (SOAEL) level and impact on human health and the quality of life for local residents.

Case No: 24/02818/FUL

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

LPP1 policy CP12 highlights that low carbon developments should integrate with new or existing development, whilst avoiding harm to existing development and communities whilst Regulation 19 emerging local plan policy CN5 states that developments should avoid or mitigate any adverse effects on the built environment, biodiversity, landscape and neighbouring uses in terms of cumulative impacts.

In accordance with LPP2 Policies DM19 and DM20 the application has been accompanied by a Noise Impact Assessment and a Lighting Impact Assessment / External Lighting Design. A noise mitigation barrier has also been identified on the proposed site layout plan.

The initial comments received from WCC Environmental Protection Officers raised significant concerns regarding potential noise impacts. These concerns referred to the effectiveness of the acoustic barrier in mitigating lower frequency noise transmission (potential humming sounds from the BESS development) and the need to ensure this would be lower than the threshold for hearing. Comments also referred to the need to assess impacts on the adjacent scout camping site (Everett's Coppice) which lies within the woodland to the south. Clarification was also requested as to whether the inverter would operate at 50 percent duty overnight and this gives lower noise levels of 45dB(A) at 10m and also further information was requested in relation to the position of noise generating plant above ground level (impacting on the effectiveness of the noise barrier). A justification for the conclusions reached in respect of noise impacts in comparison with background noise levels was also requested.

To address these concerns a revised Proposed Site Layout Plan was submitted which includes an acoustic mitigation fence of 3.5 metres in height enclosing the north, west and southern edges of the main BESS compound (an increase in length and height from the original submission). It has also been confirmed that the development design will ensure the proximity of the inverters to each other would not result in an increase in local temperature to 25°C or above (thereby reducing the potential for air conditioning units to be triggered). Predicted noise levels at sensitive receptors (having regard to the amended design to the acoustic barrier) have also been clarified.

The WCC Environmental Protection Officer has confirmed that the additional information provided has fully addressed the concerns raised subject to conditions securing full details of the final specification of the BESS units and also a noise validation report (Conditions 3 and 14).

With regards to the concerns raised by the Parish Council and the requirements of LPP2 Policy DM20 and Regulation 19 emerging local plan policy D7 in relation to ensuring noise from development does not exceed the Significant Observed Adverse Effect Level (SOAEL). The further assessments undertaken show that SOAEL will not be exceeded in this case (having regards to the feedback received from the WCC Environmental Protection Officer). Specifically, the level of noise resulting from the development is not (subject to mitigation) likely to cause a material change in behaviour, attitude or physiological response to local residents. The potential for sleep disturbance has also not been identified. The proposed acoustic barrier and development design will also ensure the proposal would reduce impacts to as near to the Lowest Observed Effect Level (LOAEL) as is reasonably possible (as required by LPP1 Policy DM20 and Reg 19 emerging policy D7). It is noted that following the Examination of the Regulation 19 emerging local plan, the supporting text of policy D7 is subject to a proposed modification,

Case No: 24/02818/FUL

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

however the text of the policy remains unchanged and as such may be afforded substantial weight.

With regards to potential cumulative noise impacts arising from the current proposal alongside solar development in the wider area (application references 24/02804/FUL and HCC/2024/0503), the Environmental Protection Officer advises that significant cumulative noise effects from the three different sites are not anticipated. This is based upon the understanding that once the solar farms are operational the noise is very minimal in comparison to BESS development.

The overall height and length of the acoustic barrier has increased and it has been designed to wrap tightly around the main BESS compound. Full details of external finish would be secured through conditions to ensure an acceptable appearance. Therefore, in this instance mitigation measures are not expected to result in an unacceptable design.

Overall, it is concluded that the assessments undertaken have adequately presented a worst-case scenario and that the proposed development would not give rise to significant adverse impacts upon the existing local sound environment. Therefore, the potential for significant adverse health or quality of life impacts arising from noise has not been identified and the proposal is compliant with LPP2 Policy DM20 and Regulation 19 emerging local plan policy D7.

With regards to potential impacts from light intrusion towards local residents, due to the distance between the development and the closest neighbouring property and having regard to the nature / specification / positioning / operation of external lighting, it is considered that any lighting impacts resulting from the development would not have an unacceptably harmful impact upon the living conditions of the occupants of the neighbouring property. It is therefore considered that the proposed development would not result in unacceptable light pollution, resulting in adverse health or quality of life impacts.

With regards to construction impacts upon local amenity, the Transport Assessment states that this phase of the development would last for approximately 7 months (32 weeks), and that construction activities would take place for 5.5 days per week (Monday to Saturday). No construction would occur on Sundays and Bank Holidays. The application has been accompanied by a Construction Traffic Management Plan which includes a Site Management Plan. This includes measures relating to dust and dirt control, noise, complaints, site management, waste management and co-ordination of deliveries. Subject to these measures being secured through conditions, it is considered that any potential impacts upon the living conditions of neighbouring residents can reasonably be mitigated during the construction phase of the development, having regard to the distance between the development and neighbouring properties. A condition to secure a Decommissioning Traffic Management Plan would have a similar result.

Overall, it is therefore concluded that the proposed development (during both construction, operation and decommissioning) would not have an unacceptable adverse impact on adjoining land, uses or property by reason of overlooking, overshadowing or by being overbearing as required by LPP2 Policy DM17. Furthermore, the development would not have an unacceptable impact on human health or quality of life and would therefore not conflict with DM20.

Sustainable Transport

Case No: 24/02818/FUL

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

LPP2 Policy DM18 and Regulation 19 emerging local plan policies T3 and T4, seek to ensure development proposals provide parking in accordance with relevant standards and needs; development allows for access to, and movement within the site having regard to the requirements of the emergency services. The policies also requires that proposals make provision for access to the site in accordance with any highway requirements on the grounds of safety, including the provision of gateways, visibility splays, and access to adopted highways. It is noted that following Examination of the Regulation 19 local plan, both emerging policies T3 and T4 are subject to proposed modifications and thus are afforded moderate weight.

The application has been accompanied by a Transport Assessment (TA) and Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP). The views of Hampshire County Council as Local Highways Authority have been sought and they have advised that there are no existing accident clusters in the local area with the potential to be exacerbated by the proposed development.

The proposal would involve the formation of a new vehicular access from Titchfield Lane, a C classified highway. The gates will be set 50m from the highway edge to ensure that the vehicle can be fully accommodated off carriageway without overhanging the highway. The Transport Assessment includes a visibility drawing which shows that an adequate level of visibility can be achieved in both directions.

Once operational, the TA states that the development is only likely to require one or two visits per week one by maintenance operatives. This is considered to represent a modest overall number of vehicle movements, and the proposal would therefore not give rise to significant adverse impacts through increased volume of traffic movements once operational. Two parking spaces are proposed within the site in order to accommodate staff visits and the Highway Authority have indicated that they are satisfied that the quantum of parking during the operational phase would not result in any overspill parking on the local highway network.

It is acknowledged that third party concerns have been raised in relation to the extent to which the development has been designed to accommodate emergency vehicles. The Transport Assessment includes full tracking details for a fire tender (Drawing 3799-01-D02).

The swept path analysis shown demonstrates vehicular swept path analysis of the site access and onsite layout accommodating a 3.5t Panel Van and Fire Tender during the operational phase displaying the vehicles entering and exiting the vicinity of the development. The Highway Authority have advised that the tracking provided for both heavy goods vehicles and emergency vehicles is acceptable.

It is acknowledged that the Parish Council has raised concerns in relation to the impacts of additional traffic movements associated with the construction phase. The Transport Assessment states that a total of 61 HGV delivery trips (122 two-way) is anticipated over the main construction phase. Smaller vehicle trips are predicted to be 10 per working day (20 two-way movements). The Highways Authority have advised that the volume of temporary traffic associated with the construction phase will not result in any severe impact on the local highway network. It is therefore considered that the additional volume of traffic movements resulting from the construction phase would not result in a significant harmful impact upon the highway network.

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

The submitted construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) states that mud and debris would be prevented from being taken onto the adjacent highway network by wheel wash facilities located at the site access and all traffic would be directed to cross these before exiting the site. The effectiveness of these measures would be monitored throughout the construction phase. Deliveries of materials would be restricted to vehicles that can access the site and manoeuvre in such a manner that they can access and egress the site in a forward gear, thus avoiding the need to reverse onto, or from, the local highway network.

