



STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Council Offices • Ebley Mill • Ebley Wharf • Stroud • GL5 4UB

Tel: (01453) 754 351/754 321

www.stroud.gov.uk

Email: democratic.services@stroud.gov.uk

10 July 2019

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Development Control Committee will be held on **TUESDAY 23 JULY 2019** in the Council Chamber, Ebley Mill, Ebley Wharf, Stroud at **6.00 pm.**

Kathy O'Leary
Chief Executive

Please Note:

- i. This meeting will be filmed for live or subsequent broadcast via the Council's internet site (www.stroud.gov.uk). By entering the Council Chamber you are consenting to being filmed. The whole of the meeting will be filmed except where there are confidential or exempt items, which may need to be considered in the absence of the press and public.
- ii. The procedure for public speaking which applies to Development Control Committee is set out on the page immediately preceding the Planning Schedule.

A G E N D A

- 1 **APOLOGIES**
To receive apologies for absence.
- 2 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
To receive Declarations of Interest in relation to planning matters.
- 3 **MINUTES – 4 AND 12 JUNE 2019**
To approve and sign as a correct record the minutes of the Development Control Committee meetings held on 4 and 12 June 2019.
- 4 **PLANNING SCHEDULE AND PROCEDURE FOR PUBLIC SPEAKING**
(Note: For access to information purposes, the background papers for the applications listed in the above schedule are the application itself and subsequent papers as listed in the relevant file.)
- 4.1 **LAND AT KINGSTON ROAD, SLIMBRIDGE, GLOS (S.19/0181/FUL)**
The creation of a car park (resubmission of S.18/1421/FUL) (372927 – 204116).

- 4.2 LAND TO THE EAST OF HIGH GREEN, LONGNEY, GLOS (S.19/0760/FUL)**
Construction of a solar park, to include the installation of solar photovoltaic panels to generate approximately 20MW of electricity, with DNO and Client substations, inverters, perimeter stock fencing, access tracks and CCTV. Landscaping and other associated works, together with retention and extension of existing hedgerow.

Members of Development Control Committee

Councillor Martin Baxendale (Chair)
Councillor Miranda Clifton (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Dorcas Binns
Councillor Nigel Cooper
Councillor Haydn Jones
Councillor Steve Lydon

Councillor John Marjoram
Councillor Jenny Miles
Councillor Sue Reed
Councillor Mark Reeves
Councillor Jessica Tomblin
Councillor Tom Williams



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DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE

4 June 2019

6.00 pm – 7.03 pm
Council Chamber, Ebley Mill, Stroud

3

Minutes

Membership

Councillor Martin Baxendale (Chair)	P	Councillor John Marjoram	P
Councillor Miranda Clifton (Vice-Chair)	P	Councillor Jenny Miles	P
Councillor Dorcas Binns	A	Councillor Jessica Tomblin	P
Councillor Nigel Cooper	P	Councillor Sue Reed	A
Councillor Haydn Jones	P	Councillor Mark Reeves	A
Councillor Steve Lydon	P	Councillor Tom Williams	P

P = Present A = Absent

Officers in Attendance

Planning Manager

Senior Planning Officer

Planning Officer

Development Manager

Solicitor & Deputy Monitoring Officer

Democratic Services & Elections
Officers

Other Members in Attendance

Councillor Tipper was in attendance.

DC.001 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Binns, Reed and Reeves.

DC.002 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

DC.003 MINUTES – 2 APRIL 2019

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the meeting held on 2 April 2019 are accepted as a correct record.

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL PLANNING SCHEDULE

Representations were received and taken into account by the Committee in respect of applications:

1	S.18/1869/FUL	2	S.19/0418/HHOLD
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Late pages relating to item 4.1 on the schedule had been circulated to Committee prior to the meeting.

DC.004 THE ERECTION OF THREE DWELLINGS ON LAND AT 8 WESTEND, CAM (S.18/1869/FUL)

The Planning Officer presented the application for 3 dwellings, 1 detached and 1 pair of semi detached properties, on the land to the rear of 8 Westend. The proposal would include an access road, 2 parking spaces for each of the dwellings including the existing dwelling, a visitor parking space and a turning area. It would also involve the removal of a side element of the existing property at 8 Westend. The access and parking arrangements had been approved by the Highway Authority, the ecology report had been assessed by the Biodiversity Officer and conditions were recommended in both cases. The late pages that had been circulated included changes as follows: an additional condition regarding sustainable drainage systems, proposal to remove condition 11 because a signed unilateral undertaking which would cover the condition had been received and a proposal to strengthen condition 12 to include retention of existing hedgerows and boundary planting.

Councillor Brian Whatling the Chair of Planning and Highways Committee at Cam Parish Council spoke in opposition to the application on the basis of overdevelopment.

A resident Victoria Gray spoke against the application and stated that 6 new houses are already being built in the area. She stated that the design of this application had received over 30 different objections. The removal of the trees and hedgerows would be an invasion of privacy, the historic use of the site as a market garden and orchard was also referred to and that the change in use of the land could affect people and wildlife. There were also concerns raised with the cramped living space provided, the design and appearance not being in keeping with the local surroundings, and access for emergency services.

The applicant Richard Crosby thanked the Committee for visiting the site in person, and advised that the site they visited was his home of 20 years. He advised that the plots were 200ft long and approximately 0.2 of an acre per property and that it would not be overdeveloped. The owners' available land would be used as a building site and parking, power and water would be provided from the existing property and the access would be completed first to allow the minimum of noise and impact on the neighbours.

In response to questions from Members the Development Manager advised that the trees on the site were not protected, as they were not in a Conservation area or subject to Tree Preservation Orders, however the Case Officer did discuss the site with the Tree Officer who advised that the trees were not worthy of preservation.

Questions were also asked by Members regarding the access to the property. The Development Manager confirmed that the Local Highway Authority had been out on site and had raised no objections.

The Development Manager explained Condition 12 further, the original condition stated that prior to the development being brought into use details of a hard and soft landscaping scheme would be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval. The amendment to the condition strengthened this by ensuring that the existing boundary landscaping is also retained. It was also confirmed that Condition 14 referred to the physical appearance of the building and that no additional openings (doors and windows) would be allowed.

The Planning Manager advised that if Members would prefer they could separate out Condition 12 into two parts to further strengthen the retention of the existing boundary treatment rather than include it in the general landscaping condition.

Councillor Cooper proposed a Motion to accept Officers' advice subject to the inclusion of a separate condition to cover the boundary treatment; this was seconded by Councillor Miles.

On being put to the vote there were 6 votes for and 3 votes against.

RESOLVED To grant permission for application S.18/1869/FUL subject to amendment as laid out in the minutes above.

Councillor Marjoram left the meeting.

DC.005 PROPOSED REAR EXTENSION TO 46 COTSWOLD GREEN, STONEHOUSE, GLOS (S.19/0418/HHOLD)

The Senior Planning Officer presented the application for the erection of a 2 storey rear extension and a single storey sloping roof element onto an existing 2 storey semi detached dwelling at 46 Cotswold Green, Stonehouse. The proposal had been revised to reduce the size of the extension and move it further away from the boundary. Officers advised the Committee that similar extensions had been granted on the same road.

A neighbour spoke to advise that he was not against the application as similar extensions could be seen on other properties on the road.

Members asked for further clarification on the changes that had been made to the application. The Senior Planning Officer advised that the original application was just under 1.5 metres from the boundary and entirely 2 storey. The new proposal is now 2 storey with a single storey element that is 2.4 metres in height. The height is the same as the existing fence which addressed concerns of an overbearing impact and loss of light. Similar developments on the same road are 2 metres and 2.3 metres from the boundary, they protrude further out than the proposed development and therefore the loss of light impact would be greater.

The Senior Planning Officer confirmed the differences between the proposed extension and the existing extension of the next door property. The proposed extension is protruding 4 metres and is 7.2 metres to ridge whereas the existing extension next door is 4.2 metres out and 7.1 metres to ridge.

Councillor Clifton proposed a Motion to accept Officers' advice, this was seconded by Councillor Haydn Jones.

On being put to the vote the Motion was unanimously carried.

RESOLVED To grant permission for application S.19/0418/HHOLD.

The meeting closed at 7.03 pm.

Chair



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DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE

12 June 2019

6.00 pm – 10.17 pm

Council Chamber, Ebley Mill, Stroud

3

Minutes

Membership

Councillor Martin Baxendale (Chair)	P	Councillor John Marjoram	P
Councillor Miranda Clifton (Vice-Chair)	P	Councillor Jenny Miles	P
Councillor Dorcas Binns	P	Councillor Jessica Tomblin	P
Councillor Nigel Cooper	P	Councillor Sue Reed	A
Councillor Haydn Jones	P	Councillor Mark Reeves	P
Councillor Steve Lydon	P	Councillor Tom Williams	P

P = Present A = Absent

Officers in Attendance

Head of Development Management	Development Manager
Principal Planning Officer	Solicitor
Director of Development Services	Interim Head of Legal Services
Chief Executive	Democratic Services Officers

Other Members in Attendance

Councillors Cornell, John Jones, Davies, Studdert-Kennedy, Tucker and Robinson.

External Consultants

WYG (Noise Consultant)
Gloucestershire County Council Highways (HDM)

DC.006 APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Reed.

DC.007 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Tom Williams did not declare an interest but felt that he needed to clarify something that had been mentioned to him. He stated that in the past he had appeared on the shareholders register as the supporters trust shareholder representative and did vote as a trust member but this was before Ecotricity took over. He wanted to make it clear that he was no longer on the board nor had any direct interest in the football club.

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL PLANNING SCHEDULE

Representations were received and taken into account by the Committee in respect of the application and also Late Pages were circulated to Committee prior to the meeting.

**DC.008 LAND AT M5 JUNCTION 13 WEST OF STONEHOUSE, EASTINGTON,
GLOUCESTERSHIRE (S.16/0043/OUT)**

The Principal Planning Officer introduced the proposal for a 5,000 capacity football stadium and other ancillary uses, two full sized grass pitches and goal practice area, parking for cars and coaches and highways improvements to the A419, including a signalised site junction and combined cycle/footway. All matters to be reserved save for access. He reminded members that Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that the determination of a planning application should be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

In this case the applicants had accepted that the proposed development was contrary to development plan policies, but after carefully balancing this against other material considerations Officers considered that this was a case where other material planning benefits outweighed the conflict with those policies and consequently were recommending approval subject to conditions and a Section 106 Agreement.

Concerns with noise had been raised from local residents, William Morris College and other groups and Officers subsequently met with them to discuss further. The Council had retained the services of a Noise Consultant and the advice received was that conditions were recommended to mitigate any noise impact. The Noise Consultant was present and would be able to answer any technical questions.

A map showing the revised scheme was shown and various aspects of the site highlighted. The ecological implications and enhancements were outlined. The heritage assets were also identified and the impact on the rural setting acknowledged. The highway mitigation and enhancements including bus, cycle and pedestrian were summarised. This scheme was supported by the County Highways, and there was an officer present who would also be able to answer any technical questions. The landscape impact and mitigation outlined with the lighting being integrated into the structure of the building, however, at night there would still be some skyglow.

The Principal Planning Officer provided an update with further public comments being received which reiterate previous concerns; an update on Condition 42: Noise condition clarifying that the internal space within the building was for teaching and living space. All other updates were within Late Pages. Other material was given to Members to read and the Chair allowed Members 5 minutes to read this.

The meeting adjourned at 8.21 pm and reconvened at 8.27 pm when members indicated that they had read all of the additional material provided.

For clarification the Principal Planning Officer confirmed the height of the building would be 19.5 metres.

The Chair invited public speaking.

Ward Members

Councillor John Jones, expressed his view that the application was contrary to both the Council's adopted Local Plan in 2015 and Eastington Neighbourhood Development Plan adopted in 2016. It was also contrary to Policies CP15, CP14 and EP1, ES3, ES7, ES8, EP9 and EP4. He concluded that in his opinion the application contravened the Local Plan and the Eastington Neighbourhood Development Plan and he requested that the application be refused.

Councillor Stephen Davies was unable to be present at the start of the meeting and Councillor John Jones read out a prepared statement outlining Councillor Davies' reasons for refusal. He focused on the concerns from William Morris House regarding the issues of unexpected and sudden noise variations on the autistic residents on match days. There were also concerns regarding the highway. He believed that strength of local feeling against this application was high (survey results 80%).

The Head of Development Management confirmed that in the Late Pages, Condition 4 tied the design down.

Parish Council Representatives

Karen Hayes spoke on behalf of Eastington Parish Council, stating that substantial weight must be given to the departure to the Local Plan and also the Eastington Neighbourhood Development Plan. She questioned the need to bring training facilities onto the stadium site as these could be provided elsewhere as they are now. There would be an increase in car use even with a shuttle bus from Stonehouse. There was a change in land use and harm to the landscape setting through the removal/disturbance of trees and hedgerows. Nailsworth Town Council had also raised their concerns. She urged refusal.

