

REPORT TO THE NORTHERN AREA PLANNING COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	4 th December 2013		
Application Number	N/13/2191/FUL		
Site Address	Spittleborough Farm Swindon Road, Lydiard Tregoze Royal Wootton Bassett SN4 8ET		
Proposal	Installation of 23ha 10MW solar PV Farm with ancillary plant, fencing, electrical equipment and landscaping		
Applicant	Miguel Gomez		
Town/Parish Council	Lydiard Tregoze		
Electoral Division	Wootton Bassett East	Unitary Member	Cllr Mollie Groom
Grid Ref	408979 183425		
Type of application	FULL		
Case Officer	Mandy Fyfe	01249 706638	mandy.fyfe@wiltshire.gov.uk

Reason for the application being considered by Committee following a call in by Cllr Mollie Groom on the following grounds: scale of development; visual impact upon the surrounding area; design – bulk, height and general appearance; environmental/highway impact as nearby Wroughton Airfield is to have an enormous solar farm; drainage issues and diversion of footpath causing inconvenience for locals.

1. Purpose of Report

To consider the above application and to recommend that planning permission be GRANTED subject to conditions.

The Parish Council have objected on the grounds of:

- Contrary to Local Plan policies
- Swindon Borough Council have just granted permission for a huge scheme at Wroughton Airfield
- A further solar park is being considered across the other side of the road as well
- If it were not for the subsidies, these would not be installed which will result in higher energy bills
- Need all the agricultural land kept for production of food
- Panels will result in flooding of land that is already subject to waterlogging
- What are the community benefits and how will these be distributed and by whom?
- Permission is required to divert footpaths and the proposed footpaths would now be longer than the existing
- Distraction from the panels to users of the M4

2 letters of objections were received

9 letters of support were received

2. Main Issues

The main issues in considering the application are:

- Principle of development
- Coalescence with Swindon

- Visual impact on the open countryside and character and appearance of the area
- Ecological Impact and mitigation measures for site and surrounding land
- Impact of the construction and decommissioning of site on adjacent highway network including M4
- Affect on the public rights of way and proposed diversion of footpaths through the site

3. Site Description

This application relates to the installation of a 10MW solar farm on a 23ha site that is to the west of Spittleborough Farm in the parish of Lydiard Tregoze to the north of A3102. The land is made up three adjoining fields with the site arranged in a roughly rectangular shape that has their northern boundary adjacent to the M4.

The existing field to the north of Sally Pussey’s Inn would be retained for agricultural use with no boundary changes. However the field to the east of this would be used as the vehicular access to the site instead of an existing field gate immediately to the east of the former BT repeater station that fronts onto the highway beyond the Inn and would be constructed of crushed stone. Space has been allocated for a site compound and temporary laydown area during the construction period only to the south east of the application site in another field.

To the west of the site itself is Churchill Farm which was the subject of a replacement dwelling permission in 2005 (05/00425/S73 refers) following the demolition of an existing bungalow on the land that backs onto the application site.

There is a Ministry of Defence pipeline that runs through the site from north to south that will divide the site in two that requires a 3m easement either side. There are also two footpaths that run through the site at present and it was proposed to divert these around the site including a new pathway that would run between the site and the M4 boundary to the north. There is also a 33KV line that runs through the site in a north-south direction.

4. Relevant Planning History		
Application Number	Proposal	Decision
13/00943/PRAP	10MW solar farm	Planning Permission required
Nearby Site on other side of road 13/0435/SCR	Screening Opinion as to whether Environmental Impact Assessment is required for Photovoltaic Solar Farm at Wickfield Farm Royal Wootton Bassett	EIA not required

5. Proposal

The proposal is to install a large solar park of 10MW on 23ha of heavy clay Grade 3 agricultural land made up of three relatively level fields which have established mature hedgerows with trees and the odd copse and the site is positioned between the A3102 and the M4 just to the west of Junction 16. The fields were down to pasture except for the southern field which had been ploughed up in April. The output would be sufficient to power 2,400 homes over a 25 year period which would then be decommissioned in its 26th year and the plant and panels removed so that the land can return to full agricultural use.

The proposed solar arrays would consist of a series of ten blue/black glass panels supported on a metal frame to allow the air to circulate and prevent overheating. Each array would be between 1.9m and 2.5m high and wide aisles of underdeveloped land would be retained between each array in this case it is suggested that a 4m gap would be maintained. For stability the metal frames will be driven into the ground up to 1.5m deep. On archaeological sensitive sites as here, it was

proposed to install concrete ballast or feet may be used to anchor the frames, but the revised plans show that these two areas identified as being archaeologically sensitive will now be left free of any works.

A number of inverter and transformer buildings are shown around the site which would convert the sun energy into alternate current (AC) and then the transformers would transfer this energy to DC Direct current and then onto meters and switchgear. There would one plant room for each megawatt (MW) output. Each building would have dimensions of 9m x 5m x 3m giving a volume measurement of 135m³ and a floor area of 45m². The buildings would be finished in painted rendered concrete with colours to be dealt with by condition.

From the transformers, cables will lead via shallow 600mm backfilled trenches to fibreglass (GRP) building of 50m² and 4m high located close to the main entrance to the south. This building would include meters and equipment to be used by the distribution network operator (DNO) in this case Scottish & Southern Energy (SSE) as well as the engineering, procurement and construction contractor (EPC). A second building for storage and maintenance would also be required.

Access to the site on the submitted plan shows that the hedgerows either side of the new access off the A3102 would be cut back to increase visibility

Following concerns raised by the County Archaeologist, two sites were found to be archaeologically sensitive on the site in the north and south fields. These will now have no works in them and the southern area will be fenced off from the solar park.

With regard to the military pipeline running north-south, this will be fenced off either side of the easement to allow permanent access to the pipeline.

There was a proposal to divert both footpaths 11 and 12 from through the site to around the site including alongside the M4. This is now not part of the scheme, as there were 'in principle' objections from the Rights of Way Team, these footpaths will now be retained in their existing location.

With regard to the proposal in relation to the M4, it is now proposed to plant a row of trees just inside the application site to mitigate views from the users of the motorway into the site. It is also proposed to plant a mixed native hedge along this boundary too. As for the rest of the hedges around and in this site, these will be retained and managed to a height of 3m with any gaps being planted up and will now have additional trees planted in these too.

