



Strategic and Technical Planning Committee

Date: Tuesday, 26th November 2024
Time: 10.00 am
Venue: Council Chamber, County Hall, Dorchester, DT1 1XJ

Members (Quorum 6)

Duncan Sowry-House (Chair), Dave Bolwell (Vice-Chair), Belinda Bawden, Toni Coombs, Richard Crabb, Spencer Flower, Craig Monks, David Northam, Belinda Ridout, Pete Roper, David Taylor and David Tooke

Chief Executive: Matt Prosser, County Hall, Dorchester, Dorset DT1 1XJ

For more information about this agenda please contact Democratic Services Meeting Contact 01305 224709 - megan.r.rochester@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

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Agenda

Item	Pages
1. APOLOGIES	
	To receive any apologies for absence.
2. MINUTES	
	To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on Monday 18 th November 2024.
	The draft minutes are to be published ahead of the meeting.
3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	

To disclose any pecuniary, other registrable or non-registrable interests as set out in the adopted Code of Conduct. In making their disclosure councillors are asked to state the agenda item, the nature of the interest and any action they propose to take as part of their declaration.

If required, further advice should be sought from the Monitoring Officer in advance of the meeting.

4. REGISTRATION FOR PUBLIC SPEAKING AND STATEMENTS

Members of the public wishing to speak to the Committee on a planning application should notify the Democratic Services Officer listed on the front of this agenda. This must be done no later than two clear working days before the meeting. Please refer to the Guide to Public Speaking at Planning Committee. [Guide to Public Speaking at Planning Committee](#)

The deadline for notifying a request to speak is 8.30am on Friday 22nd November 2024.

5. P/FUL/2023/02819 - LAND AT POST FARM, LYTCHETT MINSTER, DORSET, BH16 6AB 3 - 72

The installation of a battery energy storage system (BESS), together with associated infrastructure, security fencing, CCTV, cable route, landscaping, on-site Biodiversity Net Gain.

6. URGENT ITEMS

To consider any items of business which the Chairman has had prior notification and considers to be urgent pursuant to section 100B (4) b) of the Local Government Act 1972. The reason for the urgency shall be recorded in the minutes.

7. EXEMPT BUSINESS

To move the exclusion of the press and the public for the following item in view of the likely disclosure of exempt information within the meaning of paragraph 3 of schedule 12 A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended). The public and the press will be asked to leave the meeting whilst the item of business is considered.

There are no exempt items scheduled for this meeting.

Agenda Item 5

Application Number:	P/FUL/2023/02819		
Webpage:	https://planning.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/		
Site address:	Land at Post Farm Lytchett Minster Dorset BH16 6AB		
Proposal:	The installation of a battery energy storage system (BESS), together with associated infrastructure, security fencing, CCTV, cable route, landscaping, on-site Biodiversity Net Gain.		
Applicant name:	S4N Lytchett Ltd		
Case Officer:	Diana Mezzogori-Curran		
Ward Member(s):	Cllr Brenton, Cllr Robinson and Cllr Starr		
Publicity expiry date:	17 July 2024	Officer site visit date:	21 st June 2021 (pre-application site visit by previous case officer)
Decision due date:	31 May 2024	Ext(s) of time:	2 December 2024
No of Site Notices:	Site notices displayed by previous case officer on 31.05.2023		
SN displayed reasoning:	For awareness		

1.0 This application has been brought to the Strategic Planning Committee for determination based on the scale of the proposal.

2.0 Summary of recommendation:

2.1 GRANT subject to conditions at Section 20 of this report.

3.0 Reason for the recommendation: as set out in paras 16 – 19 of this report and summarised as follows:

- Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compensation Act 2004 provides that determinations must be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- Paragraph 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out that decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development where it accords with an up-to-date development plan.
- Large scale battery storage is identified at a national level as playing an essential role in our energy transition and ability to fully decarbonise the electricity grid by 2035 and achieve net zero by 2050.

- The proposal would make a significant contribution towards tackling climate change through the provision of battery storage.
- The proposal is considered to be acceptable in terms of the scale, design and impact on the surrounding area.
- The proposal is considered to constitute very special circumstances in the Green Belt and is therefore considered to be acceptable in this respect.
- Biodiversity net gains would be delivered through on-site planting, including grassland, mixed scrub, individual trees and native hedgerow.
- The proposed development would have limited landscape and visual impacts and would not harm the characteristics of the area.
- Appropriate mitigation would be secured via planning condition to minimise limited visual impacts.
- The mitigation measures regarding the noise levels from both BESS development on residential amenity would be secured via planning condition to minimise adverse impact.
- The site is sufficiently distant from nearby residential properties and battery safety would be appropriately managed and secured via planning condition.
- The proposal is acceptable in respect of impacts on parking, highway safety, flood risk and drainage.
- There are no material considerations which would warrant refusal of this application.

4.0 Key planning issues

Issue	Conclusion
Principle of development	Acceptable
Impact on the Green Belt	Acceptable
Scale, design, impact on character and appearance of the area	Acceptable, subject to conditions
Impact on landscape	Acceptable, subject to conditions
Impact on neighbouring amenity - noise	Acceptable, subject to conditions
Biodiversity	Acceptable, subject to conditions
Highway impacts, safety, access and parking	Acceptable, Subject to conditions
Health and Safety - Fire safety	Acceptable, subject to conditions
Flood risk and drainage	Acceptable, subject to conditions
Pollution	Acceptable, subject to conditions
Impact on Dorset Heathlands	Acceptable
Impact on trees	Acceptable, subject to conditions
Archaeology and heritage assets	Acceptable

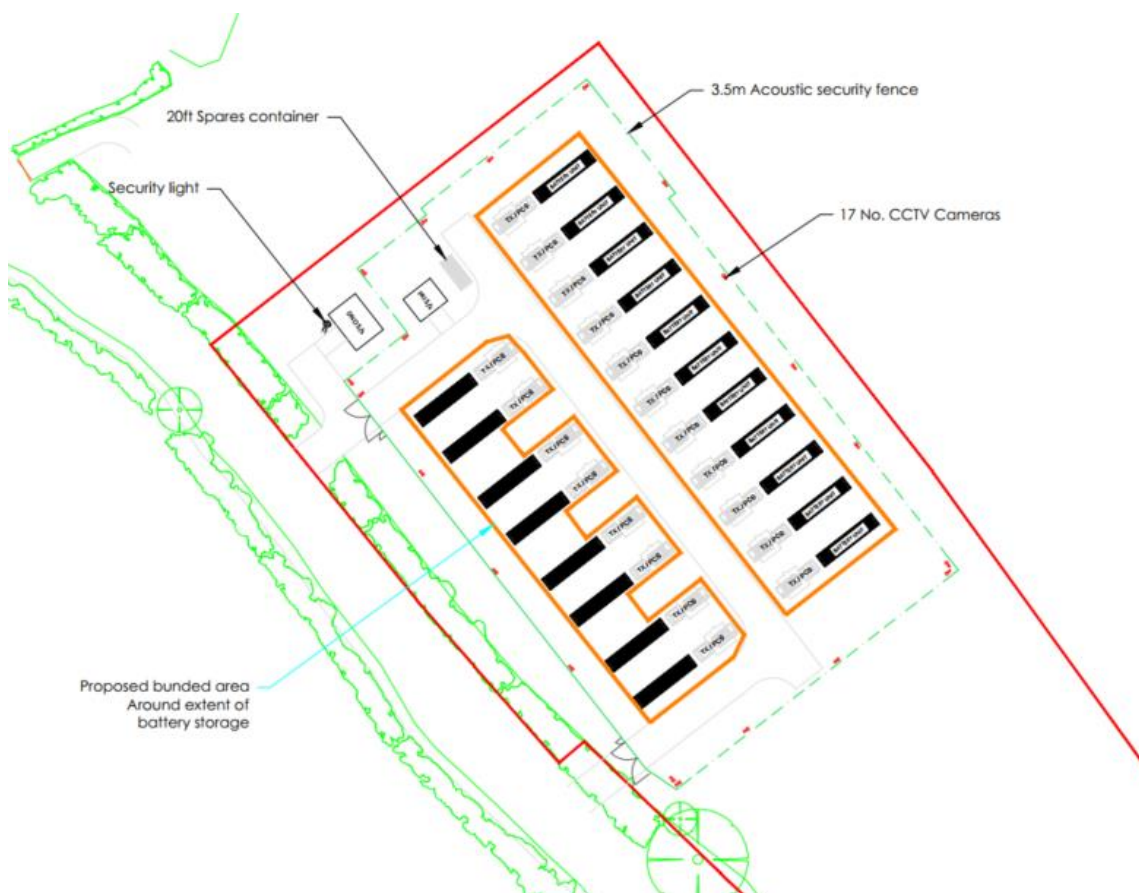
5.0 Description of Site and surrounding area

- 5.1 The site is located within a rural landscape of Lytchett Minster (approx. 1km SW) and within the Green Belt (GB). The town of Upton is beyond the A35 which bounds the site to the southeast. The site covers an area of approx. 2.2 ha in total, including the battery storage facility, a compound (approx. 0.5ha), grid connection cable corridor (approx. 1.2km long) and an area provided for biodiversity net gain enhancements (approx. 1.7ha including cable route).
- 5.2 The site comprises of pastoral fields and bound to the south, by a short stretch of the A35 dual carriageway, to the north-west, by a tributary stream of Sherford River and to the south-west, by a native hedgerow with trees, and an access track beyond. The site is not enclosed to the north-east, with the wider field area enclosed by a mixed native hedgerow.
- 5.3 The location of the battery storage units is situated to the west of Upton (the site boundary is approximately 56m from the settlement although the battery cells are situated further away) but is separated from the town by the A35 dual carriageway. The main part of the site is situated to the north east of Lytchett Minster (approximately 850m away from the main village). The nearest residential dwelling One Elm Cottage to the north west is approx. 140m from the site boundary. Residential properties to the south, beyond A35 dual carriageway are approx. 150m from the battery units.
- 5.4 To the north of the main part of the site, approx. 350m away, is the Harbour View Burial Ground and Crematorium and to the west approx. 120m is Lytchett Minster Conservation Area, separated by two roads around a small triangular field and mature trees/vegetation.
- 5.5 The site extends to the north east to connect to the electricity substation at Lytchett by means of an underground cable which is partly within the 400m Heathland buffer. The site also crosses the A350 road in order to achieve connection to the substation.
- 5.6 There are no Public Rights of Way (PRoW) crossing the site however, The Poole Harbour Trail long distance recreation route (SE18/5) crosses the A35 on the B3067, 160m south of the site. A further public footpath (SE18/3) passes 330m to the east of the site, connecting the A35 with the A350.
- 5.7 Except to the south/south east where the site is adjacent to A35 dual carriageway and urban area of Upton, the surrounding landscape is predominantly rural with a mixture of hedgerows, heathland, farmland, and scattered residential properties. BT telephone exchange to the SW and Lytchett substation are the exception. Dorset Heathlands Ramsar (international treaty for the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands) and Special Protection Area (SPA), Dorset Heaths Special Area of Conservation (SAC) is located within 400m. The Upton Heath Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) located approximately 720m north east, Poole Harbour Heath 704m south and Holton and Sandford Heath 1.4km south west of the site.

- 5.8 Grade II listed buildings lie approximately 260m to the SW, 340m to the west and 75m to the south beyond A35 dual carriageway. The Dorset National Landscape (formerly AONB) lies approximately 2.4 km south of the site and ancient woodland Hill Wood is 1.1km west of the site. No scheduled monuments are within 2km radius from the site.
- 5.9 The site will be accessed from Randalls Hill to the west via an existing unnamed access track shared with BT telephone exchange.
- 5.10 There are no watercourse features within the site boundary. Runoff from the existing greenfield site currently drains as greenfield runoff into the existing watercourses adjacent to the site to the southern corner. The topographical survey indicates that site slightly falls down towards south/southeast.

6.0 Description of Development

- 6.1 The proposal is to construct a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) that will be operational for 40 years with a storage capacity of up to 32MW. The application is in Full and includes details of the associated infrastructure, landscaping, fencing, site access road, biodiversity net gain planting and cable corridors connecting it to the National Grid (NG) Lytchett Substation.



1- Proposed Plan

6.2 The proposed BESS has the following components:

Table 1 – Proposal Summary

Component	Detail
19 x Battery Containers	The maximum height 3.4m set on a concrete slab included in maximum height. Metal and finished in a white colour.
19 x Power Conversion Units (PCS) (Inverter)	The maximum height 3.4m set on a concrete slab included in maximum height.
19 x Transformers	The maximum height 3.4m set on a concrete slab included in maximum height.
1 x BESS Private Switch Room, also includes control room and communications equipment to permit remote control	The maximum height 3m
1 x DNO Substation (Distribution Network Operator Substation)	Maximum height of 3m
1 x Spares container	Maximum height of 2.6m
1 x Parking Space	

17 x Infra-red CCTV cameras mounted on poles	The maximum height of the pole mounted CCTV cameras will be 3.6m
Acoustic fencing	Timber acoustic fence along the perimeter of BESS will be treated with fire resistant coating on both sides. The height of the acoustic fencing will be 3.5m
Access track	Existing access from Randalls Hill via unnamed road shared with the telephone exchange compound. It will be formed by a 2m crushed stone threshold adjoining the road.
Internal track	Maximum width 4m. Finished in concrete.
Cable Route	Cable route is approximately 1.2km in length and approx. 1.2m deep.

6.3 An underground cable will run from the battery storage units to the NG Lytchett substation. Two site accesses are proposed from unnamed track off Randalls Hill southwest which is shared with telecom exchange compound.

7.0 Relevant Planning History

Application reference	Site address	proposal	Decision and decision date
P/ESC/2021/03522	Application site	Screening Opinion for the development of a solar PV farm generating 16.83MW of energy	EIA development 22.10.2021
P/ESC/2021/05497	Application site	Request for EIA Screening Opinion under Section 6 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 for a 16.83 MW solar scheme and 20 – 22 MW Battery Energy Storage Scheme (BESS)	EIA development 10.01.2022
P/ESP/2022/00245	Application site	Request for EIA Scoping Opinion under the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 for a 16.83 MW solar scheme and 20 – 22 MW Battery Energy Storage Scheme (BESS)	Scoping opinion adopted 15.02.2022

7.1 Other planning applications within the area relevant to the proposed development:

Application reference	Site address	proposal	Decision and decision date
6/2019/0608	Land near Lytchett Substation, Blandford Road North, Poole, BH16 6AB Approx 847m north east from application site	Erection of a fast response electricity storage unit	Approved 04.02.2020 Under construction
6/2013/0132	Land at Race Farm, Nr Lytchett Minster Approx 1.04km north west of application site	Construction of a solar park including ground mounted solar voltaic arrays, generating up to 6.2 MWp of electricity, transformer housings, security fencing, cameras, landscaping and other associated works.	Approved 10 April 2013 Operational
3/13/0948/FUL	Land adjacent to Hendbury Quarry, Hendbury Plantation, Old Market Road, Corfe Mullen Approx 3km north of application site	Installation and operation of a solar farm and associated infrastructure, including photovoltaic panels, mounting frames, inverters, transformers, substations, fence and pole mounted security cameras, for the life of the solar farm.	Approved 28.05.2014 Operational
6/2013/0133	Land North of Newton Farm, Lytchett Minster	Construction of a solar park including ground mounted solar voltaic arrays, generating up to 3.3 MWp of	Approved 28.06.2013 Operational

	Approx 3.4km west from application site	electricity, transformer housings, security fencing, cameras, landscaping and other associated works.	
6/2013/0134	Land South of Newton Farm, Lytchett Minster Approx 3.5km west from application site	Construction of a solar park including ground mounted solar voltaic arrays, generating up to 8.1 MWp of electricity, transformer housings, security fencing, cameras, landscaping and other associated works.	Approved 28.06.2013 Operational
6/2012/0228	Redbridge Farm, Dolmans Hill, Lytchett Matravers, BH16 6HP Approx 3.9km north west from application site	Installation of ground mounted solar photovoltaic arrays, generating up to 4.99 MW, together with inverter housing and associated infrastructure.	Approved 08.11.2012 Operational
6/2011/0086	Slepe Farm, Dorchester Road, Lytchett Minster, BH16 6HS Approx 4.6km west from application site	Install an array of solar photovoltaic modules and a solar inverter cabinet.	Approved 12.04.2011 Operational

8.0 List of Constraints

Dorset Heathlands - 5km Heathland buffer

Dorset heathlands - 400m heathland buffer (underground cabling route only)

Right of Way: Footpath SE18/3 (within underground cabling route)

SGN - High pressure gas pipeline 150m or less from Regional High Pressure Pipelines (>7 bar)

SGN - Medium pressure gas pipeline 25m or less from Medium Pressure Pipelines (75mbar - 2 bar)

Risk of Surface Water Flooding Extent 1 in 30, 1 in 100 and 1 in 1000

EA - JBA - Risk of Groundwater Emergence; Groundwater levels are either at or very near (within 0.025m of) the ground surface.; Within this zone there is a risk of groundwater flooding to both surface and subsurface assets. Groundwater may emerge at significant rates and has the capacity to flow overland and/or pond within any topographic low spots.