David Paynter represented Whitminster Parish Council who objected on the grounds of the conflict with the Local Plan, landscaping impact, highway issues and noise pollution. Citing policies CP15, CP14 and EI11 as reasons for refusal. There was no guarantee of the sustainability of the club. It was human nature for fans to park in nearby roads to avoid paying car parking charges.

Opposing

David Crofts from the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) outlined reasons why in the CPRE's opinion, the application should be refused i.e. because it underplays the Council's Local Plan and ignores the Eastington Neighbourhood Development Plan, citing policies CP2 and CP15; and that the Local Plan should be upheld.

Jo-Anne Bradford from Keep Eastington Rural stated that she spoke on behalf of the people of Eastington who opposed the application. This also included their neighbours at William Morris House who needed protecting. There would be an increase in noise, traffic and the destruction of historic meadows. It was also against the Local Plan policy EI11.

Graham Barton, William Morris College questioned the public benefit, and the benefit to Eastington. He confirmed that the college was situated amongst a peaceful community. 70 decibels between 8.00 am – 11.00 pm would not be mitigated by conditions and the community could not live with that noise.

Supporting

Dale Vince, on behalf of the Applicant confirmed that at present the football club had very limited parking space. The club's ambition was to get into the Championship. Six years ago an extensive search began for a suitable new site. The stadium would be the first in the world made of wood and a sustainable development. There would be benefits for the District of Stroud.

Phil Butterworth spoke on behalf of the football club, confirming that an estimated 80-90% of fans were in favour of the project and that there are potential benefits to schools with the Forest Green Rovers Ambassador Scheme.

The Chair thought it would be helpful to discuss the planning considerations on a topic by topic basis.

Principal of Development

The Team Manager showed on a plan the location of the Grade II Listed Buildings in relation to the site. A red line showed the proposed development area, the area had not changed only the application. Events would be managed by conditions on hours, car park management, limited size and frequency. There would be no music concerts.

The Principal Planning Officer clarified that the benefits justified the departure from the Council's Local Plan. This application would not set a precedent and he was happy to defend the Local Plan. He confirmed that the 5,000 seater stadium would provide a suitable atmosphere for the club to grow in the future, but permission would be needed for an increase. There would be ancillary facilities for fans, training pitches and facilities for the club together all on one site.

When the Eastington Neighbourhood Plan was adopted by Council, following a referendum and the Local Plan was agreed a new stadium was not anticipated.

Highways

The Principal Planning Officer confirmed that on match days traffic could turn both ways. There would be traffic lights in operation. The Highways Consultant from GCC Highways answered questions confirming that the M5 came into use in 1962. There would be 1,700 parking spaces. He was satisfied that there would be controlled use as part of the Car Park Management Strategy alongside the Travel Plan. There would be a car parking charge to encourage fans to avoid using a car and use other modes of transport. Improvements were proposed on the roundabout to the M5 junction, a plan was displayed on the screen.

Landscape and Visual Impact

Grove Farm was 46m from the stadium and Mole Cottage was 90m away. No details regarding materials for planting or surfaces were available. There would be sustainable drainage across the site, with some tarmac and/or bonded surface for the roads. Condition 5 requires details on hard and soft landscaping. There would be 2 slow release drainage ponds to adjacent land.

Upon request from Councillor Williams, the Head of Development Management confirmed she was happy for all reserved matters to come back to Committee, similar to the Land West of Stonehouse.

Councillor Lydon requested clarification that the proposal was to establish the principle of a football stadium. The Principal Planning Officer confirmed that this was an outline application with indicative detail which would be controlled by conditions.

Ecology

Confirmation was given that there was an agreed Method Statement and there would be ongoing maintenance to manage the site.

Trees

No questions were asked.

Design

This outline application sought permission for a 5,000 seater stadium. There would be flexibility to increase to 10,000 without rebuilding the stadium. The applicant did not feel that design matters should be included in a Section 106 Agreement because conditions could be imposed upon the outline application as safeguards. The Building Control Manager had looked at the feasibility of the design and the timber would be treated to be fire retardant. The stadium could be evacuated within 6 minutes. Cooking areas there would have 30 minutes fire containment.

At 8.20 pm the meeting adjourned and reconvened at 8.32 pm.

Noise

The Council's Noise Consultant answered Members' questions regarding noise levels, confirming the noise from a crowd cheering inside the stadium would be less than 40 decibels. A helicopter overhead would be 75/80 decibels. Comparisons in various sounds were discussed. Noise behaved differently when travelling in or around different shapes, whether windows were open or closed. Design does affect how noise is projected. Consideration of the worst case for noise from vehicles, car parking and car doors would be covered in the Noise Management Plan. The different seasons, eg rain and wind would also affect sound.

Councillor Tomblin referred to the Late Pages and Condition 43.

Lighting

No questions were asked.

Heritage

The location of the nearby Listed Buildings and Conservation Area were identified.

Residential Amenity

Councillor Binns asked what facilities were available for local residents. The Principal Planning Officer referred to condition 48 which required submission and approval of a Community Engagement Strategy; he had only had discussions at this outline stage but the application was for a new stadium which would be the hub for the club's fitness facilities. At this stage there was no commitment on Community Engagement, because this was an outline application.

The Principal Planning Officer confirmed that a similar requirement for an Employment and Skills Plan would be imposed by Condition 47.

The Head of Development Management confirmed that under the Scheme of Delegation certain items could be decided by the Committee or in consultation with the Committee Chair and herself. In her view some of the conditions were of a technical nature, others could come back to Committee. Conditions 47 and 48 were good examples of the latter.

Air Quality, Contaminated Land or Drainage

No questions were asked.

Agricultural Land

The Principal Planning Officer confirmed that the land was Grade 3, with elements near the river being Grade 3b. He confirmed Grades 1, 2 and 3a were the best and most versatile.

Public Sector Equality Duty and Obligations

No questions were asked.

General Questions

In reply to a Member's question the Principal Planning Officer confirmed that there was no requirement for a sequential test as there were no alternative sites. The applicant had searched the area for a suitable location in Oldends Lane, Aston Down and Javelin Park but these sites were not suitable. The proposed site off junction 13 of the M5 was the most suitable.

Junction 12 of the M5 was not suitable because of the capacity of the junction and roundabout, remodeling would be very challenging. Junction 13 has the capacity for improvements to take place. The GCC Highways Consultant confirmed a proposal for warehousing had failed because of junction 12 capacity issues. Junction 13 is better for the needs of the stadium.

Councillor Lydon proposed a Motion to accept the Officers' advice and grant the permission sought, this was seconded by Councillor Marjoram. He thanked the Officers for their answers to questions for this outline application. Councillor Marjoram congratulated the Principal Planning Officer for his very detailed report.

The Solicitor asked whether the proposer and seconder wanted to encompass the amendments to the conditions recommended by the Principal Planning Officer in Late Pages and the suggestion by Members that non-technical matters reserved for further approval be brought back to the Committee for determination. The proposer and seconder agreed.

Debate

Councillor Haydn Jones stated that this was an outstanding design but was contrary to the Local Plan and the benefits would have to outweigh the presumption of refusal. He asked what benefits were there to the local community. There would be significant noise nuisance and the impact to Grove Farm, Westend. Certain important matters (eg

design and community facilities) were not to be included in a Section 106 Agreement. The applicant had demonstrated his commitment to carbon neutral by 2030.

Councillor Williams mentioned the cost of moving, i.e. the demolition of the existing stadium and the 3-5 years it will take to finish the new stadium. He was disappointed in the lack of facilities for locals.

Councillor Cooper said the club was successful and ambitious; the design was wonderful and had listened to the objections and concerns. The club had outgrown its present site and needed to move. He was not convinced that he had heard sufficient information to move away from the Council's Local Plan and Eastington Neighbourhood Design Statement.

Councillor Binns agreed with both Councillors Jones and Cooper. There had been no report on the effect on local jobs and businesses moving out of Nailsworth. The community in Eastington would get noise, lack of green fields, a huge amount of congestion and a parking charge resulting in visitors parking around the stadium. In her view it would be the wrong place for the stadium and was against the Council's Local Plan.

Councillor Miles had listened to all of the different view points and the impact on local residents. There would be significant employment and environmental gains.

At the conclusion of debate the Solicitor asked if there were any amendments to the proposal. None were proposed.

On being put to the vote there were 5 votes for the Motion and 6 votes against. The Motion to accept the Officers' advice was LOST.

Councillor Haydn Jones proposed a Motion to refuse the outline planning application. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Binns

The Head of Development Management requested that the proposer and seconder identify their proposed reasons for refusal which could then be put to the Committee for consideration.

Councillor Jones asked the Chair to allow a short period of time for formulation of the reasons for refusal.

Councillor Jones outlined the following reasons for refusal:-

That the proposed development is contrary to National Planning Policy, the Council's Local Plan and Eastington Neighbourhood Development Plan in the following respects:

National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 12

Local Plan Policies:

CP14 paragraphs 5, 7 and 8

CP15

CP12 - the impact on Nailsworth town centre

ES3 paragraph 1

ES7

ES10 - the Listed Buildings at Grove Lane

EI11

Relevant policies from the Eastington Neighbourhood Development Plan

Other material considerations are of insufficient weight to justify a departure from those planning policies.

Those reasons were seconded by Councillor Binns. No amendments to the proposal were put forward and Members did not consider that any further debate was necessary there having been a full examination of the material planning considerations

The Head of Development Management asked Councillor Jones whether he wished to delegate authority to her, in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of Committee the wording for refusal. Councillor Jones agreed. This was seconded by Councillor Binns.

On being put to the vote there were 7 votes for the Motion and 4 votes against. The Motion to refuse the outline planning application was CARRIED.

RESOLVED To refuse outline planning permission for the reasons proposed and seconded by Councillors Jones and Councillor Binns (set out above) and to delegate authority to the Head of Development Management to draft an appropriate notice of refusal to reflect those in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair before issuing the decision.

The meeting closed at 10.17 pm.

Chair



Stroud District Council

Planning Schedule

23rd July 2019

In cases where a Site Inspection has taken place, this is because Members felt they would be better informed to make a decision on the application at the next Committee. Accordingly the view expressed by the Site Panel is a factor to be taken into consideration on the application and a final decision is only made after Members have fully debated the issues arising.

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE

Procedure for Public Speaking

The Council have agreed to introduce public speaking at meetings of the Development Control Committee.

Public speaking is only permitted on those items contained within the schedule of applications. It is not permitted on any other items on the Agenda. The purpose of public speaking is to emphasise comments and evidence already submitted through the planning system. Speakers should refrain from bringing photographs or other documents as it is not an opportunity to introduce new evidence.

The Chair will ask for those wishing to speak to identify themselves by name at the beginning of proceedings. There are four available slots for each schedule item:-

Ward Councillor(s)
Town or Parish representative
Spokesperson against the scheme and
Spokesperson for the scheme.

Each slot (with the exception of Ward Councillors who are covered by the Council's Constitution) will not exceed 3 minutes in duration. If there is more than one person who wishes to speak in the same slot, they will need either to appoint a spokesperson to speak for all, or share the slot equally. Speakers should restrict their statement to issues already in the public arena. Please note that statements will be recorded and broadcast over the internet as part of the Councils webcasting of its meetings; they may also be used for subsequent proceedings such as an appeal. Names may be recorded in the Committee Minutes.