As far as the construction is concerned this will take place over a period of 5-6 months and will include periods of site preparation, installation, testing and commission. There will be between 40-50 construction personnel on site at any one time and the workforce will be encouraged to travel to and from the site in mini-buses and use car-sharing. Construction hours will be between 0800-1700 Monday to Saturdays with no works being undertaken during Sundays or bank holidays. Deliveries to the site will only take place between 1000 and 1530 hours due to the high traffic volumes on the highway.

The developer has estimated that there would be an estimated 126No HGV and 94No 25-tonne truck movements during the construction of the site. All these vehicle movements would be managed at the access junction onto the A3102 with appropriate warning signage. To ensure that left hand turns are made into the site, vehicles would use the Woodshaw roundabout to the west to turn around before entering into the site. Deliveries would be made to the works compound via a temporary metalled track. A wheel wash will be installed between the compound and the highway to ensure that no mud is trailed onto the highway.

To ensure that walkers using the rights of way are safe during the construction period, the fences will be erected right at the start of the development.

6. Consultations

Lydiard Tregoze Parish Council:

Object on the following grounds

- The proposal does not comply with Core Policies C1 (i) and C3 (i) of the Local Plan as well as NE16 (i) AND BD7 (i), (ii) and (iii).
- A change of use should be made from agricultural to 'Power Station'. Swindon Borough Council has recently granted permission for a solar farm at Wroughton, potentially the 'largest in Europe', there is also an application to process at Wickfield Farm on the other side of the road – three solar farms in a row.
- We doubt that if it was not for subsidies there would not be any and because of these subsidies we are all going to have an increase in our electricity bills.
- It has been reported that by 2020 there will be a world shortage of food, so all the agricultural land will be needed to grow food.
- With 40,000 panels arranged in parallel lines, when large areas of glass are rained upon, the rain will run off the panels into the ground and require drainage to a proper means of disposal, but there are no detailed plans of how the developer would dispose of the water.
- What is already a wet farm would become a wetter site
- In the documentation it states that 1% of the income will be donated to the local community – how will this be distributed and to whom?
- Permission will be required to divert the public footpaths, but the diversion should be no longer than the existing footpaths
- The northern edge of M4 is raised up above the site. Motorists travelling westbound will look down onto the site and rows of the rear of the solar arrays would be a distraction, so recommend a bund is constructed along the edge of the site.

County Highway Authority:

In principle I have no objection to the proposal, however there are matters of detail that need to be addressed at this stage:

- Detailed drawings of the full geometry/layout of the access arrangements for both the construction phase and operation phase. The access will need to be upgraded permanently for the operation phase and a field gate entrance is not acceptable for a proposal that will produce regular movements.
- Require full swept path analysis of the largest HGV vehicles that will be making deliveries
- Full details of the car parking arrangements

I will require a construction traffic management plan as part of the application of which the following need to be submitted:

- Deliveries from HGV's should be prohibited before 1000hours and after 1530hours (i.e. deliveries only between 1000 and 1530 hours). This should avoid peak hour traffic condition on the A3102 in this location
- The applicant will be required to enter into an agreement with highways in the event of excessive damage and mud to the highway
- That a scheme for wheel washing is applied within the site and also sweeping of the highway in the event of mud being dragged onto the highway.

Additional comments following submission of revised Construction Traffic Management Plan V2:
Recommend no highway objection subject to conditions being imposed.

County Archaeology:

Following the pre-application enquiry, correspondence has been received from the applicant's archaeological advisor. The geophysical survey undertaken has indicated two areas of archaeological interest; one an area of medieval remains to the south west and a possible prehistoric ring ditch towards the centre of the site. I have agreed informally that if the development were to go ahead, I would want these two areas left out of the development or non-invasive methods used to secure the panels (concrete shoes or gabion baskets). This would be

secured by planning condition. However I have noted that the application does not show these areas or detail the construction methodology to be used. I am therefore unable to support this application.

Additional comments: I have now received a revised version of the proposed site plan (SP.003 V2) which does indicate two areas of the site which are archaeologically sensitive and will be excluded from the installation of ground screws or any other penetrative method of securing the solar panels to the ground. I would advise that if the application is granted, that the implementation of this approach is secured with the inclusion of a planning condition referring to the methods set out in the revised plan

Council's Agricultural Adviser:

The freehold land extends to some 48.5ha and is part of a much larger dairy and arable holding of some 420ha based about 5 miles south of Spittleborough Farm. The soil is classified as Denchworth association and is described as slowly permeable seasonally waterlogged clay over clay subsoil. The proposal is to install a range of solar panels extending to some 22ha which will be arranged in linear strings set 8m apart and arranged to prevent overshadowing. The landowner will enter into agreement with the developer who will receive a rent for a 25 year period and the operator will receive the income from the generated electricity which will be supplied to the National Grid. The presence of panels on this land will mean that it can no longer be used for cultivation or to graze animals apart from sheep, because larger livestock such as cattle would be likely to damage the panels so the land between the panels will be retained as grass.

Spatial Plans:

Recommend approval with conditions: The saved policies in the adopted North Wiltshire Local Plan 2011 are still relevant. The emerging Core Strategy has progressed through the Examination in Public stage and is currently undergoing further consultation. A report by the Inspectorate on its soundness is due later this year. The Lydiard Parish forms a NEW-V neighbourhood plan area. No draft plan has yet been published by Wiltshire Council which would be at the stage that the neighbourhood plan could be afforded limited weight in determining planning applications. Therefore this neighbourhood plan is not relevant in this instance. The relevant local plan policies are C1, C3, NE9, NE11, NE13, NE15, and NE18.

The most relevant Wiltshire Core Strategy Policy 42 which deals with standalone renewable energy installations.

There is also a need to consider the coalescence with Swindon in this location.

Given the current period of transition in local planning policy and based on the information available at this stage, it is concluded that there is no robust justification to refuse permission on the ground of coalescence. Furthermore paragraph 98 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2012 states that local authorities should approve applications for solar parks if the impacts can be made acceptable. In this case, it will be important that appropriate landscape mitigation measures are agreed in writing with the council before commencement of development in order to minimise the temporary impacts of the scheme.

Council's Ecologist:

The site comprises of three fields of which one fallow arable field has been allowed to be colonised with weeds and rank grassland and two fields of improved grassland to the north which has been seeded and cropped for silage. The site is not free draining due to clay substrate and there are several damp areas. Hedgerows are mature with several mature trees. Watercourses flow west-east through the site and along boundaries which range from heavily shaded to more open stretches with aquatic and marginal vegetation. There is a pond in the northern field which has limited marginal vegetation

There is one onsite pond recently dug in the northern field and several ponds in close proximity which would appear suitable to support great crested newt, but surveys carried out in 2013 did not find any breeding activity, although the surveys were not carried out in accordance with the guidelines and some ponds within 250m were not surveyed. The negative response recorded at those ponds closest to the site does indicate that this species is unlikely to occur onsite.

