

REPORT OUTLINE FOR AREA PLANNING COMMITTEES**Report No.**

Date of Meeting	26 July 2018
Application Number	18/00457/FUL
Site Address	Land at Court Farm Court Farm LOWER WOODFORD SP4 6NQ
Proposal	Energy Storage Capacity Mechanism Plant to Support the National Grid
Applicant	Mr Simon Wheeler
Town/Parish Council	WOODFORD
Electoral Division	BOURNE AND WOODFORD VALLEY – Councillor Hewitt
Grid Ref	412588 135338
Type of application	Full Planning
Case Officer	Richard Nash

Reason for the application being considered by Committee:

The Head of Development Management considers it appropriate to refer the application to Committee given the level of public opposition to the proposal. The application was deferred by Committee on 31 May 2018, at which time it was resolved that a site visit be carried out prior to Committee determination of the application. The application was then further deferred by Committee on 28 June 2018, following the late submission of a Transport Statement and Construction Management Plan).

1. Purpose of Report

The purpose of the report is to assess the merits of the proposal against the policies of the development plan and other material considerations and to consider the recommendation that the application be approved.

2. Report Summary

The application proposes an energy storage plant to support the National Grid. The report assesses this proposal against planning policy and recommends that conditional planning permission be granted.

3. Site Description

The site comprises approximately 0.9 hectares of Grade 3 agricultural land situated on high land to the west of the Woodford Valley. The site would be accessed via a largely unmade track running west from the valley road at the northern end of Lower Woodford. The track also serves other agricultural land and buildings and is a Public Right of Way leading across to the A360 Devizes Road to the west. The site has an existing fence line to the track frontage but its boundaries are otherwise currently unmarked. A line of electricity pylons runs north to south a little to the west of the site and would be linked to the proposal.

The site is generally surrounded by extensive agricultural fields with some wooded areas nearby. The wooded areas, along with contouring and buildings to the east provide a degree of screening from public viewpoints of the site over a wide area, although the site is highly apparent in closer views when moving along the Public Right of Way. The site lies in a Special Landscape Area and an Area of Special Archaeological Significance.

4. Planning History

None

5. The Proposal

The application proposes an energy storage plant to support the National Grid. This would comprise of a number of battery units within containers, inverter/transformers, a switchgear unit, larger transformer, relay room, overhead link to the nearby pylons and associated external areas. Security columns (supporting cameras) and floodlighting are also proposed. The site would be enclosed within a security fence, with planting proposed to the outside on the east, south and west boundaries. Some of the detailed drawings of the proposal are of a generic nature but are considered sufficient to be able to make a decision on the proposal.

6. Local Planning Policy

The following Core Policies of the Wiltshire Core Strategy are relevant to the determination of this application and are considered to align with the principles, aims, objectives and intentions of the NPPF. The following policies (amongst others) are therefore considered to carry significant weight.

Wiltshire Core Strategy

Core Policy 1 (Settlement Strategy)

Core Policy 4 (Spatial Strategy for the Amesbury Community Area)

Core Policy 42 (Standalone Renewable Energy Installations)

Core Policy 48 (Supporting Rural Life)

Core Policy 50 (Biodiversity and Geodiversity)

Core Policy 51 (Landscape)

Core Policy 57 (Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping)

Core Policy 58 (Ensuring the Conservation of the Historic Environment)

Core Policy 60 (Sustainable Transport)

Core Policy 61 (Transport and Development)

Core Policy 62 (Development Impacts on the Transport Network)

Saved Policies of the Salisbury District Local Plan

C6 (Special Landscape Area)

C21 (Farm Diversification)

7. Summary of consultation responses prior to Transport Report

Both Woodford and Durnford Parish Councils have submitted lengthy and detailed objections to the proposal, which can be viewed on the Council's website. In summary:

Woodford Parish Council: Support principle of battery storage sites but object to this application on the following grounds:

- Inappropriate siting in relation to Old Sarum Scheduled Ancient Monument, Grade I listed Durnford Manor House, Conservation Area, Devenish Nature Reserve and other ecologically designated areas, many residential properties and roads and direct line of sight of Salisbury Cathedral.
- Inappropriate large industrial scale development in prominent position even considering proposed bunding and screening. Screening itself would have a

significant adverse initial impact. A conifer screen would be particularly inappropriate.

- Unsuitable access route to site via Church Bottom/Wishford Road particularly during construction phase and would aggravate situation with subsequent maintenance visits and battery replacements.
- No financial benefit either to the Parish Council or Wiltshire Council should permission be granted.
- Not convinced of claimed potential power supply to local community.
- Not convinced of claimed benefit to local employment.
- Not convinced by evidence of site search.
- Light and noise pollution emanating from plant – to residents and ecology.
- Land has not been used in recent years solely for arable farming. For the past 10 years or so it has been permanent pasture and used for lambing. While the loss of this area of land would not be of major significance, it would however be an inconvenience to the local farmer.
- Proposal would conflict with policies CP42, CP48, CP51, CP57, CP58, PS7 and C21 and the NPPF.

