

Application Number:	23/11213 Full Planning Permission
Site:	LAND NEAR WALKFORD FARM, WALKFORD, NEW MILTON BH25 5NH
Development:	Erection of a solar farm; associated ancillary infrastructure and associated works; Temporary access and construction compound.
Applicant:	Boulton Brooks (Renewables Walkford Moor) Ltd
Agent:	Savills
Target Date:	18/03/2024
Case Officer:	Vivienne Baxter
Officer Recommendation:	Grant Subject to Conditions
Reason for Referral to Committee:	Parish Council contrary view

1 SUMMARY OF THE MAIN ISSUES

The key issues are:

1. Principle of the development
2. Loss of agricultural land
3. Green Belt
4. Highway matters
5. Impact on the character and appearance of the area
6. Trees and landscaping
7. Ecology and biodiversity
8. Impact on the residential amenities of the area
9. Archaeology

2 SITE DESCRIPTION

The site lies within the countryside to the west of New Milton and north of the London-Weymouth railway line. Land to the south of the railway line lies within Dorset where it is classified as built-up. The site, however, lies wholly within the Green Belt. To the west of the site is a public right of way; this is also the vehicular access to the Woodland Burial Ground situated to the north-west of the site. Whilst there is a track which runs east/west through the middle of the site, it is not designated as a public right of way, although it is understood that public access through the site has occurred in the past.

The Walkford Moor Copse and Castlefield Copse SINCs are situated to the eastern boundary of the main bulk of the site. There is an existing track through this land which would form part of the construction access to the site, with a construction compound and temporary access track set to the east of the SINCs and north of the farm buildings associated with Walkford Farm. The existing access track between this point and Stem Lane also forms part of the site, although no works are proposed to this section. Within the SINC is Walkford Brook, which delineates the Parish Boundary between New Milton to the east and Brangore to the west.

There are few residential properties adjacent to the site. Aside from Walkford Farm are Walkford Farm Cottages adjacent to the access and Oak Cottage, Holly Lane, approximately 16m from the southern site boundary. There is also a small caravan park adjacent to and run by the occupants of Oak Cottage. The site boundary along this southern edge is a post and wire fence with brambles and other vegetation.

The main bulk of the site from Wyndham Road in the west to the SINC's in the east extends for approximately 580m. Whilst the site does not extend as far south as the railway, being a minimum of 35m away, the northern boundary is some 510m from the railway line and in line with the entrance to the woodland Burial Ground. The overall application site area is 29.32 hectares.

3 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The proposal entails the provision of a solar farm with capacity to power approximately 5,000 homes per year (15MW). This includes arrays of photovoltaic panels mounted on posts, power/sub-stations (housed in steel shipping containers), inverters, transformers, a storage container and associated communication, monitoring and security equipment (fencing, CCTV cameras and a satellite dish).

It is anticipated that construction would take around 6 months to complete, during which time a compound would be provided to the north of Walkford Farm, accessed from Stem Lane. This compound would be removed following the completion of the development. And the limited traffic generated, once operational, would access the site from Wyndham Lane, a residential road within the adjoining authority area and the access to the Woodland Burial Ground/public right of way.

4 PLANNING HISTORY

23/10588 - Proposed solar farm with associated works, equipment and infrastructure - Request for a Screening Opinion under Regulation 6 of the Town and Country Planning (Environment Impact Assessment) (EIA) Regulations 2017 (the EIA Regulations). (Screening Opinion) - EIA required 09/06/2023 - the SoS subsequently concluded that the proposal was NOT an 'EIA development

5 PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

Local Plan 2016-2036 Part 1: Planning Strategy

Policy ENV2: The South West Hampshire Green Belt
Policy ENV3: Design quality and local distinctiveness
Policy ENV4: Landscape character and quality
Policy STR1: Achieving Sustainable Development
Policy STR3: The strategy for locating new development
Policy STR8: Community services, Infrastructure and facilities

Local Plan Part 2: Sites and Development Management 2014

DM1: Heritage and Conservation
DM2: Nature conservation, biodiversity and geodiversity
DM4: Renewable and low carbon energy generation

Core Strategy

CS21: Rural economy

Supplementary Planning Guidance And Documents

SPD - New Milton Local Distinctiveness

Neighbourhood Plan

Policy NM1 - A Spatial Plan for New Milton
Policy NM4 - Design Quality

National Planning Policy Framework

NPPF Ch.11 - Making effective use of land
NPPF Ch.13 - Protecting Green Belt land
NPPF Ch.15 - Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
NPPF Ch.16 - Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