The fields are suitable for ground nesting birds and wintering birds, whilst the field margins, ditches and some of the vegetation in the southern field provide suitable habitats for reptile species. It is noted that a high abundance and diversity of invertebrates was noted and the watercourses are suitable to support water vole.

Ecological Mitigation measures should include:

- Maintaining a buffer for all hedgerows of 5m,
- plant native shrubs/trees and watercourses; manage marginal habitats;
- sow seed mixes for wintering birds and invertebrates
- and provide pre-commencement habitat manipulation for reptiles

These mitigation measures should be secured through conditions via a pre-commencement submission and approval of both a Construction Environmental Management Plan and Ecological Management and Monitoring Plan.

Wiltshire & Swindon Biological Records Centre:

Within c100m of Hagbourne WWT Reserve from which a pole cat was recorded in 2010.

Council's Right of Way Team:

The application includes a proposal to divert footpaths 11 and 12.

We object to the diversion of Footpath 11 as from experience people using this proposed diversion would need to walk alongside the motorway which will mean busy routes with water spray, litter, stray car wheels trims all of which are unpleasant and potentially dangerous. Therefore either a better alternative is found or that the route is maintained through the site as existing.

The proposed route for Footpath 12 is circuitous again, so we would prefer that it is retained in its existing position within the site.

Additional Information following plans showing that the footpaths are to be retained through the site.

Council's Landscape Architect:

While the site is located close to the M4 motorway and is subject to noise and influence of moving traffic, the character of the countryside is otherwise locally strong and with a largely intact hedgerow structure, although due to past ravages of Dutch elm disease, the majority of the hedgerow trees are absent. Whilst it is appreciated that the shadowing effects on the solar strings from existing and new trees are a constraint, it is considered that the additional of some additional strategically placed new trees especially slow growing *Quercus robur* within the treeless sections of the hedgerows or in field corners is unlikely to result in any detrimental shadowing effects during the life of the proposed development. Therefore request that the applicants revise their landscape proposals to deliver enhancement to local landscape character and which in the longer term will help reinforce and repair rural character within this identified area of character decline and positively manage this landscape which will subsequently help outweigh any resulting temporary and reversible local landscape and visual impacts identified within the submitted LVIA.

Additional comments following submission of revised Landscape Strategy: I find the proposed additional planting of Sessile Oak (*Quercus robur*) to be a welcome addition to the overall landscape strategy and to support this proposed development which in the longer term will support the aim of delivering appropriate enhancement of the local landscape character and distinctiveness in accordance with Policy NE15 of the Local Plan and this is now acceptable.

Environment Agency:

We have no objection in principle to the proposed development subject to a condition and informative

2nd comments: We acknowledge that the draft proposals as set out in surface water management scheme appear to be acceptable in principle. We look forward to receiving the finalised detailed designs and management proposals in association with the discharge of our requested planning condition.

Highways Agency:

It is unclear from the information provided how the solar panels would be secured to the ground. The site is in close proximity to the M4 so we need to see evidence that the panels are secured sufficiently to withstand wind loading in accordance with current standards. It also needs a revised and more detailed tree strategy to show a more practical and safe variety of plantation along the northern boundary to prevent glint and glare. If the Council is minded to grant permission we direct that two conditions should be imposed.

Ministry of Defence (MOD) Safeguarding:

No safeguarding objections to this proposal

Fisher German (Pipelines Agency):

There is a Government Pipeline and Storage System may be affected by the proposal. This pipeline is protected under Land Powers (Defence) Act 1958, so that any development is prohibited within a GPSS Wayleave without specific consent from the Secretary of State for Defence. Landowners and third parties have a duty of care not to damage GPSS apparatus

Swindon Borough Council:

There are no comments from the Ward Member but they would like it to be noted that an application has been submitted to Swindon Borough Council for a 41MW site at Wroughton Science Museum. From our highways department there are further concerns:

- Highways Comments: There are concerns of vehicle speed and visibility relating to Swindon Road and this particular section in the vicinity of the Sally Pussey's Inn. However we defer to the comments of the Wiltshire Highways Officer on these matters. There is no appreciable impact upon Swindon's traffic and highway safety.
- Drainage comments – the site is an existing farm field and the proposed use will only minimally increase the quantity of any new hardstanding, leading to no significant new quantity of surface water run-off. Any increased run-off is likely to be absorbed by existing agricultural drainage mechanisms and in any event will enter only Wiltshire drainage infrastructure and therefore have no detrimental impact on Swindon Borough infrastructure.
- Other comments – It is advised the LPA carefully consider connection to and capacity of the local power grid along with any associated highways cabling and associated road works.

Sustrans:

My group has been in consultation with the applicant to ensure that there is no conflict between the cycleway and the proposed development. The preferred route for the cycleway does not cross the site of the proposed solar farm. It does share the proposed access road but the traffic levels will be very low and this will not present a risk to users of a cycleway. Accordingly Sustrans has no objection to the proposed solar farm.

7. Publicity

The application was advertised by site notice, press advert and neighbour consultation.

8 letters of support on following grounds:

- Area is densely treed and closed off from road and public viewing
- Good environmental impact and will enhance wildlife
- Use of land at Spittleborough Farm for diversification is essential as farming can continue alongside operating solar panels on unproductive land and contributes to UK Green Energy targets
- Sufficient space between panels for surface water to drain off into ground

- Proposal will have no affect on the use of M4 as this creates a sustainable area for the future
- Wish that the Parish Council to re-consider their comments
- Stands as a beacon to motorway users that this Council is forward thinking and motivated to achieve government targets.
- Cannot understand how this would be a distraction to motorway users
- There is a future proposal to create a public cycle path linking Royal Wootton Bassett with Swindon and Lydiard which would travel through the farm crossing over the M4 as Spittleborough Farm Bridge. The solar farm has been in such a way to facilitate this and will go a considerable way to making a public path intersecting the farm a feasible proposal
- Will retain the rural and ecological buffer around Royal Wootton Basset and Lydiard whilst sustaining the environment and countryside setting of Spittleborough Farm and the town.