9.0 Consultations

All consultee responses can be viewed in full on the website.

Consultees

1. **Environment Agency** – Final comments received 11.07.2024

Following an initial objection due to risk of pollution to controlled waters, the EA confirmed the Applicant has provided sufficient detail regarding water drainage. The EA has confirmed removal of its holding objection subject to conditions. (Conditions 12, 13, 14, 15 and Informative 1)

2. **Dorset and Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Service (DWFRS)** – Final comments received 01.11.2024

Initial comments received from DWFRS has offered guidance regarding design, especially spacing between BESS units/containers; access and turning of emergency vehicles on site. Further guidance on water supply was offered to LPA/Applicant with initial comments.

Following the amendments to the site layout and ongoing assessment of the suitability of the fire engineered solution regarding spacing of containers, DWFRS are satisfied this achieves the objectives of National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 855. Subject to conditions DWFRS has no objection to proposal (Conditions 27, 28)

3. **National Highways** - Comments received 30.05.2023

National Highways has no comments on the development given the location and scale of the proposals in relation to the strategic road network for which we are the relevant highway authority. Neither the A350 nor the A35 in this location form part of the strategic network for which we are responsible and comments should be sought from Dorset Council's highways development management team, as the relevant local highway authority in this case.

4. **Natural England** – Comments received 05.06.2023

Natural England has no objection to proposal

5. DC – Landscape – Final comments received 21.02.2024

Following the amendments to the layout, the Landscape Team are satisfied that subject to conditions, the proposal is acceptable in terms of landscape and visual impact. (Conditions 7, 8, 9, 10, 11)

6. DC - Natural Environment Team (NET) – Comments received 07.07.2023

Biodiversity Plan submitted and approved by NET on 07.07.2023 and a Certificate of Approval issued on 07.07.2023. (Conditions 19, 20, 21)

7. DC - Rights of Way Officer - No comments received

8. DC - Highways – Final comments 13.08.2024

Following the amendments and submission of additional information, Dorset Council Highways has no objection to the proposal, subject to conditions and informative as per their comments received on 22.08.2023, 24.05.2024 and 13.08.2024. (Conditions 16, 17, 18 and Informative 3)

9. DC - Environmental Assessment – Comments received on 05.11.2024

Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) and Appropriate Assessment (AA) have concluded that in accordance with Natural England's guidance note on the assessment of road traffic emissions under the habitats regulations, it is concluded that the proposed development will not result in a likely significant effect upon the Dorset Heathlands SPA and Ramsar and Dorset Heaths SAC as a result of impacts upon air quality as a result of additional vehicular traffic.

Updated EIA screening opinion received 05.11.2024 - **EIA not required**

10. DC - Coastal risk management – No comments received

11. DC - Trees (East & Purbeck) – Comments received 13.09.2023

No objection to proposal subject to condition (Condition 7)

12. DC Environmental Health (EHO) – Comments received 16.10.2024

Following an initial objection, the EHO has confirmed the additional Noise Mitigation and Updated Modelling for Battery Storage Facility received on 09.10.2024 has demonstrated that a rating level of 35dB LAr,Tr at 1.5m above ground at the nearest noise sensitive receptors can be achieved. Accordingly, the EHO has confirmed removal of its objection subject to conditions. (Condition 22)

13. DC - Minerals & Waste Policy – Comments received 21.08.2023

The Mineral Planning Authority notes that a part of the proposed site lies within the Minerals Safeguarding Area (MSA) designated in Policy SG1 of the Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Minerals Strategy 2014. The safeguarded mineral underlying the site is expected to be sand and gravel. The Mineral Planning Authority accepts that, although the mineral is safeguarded, the safeguarded mineral comprises only a small part of the site and the MPA does not consider that the area involved justifies further mineral assessment and possible prior extraction.

The MPA can confirm that in this case, on the site identified for this proposal, there is no mineral safeguarding objection.

14. DC - Flood Risk Management – Final comments received 22.02.2024

Following the amendments to the layout, the LLFA is satisfied that submitted document provides the necessary detail to substantiate the proposed surface water drainage strategy and to demonstrate that appropriate mitigation will be put in place for the management of any residual surface water or fluvial flood risk to the development. The LLFA has no objection subject to conditions and informative. (Conditions 23, 24; Informative 2)

15. DC Senior Archaeologist – Comments received 30.10.2024

The impact on archaeological remains is not a constraint to take into account when determining this application.

16. Dorset Wildlife Trust – No comments received

17. Ramblers Association – No comments received

18. Southern Gas Networks (SGN) – Comments received 13.03.2023

The response from SNG confirms that a local engineer will be in contact separately and that SGN objects to the development until such time as detailed consultation has taken place.

The response notes there are pressure gas pipelines in the vicinity of the site which are protected by a 'Deed of Grant', which prohibits certain activities within the easement strip, no addition to or removal of surface level, no structures over or within the specified distance of the pipeline. The response raises a series of points, including:

- Any intrusion with the safety zone will not be taken lightly and any intention to proceed should be accompanied by a risk assessment or provision of supporting evidence.
- There is a wind turbine in the vicinity of the pipeline and that any turbine should be 1.5 times the fixed mast height.
- No solar panels, equipment or buildings are to be installed within the SGN easement.

- Any cable crossings should cross at 90 degrees, have a minimum clearance of 600mm from the pipeline and installed in non-metallic ducts which extend 3m from the pipeline. Any cables running adjacent must be kept greater than 3 metres from the pipeline. Further details are available if you require them.
- No piling/boreholes will be allowed within 15 metres of a pipeline without an assessment of the vibration levels at the pipeline. The peak particle velocity at the pipeline should be limited to a maximum level of 75 mm/sec. Where the peak particle velocity is predicted to exceed 50 mm/sec, the ground vibration shall be monitored by you and a SGN technician must supervise on site.
- Vehicle crossings over the pipeline must be kept to a minimum and must cross at 90 degrees.

At the time of writing a further response from SGN remains outstanding. However, SGN has advised that it could be resolved by implementing suitable planning conditions and informatives (Condition 25; Informatives 5, 6).

19. Lytchett Minster & Upton Town Council – Comments received 30.05.2023

No objection

20. Lytchett Matravers and Upton Ward members– No comments received

Representations received

Summary of comments of objection/support:

The application was advertised by site notice as noted at the beginning of this report. No letters of objection were received.

10.0 Duties

s38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that the determination of planning applications must be in accordance with the development plan unless material circumstances indicate otherwise.

11.0 Relevant Policies

Development Plan

Purbeck Local Plan (2018-2034), Adopted July 2024

Material Considerations

Emerging Local Plans:

Paragraph 48 of the NPPF provides that local planning authorities may give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans according to:

- the stage of preparation of the emerging plan (the more advanced its preparation, the greater the weight that may be given);
- the extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant plan policies (the less significant the unresolved objections, the greater the weight that may be given); and
- the degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to the NPPF (the closer the policies in the emerging plan are to the policies of the NPPF, the greater the weight that may be given).

The Dorset Council Local Plan

The Dorset Council Local Plan Options Consultation took place between January and March 2021. Being at a very early stage of preparation, the relevant policies in the Draft Dorset Council Local Plan should be accorded very limited weight in decision making.

Emerging Neighbourhood Plans

N/A

National Planning Policy Framework (December 2023)

Paragraph 11 sets out the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Development plan proposals that accord with the development plan should be approved without delay. Where the development plan is absent, silent, or relevant policies are out-of-date then permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of approval would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the NPPF or specific policies in the NPPF indicate development should be restricted.

Other relevant NPPF sections include:

- Section 4. Decision taking: Para 38 - Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available...and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.
- Section 12 'Achieving well designed places indicates that all development to be of a high quality in design, and the relationship and visual impact of it to be

compatible with the surroundings. In particular, and amongst other things, Paragraphs 131 – 141 advise that:

The Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people.

It is important to plan positively for the achievement of high quality and inclusive design for all development, including individual buildings, public and private spaces and wider area development schemes.

Development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design.

- Section 14 'Meeting the challenges of climate change, flooding and coastal change'. Local planning authorities should not require applicants to demonstrate the need for renewable or low carbon energy and should approve applications if impacts are (or can be made) acceptable (Para. 163).
- Section 15 'Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment'- Paragraphs 185-188 set out how biodiversity is to be protected and encourage net gains for biodiversity.

National Planning Practice Guidance

The NPPG acknowledges the benefits of BESS and provides guidance to applicants and Local Planning Authorities (034 Reference ID: 5-034-20230814 and 035 Reference ID: 5-035-20230814 respectively). It recommends consultation with the local fire and rescue service and consideration of proposals against guidance produced by the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) (2023).

The associated Chief Planner Newsletter of 11 September 2023 notes that ensuring BESS developments are sited, installed, operated, maintained and decommissioned safely are priorities for the Government together with ensuring that potential risks to safety are duly assessed.

Grid Scale Energy Storage System Planning Guidance

This planning guidance was published by the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) in 2023. It provides detailed guidance on the planning, design and management of BESS developments and references other guidance, comprising:

- National Fire Protection Authority (NFPA) (2023) – Standard for the Installation of Stationary Energy Storage Systems ('NFPA855')
- FM Global (2017) Property Loss Prevention Data Sheets: Electrical Energy Storage Systems

National Policy, Government Guidance and Strategy

- Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener (2021)
- British Energy Security Strategy (2022)
- Government Response: Facilitating the deployment of large-scale and long duration electrical storage (2022)
- Powering Up Britain (2023)
- Powering Up Britain Energy Security Plan (2023)
- Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1) (2023)
- National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3) (2023)
- UK Battery Strategy (2023)
- Health and Safety Guidance for Grid Scale Electrical Energy Storage Systems (March, 2024)

Other material considerations

Supplementary Planning Documents and Guidance

- Dorset Heathlands Planning Framework 2020-2025 Supplementary Planning Document
- Climate & Ecological Emergency Strategy, Dorset Council (15 July 2021)
- Natural Environment, Climate and Ecology Strategy 2023-25 Refresh (March 2023)
- Planning for Climate Change: Interim Guidance and Position Statement (December 2023)

12.0 Human rights

Article 6 - Right to a fair trial.

Article 8 - Right to respect for private and family life and home.

The first protocol of Article 1 Protection of property.

This recommendation is based on adopted Development Plan policies, the application of which does not prejudice the Human Rights of the applicant or any third party.

13.0 Public Sector Equalities Duty

13.1 As set out in the Equalities Act 2010, all public bodies, in discharging their functions must have “due regard” to this duty. There are 3 main aims:-

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people with certain protected characteristics where these are different from the needs of other people

- Encouraging people with certain protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where participation is disproportionately low.

Whilst there is no absolute requirement to fully remove any disadvantage the Duty is to have “regard to” and remove or minimise disadvantage and in considering the merits of this planning application the planning authority has taken into consideration the requirements of the Public Sector Equalities Duty. It is not considered that the application will affect anyone with protected characteristics.

14.0 Financial benefits

- 14.1 Employment, particularly during the construction and decommissioning phases of the development, as well as statutory and site operators during the lifetime of the development will provide financial benefits to the local economy.

15.0 Environmental Implications

- 15.1 At a national level the Government aims to reduce carbon emissions by 80% (compared to 1990 levels) by 2050 and fully decarbonise the electricity grid by 2030. The Government aims to achieve these targets in a number of ways, including through development of up to 50GW of offshore wind by 2030 and a fivefold increase in solar by 2035 (Powering Up Britain, 2023).
- 15.2 The Government’s Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener (October 2021) acknowledges that the path to net zero in 2050 will respond to the innovation and adoption of new technologies over time. Whilst the exact technology and energy mix in 2050 cannot be known now, the Government identifies a number of green technologies (including storage), which interact to meet demand across sectors.
- 15.3 Electricity storage complements the rapid necessary expansion of renewable technologies by providing a balancing function to support the intermittent energy supply from renewable sources.
- 15.4 National Policy Statement EN-1 (2023) states that storage has a key role to play in achieving net zero and providing flexibility to the energy system. Storage is noted to support the usable output from intermittent low carbon generation, reducing the total amount of generation capacity needed on the energy system, thereby helping to reduce constraints on the network and helping to defer or avoid the need for costly network upgrades as demand increases. EN-1 confirms there is currently around 4GW of electricity storage operational in Great Britain, around 3GW of which is pumped hydro storage and around 1GW is battery storage.
- 15.5 National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3) (2023) adds that as the electricity grid sees increasing levels of generation from variable renewable generators such as offshore wind, onshore wind and solar power, there will be an increasing need for storage infrastructure to balance electricity supply and demand.
- 15.6 The Government’s British Energy Security Strategy (2022) sets out how the Government seeks to secure clean and affordable energy in the long term. The wide-

ranging initiatives include encouraging all forms of flexibility with sufficient largescale, long-duration electricity storage (LLES) to balance the overall system.

- 15.7 In August 2022, the Government issued a response on facilitating the deployment of LLES. The response states that *“a smart and flexible energy system is essential for integrating high volumes of low carbon power, heat, and transport. The importance of flexibility for our energy security to ensure that we can efficiently match supply and demand and minimise waste was recognised in the British Energy Security Strategy. We anticipate that at least 30GW of low carbon flexible assets, which includes electricity storage, may be needed by 2030 to maintain energy security and cost-effectively integrate high levels of renewable generation.”*
- 15.8 The document notes that battery developments have an important role to play in achieving net zero, helping to integrate renewables, maximising their use, contributing to supply, and helping manage constraints in certain areas. The response further recognises that electricity storage developments provide low carbon flexibility, replacing some unabated gas generation and diversifying our technology mix to help meet energy targets.
- 15.9 The Government’s Powering Up Britain: Energy Security Plan (2023) explains the Government is facilitating the deployment of electrical storage at all scales and is working to ensure an appropriate, robust and future-proofed health and safety framework is sustained as electrical storage deployment increases.
- 15.10 In November 2023 the Government published the UK Battery Strategy. It reiterates that batteries will play an essential role in our energy transition and our ability to achieve net zero by 2050. In respect of battery safety, the Strategy notes the UK has a strong health and safety and regulatory framework covering the breadth of different batteries noting work is continuing to improve battery safety. It confirms the Government will continue to prioritise cross-departmental work into the ongoing safety of industrial-scale batteries.
- 15.11 The Department for Energy Security and Net Zero’s (DESNZ) January 2024 consultation on Long Duration Electricity Storage identifies that is a pipeline of at least 35GW of lithium-ion BESS across the UK with either a planning application submitted, planning application accepted or currently under construction.
- 15.12 In April 2024 the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) published ‘Health and Safety Guidance for Grid Scale Electrical Energy Storage Systems’ (March 2024). This document highlights the rapid growth of grid-scale electrical energy storage systems (EESS) connecting to our electricity system which play an essential role in our energy transition and our ability to achieve net zero targets. This document which highlights the existing legislation, regulations, standards and other industry guidance is intended as a good practice guidance to EESS project developers to help navigate the Health and Safety (H&S) landscape and ensure relevant aspects of H&S are integrated into their process(es). Although this guidance focusses on ‘grid-scale’ battery applications, targeting variants of lithium-ion batteries, however, the nature of the guidance is such that elements will also be applicable to other battery technologies or grid scale storage systems.