National Planning Policy Guidance

National Policy Statement EN-3

Solar and protecting our Food Security and Best and Most Versatile (BMV) Land -
Written Ministerial Statement May 15th 2024

Plan Policy Designations

Green Belt
Countryside

6 PARISH / TOWN COUNCIL COMMENTS

New Milton Town Council:
Acceptable (delegated)

Bransgore Parish Council:

Initial response

Recommend Refusal.
The committee felt that the loss of agricultural land outweighed the benefit of the solar farm, which would itself bring no actual benefit to the local area. Further concerns were raised over the proximity of the farm to SSSI landscape and the potential harm to wildlife.

Following re-consultation

Recommend Refusal.
The committee felt that not enough had been done to mitigate effects on the landscape and were concerned that the development, although temporary, would have negative long-term impacts on the landscape character and its ability to be returned to useable agricultural land in the future. In addition, the committee still objected to the loss of agricultural land.

7 COUNCILLOR COMMENTS

No comments received

8 **CONSULTEE COMMENTS**

Ecologist

Does not have significant concerns from an ecological perspective

Environmental Health (Pollution)

Recommend conditions

Conservation Officer

The nearby built heritage assets will not be affected by the development

NFDC Landscape Team

Generally, this solar farm proposal will undoubtedly be harmful to landscape character and create a visual intrusion for some, and therefore there is a policy objection, as it fails to meet policy ENV3.

If, in the planning balance, the landscape impacts are acceptable, an objection remains to the proposed ancillary infrastructure, where shipping containers are not appropriate to site in this landscape for 40 years as proposed, it therefore fails policy ENV3.

Should the application succeed please apply standard landscape conditions.

NFDC Tree Team

No objection subject to condition

NFPA Archaeologist

Requests conditions, including a 10m buffer zone around the Ring Ditch feature

HCC Highways

No objection subject to conditions

HCC Rights of Way

No objection

HCC Minerals and Waste Planning

No objection

Natural England

No objection subject to condition

Scottish and Southern Electric

Advise of presence of extra high voltage lines which traverse the site

Naturespace

Agree with submitted ecology report

Environment Agency

No objection

9 **REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED**

14 letters of objection received from local residents:

- it would be a mistake to lose agricultural land/food supply
- would put off holiday makers at caravan site
- solar panels would be better on top of commercial buildings

- noise disturbance from inverters
- potential health risk (cancer, stress, anxiety, electromagnetic hypersensitivity)
- there are enough solar panels in the New Forest, including close to this site
- negative impact on Green Belt land and semi-rural status of the area
- negative impact on public rights of way; footpath recently blocked off
- impact on the movement of wildlife/harm to ecosystem
- house prices would be affected (1.5%reduction in value)
- implementation would blight the area with industrial debris
- wrong to have a solar farm next to a burial ground
- too large - should be moved back from boundaries and screening provided
- should not act as a precedent
- construction and maintenance traffic will impact on neighbours and roads
- loss of countryside (Green Belt) view
- farmland should produce food
- unsightly signage and fencing
- disruption for anyone visiting the cemetery or industrial estate
- solar farms are inefficient

1 neutral letter received:

- fencing to the south side of the inverters would be helpful

10 PLANNING ASSESSMENT

Principle of Development

In October 2021, the Council declared a Climate and Nature Emergency and a Planning for Climate Change SPD was adopted in April 2024. The document states that nationally, the Climate Change Act 2008 (as amended 2019) legally commits the UK government to achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050. Net zero carbon in operation can only be achieved by meeting the energy needs using renewable electricity generation.

Local Plan Part 1 policy STR8 advises that support will be given to proposals for utilities such as electricity supply, where they are designed to minimise and adequately mitigate against any adverse environmental, health, safety and landscape impacts. Policy STR1 requires development to be future proofed for climate change.

Having regard to these matters, it should be noted that following the Council's determination that an Environmental Impact Assessment would be required, the applicants appealed against this decision (application 23/10588). The Secretary of State concluded that the development would not have significant effects on the environment and confirmed that the development was not an 'EIA development'.