Durnford Parish Council: Object on the following grounds:

- Proposal is not in the interests of the wider Woodford Valley on any level.
- Inappropriate siting in relation to Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, World Heritage Site and Conservation Area.
- Inappropriate materials and inadequate screening.
- Intrusive security fencing and lighting.
- Noise pollution.
- Batteries are prone to fires and leakage - implications have not been addressed in the application.
- Impact of construction traffic on inadequate local highway network.
- Loss of key agricultural land contributing to loss of income for local farmers.
- Impact on Ecology.
- Insufficient time for consultation due to apparent fast-tracking application process (Officer Note: This application has been the subject of the normal publicity and timescales for a Full planning application).

Highways (Initial Comments): Acknowledge access to site for construction traffic may cause some disruption. However, this will be for a limited time only and once complete traffic

movements to the site would be minimal. Therefore wish to raise no highway objection providing the following condition is imposed:

WM4 No development shall commence on site (including any works of demolition), until a Construction Method Statement, which shall include the following, has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority:

- the parking of vehicles of site operatives and visitors
- loading and unloading of plant and materials
- storage of plant and materials used in constructing the development
- the erection and maintenance of security hoarding including decorative displays and facilities for public viewing, where appropriate
- wheel washing facilities
- measures to control the emission of dust and dirt during construction
- a scheme for recycling/disposing of waste resulting from demolition and construction works
- measures for the protection of the natural environment
- hours of construction, including deliveries

The approved Statement shall be adhered to throughout the construction period. The development shall not be carried out otherwise than in accordance with the approved construction method statement without the prior written permission of the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: To minimise detrimental effects to the neighbouring amenities, the amenities of the area in general, detriment to the natural environment through the risks of pollution and dangers to highway safety, during the construction phase.

Further Highways comments following submission of vehicle movement information:

Inevitable there will be disruption during construction. Request following condition:

No development shall commence on site until a photographic pre-condition highway survey of the following roads; Church Bottom, the C42 (from Church Bottom to Salterton Farm Road) and Salterton Farm Road, has been carried out and issued to the Local Highway Authority. Within 3 months of the completion of the development, a post condition survey should be made available to the Highways development management team.

REASON: To ensure Church Bottom, the C42 (from Church Bottom to Salterton Farm Road) and Salterton Farm Road are maintained to an acceptable standard and any defects attributed to the construction traffic are rectified in the interests of highway safety.

Revised Recommendation from Highways (referring to 'Northern' access route from A360 via Church Bottom and C42 valley road): Tracking outputs of a large articulated vehicle accessing the proposed site have been supplied at our request. I am concerned that the tracking plans show that a full length articulated vehicle would have severe difficulty in negotiating the junction of Valley Road with the lane that leads to the site.

The plans have been annotated that temporary improvements to the junction would be required. However, this is not straightforward. A grit bin, utility pole and pole stays would need to be removed, there is a manhole cover that would not cope with over-running without some form of temporary strengthening, the bank would need excavating to the degree that the private property boundary is likely to be undermined.

Either of the alternative routes in have low telephone cables and substantial low tree cover. The applicant has not shown that the proposed vehicles which with containers of 4.7 metres high are likely to be around 5.8 metres high can access the site.

The submitted information states that a 120 tonne crane will be required. Such cranes are often delivered on vehicles that exceed the Construction and Use Regulations maximum size vehicles (16.5m long) i.e. are abnormal loads requiring special notification of travel. The applicant has not clearly detailed this vehicle and provided tracking information for it.

Therefore given this lack of information I would recommend that the application be refused for the following reason:

The proposed development would require a large number of deliveries by very high and very long vehicles during the construction phase. The roads leading to the site are narrow with constricted junctions and many overhanging trees and telephone cables. Insufficient information has been provided to enable the Local Planning Authority to determine that these vehicles can access the site without causing any substantial damage to trees, cables, highway infrastructure and private boundaries.

Landscape Officer (in response to Landscape Appraisal): Views of the site appear to be very limited and in combination with the mitigation planting and change of colour to the containers (at paragraph 9.4) should help to reduce visual effects from the wider landscape. Content to remove holding objection on the proviso we can include a condition for the colour of the containers to be agreed before commencement and that you are satisfied with the information supplied for the lighting.

Historic England (in response to Heritage Impact Assessment): Have undertaken site visit and consulted records of heritage assets and viewed data available from Environment Agency. Concur with principle conclusion that application will not result in substantial harm to designated heritage assets via change in setting. Note that proposals are likely to be visible in glimpsed views from grade II listed buildings in Lower Woodford Conservation Area. However, do not consider that could reasonably be defined as substantial harm to the Conservation Area. No objection to application on heritage grounds – application accords with paragraph 128 of the NPPF.