- 15.13 In November 2024 the newly formed National Energy System Operator (NESO) put forward the conclusions as part of its official advice to the new ministers on how to reach Labour election pledge to decarbonise the power system by 2030. The publication titled '*Clean Power 2030 – Advice on achieving clean power for Great Britain by 2030*' lay out pathways for how Great Britain can reach a clean power system by 2030. The clean power pathways see a four-to-fivefold increase in demand flexibility (excluding storage heaters), an increase in grid connected battery storage from 5 GW to over 22 GW, more pumped storage and major expansions in onshore wind (from 14 GW to 27 GW) and solar (from 15 GW to 47 GW) along with nuclear plant life extensions.
- 15.14 Chapter 2 lists a battery storage as one of the core elements to achieve a clean power system; ...' *battery storage (5 GW to over 22 GW) is needed to displace gas, to meet growing demand and to replace retiring plants. Longer-duration storage and dispatchable clean resources, such as gas with carbon capture and storage, can have an important role alongside renewables.*' This represents a major scale-up in build rates, but there are many more projects in the pipeline. Batteries currently have a one-to-two-year deployment lead time and annual levels of deployment have increased every year since 2020.
- 15.15 The connections queue is currently oversubscribed. Delivery relies on reforms to the connections queue, planning issues being resolved and market structures providing the right revenue opportunities. The vision for Clean Power 2030 is to ensure that batteries will be included on a level economic playing-field with all other technologies.
- 15.16 The NPPF (Para. 163) sets out that when determining planning applications for renewable and low carbon development, local planning authorities should not require applicants to demonstrate the overall need for renewable energy and recognise that even small-scale projects provide a valuable contribution to significant cutting of greenhouse gas emissions. It also sets out that applications should be approved if the impacts are (or can be made) acceptable.
- 15.17 Dorset Council accepts that energy needs to be produced from renewable sources and the Council must aim to provide this within its administrative area. The Council recognised this by declaring a climate emergency in May 2019, with the aim of taking a lead as an authority in tackling climate change. In November 2019 this was escalated to a Climate and Ecological Emergency. On 28 July 2024 Dorset Council declared a Nature Emergency.
- 15.18 Dorset Council's Natural Environment, Climate & Ecology Strategy (2023) includes a number of missions to support the strategy. 'Mission 1: Renewable Generation' identifies the deployment of renewables and storage to support the overarching mission of decarbonising the grid by 2035. Dorset Council published the Climate Change: Interim Guidance and Position Statement in December 2023. The Statement confirms battery storage infrastructure as forming a component of standalone renewable energy generation schemes. It notes climate change will be given significant weight as a material consideration in the balance when determining applications, in line with the legislative and national policy context.

- 15.19 The proposed BESS is 32MW. It would help to support local, national, and international targets through the provision of renewable energy supporting infrastructure, thereby reducing carbon emissions and helping to decarbonise the grid. The location, in close proximity to a substation, would reduce electricity losses compared to transmission of electricity over longer distances. It is confirmed that the Applicant has secured a Point of Connection (POC) from this specific site to the Lytchett substation approx. 18 months from commencement of development, subject to planning permission. The proposal therefore has potential to make an early positive contribution towards the above objectives.
- 15.20 The environmental benefits have to be balanced against the environmental impacts of the development, including: embodied carbon in construction materials; associated transport emissions during construction and operation; and the partial development of a greenfield site with associated landscaping.
- 15.21 The proposal would provide storage for electricity generated that can be made available at peak usage times. This reduces the need to rely on using power stations that meet peak demand, some of which use fossil fuels and therefore have a harmful impact on the climate.

16.0 Planning Assessment

The main considerations involved with this application are:

- The principle of the development
- impact on the Green Belt and very special circumstances (VSCs)
- Landscape and visual impact
- Impact on the character of the area
- The impact on neighbouring amenity - noise
- Highway impacts, safety, access and parking
- Health and Safety – fire safety
- Flood risk and drainage
- Pollution
- Impact on protected habitats – Dorset Heathlands
- Impact on trees
- Archaeology and heritage assets
- Biodiversity and BNG
- Planning balance

The following report looks at each material planning consideration in turn. In the interests of clarity, in ascribing weight to the planning considerations in favour and against, the following scale will be used: **none, limited, moderate, significant and substantial**.

16.1 Principle of Development

Principle of BESS development - Sustainability

- 16.1.1 The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material conditions indicate otherwise.
- 16.1.2 The Purbeck Local Plan (PLP) does not reference planning policy in relation to battery storage, however in **Objective 3: an environmental objective:** an aim to achieve sustainable development “*to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy*, highlighting the need for alternative systems like battery storage to be put in place within the Dorset Council administrative area.
- 16.1.3 Furthermore, environmental vision and objective aims to:
- *Conserve the outstanding character and distinctiveness of Purbeck's coastline, countryside, cultural heritage and settlements.*
 - *Improve resilience to climate change and mitigate against flood risk.*
 - *Conserve and enhance Purbeck's natural habitat, biodiversity and geodiversity.*
 - *Ensure high quality, sustainable design fit for all.*
- 16.1.4 Paragraph 73 of the PLP highlights the opportunities for climate change adoption and mitigation by:
- d) *supporting appropriate proposals that would increase low carbon or renewable energy generation;*
 - e) *encouraging sustainable design in new development and encouraging use of decentralised, renewable or low carbon energy supplies; and*
 - f) *directing most new development to the most accessible and sustainable parts of the plan area.*
- 16.1.5 Furthermore, paragraph 74 of the PLP ‘*encourages the use and supply of low carbon energy with a national target for 15% of energy needs to be delivered from renewable sources...*’
- 16.1.6 Policy E3: Renewable energy states “*The Council encourages the use and supply of renewable and low carbon energy provided any adverse impacts can be satisfactorily addressed. Proposals for development which supplies renewable, or low carbon, energy will be permitted provided that:*
- a. *the technology is suitable for the location and the scale, siting, layout, design and colour of development would not cause significant harm to landscape character or visual amenity;*
 - b. *development would not harmfully interfere with radar, telecommunications, air traffic, railways, or highway safety;*
 - c. *development would not cause significant harm to the amenity of existing neighbours because of its scale, position, noise, vibration, overshadowing, flicker (associated with wind turbines), or other emissions;*

- d. development would not harm the significance and setting of the heritage assets;*
- e. details of suitable mitigation measures and a site restoration plan are submitted as part of a planning application; and*
- f. development can be safely accessed (both during construction and whilst operating).*

- 16.1.7 Although not directly related to battery storage or renewable energy schemes themselves, Policy E3 does advocate the transition to a low carbon future. BESS schemes would work to improve the overall efficiency of the Grid which could accelerate the adoption of more renewable energy schemes.
- 16.1.8 Although not generating renewable energy the proposal would assist in managing supply and demand for renewable energy across the grid. This has been accepted by Dorset Council recently when a large 400MW BESS (ref. no. P/FUL/2023/04657) at Chickerell and smaller 47.5MW BESS at Mannington (ref. no. P/FUL/06578) were approved in July 2024.
- 16.1.9 Policy E3 should be considered in conjunction with the Council's Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy which recognises electricity will need to be generated from renewable energy, and that therefore, inter alia, it is also essential to be able to store energy locally and manage supply and demand. The criteria under Policy E3 regarding the impacts on landscape, visually, local amenity, biodiversity, neighbouring amenity, access safety are considered later in this report.
- 16.1.10 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) also addresses climate change. Paragraph 8c of the NPPF notes that a key part of achieving sustainable development is *"mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy"*.
- 16.1.11 Para. 157 of the NPPF specifically states that the planning system should support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure. Para. 162 notes that local planning authorities should not require applicants to demonstrate the overall need for renewable or low carbon energy and recognise that even small scale projects provide a valuable contribution to cutting greenhouse gas emissions and that such applications should be approved if the impacts are (or can be made) acceptable.
- 16.1.12 The National Policy Statement (NPS) for Energy (NPS EN-1) sets out national policy for nationally significant energy infrastructure and states that it may be a material consideration for any relevant application. Given the nature of this application officers consider that it is a material consideration here. The Overarching National Policy Statement (NPS) for Energy (NPS EN-1) is part of a suite of NPSs issued by the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change. It sets out the government's policy for delivery of major energy infrastructure. Paragraph 2.5.1 recognises that *"given the vital role of energy to economic prosperity and social well-being, it is important that our supplies of energy remain secure, reliable and affordable."*

- 16.1.13 Paragraph 2.3.6 of EN-1 notes that it is critical that the UK continues to have a secure and reliable supply of electricity as we transition to a low carbon economy. It is noted that to manage the risks to achieving security of supply we need sufficient electricity capacity to meet demand at all times and that electricity demand must be simultaneously and continuously met by its supply.
- 16.1.14 Paragraph 2.3.7 of EN-1 states that both demand and supply of electricity will increase in the coming decades and that existing transmission networks will have to evolve and adapt to handle increases in demand. Paragraph 3.7.4 states that new electricity infrastructure projects will add to the reliability of the national energy supply and provide crucial national benefits which are shared by all users of the system. Paragraph 3.3.3 develops this point noting that *“To ensure that there is sufficient electricity to meet demand, new electricity infrastructure will have to be built to replace output from retiring plants and to ensure we can meet increased demand”*.
- 16.1.15 The NPS EN-1 recognises the importance of energy storage in responding to climate change. Paragraph 3.3.25 states: *“Storage has a key role to play in achieving net zero and providing flexibility to the energy system, so that high volumes of low carbon power, heat and transport can be integrated.”*
- 16.1.16 Paragraph 3.3.27 continues: *“Storage can provide various services, locally and at the national level. These include maximising the usable output from intermittent low carbon generation (e.g. solar and wind), reducing the total amount of generation capacity needed on the system; providing a range of balancing services to the NETSO and Distribution Network Operators (DNOs) to help operate the system; and reducing constraints on the networks, helping to defer or avoid the need for costly network upgrades as demand increases.”*
- 16.1.17 NPS EN-1 also identifies energy storage as having a key role in reducing electricity costs and improving energy security. Paragraph 3.3.25 states: *“Storage is needed to reduce the costs of the electricity system and increase reliability by storing surplus electricity in times of low demand to provide electricity when demand is higher.”*
- 16.1.18 Additionally, The National Policy Statement (NPS) for Energy (NPS EN-5), in paragraph 2.2.2 sets out how the siting of such projects like BESS is determined:
- *the location of new generating stations or other infrastructure requiring connection to the network, and/or*
 - *system capacity and resilience requirements determined by the Electricity System Operator.*
- 16.1.19 Building upon the Joint Action Plan led by Ofgem and the Government, the Energy Networks Association launched a nationwide initiative in 2023 to accelerate grid connections for certain asset classes, with BESS selected due to its ability to facilitate large-scale renewable deployment and to alleviate many of the existing congestion and reinforcement issues that are compromising the ability to hit the net zero targets.

16.1.20 The settlement hierarchy as set out in superseded Purbeck Local Plan Part 1 (2012) remains unchanged within the adopted PLP, and the site is situated within the open countryside. The applicant has advised that the countryside location is essential due to limited opportunities to connect to the National Grid (in this instance the Lytchett substation). The BESS must be located close to a point of connection in order to utilise the available capacity to connect. There are a limited number of connection points within Dorset. In order to accommodate a BESS of this size, a connection of 33kV is required, which further limits connection opportunities.

16.1.21 The proposed development proposes infrastructure to support the National Grid in making more efficient use of energy, a significant proportion of which comes from renewable energy such as wind, which is erratic in its energy production. The battery facility allows energy to be stored at times of high production and low demand so that it can then be used at times when production is low but demand is high. It will help to use existing energy resources more efficiently. The principle of the proposed development, which will help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, is consistent with the aims and objectives of relevant Local Plan policies and provisions of the NPPF summarised above.

16.1.22 The proposed development complies with settlement hierarchy of the Purbeck Local Plan 2014-2034 (PLP) as set out in Policy EE3. It also complies with Policy E3 which advocate the transition to a low carbon future. The Purbeck Local Plan was adopted in July 2024 and found to be sound, and a logical approach to the delivery of low carbon development in the plan area. The proposed development is considered to be acceptable subject to all other material planning considerations of which an assessment is provided in this report and summarised in a planning balance exercise at the end of this report.

16.2 Impact on the Green Belt

16.2.1 The proposed development would result in 'harm' to the Green Belt because it constitutes inappropriate development as defined by the NPPF and that harm attributes substantial weight in the planning balance.

16.2.2 Paragraphs 152 and 153 of the NPPF state that:

- *“inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. ‘Very special circumstances’ (VSC) will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.”*

16.2.3 Paragraph 154 (g) states that an exception to the construction of new buildings as being inappropriate in Green Belt is:

- *not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development; or*
 - *not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt, where the development would re-use previously developed land and contribute to meeting an identified affordable housing need within the area of the local planning authority.”*
- 16.2.4 Harm to the openness of the GB may be considered in both spatial and visual terms. Factors such as the visual impact of the proposal, its volume; the duration of the development, its remendability and any provisions to return land to its original state or to an equivalent and the degree of activity likely to be generated, such as traffic generation are all relevant considerations.
- 16.2.5 Given its 40-year life span, the development would be temporary, but this lengthy period would mean openness is reduced for a considerable period.
- 16.2.6 Paragraph 156 of the NPPF states that:
- *“When located in the Green Belt, elements of many renewable energy projects will comprise inappropriate development. In such cases developers will need to demonstrate Very Special Circumstances (VSC) if projects are to proceed. Such Very Special Circumstances may include the wider environmental benefits associated with increased production of energy from renewable sources.”*
- 16.2.7 Policy E3 encourages sustainable generation of energy from renewable and low carbon sources where adverse social, environmental and visual impacts have been minimised to an acceptable level.
- 16.2.8 The submitted Planning Statement, Section 2 ‘Need for BESS and locational requirements), sets out how the proposed site has been selected as the most suitable site in the area for the proposed BESS development. The Planning Statement highlights the role of the applicant (Green Nation Energy Limited) to undertake site selection process across the country to identify suitable locations for development.
- 16.2.9 After a site selection process reviewing land within approx. 1km of the NG Lytchett substation, the proposed site was identified as suitable site for the proposed development being just over 1km from the NG Lytchett substation as feasible substation in terms of its available capacity to allow more connections.
- 16.2.10 The applicant’s justification for this Green Belt location relates to connectivity to the National Grid and the lack of available brownfield or industrial sites within approx. 1 km radius. Officers understand that it is only possible to connect renewable development to the National Grid at certain points. This depends on both the infrastructure being available but also the infrastructure having the capacity to allow a new connection to the grid. This significantly limits the number of places in which renewable energy schemes can be located. The Lytchett substation is one point at which there is an available connection. The

substation is approximately 1.1km from the site and the cable route forms part of this application. Furthermore, given that the available land in the vicinity of Lytchett substation is all within the Green Belt, the site selection could not avoid Green Belt location. The applicant has confirmed a secured grid connection at Lytchett Substation, justifying the Green Belt location.

- 16.2.11 The proposed development would be capable of storing 32MW of electricity and it would allow the release of additional electricity into the grid during peak usage times. This would help reduce the reliance on gas fuelled power stations which are used to manage peak demand as per NPS EN-1 guidance.
- 16.2.12 The surrounding landscape except Lytchett Minster Conservation Area (West), has no protected designation and has a moderate value. The cable route (NE) would pass up the track to it which lies between two Upland Heath Sites of Specific Scientific Significance (SSSI) currently in an unfavourable but recovering condition. Although the cable route does not go through SSSI, it is however within 400m heathland buffer zone. The settlement of Upton and the A35 dual carriageway to the south, junction with the A350 to the west, telecommunications mast and compound to SW and large NG substation to the NE influence the local landscape character and visual amenity, although generally the surrounding fields and rural forms of development to the N/NW and NE retain an attractiveness through their generally open character, associated vegetation and small copse which can be appreciated from Conservation Area and public viewpoints.
- 16.2.13 The nature of the proposal is such that it would have a harmful and urbanising effect on the natural environment on a temporary but nevertheless long-term basis. Landscape and visual effects will be mitigated to a degree by boundary hedges and additional planting which will screen the development from the public footpath (SE18/3), Conservation Area and assist in mitigating the impacts on the open character of the surrounding landscape. There are no close range views of the site in full, however, views towards the site from the B3067 Dorchester Road bridge over the A35 are filtered and screen by intervening vegetation though a framed view towards the site would appear to be possible from the west bound carriageway of the A35.
- 16.2.14 The applicant is seeking to complement the existing screening by increasing an area of native hedge, trees and shrubs planting along the NW, NE and SE site boundary to provide additional screening. As highlighted within the DC Landscape advice, these measures, along with the consideration of BNG interventions will ensure that the design of the proposed development responds to its setting, enhances Green Infrastructure (GI) corridors and reinforces local landscape character.
- 16.2.15 In this case, the proposed development is inappropriate as it does not meet any of the exceptions set out in NPPF paragraphs 154 or 155. In relation to impact on openness and conflict with the purposes of the Green Belt, given the temporary nature of the development (approx. 40 years), the low height design of the BESS compound (maximum 3.5m) and the mature screening around the site, harm would be limited in visual terms. Furthermore, the assessment that

the visual impact of the development on the character of the landscape will be enhanced and improved conservation of the landscape character, it is concluded that the development would cause limited landscape and visual harm and mitigation measures through additional planting would ensure that any harm would be localised.

16.2.16 In terms of the spatial impact, the site is at present undeveloped. The proposal will result in development of the part of the site, to accommodate the battery storage compound itself, the associated access points, acoustic fence, internal tracks and other health and safety paraphernalia. Although the scale of the proposed footprint is moderate (0.5ha), the proposal would have a harmful impact on the spatial aspect of the site. The openness of the Green Belt is characterised by its permanence in remaining open. By virtue of the proposal to develop a battery storage compound, the openness will be lost.