2 letters of letters of objection received

Summary of key relevant points raised:

- Agree with comments of Parish Council
- Totally unsuitable site for solar park – not inappropriate location
- A3102 is already a very congested road and this will add to this problem especially turning onto the road as this location is exceptionally dangerous
- Concerned that the panels would conduct additional noise back to the residential properties on the fringes of Woodshaw.
- Site will be on the preferred route for the Swindon to Royal Wootton Bassett cycle track
- Concerned that this will allow Swindon and Royal Wootton Bassett to merge into one urban area as several years ago the Council turned down an application for a park and ride several fields away due to the inappropriateness of the site, so why is now acceptable for fields of glass panels
- Need to consider the grade of agricultural land as the best agricultural land should not be used for solar parks, as the surrounding land is used for arable production it suggests that the site fields are better agricultural land
- No details of the grid connection, so not sure if this will mean that the surrounding roads will need to be dug up to lay cables.
- Site is potentially visible from Grade I Lydiard Park and the North Wessex Downs AONB
- Other local solar farms in vicinity –Wroughton Airfield, Castle Eaton and Sevor Farm – all in Swindon Borough Council area so need to consider cumulative impact.

Planning Policy

Adopted and saved North Wiltshire Local Plan 2011

Policies C1, C3, NE9, NE11, NE13, NE14, NE15, NE16, NE18, HE6, T2

National Planning Policy Framework 2012

Paragraphs 7, 17, 18, 19, 32, 56, 60, 61, 64, 75, 98, 100, 101, 103, 109, 112, 118, 123, 126, 128, 129, 132, 133 and 139.

8. Planning Considerations

- Principle of development
- Coalescence with Swindon
- Cumulative impact with other solar parks in vicinity
- Visual impact on the character and appearance of area
- Impact of the development on the known areas of archaeological sensitivity
- Ecological Impact and mitigation measures for site and surrounding land
- Impact of for the construction and decommissioning of site on adjacent highway network including M4

- Affect on the public rights of way and proposed diversion of footpaths through the site and concerns about the proposed Sustrans route
- Potential surface water flooding from the development
- Grid Connection concerns
- Additional Information submitted by agent in response to the Parish Council and other concerns

Principle of development

In principle, new renewable energy projects are supported by local and national planning policy with a strategic commitment to decentralising energy production and meeting climate change targets. Policy NE16 of the adopted and saved North Wiltshire Local Plan 2011 which deals with Renewable energy states that projects such as this will be supported unless the scheme would result in demonstrable harm to a designated historic area or natural landscape.

Paragraph 98 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2012 makes it clear that applicants need not demonstrate a need for renewable energy schemes as justification and the onus is to approve all such applications where the adverse impacts have been adequately mitigated.

Concerns have been raised regarding the land classification of the land. The land has been identified as Grade 3 land and it is clear from the vegetation growing at the site, that the southern field grows poorer quality vegetation compared to the other fields. There is also evidence of seasonal waterlogging, hence the ditches and ponds in the vicinity. The landowner has also recently dug a pond in the northern field which will be filled in, but a new pond is now proposed on land to the east of the arrays to mitigate the loss of this one.

Coalescence with Swindon

The proposed development would be situated in a narrow strip of countryside to the south of the M4, between the settlements of the Royal Wootton Bassett and Swindon which result in a temporary fragmentation of the countryside.

The specific policies in the Local Plan: NE2 and NE3 were not saved in 2009, because the Secretary of State deemed that these policies were inconsistent with the then Planning Policy Statement 7 which has now been replaced with the National Planning Policy Framework 2012. The proposal therefore does not conflict with the adopted development plan with regard to coalescence.

Although the Wiltshire Core Strategy has not yet been adopted, the emerging Core Strategy in paragraph 5.99 states that *“the long established policy of protecting the distinct character and identity of the villages and settlements remains a priority for local communities. This applies particularly to the parts of the community area which adjoin the administrative area of Swindon Borough Council where there may be unplanned development pressure. The open countryside should be maintained to protect the character and identify the area in accordance with Core Policy 51”*.

The Strategy further states that *“the separate identity of both Royal Wootton Bassett and Cricklade and the villages, especially those closest to Swindon will have been maintained and enhanced where appropriate.”*

There is therefore no in principle reason to recommend refusal for this scheme on these grounds provided that the use as currently proposed is for a temporary use only and would be retained to agricultural on the cessation of the permission.

Cumulative impact of other solar parks in the vicinity

Reference has been made to other solar park developments in the vicinity by objectors. As referred to above there has been a screening application (N/13/00435/SCR) for land at Wickfield

Farm which would be directly to the south of this site. The site plan and the officer's response letter are attached as Appendix A.

It should be noted that the above relates to a Screening Opinion application made under the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations 2011.

With regard to this current application, the agent did not submit a screening opinion in the first instance. Instead they submitted a pre-application as referred to in the history above. The Officer's were satisfied with the information submitted with the pre-application that an Environmental Statement under the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations would not be required here. As a result it was not necessary for the agent to submit a formal screening opinion prior to the submission of this particular application.

When this screening opinion was considered in March, the applicant was requested to undertake pre-application advice from the Council prior to submitting an application due to the fact that the site would be overlooked by the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty to the south and this would result in visually prominent urbanisation of the countryside. Since then no further application has been received for this site.

Apart from the Wickfield screening applications, there are no other applications in this part of the Wiltshire Council area, but there have been several planning applications in the Swindon Borough Council area and there is a currently a scheme for a large scale solar park at Wroughton Airfield which is still under consideration which can be found on the Swindon Borough Council website under S/13/0809. In addition under Appendix B, there is a list of permitted schemes in the Swindon Borough area. The only one that is relatively close to application site is for a solar park at Castle Eaton whose border is the actual along our unitary boundary and is near Water Eaton and Cricklade to the north of Swindon which is application number S/12/1766.

It is considered that none of the above sites are sufficient close to the application site as to have a material cumulative impact.

Impact of the development on the known areas of archaeological sensitivity

Two areas of archaeological interest were found during the survey of this site; one of an area of medieval remains in the south west and a possible pre-historic ditch near the centre of the site. It has been agreed that if permission were to be given then these two areas would need to be outside of the arrays and also not have any cabling works dug in these sites either. Following the submission of further revised plans, the County Archaeologist is now satisfied that provided that there are no penetrative ground works at these two sites, then there is no objection to the scheme and that these heritage assets will be conserved.

Visual impact on the character and appearance of the area

Although not individually designated as a special landscape area, the site falls within the bounds of Policy NE15 of the Local Plan which seeks to guard against the most harmful development in the open countryside.

