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STRATEGIC AND TECHNICAL PLANNING COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 21 JULY 2026

Present: Cllrs Duncan Sowry-House (Chair), David Northam (Vice-Chair), Belinda Bawden, Toni Coombs, Craig Monks, Belinda Ridout, Pete Roper, Gary Suttle, David Taylor, David Tooke and Carl Woode

Apologies: Cllrs Richard Crabb

Cabinet Leads in attendance: Cllr Shane Bartlett

Officers present (for all or part of the meeting):

Kim Cowell (Development Management Area Manager (East)), Philip Crowther (Legal Business Partner - Regulatory), Susan Hetherington (Transport Development Liaison Manager), John Miles (Democratic Services Officer), Megan Rochester (Senior Democratic & Governance Services Officer), Naomi Shinkins (Lead Project Officer) and Sam Williams (Lead Senior Engineer)

1. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 6th May were confirmed and signed.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests were made at the meeting.

3. **Registration for public speaking and statements**

Representations by the public to the Committee on individual planning applications are detailed below. There were no questions, petitions or deputations received on other items on this occasion.

4. **P/FUL/2025/06819 - Land between Woodlands Solar Farm, North Farm Solar Farm, and Mannington Substation**

With the aid of a visual presentation, including plans and aerial photographs, the Case Officer identified the site and outlined the proposal together with the relevant planning policies. An update slide was presented, which included changes to conditions 3 and 12 and the inclusion of an informative to satisfy the Cranborne Chase National Landscape officer that previously approved landscaping needs to be adhered to.

Members were shown the application site, its boundaries and surrounding context, including previously approved solar farms and the Mannington Substation to the southeast. The presentation highlighted nearby designations, including a Site of Special Scientific Interest and the Cranborne Chase National Landscape, together with the wider Green Belt context.

The Case Officer explained that two potential cable routes, extending to almost 10km, had been identified to connect the approved solar farms to the National Grid. Approximately 83% of the route would be located within existing highway verges, with around 17% crossing undeveloped land. A preferred route was shown, although the final route would be secured through planning conditions. Indicative trench details and cable design were presented, and Members were advised that all affected land would be reinstated following construction and this was secured by condition.

The Committee was advised that statutory consultation had been undertaken through site and press notices. Objections had been received from the Horton Ward Councillor, as detailed within the officer report.

The main planning considerations included the principle of development, Green Belt impact, landscape and visual impact, heritage assets, residential amenity, highways, flood risk, trees and biodiversity. The proposal was considered acceptable in principle, having regard to the NPPF and its role in supporting renewable energy infrastructure. As the cable would be underground, officers considered there would be no significant harm to the character of the area, heritage assets or openness of the Green Belt.

Potential construction impacts relating to noise, dust and traffic would be temporary and controlled through conditions. A Traffic Management Plan had been submitted; no new accesses were proposed and neither Dorset Highways nor National Highways had raised objections. Flood risk consultees had also raised no objections, subject to conditions.

The impact on trees was considered minimal, with appropriate tree and hedgerow protection measures proposed. Whilst some woodland loss would occur within the Mannington Substation SNCI, biodiversity mitigation and compensation, including new woodland planting would be secured as part of the development.

In conclusion, the Case Officer advised that all planning considerations had been found acceptable. The cable route would enable previously approved solar farms to connect to the National Grid, contributing to Dorset Council's climate objectives, without causing harm to the Green Belt. The officer recommendation was to Grant planning permission subject to conditions.

Public Participation

The Agent addressed the Committee and advised that the proposed cable route was essential to the operation of the development. She explained that the applicant had identified the most suitable route with the least environmental impact, supported by a comprehensive Environmental Impact Assessment, and noted that no objections had been received. The route would follow existing hedgerows and highway verges wherever possible to minimise impacts, with

construction managed through the laying of cable in small sections and the coordination of works to avoid overlap with other local projects. Ms L Leyland highlighted the ecological enhancements proposed as part of the scheme and confirmed that planning conditions would secure measures to protect existing trees. Whilst acknowledging there would be some short-term disruption during construction, she emphasised the urgent need for renewable energy infrastructure and the benefits of enabling solar farm development.

Members questions and comments

- Cllr Tooke suggested that an informative note be included drawing attention to the use of advanced boring technology, where appropriate.
- Members thanked officers for the comprehensive report and presentation.
- Members sought clarification regarding the protection of hedgerows and the findings of the flood risk assessment.
- Members welcomed the retention of previously approved planting proposals, noting that these would help protect the landscape character and mitigate visual impacts.
- Cllr Northam referred to comments from the Parish Council regarding the potential development of a footpath and suggested that discussions take place between the Parish Council and the applicant to explore whether this could be achieved outside of the planning process.
- Members queried the anticipated commencement of works. Concerns were raised regarding potential conflicts with other planned roadworks in the area, and Members emphasised the importance of coordinating activities to minimise disruption.
- Members sought confirmation that construction activities would be undertaken during normal daytime working hours
- Members queried whether there would be opportunities to undertake wildflower seeding following completion of the cable installation works.
- Members requested clarification on how Biodiversity Net Gain measures would be monitored and managed over the lifetime of the development.
- Cllr Coombs emphasised the importance of managing any works undertaken, particularly in relation to the timing of operations and minimising disruption to the local highway network. It was suggested that, if this could not be secured through a planning condition, an informative note be included drawing the developer's attention to these considerations.