The proposed management of construction traffic, including allocation of specific delivery slots, would mitigate against instances of HGV s meeting along the narrow site access road. Continuous communication is proposed between delivery drivers and the site manager to organise arrival during the delivery slot and to manage the departure of HGV s from the site and minimise inter-vehicular conflicts.

The CTMP also includes an HGV routing strategy which indicates that during the construction phase, all traffic will travel to and from the site from the south via the A27 Southampton Road, which they state is the most direct route to the strategic road network and is therefore considered acceptable.

Paragraph 116 of the NPPF recognises that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network, following mitigation, would be severe, taking into account all reasonable future scenarios.

Overall, it is concluded that the construction and operation of the proposed development would manage existing demand on the highway network, would allow for access to, and movement within, the site in a safe and effective manner and would incorporate parking provision and vehicular access as part of the overall design of the scheme as required by LPP1 Policy CP10, LPP2 Policy DM18 and Regulation 19 emerging local plan policies T1, T2 and T3.

Ecology and Biodiversity

LPP1 policy CP12 requires that consideration of low carbon developments takes into account opportunities for environmental enhancement. Regulation 19 emerging local plan policy CN5 requires that the scheme has incorporated for environmental/ wildlife enhancement and nature-based solutions.

LPP1 Policy CP16 states that new development will be required to show how biodiversity can be retained, protected and enhanced through its design and implementation and also requires new development to avoid adverse impacts, or if unavoidable ensure that impacts are appropriately mitigated. Similar aims are described within Regulation 19 emerging local plan policy NE5. These policies closely reflects the requirements of paragraph 193 of the NPPF which states that if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused.

The application site does not lie within any statutory designated nature conservation sites but lies directly adjacent to Everetts Copse (ancient woodland and SSSI designation) which bounds the south and east boundaries of the site. This designation has connectivity

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

with other areas of ancient woodland in the wider area. Impacts upon this area of ancient woodland is considered below under the heading of trees.

With regards to local ecological interests within and adjacent to the site, the application has been accompanied by a Preliminary Ecological Survey and Assessment, Bat Activity Survey and Assessment, Botany Survey and Assessment and Great crested Newt Habitat Suitability Assessment (HSI). These have been reviewed by both the WCC Ecologist and Naturespace.

With regards to protected species, Government Circular 06/2005 advises that the presence of a protected species is a material consideration when a planning authority is considering a development proposal that, if carried out, would be likely to result in harm to the species or its habitat. It also states that it is essential that the presence or otherwise of protected species, and the extent that they may be affected by the proposed development, is established before the planning permission is granted, otherwise all relevant material considerations may not have been addressed in making the decision. Planning Practice Guidance states that planning authorities need to consider the potential impacts of development on protected and priority species, and the scope to avoid or mitigate any impacts when considering site allocations or planning applications.

It is acknowledged that the Parish Council has raised concerns in relation to Great Crested Newts and that the development falls within a medium risk area for this species. However, the ecological assessments undertaken identify that great crested newts are unlikely to be present and impacted by the proposed works. The northern pond is located approximately 20m from the red line boundary and was assessed as being of 'poor' quality. The other ponds in the landscape are located to the south approximately 450m from the red line boundary. On this basis Nature Space have advised that subject to the construction adhering to the recommended precautionary working measures, no adverse impacts upon great crested newts are identified.

With regards to potential impact on other species, the trees and habitats on-site are suitable for bat roosting and foraging and the site has also been identified as having potential presence of reptiles. Further survey work has therefore been undertaken in respect of both of these species. The Bat Activity Survey & Assessment Common pipistrelle bats indicates that the woodland and trees present around the boundaries of the site are of high value for local bat populations and that any development works to this site must incorporate wide unlit and undeveloped margins around the boundary to ensure that important commuting and foraging networks are retained. The proposed site layout has been developed to focus on retaining, protecting and buffering habitat features identified and being used by bats so their key functionality can be retained. A 15m strip of grassland habitat will be maintained around the southern and eastern boundary of the site with the adjacent trees untouched by the development, therefore maintaining the foraging habitat identified. A sensitive lighting scheme is also recommended. This can be secured by condition.

The further reptile survey undertaken identifies that a low population of both slow worm and common lizard are present within the site, present on the site, the majority found in the eastern and central land parcels. The revised dormouse survey found no evidence of dormice within the hedgerow boundary, and it is considered likely the current management regime reduces the food available for this species. Both of these reports range of mitigation and enhancement measures which can be conditioned as part of the

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

Construction Traffic and Environmental Management Plan (CTEMP) and the Landscape and Biodiversity Enhancement Plan.

Biodiversity Net Gain is now required under the statutory framework introduced by Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. This seeks to ensure development proposals deliver at least a 10% increase in biodiversity value relative to the pre-development biodiversity value of the onsite habitat. This increase can be achieved through onsite biodiversity gains, registered offsite biodiversity gains or statutory biodiversity credits.

The application has been accompanied by a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment. Whilst the applicant has advised that >10% BNG can be provided onsite for linear and watercourse features, a BNG of only 1.23% can be provided onsite for habitat units which falls short of the mandatory 10% gain required. However, the applicant has stated that the balance would be achieved through purchasing offsite biodiversity units from a registered Habitat Bank. Accordingly, it is considered appropriate to impose a condition which secures BNG on-site in the first instance, or if this is shown to be unviable, off site, or as a last resort elsewhere and/or via strategic payments. The Applicant has confirmed agreement to the recommended condition.

Having regard to the above assessment and the various measures put forward by the Applicant, it is concluded that the proposal would avoid unacceptable adverse impacts upon biodiversity, and would retain, protect and enhance biodiversity through its design and implementation whilst also providing a net gain of well-managed, multifunctional green infrastructure. The development would therefore be in accordance with LPP1 Policies CP12, CP15 and CP16, Regulation 19 emerging local plan policies CN5, NE4 and N5 and paragraph 193 of the NPPF.

Appropriate Assessment

The proposed development would not involve any additional overnight accommodation, would not necessitate the provision of connections to the foul water drainage network and would therefore not increase nutrient load at the Solent water environment. The development also does not lie within or close to any European Nature Conservation Sites and would not materially increase recreational pressure upon these designations. Therefore, the development would not cause a significant effect upon the Solent European Sites protected as Special Protection Area and Special Area of Conservation under European law and it is not necessary to undertake an Appropriate Assessment in this instance.

Trees

The trees within the site and along its boundaries are not subject to any tree preservation orders. However, as identified above, the site is adjoined by the Botley Wood and Everett's and Mushes Copse Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) (ancient semi natural woodland). Ancient woodland is irreplaceable and therefore measures must be taken to avoid and mitigate potential impacts on this habitat.

Paragraph 187 of the NPPF states that proposals should recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services - including trees and woodland. LPP2 Policy DM23 reflects these requirements

Case No: 24/02818/FUL

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

and states that proposals should protect and enhance the key characteristics of the landscape and should avoid the loss of key features.

LPP2 Policy DM15 states that proposals should conserve or enhance trees, hedgerows and corridors which contribute to local distinctiveness. These aims are also set out in Regulation 19 emerging local plan policies D4 and N9. Similarly, LPP2 Policy DM24 and Regulation 19 emerging local plan policy NE15 state that proposals should not result in the loss or deterioration of ancient woodlands, important hedgerows, special trees, distinctive ground flora and the space required to support them in the long term.

The application has been accompanied by an arboricultural impact assessment (AIA) which has been reviewed by the WCC Tree Officer.

With regards to onsite impacts the submitted arboricultural impact Assessment identifies the necessary removal of some trees (mixed species hedgerow and goat willow) on the roadside boundary to facilitate the access and improve visibility. Whilst they are of some landscape / amenity value, they are assessed as being of low quality and the proposals include replacement tree and hedge planting the western and northern sides of the site respectively. The AIA includes tree protection measures for all retained trees on site and this accords with the relevant British Standard and the WCC Tree Officer raises no objections relating to impacts upon trees within and adjacent to the site.