Agricultural Land

In May this year, a Ministerial Statement was published noting the importance of food security for our national security, as well as the importance of solar power for energy security, net zero and clean growth. It advises that the highest quality agricultural land is the least appropriate for solar development. Agricultural land is classified into Grades 1-5 with Grades 1-3a being the best and most versatile (BMV).

The site is currently in agricultural use. The applicants have produced an agricultural report detailing the agricultural classification of the site, during the production of which it was noted that the northern part of the site was fallow, with turnip stubble noted to the south. The agricultural report states that 28.9ha of land within the site were surveyed, with the breakdown of land by classification being as follows: Grade 1 - 1.3 Ha, Grade 2 - 5.8 Ha, Grade 3a - 7.9 Ha and Grade 3b - 13.9 Ha.

An Alternative Assessment Report produced to support the application identifies the study area for the proposed development as being within 2km of the 33kV power line crossing this part of the district east/west. Within this search area are many constraints including urban land, the National Park, Nationally and Locally designated environmental sites, Heritage Assets and Ancient Woodland. This study resulted in 10 alternative sites being considered, which were all assessed having regard to factors such as proximity to the National Park, distance to an appropriate connection point to minimise energy loss, impact from trees and shading and distance from heritage assets. The site subject of this application was the highest performing site given these considerations and as 75% of the land within the site is classified as Grade 3a and 3b land, the alternative sites only included land with a lower agricultural classification (Grade 3a-5).

The report goes on to state that 48% of the land is not classed as BMV, with the highest grade land being located to the north / north-west of the site, where care has been taken to avoid solar arrays. Although this means that part of the proposed solar farm would be on land which is classed as BMV, the Ministerial Statement does not specifically preclude such land from solar farm development; nor does such development preclude more intensive agricultural use at some point in the future.

The Ministerial Statement also refers to the cumulative impact of solar farms, and it is noted that there are two, smaller solar farms nearby. One is to the north, approximately 165m away to the other side of the extant permission for the extension to the Woodland Burial Ground, and the other borders the A35 to the west. Both are separated by woodland and in the case of the one to the west, further agricultural land. It is not considered that the cumulative impact of solar farms in this location would be excessive or of concern that the separate solar farms would merge with each other.

Ultimately, it is recognised that there is a balance to be struck between protecting BMV agricultural land and green energy objectives. However, given the desire to support proposals for electricity supply in policy STR8, coupled with the acknowledged climate emergency, and measures taken to minimise use of the BMV land within the site area, the proposal is considered acceptable in principle, subject to the considerations referred to below.

South West Hampshire Green Belt

The NPPF (para. 156) makes specific reference to renewable energy projects within the Green Belt, stating that elements of such projects will comprise inappropriate development and very special circumstances will be required. There is no further definition of what those elements would be. On this basis, it is considered that the development as a whole should be considered inappropriate development.

This being the case, the applicant has put forward considerations for very special circumstances. These include continued low intensity agricultural use of the site, a significant increase in biodiversity, the creation of temporary construction jobs, contributing towards net zero through saving over 3,000 tonnes of CO2 annually, the potential to power up to 5,000 homes annually and helping to mitigate against the Council's Climate Emergency.

Having regard to the purposes of including land within the Green Belt, this site forms roughly half of a wider parcel of land (extending to the west) which is considered to have relatively strong boundary features, including the railway line to the south and SINC to the east of the application site. The parcel as a whole makes a strong contribution towards restricting the sprawl of large built-up areas and assisting the

countryside from encroachment. It offers a weak contribution to preventing neighbouring towns merging given the gap between Christchurch and Ringwood, particularly as intervening villages also have large gaps between them. Whilst the proposed construction access would be through New Milton, there are other Green Belt parcels between the main bulk of the site and the industrial/residential areas of western New Milton. The Green Belt land parcel does not form part of the setting of any historic town.

In view of the relatively well screened nature of the site through the presence of woodland and a railway cutting to the east and south, the impact of the development on the openness of this part of the Green Belt would be contained in that the site is well screened from the east and only visible from public vantage points to the south and west along the public right of way. Whilst there would also be views from further north of the site, public access to this parcel of land is not publicly accessible. However, it is acknowledged that there would be some impact on openness in view of the overall height of the panels (between 0.8m and 2.9m high), although below these dimensions the site would be largely open aside from the mounting structures. The proposal includes 4no. power stations with a maximum height of 3.5m, a substation (housed in a metal container and not exceeding 3.95m high) and a storage container 3m in height. The power stations would be grouped in two pairs, central to each of the north and south areas either side of the track running east/west through the site. Overall, it is considered that the proposal would represent some harm to the openness of the Green Belt.