16.2.17 Whilst para 16.2.15 above concludes the harm to the openness of the GB in terms of landscape and visual impact would be limited, overall it is considered that the proposed development would result in harm to the Green Belt, both on a visual and spatial level, by virtue of the development of a previously undeveloped site and the scale of development (including associated paraphernalia). In addition it constitutes inappropriate development as defined by the NPPF. The application should therefore only be approved if the harm by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations, so as to amount to the very special circumstances necessary to justify the development.

16.2.18 It is accepted that the proposal would make a contribution to energy security nationally. As aforementioned, other sites within 1km of NG Lytchett substation have been explored but found unsuitable as more sensitive. Due to NG Lytchett substation being located within the GB there was no possibility to explore sites outside the GB. It is acknowledged that here are limited sites suitable for development and the site chosen minimises as far as possible the impact on the openness of the Green Belt. The substation is largely surrounded by Ramsar heathland and there are a number of residential properties in the immediate vicinity which prevent the proposed development being situated closer to the substation. The proposed development site is further away from residential properties and is also well screened reducing the visual impact on the openness of the Green Belt.

16.2.19 Although as previously mention in paragraph 16.2.17 the proposed development would result in 'harm' to the Green Belt because it constitutes inappropriate development as defined by the NPPF and that harm attributes substantial weight against the development in the planning balance, the officers note that past appeal decisions nationally (most recent one in October 2024 – APP/Q4245/W/24/3343250), have given "substantial weight" to the benefit of contributing to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by providing a facility to store surplus energy. This would contribute to national goals to reduce carbon emissions. The storage of surplus energy and reduction in Carbon emissions will be considered in more detail later when assessing whether there are 'very special circumstances' in Section 17 at the end of this report.

Very Special Circumstances (VSC)

16.2.20 The proposed development would result in 'harm' to the Green Belt because it constitutes inappropriate development as defined by the NPPF. That harm should be given **substantial weight**. The application can only be approved if there are VSCs which means that the harm to the Green Belt and any other harm from the development are clearly outweighed by other considerations.

16.2.21 The applicant has submitted a case for 'very special circumstances' (VSC) making the case that harm to the Green Belt is clearly outweighed by other circumstances as follows:

1. *Need for energy storage facilities*
2. *Site location and no alternative sites*
3. *Biodiversity and BNG*
4. *Temporary use of site*
5. *Farm diversification*
6. *Community benefit and wider economic benefits*

16.2.22 It is acknowledged that the scheme provides a facility which would contribute to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by storing surplus energy and releasing it during periods of peak demand. Paragraph 156 of the NPPF recognises that VSCs may include the wider environmental benefits from increased renewable energy production. In this respect the proposal is considered to have wider national environmental benefits and will be attributed weight for this reason.

16.2.23 As the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt, planning permission should only be granted in very special circumstances where the harm to the Green Belt and any other harm is clearly outweighed by very special circumstances. Thus, very special circumstances can only be considered once all impacts of the proposal have been assessed. Whether or not harm to the Green Belt identified in this report is clearly outweighed by VSCs is assessed in Section 17 at the end of this report.

16.2.24 In the interests of clarity, in ascribing weight to the material considerations in favour and against the development in the officer assessment below, the following scale will be used: **none, limited, moderate, significant and substantial**.

16.3. Landscape and visual impact

16.3.1 This application is supported by a Landscape and Visual Assessment (LVA) which provides an assessment of the potential effects of the proposed development on the existing landscape and visual amenity of the application site and surrounding area. The LVA is based upon a 3km radius for the consideration of potential landscape and visual effects.

- 16.3.2 The application site falls within the National Character Area (NCA) 135 Dorset Heathland. The character area is focussed around the large areas of internationally designated heathland, separated by river valleys and two natural harbours at Poole and Christchurch. The NCA profile concentrates on the lowland heath, and the conurbation of Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole. Relevant Key Characteristics refer to a low-lying landscape incised by shallow river valleys, agricultural fields bound by hedgerows and fences, and a sparse settlement pattern away from the main conurbation.
- 16.3.3 The application site is not located within any nationally or locally designated landscape and does not exhibit any special qualities which elevate its value beyond that of everyday landscape. The Dorset National Landscape (formerly known as AONB) which encompasses much of Poole Harbour and the heathland landscape lies approx. 2.5km south from the site at its closest point. Several blocks of Ancient Woodland are present in the landscape to the north-west of the site, with Hill Wood the closest at approximately 1.2km to the west.
- 16.3.4 The wider landscape is nationally and internationally designated for its biodiversity interest, with a significant extent of heathland recognised by Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar designations. A number of these nature conservation sites are also National Nature Reserves (NNR).
- 16.3.5 In terms of roads and recreational routes The Poole Harbour Trail long distance recreational route crosses the A35 on the B3067, 160m south of the site. This route provides a series of circular and linear walks completing a circuit of Poole Harbour. A further public footpath (SE18/3) passes to the east of the site, connecting the A35 with the A350, however, the site visit suggests this is closed as it is not possible to cross the A35.
- 16.3.6 Away from these two routes, public recreational access to the site area is limited to rural lanes crossing the landscape to the west. Beyond the A350 to the east, small areas of Access Land are present at Beacon Heath, with a larger area at Upton Heath.
- 16.3.7 The LVA itself contains an assessment of the landscape and visual effects of the proposed development and impact on the Green Belt. With regards to 'Landscape effects' the introduction of the proposed development will locally alter the existing small portion of a medium sized pastoral field of the application site to a landscape comprising a battery storage facility (BESS) with associated infrastructure. A large scale change would also typically be experienced within immediately adjoining fields. To the south and east the A35 and urban edge have lower scenic value due to the nature of built form, roads and hard boundary treatments. The boundary vegetation to the south and north-west is generally of higher value as it contains mature native trees with understory and occasional marginal planting close to waterways. The watercourses close to the site are also of higher sensitivity. Beyond the site boundaries, the scale of change would largely reduce to small as screening and/or filtering is present and as mitigation planting matures.

- 16.3.8 The amended layout changes have moved the southern fenced boundary of the site further south to accommodate the required fire access alongside a revised battery arrangement. These changes have not resulted in any loss of existing sensitive features.
- 16.3.9 The LVA identified that the proposed landscape mitigation includes strategic planting and enhancement to the boundaries of the proposed development. These measures, along with the consideration of BNG interventions will ensure that the design of the proposed development responds to its setting, enhances Green Infrastructure (GI) corridors and reinforces local landscape character. The LVA concludes that the landscape effects on the site itself are assessed as moderate adverse and medium adverse during construction on views close to the immediate boundary of the site.
- 16.3.10 During operation, the proposed development will have a minor adverse landscape effect on the characteristics of the application site. Some beneficial elements including new hedgerow planting and tree planting; rich grassland and enhancements of the existing which will help integrate the proposed development within the wider landscape.
- 16.3.11 With regards to 'visual effects', the LVA notes that the proposed development will not be highly visible in the wider landscape as the site is reasonably well contained by the surrounding vegetation pattern which is typified by dense boundaries which contain mature trees and hedgerows. Views into the site are limited to a few locations close to the boundaries of the site that include opportune views from two elevated positions on the local road/cycle network.
- 16.3.12 The site is visible from the southern part Harbour View Crematorium and its burial grounds which are located just to the north of the site. From this location, views are heavily filtered through intervening vegetation and limited to small portions of the site.
- 16.3.13 With regards to 'visual effects', due to the location of the site in the lower portion of the field, there are a limited number of residential properties that would experience close distance views of the site. These are restricted to a single dwelling which overlooks the site positioned on Blandford Road North approximately 600m north of the site, and two properties on the junction of Randalls Hill and Huntick Road which are oriented southeast towards the site. Due to the orientation of the residential properties on the junction of Randalls Hill and Huntick Road, the visual effects of the proposed development are therefore restricted to the single residence which overlooks the site directly. This residence will experience the greatest visual change, which is likely to be limited due to the nature of topography, intervening vegetation and by the low heights (max. 3.5m) of the proposed development.
- 16.3.14 Generally within the wider landscape, private views are screened by intervening vegetation, topography and the A35 with its associated verges and acoustic fencing. Private residences on the northern edge of Upton, close to the site, are well screened by mature vegetation and trees on both sides of the road. It

should be noted that the A35 is slightly elevated above the urban edge Upton as it passes the site.

16.3.15 It is considered that the findings of the LVA are appropriate. The overall design of the proposed development has considered its setting within the confines of the Dorset Landscape Assessment; Valley Pasture/Rolling Wooded Pasture Landscape Types LCT to ensure the potential effects Upon landscape and visual receptors are limited. The siting of the proposed development within the limits of the existing boundaries comprising mature vegetation which will help to integrate the proposed development within the local landscape.

16.3.16 The relatively low elevation of the application site, low heights of the various proposed structures, and presence of existing vegetation across the landscape of the immediate and wider area would significantly help to screen potential inward views of the proposed development from the majority of visual receptors. The direct views of the proposed development are limited to a very small number of neighbouring receptors within relatively close proximity to the site.

16.3.17 The LVA submitted with the proposal and concludes: *that there are likely to be some moderate adverse impacts landscape effects on the site itself and medium adverse impacts on close views during construction on views close to the immediate boundary of the site. Following completion there are likely to be some minor to negligible adverse visual effects but these will be limited to a couple of view locations. The proposed development incorporates a considered mitigation strategy including buffers around the edges of the site that respond to the local landscape character and its associated GI in order to mitigate effects and deliver long-term landscape enhancement* and that *"...subject of application of the mitigation... the site is capable of accommodating the proposed development and the proposed development is considered to be acceptable in landscape and visual terms"* (Paragraphs 13.19 and 13.20).

16.3.18 The Council's Landscape Officer agrees with this conclusion of the LVA. The necessity for the proposed development to be in close proximity to existing National Grid infrastructure limits the number of sites that are available for the proposed BESS development. The proposed development will result in encroachment into the countryside; however, it is not considered that this would cause significant adverse impacts to visual amenity. Officers note that the development is temporary and therefore reversible. The Council's Landscape Officer has no landscape or visual objection to the proposed development subject to conditions being applied to any future planning approval with regard to the submission and approval and/or implementation of an arboricultural method statement, tree protection plan, and detailed hard and soft landscape proposals. Subject to these conditions the proposal is considered to be acceptable in landscape terms and complies with Policies E1, E12 of the Purbeck Local Plan (2018-2034) and section 12 of the NPPF (subject to conditions 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 at the end of this report).

16.3.19 Taking into consideration the location of the development, mature screening and proposed landscape mitigation measures, it is considered that any impacts

on landscaping are attributed limited weight against the development in the planning balance.

16.4. Impact on the character of the area

- 16.4.1 As previously noted in this report, the site is located within a rural landscape of Lytchett Minster. Except to the south/south east where the site is adjacent to A35 dual carriageway and urban area of Upton, the surrounding landscape is predominantly rural with a mixture of hedgerows, heathland, farmland, and scattered residential properties. BT telephone exchange to the SW and Lytchett substation are the exception. The site extends to the north east to connect to the electricity substation at Lytchett by means of an underground cable which is partly within the 400m Heathland buffer. The site also crosses the A350 road in order to achieve connection to the substation.
- 16.4.2 Dorset Heathlands Ramsar (international treaty for the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands) and Special Protection Area (SPA), Dorset Heaths Special Area of Conservation (SAC) is located within 400m. The Upton Heath Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) located approximately 720m north east, Poole Harbour Heath 704m south and Holton and Sandford Heath 1.4km south west of the site.
- 16.4.3 Grade II listed buildings lie approximately 260m to the SW, 340m to the west and 75m to the south beyond A35 dual carriageway. The Dorset National Landscape (formerly AONB) lies approximately 2.4 km south of the site and ancient woodland Hill Wood is 1.1km west of the site. No scheduled monuments are within 2km radius from the site.
- 16.4.4 The nearest residential dwelling One Elm Cottage to the north west is approx. 140m from the site boundary. Residential properties to the south, beyond A35 dual carriageway are approx. 150m from the battery units.
- 16.4.5 Site is suitably well screened by existing mature vegetation. With relatively low heights (max. 3.5m) of the various proposed structures, including perimeter/acoustic fencing, it is considered, the siting of the proposed development within the limits of the existing and proposed boundaries comprising mature vegetation will help to integrate the proposed development within the local landscape and will not have a negative impact on the character of the area.
- 16.4.6 The applicant has proposed in their landscaping plan to provide hedge/tree planting around the boundary of the field with tree planting around the northwestern, northeastern, and southeastern boundaries of the site compound. An appropriate condition securing proposed additional planting is necessary to enhance the appearance of the development. (Condition 8)
- 16.4.7 Furthermore, the proposal is temporary (40 years) and thereafter reversible. With this in mind and the assessment of the visual impact above, the proposal is considered to be acceptable and complies with Policies E7, E8, E12 of the Purbeck Local Plan (2018-2034) and section 12 of the NPPF.

The impact of the proposed development upon the character of the area is attributed limited weight against the development in the planning balance.

16.5 Impact on neighbouring amenity - Noise

- 16.5.1 There are no residential properties immediately adjacent to the application site. The location of the battery storage units is situated to the west of Upton (the site boundary is approximately 56m from the settlement although the battery cells are situated further away) but is separated from the town by the A35 dual carriageway. The main part of the site is situated to the north east of Lytchett Minster (approximately 850m away from the main village). The nearest residential dwelling One Elm Cottage to the north west is approx. 140m from the site boundary. Residential properties to the south, beyond A35 dual carriageway are approx. 150m from the battery units. While it may be possible to have limited views of the site in winter the outlook from neighbouring properties will be little affected.
- 16.5.2 The key issue in terms of potential amenity impacts relates to noise. Although the site is adjacent to the noisy A35 carriageway to the south, the BESS compound itself is located within the northern part of the site which is in more tranquil, rural location away from the A35. The design of the BESS compound includes 3.5m high solid acoustic barrier around the perimeter of the site, mitigating any potential noise impacts on nearby residential receptors.
- 16.5.3 A Noise Impact Assessment (NIA) dated November 2022 was produced to accompany the application. The NIA results demonstrated that all receptors (neighbouring properties) within the 250m radius had a low impact, with the exception of two receptors (Randalls Hill, One Elm Cottage) and property at Redwood Road which would have an adverse impact and therefore, mitigation is required for the proposed development.
- 16.5.4 The applicant has submitted updated Noise Modelling Results for Battery Storage Facility dated 09.10.2024. This technical note presents revised noise modelling results for the BESS to demonstrate if through a scheme of acoustic mitigation, a low rating level can be achieved during the night-time at NSR3 (Randalls Hill) and NSR4 (Redrow Road).
- 16.5.5 The noise modelling has been undertaken in response to feedback from the Environmental Health Officer (EHO), addressing concerns about night-time noise levels and demonstrating the low rating level requested by the EHO in their consultation response can be achieved, based on the cumulative impacts when considering the application site and the adjacent A35 carriageway.
- 16.5.6 The results from the above noise modelling shows that the specific sound level from the proposed BESS at NSR3 would be 32dB *Lar,Tr* and 33dB *Lar,Tr* at NSR4 which is also affected by the noise created by A35. This is considered a 'low' rating level as per the Association of Noise Consultants (ANC) technical note on BS 4142, ensuring compliance with the night-time noise criteria.

- 16.5.7 Following an initial objection, the EHO has confirmed the updated Noise Modelling Results for Battery Storage Facility received on 09.10.2024 has demonstrated that a rating level of no more than 35dB Lar,Tr at the nearest noise sensitive receptors can be achieved. Accordingly, the EHO has confirmed removal of its objection subject to condition (Condition 22) that require the design and construction of the development to include mitigation to ensure the above noise criteria are achieved and maintained throughout the development lifespan. Further conditions (Condition 26) regarding contaminated land and construction management (Condition 15) are also necessary to be imposed to this consent to ensure any possible risks from contamination are minimised.
- 16.5.8 With the 'low' rating noise levels achieved as demonstrated above and mitigation measures proposed to be secured via planning condition (Condition 22) the proposal would not have an adverse impact on residential amenity in accordance with Policy E12 of the Purbeck Local Plan (2018-2034).
- 16.5.9 Taking into consideration the nature of development, presence of A35 carriageway, mitigation measures proposed, it is considered the impact on neighbouring amenities regarding the noise is attributed limited weight against the development in planning balance.
- 16.6 Highway impacts, safety, access and parking
- 16.6.1 The site will be accessed via the existing access and an additional access off unnamed track from Randalls Hill. The application is supported by a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) which has been accepted by the Highway Authority as being appropriate and robust. It considers the impact of the traffic associated with the proposed development on the local highway network at both construction phase and when development will be operational.
- 16.6.2 The proposed development will be accessed by means of an adopted no through road branching from Randalls Hill that was dissected by the construction of the A35. It is anticipated that there will be a degree of vehicular movements during the construction phase of the development which estimated to last approx. 14 months. These are predicted to be low level, with no more than 2 two-way HGV movements per day.
- 16.6.3 Construction vehicles will be routed northeast via Randalls Hill up to A350 Blandford Road North. Additionally, as part of the CTMP the applicant will make use of route planning and any temporary signage / traffic management measures will be provided (location to be agreed with Dorset Highways). A road condition survey of the carriageway and adjacent highway verges can be carried out both before and after the construction period, in consultation with Dorset Highways. To illustrate the capacity of available parking onsite the applicant has shown standard size vehicle spaces. It is considered that the proposed routing is suitable to accommodate the predicated development traffic.