The order for each item on the schedule is

1. Introduction of item by the Chair
2. Brief update by the planning officer.
3. Public Speaking
 - a. Ward Member(s)
 - b. Parish Council
 - c. Those who oppose
 - d. Those who support
4. Member questions of officers
5. Motion
6. Debate
7. Vote

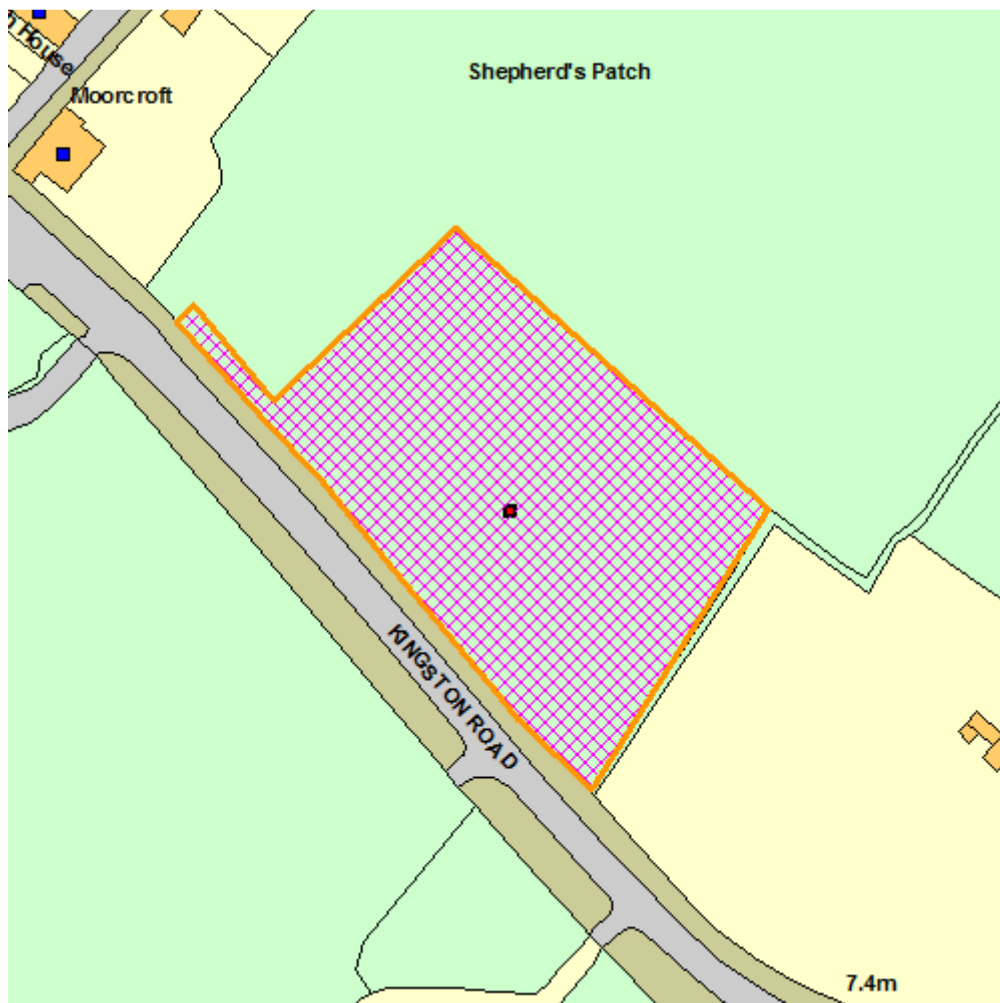
A copy of the Scheme for Public Speaking at Development Control Committee meetings is available at the meeting.

Parish	Application	Item
Slimbridge Parish Council	Land At, Kingston Road, Slimbridge. S.19/0181/FUL - Creation of car park (Resubmission of S.18/1421/FUL) (372927 - 204116)	01
Longney & Epney Parish Council	Land To The East Of High Green, Longney, Gloucester. S.19/0760/FUL - Construction of a solar park, to include the installation of solar photovoltaic panels to generate approximately 20MW of electricity, with DNO and Client substations, inverters, perimeter stock fencing, access tracks and CCTV. Landscaping and other associated works, together with retention and extension of existing hedgerow	02



Development Control Committee Schedule 23/07/2019

Item No:	01
Application No. Site No.	S.19/0181/FUL
Site Address	Land At, Kingston Road, Slimbridge, Gloucestershire
Town/Parish	Slimbridge Parish Council
Grid Reference	372927,204116
Application Type	Full Planning Application
Proposal	Creation of car park (Resubmission of S.18/1421/FUL) (372927 - 204116)
Recommendation	Permission
Call in Request	Requested by Head of Development Management





Development Control Committee Schedule 23/07/2019

Applicant's Details	Slimbridge Parish Council 23 Tennyson Road, Dursley, Gloucestershire, GL11 4PZ,
Agent's Details	None
Case Officer	Rachel Brown
Application Validated	05.02.2019
CONSULTEES	
Comments Received	Planning Strategy Manager (E) Development Coordination (E) Lower Severn Internal Drainage Board Contaminated Land Officer (E) SDC Water Resources Engineer Natural England (E) Environmental Health (E)
Constraints	Consult area Flood Zone 2 Flood Zone 3 Slimbridge Parish Council SAC SPA 7700m buffer Village Design Statement
OFFICER'S REPORT	

MAIN ISSUES

- Principle of development
- Residential Amenity
- Highways
- Landscape impact
- Ecology
- Flood risk
- Archaeology and Heritage Assets

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The site is located at Shepherd's Patch, to the north west of Slimbridge. The site comprises part of an agricultural field, with vehicular access off Kingston Road.

The site is not affected by any sensitive landscape designation, nor is it within a conservation area or nearby to any listed buildings. The site however falls within flood zones 2 and 3.

PROPOSAL

The application seeks permission for the creation of a car park. It has been made by the Parish Council to assist in managing tourism and alleviating traffic flow issues in the area.



Development Control Committee Schedule 23/07/2019

MATERIALS

Type 1 stone to finished level
Post and wire livestock fencing

REPRESENTATIONS

Statutory Consultees:

SDC Contaminated Land Officer - no comments

SDC Water Resources Engineer - Comments Internal Drainage Board to comment regarding surface water.

SDC Senior Biodiversity Officer - Acceptable subject to condition and informative

SDC Principal Environmental Health Officer - no adverse comments to make

GCC Highways - recommend no highway objection subject to conditions

Lower Severn Internal Drainage Board - comment that the applicant will require land drainage consent

GCC Public Rights of Way - Car park will not affect the footpath CSL 4; however if the stile is moving to a new location then it may need authorising.

Natural England - No objection; NE agrees with the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) 'screening' report conclusions.

Public:

At the time of writing this report 13 letters of objection, a petition containing 68 signatures, and a representation from the Shepherds Patch Resident's Groups have been received. Objections relate to:

- Continued issue throughout village with poor parking
- Not fair money spent on car park to appease lower end of village when top are left to suffer
- Car park will be at the cost of natural land and be an eyesore
- Objector does not wish to pay towards car park that will not benefit them
- Least appropriate site for car park
- The meadow is unimproved grassland which hosts large variety of wild flowers, grasses, butterflies and birds
- Other fields in area would be more appropriate
- Proper ecological survey is required
- Reduction in grazing land
- Increased risk to sheep from dogs
- Affect on local residents
- No proven need for the car park in this location
- Many of the cars parked on the road belong to boat owners



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- Problem could ameliorated by using resident's proposed alternative parking on the verge of the road
- Traffic lights to enforce single file traffic would also be effective
- On most days during the summer the parking along the verge is not full
- Suggest full traffic survey be carried out over 6 months
- Proposed car park is disproportionate to the need
- The mound and stock fence will add to visual eyesore
- A proper hedge and trees should be planted
- The car park would be filled with the cars of those who have boats moored on the canal making it unavailable for those who wish to walk, cycle or fish
- Not the business of the Parish Council to be providing extra parking for local businesses
- Increase traffic
- Lack of pavements
- Parked cars slow traffic down
- Greater risk of accidents
- Cause noise pollution through the surface of the car park
- Likely to be used at night for over night parking
- Increase flooding
- Parking should be provided away from residents on WWT side of canal
- Double yellow lines would ease flow of traffic as would ensuring canal bridge remains staffed and operators allow traffic over from village side first
- Canal moorings should be reduced
- Parking should only reflect present need of visitors, not provide increase capacity for local businesses
- Car park will attract more visitors
- Overnight parking and associated local disturbance
- Car park does not address issues of speeding in village
- Real parking problem is around the school
- Money should be spent on reducing speed and school parking
- Detrimental effect on area and destroying wildlife and source of food for wildlife
- Field in flood zone 3 and regularly floods
- Local residents not contacted regarding the car park
- Parking spaces not going to be delineated
- Should work with WWT to make car parking available at WWT
- Cost to the village for ongoing maintenance and management
- Uncertainty of sufficient funding
- Lack of management or maintenance plan
- Design not fit for purpose
- Disturbance, smell, fumes, loss of privacy and overbearing effect
- Materials not acceptable

4 letters of Support have been received



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NATIONAL AND LOCAL PLANNING POLICIES

National Planning Policy Framework.

Available to view at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

Stroud District Local Plan.

Policies together with the preamble text and associated supplementary planning documents are available to view on the Council's website:

https://www.stroud.gov.uk/media/1455/stroud-district-local-plan_november-2015_low-res_for-web.pdf

Local Plan policies considered for this application include:

- CP1 - Presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- CP2 - Strategic growth and development locations.
- CP3 - Settlement Hierarchy.
- CP4 - Place Making.
- CP13 - Demand management and sustainable travel measures.
- CP14 - High quality sustainable development.
- CP15 - A quality living and working countryside.

- EI10 - Provision of new tourism opportunities.
- EI11 - Promoting sport, leisure and recreation.
- EI12 - Promoting transport choice and accessibility.
- ES3 - Maintaining quality of life within our environmental limits.
- ES4 - Water resources, quality and flood risk.
- ES6 - Providing for biodiversity and geodiversity.
- ES7 - Landscape character.
- ES11 - Maintaining, restoring and regenerating the District's Canals.

Slimbridge Design Statement was adopted in 2017 and is a material consideration. A full copy of the document is available at: <https://www.stroud.gov.uk/environment/planning-and-building-control/planning-strategy/supplementary-guidance>

It contains the following relevant guidelines:

Slimbridge Landscape and Natural Environment (SLN)

- SLN 2
- SLN 3
- SLN 4

Slimbridge Roads and Footpaths (SRF)

- SRF 1
- SRF 2

Slimbridge Employment and Infrastructure (SEI)

- SEI 1



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The application has a number of considerations which both cover the principle of development and the details of the proposed scheme which will be considered in turn below:

PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT

Slimbridge Parish Council has applied for a car park to provide off-road parking for visitors to the area. Currently vehicles park on the grass verge. The car park would have the capacity for up to 42 cars, plus disabled spaces and space for motorcycles and bicycles. The car park will be surrounded by earth bunds made using soil dug from the car park. A stock proof fence would be erected around the outside of the bund. A footpath is proposed to allow pedestrians to access the car park via the existing footpath in the corner of the field. The Parish Council is proposing to maintain the car park.

The Local Plan has been adopted and full weight should therefore be given to the contents of the development plan, in accordance with paragraphs 11 and 12 of the NPPF. There is a presumption in favour of sustainable development as applied locally through the policies contained within the development plan. Consequently, decision makers should approve proposals that accord with the development plan without delay, but should refuse development that conflicts with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The proposal is for a community car park with up to 42 spaces plus 3 disabled bays and an area for cycles and motorbikes, located close to the Sharpness canal at Shepherd's Patch. Support for low impact development and uses that bolster tourism, leisure and accessibility to the countryside for visitors and residents is in the Local Plan guiding principles for development within the Severn Vale. It is also noted that provision of off road parking is a key objective of the Slimbridge Village Design Statement.

A car park would improve access to the canal and help to facilitate environmental improvements to existing verges currently eroded by informal roadside parking. Providing that the bunding and planting is delivered to mitigate visual impacts the proposals are considered to constitute low impact development and to achieve environmental improvements in the vicinity of Kingston Road on the approach to the Canal.

The development is within the core recreation catchment zone for the Severn Estuary SPA. However, the provision of the car park is proposed specifically to manage visitor pressures in the area and is identified in the Council's Strategy for the avoidance of likely significant effects on the Severn Estuary.

A car park would improve access to the canal and help to facilitate environmental improvements to existing verges currently eroded by informal roadside parking. The provision of the car park would help to manage visitor pressures in the area and is identified in the Council's Strategy for the avoidance of likely significant effects on the Severn Estuary.



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RESIDENTIAL AMENITY

There is a separation distance of 30m between the proposed car park and the nearest neighbouring residential properties. The car park would be enclosed by a 1.5m high bund that would help screen light from the car movements. No details of opening hours for the car park have been provided, however this detail can form part of a Management and Maintenance plan, the details of which can be controlled via a condition. No lighting is proposed.

Given the degree of separation to the neighbouring properties, the proposal would not have a harmful impact on the amenities of neighbouring occupiers.

HIGHWAYS

Gloucestershire County Council Highways Development Management have reviewed the submitted details and confirm that the proposed access is suitable for two-way working for the anticipated type of vehicle likely to access the car park

In order to ensure the access is maintained and debris is not spread onto the highway, the vehicle access shall be bound within the first 5m of the carriageway edge.

The speed limit is 30mph dictating a visibility splay of 54m long and set back 2.4m from the carriageway edge. The required visibility splays can be achieved in either direction.

No highway objection is raised subject to conditions.

LANDSCAPE IMPACT

The site is outside any sensitive landscape designation. The land is classified as Severn Vale Grazing Marshes within the adopted Stroud Landscape Assessment. The scheme is for the provision of a car park 27m x 47m, enclosed by soil mounds 5m wide x 1.5m high. The existing roadside hedge will be retained. The car park would be surfaced in type 1 stone. Whilst the car park would be visible it would not be visually intrusive or cause harm to the character of the landscape.

ECOLOGY

The application has been screened by Stroud District Council as the competent authority, for Likely Significant Effects under Regulation 63 of the Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2017.

The development is within the core recreation catchment zone for the Severn Estuary SPA. However, the provision of the car park is proposed specifically to manage visitor pressures in the area and is identified in the Council's Strategy for the avoidance of likely significant effects on the Severn Estuary. Severn Estuary access is restricted at the point of the proposed car-park by the Wild Fowl and Wetlands Trust Centre; visitors to the car park will likely access the canal for recreational purposes and thus reduce visitor numbers accessing the Severn Estuary at other points along the SPA.