It is considered that whilst the proposal would clearly have some impact on the visual amenities of the area, this impact would not be a forever change, albeit that it would be for a lengthy temporary period (40 years) and would be fully reversible.

Overall, given the Climate Emergency referred to above and the significant increase in biodiversity on site, the proposal to provide electricity through a renewable resource is considered to weigh significantly in favour of the proposal. In addition to this, whilst the use of roof tops within a more urban setting might assist in the provision of renewable energy, the amount of energy this would generate is limited, whilst many other countryside locations in the area fall within the New Forest National Park where such infrastructure proposals would not be considered acceptable. Therefore cumulatively, it is considered that the considerable benefits of the proposal, particularly in terms of reducing CO2 emissions, constitute very special circumstances to justify a development that is inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

Highway safety, access and parking

The proposed construction access would be from Stem Lane where there is an existing gated access point which subsequently leads to Walkford Lane. At this point, the access would be routed into the field to the east of Walkford Farm, opposite Walkford Farm Cottages and would temporarily lead to a construction compound to the north of the farm complex. From here, the temporary access track would continue west through the SINC where it would join the existing track running east/west through the site. Whilst this track is not a public right of way, it is understood that until recently, it has been available for the public to use, linking through to the public right of way along Wyndham Road. This latter part of the track includes adequate width to allow two low loaders to pass at a variety of points along the route.

Following the completion of the development, maintenance access would be via Wyndham Road which, whilst a public right of way, is already utilised by the Woodland Burial Ground and for agricultural purposes. Maintenance requirements

for solar farms are very low frequency and, as such, the impact on traffic generation post development would be negligible.

The Highway Authority requested some additional details to clarify the use of the access track from Stem Lane through the SINC and on receipt of this information, which includes details relating to the operation of the access point and number of trips generated by the construction process, has raised no objection to the proposal subject to the imposition of a condition requiring a construction method statement.

Trees and landscaping

Walkford Moor Copse to the north-east of the site is designated as ancient woodland. The proposal is more than the required 15m buffer zone from this designation. South of this designation is a broad-leaved woodland through which the construction traffic would run. In view of use being made of the existing track through this area and adequate ground clearance from overhanging branches, there are no tree issues with regard to this area of woodland.

The Arboricultural Impact Assessment provided with the application indicates that 26 self seeded oak trees and a group of hawthorn, oak and elder within the field would be lost as part of the development. These trees are not protected and of such small stature, they do not make a significant contribution to the amenity of the area. A linear group of Monterey Cypress trees close to the proposed temporary access to the east of the site would be impacted by these works, although in view of their overall poor form, they are not considered a constraint to development.

A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment has been provided for the proposed development which details how it is considered the proposal would impact on the landscape character of the area. Within this document, it is stated that the proposal has evolved, in part through consideration of the landscape assessment. It is noted that the site is not designated for its landscape value and the proposal is not considered to have significant visual impact such as to warrant an EIA. Further to the initial concerns raised by the Council's Landscape team, the applicant has provided further supporting information which is considered below.

With regard to the quality of the proposed substation and metal storage containers, the proposals are very typical of other similar solar farm projects, both locally and nationally. Whilst they would be taller than the adjoining solar arrays, in view of the existing and proposed boundary treatment and distance from public vantage points, it is not considered that they would be significantly harmful given the proposed dark finish in relation to the wooded backdrop seen from various points along the public right of way. The applicant has considered the possibility of cladding the structures or the provision of 'small barn-like structures' but concluded that the potential increase in height of an alternative structure would be more harmful in this location, and there would be further Green Belt/inappropriate development considerations for a more permanent building. The substation and storage container would be located where there is presently a silo, which, whilst of an agricultural context, is much taller than the structures proposed.

The additional supporting information provides photographs of the site from various vantage points along the public right of way during the winter months, supplementing those in the original submission during the summer months. The effects of the proposed development are considered at year 1 and year 15, taking into account the proposed mitigation. Much of the applicant's conclusion is that the largely dense existing perimeter vegetation would limit the long term impact of the proposal on the landscape of the area. The proposed mitigation plan is considered robust subject to existing and new hedgerows being properly managed so as not to grow into small

trees in order to maintain landscape character. There would be new hedgerows to the south and north/north-west.