Archaeologist: Support Subject to Conditions: Site is of archaeological interest. There are HER records all around the site relating to prehistoric settlement and agriculture...[refers to NPPF 128]...Given the limited proposed footprint of impact, do not consider that field evaluation is necessary...[refers to NPPF 141]...It is therefore recommended that a programme of archaeological works in the form of an archaeological watching brief is carried out as part of any development.

The applicant should be aware that, if archaeological remains are encountered, this may have an effect on their programme of works. If human remains are encountered during the works, they cannot be removed without the appropriate permissions.

Recommendation: Full condition (WL26): No development shall commence within the area indicated (proposed development site) until:

A written programme of archaeological investigation, which should include on-site work and off-site work such as the analysis, publishing and archiving of the results, has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority; and

The approved programme of archaeological work has been carried out in accordance with the approved details.

REASON: To enable the recording of any matters of archaeological interest.

Informatives: The work should be conducted by a professionally recognised and suitably experienced archaeological contractor. All archaeological works must in accordance with a written scheme of investigation, approved by this office. There will be a financial implication for the applicant.

In the first instance, we consider that the archaeological works should include a geophysical survey of the proposed development area. The results of this should then be used to develop an appropriate mitigation design proportionate to the significance of those remains identified.

The applicant should be aware that, if archaeological remains are encountered, this may have an effect on their programme of works. If human remains are encountered during the works, they cannot be removed without the appropriate permissions.

Ecologist: Application site lies in close proximity to non-statutory nature conservation sites that are a material consideration in the determination process, including Smithen Down County Wildlife Site and calcareous grassland priority habitat/habitat of principal importance,

as well as the River Avon Special Area of Conservation and Site of Special Scientific Interest.

Proposed lighting is a potential issue in terms of ecology and will require mitigation measures to reduce potential for upward and sideways light spill and potential for effects on ecological receptors including nocturnal and crepuscular species. Wildlife sensitive lighting strategy will be required via a planning condition to ensure measures to reduce light spill onto adjacent woodland are implemented. Lighting strategy would need to be prepared with input from an ecological consultant to ensure it is appropriate.

Submitted stone curlew assessment has appropriately assessed whether there is potential pathway for effect between the proposed development site and associated proposed activities and the Salisbury Plain Special Protection Area and its qualifying species. Given potential for some time to lapse between the granting of planning permission and the commencement of works on site, would welcome undertaking of update survey/check. Would welcome inclusion of new planting along northern boundary of site, as well as other boundaries.

Recommended Conditions:

1) The development shall be undertaken in strict accordance with the measures stipulated in Section 5 of the Ecological Survey report (Clarkson and Woods Ecological Consultants, January 2018) and the Stone-curlew assessment (submitted via email by Clarkson and Woods Ecological Consultants, on 1st May 2018) which requires the restriction of construction activities to between October and March. The development shall be undertaken with liaison with, and supervision by (where applicable), a suitably qualified and competent ecological consultant.

REASON: To ensure appropriate protection and mitigation for habitats and wildlife including protected species, and to ensure compliance with wildlife legislation, the NPPF and Core Policy 50 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy (Adopted January 2015).

Pre-Commencement Conditions

2) No development shall commence until a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) has been submitted to, and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The strategy shall be prepared by a suitably qualified and competent ecological consultant and shall include and build upon the measures stipulated in Section 5 and Figure 5 of the Ecological Survey report (Clarkson and Woods Ecological Consultants, January 2018) and the Stone-curlew assessment (submitted via email by Clarkson and Woods Ecological Consultants, on 1st May 2018). The measures stipulated in the CEMP shall include, but not be limited to:

- i) Details of any pre-commencement surveys required including for badger;
- ii) Precautionary working method statements including those required for vegetation clearance particularly in respect of nesting birds and reptiles;
- iii) Timings of the works and appropriate mitigation measures;
- iv) Ecological protection measures to be implemented, such as installation of fencing to safeguard features of ecological importance;
- v) Details of ecological enhancement measures to be implemented including the proposed meadow and hedgerow planting, and log pile.

Thereafter, all works shall be undertaken in strict accordance with the approved CEMP and with liaison with, and supervision by (where applicable) a suitably qualified and competent ecological consultant.

REASON: To ensure appropriate ecological mitigation and enhancement measures are implemented and to ensure compliance with wildlife legislation, the NPPF and Core Policy 50 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy (adopted January 2015).