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WWT have provided a statement which indicates that the field proposed to be used as a car park is unlikely to provide potential foraging and resting sites for SPA qualifying bird species due to the following:

"The enclosed nature of the field, proximity of houses and power/phone lines which do not make it as desirable as the more open fields closer to the estuary that are managed specifically with these birds in mind. It is therefore considered that the proposed development will not result in any likely significant effects on the designated site and no mitigation is required."

The outcome of the screening is that the project will have no adverse effect on the site at all. Natural England have confirmed that they agree with the HRA Screening report conclusions.

An ecological survey was undertaken at the site during the end of April 2018, species found indicate poor semi-improved grassland. This offers limited ecological value and is typical of a less species diverse sward. In the past the grassland has likely been improved by adding fertiliser, nutrients to increase the quality of the grassland for either the grazing of animals or for the production of silage/hay. By adding nutrients to a grassland the diversity of the sward decreases while the strong grass species begin to dominate the sward suppressing the more delicate slow growing herbs.

It is noted that the surveys for grassland species were undertaken outside of most optimal period of June/July and therefore a ground truthing exercise has been undertaken during a site visit by the Council's Biodiversity Officer on 3rd July 2019 in order to assess the grassland against the submitted surveys and to ensure that species such as orchids, that are more difficult to detect when not in flower, were not present. As a result of this exercise no additional species was discovered at the site and it is agreed that the above conclusions are correct.

Therefore the proposed car park will have limited ecological impacts on the biodiversity within the local area. It is proposed to bund the car park with the excess spoil and plant the bunds with a wildflower mix, if established and managed correctly it will support pollinating insects.

FLOOD RISK

The site is within flood zone 3. The car park would be classified as a less vulnerable use. It is proposed to line the area of the car park with a geotextile membrane, followed by stone, with a type 1 stone over the site to finished level. The materials proposed are permeable and the proposal would not increase flood risk elsewhere.

The Council's Water Resources Engineer has no comments to make. The Lower Severn Internal Drainage Board, responsible to the management of flood risk within the low lying areas of the River Severn have commented on the application that the applicant will require land drainage consent and an informative is recommended.



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REVIEW OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Letters of objection and comment have been received in response to the application and these are available to view on the electronic planning file. The objections and comments raised have been duly noted and considered in full in the main body of this report.

RECOMMENDATION

In light of the above, it is considered that the proposal complies with the policies outlined and the application is recommended for **Permission**.

HUMAN RIGHTS

In compiling this recommendation we have given full consideration to all aspects of the Human Rights Act 1998 in relation to the applicant and/or the occupiers of any neighbouring or affected properties. In particular regard has been had to Article 8 of the ECHR (Right to Respect for private and family life) and the requirement to ensure that any interference with the right in this Article is both permissible and proportionate. On analysing the issues raised by the application no particular matters, other than those referred to in this report, warranted any different action to that recommended.

Subject to the following conditions:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission. Reason: To comply with the requirements of 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 hereby permitted shall be carried out in all respects in strict accordance with the approved plans listed below: Proposed Drawings of 24/01/2019 Plan number = PCP/1 Proposed Drawings of 24/01/2019 Plan number = PCP/2 Proposed Drawings of 24/01/2019 Plan number = PCP/3 Reason: To ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans and in the interests of good planning.3. Notwithstanding the submitted details, any vehicular entrance gate serving the car park fronting Kingston Road shall be set back a minimum of 5m from the carriageway edge of the public highway and maintained thereafter.
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Reason:

To ensure that a private motorcar can be fully accommodated off of the highway and to ensure the safe unimpeded free flow of traffic on Kingston Road in accordance with Paragraph 35 of the NPPF.

4. Throughout the construction period of the development hereby permitted provision shall be within the site that is sufficient to accommodate the likely demand generated for the following:

- i. parking of vehicles of site operatives and visitors;
- ii. loading and unloading of plant and materials;
- iii. storage of plant and materials used in constructing the development;
- iv. provide for wheel washing facilities

Reason:

To reduce the potential impact on the public highway and accommodate the efficient delivery of goods in accordance with paragraph 110 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

5. Prior to occupation of the proposed development hereby permitted the first 5m of the proposed access road, including the junction with the existing public road and associated visibility splays, shall be completed to at least binder course level.

Reason:

To minimise hazards and inconvenience for users of the development by ensuring that there is a safe, suitable and secure means of access for all people that minimises the scope for conflict between traffic and cyclists and pedestrians in accordance with paragraphs 108 and 110 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

6. The vehicular access hereby permitted shall ensure the existing roadside frontage boundaries provide and maintain visibility splays extending from a point 2.4m back along the centre of the access measured from the public road carriageway edge (the X point) to a point on the nearer carriageway edge of the public road 54m distant in both directions (the Y points). The area between those splays and the carriageway shall be maintained so as to provide clear visibility between 1.05m and 2.0m at the X point and between 0.26m and 2.0m at the Y point above the adjacent carriageway level.



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Reason:

To avoid an unacceptable impact on highway safety by ensuring that adequate visibility is provided and maintained to ensure that a safe, suitable and secure means of access for all people that minimises the scope for conflict between traffic and cyclists and pedestrians is provided in accordance with paragraphs 108 and 110 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

7. The development hereby permitted shall not be brought into use until details of the proposed arrangements for future management and maintenance of the proposed car park have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The management and maintenance plan should include details such as
- a. Dog waste bins, including an emptying schedule.
 - b. General rubbish bins, including an emptying schedule.
 - c. Details of wildflower planting, including timings of planting, methods used to encourage establishment.
 - d. Type and source of materials to be used where appropriate, e.g. native species of local provenance.
 - e. Prescription of management actions
 - f. Preparation of work schedule (including an annual work plan capable of being rolled forward over a five year period)
 - g. Details of body or organisation responsible for implementation of the plan.
 - h. Ongoing monitoring and remedial measures.
 - i. Proposed opening hours of the car park and how this will be controlled.

The plan shall also set out how contingencies and/or remedial action will be identified, agreed and implemented so that the development still delivers the fully functioning biodiversity objectives of the originally approved scheme. The approved plan will be implemented in accordance with the approved details.

Reason:

To protect and enhance the site for biodiversity in accordance with paragraph 175 of the National Planning Policy Framework, Policy ES6 of the Stroud District Local Plan 2015 and in order for the Council to comply with Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 and to protect the amenities of neighbouring occupiers in accordance with Local Plan Policy ES3.

8. No lighting, whether fixed or mobile, or other form of lighting of any description shall be installed on or around the car park.



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Reason:

In the interests of the amenities of local residents and to minimise light pollution in accordance with Local Plan Policies ES3, CP14, ES6.

9. The development hereby permitted shall not be brought into use until details of the proposed height restrictor barrier and gate have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Development shall then be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason:

In the interests of the visual amenities of the area.

Informatives:

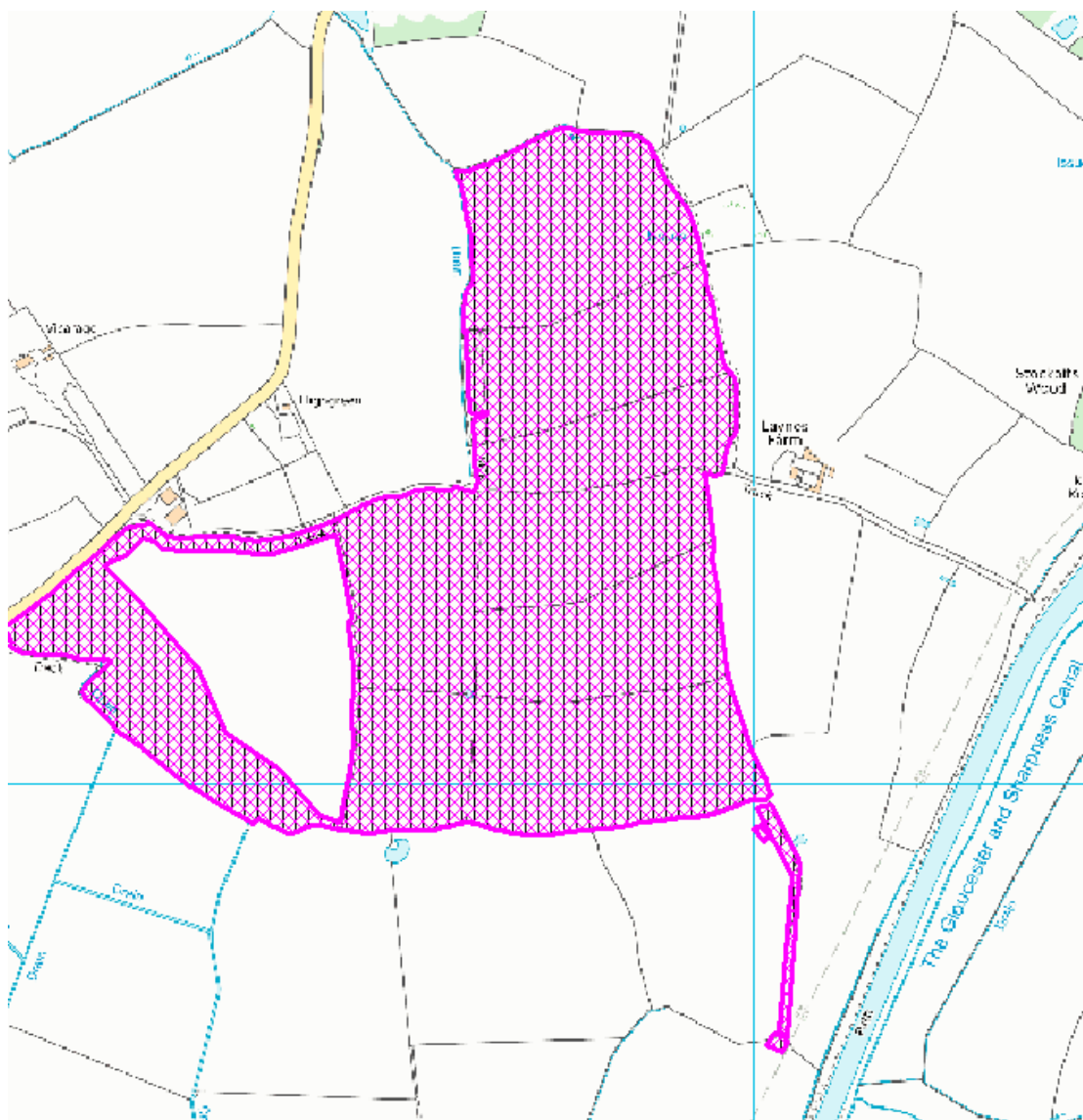
1. The proposed development will require the provision of a footway/verge crossing and the Applicant/Developer is required to obtain the permission of the County Council before commencing any works on the highway.
2. The applicant will require land drainage consent from the Board for any works within 8 metres of the ditch adjacent the road. Consent will also be required for the additional length of culvert to be installed within the ditch.
3. If the stile is moving to a new location then it may need authorising as a new structure under S147 of the Highways Act, 1980.
4. The applicant's attention is also drawn to the protection of breeding birds under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. This makes it an offence to kill or harm birds or damage or destroy their eggs. To avoid contravening these provisions it would be advisable to avoid carrying out any work that might damage an active nest during the bird breeding season (March to August inclusive).



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Item No: 02

Application No.	S.19/0760/FUL
Site No.	PP-07675290
Site Address	Land To The East Of High Green, Longney, Gloucester, Gloucestershire
Town/Parish	Longney & Epney Parish Council
Grid Reference	377639,212224
Application Type	Full Planning Application
Proposal	Construction of a solar park, to include the installation of solar photovoltaic panels to generate approximately 20MW of electricity, with DNO and Client substations, inverters, perimeter stock fencing, access tracks and CCTV. Landscaping and other associated works, together with retention and extension of existing hedgerow
Recommendation	Permission
Call in Request	Parish Council





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Applicant's Details	Elgin Energy EsCo Limited C/o Agent, Pegasus Group, Pegasus House, Querns Business Centre, Whitworth Road, Cirencester, GL7 1RT
Agent's Details	Pegasus Group Pegasus House, Querns Business Centre, Whitworth Road, Cirencester, GL7 1RT
Case Officer	John Chaplin
Application Validated	05.04.2019
	CONSULTEES
Comments Received	Longney & Epney Parish Council SDC Water Resources Engineer Archaeology Dept (E) Berkeley Vale CPRE Biodiversity Officer Natural England (E) Arboricultural Officer (E) Development Coordination (E) Environmental Health (E)
Constraints	Flood Zone 2 Flood Zone 3 Neighbourhood Plan Hardwicke Parish Council Longney and Epney Parish Council Moreton Valence Parish Council Affecting a Public Right of Way SAC SPA 7700m buffer Village Design Statement
	OFFICER'S REPORT

MAIN ISSUES

- Principle of development
- Landscape and Visual impact
- Ecology
- Residential Amenity
- Highways
- Archaeology and Heritage Assets
- Flood risk
- Obligations



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DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The application site consists of approximately 40 hectares of current agricultural land located to the east of Longney village. This is made up of arable fields with mixed hedgerow boundaries. The site is located in undulating countryside west of the Gloucester and Sharpness Canal and east of the River Severn.