With regards to ancient woodland, it is recognised that paragraph 193 of the NPPF states that development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons, and a suitable compensation strategy exists. The NPPF defines such habitats as those which are technically very difficult (or take a very significant time) to restore, recreate or replace once destroyed, taking into account their age, uniqueness, species diversity or rarity.

Natural England and the Forestry Commission's standing advice states that no development should be approved which sits within a buffer zone of at least 15 metres of an ancient woodland. The Parish council has raised concerns over the impact the proposed development would have upon ancient woodland habitats adjacent to the site.

All trees within the designated ancient and semi-natural woodland on the eastern and southern boundaries are to be retained and protected. The submitted AIA states that a 15m buffer zone is sufficient for all surveyed trees, apart from three oaks along the woodland boundary (T11-T13 inclusive), where the minimum RPA is calculated as 16m. The WCC Tree Officer advises that the proposed protection fencing to be installed along the edge of the buffer zone (15-16m wide as appropriate) is sufficiently robust and in accordance with the relevant British Standard. The AIA states that some aspects of construction, including access routes and the proximity of infrastructure to buffer zones, may temporarily require encroachment into the buffer areas. Where this occurs, mitigation measures, including arboricultural supervision and temporary ground protection are proposed, and on this basis, the WCC Tree Officer is supportive of the proposal.

With regards to potential indirect impacts upon ancient woodland, it is recognised that the relevant standing advice states that impacts from development can arise from damaging or compacting soil, increasing levels of dust, air, soil and light pollution, noise and vibration, changing the water table or drainage, changing the woodland ecosystem by removing the woodland edge or thinning trees and also reducing the amount of semi-natural habitats

Case No: 24/02818/FUL

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

next to ancient woodland that provide important dispersal and feeding habitat for woodland species.

The comments received from Natural England identify the need for any Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SuDS) to be designed to ensure there will be no deterioration in water quality or changes in water quantity from the site. The submitted Emergency Response Plan indicates that fire water run-off would be captured in lined attenuation features and would be removed within 24 hours by a local emergency waste disposal service using a sealed mobile tanker. These details would be secured through condition 7, with impacts upon the water environment during the construction phase of the development would be secured through condition 6.

Because no changes in ground level would occur within 15 metres of the buffer zone of the ancient woodland designation, the proposal would not give rise to harmful impacts from increased surface runoff onto adjacent habitats. Within the development footprint, all surface water is to be retained on site and discharged at a controlled rate to an adjacent ditch and swale to avoid inundation of adjacent watercourses. Having regard to this, it is considered that the development design would adequately ensure the development would not affect the hydrology of the adjacent ancient woodland habitats.

Overall, it is considered that subject to appropriate mitigation being in place the proposal would not result in the loss or deterioration of ancient woodlands, important hedgerows, special trees, distinctive ground flora and the space required to support them in the long term.

Sustainability

Paragraph 161 of the NPPF states that the planning system should support the transition to net zero by 2050 and take full account of all climate impacts including overheating, water scarcity, storm and flood risks and coastal change. It also states that proposals should help to: shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimise vulnerability and improve resilience; encourage the reuse of existing resources, including the conversion of existing buildings; and support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure.

LPP1 Policy CP11 reflects these requirements and states that developments should achieve the lowest level of carbon emissions and water consumption which is practical and viable and should apply the energy hierarchy through maximising energy efficiency and designing out the need for energy use in the first instance. LPP2 Policy DM16 also states that proposals should utilise the principles of energy efficient design, by means of layout, orientation, passive solar gain, and the design of buildings and spaces, as far as is compatible with the character of the area. Regulation 19 emerging local plan policy D1 requires proposals to demonstrate that measures to minimise carbon emissions and reduce the impact on climate change form an integral part of the design solutions.

In this instance the primary purpose of the proposed development would be to reduce reliance upon non-renewable resources. Concern has been raised that the battery cells require replacement every 5-10 years. The applicant has advised that the industry standard predictions for degradation are 15-20 years indicating one replacement would be required within the proposed lifecycle of the development. In addition, the high value of the materials within the battery cells leads to high recycling rates. The applicant has advised

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

that the relevant regulatory system for the disposal of commercial scale batteries is the Waste Batteries and Accumulators Regulations 2009.

With regards to the construction and decommissioning phases, full details of measures to minimise waste and resources would be secured as part of a construction environmental management plan (CEMP). A soil remediation strategy would also be secured as part of the decommissioning plan.

In this respect, it is considered that subject to conditions the proposed development would meet the requirements of LPP2 Policy DM16, Regulation 19 emerging local plan policy D1 alongside paragraph 161 of the NPPF.

Sustainable Drainage

The application site does not lie within or directly adjacent to a flood zone. Notwithstanding this, the proposal would comprise major development and would introduce a significant element of development onto an existing greenfield site and would therefore lead to a potential increase in surface runoff. In accordance with NPPF paragraph 181, the application has been accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment and Surface Water Drainage Strategy. The views of the WCC Drainage Engineer, Southern Water, the Environment Agency and Hampshire County Council as the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) have been sought.

The Application site (inclusive of the proposed access) lies wholly within a Flood Zone 1 and therefore accords with the requirements of NPPF paragraph 170 which states that inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk (whether existing or future).

Notwithstanding this, it is recognised that LPP1 Policy CP17 seeks to ensure new development would be designed to ensure risk is not increased elsewhere and that opportunities to reduce the causes and impacts of flooding within the District are considered. This policy also states that proposals should include sustainable water management systems such as Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) which should be designed to meet the relevant standards so as to gain approval by the SuDS Approval Body. These requirements are reflected in Regulation 19 emerging local plan policy NE6 which, as it is currently subject to a proposed modification following the Examination of the Reg 19 emerging local plan, is afforded moderate weight.

These requirements are consistent with paragraph 182 of the NPPF which states that applications which could affect drainage on or around the site should incorporate sustainable drainage systems to control flow rates and reduce volumes of runoff, and which are proportionate to the nature and scale of the proposal. It states that these measures should provide multifunctional benefits wherever possible, through facilitating improvements in water quality and biodiversity, as well as benefits for amenity. With regards to major development in particular proposals should:

- a) take account of advice from the Lead Local Flood Authority;
- b) have appropriate proposed minimum operational standards; and
- c) have maintenance arrangements in place to ensure an acceptable standard of operation for the lifetime of the development.

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

LPP1 Policy CP12 requires that consideration of low carbon schemes take account of the potential to integrate with new or existing development, whilst avoiding harm to existing development and communities. Regulation 19 emerging local plan policy CN5 requires that measures are incorporated into the scheme to avoid or mitigate any adverse effects on the (*inter alia*) built environment and neighbouring uses.

The LLFA initially raised concerns regarding the potential for surface water flood risk on Titchfield Lane in particular relating to the potential for loss of surface water flood storage volume within the site, and the capacity of the existing culvert underneath Titchfield Lane. The applicant has undertaken further discussions with the LLFA and provided additional calculations. These have been reviewed by the LLFA which has advised that the additional information demonstrates that there is sufficient capacity within the existing culvert to accept flows without causing activation of the area of flood risk within the site.

On this basis, the LLFA accepts that the proposed amendments to the site would not increase flood risks to the highway. In addition, the LLFA has also requested a condition to request some additional information to demonstrate how the run-off from the proposed internal access road would be directed to the swale. Officers are satisfied that this can be secured through an appropriate condition.

With regards to water quality, LPP1 Policy CP17 states that proposals should not cause unacceptable deterioration to water quality or have an unacceptable impact on water quantity (including drinking water supplies). These requirements are consistent with paragraph 187 of the NPPF which states that new / existing development should not cause or be subject to unacceptable risk from water pollution. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such water quality. In this instance the proposed development does not lie within a source protection zone.

Having regard to the nature of the proposed development, it would not lead to any additional need for foul drainage provision.

Overall, it is therefore concluded that the proposal would ensure that water supply, surface water drainage and wastewater infrastructure would service new development as required by LPP1 CP17 and Regulation 19 emerging local plan policy NE6.

Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land

In acknowledging that agricultural land is a finite resource and that development should seek to avoid BMV agricultural land, it should be noted that the site is not classified as Grade 1,2 or 3 quality agricultural land (Regional Land Classifications) but instead is identified as being 'non-agricultural' (www.magic.gov.uk). It is not therefore BMV agricultural land and no conflict with LPP2 policy DM17, Regulation 19 local plan emerging policy CN5, paragraph 187 of the NPPF and Planning Practice Guidance (Renewable and Low Carbon Energy) would result.

Fire Safety

It is recognised that battery storage systems can give rise to increased risk of fire and that concerns have been raised by both the Parish Council and third-party comments in this regard. Regulation 19 emerging local plan policy (afforded moderate weight) includes a

Case No: 24/02818/FUL

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

requirement that the emergency plan for an energy storage facility addresses the risk of fire and any potential contamination run off.

The application has been accompanied by an Emergency Response Plan, a Fire Strategy Plan and a Risk Management Plan.

The Applicant has confirmed that the battery units will be UL9540A certified to ensure thermal runaway cannot propagate between containers. The design incorporates a separation distance of 1.5m minimum on sides of the units that contain access panels, doors, or deflagration vents; this accords with the relevant fire safety standard (FM Global 2023, cited in 'Health and Safety Guidance for Grid Scale Electrical Energy Storage Systems' Fraser Nash, produced in 2024 for Department for Energy Security & Net Zero. The individual battery units would be grouped together so that the walls of some of the units would be between approximately 30-1.5m apart, however the submitted elevations demonstrate that the requirements of the guidance would be achieved, as each battery unit would have at least two walls without doors, access panels or vents. It is noted that the recent (December 2025) National Fire Chiefs Council Guidance document (Grid Scale Energy Storage System Planning) quotes NFPA855 which indicates that separation between cabinets can be reduced to 0.941m, however the NFCC guidance also highlights that it is important to consider the NFPA855 in its entirety including Section 9.4.2. of Annex A which indicates that smaller spacings are acceptable (section 9.4.2.3) depending on the acceptance of fire and explosion testing by the relevant authority, where the standard testing is undertaken in accordance with UL 9540A or equivalent. It is noted that the NFCC guidance specifically states that LPAs should not use the guidance as a mandatory set of recommendations and instead prioritise discussions with the local fire and rescue service.

Each battery unit would be provided with internal aerosol or water-based fire suppression systems which would be designed to extinguish fire before it is able to escalate or spread and would be activated automatically based on fire detection in the battery containers. In the event that a fire breaks out, the applicant has stated that the recommendation is to observe a controlled burn, aiming not to directly tackle any battery fire to avoid fire water run-off and only applying 'boundary cooling' that is spraying water on the adjacent battery enclosures, to prevent the spread of fire and minimising potential for water contamination.

If water is required for firefighting, it will be provided on site via 2 hydrants which would provide 1,900 litres per minute for two hours (total of 228,000 litres). It is noted that this is greater than the volume of 180,000 litres required by the updated National Fire Chiefs Council Guidance (December 2025). Any water from firefighting would be collected within the surface water attenuation facilities which has been sized to accommodate all of the firefighting water assuming a 1 in 30 year storm event. Attenuation would be provided within the swale and the stone-blanket sub-base. For pollution prevention purposes, the attenuation facilities would be lined/sealed so that no infiltration into groundwater could occur. In the event of a fire both of the outfalls would be closed, to ensure any potentially contaminated water would not then enter adjacent watercourses or groundwater; this would occur either automatically shut off or could be activated remotely. All firewater run-off would be removed by a local emergency waste disposal service will be contracted to safely remove the water using a sealed mobile tanker. The emergency waste disposal service will be required to have a 24/7 number and to be able to access the site within 2 hours of the call.

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

All these measures would be secured as part of a detailed Battery Safety Management Plan (to be secured by condition). The proposed condition requiring a Battery Safety Management Plan includes a provision requiring that it include full details setting out how firewater used during fire suppression would be temporarily contained on site, and then removed from the site within 24 hours.

It is noted that the NFCC guidance specifically states that LPAs should not use the guidance as a mandatory set of recommendations and instead prioritise discussions with the local fire and rescue service. Fire and Rescue Services have a statutory responsibility under the Fire and Rescue Services Act, but are not a statutory consultee for planning applications. However, the view of the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service has been sought throughout the application process; they have confirmed that any potential fire risk can reasonably be addressed through an appropriate condition. In recent Appeal Decisions in 2024 and 2023 (APP/V4630/W/24/3347424 and APP/C3240/W/22/3293667), the Planning Inspector and the Secretary of State have stated that that detailed matters associated with fire safety may be addressed by planning condition.

The Applicant has also indicated that they are content for a planning condition to be imposed to require the installation of an audible fire alarm on the site to ensure the safety of those using the adjacent Scout hut premises (include as part of condition number 7).

It is noted that the Health and Safety Guidance for Grid Scale Electrical Energy Storage Systems' (produced by Fraser Nash, in 2024 for Department for Energy Security & Net Zero) states that in order to address emergency scenarios, it is likely that two separate access routes into the site are likely to be necessary, in case one becomes obstructed or inaccessible. It is noted that case history on the matter of a single access into a battery site is apparently conflicting, with the Inspector for APP/U1105/W/23/3319803 (16/02/2024) raising concerns regard the proposed means of access, whereas the Inspector for APP/Q4625/W/24/3343977 (09/01/2025) found no compelling evidence that the proposals was unacceptable in this regard. It is noted that in the case of the Dismissed Appeal, (APP/U1105/W/23/3319803, the Inspector raised concerns that the arrangement of the internal access roads in relation to the prevailing wind direction (from the SW) would potentially mean that fire to the east, in the vicinity of access, would hinder the use of the access. Officers have reviewed the plans for that appeal proposal in comparison with this scheme and have found notable differences between the proposals, in particular; the access for this site is at the west of the site; the battery units are set back 60m from the highway access, and are surrounded by a ring road, allowing better access to all parts of the site than the appeal site and ensuring no need to reverse. In addition, the NFCC (Dec 2025) guidance advises that if the provision of an alternative access point is not practicable, an alternative may be to provide a perimeter 'loop' type of vehicle access around the site. Tracking plans provided indicate that a fire tender can access all parts of the site and that within the substation area there is sufficient space to enable reversing of a fire tender. On this basis, officers are satisfied a single point of access to the site is acceptable, particularly given that no objection has been raised by the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service.

Whilst there is a risk of fire from the proposal - as indeed there is from most developments - the securing of a Battery Safety Management Plan by condition would reduce and manage such risks. As such, it is not considered that this provides a reason for refusing the application.

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

Decommissioning

Regulation 19 emerging local plan policy CN5 (afforded moderate weight) includes a requirement that the restoration plan includes details of how the materials on the site will be recycled/re-used and there is a soil remediation plan and strategy that identifies what landscape/biodiversity features should be retained and enhanced in perpetuity if the site reverts to its former use as a result of the proposal ceasing to be operational

As identified above, planning permission is sought for the proposed development for a temporary period, time-limited to 35 years. After this time, it is stated that all development and infrastructure related to the BESS will be removed from the site. It would therefore be necessary to secure a decommissioning plan at this stage of the development to ensure the following issues have been addressed and to avoid any permanent harmful impacts upon the local environment once the development is no longer in use:

- Waste disposal
- Removal of hardsurfaces and cables
- Decommissioning exclusion zones to protect adjacent habitats
- Notification of interested parties
- Site restoration

These matters can be addressed through an appropriately worded planning condition.

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

It has been demonstrated that there is an operational need for the development to be located on the Application Site, that there are no other viable alternative locations for the proposed development and that it would provide benefits for economic growth and energy security. It is also acknowledged that the site benefits from a grid connection and that LPP1 Policy CP12 sets out the need to have regard to available connections to the electricity network. The proposal would contribute towards national, regional & sub-regional renewable energy targets and CO2 savings.

Furthermore, the development design has sought to minimise and (where appropriate) mitigate impacts upon the local environment as far as practicable having regard to landscape character, local residential amenity, fire safety, highways and biodiversity.

Therefore, the development is in accordance with the Development Plan.

The proposed development also accords with national policy objectives which seek to reduce the costs of the electricity system, increase reliability by storing surplus electricity in

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

times of low demand to provide electricity when demand is higher, maximise usable output from intermittent low carbon generation (e.g. solar and wind), and reduce the total amount of generation capacity needed.