Having had the opportunity to discuss the merits of the application and an understanding of all this entailed; having considered the officer's report and presentation; the written representatives; and what they had heard at the meeting, a motion to **APPROVE** the officer's recommendation to **GRANT** as recommended, was proposed by Cllr Toni Coombs, and seconded by Cllr Belinda Rideout, subject to conditions set out in the officer's report, the updates reported to the Committee, with the addition of informative notes drawing the developer's attention to the use of advanced cabling technology and to the careful management of construction operations to minimise disruption.

Decision: To grant for the reasons set out in Section 18 of the officer's report, the updates reported to the committee, with the addition of informative notes to the

use of advanced cabling technology and the careful management of construction operations.

5. **Urgent items**

There were no urgent items.

6. **Exempt Business**

There was no exempt business.

Decision Sheet

Duration of meeting: 10.02 - 11.10 am

Chairman

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Strategic and Technical Planning Committee
Tuesday 21st July 2026
Decision List

Application: P/FUL/2025/06819

Application Site: Land between Woodlands Solar Farm, North Farm Solar Farm, and Mannington Substation

Proposal: Proposed cable route in conjunction with approved solar farm developments (North Farm Solar Farm Ref. P/FUL/2023/02829 and Woodlands Solar Farm Ref. P/FUL/2023/03415) at Mannington, Horton.

Recommendation: GRANT subject to conditions at Section 18 of this report.

Decision: Approve subject to the following planning conditions:

Officer note: Written agreement to the pre-commencement condition(s) was received from the applicant 10 July 2026.

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 and documents:

- Man7b.v7 Es Figure 1.1 Full Cable Route Planning Boundary
- Man7c.v2 Es Figure 3.1 3.15 Full Cable Route Planning Boundary Detailed
- Man5.v5 Es Figure 3.16 Potential Cable Routes
- MAN7d.v1 Indicative cable trench

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

3. Prior to the commencement of development, a Final Cable Route Scheme shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Final Cable Route Scheme shall identify:
 - a) one route between North Farm and Woodlands Solar Farm; and
 - b) one route between Woodlands Solar Farm and Mannington Substation

selected from the route options assessed under this application and shown on drawing MAN5.v5 ES Figure 3.16.

The development shall thereafter be carried out in accordance with the approved Final Cable Route Scheme.

Reason: To ensure final details of proposed cable route are agreed.

4. Prior to commencement of any development hereby approved, a scheme for the restoration of land post installation within the site shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Restoration of the land shall be carried out in accordance with the approved scheme.

Reason: To ensure an acceptable restoration of the site in the interests of the setting of the National Landscape and the character of the area.

5. Prior to commencement of any development hereby approved, an updated Public Right of Way (PRoW) Strategy shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

The PRoW Strategy shall confirm the final cable route, associated impacts on PRoWs and details of how impacts will be mitigated and rectified.

The development shall be carried out in accordance with the agreed strategy.

Reason: To ensure an acceptable restoration of the site in the interests of the setting of the National Landscape and the character of the area.

6. Prior to the commencement of any development hereby approved, a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP), incorporating biodiversity and pollution prevention measures, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Details shall include:
 - 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.

i) Details of pollution risks including:

- 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.

The development shall proceed in strict accordance with the agreed CEMP, including an implementation timetable.

Reason: To protect biodiversity and prevent pollution during the construction phase.

7. Prior to the commencement of any development hereby approved, a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) must be submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority. The CTMP must include:

- construction vehicle details (number, size, type and frequency of movement)
- a programme of construction works and anticipated deliveries
- timings of deliveries so as to avoid, where possible, peak traffic periods
- a framework for managing abnormal loads
- location of construction site access
- contractors' arrangements (compound, storage, parking, turning, surfacing and drainage)
- wheel cleaning facilities
- vehicle cleaning facilities
- inspection of the highways serving the site (by the developer (or his contractor) and Dorset Highways) prior to work commencing and at regular, agreed intervals during the construction phase
- a scheme of appropriate signing of vehicle route to the site
- a route plan for all contractors and suppliers to be advised on
- temporary traffic management measures where necessary

The development must be carried out strictly in accordance with the approved Construction Traffic Management Plan.

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.

8. Prior to the commencement of any development hereby approved, details of construction management shall be submitted and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Details shall include:

- no bonfires;
- protection of nearby receptors from dust, noise and vibration arising from construction;
- storage of waste materials prior to removal from site

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

Reason: To protect the amenity of the occupants of residential properties in close proximity to the construction route.

9. Prior to the commencement of any development hereby approved (including site clearance and any other preparatory works), a scheme for the protection of trees and hedges in accordance with the current BS5837 recommendations shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA. Such a scheme shall include an Arboricultural Impact assessment and Method statement. Additionally, a detailed Construction Method Statement complying with required Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Method Statement shall be submitted to the LPA prior to the commencement of any works and approved in by the LPA. The development must be carried out in accordance with the approved scheme and statements.