Part of the site is bound by the Longney Lane to Hardwicke with two footpaths crossing the site linking the Lane and Longney with the towpath of the canal.

A small part of the site is located within Flood Zone 2 & 3 however, no panels are proposed in this area with the majority in Flood Zone 1.

The site is not located within a conservation area and has no listed building on site. However, within the wider area are a number of heritage assets including the St Laurence Church (Grade 1), Manor Farm, Madams End Farm and Clarkes Farm Longney and Oakey Farm (Grade 2) and Hardwicke Court (Grade 2*).

The site is 5km away from the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and is located near the Severn Estuary and Walmore Common RAMSAR, SPA, SAC and SSSI sites.

PROPOSAL

This is a revised proposal for the construction of a solar park.

The proposal now outlines that the installation of fixed ground mounted solar photovoltaic panels will generate approximately 20MW of electricity covering an area of 30.46Ha spread across 8 fields. This revised scheme reduces the size of the development by removing the panels from the most Westerly field.

Landscaping consists of the retention and enhancement of the existing hedgerow with the planting up of the gaps and management to allow the outer hedgerows to grow to 5m and internal to 3-4m. A tree planting scheme to the southwest side of the site is still provided with an additional 10m woodland buffer to the West of the boundary of the panels.

Planning permission is sought for a temporary period of 30 years from the date of first exportation of electricity from the site.

The solar panels will be attached to arrays/frameworks which will rise from 0.8m up to a maximum height of 3m. The steel frame uprights will be driven into the soil no more 1.5m deep removing the need for deep foundations. In archaeological sensitive hotspots on the site concrete sleeper supports will be used. Such supporting systems are designed to avoid the use of concrete foundations and are reversible.

A 2.4m high deer/security fence with wooden poles is proposed around the perimeter of the site. In addition to fencing, it is proposed that 3m high pole mounted CCTV security cameras will be provided inside the site.



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The associated DNO and Client substations, inverters, access tracks and associated works are also proposed.

Differences from previous scheme

The Applicant has reduced the number and physical extent of the panel coverage resulting in a reduction in the application site area. This includes removing a significant number of panels, the agent outlines that a total of 176 'full' Solar Array (48 panels) and 19 'half' Solar Array (24 panels) have been removed across 42 rows from the sites western edge. This has resulted in 4 inverters being removed from the site (16 remain) and the overall length of perimeter fencing and access track have also been reduced.

The quantum of landscaping proposed has also been increased. A liner north-south landscaping buffer, approx 10m wide by approx 400m long, is proposed to reinforce the western edge of the proposed Solar park site alongside infill planting and enhanced landscape management across the site.

REVISED DETAILS

None - updates to be provided at committee.

MATERIALS

PV solar panels - matt grey/blue with anti-reflective glass

2.4m high deer/security fence with wooden poles

Substation and invertors - Colour to be agreed.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

S.18/0537/FUL Construction of a solar park, to include the installation of solar photovoltaic panels to generate approximately 25MW of electricity, with DNO and Client substations, inverters, perimeter stock fencing, access tracks and CCTV. Landscaping and other associated works, together with retention and extension of existing hedgerow (377639 - 212224). Refused - Appeal in progress.

REPRESENTATIONS

Statutory Consultees:

Longney and Epney Parish Council:

Raised serious concerns

- Seek clarification regarding the number of panels and maximum height.
- Believe the scheme will be visible from parts of the parish and further afield despite claims in the application to the contrary.
- Concerned the solar panel will have a detrimental effect on the ecology of the site and surrounding area.
- seek clarification regarding the intended use of the area now outside the application site.
- Request clarification of the arrangements regarding access over the archaeological site during the construction phase of the project.



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- Real concerns about the highways impact e.g. Saul High Street is particularly unsuited to large lorries.
- Suggest the nearby Gloucester to Sharpness Canal could be used as an alternative 'Green' transport route.
- Consider the reasons for refusal to the previous application still apply.

There has not been sufficient reduction in size of the installation to mitigate these concerns.

The Parish consider that there are more appropriate sites in close proximity, where such an installation would not have such a detrimental impact on the landscape or ecology. Alternative sites include roofs, warehousing, business parks, distribution centres, brownfield sites and land between the M5 and A38.

If minded to approve the Parish Council would seek conditions to:

- At no stage should an amendment to increase the area covered by the solar panels be permitted.
- A mandatory and funded decommissioning plan; the responsibility for this should be legally transferred with any future change of ownership of the installation.
- Additional screening should be required at the northern edge of the development site.
- That no more solar installations should be approved for development in Longney and Epney by Stroud District Council. It's unique character is already being eroded.

The Parish Council also note that the majority of the responses of support to this application come from people that reside outside the immediate locality of Longney and Epney.

Moreton Valence Parish Council: No comment received

Hardwicke Parish Council: No comment received

Forest of Dean District Council: No comment - You may wish to consult Westbury Parish Council on the application as this is the parish opposite the site.

Cinderford Town Council: No comment received

Littledean Parish Council: No comment received

Westbury on Severn Parish Council: No comment received

Environment Agency: Reference to standing advice.

GCC as Local Lead Flood Authority (LLFA): No objection

SDC Water Resources Engineer: No comment

GCC Archaeology: Recommends condition

GCC Highways: No highways objection subject to conditions.

GCC Public Rights of Way (PROW): No comment received



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The Ramblers (Gloucester Group): No comment received

SDC Environmental Health: Recommend works hours and dust control conditions
SDC Contaminated Land: To be reported.

Natural England: No objection
SDC Biodiversity Officer: Recommends conditions
SDC Tree Officer: Recommends conditions

Public:

A large number of Support comments (80) have been received.
These highlight the climate emergency and the benefits of renewable energy, Contribution towards a sustainable future and Carbon neutral District by 2030.
Invisible from the village - positive addition
on lower grade land
Provides superb habitat around.
Preferable to wind turbines.
Current arable installing panels will take back grassland. Increase bio-diversity.

A large number of object comments (30) have been received.
These highlight the landscape impact, unnecessary industrialisation
Visible from AONB and neither sympathetic nor complement the landscape, greenbelt land in an area of natural beauty.
Question the consideration of alternatives sites.
Question the proposed output level, this will reduce over time.
Limited sunlight in UK makes it unsuitable location for solar panels.
Insufficient consideration of the landscape area.
Set a precedent for future development.
The low carbon claim is flawed - panels made in China using fossil fuels, and is unlikely they will generate enough electricity to offset their manufacture.
Not mitigated the northern boundary
Potentially cumulative impact with other solar parks and GCC incinerator (particularly from the escarpment).
Concern regarding possible use of cleaning chemicals
Decommissioning should be conditioned.
No future enlargement should be allowed
Concern regarding lighting
Major impact on wildlife and habitat (owls)
Road can not cope with construction HGVs and additional traffic. Weight limits on the bridges.
3m height is much taller than other solar parks - increasing the visual impact.
Much better alternative locations.
Far too large. 6-10% of Longney
Will this change the planning status to 'Brownfield'?
How does this proposal benefit the local people? A Community benefit fund should be made available.



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CPRE: Objection - The reduction in the number of panels is welcome but is very limited in terms of the northernmost field and does not overcome CPRE's previous concerns. A further reduction is required. The screening will take time to develop and relies on sensitive maintenance.

Concern about the impact on the footpaths and a tunnel like affect. Hedgerow loss for provide the access will open up views. Concerned about cumulative impact from Cotswold escarpment. Potential alternative sits have still not been properly addressed. Is it Farm diversification will sufficient land be left?

It has not been clearly demonstrated that the previous reason for refusal have been fully addressed.

The current proposal still falls short and should be refused owing to its harmful impact on the countryside in a particularly sensitive location.

NATIONAL AND LOCAL PLANNING POLICIES

National Planning Policy Framework 2.2.

Available to view at:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/2116950.pdf>

Whilst the documents need to be read as a whole, of particular relevance paragraph 148 is supportive of the transition to low carbon future and supports renewable energy. Paragraph 154 states that there is no requirement for applicants to demonstrate the overall need for renewables and that they should be approve if the impacts are acceptable.

National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG) also provide guidance on consideration of solar developments along with further Government guidance in the form of a speech by the Minister for Energy and Climate Change, the Rt Hon Gregory Barker MP, to the solar PV industry on 25 April 2013 and written ministerial statement on solar energy: protecting the local and global environment made on 25 March 2015.

The Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1) (July 2011) and National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3) (July 2011) also have to be considered.

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

Section 66(1).

Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979.

Stroud District Local Plan adopted 2015.

Policies together with the preamble text and associated supplementary planning documents are available to view on the Councils website:

www.stroud.gov.uk/localplan

Local Plan policies considered for this application include:

CP1 - Presumption in favour of sustainable development.



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CP2 - Strategic growth and development locations.
CP3 - Settlement Hierarchy.
CP4 - Place Making.
CP5 - Environmental development principles for strategic growth.
CP7 - Lifetime communities.

CP13 - Demand management and sustainable travel measures.
CP14 - High quality sustainable development.
CP15 - A quality living and working countryside.

ES1 - Sustainable construction and design.
ES2 - Renewable or low carbon energy generation.
ES3 - Maintaining quality of life within our environmental limits.
ES4 - Water resources, quality and flood risk.
ES5 - Air quality.
ES6 - Providing for biodiversity and geodiversity.
ES7 - Landscape character.
ES8 - Trees, hedgerows and woodlands.

ES10 - Valuing our historic environment and assets.
ES11 - Maintaining, restoring and regenerating the District's Canals.
ES12 - Better design of places.

The proposal should also be considered against the guidance laid out in SPG Stroud District Landscape Assessment, SPD Planning Obligations (2017) and Heritage Strategy SPA (2018).

The Longney and Epney Parish Design Statement was adopted on 22nd September 2011 and is a material consideration in Development Control decision making.

The design statement seeks to protect the unspoilt rural character of the area. The following policies are of particular relevance:

Policy LNE3 All new development should be designed to conserve and enhance the character and appearance of the landscape and this character should influence the layout and form of any such development.

Policy LF1. Agricultural land is regarded as a natural asset and finite resource which should be protected. The presence of the best and most versatile agricultural land will be taken into account alongside other sustainability considerations (e.g. biodiversity, the quality and character of the landscape, its amenity value or heritage interest, maintaining viable communities) when considering planning applications.

Policy LI1. Any development, residential or commercial, which results in a significant increase in traffic volumes, will be strictly controlled in this rural location.



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LI3. Development bringing additional heavy traffic across the canal bridges should be strictly controlled owing to highway safety and the risk of damage to the bridges.

LCCE3. The Parish will give priority to the use of SuDS (sustainable drainage systems - ponds soakaways).

LCCE4. Energy efficient installations including renewables such as solar panels should be supported in/on all buildings so long as they are in proportion and scale to the building and do not adversely affect any acknowledged historic architectural character or structural integrity.

LPV3. The public rights of way network should be safeguarded and properly maintained.

Whilst the site is located outside, it is located adjacent to the boundary of the adopted Hardwicke Neighbourhood Development Plan area. Regard for the NDP is therefore still relevant in the consideration of this proposal.

Whilst not yet planning policy or guidance the District Council has announced a climate emergency and set a target for the district to be carbon neutral by 2030. Parliament has also approved a motion to declare an environment and climate emergency and to increase the ambition of the current UK's climate change targets under the Climate Change Act 2008. Legislation has been laid before parliament with an aim for net zero carbon emissions by 2050. These are material considerations and it is for the decision maker what weight they should attribute them. However, whilst they show a likely direction of travel the details of how policy will change are still at the early stages and it is not yet certain how this will be implemented and therefore should only be given limited weight at this time.

The application has a number of considerations which both cover the principle of development and the details of the proposed scheme which will be considered in turn below:

PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT

The site is located outside any settlement limits defined within the Local Plan in an area of open countryside where development is normally strictly controlled. However, national planning policy in the form of the revised NPPF supports and encourages renewable energy with Local Plan Policy ES2 also seeking to maximise the generation of renewable or low carbon energy.

The Local Plan policies including ES2, ES3 and ES7 outline that schemes will only be supported where they will not have a significant adverse impact which includes landscape character, visual and residential amenity, water quality and flood risk, historic features, biodiversity and highways.

This is supported by the written ministerial statement which makes clear that whilst the provision of renewable energy can be a benefit, this does not justify the wrong development in the wrong location and careful consideration of the site specifics is required to provide a well-planned and considered scheme. This includes the unnecessary use of high quality agricultural land. Protecting the global environment is not an excuse to trash the local



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environment. Whilst the climate emergency is a material consideration the National Planning Policy guidance (NPPG) also makes it clear that the benefits of renewable energy do not automatically override environmental and other considerations.