The application site is in the open countryside on two sides of it, but abuts the M4 to the north which is slightly raised above the field level and the A3102 between Swindon and Royal Wootton Bassett which is to the south beyond a further field. Spittleborough Farm is to the east. To the west and set back from the road up a long track is Churchill Farm which is has farm land abutting the application site.

It is clear that this landscape character area is sensitive to change due to the location of the site between Royal Wootton Bassett and Swindon as well as boarding the M4. The landscape objectives set out in the Council's Landscape Assessment is to restrict new development to maintain the separation between these settlements and to retain the integrity of the landscape. Therefore only very limited development would be appropriate and should these be approved it

would be necessary to include planting schemes to screen the development from the rest of this area. The applicants have confirmed that in their landscape strategy that they would retain the existing hedges which surround and are through the site at 3m high. A new hedge would also be planted alongside the boundary to the M4 would be a double staggered row of 60-80cm native species transplants at 45cm centres appropriately staked and with shelters. In addition to the new hedge, a row of native trees will be planted alongside the new hedge with species that are appropriate to the Highways Agency. Following negotiations 18No new trees would also be planted around the site in the hedgerows which are to be retained. This will increase both the biodiversity and also the enhancement of the landscape.

The proposals should retain and improve the existing field boundaries and seek to nurture new hedgerows trees to reinforce quality design/mitigation, appropriate landscape and ecological enhancement through good ongoing management principles and practices. Therefore the design and appearance of the proposed security fencing will be an important landscape consideration, so the applicant has agreed that rural deer fencing is proposed and any inclusion of security lighting would not be supported in this rural context.

It is acknowledged that the proposed solar park will result in some moderate/minor adverse landscape and visual effects but these are likely to be localised. It is clear that the site and proposed development will be visible from the elevated motorway and that this visual receptor will be exposed to short duration views. The proposals include landscape mitigation in the form of new hedgerow and tree planting along this northern boundary with the motorway to help screen and filter the views of development over time.

It is likely that the security fence and the upper part of the first row of solar strings will also be visible along the highest edge of the development site and through the existing 'gappy' hedgerows from The Sally Pussy Inn PH car park to the south and part of the proposed development would be visible from the upper windows of dwellings at Woodshaw as well.

It is also noted that the proposal includes landscape mitigation in the form of additional planting to gap up and reinforce the existing perimeter hedgerows and these should be retained at a height of 3m to mitigate the visual effects. Following negotiations with applicant there has now been a revised landscape strategy that retains the new hedge and trees along the M4 boundary and will plant 18No new oak trees around the site in the retained hedges. The proposals for the additional planting is considered to be acceptable to the Council's Landscape Architect and he has raised no further concerns.

It is also likely that there will be some distant inter-visibility with the North Wessex Downs AONB which has scarp slopes some 4km to the south. It is not considered that the proposal would result in any significant adverse or harmful landscape visual effect to the AONB designation and if the hedges are maintained at 3m high then the impact would be reduced.

A comment has been made that the solar park may be visible from Lydiard Country Park. This is considered unlikely as the M4 is higher than the application site, so that the arrays would be behind its southern embankment and therefore it is unlikely that it would be visible from the north.

However the greatest visual change effect would be for local users of the two existing footpaths which currently pass through the proposed development site. These were originally going to be diverted around the perimeter of the site, but following objections from the Rights of Way team, these footpaths will no longer be diverted. The revised plans now show the footpaths as being retained and the latest revised plan now shows the layout changed to take account of the footpath routes.

On completion of the arrays the site will be re-seeded with a 'tussocky' grassland and wildflower mix which will be beneficial to a variety of notable faunal species and also the new seed mix could provide grazing for sheep.

The proposal is for a 25 year period only. At the end of this period, the site will be dismantled and the land returned to its former use.

Ecological Impact and mitigation measures for site and surrounding land

This site comprises of fields which are on slowly permeable soil of which one is used as arable which is predominately down to weeds and poor quality grass, with the other two fields being improved grassland. Because the land is not free draining there are several damp areas around it and including one recently dug pond. The boundaries are all established hedgerows. Originally many of the hedges would have contained elm trees but they succumbed to Dutch Elm disease several decades ago.

There is a requirement that development should minimise the impact on biodiversity as part of any scheme so that mitigation measures will be required where a development would have a detrimental impact on existing biodiversity. It is considered that site is suitable for ground nesting birds and wintering birds whilst the field margins, ditches and some of the vegetation in the southern field would provide suitable habitats for reptile species. It was also noted that there is a high abundance and diversity of invertebrates and the watercourses could support water vole.

As a result of the type of species that could be found on this site, the Council's Ecologist has not raised any objections subject to that both a Construction Environmental Management Plan and an Ecological Management and Monitoring Plan would need to be submitted as pre-commencement conditions. The Mitigation measures should include maintaining a buffer for all hedgerows of 5m; the planting of native trees and shrubs along hedges and watercourses to maintain marginal habitats; the correct seed mix of grasses for wintering birds and invertebrates and a habitat manipulation for reptiles secured prior to any development.

Impact of the construction and decommissioning of the site on adjacent highway network including M4

This site situated between Royal Wootton Bassett and Swindon is on a very busy road (A3102) that suffers from very high traffic volumes during peak times. As such these schemes require consideration under Policy T2 of the Local Plan that deals with transport assessments and travel plans. Although the Highway Authority had no objection in principle to proposal there were still outstanding issues that needed to be sorted out prior to determination. Originally the applicant has proposed a one way system involving a route through Spittleborough Farm yard itself which led to west across the fields. This was discounted so that the only access into the site is directly from the main road to the east of the former BT transfer station building. As part of the consideration of the scheme, the applicant was required to submit a construction management plan which had to include the following:

- an agreement that the HGV's to be used to deliver to the site would be prohibited from accessing the site before 1000hours in the morning and after 1530hours in the afternoon thereby making sure that deliveries would only occur between 1000 and 1530 hours, so avoid the peak hour traffic on the A3102 in this busy location.
- That the applicant be required to enter into an agreement with the Highway Authority in the event of excessive damage and mud entering onto the highway
- Finally there would need to be wheel washing equipment positioned on site and that any mud that was dragged onto the highway would be regularly swept.

Following the submission of a further revised plan and the Construction Management Plan, the Highway Engineer is now satisfied with the scheme subject to conditions being imposed on any permission.

As far as the Highways Agency was concerned, they had concerns about how the solar panels would be attached to the ground as if there were strong winds they would need to be satisfied that the panels would not detach and then blow onto the M4. They also requested a detailed tree strategy for the trees to be planted along the northern boundary to prevent glint and glare issues for drivers.