- 16.6.4 The submitted CTMP states that the access track to reach the second access gate to the south of the site is approx. 2.5m wide. This route has been used by HGVs and farm traffic for access in the past and it is considered acceptable for use in emergency for fire rescue vehicles. The applicant has also provided a swept path analysis that shows the two van vehicles needed to access the site at operational stage will be able to negotiate the existing track.
- 16.6.5 The applicant has stated that once operational the site will be unsupervised and only encounter low traffic levels with a maximum of one or two visits per week by car or van, for maintenance and inspection purposes. It is therefore anticipated that there will be no long-term operational traffic impact as a result of the proposed development.
- 16.6.6 The Council's Highways Team have been consulted on the proposals and they have confirmed that the submitted CTMP is satisfactory and robust and that the residual cumulative impact of the development cannot be thought to be "severe" when consideration is given to paragraphs 110 and 111 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), September 2023.
- 16.6.7 The Highway Authority considers that the proposal does not present a material harm to the transport network or to highway safety and consequently has raised no objections, subject to planning conditions requiring compliance with submitted construction traffic management plan, and manoeuvring, parking and loading areas, and visibility zone scheme to be submitted. (Conditions 16, 17, 17). Officers therefore consider that the proposals are acceptable in relation to highway safety.
- 16.6.8 As the proposal will include cabling via the A350 Blandford Road North the applicant must contact Dorset Highways using the Informative Note 3 prior to works to obtain the necessary licences and liaise with the Traffic Team. Any new or changes to existing access points for the A350 Blandford Road North will be subject to a separate planning application process.

In terms of highway impacts, safety, access and parking the proposal is considered no weight against the development in the planning balance.

16.7 Health and safety

- 16.7.1 Fire risk and associated impacts of any battery storage facilities have become principal concerns in terms of health and safety.
- 16.7.2 The NPPF notes Local Planning Authorities must determine applications on planning grounds only. Whilst fire risk can be associated with almost all types of development it is not routinely assessed at the planning application stage as potential implications are managed under other regulatory frameworks and regimes, such as Building Regulations and the Environmental Protection Act. However, given the nature of the development, providing lithium-ion battery storage, health and safety is a material planning consideration so far as it relates to land use planning. It should also be noted that the proposal does not constitute a building for the purposes of the Building Regulations, and so the

requirement to comply with the fire related aspects of Building Regulations does not apply.

- 16.7.3 The NPPF notes Local Planning Authorities should *'consult the appropriate bodies when considering applications for the siting of, or changes to, major hazard sites, installations or pipelines, or for development around them'* (Para. 45). Appropriate bodies have been consulted in respect of health and safety matters. The application falls within the consultation distance zones of a high pressure pipeline. Accordingly, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) advice has been sought and utility companies have been consulted. HSE has confirmed it does not advise against the development and has no further comment on the application.
- 16.7.4 Of relevance to health and safety considerations is planning policy E3 of PLP, which notes inter alia that development proposals will only be permitted provided *'It would not cause significant harm to the amenity of existing neighbours because of its scale, position, noise, vibration, overshadowing, flicker (associated with wind turbines), or other emissions.'*
- 16.7.5 The NPPF more generally promotes healthy places and notes decisions should *'promote public safety and take into account wider security and defence requirements'* (Para. 101). In respect of pollution, the NPPF states decisions should also ensure *'new development is appropriate for its location taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment, as well as the potential sensitivity of the site or the wider area to impacts that could arise from the development...'* (Para. 191).
- 16.7.6 National Planning Practice Guidance establishes guidance to Local Planning Authorities in the assessment of applications for battery storage (034 References ID: 5-034-20230814 and 035). It recommends consultation with the local Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) and consideration of guidance for FRS' published by the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) entitled 'Grid Scale Battery Storage System Planning'.
- 16.7.7 The NFCC guidance recognises BESS developments are a fundamental part of the UK's move toward a sustainable energy system and recognises the potential for fire. It notes the NFCC's expectation is that a comprehensive risk management process must be undertaken by operators to *'identify hazards and risks specific to the facility and develop, implement, maintain and review risk controls. From this process a robust Emergency Response Plan should be developed.'* The guidance is wide ranging. It includes a number of recommendations relevant at the planning stage (such as access and layout) as well as detailed design and site management recommendations (such as venting and signage). The guidance explains that every BESS development is different and states a Fire Rescue Services (FRS) should not limit themselves to the content of the guidance noting reference may be made to other guidance and standards including the internationally recognised guidance of the National Fire Protection Authority (NFPA) (2023) – Standard for the Installation of Stationary Energy Storage Systems ('NFPA 855').

16.7.8 In accordance with the Council's consultation protocol, the Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Services (DWFRS) has been consulted at the request of planning officers. The initial response form DWFRS has resulted in request for additional information to be submitted regarding layout, design, access, provision of a suitable water supply.

16.7.9 The applicant has submitted final amended site layout plan on 09.10.2024. The amended site layout plan contains:

- The amended layout to allow for alternative gaps of 4m and 6m between battery containers to the southwest row. This would create wider gaps for fire appliances to turn around.
- Additional access and turning – the applicant has created an additional access at the south east end of the site. It will also be possible for fire appliances to drive between the row of containers to the north east of the site and the fence with a 4m wide perimeter track on site. This will allow fire engines to turn around without reversing more than 20m as per requirements of the Fire Authority.
- Water supply – in the agreement with Wessex Water, the applicant has provided two fire hydrants within 90m of both site entrances which will be connected to one of the mains identified in close proximity to the site.
- Bunded areas - The BESS will be bunded and a valve fitted at each bund outlet, allowing the network to remain closed and firewater contained during the event of a fire or extremely wet weather.
- SuDS scheme - The SuDS scheme proposed will effectively reduce the runoff rate to less than the undeveloped (current) runoff rates because storage on site will be improved. An attenuation pond and conveyance trench, shown on the amended plan is also included in Appendix B of the submitted Contamination and Containment Drainage Strategy. The attenuation pond has been proposed to allow the interception and storage of flows from across the site. To effectively intercept flows, a conveyance trench located around the northern downstream perimeter of the development is proposed. This aspect of proposal will be dealt in more detail later in this report.

16.7.10 The proposed site layout plan has been amended to address statutory consultee comments from DWFRS in respect of fire safety. Comments received from DWFRS pertained to ensuring suitable emergency water supplies were available onsite, further considerations for site access, and site design. In response to DWFRS comments, two fire hydrants are proposed within the updated site layout plan, located within 90m of each entrance gate and connected to the nearest mains to the site. Current guidance states the water supply should be able to provide a minimum of 1,900 l/min for at least 120 minutes. The proposed hydrants are subject to suitable testing and maintenance by the operator. Although the DWFRS are satisfied that two fire

hydrants are appropriate water supply in case of firefighting operations, it is necessary to condition a final water supply for firefighting operation scheme is tested and submitted to local planning authority for approval prior to first use of the proposed BESS development (Condition 29).

16.7.11 The additional access will provide entry into the opposite end of the BESS compound is also detailed as requested by DWFRS. Also, the internal tracks loop through the BESS compound are approx. 4m wide with addition of three emergency vehicle turning points between north east and south west rows of battery containers. The additional access ensures two points of access into the BESS compound are available in accordance with National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Guidance and addresses matters raised in the DWFRS consultation response.

16.7.12 For this BESS development, the exact battery model would be chosen post planning decision since the technology is constantly improving. This is in line with NFPA 855 guidance, which does not require information regarding the exact model of proposed battery prior to planning consent being issued, however information regarding the battery chemistries being proposed is a requirement and is covered under Safety Management Plan condition (Condition 28). In this case, the applicant has confirmed that the proposed batteries will be Lithium-ion phosphate with associated liquid cooling within storage containers. The applicant (S4N Lytchett Ltd) is managed and part-owned by renewable energy specialist Green Nation who will undertake a risk analysis for new and existing suppliers of the equipment required, in line with its internal procedures.

16.7.13 As previously mentioned, the site design has been informed with regard to safety. As noted by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) Health and Safety Guidance for Grid Scale Electrical Energy Storage Systems (April 2024), guidance on appropriate separation distances varies across existing guidance documents. The battery containers and associated inverters/transformers are arranged with spacing of 4m to the northwest row and alternate gaps of 4m and 6m to south west row. NFPA 855 recommends a 3.1m spacing between container banks (two battery containers together) with the opportunity to reduce this to 3ft (0.914 m) where design mitigations have been implemented such as large-scale fire testing (complying with UL 9540A or equivalent) or use of non-combustible walls/containers with a 2-hour fire resistance rating (in accordance with ASTM E119 or UL 263).

16.7.14 The proposed design does not utilise a container bank system, instead it uses single battery containers with an associated single transformer/inverter. It is noted that the UK NFCC recommends 6m spacing between containers unless suitable design features can be introduced to reduce that spacing. Within the proposed development, the applicant has confirmed that generic systems are fitted with fire detection and suppression systems and a specific detail of firewall rated IE60 between each battery will be applied at the final design stage. This would provide a 120 minute firewall between battery compartments from enclosure to enclosure which allows the separation distance between enclosures to be reduced from 6m. Furthermore, the FM Global 5-33 report

reference in the NFCC Guidance has since been updated to reflect a reduced separation distance of 1.5m. As noted above, the intention is that proposed battery units will include extensive mitigation measures and comply with the current fire safety legislations/guidance as listed above. Those measures would be conditioned within the Battery Safety Management Plan prior to commencement of development (Condition 28).

16.7.15 Furthermore, on the basis that procurement of the battery units includes an ongoing assessment of the suitability of the fire engineered solution regarding spacing of containers, DWFRS are satisfied the above proposal achieves the objectives of NFPA 855.

16.7.16 As per NFCC guidance, any vegetation that naturally seeds within the lifespan of BESS compound should be removed and no planting of hedgerows or trees should be planted within 10m of the battery containers. The amended plan submitted on 09.10.2024 shows slightly less than 10m distance to the proposed mitigation planting (hedges/trees) to the north and north eastern corner of the site.

16.7.17 Further advice was sought from the DWFRS who have advised that presence of the fire retardant acoustic barrier could be considered as a mitigation as long as the timber fence is coated with appropriate fire resistant coating from both sides to withstand fire impingement for an extended period. Furthermore, the choice of species should also be a consideration to reduce fire propensity and improve the fire defensible space.

16.7.18 As per agreement with the applicant via planning agent on 01.11.2024, DWFRS has confirmed that in this case due to timber acoustic fence which would be treated with fire resistant coating on both sides and 3.5m height which physically separates battery containers and proposed planting will successfully mitigate the marginally shorter distance applied to proposed layout as per NFCC guidance. Specific conditions requiring full details for acoustic timber fence and final soft landscaping will be applied to be agreed (Conditions 27, 8).

16.7.19 In respect of distance to residential properties, the NFCC guidance notes distances between BESS units and occupied buildings/site boundaries will vary. It recommends an initial minimum distance of 25m prior to any mitigation and notes reduced distances may be possible in rural settings. The closest residential properties are located between 120-130m away from the BESS boundaries. This indicates the site is appropriately sited in relation to residential properties and is considered to accord with guidance.

16.7.20 As previously mentioned, the site would be accessed by two access points off unnamed track to the south west which is in line with the NFCC guidance to account for opposite wind directions/conditions.

16.7.21 The Applicant has consulted with DWFRS throughout the planning process and has worked with DWFRS to ensure they are content with the layout design. The layout was updated in October 2024 in response to DWFRS comments. In its correspondence dated February and October 2024, DWFRS notes the

improvements to the site design for firefighting provision on site with the additional access including a Gerda Premises Information Box to store the key code/key for easy access in emergency are acceptable. DWFRS is satisfied that proposed bunded areas, subject to condition 13 for emergency response plan to include arrangements for closing any penstock valves and emptying the bunt to prevent overtopping, will assist during wet weather or firefighting operations to contain excess or contaminated water away from watercourses. It also confirms that spacing between battery containers, distance from residential properties and vegetation is acceptable and achieves the objectives of NFPA 855.

16.7.22 Due to the nature of battery storage facilities, the risk of fire could not be fully eliminated however, with the proposed mitigation measures in place as described above, a fire is not considered likely. If a fire were to occur it is considered appropriate measures are secured for the fire service to deal with the situation.

16.7.23 The Battery Safety Management Plan which should detail the risk management of the proposed BESS development has not been submitted at application stage, however some fire safety measures have been incorporated into the design of the proposed BESS.

16.7.24 All battery units are generally fitted with monitoring, fire detection and suppression systems. The BESS containers are normally monitored by an in-built battery management system (BMS) which ensures the batteries operate within safety limits and should the batteries exceed safe limits, the BMS will issue alarms and stop operation. The BESS containers are protected by an in-built fire safety system comprised of sensors, monitoring programmable logic controller (PLC), fire alarm control panel (FACP), fire suppression, and deflagration mitigation.

16.7.25 The proposed BESS would be continually monitored by a 24/7 Emergency Management system (EMS) linked to the BMS. This will allow the system to be remotely close down the installation, disconnecting the power connection to minimise the risk of any fire hazard developing. If the operator identifies thermal runaway conditions, the ERP would be exercised and DWFRS engaged as necessary.

16.7.26 The existing access from Randall Hill via unnamed track will be utilised and additional access to the opposite site is provided. The access track is suitable for HGV's and farm vehicles hence also suitable for emergency vehicles. The internal tracks within the BESS are 4m wide forming a loop through the compound and include three turning places for emergency vehicles between two rows of battery containers. During operation, access tracks will be kept clear of obstruction at all times.

16.7.27 The design includes two fire hydrants within 90m of the both site entrances which will be connected to one of the Wessex Water mains identified in close proximity to the site. This is acceptable with regards to firefighting operations considering that fire crew should allow a battery to burn itself out, rather than

seeking to extinguish the fire. This is consistent with NFCC guidance which states, water would be used as a defensive firefighting strategy on adjacent equipment to prevent the fire spreading to adjacent equipment.

16.7.28 A perimeter acoustic fence and locked gates would prevent unauthorised access to the BESS compound and be regularly inspected to ensure they are in a good state of repair. Infra-red CCTV cameras facing into the compound would also monitor the proposed site and signage around the external perimeter would be erected to warn of high-voltage equipment etc.

16.7.29 As part of the emergency response plan, DWFRS would have the relevant codes to access the compound in the event of an emergency. Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Services have stated that they are content the site layout achieves the objectives of NFPA 855.

16.7.30 Notwithstanding the already submitted information and given the evolution of technology, it is necessary to secure a BESS Safety Management Plan (SMP), Risk Management Plan (RMP) and Emergency Response Plan (ERP) via planning condition (Condition 28).

16.7.31 The SMP should provide advice in relation to overall safety and management of proposed battery units and associated components through construction, operation and decommissioning phase. The specific models of batteries with all technical data and results of fire safety testing is also required.

16.7.32 The SMP has to set out the most relevant guidance and legislation relating to the construction, operation, and decommissioning of BESS in the UK which are listed below:

1. PPG Renewables and Low Carbon Energy
 - a. National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Grid Scale BESS planning – Guidance for Fire and Rescue Service (FRS).
 - b. FM Global Property Loss Datasheet 5-33 – Lithium-Ion BESS
2. National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) – Energy Storage Systems and Solar Safety, which refers out to:
 - a. Underwriters Laboratory (UL)1973 – Standard for Batteries for Use in Stationary, Vehicle Auxiliary Power, and Light Electric Rail Applications.
 - b. UL9540A – BESS Test Methods.
 - c. UN38.3 – Standard Requirements for Lithium-Ion Battery Production.
 - d. 3. International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) 61508 - Functional Safety of Electrical/Electronic/Programmable Electronic Safety related Systems (E/E/PE, or E/E/PES).

16.7.33 To be satisfactory, the SMP has to demonstrate the statement has been informed by consultation responses and how proposed BESS could be constructed, operated and decommissioned safely.