It has been outlined that the scheme would generate approximately 20MW per annum, enough electricity to power 6,000 homes every year. These figures are estimates and have been questioned by local residents and with the reduction in panels there is an element of doubt over the specific numbers and further clarification has been sought. Nevertheless, the scheme would still generate a significant amount of renewable energy that would be the equivalent annual electricity needs of many hundreds of homes and result in a carbon saving contributing towards the Government's renewable energy targets and security of UK supply as well as tackling climate change. These are all significant benefits of the proposal.

The scheme will also provide an additional income for the agricultural business and does provide, whilst not overly emphasised, a degree of farm diversification to support other rural activities.

Site selection and alternatives

The need to explain the site selection, search area and discounted alternative sites has been raised with the agent both during the previous application and at pre-app stage but limited information has been submitted to demonstrate the full assessment the applicant has carried out in their site selection.

Both national guidance and local planning policy seek to encourage an effective use of land by guiding development to previously developed land. Where solar development proposals involve greenfield land it has to be shown that the use of any agricultural land is necessary and poorer quality land is used in preference to the higher quality land.

Agricultural land within Grades 1, 2 and Subgrade 3a of the Agricultural Land Classification is considered the "best and most versatile agricultural land". This is land which is most flexible, productive and efficient in response to inputs and is protected by the guidance in the NPPG and ES2.

The submitted Agricultural Land Classification report concludes that the Site comprises entirely of subgrade 3b, "moderate" quality agricultural land. The clay within the topsoil increases the soil wetness limiting the quality to 3b. The scheme therefore does not make use of the higher quality land and proposes the sowing of grass and wildflower mix around the panels which will be a biodiversity improvement and providing the potential for sheep to graze, maintaining the agricultural use. The proposal is also limited to a 30 year lifespan, therefore it is considered to be temporary and the land can be reinstated fully to agricultural land following the removal of the panels.

Local residents have suggested the use of alternative sites including on existing industrial buildings or land near the GCC incinerator or motorway. Whilst limited information has been submitted by the agent, it is not evidence that there are comparable scale and suitable brownfield and non-agricultural land available with the area. The Council's Brownfield register does not provide any sites nearing the size of the site area of the proposal and there are no



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renewable energy allocations to guide development to a specific location. The negative impacts of the loss of employment land allocations would also have to be a consideration.

The need to consider the possibility and proximity of a grid connections and grid capacity will also be a primary consideration for the developer. This has not been formally evidenced by the agent but there is limited grid capacity within the district with the 132kv power line between Berkeley and Gloucester being one of few points available. A further problem is finding a willing landowner.

Whilst the site selection and sequential assessment has not fully been evidenced and would have been useful supporting information it is noted that previous appeal inspectors e.g. APP/D3125/A/14/2214281 have concluded that it is not for developers to prove there are no better alternative location before planning permission may be granted.

Officers therefore have limited evidence that alternative sites are available to be able to justify recommending refusal on this principle issue.

Size and scale

Local Plan Policy, in particular ES2 seeks to maximise the generation of energy from renewable or low carbon sources to meet the UK Government's CO2 reduction targets. The local plan encourages standalone schemes of any size provided they do not have a significant adverse impact but specifically encourages small-scale renewable energy developments.

With the scheme of this size it is difficult to conclude it is anything other than large scale and the local concern about the scale is appreciated with local residents, the Parish Council and others like CPRE raising this as an issue. Discussions have taken place with the agent/applicant and this revised scheme has reduced the scale of the proposal. This appears to be the maximum reduction the applicant is willing to propose as it is understood further reduction would affect the finance of the scheme.

The scheme therefore remains large and whilst this is not a departure from the policy which does support larger stand-alone developments, careful consideration of the impacts are required.

When compared with other solar parks in Stroud and Gloucestershire this is not the largest. Troughton Farm scheme in Tewkesbury is approx. 30MW, Preston/Crucis Park Cirencester scheme is approx. 26.4MW and here in Stroud the Cambridge development is approx. 28.5MW. Looking across the whole country the largest schemes are mainly 50-70MW size with the majority generating in or around the 20-30MW. As another comparison, the County Council incinerator is estimated to export to the grid approximately 14.5MW.

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT

The application has been submitted with the support of an Assessment of Landscape and Visual Effects (ALVE), Design and Access Statement (DAS), biodiversity management plan and planting proposal. To assist the LPA in the assessment of the submitted documents, specialist input has been received from an independent landscape consultant.



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In order to assess the potential landscape impact, the character and sensitivity of the landscape and its susceptibility to change compared with the magnitude of the change has to be considered.

The ALVE states that the southern part of the site lies in the Rolling Agricultural Plain landscape character area and the northern part lies in the Severn Vale Hillocks landscape character area.

The Rolling Agricultural Plain includes a mix of open flat plain to more undulating landforms. These have a strong field pattern with some woodlands and mature hedgerow trees providing a semi-enclosed landscape with some distant views. Key priorities in this area include continued management of existing hedgerows and trees and the control sporadic development. In terms of sensitivity to change, the flat and relatively open nature of the area and the visibility of this landscape from the AONB make it particularly susceptible to inappropriate development.

The Severn Vale Hillocks character area includes slightly higher undulating landforms which provide a visual barrier between the River Severn and Severn Plain. Parts of this area can be well wooded but also has strong hedgerow trees as part of the field patterns. In terms of sensitivity to change the existing pattern of land use and the balance woodland, arable and pasture is a strong aspect of this landscape. The strong pattern of woodland and hedgerow in this landscape makes it relatively robust to changes, allowing new development to be absorbed to some degree. However, the rising land increases the visibility to the surrounding lowland and therefore increases susceptibility.

Due to the limited timescale of 4 months for construction any adverse effects of the proposed development are likely to short term and therefore overall are unlikely to be significant. It is therefore more important to consider the operational effects at year 1, year 10 and beyond.

The proposal includes rows of tilted solar panel with associated substations and transformers and fencing and security cameras. Whilst solar parks are sometimes located in rural areas the equipment has no specific rural connection in its design, appearance or use and would introduce dense, regimented appearance representing discordant and utilitarian features in this gentle rural landscape.

Photomontages have been submitted by the agent and these provide two views, one from the Longney Lane near the site access and another view from footpath to the southwest. These are a useful tool in assessing the potential impact and the extent the site will be visible. Following the advice of our landscape consultant to aid decision makers, discussions with the agent are underway to provide of a further photomontage from the south, which whilst set further away, has been highlighted by our consultant as providing possibly the worst case view.

The topography and intervening hedgerows and trees mean that the site is not easily visible from the bulk of the area to the north, especially in summer when the trees are in leaf. Similarly, the flat landscape and intervening hedgerows and trees mean that the lower parts



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of the site are also not prominent. However, the development does change and affect the local character particularly on the lower slopes with the effects on views being most pronounced from the south west. In key views from the approach along Longney Lane and on the footpaths through the site the development will be evident.

The removal of the proposed development in the western field and the additional proposed tree belt to the west of the development results in a substantial reduction in views from the west and south west which includes a number of houses. Whilst visible in the short term, the hedgerow management and planting reduce the effects to not significant within a few years.

The proposals now state that the boundary hedges will be managed at 5m high where possible and otherwise 3 to 4 m high. Views in will be possible, particularly where hedges are at the lower heights because of the rising ground behind hedges, particularly in views from the south. Internal hedges are now proposed to be a minimum of 3m high rising to 4 m. This will help to reduce effects although again if the land rises behind the hedge then the development is likely to be visible.

Overall, most visual effects from most viewpoints will reduce to 'not significant' within a few years. Those that remain significant are likely to be from the south, such as the footpath adjacent to Oakley Farm (Viewpoint 5), as the land rises behind the boundary hedges which mean that they will not be fully effective in screening the 3m high solar arrays and other infrastructure. From the Officers site visit it was not evident that this was a frequently used path.

Users of the footpaths either close to or within the site will also have significant adverse affected views. The panels will be seen on the near skyline and the panel structures and security fencing will not be inkeeping with the current rural setting. Some views are also possible from the Gloucester and Sharpness Canal. Some of these views would be significantly mitigated over time by allowing boundary hedges and trees to be retained or grow and by gapping up these hedges. These landscape proposals are an improvement on the previous proposals.

In terms of public highways, views from Castle Lane to the south would be possible, but at a distance and at an oblique angle. With the removal of the panels from the field adjacent to Longney Lane, which is a National Cycle Route, the previous nearby views would now be unlikely to undergo significant effects after the first couple of years with the proposed hedgerow management and tree planting. Views are limited from other roads due to orientation or intervening vegetation.

In terms of effects on residential properties, the dwellings in Longney have views of the site from the south west. Whilst most views are from 1st floor windows there may be some views from ground floor windows, especially in winter (e.g. Lynch Farm). High Green will have views from first floor windows as will Laynes Farm. Grove Farm and an adjacent property have views over the site from the north. All these views are acknowledged by the ALVE, but that the effects are not likely to be significant. The Vicarage appears to be largely screened by vegetation.



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The previous application was refused on detrimental landscape impact with the prominent field now removed being part of the proposal. In coming to this conclusion the mitigation and partial screening provided was considered, however, given the temporary operational period of 30 years, Officers were not convinced that waiting 15-20 years for this mitigation with a significant adverse impact was acceptable. This revised proposal not only removes development from the prominent westerly field but also enhances the hedgerow management and provides planting of a tree buffer to help reduce the effects.

However, some views, such as from the south will remain as the land within the site rises above the boundary hedges and the 3m high solar panels and infrastructure will be visible in the long term. This is acknowledged that there are significant effects on landscape character within the site and within the local area and this has to be weighted in the planning balance.

A small section of hedge will be required to be removed and some verge vegetation cut back to provide the new access onto the lane. Whilst this will provide a view into the field and of the access track, the new woodland buffer and hedge once developed will provide cover and screen views of the side of the panels.

Whilst limited to the areas of archaeological interest, the use of concrete sleepers will be slightly more visible and does not aid integration in the rural setting.

Officers are generally supportive of solar development but the large scale and the localised impact of this proposal have to be appreciated. As discussed above the reduction in size and the enhance landscape has reduced the prominence and landscape impact. There is a localised impact which has to be weighted in the planning balance this will be reduce over time as the screening grows and develops.

Wider landscape and Cotswold AONB

Policy ES7 states that within the Cotswolds AONB or on land that may affect its setting, priority will be given to the conservation and enhancement of the natural and scenic beauty of the landscape whilst taking account of the biodiversity interest and historic and cultural heritage. Therefore, the setting of the AONB is also a fundamental consideration. This is supported by Paragraph 172 of the NPPF which states great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and that they have the highest status of protection.

Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000 also states that in exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land in an area of outstanding natural beauty, a relevant authority shall have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The Cotswold Conservation Board has published the Cotswold AONB Management Plan 2018-2023. One of its core polices aims to deliver a consistent, co-ordinated and landscape led approach to the Cotswolds AONB. This is supported by the Board's Position statements on Setting of the AONB.



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The impact on wider views and the wider landscape setting therefore also has to be considered. Vantage points on both the higher ground of the escarpment and on the other side of the river have been visited.

The location of the development on rising land is not considered ideal but it avoids the steeper and higher slopes of the Hillocks to the north. Its scale is large but it retains the existing pattern of trees and hedgerow lines which contribute to landscape character. Whilst the development is likely to be visible from the Cotswold escarpment, with these and the distance the effect on the AONB and its setting is considered not to be affected significantly.

The Cotswolds Conservation Board have made no comment on the application and it is also noted that the local Council's on the Forest side of the River Severn have not raised landscape impact as a concern from their perspective.

Cumulative impact

The submitted ALVE assesses the potential cumulative effects with the small operational 5MW solar energy development at Stantway Court Farm 4.2 km to the west, near Westbury on Severn as negligible to low. With the separation of the two developments by distance, landform, vegetation and the River Severn, and the lack of clear intervisibility mean that the cumulative landscape and visual effects appear to be very limited.

Other solar developments in the Stroud area have a similar negligible impact when viewed from wider elevated positions like Mayhill, Robinswood Hill and Haresfield Beacon. These views are located further away giving even less possibility of intervisibility with other built features like the industrial units at Quedgeley and the incinerator being prominent.

From parts of the Cotswold scarp, the juxtaposition of the proposed solar park with the GCC incinerator is likely to be unfortunate. However, with the dominating impact of the county council's incinerator, the cumulative impact of this scheme is unlikely to be significant.

ECOLOGY

The application has been submitted with the support of an Ecological Assessment Report which included the site surveys and desk study, with the applicant's project ecologist also providing the application Biodiversity Management Plan (BMP) and information to inform a Habitats Regulations Assessment Report (HRA). A further ecological clarification applicant's ecologist has also been received.

The submitted surveys sought to establish the importance of the application site and immediate surroundings for wintering waterfowl and waders, including the potential for qualifying birds of the Severn Estuary and Walmore Common SPAs and Ramsar sites. The submitted details conclude that based on the combination of the wintering birds surveys adopting a previously NE agreed methodology, record search and literature reviews of the area and key species, the site is not considered of importance for qualifying interest species.