In support of the scheme regarding the solar array structures to be erected on the site, the mounting structures and anchorage piles have been designed as per the European standard Code 1 which defines the static and dynamic load design requirements. This framework was used on a recent solar array along the A303 because this too required similar firm foundations.

A revised landscape strategy was submitted and this now includes using certain native tree species to be planted along this boundary. The trees will include field maple, hornbeam, wild cherry and sessile oak. In addition a new hedge would also be planted alongside the motorway boundary again with native species. The original species list did not include any evergreen shrubs which are a requirement of such hedges, but it is noted that holly is now proposed in the new landscape strategy recently submitted.

Following negotiations between the Highways Agency and the developer, the Agency are now satisfied with both the construction details of the solar array framework and the tree planting that will take place along motorway boundary and have subsequently withdrawn their requirement for any conditions to be imposed should permission be granted.

Affect on the public rights of way and proposed diversion of footpaths through the site and concerns regarding the proposed Sustrans route

Concern was raised by the Rights of Way team about the proposed diversion of these footpaths as the new routes would have been longer than the existing routes. As a result, the developers have now agreed to retain the routes as shown. This will mean that the layout of the arrays will have to change to allow for two 3m wide corridors to be made across the site to accommodate the footpaths and their fencing. The retention of the rights of way through the site is to be welcomed. The agent has indicated that they would not be planting hedges along the new fence lines for the footpaths and this is acceptable to the Rights of Way team as maintaining these hedges would be difficult due to the layout of the arrays.

There is also no objection to the development with regard to the proposed Sustrans route as the developer has been in discussions with them. Their preferred route for the cycleway would not cross the site, so there is no objection to the scheme.

Potential surface water flooding from the development

It is noted that the Parish Council were concerned about the potential for flooding from the solar arrays. This is not a unique issue to this site, because this is why the Environment Agency always requires a full flood risk assessment and sequential test for all large scale solar park applications.

From the information submitted by the applicant, the Environment Agency has no objection in principle to the development. However they have recommended that a condition be imposed requiring a detailed surface water run-off limitation scheme, together with supporting calculations to be submitted prior to commencement. This condition is required to prevent any increased risk of surface water flooding associated with the installation of the solar farm development. As part of the negotiation process the developer has now submitted information on the supporting calculations and drawings as required by the environment agency. Notwithstanding this additional information the Agency still wish for their condition to be imposed on any permission.

Grid Connection Concerns

It is noted that Swindon Borough Council make reference to the Council needing to check the grid connection for this solar farm. The agents have now submitted documentation from the District Network Operator (DNO) which is Scottish & Southern Energy that they are satisfied with the point of connection to the existing Swindon to Wootton Bassett 33kV overhead line which will be within the application site and this is to be welcomed.

Additional Information submitted by agent in response to the Parish Council and other concerns

The agent states that this proposal would provide enough renewable energy to supply up to 2,400 homes for a 25 year period from low grade agricultural land. Solar energy is a valuable modern 'crop' providing sustainable energy security for the future. Furthermore it will provide agricultural diversification necessary to withstand the uncertain economic future for the farming community as the rent paid to the farmer will be used to aid the farm long term management. In this case the solar farm would not reduce the agricultural output of the land as the livestock are being relocated within the land holding and sheep will be 'conservation grazed' on the resultant grassland which is the subject of a land management plan. In addition with the added trees and enhanced hedges this would further increase the biodiversity.

It is also not considered that the land would become industrial as the solar farm is a temporary use and it would retain its agricultural designation too and after the 25 year period, the land would be retained to full agricultural use.

With regard to the Parish Council's concerns regarding the loss of agricultural land for food by solar parks, the Government's view is that up to 20% of the best and most versatile land can be used for bio fuels. This land is not high grade agricultural land due to its slowly permeable soil.

In terms of the fencing to be used, this would be deer fencing which similar to standard agricultural use fencing and the arrays would be kept below the retained hedges which are to be kept at 3m high to minimise the impact of the scheme from the surrounding area .

It should be noted that this type of renewable energy involves considerably less infrastructure than other forms of energy production.

There would be no increase in water flow as determined by the submitted Flood Risk Assessment report and this is typical of all other solar farms. In addition the scheme will include improved drainage including sustainable drainage measures like swales.

It should also be noted that so far England has erected some 7 gigawatts (7GWp) of solar arrays which equates to some 875 solar farms of approximately 16ha each with an approximate output of 8MW. However the most important limiting factor for a solar farm is the electrical capacity to take the generated power to the National Grid. It is extremely difficult for a sub-station to be able to take on this huge output, so site locations are dictated by the presence of suitable grid connections.

Finally with respect to the concern about the panels being able to conduct noise back to the residents of Woodshaw which was raised as one of the objections, a Noise Report was submitted which calculates that the virtual acoustic source would be 13dB lower than the direct traffic noise already experienced. When the virtual noise level is added to the existing direct traffic noise level then the overall result does not change. This means that there would be no perceptible increase in noise from the siting of the solar arrays on the residents of Woodshaw compared to the noise of the A3102 and the M4.

9. Conclusion

It is considered that the proposed development as a whole contributes towards acknowledged sustainability objectives and as such is inherently justified in principle. This level site is considered to be well suited for the installation of a solar park with conservation grazing for sheep. The concerns raised by both the Highways Agency and County Highways have been taken into account as well.

Furthermore a landscape strategy has been submitted that is now satisfactory to both the Agency and the Council's Landscape Architect, so that the new planting of both hedges and trees will be a positive improvement allowing for this sensitive landscape to be re-invigorated as it was before the onset of Dutch Elm disease forty years ago. Equally the proposed ecological enhancements and mitigation measures will increase the biodiversity here too.

It is also noted that the two sensitive areas within the site are to be kept clear of any development and following concerns raised by both objectors and the Rights of Way team, the footpaths are to be retained in their existing positions.

The recommendation is there to grant permission as all the issues of concern have been addressed.

10. Recommendation

Planning Permission be **GRANTED** subject to conditions:

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

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

2. The Local Planning Authority shall be notified in writing within one month of the event that the solar array hereby approved has started to feed electricity to the Grid. The installation hereby approved shall be permanently removed from the site and the surface reinstated within 25 years and six months of the date of notification and the local planning authority shall be notified in writing of that removal within one month of the event.

REASON: In the interests of amenity and the finite operation of this type of development.