3) No development shall commence until a comprehensive Landscape Plan and Planting Schedule setting out details of soft landscaping, including the proposed meadow and hedgerow planting as detailed in Section 5 and Figure 5 of the Ecological Survey report (Clarkson and Woods Ecological Consultants, January 2018) has been submitted to, and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The applicant should consider the inclusion of hedgerow planting along the northern perimeter of the plant as well as the

eastern, southern and western boundaries. Thereafter, the works shall be undertaken in strict accordance with the approved Landscape Plan.

REASON: To ensure appropriate landscaping and enhancement; and to accord with the aims of NPPF and Core Policy 50 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy (adopted January 2015).

No new external lighting shall be installed until a Wildlife Sensitive Lighting Strategy has been submitted to the local planning authority for approval in writing. The lighting strategy shall specify the number, type and location of luminaires and lighting columns to be installed and will be accompanied by a lighting contour plan/lux plot. In addition, details of mitigation measures setting out how light spill onto retained and new habitats/areas of planting/ecological enhancement features will be minimised shall be included within the strategy. The strategy shall include and build upon the measures stipulated in Section 5 of the Ecological Survey report (Clarkson and Woods Ecological Consultants, January 2018) and shall be prepared with liaison with a suitably qualified and competent ecological consultant. Thereafter, the development shall be carried out in strict accordance with the approved strategy.

REASON: To ensure appropriate mitigation for protected species and reduction in light spill onto retained and new habitats.

Informative:

The applicant should note that under the terms of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended) it is an offence to disturb or harm any protected species, or to damage or disturb their habitat or resting 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.

Public Protection: Have read and considered noise assessment. Whilst it is of concern that the BS4142 assessment for one of the measurement points has resulted in a difference of +7 between the background and rating level the assessment is very robust. Source sound levels are based on the whole battery site running at maximum capacity and propagation calculations are based on a free field with no natural noise barriers between the source and receiver. There are a number of farm buildings between the source and receiver which will further attenuate noise. Therefore extremely unlikely that noise from the proposed development would cause loss of amenity inside residential properties at night time. The assessment shows that during day time the sound levels would be unlikely to have an adverse impact. Therefore we would not be able to support an objection to this application based on noise impacts.

There is the potential for noise and dust impacts during construction. The following condition is therefore recommended:

No development shall commence on site until a construction management plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The plan shall include details of the measures that will be taken to reduce and manage the emission of noise, vibration and dust during construction phase of the development. It shall include details of the following:

- The movement of construction vehicles;
- The cutting or other processing of building materials on site;
- Wheel washing and vehicle wash down facilities;
- The transportation and storage of waste and building materials;
- The recycling of waste materials (if any)
- The loading and unloading of equipment and materials
- The location and use of generators and temporary site accommodation
- Pile driving (If it is to be within 200m of residential properties)

The construction/demolition phase of the development will be carried out fully in accordance with the construction management plan at all times.

Rights Of Way Officer: No particular concerns.

9. Publicity (prior to submission of Transport Statement and Construction Management Plan)

The application was advertised by 4 site notices and consultations were carried out with neighbours closest to the site.

1 letter of support has been received, from a member of the Family Trust that owns the site, on the following grounds (in summary):

- Proposal will help national need to de-carbonise energy requirements
- Grade 3 is not prime farming land - loss of 2 acres out of 577 will not materially affect earning potential of farm
- Site well screened by maturing plantations and barn and developer intends further landscaping
- Camp Hill available as alternative access to site
- Once site is in operation additional daily traffic impact is negligible
- Four additional jobs will be created in the locality
- Planning permission sought for limited period only
- Site will have no impact on conservation measures already in place
- Field has little conservation merit
- Land owner's connection to village is long-term

141 objections have been received from the community on the following grounds (in summary):

- Introduction of industrial development into countryside
- Visual Impact
- Landscape Impact
- Impact on highway safety
- Impact on Ecology
- Noise and Light Pollution
- Fire Hazard
- Health Implications
- Impact on Heritage Assets
- Impact on drainage and flooding
- Lack of information submitted
- Fast Tracking of Application
- Alternative sites more appropriate
- Loss of agricultural land
- Unconvinced of community benefit
- Precedent

10. Comments received on Transport Statement and Construction Management Plan)

Woodford Parish Council: Has reviewed document (review has been provided to Highways Officer). Review raises questions about accuracy of information provided by Applicant, particularly regarding size and nature of containers, vehicles involved in transporting them

and the likely impact on minor roads through a rural village environment with many overhanging trees, overhead wires and a very tight turn to access the site. Removal of banking and possibly hedging that may be in private ownership will be necessary.

Vehicles accessing track would need to start to turn on the wrong side of the road on a fairly blind corner and even with banking removed there would be little or no margin for error between the vehicle, the telegraph pole and the brick and flint wall on the South side.

