

Address: Land parcel West of Worlds End Farm, Worldsend Lane, Clapton, Berkeley

Further public comments

Concern about highway implications of 2 solar site coming forward at the same time.

CPRE submitted comment - this raises the cumulative impact and concern about the rural location including the restrictive nature of the local highway network.

Cumulative Impact

To update following the drafting the report, South Gloucestershire Council have now granted planning permission for the adjacent solar proposal at Hill Court Farm. Whilst it has not yet been constructed this permission is a material consideration and an assessment of the cumulative impacts is required as part of the assessment of the merits of this proposal. A plan is included in the Appendix.

The Woodlands Farm solar scheme S.22/1955/FUL is still under consideration and therefore can be given limited weight at this time. There is a great separation distance with this proposal being located to the North. A plan is included in the Appendix.

Landscape

Given the proximity the application submissions for this application and the Hill Court Farm have both looked at cumulative impacts of their development taking into account the other. This needs to address any in combination effects as well as sequential views users may have when moving along local roads or footpaths.

The Hill Court Farm Landscape and Visual Assessment (LVA) concludes there was a medium moderate adverse impact which was not worsened when taking cumulative impacts into account. The reason being that the two sites are only seen together from a few viewpoints mainly to the east.

The LVA for this application also agrees and states:

“Cumulative landscape effects are limited to the LCT and LCA that the proposed development and cumulative projects sit within. Although there would be cumulative effects, they would not increase the level of effect beyond that already assessed. The level of effect has been appraised as slight which should not be material in the decision-making process.”

The Cumulative Screened Zone of Theoretical Visibility is included in the Appendix. Whilst there are other local points, the key viewpoints for this scheme are along the Severn Way, a national route along the shoreline and also from the elevated ground of the Triassic Ridge the Whitcliff deer park to the East. As outline above the visual receptors affected remain close to the site and do not greatly increase the level of visual effect beyond that already assessed.

The low lying landscape with hedgerows limits views from the wider landscape. The proposal retains the hedgerows and includes buffer planting to aid in particular views from the elevated

deer park side of the site. Officers are satisfied that any combined and sequential views do not significantly increase the level of harm already identified.

The proposal has been proposed with a 45-year life span. Whilst there may be different views on whether this is temporary and we await further guidance from central Government in the upcoming draft Energy policy statement, the removal of the panel and decommissioning is controlled by condition. This would currently remove the panels and any impact after this time period.

As outlined in the main report Officers are satisfied that there is a separation distance to other solar installations.

As concluded in the main report the landscape impact will reduce as the mitigation takes effect. This includes the cumulative impacts. The trees planted will develop and with appropriate management of the existing and proposed planting this results in an 'at year 15' assessed impact being reduced.

There are some landscape impacts from the scheme and these do have to be considered including the cumulative impact with the adjacent project. However, Officers do not consider this significantly alters the impact already assessed. The scheme will have a localised impact and this has to be weighted in the planning balance.

Heritage

The Whitcliff deer park to the East is part of the Grade II* Berkeley Castle Registered Park and Garden. The list description and plan are attached within the Appendix for information. The impacts on this and other nearby heritage assets are addressed in the main report. Historic England and our Conservation Officer are satisfied that any impacts would be very limited and not be harmful to the significance of individual heritage assets. The South Gloucestershire assessment can to a similar conclusion.

Therefore, given the position of the South Gloucestershire scheme, Officers are satisfied that the cumulative impact would also not be significant. A positive heritage balance as outlined in the main report would still be relevant. The public benefits include renewable energy generation outweigh the mitigated limited, including cumulative, less than substantial harm to nearby heritage assets.

Ecology

The ecological implications of each proposal have been assessed. Due to the nature of the proposed developments, the mitigation proposed, it is not anticipated that there will be significant effects on the Severn Estuary European Sites, in combination with other plans and projects.