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

Drawing Nos:

SH-P-001 Rev 00 1:25000 Location Plan
SH-P-002 Rev 00 1:5000 Existing site
SH-P-002 Rev 01 1:2500 Existing site
SH-P-003 Rev 00 1:5000 Proposed site plan
SH-P-004 Rev 00 1:5000 Existing topography
SH-P-007 Rev 00 1:1000 Long section North to South
OR-001 Rev 10 1:50 Solar Mounting & modules twin pile
OR-002 Rev 10 1:50 Perimeter security deer fencing
OR-003 Rev 10 1:100 Combined DNO & EPC Switchgear Housing
OR-004 Rev 10 1:50 Typical site fence & maintenance details
OR-005 Rev 10 Site welfare & storage/office facilities
OR-006 Rev 10 1:25 Site security and MET monitoring
OR-007 Rev 10 1:100 Inverter housing (Type: Central)
OR-008 Rev 10 1:50 Site storage
3001 Rev A Conceptual Suds Layout 1 of 2
3002 Rev A Conceptual Suds Layout 2 of 2

Documents:

Planning Statement
The Proposal
Design & Access Statement
Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment
Heritage Desk-Based Assessment
Notes/Plan for Glint & Glare Analysis
Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey
Great Crested Newt Survey Report
Statement of Community Involvement

Revised and additional information:

2No colour photos of the site as viewed from and near the M4	31 st July 2013
Revised SH-P-004 Rev 02 1:1500 Existing Topography	24 th September 2013
Revised SH-P-005 Rev 02 1:1000 Topographic Survey Sections	24 th September 2013
Additional Noise Report	27 th September 2013
Revised Flood Risk Assessment incorporating sustainable drainage system	11 th October 2013
Additional Ecological and Land Management Plan	23 rd October 2013
Amended Construction Management Plan	24 th October 2013
Additional ITB9046-SK-004 Construction Access Visibility	24 th October 2013
Additional ITB9046-SK-005 Temporary construction access low loader visibility	24 th October 2013
Additional SH-P-111 Rev 00 Access Compound & Visibility	29 th October 2013
Additional Proposed Connection Arrangement	29 th October 2013
Additional copy of letter from Scottish & Southern Energy agreeing to Point of Connection for proposed solar park including 1:10000 drawing of connection	29 th October 2013
Revised Landscape Strategy	13 th November 2013
Revised SH-P-003 Rev 12 1:2500 proposed site plan	18 th November 2013

REASON: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

4. Within six months of the commencement on site, a scheme for the Decommissioning and Restoration of the development shall have been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority, the details of which shall include how the land will be restored back to fully agricultural use upon the development no longer being in operation or upon the expiry date of 25 years and six months of from the date of this planning permission whichever is sooner. The Decommissioning and Restoration scheme of this development shall be carried out in accordance with the scheme so agreed.

REASON: To ensure upon the development no longer being in use, the complete removal of all development allowed under this permission and the restoration of the land to its former condition.

5. The proposal shall be carried out in accordance with the 'Construction Traffic Management Plan' Dated October 2013 (attached). If there are any departures from the plan, departures will need to be agreed in writing by the LPA prior to actions or works being carried out on site. Deliveries or vehicular movements with HGVs are prohibited before 10am and after 3.30pm (i.e. HGV deliveries only between 10am-3.30pm). This is to avoid the peak hour traffic conditions on the A3102 in this location. The construction traffic access route shall be via roundabout west of the site on A3102 and shall result in left turn in only movements.

REASON: In the interests of Highway safety.

6. No development shall commence on site until full construction details of both access points for both the construction phase (in accordance with drawing 'Construction Access Visibility ITB9046-SK-004 dated 18.10.13) and operation phase has been submitted and approved in writing by the LPA. The access points shall be properly consolidated and surfaced (not loose stone or gravel) for a minimum of the first 10m. A scheme for discharge of surface water from both sites (including surface water from access) and piping of the ditches shall be provided. The development shall not be first commenced until the access has been constructed in accordance with the approved details. The access shall be maintained as such thereafter.

REASON: To ensure that the development can be adequately drained.

7. No part of the development shall commence until the parking area (temporary construction compound), passing bay, turning area and wheel washing facilities, shown on the Access, Compound and Visibility SH-P-111 dated 10.10.13 and Proposed Site Plan SH-P-003 11 (dated 30.10.13) have been constructed and laid out in accordance with the approved details. This area shall be maintained and remain available for this use at all times thereafter.

REASON: To ensure that adequate provision is made for parking within the site in the interests of highway safety.

8. No development shall commence on site until visibility splays have been provided at both access points and have been provided between the edge of the carriageway and a line extending from a point 2.4 metres back from the edge of the carriageway, measured along the centre line of the access, to the points on the edge of the carriageway 215 metres either side of the entrance from the centre of the access. Such splays shall thereafter be permanently maintained free from obstruction to vision above a height of 1m above the level of the adjacent carriageway. (In accordance with drawing 'Construction Access Visibility ITB9046-SK-004 dated 18.10.13)

REASON: In the interests of highway safety.

9. A condition survey of the highway network relating to the access routes to the site shall be carried prior to the commencement of the works, the survey shall be carried out by the applicant in conjunction with the highway authority, in compliance with Section 59 of the Highways Act, to ensure that as a result of the proposal the existing condition of the highway network is maintained. If as a result of the construction phase damage to the highway network has been identified, within 3 months of the identification the damage, the works shall be remedied.

REASON: In the interests of maintaining the existing condition of the highway network.

10. No materials, goods, plant, machinery, equipment, finished or unfinished products/parts of any description, skips, crates, containers, waste or any other item whatsoever shall be placed, stacked, deposited or stored outside any building on the site.

REASON: In the interests of the appearance of the site and the amenities of the area.

11. There shall be no external lighting (outside the construction phase) of any kind erected on the site unless otherwise agreed in writing in the form of a separate planning permission in that regard.

REASON: In the interests of visual amenity in the open countryside.

12. No development shall commence on site until fencing has been erected in a manner to be agreed with the Local Planning Authority prior to its erection around the two areas marked on Plan SH-P-003 Rev 12. The fencing shall be maintained for the duration of the development and no ground works (including cable trenching) shall take place within the area inside that fencing.

REASON: To protect areas of the site which are of archaeological interest.