3 Objections received from the community on the following grounds:

Vehicles required would not be able to undertake manoeuvres required without removal of private earth bank

Vulnerability of electricity pole at junction of access track

Potential damage to flint and lime mortar wall at junction of access track

Large vehicles would damage trees and buildings along roads

Consideration could be given to access to the site from the A360 Devizes Road where there are some straighter stretches of highway

Light Pollution

Highways Officer: The submitted details are sufficient to overcome the highway concerns regarding the construction phase of his application. I would refer you to Table 3 which sets out more the expected vehicles and numbers. Note that the "All Phases" column shows the trip number totals (where a trip is a one-way vehicular movement). eg. the expected 55 full size articulated deliveries equates to 110 trips. Delivery vehicles (HGVs) over the 16 week construction period are stated at 252 trips therefore average at 2.9 trips per day assuming a 5.5 day week. This is an average and therefore some days may of course see a greater frequency and some days less.

The CMP provides tracking information for the 5-axle mobile crane vehicle to show that it can access the site. 16.5m metre long articulated vehicles have also been tracked through the relevant parts of the network.

Section 3.6 of the CMP advises that no construction delivery vehicle will exceed 16.5m or be higher than 4.7m, and that the telephone cables are about 5.5m high. I consider it important that the large delivery vehicles are escorted to and from the site: 1. To check that they are passing satisfactorily beneath any cables and tree branches that may have sagged to a lower than expected height, and 2. To assist other motorists in not meeting the large vehicles through the narrower sections.

I have queried whether the vehicles will actually be no higher than 4.7m, and I have been assured that is the case - containers will be delivered made up as a unit , but without the air conditioning units on top.

Because of the tightness of the turn into the lane leading to the site from the Valley Road from the north, the CMP recommends using the route from the south via Camp Hill. This will avoid having to alter the verge and telephone pole at the junction if the Church Bottom route were to be used. Camp Hill also has a better junction with the A360 with adequate radii. My previous preference for the northern route was because of the greater number of trees and cables over the southern route, but that has now been overcome by the information on vehicle heights and cable heights.

Have reviewed the report provided by the Parish Council and compiled by Mr Martin Giles, and it does not alter my view that the construction phase can be managed. The vehicle track drawing provided by Mr Giles is an overlaid template of an artic making a U-turn and is therefore not representative of the actual turning movement required to enter Salterton Farm Road.

Believes that earth bank referred to by objector is highway land outside of boundary hedge. As such any minor damage to it can be rectified under by the Applicant under the provisions of the Highways Act. I think significant damage is unlikely given the tracking information provided.

Given the more detailed information now provided I consider that the construction period can be managed by the imposition of suitable conditions which are recommended below:

No development shall commence on site until a photographic pre-condition highway survey in conjunction with the Council Area Highway Engineer (contact Andy Cole telephone 01722 434529), of the following roads: Camp Hill, Valley Road from the Camp Hill junction to the junction of Salterton Farm Road in Lower Woodford, and the highway section of Salterton Farm Road leading to the site has been carried out and provided to the Highway Authority. Within 1 month of the completion of the construction phase, a similar post condition photographic survey of the same roads must be carried out and made available to the Highway Authority.

REASON: To ensure that responsibility for any damage to the roads leading to the site caused by construction traffic can be agreed with the applicants, with rectification of the damage being pursued under the provisions of the Highways Act 1980 if appropriate.

Prior to commencement of the development details shall be submitted to the LPA of construction vehicle turning and parking areas. The approved vehicle turning and parking areas shall be maintained throughout the construction phase for the parking and turning of construction vehicles.

REASON: In the interests of safe and convenient operation of the construction phase in the vicinity of the site.

During the construction phase of the development the Transport Statement and Construction Management Plan dated June 2018 shall be followed, with the southern or Camp Hill route to and from the site being used by all construction vehicles. All heavy goods vehicle construction vehicles shall be escorted to and from the site by an escort vehicle travelling in front of the heavy goods vehicle, to assist in clearing passage and ensuring that overhead cables and trees are not damaged. Temporary warning signs of construction heavy vehicles shall be erected at several points along the construction route facing both directions, and shall be maintained during the construction phase.

REASON: In the interests of highway safety and road user convenience.

11. Planning Considerations

ASSESSMENT

Principle

Section 55 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 defines the meaning of development as the means of carrying out of building, engineering, mining, or other operations in, on, over or under land, or the making of any material change in the use of any buildings or other land. The development plan accepts the principle of development subject to the aims and objectives of policy being met.

The site lies within the Open Countryside for planning purposes. In such locations new development would normally only be permitted in particular circumstances related to specific needs and criteria.

The proposal relates to energy supply. Rather than a standalone renewable energy source the development would store energy supplied by the National Grid, which would then be fed back in to the Grid at times of peak demand. However, the proposal would tie in with the Government's aims around energy supply, specifically in terms of providing a secure and reliable supply of electricity. This is a relatively new approach to maintaining power supply and it is considered reasonable to assess the proposal against CP42 as the issues arising from a storage proposal are likely to be similar to those arising from a renewables proposal. CP42 is supportive of schemes subject to satisfactory resolution of site specific constraints.