Notwithstanding this, it is recognised that negative residual impacts would result from the development and that these will need to be considered alongside any potential benefits as part of the overall planning balance. The main harms resulting from the development (and the level of weight to be attributed in each case) are summarised as follows):

- Moderate to minor visual harm to local landscape character as a result of the appearance of the development (and cumulative impacts with other developments). However, these impacts would be localised, limited to close range views and very limited sections of the adjacent public right of way network (which are well distanced from the site) – and would not unacceptably impact upon landscape character more widely once mitigation planting becomes more established. The impact upon the intrinsic rural character of the site itself is acknowledged however and as such this impact is considered to have moderate weight in the overall planning balance.
- The proposal will introduce an artificial source of noise and lighting into a rural environment where background noise is typically low and external lighting is minimal. However, these impacts would also be localised and whilst noise associated with the development may slightly affect the acoustic character of an area (with some loss of tranquillity), this would not be to the extent there would be a significant change to quality of life. External lighting would be in use at limited times when operatives visit for maintenance during the winter, and during emergencies. On this basis, this impact is considered to have limited weight in the overall planning balance.
- Impacts upon the amenities of neighbouring residents and visual amenities of the area during the construction stage and decommissioning stages. However, these impacts would be tempered by the short duration of these phases and the scope to mitigate impacts as part of a Construction Environmental Management Plan and later a Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan. On this basis this impact is considered to have limited weight in the overall planning balance.

Benefits

It is recognised that the purpose of the proposal is to store power from the grid at times of excess supply and would feed this power back into the grid at times of high demand.

It is also acknowledged that the site benefits from a grid connection and that LPP1 Policy CP12 sets out the need to have regard to available connections to the electricity network and contributions to national, regional & sub-regional renewable energy targets and CO2 savings. This Policy aligns with the Framework requirement for the planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate and help to increase the use and supply of renewable and low carbon energy and heat. It is recognised that other national policies, such as the National Policy Statement for Energy also support the need for energy storage solutions.

The Applicant also refers to a number of benefits which would be achieved, and a conclusion in relation to the weight to be attributed to these is set out below.

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

- Employment benefits – limited weight given the modest requirement for long-term employment and scale of development
- BNG – limited weight given that this is now a mandatory requirement set out in legislation and that the majority of enhancements will be delivered off site in this case
- Reduced ‘lost energy’ / increased efficiency to the grid
- Enhancing the reliability of renewable power and the grid generally – significant weight

Significant weight can be attribute to the benefits of increasing the efficiency of the grid, enhancing the reliability of renewable power and thereby reducing reliance on fossil fuels having regard to the provisions within the NPPF paragraph 168.

Whilst not all impacts on the landscape, local tranquillity and or visual amenities could be entirely avoided, the site selection process and landscaping elements have minimised the effects as far as possible.

Whilst a BESS would be visually at odds to some infrastructure found in rural areas, such as agricultural / equestrian development, it should be recognised that rural areas also have many features such as electricity transmission towers, polytunnels, and solar development. In this respect, the development of 1.1 hectares (developed area) of a self-contained and relatively low-level Battery Storage Site, which can be landscaped in a way so as to minimise any visual impacts. Therefore, in the case of all the impacts identified these do not result in harm or cause effects that cannot be made acceptable and mitigated through planning conditions.

Any potential impacts would be significantly outweighed by the great weight attached to the public benefits of the scheme, which is aligned with the NPPF, other national policy and guidance which support energy storage solutions, a key element of energy infrastructure that supports renewable energy. Therefore, both planning policy and material considerations weigh significantly in favour of the granting of permission in this instance.

It is therefore recommended that planning permission should be granted.

Recommendation

PERMIT subject to the following conditions:

Conditions

Preliminary Conditions

1. The development hereby permitted shall begin no later than 3 years from the date of this decision.

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

Case No: 24/02818/FUL

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans and documents:

Plans

Location Plan – Reference T1 REV 1 (dated 03/01/2025)
Proposed Site Layout Plan – Reference 3 REV 6 (dated 27/06/2025)
Fire strategy Plan – Reference 4 REV 4 (dated 25/02/2026)
Landscape Mitigation Plan – Reference 0880-SH R SK-XX-XX-DR -L -1000 REV 07 (dated 23/08/2024)
Surface Water Drainage Strategy Reference 373-004-D001 Rev P09 (dated 12/01/2026)
Acoustic Mitigation Fence – Reference 1 Rev 1 (dated 27/02/2025)
Monitoring Room, Office and Warehouse – Reference T10 REV 1 (dated 03/01/2025)
CCTV and Lighting Pole – Reference T11 REV 1 (dated 03/01/2025)
Access Track – Reference T12 REV 1 dated (03/01/2025)
132KV Substation – Side View – Reference T13 REV 2 (dated 02/03/2026)
Palisade Fence – Reference T14 REV 1 (dated 03/01/2025)
Battery Unit – Reference T5 REV 1 (dated 03/01/2025)
Power Station (Skid) BESS – Reference T6 REV 1 (dated 26/09/2024)
Auxiliary Transformer T7 Rev 1 (dated 26/09/2024)
Switchgear building – Reference T8 REV 1 (dated 26/09/2024)
DNO Building – Reference T9 REV 1 (dated 26/09/2024)
CCTV Pole – Reference 1 REV 1 (dated 07/11/2024)

Cut and Fill Analysis Sheet 1 of 2 - Reference CA-01 REV 01 (dated 19/09/2024)
Cut and Fill Analysis Sheet 2 of 2 – Reference CA -02 REV 01 (dated 19/09/2024)

Documents

Emergency Response Plan – Reference 10524456-UKSTK-WP02, REV. 0 (dated 30/09/2024)
Construction Traffic Management Plan – Reference 3799-01-CTMP02 (dated February 2025)
Transport Statement – Reference 3799-01-TS01
Phase 1 Geo-Environmental Assessment -Reference GEG-24-811/ PI (dated 23/01/2024)
Employment and Skills Plan – October 2024
Arboricultural Impact Assessment Rev 3.0 – Reference J240635-GGC-XX-XX-T-ARB-0600 (dated 03/12/2024)

Reason: To ensure an acceptable design, scale and layout and to avoid adverse impacts upon amenity.

Pre-commencement Conditions

3 No development shall take place until full details of the BESS unit specification have been submitted to the Local Planning Authority and have been approved in writing. These details shall clarify the height (above ground level) and Sound Power Levels of any noise sources within the proposed development.

The development shall be carried out fully in accordance with the approved details during both construction and operation.

Case No: 24/02818/FUL

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

Reason: To ensure the proposed development would not exceed the predicted noise levels within the approved noise report.

4 Prior to the commencement of the development hereby permitted, detailed proposals for the disposal of surface water shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This shall include detailed information demonstrating a suitable overland flow route between the access road and pond (or other drainage features) demonstrating that water flows are appropriately managed and are not directed towards the Highway

Where any SuDS Scheme is to be implemented detail shall be provided in relation to the following:

- Responsibilities of each party for the implementation of SuDS
- Timetable for implementation
- Management and maintenance plan for the lifetime of the development

This should include the arrangements for adoption by any public authority or statutory undertaker and/or any other arrangements to secure the operation of the scheme throughout its lifetime.

The development shall not be occupied or brought into beneficial use until the approved measures have been implemented. These details shall be implemented in full and only as approved and retained thereafter.

Reason: This is a pre-commencement condition that is required to ensure flood risk is not increased elsewhere, that opportunities to reduce the causes and impacts of flooding within the District are addressed.

5 No development shall take place unless otherwise agreed in writing until a scheme to deal with contamination shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

The scheme shall conform to current guidance and best practice as set out in LCRM - Land contamination risk management and BS10175:2011 Investigation of potentially contaminated sites - code of practice; or other supplementary guidance and include the following phases, unless identified as unnecessary by the preceding stage and agreed in writing by the LPA:

a) A preliminary site investigation or desk top study documenting all the previous and existing land uses of the site and adjacent land and preliminary conceptual site model identifying all identified potential risks;

b) An detailed intrusive site investigation report (in accordance with Section 6.7 of the Phase I Geo-Environmental Assessment, Geo Environmental Group, GEG-24-811/P1, dated 23/01/2024) documenting the ground conditions of the site and incorporating chemical and gas analysis identified as appropriate by the preliminary conceptual site model as presented in the desk top study;

c) A remedial strategy detailing the measures to be undertaken to remove or avoid risk from contaminants and/or soil gas identified when the site is developed and proposals for

Case No: 24/02818/FUL

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

future maintenance and monitoring. Such scheme shall include nomination of a suitably qualified person to oversee the implementation of the works.