Based on the submitted information, Natural England considers that the proposed development will not have likely significant effects on the Severn Estuary and Walmore



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Common SPAs and Ramsar sites and have raised no objection to the proposed development.

Natural England are also satisfied that the application site does not offer suitable habitat for the SPA bird species and that mitigation in respect of the Severn Estuary SPA is not required. Therefore, in relation to the likely impacts the proposed Solar park may have on the Severn Estuary it is concluded by both SDC and Natural England that the proposals will not result in any likely significant affects to the European site. The HRA screening opinion confirms this.

Similarly, Natural England considers that the proposed development will not damage or destroy the interest features of the Upper Severn Estuary Site of Special Scientific Interest for which the site has been notified and has raised no objection.

Our ecologist had raised concern about the impact on on-site farmland birds. Further clarification has been submitted with the winter surveys showing a low number e.g. <10 skylarks. Further information regarding Skylark has also been provided with the applicant's ecologist quoting some interesting research 'The effects of Solar Farms on Local Biodiversity: A Comparative Study' (Montag et al 2016), which found after comparing a solar farm site with adjacent farmland that skylark actually favoured the solar park fields and enhanced wild meadow planting schemes to that of the adjacent farmland. With this study in mind it is therefore considered that the proposed scheme is likely to enhance the site for Skylarks provided that the proposed mitigation planting is fully implemented.

The submitted information also provides details of the current field management with supporting research to suggest that autumn planting provides habitats unsuitable for use by Lapwings for either over wintering or spring breeding. This evidence along with the fact that the Lapwing were only observed once during winter surveys suggests that the site is highly unlikely to support important populations of breeding or wintering Lapwing.

This additional information emphasises the wider research and the habitat enhancements. The scheme provides an increase in the native hedgerows, enhanced grassland, wildflower meadow, woodland planting and a minimum of 15 bird and a minimum of 15 bat boxes being erected on existing trees. Security fences will have small 'animal gaps' to permit badgers and other mammals to continue to utilise habitats within the Site. Appropriate mitigation/avoidance for reptiles has also been outlined.

There have been some concerns from objectors in relation to impacts on barn owls. The Barn Owl Trust states that 'Ground mounted PV systems present a negligible collision risk and do not electrocute, dazzle or burn Barn Owls. In fact, solar PV 'farms' have the potential to be of great benefit to Barn Owls as the array frameworks are typically at a height from which Barn Owls can perch-hunt. In order to benefit Barn Owls, the grass below and around the arrays should be allowed to develop into good Barn Owl foraging habitat - rough tussocky grassland with a litter-layer not less than 70mm deep. It is therefore considered that the proposed mitigation and enhancement measures will likely increase the suitability of the habitat within the site for foraging barn owls.



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It is considered that the proposal will provide a net gain for breeding bird species and lead to a substantial biodiversity benefit which fully accords with the NPPF (2018) obligation to protect and enhance biodiversity.

RESIDENTIAL AMENITY

Some of the site will be visible from some nearby residential properties. However, with the existing mature vegetation, the proposed landscape management strategy to allow the hedging to grow taller in addition to the new planting and the distance to the nearby residential dwellings it is considered the scheme does not give rise to significant residential amenity issues.

The construction phase of the development (and potentially similar for the decommissioning phase) is proposed to be approximately 16 weeks. During these times there is the potential for general construction noise and disturbance. The impact of this can be mitigated to a degree with the construction hours along with other controls over dust etc can be agreed via the submission of a Construction Management Plan.

It is also estimated that the site will typically generate no more than 6 HGV deliveries per day (12 two-way movements). The one-way system of the traffic management also helps mitigation this. During the operational phase the trip generations will be negligible 10-20 visits per year for security and maintenance work.

The potential for glint and glare is also likely to have only a limited impact. The solar panels will be positioned facing due south and are designed primarily to absorb sunlight rather than to reflect it. The panels are therefore considered to be less reflective than water or wet surfaces (e.g. lakes, or wet tarmac) and with the tilted position any glare limited. The glint and glare assessment submitted with the application demonstrates that with the existing vegetation and the additional landscaping as well and the local topography and distance involved no further mitigation would be required to reduce the impact.

Due to the limited timescale involved in the construction, the mitigation and management as well as the site location/distance to residential properties, it is considered that there will not be any significant adverse harm caused and it would therefore be unreasonable to recommend refusal on this ground alone.

HIGHWAYS

The proposed solar park is located east of Longney village and is accessed via the class 3 highway which is subject to national speed limit and has varying width bordered by verges and hedges.

The supporting documents state estimated construction and decommissioning traffic would form the main vehicle movements to and from the site with the transport statement anticipating 415 two-way delivery movements for equipment and materials. This typically results in no more than 6 deliveries per day (12 two-way HGV movements). This equates to 1 HGV per hour along the entry and exit routes. It is anticipated that deliveries will avoid the rush hour peaks. A similar number is anticipated to be generated during the decommission phase. The transport statement also mentions up to 15 light vehicles per day on site or 30



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two-way movements. Once operational 10-20 van or 4x4 movements are expected per year, which is not considered a significant level.

The scheme includes a new access onto Longney Road, the lane between Longney and Hardwicke. This will require removal of some of the existing hedge but due to its position this will be less than would be required to adequately improve the existing substandard access. Within the site, access tracks will be kept to a minimum and will be 3.5m wide and made of crushed aggregate.

The site access tracking illustrated on plan E183/04 Rev A illustrates suitable swept path tracking for HGV's. The submitted speed survey, accounting for wet weather adjustment, demonstrates that the 85%ile speed of 46-47mph is well below the 60 mph speed limit of the road. The County Highways Officer is therefore satisfied that in accordance with this report only a 121m visibility splays rather than the 160m shown is required. As outlined above a small section of hedge will be required to be removed and some verge vegetation cut back to provide the appropriate visibility. The impact on views into the site and the landscape implications are addressed elsewhere in this report.

A number of objections have been received regarding the rural access lanes to the site and restricted nature of the lanes from the A38 to and from the site to accommodate the additional large vehicle traffic estimated. It is proposed that a route from the A38 via Frampton and Saul will be used to access the site with the return/exit routed north towards Hardwicke. These concerns are appreciated. The highway report outlines that the survey data shows that the increase by 21 movements per day at Saul High Street will only be an increase of 1.8% on the access and to exit the site via Haywicks Lane is an 1.2% increase. With GCC Highways input, this is considered to be comparatively low and with the separate access and egress routes, the impact on the local highway network will not be significant or severe enough to warrant refusal.

Further details have been sought and provided regarding HGV swept path tracking and traffic management on these proposed routes to and from the site. These plans have illustrated a combination of inter-visible passing spaces for HGV's and on-coming traffic and traffic management measures involving site traffic signage and banksman in radio contact to direct HGV's through the narrowest highway sections without inter-visible passing. This approach has been accepted in principle by GCC Highways, however, a detailed Construction Method Statement can be required via condition.

The Highways Officer also notes that as the swept paths are based on OS plans there may be inaccuracies which may necessitate additional traffic management measures such as escort vehicles for HGV's at narrow sections with restricted inter-visibility or localised carriageway widening which can be address with the details of the Construction Method Statement. Some of the locations on the access and egress routes require additional staff/vehicles to manage the transport movements and are distant from the site itself. The Construction Method Statement would address these and the need to provide adequate welfare provision.



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Local concern has been raised regarding the impact on the canal crossing. The Highways Officer has considered this and confirmed that having checked their records there are no weight restrictions on the bridges on the proposed construction route over the canal. The canal bridges are shared with pedestrians and therefore traffic management should also ensure appropriate pedestrian safe movement. Additionally a condition survey will be required along the routes before, during and after construction and decommission to mitigate and repair any risk of damage during these phases.

Therefore, no highway objection to the scheme is raised.

The proposed solar park affects two Public Footpaths, ELY 24 and ELY 26. The County Public Rights of Way Officer has raised no comment to this application and had no objection to the previous larger proposal as the plan has taken the line of these footpaths into account and left sufficient margins for them, including a desire line as currently used by the public.

A temporary footpath closure may be required during the construction phase to protect the public from construction activities. The applicant would need to address this directly with the PROW team at GCC.

The Parish Council have raised the potential for the canal to be used as an alternative 'Green' transport route to deliver the panels and equipment to site to reduce pressure on the constrained local lanes which they have significant concern about. This has been put to the agent for consideration however a positive response has not yet been received with concern regarding the cost of additional investigation work, and that the highway alternative has already been tested and considered acceptable by the Local Highway Authority. The practicality and logistics issues are also noted given that there are no freight transfer facilities at either end and that there may be potential landownership issues. Any further update on this suggestion, if available, will be provided at the committee meeting. Whilst the merits of this option are noted, Officers feel it would be difficult to justify requiring the applicant to investigate and endeavour to use this alternative form of transport.

ARCHAEOLOGY & HERITAGE ASSETS

The site is located within the vicinity of several listed buildings and close to the non-designated heritage asset of the Gloucester-Sharpness Canal. There may be some inter-visibility between the heritage assets and the site; however, this does not necessarily automatically mean that there would be harm to their historic significance or to their setting. The intervening mature vegetation and the sloping topography also helps result in no visibility or limited intervisibility.

Due to the degree of separation, it is considered that the proposed solar development will cause no harm to the setting of the nearby listed buildings, or to the undesignated but historically important canal. Views of these assets are unlikely to be compromised by the proposed development.

The County Archaeologist has checked the proposed development area against the County Historic Environment Record, and there is no evidence for any previous archaeological investigation here. However, the wider landscape is known to contain extensive



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archaeological remains relating to prehistoric and Roman activity and settlement. Such archaeological remains are often covered, and so masked from view, by medieval and modern plough soils.

Against that background, and in view of the large size of the application site during the previous application the County Archaeologist had concern that significant archaeological remains relating to prehistoric and Roman activity and settlement may be present within the proposed development area, and that any such remains would be adversely affected by ground works and intrusions required for this scheme.

Therefore, a programme of archaeological field evaluation has been carried out. These comprised the excavation of 65 trial-trenches located to investigate ground anomalies predicted by a previous geophysical survey and to test areas devoid of geophysical response. This work has identified a large number of archaeological features, some of which have proved to relate to areas of Roman activity, including one area of possible industrial activity.

The County Archaeologist is satisfied with the field evaluation and that it provides sufficient information to allow an informed planning decision to be made regarding archaeological issues. The field evaluation report was accompanied by figures locating the areas of archaeological interest, and clarification is being sort from the agent that it is proposed to support the arrays in these identified areas only on concrete sleepers in order to protect the archaeological interest from the ground intrusions required for the development.

The Parish Council have raised concern about access over the archaeological hotspots on site during the construction phase. The archaeology is preserved below modern agricultural soils which will provide a protective 'buffer' against for example vehicle movements.

On this basis the County Archaeologist has no objection in principle to the proposed development as the concrete sleepers will conserve archaeological remains and no further mitigation is required.

FLOOD RISK

The main development site falls within Flood Zone 1. An area of the site along its southern boundary is located within Flood Zones 2 and 3, however, all the proposed solar panels are located outside of this area, in Flood Zone 1. The cable route from the proposed solar park to the existing wire pole terminal is located within Flood Zone 3 but is considered to have no impact on flood risk.

In their Flood Risk Assessment (March 2019), the applicant has demonstrated that the design of the solar panels, allowing rainwater to fall from the panels onto vegetated ground, means the site will have negligible impact on surface water runoff compared to the existing greenfield runoff rates.

As discussed above, the archaeological investigations have identified a number of areas of archaeological interest where concrete sleeper foundations are proposed to avoid the need to pile stanchions. This will therefore increase the impermeable area of the site. Similarly the



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invertors and substation will also result in a minor increase in the impermeable area. However, given their distribution around the site, the impact will be minimal but they still have been taken into consideration in the assessment of the surface water runoff calculation post development.

A sustainable drainage strategy, involving the implementation of SuDS in the form of swales has been proposed to manage the disposal of surface water runoff from the proposed development on the site. Swales are proposed at the low points of the application site to intercept extreme flows which may already run offsite and forms a 'betterment' of the existing surface water system/storage.

Considering the nature of the site and the availability of surplus attenuation provided within the proposed swales, these provide addition storage (306.2 m³) which is greater than the additional runoff generated as a result of the extreme 1 in 100 year storm event, including an allowance for climate change (146.7 m³). The proposal therefore compensate for the impact and GCC as LLFA have raised no objection to the proposed drainage strategy.

Details of the future management and maintenance of these drainage features can be approved via condition.

OBLIGATIONS

None - Any discussion regarding a possible community fund whilst understanding it might be desirable and provide benefit to the local community would not met the tests of a planning obligation to be necessary, directly relevant in planning terms and fair and reasonable. It can not be given weight in the consideration of this application and would be for separate discussions between the developer and the local community/Parish Council.