Applicants are not required to justify the overall need for energy development, either in a national or local context. However, in particular, proposals must demonstrate how impacts on the following factors have been satisfactorily assessed, including any cumulative effects, and taken into account:

- i. The landscape, particularly in and around Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- ii. The Western Wiltshire Green Belt
- iii. The New Forest National Park
- iv. Biodiversity
- v. The historic environment including the Stonehenge and Avebury World Heritage Site and its setting
- vi. Use of the local transport network
- vii. Residential amenity, including noise, odour, visual amenity and safety
- viii. Best and most versatile agricultural land.

Criteria ii, iii and viii do not apply in this case and the matters affecting other criteria of CP42 are discussed below.

The proposal can also be considered as diversifying traditional farming activities. Saved Policy C21 is supportive of such development provided that:

- i. access is suitable at all times of the year
- ii. the proposal will not prejudice the viability of nearby village shops
- iii. the proposal does not result in inappropriate levels of traffic generation
- iv. any building necessary to implement the new activity is of an appropriate scale to that activity and of a high standard of design; and
- v. there is no adverse impact of the activity or any building associated with the activity on either the landscape, the local built environment or nature conservation interests

Criterion ii does not apply in this case and the matters affecting other criteria of C21 are discussed below.

CP48 is in principle supportive of infrastructure improvements, provided the development would not be to the detriment of the local environment or local residents.

The Applicant has explained how the site (as one of around 100 nationally) has been selected. Initially, matters such as high level planning constraints (National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Conservation Areas and European nature sites), landowner interest and Grid availability and practicality were considered. The precise preferred siting was then pinpointed on a more local level by looking at relationships with nature and heritage designations, dwellings and public viewpoints. This approach is considered reasonable although the questions of ease of accessibility to the National Grid and land availability are of course critical to the final choice.

It is not disputed that the proposed site may be one of the 'best c100' available out of the many considered, in terms of balancing out these various considerations. However, it does not follow that its development should then be automatically granted planning permission. The proposal would still have to meet more detailed and site specific policy requirements and these are discussed below.

Character and Visual Impact
(Pertains to criteria i and v of CP42 and iv and v of C21)

The various proposed structures would have a generally bulky and harsh appearance that would be expected from energy or other infrastructure plant and have a range of heights up

to approximately 4.7 metres. The outer security fence would be 2.4 metres in height with security lighting at a suggested height of 4 metres and security camera columns at a suggested height of 6 metres.

In terms of character and visual amenity, such development would clearly in itself be considered as highly intrusive in this location. However, screening planting is proposed with a view to reducing visual impact and the much higher existing pylons immediately to the west would also provide a vertical context for the higher sections of the security columns. Precise details of security lighting and camera provision, as well as landscaping, could be agreed by way of planning conditions.

The Applicant has advised that the security lighting would be designed to be activated by sensors, which can be adjusted to enable them to distinguish between small animals and humans. The lights would therefore illuminate only when people access the site and would switch off again once the sensors were not picking up movement of human sized objects. This would avoid intermittent illumination should small wildlife enter the site. In addition the lights could also be installed with timers to ensure that lights are not left on overnight and designed only to illuminate the area relating to the sensor detecting movement (i.e. wholly within the site). These details could be agreed by way of a planning condition.

As noted above, neither the Landscape Officer nor Historic England has objected to the proposal, subject to condition. It is therefore considered that, subject to appropriate details and mitigation being agreed, the proposal would not have a detrimental impact on the character or visual amenity of the site or locality.

Neighbouring Amenity (Pertains to criteria vii of CP42)

There are no residential properties close to the site. However, the proposed access track would pass by a number of dwellings. This track already apparently has an unfettered right of vehicular access to agricultural land and buildings which is likely to involve regular movements by large vehicles. There would be a concentrated period of increased movements arising from the proposal and involving construction and delivery vehicles during the construction phase of approximately 6 months. However, on an individual basis it is considered these would be unlikely to be any more obtrusive than is the case with the current use of the track. The Public Protection Officer has recommended a condition relevant to this issue as noted above.

Once operational the number of vehicle movements to and from the site would be restricted to visiting engineers and service contractors. The site would be visited daily by the engineers. It is considered that, in terms of ongoing noise and general disturbance, this level of vehicle movement would be unlikely to cause a detrimental level of additional impact to residential properties, over and above the existing situation.

The installation would in itself produce a degree of noise and a Noise Report has been submitted in support of the application. The Public Protection Officer has no objection to the proposal on these grounds.