Overall, the existing field patterns would be retained and use made of existing infrastructure such as the access tracks and concrete hardstanding. Although the proposal represents a long term temporary change to the use and character of the agricultural land, it would enable continued, less intensive agricultural use and would be fully reversible. Whilst, the concerns of the Council's landscape team are noted, it is considered the scheme's benefits in terms of sustainability and climate change objectives outweigh the landscape harm arising from the development, subject to suitable landscaping measures being implemented, which can reasonably be secured as a condition of any planning permission.

Impact on the character and appearance the area

As stated above, although temporary, the proposal is for a 40 year solar farm, and it would have an impact on the character and appearance of the area. Having regard to policy ENV3, it is considered that the proposal is functional and makes good use of the site. In terms of its relationship with landscape features, the development would be sited within the existing field pattern, negating the need to remove significant lengths of hedgerows or trees of high amenity value. The site would also include landscaped open spaces in order to increase biodiversity and provide ecological mitigation.

Although the site is relatively enclosed, the applicants have given consideration to views into the site in order to minimise visual intrusion, particularly to the west where land is most open for those passing by. This has resulted in existing hedgerows being supplemented and additional planting to provide new hedgerows. Whilst the combination of increased hedgerow height and views of the arrays and security fencing above these could have an adverse impact on the appearance of the area, through a sense of enclosure when using the public right of way, it is considered that the proposal offers significant benefits which overrides the concerns for this impact.

Ecology and biodiversity

The application is supported with an Ecological Appraisal which has been supplemented with skylark mitigation details. The report recommends a Biodiversity Management and Enhancement Plan which would provide precautionary measures to deal with reptiles, bats, badgers and dormice, none of which would be adversely affected by the proposal, largely in view of their habitat (trees/hedgerows) not being substantially affected and having a buffer zone to ensure the vegetation and its root zones are not impacted by the works.

The site has been identified as breeding territory for skylarks, with up to three breeding pairs possible (based on the land being sown with barley at the time of the survey, understood to result in higher breeding densities than other cereal crops). Although the proposal would result in the site not being available for breeding, a mitigation area adjacent to the site is proposed which would accommodate 6 skylark plots and enable the site to continue to be used for foraging purposes. Securing this mitigation should enable the population of skylarks to be maintained.

The application is supported with a biodiversity metric indicating that the biodiversity uplift would be well in excess of 10% (231%). This would be achieved through the creation of over 1km of native hedgerows with trees and around 26ha of grassland of moderate to good quality. The proposal would also maintain existing field margins, hedgerows and non-cereal crop areas, which would result in an overall increase in biodiversity on site.

The proposal does not include lighting following construction, other than that necessary to enable access to the associated equipment enclosures, use of which would be very occasional. As such, there would be no adverse impact on foraging bats due to increased lighting, as a dark corridor would be maintained. Perimeter fencing is proposed to include access for small mammals through gaps underneath fence panels or the provision of mammal gates at intervals around the site.

Subject to the imposition of conditions requiring compliance with the submitted skylark mitigation plan and a Biodiversity Management and Enhancement Plan, the proposal is considered to comply with policy DM2 of the Local Plan Part 2. The increase in biodiversity is considered to be a significant benefit of the proposal and adds to the very special circumstances that justify such development in the Green Belt.

Residential amenity

There are few residential properties which adjoin the site, although those at the northern end of Holly Lane are closest. Properties in Wyndham Road and Broadlands Close (within the adjoining authority area) are approximately 80m from the proposed arrays (and across a railway line), whilst the residential curtilage to Oak Cottage is situated 37m from the nearest array of panels, with the power station/inverter structures 120m away from this property.

The proposal is not considered to be harmful in terms of overshadowing or resulting in a loss of light to neighbouring properties in view of the distances between the arrays and residential properties. Whilst some nearby residents will have views of the solar array, the proposal would not be overbearing.

Concerns have been expressed locally with regard to the potential noise and disturbance caused by the inverters/power station. The application has been supported with a Noise Assessment which Environmental Health consider to have been written using an appropriate methodology in accordance with relevant guidance. During operation, there is the potential for a 'hum' to emanate from the transformer. It is not considered that this would give rise to unacceptable impacts to amenity. In determining the appeal relating to the EIA, the SoS advised in September 2023 that there are no likely significant impacts affecting human health due to established industry standard Health and Safety measures. It is further understood that the World Health Organisation advises that current evidence does not confirm the existence of any health consequences from exposure to low level electromagnetic fields such as those generated by solar farms. This low level is comparable to those emitted by household appliances.