Reason: This is a pre-commencement condition that is required in order to secure satisfactory development and in the interests of the safety and amenity of future occupants

6. No development (including site clearance) shall take place, until a Construction Method Statement has been submitted to, and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The Statement shall provide for:

- Programme for construction (including timing / hours of construction works) – having regard to the need to mitigate any potential cumulative impacts with nearby developments
- Measures to avoid or mitigate impacts on species and habitats
 - Sections 3 and 4 of the Titchfield Lane Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA) *Ellendale Environmental, version CIC v1.3, dated 27/08/2025)
 - Section 4.2 of the Titchfield BESS Bat Activity Surveys & Assessment (Ellendale Environmental Version CIC v1.2, dated 19/10/2025)
 - Section 5 of the Titchfield Lane Dormouse Survey and Assessment (Ellendale Environmental, version CIC v1.3 dated 17/10/2025)
 - Section 3.8 of the Titchfield Lane BESS Reptile Mitigation Strategy (Ellendale Environmental, version CIC v1.1 dated 12/11/2025)
 - Section 4.2 of the Titchfield Lane BESS Botany Survey & Assessment (Ellendale Environmental CICv1.0, dated 19/08/2024)
 - Section 4.2 of the Titchfield Lane BESS Great Crested New Habitat Suitability Index (Ellendale Environmental CIC v1.0 dated 28/06/2024)
 - EEL753 Titchfield Lane, Breeding Bird Survey Technical Note
- Use of fences and barriers to protect adjacent land and protected habitats
- Details of routing of any underground cables associated with the development
- Measures to prevent pollution to water courses
- Public communications and constraints strategy
- Details of construction compounds and storage areas
- Dust suppression
- Waste storage and disposal
- Measures to maximise use of low-carbon materials, to optimize energy efficiency, manage waste effectively, and utilise renewable energy sources during construction
- Noise, visual and vibrational impacts, (e.g. may include visual screening)
- Lighting measures to ensure boundary habitats are not luminated
- Any necessary measures to protect nearby ancient woodland including impacts from changes in soil composition, contamination, hydrological changes / surface runoff and compaction
- Tree protection measures set out within the Arboricultural Method Statement (to be submitted and approved in accordance with Condition 8)

The approved Construction Method Statement shall be adhered to throughout the construction period for the development.

Reason: This is a pre-commencement condition to ensure that all demolition and construction work in relation to the development does not cause materially harmful effects on nearby habitats, land, properties, businesses or highway safety

Case No: 24/02818/FUL

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

7 Development of the battery storage compound shall not commence until details relating to the fire safety arrangements of battery systems in the form of a Battery Safety Management Plan are submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Plan shall include fire safety measures for emergency personnel attending a fire incident, as required by the National Fire Chiefs Council “Grid scale energy storage system planning – Guidance for Fire and Rescue Services” (2025) or subsequent guidance document, including the following:

- deflagration vents
- including installation of an audible fire alarm on the site
- Details of how the fire and rescue service will be alerted
- Full facility description, including infrastructure details, operations, number of personnel, and operating hours
- A site plan depicting key infrastructure: site access points and internal roads, firefighting facilities (for example, water tanks, pumps, booster systems, fire hydrants, and fire hose reels), drainage, and neighbouring properties
- Details of the emergency response coordinator, including the subject-matter expert for the site
- Safe access to and within the facility for emergency vehicles and responders, including to key site infrastructure and fire protection systems
- Details and explanation of warning systems and alarms on site and locations of alarm annunciators with alarm details (smoke, gas, temperature)
- Hazards and potential risks at the facility and details of their proposed management
- The role of the fire and rescue service at incidents involving a fire, thermal event or fire spreading to the site
- Emergency shutoff or isolator locations including penstock valve and its means of operation
- A comprehensive review of the space between units in line with the UL 9540A testing information to establish whether there is potential for fire to spread between units
- Details of the proposed battery chemistry
- Details setting out how firewater used during fire suppression would be temporarily contained on site and then removed from the site by a registered waste disposal company, within 24 hours.

The Battery Safety Management Plan shall include plans to show the following:

- The layout of structures
- Any areas where hazardous and flammable materials are stored on site (location of gas cylinders, process areas, chemicals, piles of combustible wastes, oil and fuel tanks)
- All permanent ignition sources on the site and show they are a minimum of 6m away from combustible and flammable waste
- Any areas where combustible waste is being treated or stored, including non-waste material
- All separation distances
- Any areas where combustible liquid wastes are being stored
- Main access routes for fire engines and any alternative access
- Access points around the site perimeter to assist firefighting
- Hydrants and water supplies

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

- Areas of natural and unmade ground
- The location of fixed plant or storage location of mobile plant when not in use
- The location of spill kits
- Any other relevant site-specific information
- Drainage runs, pollution control features such as drain closure valves, and fire water containment systems such as bunded or kerbed areas
- Details of all sensitive receptors within a 1km radius of the site that could be affected by a fire. Plans should have a compass rose showing north and the prevailing wind direction. Examples of sensitive receptors may include:
 - Schools, hospitals, nursing and care homes, residential areas, and workplaces;
 - Protected habitats, watercourses, groundwater, boreholes, wells, and springs supplying water for human consumption (Further habitat information can be found on the Defra [MAGiC map](#))
 - Roads, railways, bus stations, pylons (on or immediately adjacent to the site only), utilities, and airports

The proposals must be implemented as approved and shall remain in place for the lifetime of the approved development.

Reason: This is a pre-commencement condition to protect adjoining land and habitats from increased fire risk associated with the proposed development.

8 No development including site clearance, demolition, ground preparation, temporary access construction/widening, material storage or construction works shall commence until an Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS), prepared in accordance with the BS5837:2012 has been submitted to, and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The statement shall outline how trees will be protected through the development including; 'Buffer Zone Enforcement'; regular arboricultural supervision during key stages of the development; temporary ground protection and shall include an updated tree protection plan. No development or other operations shall take place other than in complete accordance with the approved method statement.

REASON: This is a pre-commencement condition to ensure that reasonable measures are taken to safeguard trees in the interests of local amenity and the enhancement of the development itself.

9 No development including ground preparation, temporary access construction or construction work shall commence on site until a Tree Planting Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The plan shall include the position, species and size of all new trees proposed for the development. The plan shall also include specific tree planting details to demonstrate that the underground soil volume and watering can be achieved to support the tree(s) to healthy maturity. Details of protection of young trees to reduce the likelihood of damage from pests shall be included. No development shall take place other than in complete accordance with the Tree Planting Plan.

Should any of the new trees die, become severely damaged or diseased within 5 years of planting, they shall be duly replaced by a tree of a similar size and species to that originally planted. Any modifications to the requirements of this condition must be agreed in writing with the local planning authority.

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

REASON: This is a pre-commencement condition to ensure that reasonable measures are taken to establish trees in the interests of local amenity and the enhancement of the development itself.

10 No development shall commence until details / samples of the materials to be used in the construction of acoustic barrier (drawing no: 1 dated 27/02/2025), Monitoring Room / Office (drawing T10 REV 1), security fence (drawing T14 REV 1), battery units (drawing T5 REV 1), power stations (drawing T6 REV 1), switchgear building (drawing T8 REV 1) and DNO building (drawing T9 REV 1) have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details / samples.

Reason: This is a pre-commencement condition to ensure an acceptable design, scale and layout and to avoid adverse impacts upon amenity.

11. No development shall take place until full details of the finished levels, above ordnance datum, of the ground floor(s) of the proposed buildings, in relation to existing ground levels have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved levels.

Reason: This is a pre-commencement condition to ensure a satisfactory relationship between the new development and adjacent buildings, amenity areas and trees.

12. Development may not be begun on site unless:

- (i) a biodiversity gain plan has been submitted to the planning authority; and
- (ii) The planning authority has approved the plan.