It is therefore considered that, subject to appropriate details and mitigation being agreed, the proposal would not have a detrimental impact on neighbouring amenity.

Highways (Pertains to criteria vi of CP42 and i and iii of C21)

The Applicant advises that vehicles delivering to the site would travel from the A360 along a road south of the site named Camp Hill, and then along the Woodford valley road to the entrance to the access track. The Highways Officer has raised no objections to the proposal subject to the conditions noted above.

Other Matters

(Pertains to criteria iv and v of CP42 and v of C21)

The Archaeologist and Ecologist have no objections to the proposal subject to the conditions noted above.

RECOMMENDATION

That the application be approved subject to the following conditions:

- 1 WA1** 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 WM13** The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

 - 1395-PL-01 04 (Planning Layout)
 - 1395-PL-02 04 (Site Location Plan)
 - Design and Access Statement
 - ENS-STD-PL-25 (Standard Battery Container Plans and Elevations)
 - ENS-STD-PL-27 (Standard HVAC Slab Plans and Elevations)
 - ENS-STD-PL-28 (Standard Inverter/TX Container Plans and Elevations)
 - ENS-STD-PL-29 (Standard Inverter/TX Skid Plans and Elevations)
 - ENS-STD-PL-30 (Standard Containerised Switchgear Plans and Elevations)
 - ENS-STD-PL-32 (Standard Security Fencing Typical Details)
 - ENS-STD-PL-33 (Standard 132kv Single Circuit Tee Off (Underground) Details)
 - ENS-STD-PL-34 (Standard 132kv Single Circuit Tee Off (Overhead) Details)
 - ENS-STD-PL-45 (Standard Control and Metering Room Plans and Elevations)
 - ENS-STD-PL-46 (Standard Marshalling Kiosk Details)
 - ENS-STD-PL-48 (Standard 33kv Cable Cross section in Agricultural Land)
 - ENS-STD-PL-51 (Standard Palisade Security Fence Details)
 - SOL1801EE0_1 (Environmental Noise Assessment)

REASON: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.
- 3 WB2** Notwithstanding Condition 2, no development shall commence on site until details of the finishing materials to be used on the development have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.
REASON: The application contained insufficient information to enable this matter to be considered prior to granting planning permission and the matter is required to be agreed with the Local Planning Authority before development commences in order that the development is undertaken in an acceptable manner, in the interests of visual amenity and the character and appearance of the area.
- 4 WC1** No development shall commence on site until a scheme of soft landscaping has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, the details of which shall include a detailed planting specification showing all plant species,

supply and planting sizes and planting densities. The proposed scheme should include the proposed meadow and hedgerow planting detailed in Section 5 and Figure 5 of the Ecological Survey report (Clarkson and Woods Ecological Consultants, January 2018) and the inclusion of hedgerow planting along the northern perimeter of the site as well as the eastern, southern and western boundaries.

REASON: The application contained insufficient information to enable this matter to be considered prior to granting planning permission and the matter is required to be agreed with the Local Planning Authority before development commences in order that the development is undertaken in an acceptable manner, to ensure a satisfactory landscaped setting for the development and the protection of existing important landscape and ecology features.

- 5 WC2** All soft landscaping comprised in the approved details of landscaping shall be carried out in the first planting and seeding season following the first occupation of the completion of the development; 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 hard landscaping shall also be carried out in accordance with the approved details prior to the occupation of any part of the development 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.

- 6** No external lighting, cameras or speakers shall be installed on site until a strategy and plans showing the number, type and location of lighting sources, cameras or speakers and supporting columns to be installed and will be accompanied by a lighting contour plan/lux plot. In addition, details of mitigation measures setting out how light spill onto retained and new habitats/areas of planting/ecological enhancement features will be minimised shall be included within the strategy. The strategy shall include and build upon the measures stipulated in Section 5 of the Ecological Survey report (Clarkson and Woods Ecological Consultants, January 2018) and shall be prepared with liaison with a suitably qualified and competent ecological consultant. The approved lighting, cameras and speakers shall be installed and maintained in accordance with the approved details and no additional external lighting, cameras or speakers shall be installed.

REASON: In the interests of the amenities of the area, to minimise unnecessary light spillage above and outside the development site and to ensure appropriate mitigation for protected species and reduction in light spill onto retained and new habitats.