Whilst it is noted that the application offers a change to the view for some local residents, it is not considered that there would be significant harm to the residential amenities currently enjoyed by local residents, and the proposal accordingly complies with policy ENV3 of the Local Plan Part 1.

Archaeology

The site lies within an area of moderate archaeological interest. Further to the initial pre-application submission, investigative works have been undertaken to determine the extent of any archaeological remains. This involved the excavation of 158 evaluation trenches, resulting in the discovery of Early and Late Iron Age pottery and, notably, a ring ditch enclosing cremation burials, likely to be of the Early Bronze Age. Whilst this monument is not scheduled, the Archaeologist considers that it should be of equal significance to Scheduled Monuments given the potential for encountering human remains.

This discovery has resulted in a break in the layout of arrays in the south-eastern part of the site in order to ensure a buffer zone around this important archaeological feature. The Archaeologist has advised that the indicated 15m buffer zone would give the most protection to the monument and negates the need for further archaeological investigation. Conditions are recommended in order to secure appropriate protection to this buffer zone and ensure compliance with paragraph 206 of the NPPF.

11 OTHER MATTERS

N/A

12 CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

It is acknowledged that the solar farm covers a large area which would have implications for visual amenity over the course of the temporary 40 year period. However, the application includes mitigation relating to both landscape and ecological issues, which combine to offer a reduced impact in landscape terms and a significant increase in biodiversity. In this respect the proposal is considered to comply with policies DM2 and ENV3.

It is also recognised that the proposal constitutes inappropriate development in the Green Belt and would result in the long-term temporary loss of some good quality agricultural land. However, these factors must be weighed up against the need to reduce carbon emissions in line with the Council's stance on the ongoing Climate Emergency. The scheme will deliver significant benefits in that it would provide renewable energy for a significant number of properties within the local area, thereby helping to reduce CO2 emissions and contributing positively to meeting climate change targets. Having regard to site-specific circumstances and wider constraints, it is considered these benefits constitute very special circumstances to justify what is inappropriate development in the Green Belt, and to also justify development on some agricultural land that is classified as being of the best and most versatile quality. In applying this balance, it is noted that the proposal would not preclude the return to high intensity farming following the decommissioning of the solar farm.

As such, in conclusion, it is considered that the benefits of providing renewable energy outweigh other considerations, and the proposal is considered to be justified in this location and in accordance with policies STR1 and STR8 of the Local Plan. Permission is therefore recommended subject to conditions.

13 RECOMMENDATION

Grant Subject to Conditions

Proposed Conditions:

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

Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

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

PLS-1356 - Topographical survey

PL.001a rev.R7- SITE DESIGN PLAN

PL.001 rev.R1 - TECHNICAL DETAILS - MOUNTING STRUCTURE

PL.005 rev.R1 - TECHNICAL DETAILS - MV POWER STATION

PL.006 rev.R1 - TECHNICAL DETAILS - CUSTOMER SUBSTATION

PL.007 - TECHNICAL DETAILS 1 _ Gate-Fence-Construction Road, Camera, Satellite Dish

PL.010 rev.R1 - TECHNICAL DETAILS - STORAGE CONTAINER

31059/WALKFORD SITE PLAN 2 - existing site plan

31059/ACCESS AND CONSTRUCTION 1 - proposed site plan temporary access track & construction compound

31059/WALKFORD MOOR SOLAR 7 - location plan

P20-0562__17_G - landscape mitigation plan

Arboricultural Impact Assessment July 2023

Arboricultural Survey Report April 2023

Noise Impact Assessment rev.02 9.8.23

Revised Skylark Mitigation Strategy V3 13.5.24

Reason: To ensure satisfactory provision of the development.

3. Using the Landscape Mitigation Plan P20-0562__17_G as a base, before development commences, a scheme of landscaping of the site shall be submitted for approval in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This scheme shall include:

- a) the existing trees and shrubs which have been agreed to be retained;
- b) a specification for new planting (species, size, spacing and location);
- c) areas for hard surfacing and the materials to be used;
- d) the treatment of the boundaries of the site and other means of enclosure;
- e) a method and programme for its implementation and the means to provide for its future maintenance.

No development shall take place unless these details have been approved and then only in accordance with those details.