In making an application to discharge the biodiversity gain condition the following information shall be provided:

- a) information about the steps taken or to be taken to minimise the adverse effect of the development on the biodiversity of the onsite habitat and any other habitat;
- b) the pre-development biodiversity value of the onsite habitat;
- c) the post-development biodiversity value of the onsite habitat;
- d) any registered offsite biodiversity gain allocated to the development and the biodiversity and the biodiversity value of that gain in relation to the development;
- e) any biodiversity credits purchased for the development; and
- f) any such other matters as the Secretary of State may by regulations specify.

Reason: This is a pre-commencement condition to ensure an appropriate setting to the development and to secure a net gain in biodiversity in accordance with the statutory framework introduced by Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

13. The development shall not commence until a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (the HMMP), prepared in accordance with the approved Biodiversity Gain Plan under Condition 4 has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority (LPA). The HMMP shall include the following details:

- (g) the roles and responsibilities of the people or organisation(s) delivering the HMMP;
- (h) any necessary legal mechanism or covenant for securing the monitoring over the relevant period;

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

- (i) the planned habitat creation and enhancement works to create or improve habitat to achieve the biodiversity net gain in accordance with the approved Biodiversity Gain Plan;
- (j) the management measures to maintain habitat in accordance with the approved Biodiversity Gain Plan for a period of 30 years from the completion of development;
- (k) a proposed definition of 'completion of development' in respect of the development hereby approved.
- (l) The approved Biodiversity Gain Plan shall be maintained for at least 30 years after the development is complete.

The approved habitat creation and enhancement works shall be implemented in full within six months of the date of their written approval and be shall be maintained for at least 30 years after the development is completed. Notice in writing shall be given to the LPA once the habitat creation and enhancement works as set out in the HMMP have been completed

Reason: This is a pre-commencement condition to ensure an appropriate setting to the development and to secure a net gain in biodiversity in accordance with the statutory framework introduced by Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and paragraph 193 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

Prior to Use / Occupation Conditions

14. A noise validation report demonstrating compliance with the noise criteria shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority before the approved development is brought into use. This assessment shall be conducted in accordance with the WCC Technical Guidance for Noise document (2022) approved xx. The approved noise protection measures shall thereafter be maintained and operated in accordance with the approved scheme.

Reason: To ensure the proposed development would not exceed the predicted noise levels within the approved noise report.

15. Prior to the occupation of the development hereby permitted, written verification produced by the suitably qualified person nominated in the approved remedial strategy shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The report must demonstrate that the approved remedial strategy has been implemented fully, unless varied with the written agreement of the Local Planning Authority in advance.

Reason: In order to secure satisfactory development and in the interests of the safety and amenity of local residents.

16. The development shall not be brought into use until a Landscape Management and Biodiversity Enhancement Plan (LMBEP), including long term design objectives, management responsibilities and maintenance schedules for all landscape areas has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

The landscape management plan shall be carried out in accordance with the details hereby approved, in particular with the following documents:

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

- Sections 3 and 4 of the Titchfield Lane Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA) *Ellendale Environmental, version CIC v1.3, dated 27/08/2025)
- Section 4.2 of the Titchfield BESS Bat Activity Surveys & Assessment (Ellendale Environmental Version CIC v1.2, dated 19/10/2025)
- Section 5 of the Titchfield Lane Dormouse Survey and Assessment (Ellendale Environmental , version CIC v1.3 dated 17/10/2025)
- Section 3.8 of the Titchfield Lane BESS Reptile Mitigation Strategy (Ellendale Environmental, version CIC v1.1 dated 12/11/2025)
- Section 4.2 of the Titchfield Lane BESS Botany Survey & Assessment (Ellendale Environmental CICv1.0, dated 19/08/2024)
- EEL753 Titchfield Lane, Breeding Bird Survey Technical Note
- EEL753 Titchfield Lane – Invertebrate Survey Technical Note
- Landscape mitigation plan 0880-SHR SK-XX-XXDR-L-1000 Rev 06

Reason: To ensure that due regard is paid to the continuing enhancement and maintenance of amenity afforded by landscape features of public and nature conservation significance.

17. No development shall not be brought into use until provision has been made within the site [in accordance with drawing numbers 3799-01-D03, 3799-01-D02 and 3 REV 6) for vehicular visibility, parking and internal circulation. That space shall thereafter be kept available at all times for those purposes for the lifetime of the approved development.

Reason: To ensure that vehicles parked on the site are able to enter and leave in forward gear.

Other Conditions

18. All hard and soft landscape works shall be carried out in accordance with the landscape mitigation plan (0880-SHR SK-XX-XXDR-L-1000 Rev 06). The approved details shall be carried before the development is brought into use or in accordance with a programme agreed with the Local Planning Authority. If within a period of five years after planting any tree or plant is removed, dies or becomes, in the opinion of the Local Planning Authority, seriously damaged, defective or diseased another tree or plant of the same species and size as that originally approved shall be planted at the same place, within the next planting season, unless the Local Planning Authority gives its written consent to any variation.

Reason: To ensure the provision, establishment and maintenance of a reasonable standard of landscape in accordance with the approved designs.

19. Development shall cease on site if, during any stage of the works, unexpected ground conditions or materials which suggest potential contamination are encountered, unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. Works shall not recommence before a site assessment has been undertaken and details of the findings along with details of any remedial action required (including timing provision for implementation), has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall not be completed other than in accordance with the approved details. NB - potentially contaminated ground conditions include infilled ground, visual evidence of contamination or materials with an unusual odour or appearance.

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

Reason: In order to secure satisfactory development and in the interests of the safety and amenity of future occupants.

20. The proposed development shall be carried out fully in accordance with the recommendations contained within Section 4.2 of the Great Crested Newt Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) (Ellendale Environmental, 1 July 2024) in relation to precautionary working measures.

Reason: To maintain, protect and enhance biodiversity as required by Policy CP16 of the Winchester Local Plan Part 1: Joint Core Strategy Adopted 2013

21. 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.

Temporary Permission and Decommissioning Plan

22. Within 1 month of the date of first import of electricity, confirmation shall be given in writing to the local planning authority of the date of first import from the Grid. The development hereby permitted shall cease on or before the expiry of a 35 year period from the date of the first import 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 BESS units and all associated above ground works.
- The management and timing of the work.
- Details of how the materials on the site will be recycled/re-used
- Soil remediation plan and strategy that identifies what landscape/biodiversity features should be retained and enhanced in perpetuity if the site reverts to its former use as a result of the proposal ceasing to be operational
- A traffic management plan to address likely traffic impact issues during the decommissioning period.
- 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 34 years and 6 months from the date of the first commercial import of electricity and subsequently implemented as approved

Reason: To ensure that the site is restored in the long-term interests of the visual character and biodiversity of the surrounding area and that the effects of site decommissioning on the highway network is mitigated in the interests of highway safety.

Case No: 24/02818/FUL

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

23. In the event the site ceases to import or export electricity for a period of 6 months prior to the end of the 35 year period, a scheme of decommissioning works (the Early Decommissioning Scheme) shall be submitted to by the Local Planning Authority for written approval, no later than 3 months from the end of the 6 month period. The Early Decommissioning Scheme shall include:

The Decommissioning Scheme shall include:

- The removal of the BESS units and all associated above ground works.
- The management and timing of the work.
- Details of how the materials on the site will be recycled/re-used
- Soil remediation plan and strategy that identifies what landscape/biodiversity features should be retained and enhanced in perpetuity if the site reverts to its former use as a result of the proposal ceasing to be operational
- A traffic management plan to address likely traffic impact issues during the decommissioning period.
- 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 Early Decommissioning Scheme shall be implemented only as approved.

Reason: To ensure that the site is restored in the long-term interests of the visual character and biodiversity of the surrounding area and that the effects of site decommissioning on the highway network is mitigated in the interests of highway safety.

24. Other than the lighting details specified in Drawing Reference T11 REV 1 and the approved lighting specification (Lighting Impact Assessment and External Lighting Design Reb B December 2024) no external lighting shall be installed on the site unless details of such proposals have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

The lighting scheme should be in accordance with Guidance Note 08/23 produced by the Bat Conservation Trust and Institute of Lighting Professionals. This information shall include a layout plan with beam orientation and a schedule of equipment in the design (luminaire type, mounting height, aiming angles and luminaire profiles). The lighting shall be installed, maintained and operated in accordance with the approved details unless the Local Planning Authority gives its written consent to the variation.