- 7 WM4** No development shall commence on site (including any works of demolition), until a Construction Method Statement, which shall include the following, has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority:

- The parking of vehicles of site operatives and visitors
- loading and unloading of plant and materials
- transportation and storage of plant, materials and waste
- the erection and maintenance of security hoarding including decorative displays and facilities for public viewing, where appropriate
- wheel washing and vehicle wash down facilities;
- measures to control the emission of dust and dirt during construction

- a scheme for recycling/disposing of waste resulting from demolition and construction works
- measures for the protection of the natural environment
- hours of construction, including deliveries
- The location and use of generators and temporary site accommodation
- Pile driving (If it is to be within 200m of residential properties)
- The movement of construction vehicles;
- The cutting or other processing of building materials on site;
- Details of any pre-commencement ecological surveys required including for badger;
- Precautionary working method statements including those required for vegetation clearance particularly in respect of nesting birds and reptiles;
- Timings of the works and appropriate ecological mitigation measures;
- Ecological protection measures to be implemented, such as installation of fencing to safeguard features of ecological importance;
- Details of ecological enhancement measures to be implemented including the proposed meadow and hedgerow planting, and log pile.

The ecological elements of the CEMP shall be prepared by a suitably qualified and competent ecological consultant and shall include and build upon the measures stipulated in Section 5 and Figure 5 of the Ecological Survey report (Clarkson and Woods Ecological Consultants, January 2018) and the stone curlew assessment (submitted via email by Clarkson and Woods Ecological Consultants, on 1 May 2018). The approved CEMP shall thereafter be adhered to and the development shall not be carried out otherwise than in accordance with the approved CEMP without the prior written permission of the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: To minimise detrimental effects to the neighbouring amenities, the amenities of the area in general, detriment to the natural environment through the risks of pollution and dangers to highway safety, during the construction phase.

- 8** No development shall commence on site until a photographic pre-condition highway survey in conjunction with the Council Area Highway Engineer (contact Andy Cole telephone 01722 434529), of the following roads: Camp Hill, Valley Road from the Camp Hill junction to the junction of Salterton Farm Road in Lower Woodford, and the highway section of Salterton Farm Road leading to the site has been carried out and provided to the Highway Authority. Within 1 month of the completion of the construction phase, a similar post condition photographic survey of the same roads must be carried out and made available to the Highway Authority.
REASON: To ensure that responsibility for any damage to the roads leading to the site caused by construction traffic can be agreed with the applicants, with rectification of the damage being pursued under the provisions of the Highways Act 1980 if appropriate.
- 9** Prior to commencement of the development details shall be submitted to the LPA of construction vehicle turning and parking areas. The approved vehicle turning and parking areas shall be maintained throughout the construction phase for the parking and turning of construction vehicles.
REASON: In the interests of safe and convenient operation of the construction phase in the vicinity of the site.
- 10** During the construction phase of the development the Transport Statement and Construction Management Plan dated June 2018 shall be followed, with the southern or Camp Hill route to and from the site being used by all construction vehicles. All heavy goods vehicle construction vehicles shall be escorted to and from the site by an escort vehicle travelling in front of the heavy goods vehicle, to assist in clearing passage and ensuring that overhead cables and trees are not damaged. Temporary

warning signs of construction heavy vehicles shall be erected at several points along the construction route facing both directions, and shall be maintained during the construction phase.

REASON: In the interests of highway safety and road user convenience.

11 WL26 No development shall commence until;

A written programme of archaeological investigation, which should include on-site work and off-site work such as the analysis, publishing and archiving of the results, has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority; and

The approved programme of archaeological work has been carried out in accordance with the approved details.

REASON: To enable the recording of any matters of archaeological interest.

12 The development shall be undertaken in strict accordance with the measures stipulated in Section 5 of the Ecological Survey report (Clarkson and Woods Ecological Consultants, January 2018) and the Stone-curlew assessment (submitted via email by Clarkson and Woods Ecological Consultants, on 1st May 2018) which requires the restriction of construction activities to between October and March. The development shall be undertaken with liaison with, and supervision by (where applicable), a suitably qualified and competent ecological consultant.

REASON: To ensure appropriate protection and mitigation for habitats and wildlife including protected species.

13 The development hereby approved including all related on-site built infrastructure (such as any CCTV cameras and poles, switch gear, access tracks, security fences, etc.) shall be removed and the land restored to a condition suitable for agricultural use within 6 months of the batteries ceasing to be used, or the expiry of 30 years after the date of first connection of any element of the development to the National Grid, whichever is the sooner.

REASON: In the interests of amenity and the timely restoration of the land.

ARCHAEOLOGY INFORMATIVES:

The work required under Condition 10 should be conducted by a professionally recognised archaeological contractor in accordance with a written scheme of investigation approved by this office and there will be a financial implication for the applicant.

In the first instance, we consider that the archaeological works should include a geophysical survey of the proposed development area. The results of this should then be used to develop an appropriate mitigation design proportionate to the significance of those remains identified.

The applicant should be aware that, if archaeological remains are encountered, this may have an effect on their programme of works. If human remains are encountered during the works, they cannot be removed without the appropriate permissions.

ECOLOGY INFORMATIVE:

The applicant should note that under the terms of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended) it is an offence to disturb or harm any protected species, or to damage or disturb their habitat or resting 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.