Reason: To ensure that the development takes place in an appropriate way and to comply with Policies ENV3 and ENV4 of the Local Plan 2016-2036 Part One: Planning Strategy for the New Forest District outside of the National Park.

4. Due to the presence of significant archaeological and human remains, prior to the commencement of development, a Monument Management Plan (MMP) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The MMP shall include, but is not limited to, the following details:

- how an area (Exclusion Zone) around the Monument will be established and implemented,
- how the Exclusion Zone will be maintained, and
- the activities which can and cannot take place within the Exclusion Zone.

Development shall only be carried out in accordance with the MMP.

Reason: In the interests of protecting items of archaeological interest and in accordance with policy DM1 of the Local Plan Part 2.

5. No development shall take place until details of a secure temporary construction barrier have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The barrier shall encompass the total area of the archaeological 'exclusion zone' as shown on drawing PA.001a to the south-east of the sub-station/storage compound to prevent vehicle access and use of the area. The barrier shall be installed throughout the duration of the construction of the development (unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority) and shall be removed following completion of the development.

Reason: In the interest of protecting items of archaeological interest and in accordance with policy DM1 of the Local Plan Part 1.

6. No development shall start on site until a construction method statement has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, which shall include:
- a) A programme of and phasing of demolition (if any) and construction work;
 - b) The provision of long term facilities for contractor parking;
 - c) The arrangements for deliveries associated with all construction works, including high level details regarding the use of a banksman;
 - d) Methods and phasing of construction works;
 - e) Access and egress for plant and machinery;
 - f) Protection of pedestrian routes during construction;
 - g) Location of temporary site buildings, compounds, construction material and plant storage areas; and
 - h) Wheel washing facilities/mud prevention methods.

Demolition and construction work shall only take place in accordance with the approved method statement.

Reason: In order that the Planning Authority can properly consider the effect of the works on the amenity of the locality.

7. Prior to the commencement of development, a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The CEMP shall identify the steps and procedures that will be implemented to avoid or mitigate constructional impacts on species and habitats and should address the following impacts:

- Storage of construction materials/chemicals and equipment;
- Dust suppression;
- Chemical and/or fuel run-off from construction into nearby watercourse(s);
- Waste disposal;
- Noise/visual/vibrational impacts;
- Measures to ensure no materials, machinery, vehicles or works will encroach on the designated site;
- Timings of works to avoid nesting/breeding seasons;
- Mammal ramps for open excavations;
- Lighting measures to ensure boundary habitats are not illuminated;
- Any necessary measures to protect nearby ancient woodland;
- No working after dusk in order not to illuminate areas of ancient woodland.

The development shall be implemented in full accordance with the approved CEMP.

Reason: In the interests of nature conservation and biodiversity.

8. The development shall be implemented in accordance with the Savills Noise Impact Assessment, dated 9th August 2023, such that the sound power level of the inverters does not exceed 76 dbA L_w between 2200 and 0700 hours and does not exceed 91dBA L_w between 0700 and 1900 hours.

Reason: In the interests of the residential amenities of the area and in accordance with policy ENV3 of the Local Plan Part 1.

9. Unless otherwise approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, all works and ancillary operations in connection with the construction of the development, including the use of any equipment or deliveries to the site, shall be carried out only between 0800 hours and 1800 hours on Mondays to Fridays and between 0800 hours and 1300 hours on Saturdays and at no time on Sundays, Bank Holidays or Public Holidays.

Reason: In the interests of the residential amenities of the area and in accordance with policy ENV3 of the local Plan Part 1.

10. The woodland and trees on the site which are shown to be retained on the approved plans shall be protected during all site clearance, demolition and building works in accordance with the measures set out in the submitted Barton Hyett Associates Arboricultural Consultants Arboricultural Impact Assessment ref: 5411, dated 8th August 2023.

Reason: To safeguard trees and natural features which are important to the visual amenities of the area.

11. The development shall be undertaken in accordance with the methodology, mitigation and enhancement measures set out in the Revised Skylark Mitigation Strategy and in Appendix 4: Biodiversity Management and Enhancement Plan of the Ecological Assessment Report V3. These mitigation and enhancement measures shall be provided in full before the development is fully operational or within such other timescale as is otherwise first approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of biodiversity and in accordance with policy DM2 of the Local Plan Part 2.

Further Information:

Vivienne Baxter

Telephone: 023 8028 5442

