

INFORMATION RECEIVED SINCE PREPARATION OF REPORT

Application number	TWC/2021/1225
Site address	Site of Cheswell Grange Farm, Cheswell Drive, Cheswell, Newport, Shropshire
Proposal	Construction of a solar farm comprising ground mounted solar photovoltaic arrays together with battery energy storage facility and associated infrastructure, including WPD and client substations, inverters, perimeter security fencing, access tracks, cctv and landscaping ***AMENDED PLANS RECEIVED ***
Recommendation	Full Grant

1.0 ARBORICULTURAL OFFICER COMMENTS

- 1.1 The Council's Arboricultural Officer has provided further comment on the Amended Landscaping Plan and identified a need for the locations of particular species of trees to be specified. The Applicant has agreed to address this as part of the Landscaping Scheme condition.

2.0 ADDITIONAL CONDITIONS ADDED TO RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 In response to a request from Cllr Eade the Applicant has agreed to include semi-mature specimens in the Landscaping Scheme, which will be secured via planning condition.
- 2.2 Additionally, Cllr Eade has enquired whether landscaping can be undertaken prior to the construction of any works, as opposed to 'no later than the first planting season' as proposed in the Landscaping Scheme condition. Typically, landscaping takes place after development has been completed to avoid damage during construction. However, as the red line boundary takes account of hedgerow locations this is something that could be looked at with the Applicant as part of a Phased Landscaping Scheme. The condition is proposed with the following amended wording to allow for this to be explored with the Applicant, should Members be minded to approve the proposals:
- Landscaping Scheme showing phased planting to be implemented prior to construction above ground or no later than first planting season following first export of electricity, including semi-mature specimens
- 2.3 The Council's Highways Engineer included conditions in their original comments which were accidentally omitted from the committee report. These are now included in the Recommendation and relate to:
- Site Environmental Management Plan
 - Provision of Visibility Splays
 - No Piling or Foundations or Installation of Mounting Frames within Areas Reserved for Parking, Loading, Unloading or Turning

3.0 ADDITIONAL PUBLIC REPRESENTATION

- 3.1 One further letter of objection has been received raising the following new comments:

- There is no information in the documents on what materials are used in the manufacture of the supporting frames that hold the PV panels nor on any protection treatments.
- Any metallic coating applied only has a limited life and once this life is exceeded the metal substrate will corrode. Some corrosion protection treatments can be very toxic to the environment and make agricultural land unfit for purpose. The land has to be returned to agricultural use after 40 years.
- This application should be rejected with a request to the Applicant that further information be supplied to the Council regarding what construction materials are to be used and corrosion treatments applied.
- A full Environmental Impact Assessment should be carried out on the proposed materials and corrosion protection treatments by experts in this field and not by unqualified specialists.
- This site is alongside a Severn Trent borehole for drinking water and the risk of contamination has to be eliminated. Furthermore the potential corrosion between soil/lying water (especially in winter) can result in harmful and toxic by-products to grazing farm animals.

4.0 OFFICER COMMENTS

- 4.1 The committee report includes a planning condition requesting details of materials as part of any planning consent. If Members are minded to do so this could be expanded to specifically include details of corrosion protection treatments.
- 4.2 A screening opinion was carried out for this development prior to the application being submitted (EIA/2021/0005) as noted in the committee report, which concluded that a full Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) was not required. Members are asked to note that under the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations a solar farm falls within category 3(a) *Energy Industry - Industrial installations for the production of electricity, steam and hot water* where the threshold for requiring an EIA is a thermal output of more than 50MW. The thermal output of the proposed development would be 19MW and falls under the threshold.
- 4.3 Furthermore, the key issues to consider for category 3(a) developments under a screening opinion are levels of emissions to air, arrangements for the transport of fuel and any visual impact. As such, the points raised in the latter of objection fall outside of what an EIA would consider.
- 4.4 Taking the above matters into account Officers advise there is no material reason to warrant a review of the recommendation made in the committee report.

5.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 5.1 Based on the conclusions above, the recommendation to the Planning Committee on this application is that **DELEGATED AUTHORITY** be granted to the Development Management Service Delivery Manager to **GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION** (with the authority to finalise any matter including Condition(s), legal agreement terms, or any later variations) subject to the following Condition(s):

Condition(s):

Time Limit

Temporary Consent – 40-years (incl. Decommissioning Strategy)

Submission of Decommissioning Strategy (if site ceases to operate for 12-months prior to 40-year period)

Submission of Ecological Assessment Report prior to Decommissioning

Final Layout to be Submitted and Approved (incl. layout, equipment elevations and floor plans)

Submission of Acoustic Assessment

Badger - Pre-commencement Inspection

Bats - Pre-commencement Survey

Lighting Plan

Development in Accordance with Construction Traffic Management Plan

Archaeology - Written Scheme of Investigation

Built Heritage - Details of Additional Mitigation Planting

Drainage - Details of SuDS Management

Access Details

Details of Materials

Development in Accordance with Submitted Tree Protection Plan

Details of Proposed Tree and Hedge Planting Species and Locations

Landscaping Scheme showing phased planting to be implemented prior to construction above ground or no later than first planting season following first export of electricity, including semi-mature specimens

Ecological Survey – in Accordance with Biodiversity Management Plan and Landscape and Ecological Management Plan

Provision of Ecological Monitoring Report

Development in Accordance with Approved Plans

Site Environmental Management Plan

Provision of Visibility Splays

No Piling or Foundations or Installation of Mounting Frames within Areas Reserved for Parking, Loading, Unloading or Turning