PLANNING BALANCE & RECOMMENDATION

The NPPF requires the benefit of renewable energy provision to be considered in conjunction with any impacts and a balance needs to be taken whether these benefits outweigh any harm.

The scheme does make a contribution towards meeting the UK's legally binding climate change and renewable energy obligations. The proposal will provide the benefits of renewable energy and the national and local policy support for such is appreciated. Onsite ecological enhancements e.g. hedgerow and grassland for birds etc are also a benefit of the scheme.

However, as addressed above the scheme will have most impact locally. The character of the area when experienced from the section of footpaths which cross the site will be significantly affected and some local residents will be able to view the site from in particular those adjacent to the site and from views from the South.

The reduction of panels in the western field and the improved landscaping planting and management does increase the level of screening and reduces the impact. The benefits of the screening also improves once the trees and hedging develop.



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It does still have to be acknowledged that the scheme will still be visible from some viewpoints and given the utilitarian appearance it would have a visual impact which would erode the rural undeveloped qualities of the site. These affected views are localised including the footpaths which cross the site and most affected views from the South.

The Applicant appears keen to explore opportunities for educational visits with local schools and local residents which would help enhance and increase knowledge of renewable energy developments and uses. An education area has been outlined and information boards can also be required. Whilst it is hard to quantify the social benefits and amount of use these feature will get, this part of the scheme does provide a degree of positive gain to the planning balance.

The proposal also has onsite ecological benefits. These include the enhancement of the existing landscape features with additional planting and management of the hedgerows, areas surrounding the panels and the meadow below provide biodiversity and habitat enhancements.

Whilst it is noted that the development will have an impact locally and the initial screening will take time to mitigate the visual and landscape harm it is considered that this revised proposal will not have the same level of harm as the previous proposal. Therefore, **on balance** it is considered that the merits of the scheme now outweigh the harm and the proposal is recommended for permission.

HUMAN RIGHTS

In compiling this recommendation we have given full consideration to all aspects of the Human Rights Act 1998 in relation to the applicant and/or the occupiers of any neighbouring or affected properties. In particular regard has been had to Article 8 of the ECHR (Right to Respect for private and family life) and the requirement to ensure that any interference with the right in this Article is both permissible and proportionate. On analysing the issues raised by the application no particular matters, other than those referred to in this report, warranted any different action to that recommended.

Subject to the following conditions:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission. Reason: To comply with the requirements of 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 hereby permitted shall be carried out in all respects in strict accordance with the approved plans listed below: Proposed Drawings of 05/04/2019 Site Location Plan – Drawing E0232_06 Sheet _ Rev F Site Layout and Planting Proposals – Drawing E0232_03 Sheet _
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Rev N

Sections Through Modules – Drawing E0232_11 Sheet 1/7

Inverter Cabinet – Drawing E0232_11 Sheet 2/7

Applicant Substation – Drawing E0232_11 Sheet 3/7

Wire Pole Terminal – Drawing E0232_11 Sheet 4/7

DNO Substation – Drawing E0232_11 Sheet 5/7

Security Fence – Drawing E0232_11 Sheet 6/7

CCTV Camera – Drawing E0232_11 Sheet 7/7

Reason:

To ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans and in the interests of good planning.

3. The permission hereby granted shall be limited to a period of 30 years from the date when electricity is first exported from the solar panels to the local electricity grid (hereafter known as 'The First Export Date'). Written notification of The First Export Date shall be given to the Local Planning Authority within 14 days of the event occurring.

Reason:

In order to safeguard the visual amenity and landscape character of the area in accordance with Policies ES2 & ES7 of the adopted Stroud District Local Plan, November 2015 and paragraph 154 of the Revised National Planning Policy Framework.

4. Within 12 months of the date when the solar panels permanently cease to produce electricity, or the expiration of this permission, whichever is the sooner, the solar panels and its ancillary equipment and infrastructure shall be removed, and the land restored, in accordance with a scheme to be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. The land restoration scheme shall be submitted within two months of the cessation of electricity production.

Reason:

In order to safeguard the visual amenity and landscape character of the area in accordance with Policies ES2 & ES7 of the adopted Stroud District Local Plan, November 2015 and paragraph 154 of the Revised National Planning Policy Framework.

5. In areas of archaeological interest as outlined on the submitted plan (Proposed drainage arrangements plan - Drg No. E183/22 Rev B received on 08th April 2019) the array panels shall be supported on concrete sleeper foundations placed upon existing ground level.



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Reason:

The use of concrete sleepers to support the array panels will conserve archaeological remains in accordance with Policies CP14 & ES10 of the adopted Stroud District Local Plan, November 2015 and paragraph 193 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

6. Notwithstanding the submitted details, the colour and finish of the proposed inverters/ transformers and substations shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority and shall be maintained as such thereafter.

Reason:

In order to safeguard the visual amenity and landscape character of the area in accordance with Policies CP14, ES3 and ES7 of the adopted Stroud District Local Plan, November 2015. Consideration of dark green, grey or brown matte colours to recess into the landscape should be considered.

7. The development hereby permitted shall not be commenced until a detailed planting plan and schedule have been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. These shall include plant species, sizes, numbers, densities and the details of the gapping up planting of the external hedgerow.

Reason:

In the interests of the visual and residential amenities of the area and to conserve and enhance the natural environment and biodiversity in accordance with Policies CP14, ES2, ES3, ES6, ES7 and ES8 of the adopted Stroud District Local Plan, November 2015 and paragraphs 170(b) & 175 (c) & (d) revised National Planning Policy Framework.

8. All planting, seeding or turfing comprised in the approved details of planting plan and schedule shall be carried out in the first complete planting and seeding seasons following the commencement of the development. Any trees or plants which, within a period of five years from the completion of the development, die, are removed, or become seriously damaged or diseased, shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species, unless the Local Planning Authority gives written consent to any variation.

Reason:

In the interests of the visual and residential amenities of the area and to conserve and enhance the natural environment and biodiversity in accordance with Policies CP14, ES2, ES3, ES6,



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ES7 and ES8 of the adopted Stroud District Local Plan, November 2015.

9. Prior to The First Export Date, a landscape management/maintenance plan shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. This shall include a management/maintenance schedule which maintains the external hedgerows at a minimum of 5m and internal hedgerows at a minimum 3-4m high. The landscape management plan shall be implemented and maintained in accordance with the approved details for the duration of the development.

Reason:

In the interests of the visual and residential amenities of the area and to conserve and enhance the natural environment and biodiversity in accordance with Policies CP14, ES2, ES3, ES6, ES7 and ES8 of the adopted Stroud District Local Plan, November 2015.

10. The development hereby approved shall be carried out in full accordance with the recommendations contained in the Avian Ecology Ecological Assessment Report - Ref: Pegas-075-1754 V7 including all appendices. This includes the Biodiversity Management Plan which states that those trees retained will be allowed to grow to their full height at maturity.

Reason:

To conserve and enhance the natural environment, ensure the long-term protection of biodiversity and in the interests of the visual and residential amenities of the area in accordance with Policies CP14, ES2, ES6 and ES7 of the adopted Stroud District Local Plan, November 2015.

11. Prior to The First Export Date, written confirmation from the Project Ecologist that the mitigation and enhancement measures have been implemented as approved shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. Ecological monitoring reports shall then to be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority annually for the first 3 years after The First Export Date.

Reason:

To conserve and enhance the natural environment and ensure the long-term protection of biodiversity in accordance with Policies CP14, ES2 and ES6 of the adopted Stroud District Local Plan, November 2015.



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12. No operations of any description (this includes all forms of development, tree felling, tree pruning, temporary access construction, soil moving or operations involving the use of motorised vehicles or construction machinery), shall commence on site in connection with the development until the Tree protection as outlined on Tree protection plan BHA_261_03 Rev F has been installed. No excavation for services, storage of materials or machinery, parking of vehicles, deposits or excavations of soil or rubble, lighting of fires or disposal of liquids shall take place within the areas defined by the fencing. The fencing shall be retained for the full duration of the construction phase of the development and shall not be removed or repositioned without the prior written approval of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason:

To preserve trees and hedges on the site in the interests of visual amenity and the character of the area in accordance with Policies CP14, ES7 and ES8 of the adopted Stroud District Local Plan, November 2015 and paragraphs 170(b) & 175(c) & (d) revised National Planning Policy Framework.

13. No development shall take place, including any works of demolition, until a Construction and Decommission Method & Logistics Statement has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. The approved Statement shall be adhered to throughout the construction period. The Statement shall:

- i. specify the type and number of vehicles;
- ii. provide for the parking of vehicles of site operatives and visitors;
- iii. provide for the loading and unloading of plant and materials;
- iv. provide for the storage of plant and materials used in constructing the development;
- v. provide for wheel washing facilities;
- vi. specify the intended hours of construction operations;
- vii. measures to control the emission of dust and dirt during construction;
- viii. specify the intended construction routes in general accordance with E198-DOC01-TS';
- ix. notwithstanding Technical Note 'E198-DOC01-TS' ensure sufficient inter-visible passing places and Local Authority approved traffic management measures based on construction and decommission route topographical/ground surveys
- x. include confirmation that a construction route highway survey will be undertaken and submitted before, during and after construction and decommission periods based on a Local Authority agreed timescale with any resulting construction or decommission traffic damage along repaired.



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- xi. include key performance indicators based on GCC Freight policy
- xii. demonstration of adequate welfare opportunities for staff including Banksmen.

Reason:

To reduce the potential impact on the public highway, accommodate the efficient delivery of goods and supplies and to protect the residential amenity of the residents of surrounding residential properties in accordance with Policies CP13, CP14, ES2 and ES3 of the adopted Stroud District Local Plan, November 2015 and paragraph 108-111 of the Revised National Planning Policy Framework.

14. No works shall commence on site (other than those required by this condition) on the development hereby permitted until the first 20m of the proposed access road, including the junction with the existing public road and associated visibility splays, has been completed to at least binder course level.

Reason:

To minimise hazards and inconvenience for users of the development by ensuring that there is a safe, suitable and secure means of access for all people that minimises the conflict between traffic and cyclists and pedestrians in accordance with Policy CP13 of the adopted Stroud District Local Plan, November 2015 and paragraph 110 of the Revised National Planning Policy Framework.

15. The vehicular access hereby permitted shall not be brought into use until the existing roadside frontage boundaries have been set back to provide visibility splays extending from a point 2.4m back along the centre of the access measured from the public road carriageway edge (the X point) to a point on the nearer carriageway edge of the public road 121m distant in both directions (the Y points). The area between those splays and the carriageway shall be reduced in level and thereafter maintained so as to provide clear visibility between 1.05m and 2.0m at the X point and between 0.26m and 2.0m at the Y point above the adjacent carriageway level.

Reason:

To reduce potential highway impact by ensuring that adequate visibility is provided and maintained and to ensure that a safe, suitable and secure means of access for all people that minimises the conflict between traffic and cyclists and pedestrians is provided in accordance with Policy CP13 of the adopted Stroud District



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Local Plan, November 2015 and paragraph 110 of the Revised National Planning Policy Framework.

16. The vehicular access hereby permitted shall not be brought into use until the existing roadside frontage boundaries have been set back in accordance with plan E183/04 Rev A either side of the access to allow for swept path tracking.

Reason:

To reduce potential highway impact by ensuring that adequate visibility is provided and maintained and to ensure that a safe, suitable and secure means of access for all people that minimises the conflict between traffic and cyclists and pedestrians is provided in accordance with Policy CP13 of the adopted Stroud District Local Plan, November 2015 and paragraph 110 of the Revised National Planning Policy Framework.

17. Prior to The First Export Date, all the drainage works outlined in the drainage strategy (Flood Risk Assessment (PFA ref: E183 Issue 3) received on 08 April 2019 including plan E183/22 Rev B Proposed Drainage Arrangements Plan shall be completed in accordance with the details so approved and maintained as outlined in the approved report for the duration of the development.

Reason:

To ensure adequate surface water drainage is provided and to reduce the risk of creating or exacerbating a flooding problem in the local area in accordance with Policies CP14, ES2 and ES4 of the adopted Stroud District Local Plan, November 2015 and the revised National Planning Policy Framework.

18. No external artificial lighting shall be installed other than essential for security and the details shall first be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason:

In order to safeguard the visual amenity and landscape character of the area in accordance with Policies CP14, ES3 and ES7 of the adopted Stroud District Local Plan, November 2015.

19. Prior to The First Export Date, a public information and education scheme shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. This shall include details of the provision of the proposed education area and public information boards along with a timetable for their implementation. The scheme shall then be implemented in accordance with the approved details and maintained for the duration of the development.



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Reason:

To provide a direct benefit and education opportunities for the local community to engage and highlight the benefits of solar energy and the scheme in accordance with Policies CP14, ES2 and ES7 of the adopted Stroud District Local Plan, November 2015.

Informative:

1. The proposed development will involve works to be carried out on the public highway and the Applicant/Developer is required to enter into a legally binding Highway Works Agreement (including an appropriate bond) with the County Council before commencing those works.