16.7.34 The RMP should provide advice in relation to potential emergency response implications, such as:

- The hazards and risks at and to the facility and their proposed management.
- Any safety issues for firefighters responding to emergencies at the facility.
- Safe access to and within the facility for emergency vehicles and responders, including to key site infrastructure and fire protection systems.
- The adequacy of proposed fire detection and suppression systems (e.g., water supply) on-site.
- Natural and built infrastructure and on-site processes that may impact or delay effective emergency response.

16.7.35 The ERP should be developed to facilitate effective and safe emergency response and should include:

- How the fire service will be alerted.
- A facility description, including infrastructure details, operations, number of personnel, and operating hours.
- A site plan depicting key infrastructure: site access points and internal roads; firefighting facilities (water tanks, pumps, booster systems, fire hydrants, fire hose reels etc); drainage; and neighbouring properties.
- Details of emergency resources, including fire detection and suppression systems and equipment; gas detection; emergency eyewash and shower facilities; spill containment systems and equipment; emergency warning systems; communication systems; personal protective equipment; first aid.
- Up-to-date contact details for facility personnel, and any relevant offsite personnel that could provide technical support during an emergency.
- A list of dangerous goods stored on site.
- Site evacuation procedures.
- Emergency procedures for all credible hazards and risks, including building, infrastructure, and vehicle fire, grassfire, and bushfire

16.7.36 As a part of ERP, DWFRS would have the relevant codes to access the compound in the event of an emergency. The ERP would be reviewed and updated throughout the BESS's lifespan to ensure it remains fit for purpose.

16.7.37 The above emergency plans should be produced in conjunction with DWFRS. Dorset Council would consult with DWFRS when details are submitted for approval pursuant to the condition. Subject to conditions, officers are satisfied that the health and safety matters of the development are acceptable and comply with current fire safety regulations/guidance. (Conditions 27, 28, 29).

16.7.38 Taking into consideration proposed measures regarding fire safety and health and safety respectively is considered limited weight against the development in the planning balance.

16.8 Flood risk and drainage

- 16.8.1 The site and the access route fall within Flood Zone 1 and have low risk of flooding. The Dorset Explorer Groundwater Risk of Emergence web resource indicates that groundwater is at a shallow depth beneath the site. Notwithstanding this, during intrusive site investigation groundwater seepages were encountered at approximately 2m bgl at trial pit TP1 to the west of the site, and groundwater was not noted in any other trial pit. In the event of groundwater emergence, flooding would follow the local topography and flow off site, to the south, without accumulating within the site. Flood risk from this source is therefore considered to be low.
- 16.8.2 The EA Risk of Flooding from Surface Water mapping shows a predicted surface water flow path that crosses the east edge of development area from north to south, from the 1-in-100 year rainfall event and upwards. This flow path is shown to be more significant at the 1-in-1000 year rainfall event. Dorset Council Flood Risk Management team hold no records of historic flooding events on the site however it should be noted that downstream offsite flooding has been recorded on Watery Lane.
- 16.8.3 An ordinary watercourse is mapped to flow along the western edge of the site from north to south and another ordinary watercourse is shown to run along the southern edge of the site in a south-westerly direction. The two watercourses meet before flowing south through a culvert under the A35. South of the A35 the ordinary watercourse flows in a south-east direction along the course of Policeman's Lane and then Watery Lane.
- 16.8.4 It should be noted that although the site is shown to be in Flood Zone 1 the adjacent watercourses will not have been modelled as part of the EA flood modelling exercise. Therefore, the risk of fluvial flooding from these ordinary watercourses is currently unknown and cannot be assumed to be low. Further modelling would be required in order to fully understand the fluvial flood risk from these adjacent watercourses. The LLFA speculates that due to the bends in the watercourse it is possible that water may leave the river north of the development area and cross the field along the line of the predicted surface water flow-path. Because fluvial flood risk is not fully understood at this time it is possible that flooding along this flow-path may be more frequent than is indicated on the surface water mapping and as such a site-specific drainage strategy in accordance with the NPPF and relevant technical guidance and practices, the management of surface water runoff must demonstrate that the proposed development is not to be placed at risk and that no off-site worsening is to result. This will be dealt via condition as set out later in this section.
- 16.8.5 The Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) has reviewed the revised Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) and Surface Water Drainage Strategy dated January 2024 providing details of surface water proposals by the applicant. The document referenced above provides detail regarding drainage from the applicant's site. Following review of the revised report the LLFA reiterates the following:

- The SuDS hierarchy has been followed with infiltration testing carried out initially. Soakaway tests show that soil types on site are not suitable for soakaways.
- Attenuation of surface water within a stone sub-base storage layer is proposed with a restricted discharge to the adjacent watercourse.
- The site is to be surfaced with stone/gravel between the proposed utilities.
- Section 3.14 states that the *'proposed facilities will be set above ground level, mounted on plinths,'* therefore surface water or fluvial water *'will be able to pass between them without obstruction and without impacting upon the proposed utilities apparatus.'*

16.8.6 The LLFA also notes the changes within the revised FRA as follows:

- The overall development area has been increased and as a result drainage calculations have been revised.
- The change to the layout has resulted in more of the development being placed within the mapped surface water flowpath. However, it is noted that this predicted flowpath is modelled to become its most significant only during the less frequent rainfall events (i.e. above the 1-in-100 yr events).
- Updated surface water drainage strategy has removed the following line from paragraph 4.6, *'the system would remain unlined in order to maximise any infiltration potential'* so it remains uncertain as to whether or not the applicant intends to line the attenuation system.

16.8.7 Despite the above changes the LLFA has confirmed that their position in relation to these proposals remains the same as previous. LLFA has no objection to the application subject to the conditions and informatives listed later in this section.

16.8.8 The majority of the surface surrounding the battery stores is proposed to be constructed from permeable materials, however except the battery units themselves, associated inverters/transformer units, a substation etc which will produce some additional runoff. The proposed SuDS for the site include a combination of permeable paving, the trench and attenuation basin. The proposed SuDS features are designed to provide the required storage volume to retain the 1 in 100 plus 50% climate change event.

16.8.9 The management of polluted surface water for fire-fighting runoff will be discussed in the next section of this report.

16.8.10 The LLFA also highlights that at the time of Discharge of Conditions stage, the applicant has to consider and address the following:

- If attenuation within the sub-base is proposed without a surrounding impermeable liner, the applicant should ensure that adequate groundwater monitoring has been carried out in order to provide certainty that attenuation volumes will not be impacted by high groundwater

levels. The initial groundwater test results are encouraging but groundwater monitoring over the course of a winter period should be taken into account when finalising the design of the surface water attenuation. If groundwater levels are shown to rise above the proposed base level of the attenuation then a suitable means of tanking will need to be included in the final design.

- Assessment of the unknown fluvial flood risk should be considered as part of the finalised designs and taken into account within any proposed flood mitigation measures.

16.8.11 All battery infrastructure including the access road is proposed to be located in areas of lower flood risk. The LLFA has confirmed that to ensure that the above listed elements are properly considered, LLFA has no objection subject to planning conditions securing a detailed surface water management scheme for the site, based upon the hydrological and hydrogeological context of the development including clarification of how surface water is to be managed during construction, details of management and maintenance scheme for both surface water and SuDS systems to be submitted and approved by the LPA and an Informative for prior Land Drainage Consent (LDC) to be secured by the applicant.

16.8.12 The proposal is therefore considered to be acceptable from a surface water perspective and would not generate flooding through surface water run-off or exacerbate flooding elsewhere and is compliant with Policy E5 of the Purbeck Local Plan subject to implementing above conditions (Conditions 23, 24; Informative note 2).

Proposed drainage strategy is considered to have no weight against the development in the planning balance.

16.9 Pollution

16.9.1 The development would not generate unacceptable pollution, odour detrimental emissions or associated impacts during normal operation. There is however a risk of such impacts in the event of a fire and thermal runaway.

16.9.2 The applicant has responded to initial concerns raised by the Environment Agency (EA). A 'Contamination and Containment Drainage Strategy' by Nijhuis Saur Industries dated 5 July 2024 and the email from the agent dated 5 July 2024 includes specific consideration to the potential volumes of firefighting water that could be used in the event of a fire, and the containment of this runoff to prevent contamination of the underlying aquifer and local watercourses.

16.9.3 It has been determined that an attenuation option is most suitable for this development. The access roads will be formed of crushed stone and therefore will remain permeable in nature. The total impermeable area would be approx. 3720m². A trench is proposed to will run along the northern boundary of the site, connecting to a proposed drainage network beneath the access

roads/vegetation. This drainage network will then connect to an attenuation basin.

- 16.9.4 Additionally, each section of the batteries will be bunded to prevent any contaminated runoff in the event of a fire. The bunded areas of the battery storage will be connected via individual outlet pipes to the trench. A valve is to be fitted to each outlet from the bunds so that each area can be fully contained in the event of a fire and should the water become polluted.
- 16.9.5 It is proposed that when the flow exceeds 0.7l/s the system would back up into attenuation pond sized to contain the 100 year + 50% climate change event. MicroDrainage calculations indicate a minimum pond base size of 90m² and 1.7m depth and 1 in 4 side slopes (giving a surface area of 404.9m²), using a HydroBrake Optimum flow control device.
- 16.9.6 The Environment Agency has been reconsulted and is content with the existing layout design and has now removed its objection to the development subject to conditions. These conditions relate to further detailed information would be required prior to commencement of development. The further information relate to surface water drainage and pollution control. It is noted that contamination of land would be managed under separate legislation, notably the Environmental Protection Act, with the precise method of remediation depending on the nature and extent of contamination.
- 16.9.7 Further pre-commencement conditions required relate to Emergency Pollution Control Method Statement, Verification Plan and Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP). Accordingly, with the recommended conditions imposed the proposal is not considered to give rise to concerns with pollution. (Conditions 12, 13, 14, 15; Informative note 1)
- 16.9.8 Environmental Protection measures mitigate for the proposed development and are therefore considered no weight against the development in the planning balance.
- 16.10 Other matters

Impact on Protected Habitats - Dorset Heathlands

- 16.10.1 As previously mentioned in this report, the route of the underground cable passes adjacent to the Dorset Heathlands Ramsar site, which surrounds the substation on three sides, however it does not cross the protected site. The site of the battery storage units is situated approximately 650m from the protected habitat.
- 16.10.2 The proposed use will not increase recreational pressure on the heathland, which is identified in the Heathlands SPD as causing harm to it. Given this, and that the development does not encroach onto the Ramsar site, Natural England have not objected to the proposal. An appropriate assessment has concluded that the proposed development will not result in an adverse effect upon the

integrity of the Dorset Heathlands. The impact on protected Dorset Heathlands therefore has no weight against the development in the planning balance.

Trees

16.10.3 The site includes trees on the site boundaries. One category U tree (T28) will be removed as part of the proposals. All other on-site trees and hedgerows are to be retained.

16.10.4 The applicant has submitted an Arboricultural Impact Assessment together with Arboricultural Method Statement and tree protection plan dated April 2023. From the submitted information and the DC Tree Officer assessment, it is concluded that the proposals are acceptable subject to the full implementation of the details set out in the Arboricultural Method Statement. The agreed protection barriers and ground protection should be put in place and thereafter retained and maintained as per the specification until development is complete. (Condition 7)

The impact on trees has no weight against the development in the planning balance.

Archaeology and heritage assets

16.10.5 The application is accompanied by a Planning Statement and Design and Access Statement dated May 2023 which amongst other matters evaluates the potential direct and indirect effects of the proposed development upon cultural heritage assets and archaeological remains. The application is also accompanied with a Historic Desk Based Assessment which advises *'The potential for buried archaeology at the Site has been generally assessed as low for earlier periods with a higher potential for the medieval and later periods, as evidenced in aerial photographs and historic maps which indicate a number of undated probable drainage features and former field boundaries.'*

16.10.6 The Dorset Historic Environment Record does record a few features seen on aerial photographs hereabouts, but these are only ditches or trackways that would not be impacted a great deal. The DC Senior Archaeologist has confirmed that impact on archaeological remains is not a constraint to take into account when determining this application.

16.10.7 There are no designated heritage assets within the site boundary. To the south west of the site approximately 260m from the site boundary are two listed buildings, "Lodge to South Lytchett Manor" and "Entrance gates and gate piers to South Lytchett Manor", both of which are Grade II listed. To the east of the site approximately 80m away, within the boundary of Upton is 144 Dorchester Road, which is also Grade II listed. The Lytchett Minster Conservation Area is situated approximately 100m to the west of the site.

16.10.8 144 Dorchester Road is severed from the site by the A35 dual carriageway bypass and is surrounded by largely 20th Century development associated with the expansion of the settlement of Upton. As such, the proposed development

is not considered likely to impact the setting of the listed building. The two listed buildings to the south west are associated with South Lytchett Manor, now the Lytchett Minster School which is further to the west. The listed buildings formed the entrance to the estate. The Conservation Area encompasses the land that formed part of the gardens associated with the Manor House. Both are well screened from the site by well established vegetation and there is little to no visibility between them. As the site sits outside of the historical garden associated with the Manor, it is considered that the conservation area and the setting of the listed buildings will not be harmfully impacted.

16.10.9 The site itself has a historic landscape character that comprises modern fields created following woodland clearance. The site makes a neutral contribution to appreciating the heritage values of the assets within the study area as it is not within the settings of these assets.

In conclusion, the impact on archaeology, heritage assets and Conservation Area has no weight against the development in the planning balance.

Mineral safeguarding

16.10.10 The site is situated partly within the minerals safeguarding area designated in Policy SG1 of the Bournemouth, Dorset, and Poole Minerals Strategy 2014. The Council's Minerals and Waste Team have confirmed that as a small part of the site would be affected it is considered that further mineral assessment and possible prior extraction will not be required on this occasion. The impact on minerals has no weight against the development in the planning balance.

Decommissioning

16.10.11 A suitably worded planning condition to secure appropriate decommissioning of the site would ensure that electrical storage infrastructure is removed at the end of the 40-year period or within 6 months of the cessation of electricity storage and distribution by the facility (whichever is the sooner). (Condition 4)

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

16.10.12 Following consideration of the relevant selection criteria for screening Schedule 2 development presented in Schedule 3 of the EIA regulations, it is concluded that the proposed development is unlikely to result in significant environmental impacts. Therefore, an Environmental Impact Assessment is not required in this instance.

High pressure gas pipelines

16.10.13 There is a high pressure pipeline in a vicinity of the proposed site to the north east just outside the Lytchett substation. The only development proposed across the pipelines is an underground cable connecting the BESS to Lytchett Substation.

- 16.10.14 Since receiving an objection from SGN in March 2023, officers have repeatedly tried to liaise with SGN to seek to address the objection given it erroneously states that the development includes a wind turbine and solar panels, and it is not clear whether SGN had reviewed the proposed drawings.
- 16.10.15 As requested by the case officer in subsequent correspondence, the SGN advise that installation must adhere to SGN Safety Management Framework (ref. SGN/WI/SW/2 - Safe Working in the Vicinity of High Pressure Gas Pipelines dated June 2018).
- 16.10.16 Whilst SGN's objection has not been withdrawn at the time of writing, SGN has advised that the objection can be addressed by implementing suitable planning conditions. With appropriately worded method statement conditions and an informative on works within the vicinity of the pipeline, the development is considered acceptable in relation to high pressure gas pipelines (Condition 25 and Informative Note 5, 6).

The impact on high pressure gas pipeline therefore has no weight against the development in the planning balance.

17.0 Very Special Circumstances to justify development in the Green Belt

- 17.1.1 As detailed in the report, very special circumstances will need to be demonstrated in order to justify development which is identified as causing harm to the openness of the Green Belt, both visually and spatially. In order to be acceptable, the very special circumstances must clearly outweigh the harm that is considered to be caused by the proposed development.
- 17.1.2 In each case, it will be for the decision-maker to form a planning judgment as to whether the harm to the Green Belt, by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm is clearly outweighed by countervailing factors such as to justify the grant of permission for inappropriate development.
- 17.1.3 The applicant has identified a number of factors which it considers to constitute very special circumstances, each of which is considered below.
1. *Need for energy storage facilities*
 2. *Site location and no alternative sites*
 3. *Biodiversity and BNG*
 4. *Temporary use of site*
 5. *Farm diversification*
 6. *Community benefit and wider economic benefits*
- 17.1.4 Taking each circumstance in turn they are assessed in the planning balance as follows:
1. Need for energy storage facilities

The National Grid has a statutory duty to ensure that the supply of electricity in the UK remains within certain limits in relation to demand. The balance of supply and demand within the grid is known as System Frequency. Frequency is continuously changing as levels of electricity generation and consumption fluctuate and at times, the generation from baseload power stations is insufficient to meet demand when there are spikes in consumption. There are times when primary power sources are interrupted and baseload generation unexpectedly becomes unavailable.

Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) can bridge the gap in production, thus avoiding potential blackouts. They offer additional capacity to deal with system stress and any variations in grid frequency at both a local and national level. Overall, BESS assists the National Grid services in providing a means of allowing electricity from the grid to be imported and stored at times of low demand/high generation and then be exported back into the grid at times of higher demand/system stress. It is considered that the circumstances can be given substantial weight favour of the development in the planning balance.

The scheme would comply with government guidance set out in the NPPF at paragraph 156, which recognises the wider environmental benefits associated with increased production of energy from renewable sources in the GB, and NPPF section 14 in supporting the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate.

Significant weight should be given to the Government's initiative, national policy and the scheme's contribution to meeting a low carbon future in climate change by supporting renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure in accordance with the NPPF 157.

2. Site location and alternative sites

As set out in the above paragraphs, it is acknowledged that, there are limited locations of a suitable grid connection. One such location is at NG Lytchett substation where alternative sites have been explored within 1km of substation. The secured grid connection to this site has been confirmed by the applicant. The immediate local landscape is influenced by the urban form of Upton to the south, enclosed by the A35 carriageway. To the north and west the development is more sporadic, with isolated houses, estate buildings and peri-urban feature including caravan parks, a crematorium and burial ground dotting the landscape.

The small village at Lytchett Minster to the west, and the larger settlement at Lytchett Matravers to the north-west form defined clusters of residential development alongside other local facilities. To the north east there is a large Lytchett substation. There is an existing access track connecting the proposed and existing telecom site location via Randalls Hill, comprising of bare ground and hardstanding. The proposed cable route has been designed to avoid designated sites and it will be placed within the existing highway, with no loss or impact to the adjacent habitats. It is considered that the location of the site in close proximity to the NG Lytchett substation and the secured grid connection

can be given substantial weight in favour of the development in the planning balance.

3. Biodiversity and BNG

The application is supported by a Biodiversity Plan (BP) that has been agreed by the Council's Natural Environment Team (NET) on 02.02.2024. The BP outlines a range of measures to deliver biodiversity net gains, including grassland, mixed scrubs, individual trees and hedgerows habitats will be created, and species enhancement measures will be incorporated within the site.

This application was validated on 23 May 2023 and therefore Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) requirements do not apply. However, a biodiversity metric has been submitted with the application. Overall, the development proposals would result in an 820.35% net gain of habitat area biodiversity units in excess with policy requirements. A gain would also be achieved in hedgerow units.

The implementation and creation of habitats post-development will be outlined in a Landscape Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) which is conditioned (Condition 20). The LEMP will include detailed drawings, management objectives and prescriptions and timetables, as well as a plan to define who is responsible for activities for both on-site and off-site habitats; management plan for all habitats at the site and necessary interventions should habitats fall short of their desired future condition.

During the construction period, lighting should be limited to the essential minimum throughout the site. One security or operational lighting (for maintenance) will be installed outside of the distribution network operator substation (DNO s/s). Lighting should be motion triggered, on short duration timers (<1 minute), avoid pointing upwards, with the spread of light being kept near to or below the horizontal. To minimise effects on light sensitive species, artificial lighting should be directional to the task for which it is required and angled away from all boundary features. Furthermore, light spill should be minimised through the use of accessories such as louvres, reflectors, hoods, covers, baffles and shields. If necessary, it is also possible to reduce light spill by painting part of the luminaire protector. Low UV component or LED lamps with a low to negligible UV content (towards the warmer end of the light spectrum) should be used as UV light attracts insects, thus depleting foraging resources in adjacent habitats as well as making bats that use lit areas vulnerable to predation.

The BP also sets out mitigation measures regarding bats, birds badgers, dormouse, amphibians, reptiles and hedgehogs which includes precautionary working methods during construction (Section G of approved BP) and sensitive clearance of habitats. The implementation of above mentioned measures within the approved BP, including lighting, will be outlined in Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) which is conditioned (Condition 19). The Council's Natural Environment Team have been consulted on these measures and confirmed that they are appropriate.

Subject to full implementation of the approved Biodiversity Plan dated 02.02.2024 (Condition 21), the Dorset Council Natural Environmental Team has no objection to the proposal and overall, it is considered that the impacts on ecology and biodiversity from the proposed development will be acceptable. In addition, other benefits associated with biodiversity, and landscaping such as a net gain of 820.35% in habitat areas and a net gain in hedgerows units are also taken into consideration. BNG is considered as part of the planning balance and it is attributed significant weight in favour of the development.

4. Temporary use of site

BESS projects are temporary and fully reversible. Planning permission is sought for a 40-year period, at the end of this time the project will be decommissioned, and the site will be fully restored to its current state.

Although the site will be fully restored to its previous use at the end of its life span, 40 years is a very long time in planning terms and the temporary nature of development would still have an impact on the character of the area, the landscape character and visual effects and the openness of the green belt. As such it is considered that the temporary use of the site can only be given limited weight in favour of the development in planning balance.

5. Farm diversification

The applicant highlights within the submitted Planning Statement that the proposed BESS will utilise a fraction of the land under the control of the landowner which will assist the landowner to remain financially and environmentally sustainable (having already implemented various other biodiversity regimes within their control).

The personal financial gain of the landlord as a result of this proposal can be given no weight in favour of the development in planning balance and it is not accepted by the Council as a very special circumstance to outweigh the harm of the proposal to the green belt.

6. Community benefit and wider economic benefits

The proposed BESS will bring economic benefits at the construction stage with local suppliers contracted to provide materials for the build. The operation and management of the project would result in the creation of one direct green industry employment with various spin off employment opportunities over the life of the project. Furthermore, the applicant claims that the proposed scheme would attract council rates to the local authority and a 'Community Fund' will be offered in the future to the local community.

The proposed BESS project is of a temporary nature and any economic benefits beyond construction would be limited. As such it is considered that economic benefits from the proposed development can be give limited weight in favour of the development in the planning balance.

Regarding the potential community benefits from the proposed project, this is not being fully justified within the submitted information. A community fund which is unrelated to the development itself does not meet the test within the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) regulation 122 and cannot be taken into account. As such the community benefit as a result of this temporary project can be given no weight in support of the development in planning balance.

18.0 Planning balance

18.1.1 Again paragraph 153 of the NPPF states: *When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. ‘Very special circumstances’ will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.*

18.1.2 The following tables set out the planning considerations both in favour and against the development, and the weight afforded to these in the planning balance. For clarity, considerations with a neutral impact noted in this report are not considered further in this section.

In the interests of clarity, in ascribing weight to the planning considerations in favour and against I have used the following scale: **none, limited, moderate, significant and substantial.**

Consideration in favour	Weight	Reason
Need for battery energy storage facilities (BESS)	Substantial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Substantial contribution to energy security and achieving national and local climate targets
Environmental benefits	Substantial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BESS is a facility which contributes to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by storing surplus energy as such have wider national environmental benefits as per para. 156 of the NPPF Helps to address Dorset Council Climate targets
Location	Substantial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The immediate local landscape is already influenced by large electrical substation, pylons and major highway routes. Sequential site selection test ruled out other sites within 1km of NG Lytchett substation

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confirmed grid connection to Lytchett Substation Site is suitably well screened by existing mature vegetation and proposed mitigation planting.
Public benefit	Substantial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Renewable energy generation identified as a public benefit
Biodiversity and BNG	Significant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited loss of habitat No loss of trees with a potential for bat roosting BNG of 820.35%
Temporary use of site Economic benefits	Limited	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited economic benefits beyond construction
Farm diversification and personal gain	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No evidence to support the farm is struggling without farm diversification Personal financial gain has no weight in planning balance
Community benefits	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A community fund which is unrelated to the development itself does not meet the test within the CIL regulation 122

Consideration against	Weight	Reason
Impact on the Green Belt	Substantial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Openness of the Green Belt harmed both visually and spatially as set out above
Impact on the character of the area	Limited	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Temporary nature of development Existing electricity substation in the vicinity Existing major highways routes
Impact on landscape character and visual effects	Limited	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No effects from development across the wider landscape Development screened by mature vegetation and will integrate within the local landscape Development temporary and reversible

Residential amenity – noise	Limited	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presence of A35 carriageway • 3.5m high acoustic fence proposed • Low rate noise levels during night achievable by reduction in operational units, inverter noise reduction and battery noise reduction - conditioned
Health and safety – Fire risk	Limited	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The risk of fire cannot be completely eliminated given the nature of the development (lithium-ion battery storage) but it can be mitigated • Fire related aspects of Building Regulations does not apply to this development • Proposal complies with NFPA 855 and NFCC guidance • Fire safety mitigation can be conditioned • Water supply for fire fighting provided
Pollution	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The development would not generate unacceptable pollution, odour detrimental emissions or associated impacts during normal operation except in the event of a fire and thermal runaway.
Flood Risk	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposed development has no impact on flood risk
Impact on highways safety	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No material harm to transport network • No long term operational traffic impact • Access routes acceptable
Impact on Dorset Heathlands	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No direct habitats loss - site of any environmental designations
Trees	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No impact on existing trees
Minerals safeguarding	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No issues identified in relation to mineral safe guarding.
Impact on archaeology and heritage assets	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No designated heritage assets within the site boundary

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Setting of two Grade II Listed Buildings would not be harmfully impacted • Little to no visibility of the proposed development from Lytchett Conservation Area • Small section of ditches or trackways would be impacted by proposal with no effect
High pressure gas pipe	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Works within the close vicinity to HPGP have been conditioned

18.1.4 Again, the question of whether the development can be justified in the Green Belt having regard to existence of very special circumstances ultimately is a planning judgement for the Council.

18.1.5 The following table compares planning considerations in relation to the weight attributed to them.

Weight	Consideration AGAINST	Consideration in FAVOUR
Substantial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harm to the Green Belt 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for battery energy storage facilities (BESS) • Environmental benefits • Location • Public benefits
Significant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None identified 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biodiversity and BNG
Moderate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None identified 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None identified
Limited	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact on the character of the area • Impact on landscape character and visual effects • Residential amenity – noise • Health and safety – Fire risk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporary use of site and Economic benefits
None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact on highways safety • Floor Risk • Impact on Dorset Heathlands • Trees • Minerals safeguarding • Impact on archaeology and heritage assets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farm diversification • Personal gain • Community benefits

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pollution • High pressure gas pipe (HPGP) 	
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18.1.6 It is considered that very special circumstances do exist, namely the support that the development will provide to the energy grid by providing additional capacity to deal with system stress and the variations in grid frequency at both a local and national level that are anticipated with ever increasing reliance on renewable energy. The Green Belt location is made necessary by the need for a practical and viable connection to grid which the Sub Station offers. Battery Energy Storage Systems provide a means of allowing electricity from the grid to be imported and stored at times of low demand/high generation and then be exported back into the grid at times of higher demand/system stress. These systems therefore indirectly support the generation of electricity by renewable sources, ultimately contributing to wider environmental benefits.

18.1.7 The Dorset Council Climate Change: Interim Guidance and Position Statement notes climate change will be given significant weight as a material consideration in the balance when determining applications, in line with the legislative and national policy context. It identifies renewable energy generation as a public benefit which should be afforded significant weight even if the project is small-scale.

18.1.8 As demonstrated in the above tables, it is concluded that the environmental, social and public benefits that will be delivered as a result of this proposal, and grid connection location clearly outweigh the harm to the Green Belt and all other harm as identified in this report.

18.1.9 Therefore in accordance with paragraph 153 of the NPPF very special circumstances do exist and the proposal complies with the development plan as a whole and should be approved.

19.0 Conclusion

19.1.1 The application proposes development to provide a battery storage facility which will allow a more efficient use of renewable energy and will as a result help to reduce carbon emissions to the benefit of the environment. It would respond to Dorset Council’s declared climate emergency and ecological emergency. The renewable energy benefits of the development therefore attract significant positive weight in the planning balance as noted above. The development is in accordance with national and local planning policy and the environmental benefits weigh strongly in favour of the development.

19.1.2 Resulting pollution from fires is regulated by other legislative regimes and the planning system must operate on the assumption that these are effective. Nevertheless, the proposals have been considered against NFCC guidance and the site is located in excess of the minimum distances to residential properties

advised by the guidance. The EA's recommended planning conditions are proposed to be imposed and there is no objection from Natural England.

19.1.3 The proposed energy storage facility with ancillary compound and structures is considered inappropriate development in the Green Belt. Very Special circumstances advanced in support of the application include the need for the BESS in terms of climate change, energy security, energy affordability, the availability of a grid connection, together with more limited socio-economic benefits and a net biodiversity gain. Taken together these benefits carry very considerable weight in favour of the scheme and clearly outweighs the harm to the Green Belt.

19.1.4 It is considered that the development is sustainable, and the collective significant benefits of the proposal outweigh the harm to the Green Belt and the other harm set out above so that the very special circumstances necessary to justify the development exist. For the reasons set out above, it is considered that the proposal is in accordance with the Development Plan and guidance within the NPPF and there are no material considerations meaning that planning permission should be refused. The application is therefore recommended for approval subject to planning conditions.

20.0 Recommendation

Approve subject to the following planning conditions:

Officer note: *Written agreement to the pre-commencement condition(s) was received from the applicant on 11 November 2024.*

1. The development to which this permission relates must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of this permission.

Reason: This condition is required to be imposed by Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

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

GNL-004-PL-01 08 Location Plan
GNL-004-PL-02 11 Proposed Site Layout Plan
GNL-004-PL-03 02 Proposed Elevation
GNL-004-PL-05 02 Proposed BESS Component Elevations
GNL-004-PL-06 01 Proposed PCS & Transformer Component Elevations
GNL-004-PL-06 00 Private Substation Floor Plans & Elevations
GNL-004-PL-07 00 DNO Substation Floor Plans & Elevations
GNL-004-PL-08 01 CCTV Detail
GNL-004-PL-09 00 Gate Elevation
GNL-004-PL-10 00 20ft Spares Container Floor Plans & Elevations
GNL-004-PL-11 01 Acoustic Fence Detail
1155-006 Two Vans Passing Swept Path
1155-004 E Vehicle Swept Path - Emergency Vehicle

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

3. The planning permission hereby granted shall be limited to a period of 40 years from the date when electrical power is first exported from the batteries to the electricity grid network, excluding electricity exported during initial testing and commissioning. Written confirmation of the first export date shall be provided to the Local Planning Authority no later than one calendar month after the event.

Reason: To define the permission and in the interests of proper planning

4. No later than 6 months prior to the expiry of the planning permission, or within 6 months of the cessation of electricity storage and distribution by this facility, whichever is the sooner, a detailed scheme of works for the removal of the development (excluding the approved landscaping and biodiversity works) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme of works shall include the following details:
 - i) a programme of works, including a timetable for their completion;
 - ii) a method statement for the decommissioning and dismantling of all equipment and surfacing on site;
 - iii) a Decommissioning Traffic Management Plan to address likely traffic impacts associated with the decommissioning;
 - iv) details of any items to be retained on site;
 - v) a method statement for restoring the land to agricultural use.
 - vi) timescale for the decommissioning, removal and reinstatement of the land;
 - vii) a method statement for the disposal/recycling of redundant equipment/structures.

The scheme of works shall be undertaken in accordance with the approved details and timescales. The Local Planning Authority shall be notified in writing of the date of the cessation of electricity storage by or distribution from the development within one calendar month of the event.

Reason: To ensure the satisfactory restoration of the site.

5. The Local Planning Authority shall be notified in writing within one month of the event that the development hereby approved has started to store or distribute electricity to/from the Grid. The installation hereby approved shall be permanently removed from the site and the surface reinstated within 40 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 character and appearance of the area.

6. Notwithstanding the details shown on the approved plans, no development shall commence on site until details of the materials, colour and finish of any built structures and containers, poles, fencing, gates etc., have been submitted to and

approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details prior to the development being first brought into use and retained as such for the lifetime of the development.

Reason: To ensure an appropriate visual impact within this rural location.

7. The approved development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved Arboricultural Method Statement and Tree Protection Plan, dated April 2023 setting out how the existing trees are to be protected and managed before, during and after development. No occupation of the approved development shall commence until a signed certificate of compliance by the appointed Arboriculturalist has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that trees to be retained are not adversely affected by the development proposals and the approved method statement is complied with for the duration of the development.

8. No development shall commence until a hard and soft landscape scheme has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority showing details of all trees and other planting to be retained; a planting specification and plan to include numbers, size, species, positions of all new trees and shrubs; details of existing and proposed levels, walls, fences and other boundary treatments and surface treatments of the open parts of the site; and a programme of implementation.

Reason: to ensure the adequate mitigation of the landscape and visual impact of the proposals and the provision of an appropriate hard and soft landscape scheme prior to the commencement of development.