Reason: To protect the ecology and amenities of the area

25. The development shall be carried out fully in accordance with the approved Construction Traffic Management Plan (reference 3799-01-CTMP02, dated February 2025). The approved measures shall be adhered to for the full duration of the construction phase.

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

Reason: To ensure access to, and movement within, the site in a safe and effective manner, during the construction phase

Informatives:

1. In accordance with paragraph 39 of the NPPF (December 2024), 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, a site meeting was carried out with the applicant

2. In accordance with Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, this decision has been taken having regard to the policies and proposals in the National Planning Policy Framework, the Development Plan, and all other material planning considerations identified in the "Officer Assessment" section of the report.

3. High Voltage Transmission Overhead Line:

Please be advised that the proposed development is in close proximity to a High Voltage Transmission Overhead Line provided the statutory clearance (indicated on the attached profile drawing uploaded with their comments dated 23 January 2025) are maintained and our guidance information is followed at all times.

4. Great Crested Newts:

The applicant is reminded that, under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), it is an offence to (amongst other things): deliberately capture, disturb, injure, or kill great crested newts; damage or destroy a breeding or resting place; intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a resting or sheltering place.

Planning permission for a development does not provide a defence against prosecution under this legislation. Should great crested newts be found at any stage of the development works, then all works should cease, and a professional and/or suitably qualified and experienced ecologist (or Natural England) should be contacted for advice on any special precautions before continuing, including the need for a licence.

5. Firefighting and the Environment

Should a serious unsuppressed fire occur on the site, the water environment may become polluted with 'fire water run-off' that may include foam. The Service will liaise with the appropriate authorities at any incident where they are in attendance and under certain circumstances, where there is a serious risk to the environment, a 'controlled burn' may take place. This of course could lead to the total loss of the site contents.

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

Premises' occupiers have a duty to prevent and mitigate damage to the water environment from 'fire water run off' and other spillages.

It is HIWFRS understanding that many insuring bodies for these sites in the UK require a minimum separation that exceeds the guidance in FM Global 5-33. The applicant is therefore advised to approach prospective insuring bodies at an early stage to establish whether the layout meets insurance requirements.

6. Sustainable Urban Drainage (SuDS)

Best practice SuDS should be designed and installed in accordance with the requirements in the CIRIA SuDS Manual (C753).

Please note, the pollution hazard indices in the CIRIA SuDS Manual (C753) relate to 'protected waters' with regards to drinking water supply. Step 3 under Section 26.7.1 of the SuDS manual outlines that the requirement for extra treatment should be considered in relation to discharge to environmentally protected sites. It states that 'an additional treatment component (i.e. over and above that required for standard discharges), or other equivalent protection, is required that provides environmental protection in the event of an unexpected pollution event or poor system performance'.

The detailed design of a Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS) should include evidence to show that the proposed SuDS scheme will ensure there will be no deterioration in water quality [or changes in water quantity] in discharges from the site. Information on the long-term management and maintenance (including funding) of the SuDS for the lifetime of the development should also be secured prior to the commencement of any works.

7. Highways

The granting of planning permission does not authorise the undertaking of any works within the highway (carriageway, footway or verge). Any works within the highway must be approved by S278 Agreement, details of which can be found at:

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/developers/constructionstandards>

Appendix 1

Wickham Parish Council comment dated 29 January 2024

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

24/02818/FUL | Erection of Battery Energy Storage Facility including creation of new vehicular access along with landscaping and all associated engineering works | Land Adjacent Titchfield Lane Wickham Hampshire

Wickham and Knowle Parish Council OBJECT to this application for the following reasons:

- 1) **NPPF Para 193 (b)** “development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted.”

The proposal is adjacent to Botley Wood and Everett's and Mushes Copses SSSI which is an irreplaceable ancient and semi-natural woodland habitat. The Parish Council has significant concerns about the safety of a BESF site and does not take comfort in the feedback from Hampshire Fire and Rescue, who are unable to make any judgements on the site, as BESS technology and safety is currently dependent on the manufacturer of the units. A supplier for the BESS site will not be available until planning permission is granted. This does not satisfy considerable concerns as to what would happen if there were a fire, which is entirely possible given the risk of batteries overheating.

On 15 September 2020, a fire at a BESS site in Liverpool took 59 hours to extinguish, external and created a "significant blast", Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service reported. If this was to happen at the site in Wickham it would have a catastrophic impact on the entire area. The difficulty accessing the site via the country lane and no alternative rapid access option does not make the site suitable.

- 2) **NPPF Para 193 (c)** “development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused”

There is no doubt that this application has a detrimental effect on the surrounding wildlife, habitats and woodlands.

- 3) **LPP1 - Policy MTRA 4 - Development in the Countryside**

This application does not meet any of the permitted development uses for operational need and development in the countryside. It does not consider or demonstrate any alternative brown field sites.

The policy states “Development proposed in accordance with this policy should not cause harm to the character and landscape of the area or neighbouring uses, or create inappropriate noise/light and traffic generation.” This application does not support this statement.

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

4) The application does not support any of the following LPP2 policies

- **DM19 - Development and Pollution**

Light pollution in the countryside will occur from the proposed security lighting.

No details have been provided of the proposed means of disposal of surface water drainage.

Hampshire Fire and Rescue do state that should a serious unsuppressed fire occur on the site, the water environment may become polluted with 'fire water run-off' that may include foam.

- **DM20 - Development and Noise**

Levels of noise may be above the acceptable levels as set out by Significant Observed Adverse Effect Level (SOAEL) level and impact on human health and the quality of life for local residents.

The equipment being proposed has a large component of low frequency noise, an acoustic barrier has been proposed around the northern portion of the battery and inverters, however here is no indication on how affective this barrier will be in lessening the low frequency noise

- **DM23 - Rural Character**

The application will create an unacceptable impact on the rural character of this countryside, and goes against the following characteristics as defined in DM23 – Visual, physical and tranquillity.

- **DM24 - Special Trees, Important Hedgerows and Ancient Woodlands**

Development should not result in the loss or deterioration of ancient woodlands, important hedgerows, special trees, distinctive ground flora and the space required to support them in the long term.

5) The development falls within the amber impact risk zone for great crested newts.

Impact risk zones have been derived through advanced modelling to create a species distribution map which predicts likely presence. In the amber impact zone, there is suitable habitat and a high likelihood of great crested newt presence. - There are 4 ponds within 500m of the development proposal with the closest being located 20m north.

Great Crested Newt Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) – was conducted without access to the pond? A visual inspection was conducted beyond the fenced area, approximately 10m from the waterbody.

Is this sufficient for a protected species?

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

6) Highways

During the peak period of construction there will be approx 10 two-way movements, per day, plus 10-20 trips per day for construction staff and ad-hoc deliveries.

HCC state "On face-value it is considered that this volume of temporary construction related traffic is unlikely to result in significant issues." Yet this application is being reviewed without any consideration of other applications going through the system.

Due to the location of Botley Wood Substation, the Parish Council has been approached by Greenergy, Conrad Energy Solar Farm and in particular 24/02023/HCS - the construction of a 10.5 MW Solar Photovoltaic PV_ Farm and Gas Management System, which is also being consulted. This latter alone would involve approximately 36 HGV movements per weekday for its 5 year life cycle – an estimated increase of approximately 200% per day on current HGV movements (i.e. classes TB3 and 4 three and four axle trucks. Greenergy's application adds to this overload.

Titchfield Lane, a rural country lane, simply can not take such volumes of HGV traffic. The lane is insufficiently wide at several places to allow two such HGVs to pass without contact.

The Parish Council request that Hampshire Highways review Titchfield Lane with consideration of **ALL** energy projects that are being planned and not just take a single application at face value, Policy MTRA4 should be properly tested.

While the Council understands the need to store energy, the location of this site, within ancient woodland is simply not suitable. The applicant does not justify why they have selected this site), or why this site is more suitable that any other, yet the reasons to not use this site are clear.

The Parish Council request this application is reviewed by Committee.