13. Prior to commencement of the development an Ecological Monitoring and Management Plan shall be submitted to and approved prior to the commencement of the development, a Construction Environmental Management writing by the Local Planning Authority. The plans shall include the following elements:

- Maintain the root protection area around the existing and proposed trees to be planted in accordance with the Landscape Strategy received 13.11.2013.
- Fill in hedgerows 'gappy' hedgerows with native species and maintain a buffer zone of 5m around hedgerows
- Establishment of the native tree planting as shown on submitted Landscape Strategy
- Create at least one replacement pond within the site to create a new wetland habitat
- Maintain a minimum of a 5m buffer for all watercourses and maintain management to prevent encroachment and maintain/enlarge open sections. Avoid damage to water vole

populations/burrows/habitats by preventing screening vegetation on the southern or both banks of the watercourses.

- Sow appropriate and species rich seed mixes for over-wintering birds
- Submit pre-commencement habitat manipulation details so as to prevent damage reptile populations and loss of supporting habitats
- Features to be installed for the benefits of protected/BAP fauna

The development shall be carried out in accordance with the agreed Construction Environmental Management Plan and all elements of the approved plan shall be implemented unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: To protect and enhance the biodiversity across the site.

14. Prior to the commencement of the development an Ecological Monitoring and Management Plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The plan shall include the following elements:

- Management of existing and proposed trees
- Management of hedgerows at a height no less than 3m high
- Management of retained/restored/created grassland
- Features to be installed for the benefits of protected/BAP fauna
- Ecological Monitoring to inform future management at the site.

The development shall be carried out in accordance with the agreed Construction Environmental Management Plan and all elements of the approved plan shall be implemented unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: To protect and enhance the biodiversity across the site.

15. All soft landscaping compromised in the approved details and strategy of the Landscape Strategy and Mitigation Proposals received on 13.11.2013 shall be carried out in the first planting and seeding season following the completion of the development whichever is sooner. All shrubs, trees and hedge planting shall be maintained free from weeds and shall be protected from damage by vermin and stock. Any trees or plants which within a period of five years, die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of a similar size and species, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority. All landscaping shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details prior to the completion of the solar park or in accordance with a programme to be agreed in writing with the local planning authority.

REASON: To ensure a satisfactory landscaped setting for the development and the protection of existing important landscape features.

16. No demolition, site clearance or development shall commence on site, and; no equipment, machinery or materials shall be brought on to site for the purpose of development, until a Tree Protection Plan showing the exact position of each existing and proposed trees and their protective fencing in accordance with British Standard 5837: 2012: "Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction -Recommendations"; has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, and;

The protective fencing shall be erected in accordance with the approved details. The protective fencing shall remain in place for the entire development phase and until all equipment, machinery and surplus materials have been removed from the site. Such fencing shall not be removed or breached during construction operations.

No retained tree/s shall be cut down, uprooted or destroyed, nor shall any retained tree/s be topped or lopped other than in accordance with the approved plans and particulars. Any topping or lopping approval shall be carried out in accordance British Standard 3998: 2010 "Tree Work – Recommendations" or arboricultural techniques where it can be demonstrated to be in the interest of good arboricultural practise.

If any retained tree is removed, uprooted, destroyed or dies, another tree shall be planted at the same place, at a size and species and planted at such time, that must be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

No fires shall be lit within 15 metres of the furthest extent of the canopy of any retained trees or hedgerows or adjoining land and no concrete, oil, cement, bitumen or other chemicals shall be mixed or stored within 10 metres of the trunk of any tree or group of trees to be retained on the site or adjoining land.

[In this condition “retained tree” means an existing tree which is to be retained in accordance with the approved plans and particulars; and paragraphs above shall have effect until the expiration of five years from the first occupation or the completion of the development, whichever is the later].

REASON: To enable the Local Planning Authority to ensure the retention of trees on the site in the interests of visual amenity.

17. No development approved by this permission shall be commenced until a detailed surface water run-off limitation scheme, together with supporting calculations has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority . The submitted details shall clarify the intended future ownership and maintenance of all drainage works serving the site. The approved scheme shall be implemented and maintained in accordance with the approved programme and details.

REASON: To prevent any increased risk of surface water flooding associated with the installation of the solar farm development.

CONDITION NOTE: It is recommended that the developer investigates and specifies appropriate Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDs) for surface water management on the site, in order to prevent the possibility of the rate of run-off exceeding the existing greenfield rate and to reduce any pollution risks associated with potential soil erosion during/immediately after construction. These techniques involve controlling any sources of increased surface water and include:
a) *Interception and reuse; b) Porous paving/surfaces; c) Infiltration techniques; d) Detention/attenuation and e) Wetlands.*

INFORMATIVES

1. The applicant is requested to note that this permission does not affect any private property rights and therefore does not authorise the carrying out of any work on land outside their control. If such works are required it will be necessary for the applicant to obtain the landowners consent before such works commence.

If you intend carrying out works in the vicinity of the site boundary, you are also advised that it may be expedient to seek your own advice with regard to the requirements of the Party Wall Act 1996.

2. The applicant should note that there may be badger setts in the vicinity of the site, and as a consequence compliance with certain requirements and provisions of the Badgers Act 1991 may be necessary. If this is the case the applicant is advised to contact Natural England who is responsible for issuing licences relating to development on the site of badger setts.

3. The applicant should note that under the terms of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) and the Habitats Regulations (2010) it is an offence to disturb or harm any [protected species](#), or to damage or disturb their habitat or roosting place. Please note that this consent does not override the statutory protection afforded to any such species. In the event that your proposals could potentially affect a protected species you should seek the advice of a suitably qualified and experienced [ecologist](#) and consider the need for a licence from Natural England prior to commencing works. Please see Natural England's [website](#) for further information on protected species.

4. There must be no interruption to the existing surface water and/or land drainage arrangements of the surrounding land as a result of the operations on the site. Provisions must be made to ensure that all existing drainage systems continue to operate effectively.

APPENDIX A

Details of Wickfield Farm Screening - N/13/00435/SCR (attached)

APPENDIX B

List of solar parks permitted in Swindon Borough Council area

1. S/11/0248 - Installation of ground mounted solar array with agricultural at Roves Lane Roves Farm Sevenhampton SN6 7QR
2. S/12/1094 - Application for Environmental Impact Assessment a for erection of solar park to including solar panels to generate 15MW with transformer housings, cameras, landscaping and other works at Pentylands Farm Highworth SN6 7RB
3. S/12/1766 - Application for Environmental Impact Assessment for erection of solar park to include the installation of solar panels to generate electricity with transformer housings, security fencing & cameras, landscaping and associated works at Castle Eaton Farm Mill Lane Castle Eaton SN6 6JX
4. S/13/0165 - Installation of solar farm at Sevor Farm Nightingale Lane South Marston SN3 4SL