9. All hard and soft landscape works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details. The works shall be carried out prior to the use of the site or in accordance with a programme agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: to ensure that the agreed hard and soft landscape scheme is implemented.

10. Any trees or other plants indicated in the approved scheme which, within a period of five years from the date of the development being completed, die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced during the next planting season with other trees or plants of a species and size to be first approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Hard landscape features will be maintained in perpetuity.

Reason: to ensure that the agreed hard and soft landscaping scheme is established and maintained.

11. Unless otherwise agreed by the Local Planning Authority, all new cabling between the Lytchett Substation and the permitted Battery Storage Plant, shall be laid underground.

Reason: In the interests of the visual amenity and landscape character of the area

12. The development hereby permitted shall not be commenced until such time as a final scheme to dispose of surface water for the battery storage areas has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. The scheme shall include the pollution protection principles set out in the supporting 'Contamination and Containment Drainage Strategy' by Nijhuis Saur Industries (edition 02, dated 5th July 2024) and cross section drawings of the bunded areas. The final drainage design must demonstrate that in the event of a battery fire, all firefighting effluent can be retained on site. The scheme shall be implemented as approved.

Reason: To ensure that any potentially contaminated effluent in the event of a pollution incident does not pose an unacceptable risk to the water environment in line with paragraph 180 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

13. The development hereby permitted shall not be commenced until such time as a detailed method statement and emergency plan for pollution control in the event of, and remediation following, a battery fire incident has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme shall include, but not necessarily be limited to:
 - The pollution control methods used in case of a fire, such as how and when valves will be closed to ensure firewater is stored on site and ensuring there is sufficient capacity within the system if needed.
 - How and where contaminated surface water, site materials and drainage infrastructure will be sampled, managed and remediated/replaced following a fire incident to ensure no contamination enters the environment when normal operation resumes.
 - A verification plan providing details of the data that will be collected and provided in order to demonstrate that the works set out in the remediation strategy are complete.

The scheme shall be implemented as approved in the event of a fire incident and any subsequent amendments shall be agreed in writing with the local planning authority.

Reason: To ensure that the any potentially contaminated effluent does not pose an unacceptable risk to the water environment in line with paragraph 180 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

14. Prior to the any areas affected by a potential pollution incident being brought back into use, a verification report demonstrating the completion of works set out in the approved emergency plan and the effectiveness of the remediation shall

be submitted to, and approved in writing, by the local planning authority. The report shall include results of sampling and monitoring carried out in accordance with the approved verification plan to demonstrate that the site remediation criteria have been met.

Reason: To ensure that the site does not pose any further risk to the water environment by demonstrating that the requirements of the approved emergency plan have been met, in line with paragraph 180 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

15. No development approved by this permission shall be commenced until a Construction Environmental Management Plan, incorporating pollution prevention measures, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The plan shall subsequently be implemented in accordance with the approved details and agreed timetable.

Reason: To prevent pollution of the water environment in line with paragraph 180 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

16. Before the development is occupied or utilised the areas shown on Drawing Number 1155-005 for the manoeuvring, parking, loading and unloading of vehicles must be surfaced, marked out and made available for these purposes. Thereafter, these areas must be maintained, kept free from obstruction and available for the purposes specified.

Reason: To ensure the proper and appropriate development of the site and to ensure that highway safety is not adversely impacted upon.

17. Before the development hereby approved commences the submitted Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) must be implemented and adhered to fully for the full length of the construction period.

Reason: to minimise the likely impact of construction traffic on the surrounding highway network and prevent the possible deposit of loose material on the adjoining highway.

18. Before the development commences a scheme showing precise details for the provision of a visibility zone across the frontage of the site, adjacent to the public highway, must be submitted to and approved by the Planning Authority. The approved scheme must be constructed before any part of the development hereby permitted is occupied or is brought into use and will require the visibility zone to be cleared/excavated to a level not exceeding 0.6 metres above the relative level of the adjacent carriageway and must thereafter be maintained and kept free from all obstructions.

Reason: To ensure that a vehicle can see or be seen when exiting the access.

19. Prior to the commencement of development on the site, a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) (Biodiversity) must be submitted to and approved in writing by the local Planning Authority. The CEMP must include the following:
- a) Risk assessment of potentially damaging construction activities.
 - b) Identification of "biodiversity protection zones".
 - c) Practical measures (both physical measures and sensitive working practices) to avoid or reduce impacts during construction (may be provided as a set of method statements).
 - d) The location and timing of sensitive works to avoid harm to biodiversity features.
 - e) The times during construction when specialist ecologists need to be present on site to oversee works.
 - f) Responsible persons and lines of communication.
 - g) The role and responsibilities on site of an ecological clerk of works (ECoW) or similarly competent person.
 - h) Use of protective fences, exclusion barriers and warning signs

The development shall take place strictly in accordance with the approved CEMP.

Reason: To protect biodiversity during the construction phase.

20. A landscape and ecological management plan (LEMP) shall be submitted to, and be approved in writing by, the local planning authority prior to the commencement of the development. The content of the LEMP shall include the following:
- a) Description and evaluation of features to be managed.
 - b) Ecological trends and constraints on site that might influence management.
 - c) Aims and objectives of management.
 - d) Appropriate management options for achieving aims and objectives.
 - e) Prescriptions for management actions.
 - f) Preparation of a work schedule (including an annual work plan capable of being rolled forward over a five-year period).
 - g) Details of the body or organization responsible for implementation of the plan.
 - h) Ongoing monitoring and remedial measures.

The LEMP shall also include details of the legal and funding mechanism(s) by which the long-term implementation of the plan will be secured by the developer with the management body(ies) responsible for its delivery.

The LEMP shall also set out (where the results from monitoring show that conservation aims and objectives of the LEMP are not being met) how contingencies and/or remedial action will be identified, agreed and implemented so that the development still delivers the fully functioning biodiversity objectives of the originally approved scheme.

The approved LEMP must be implemented in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To protect the landscape character of the area and to mitigate, compensate and enhance/provide net gain for impacts on biodiversity.

21. The Biodiversity Plan (BP) certified by the Dorset Council Natural Environment Team on 7th July 2023 must be implemented in full in accordance with the specified timetable(s) in the BP.

Reason: To minimise impacts on biodiversity.

22. Noise emissions from the development hereby permitted shall not exceed the levels presented in Technical Note 'Additional Noise Mitigation and Updated Modelling', 25149-HYD-ZZ-XX-TN-Y-1001, 09/10/2024.

A noise validation report demonstrating that the scheme is operating within a rating level of 35dB L_A,_Tr at 1.5m aboveground at the closest noise sensitive premises in existence at the time the application was validated, inclusive of applicable tonal penalties, shall be submitted to the LPA within 3 months of first operation and approved by the LPA, unless otherwise agreed in writing. This assessment shall be conducted in accordance with BS4142:2014+A1:2019 'Methods for rating and assessing Industrial and Commercial noise.

Reason: To protect neighbouring amenity.

23. No development shall take place until a detailed surface water management scheme for the site, based upon the hydrological and hydrogeological context of the development, and including clarification of how surface water is to be managed during construction, has been submitted to, and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The surface water scheme shall be fully implemented in accordance with the approved details before the development is completed.

Reason: To prevent the increased risk of flooding, to improve and protect water quality, and to improve habitat and amenity.

24. No development shall take place until details of maintenance and management of both the surface water sustainable drainage scheme and any receiving system have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme shall be implemented and thereafter managed and maintained in accordance with the approved details. These shall include a plan for the lifetime of the development, the arrangements for adoption by any public body or statutory undertaker, or any other arrangements to secure the operation of the surface water drainage scheme throughout its lifetime.

Reason: To ensure future maintenance of the surface water drainage system, and to prevent the increased risk of flooding

25. Prior to commencement of development details of the exact route and depth of the underground cable connecting the development with the Lytchett Substation

shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter, the underground cable shall be installed as approved.

Reason: To ensure the underground cable is routed appropriately in relation to nearby utilities infrastructure (including SGN high pressure gas pipelines) and the rights of the statutory undertaker are not compromised.

26. In the event that contamination is found at any time when carrying out the approved development, it must be reported in writing immediately to the Local Planning Authority and an investigation and risk assessment must be undertaken in accordance with requirements of BS10175 (as amended). If any contamination be found requiring remediation, a remediation scheme, including a time scale, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and remediation carried out in accordance with the approved scheme. On completion of the approved remediation scheme a verification report shall be prepared and submitted within two weeks of completion and submitted to the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure risks from contamination are minimised.

27. Prior to the first use of the Battery Energy Storage System a full specification for the proposed 3.5m high acoustic timber fence shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The details must include the following:
- a) The fire-retardant coating for timber to reach a minimum of 60 minutes fire rating on both sides of acoustic fence
 - b) Tested to UKAS Fire Test Standards
 - c) Durable, water-resistant and eco friendly

Once approved, the fence must be installed in accordance with the approved Site Layout Plan ref. no. GNL-004-PL-02 Rev 11. The fence shall thereafter be maintained and retained until such time that the use of the site ceases.

Reason: To minimise fire risks and to protect the environmental amenities of the immediate locality.

28. Prior to installation of any battery storage units, a Battery Safety Management (BSMP) Plan, a Risk Management Plan (RMP) and an Emergency Response Plan (ERP) shall be produced in conjunction with Dorset & Wiltshire Fire Rescue Services (DWFRS) and approved in writing by the Planning Authority. The BSMP must detail the risk management of the proposed BESS development, the RMP must provide advice in relation to potential emergency response implications and the ERP must be developed to facilitate effective and safe emergency response as per National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Guidance.

The RMP/ERP shall be reviewed and updated throughout the BESS's lifespan in agreement with the local fire services to ensure it remains fit for purpose. In the event of an emergency the approved RMP and ERP must be complied with.

Reason: To minimise fire risks and to maximise Fire Rescue Services respond time and fire management in case of fire.

29. Prior to the installation of battery storage units, the fire hydrants shown on the approved drawing GNL-004-PL-02 11 shall be installed, connected to a Water Company mains and tested to required capacity (1,900 l/min for at least 120 min) before they are made available for use. Thereafter, the fire hydrants shall be maintained and available for use throughout the lifetime of the development and until the battery containers are removed from the site.

Reason: To ensure adequate water supplies in accordance with National Fire Chiefs Council guidance 'Grid Scale Battery Energy Storage System Planning – Guidance for FRS' (2023).

Informative Notes:

1. The submitted CEMP must include safeguarding measures to deal with the following pollution risks:
 - the use of plant and machinery
 - wheel washing and vehicle wash-down and disposal of resultant dirty water
 - oils/chemicals and materials
 - the use and routing of heavy plant and vehicles
 - the location and form of work and storage areas and compounds
 - the control and removal of spoil and wastes
 - silt management
2. Prior Land Drainage Consent (LDC) may be required from DC's FRM team, as relevant LLFA, for all works that offer an obstruction to flow to a channel or stream with the status of Ordinary Watercourse (OWC) – in accordance with s23 of the Land Drainage Act 1991. The modification, amendment or realignment of any OWC associated with the proposal under consideration, is likely to require such permission. We would encourage the applicant to submit, at an early stage, preliminary details concerning in-channel works to the FRM team. LDC enquires can be sent to floodriskmanagement@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk.
3. The applicant should contact Dorset Highways by telephone at 01305 221020, by email at dorsethighways@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk, or in writing at Dorset Highways, Dorset Council, County Hall, Dorchester, DT1 1XJ, before the commencement of any works on or adjacent to the public highway, to ensure that the appropriate licence(s) and or permission(s) are obtained.
4. Please check that any plans approved under the building regulations match the plans approved in this planning permission or listed building consent. Do not start work until revisions are secured to either of the two approvals to ensure that the development has the required planning permission or listed building consent.
5. The site includes easements associated with high pressure gas pipelines. Before any works is carried out on permanent easements, written approval should be obtained from SGN. This approval must be subject to SGN retaining the right to restrict access to the pipeline at any time in the future. The developer's attention

is drawn to SNG's Guidance for Third Parties: Safe Working Near High Pressure Gas Pipelines.

6. The site includes a high voltage underground cable covered by a Deed of Grant (dated 2 August 1967). Notwithstanding planning conditions, written approval must also be obtained from Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks (SSEN) prior to the diversion of the cable.

7. Informative: National Planning Policy Framework Statement

In accordance with paragraph 38 of the NPPF the council, as local planning authority, takes a positive approach to development proposals and is focused on providing sustainable development.

The council works with applicants/agents in a positive and proactive manner by:

- offering a pre-application advice service, and
- as appropriate updating applicants/agents of any issues that may arise in the processing of their application and where possible suggesting solutions.

In this case:

- The applicant was provided with pre-application advice.

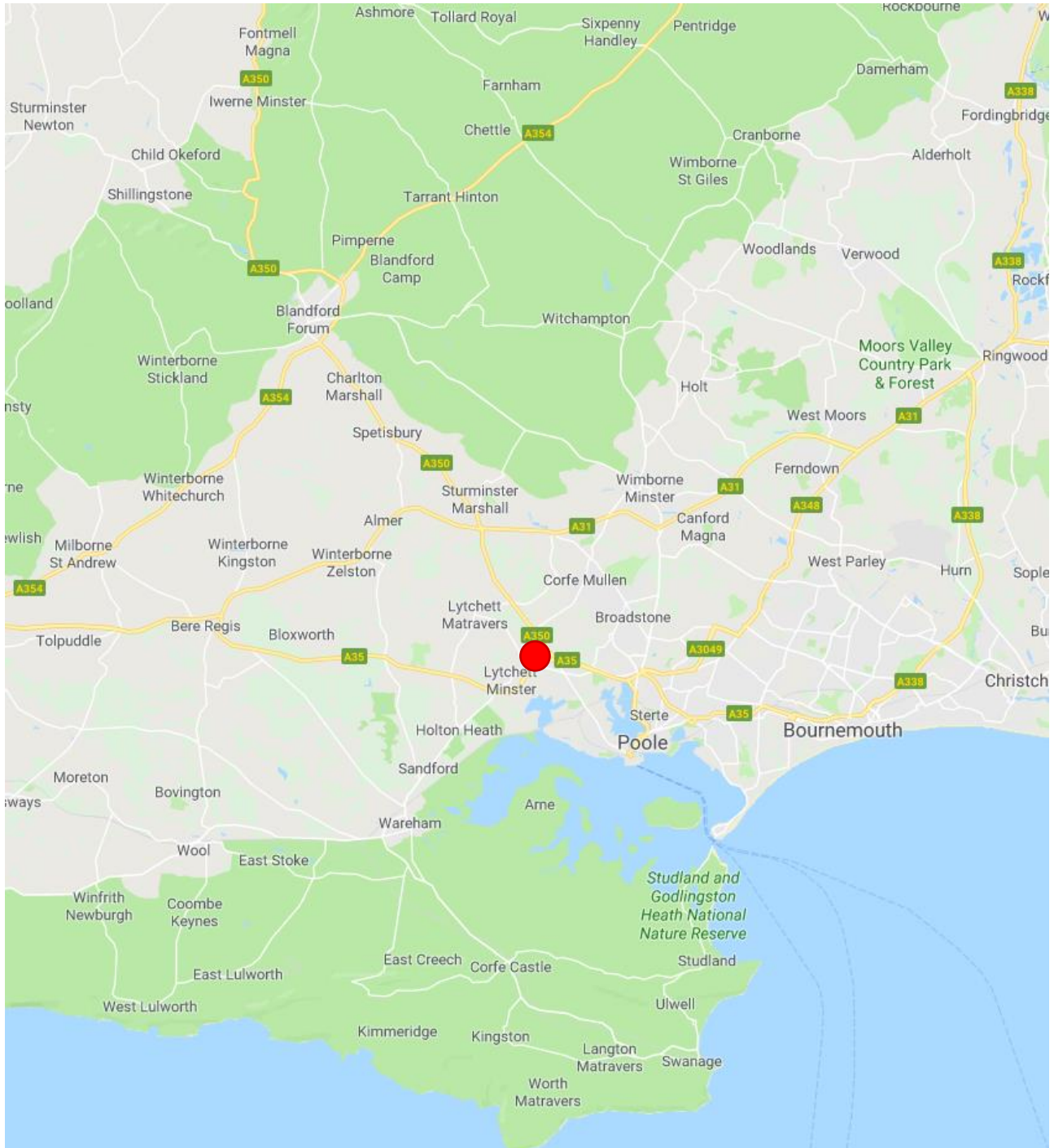
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● Approximate Site Location

Application reference: P/FUL/2023/02819

Site address: Land at Post Lane, Lytchett Minster, Dorset, BH16 6AB

Proposal: The installation of a battery energy storage system (BESS), together with associated infrastructure, security fencing, CCTV, cable route, landscaping, on-site Biodiversity Net Gain.



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