Reason: To safeguard trees and natural features which are important to the visual amenities of the area

10. Prior to the commencement of any development hereby approved, including any excavation, a written scheme that details a programme of investigative archaeological work shall be submitted to, and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This scheme shall include archaeological fieldwork together with post-excavation work and publication of the results. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved scheme.

Reason: To safeguard and/or record the archaeological interest on and around the site.

11. Prior to the commencement of any development hereby approved, a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (the HMMP) which accords with the

approved Biodiversity Gain Plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The HMMP shall include:

- i) A non-technical summary;
- ii) The roles and responsibilities of the people or organisation(s) delivering the HMMP;
- iii) The planned habitat creation and enhancement works to create or improve habitat to achieve the biodiversity net gain in accordance with the approved Biodiversity Gain Plan and a timetable for implementation;
- iv) The management measures to maintain habitat in accordance with the approved Biodiversity Gain Plan for a period of 30 years from the completion of the habitat and enhancement works as set out in the HMMP.
- v) The monitoring methodology and frequency in respect of the created or enhanced habitat to be submitted to the Local Planning Authority.

Thereafter the development shall be carried out, along with the management and monitoring of habitat, in accordance with the approved HMMP.

Reason: In the interests of biodiversity to secure the monitoring and management of significant onsite habitats.

12. Prior to the commencement of any development hereby approved, a badger sett survey of the development site and immediately adjacent areas shall be undertaken. A report detailing the results of the survey is to be submitted in writing to the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: in the interest of protected species.

13. Prior to the commencement of any development hereby approved, details of the proposed SNCI off site compensation planting, located within the blue boundary of 'Man7b.v7 Es Figure 1.1 Full Cable Route Planning Boundary', shall be submitted to and agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority in accordance with the approved Biodiversity Net Gain information submitted 'E24127701 Mannington Solar Cable Route BNG Process Note (rev B)'. Details shall include:

- Baseline plan;
- post development habitat plan;
- species lists/assemblages;
- planting density; and
- maintenance and management details.

The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason : To ensure mitigation planting is provided for the loss of woodland within the Mannington Substation SNCI.

14. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the submitted flood risk assessment (ref Planning, Design And Access Statement, PWA Planning Group, November 2025, EP-24-179) and the following mitigation measures it details:

- The cable route to be installed below ground, with all land reinstated upon completion.
- The land within the flood zones must be reinstated to the same level as it was before the cable route's installation.

These mitigation measures must be fully implemented prior to connection to the solar farm. The measures detailed above shall be retained and maintained thereafter throughout the lifetime of the development.

Reason: To prevent flooding elsewhere by ensuring that there is no loss of storage for flood

15. 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). Should 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. The approved remediation scheme shall be carried out and 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 minimized.

16. For the duration of the construction and restoration period, hours of work (including deliveries) shall only be between the hours of 08:00 and 18:00 hours Monday to Saturday and not at all on Sundays and Bank Holidays.

Reason: To protect the amenity of the occupants of residential properties in close proximity to the construction route.

Informatives:

1. The effect of paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 is that planning permission granted for the development of land in England is deemed to have been granted subject to the condition "(the biodiversity gain condition)" that development may not begin unless:

- (a) a Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to the planning authority, and
- (b) the planning authority has approved the plan.

The planning authority, for the purposes of determining whether to approve a Biodiversity Gain Plan if one is required in respect of this permission would be Dorset Council.

There are statutory exemptions and transitional arrangements which mean that the biodiversity gain condition does not always apply. These are listed below.

Based on the information available this permission is considered to be one which will require the approval of a biodiversity gain plan before development is begun because none of the statutory exemptions or transitional arrangements listed below are considered to apply.

Read more about Biodiversity Net Gain and Biodiversity Gain Plans at <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/w/biodiversity-net-gain> and <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/submit-a-biodiversity-gain-plan>.

2. This application is subject to Biodiversity Net Gain. A Section 106 Agreement is likely to be required to secure the maintenance and monitoring of any Biodiversity Gain Plan or Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) approved by the Council.
3. 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.
4. A Flood Risk Activity Permit may be required from the EA, as relevant regulator for all works to a designated Main River that take place in, under or over, or as prescribed under relevant byelaws in accordance with section 109 of the Water Resources Act 1991. To clarify the Environment Agency's requirements, the applicant should contact the relevant department by emailing floodriskpermit@environment-agency.gov.uk.
5. The Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016 require a permit or exemption to be obtained for any of the following activities:
 - erecting any temporary or permanent structure in, over or under a main river, such as a culvert, outfall, weir, dam, pipe crossing, erosion protection, scaffolding or bridge

- altering, repairing, or maintaining any temporary or permanent structure in, over or under a main river, where the work could affect the flow of water in the river or affect any drainage work
 - building or altering any permanent or temporary structure designed to contain or divert flood waters from a main river
 - dredging, raising, or removing any material from a main river, including when you are intending to improve flow in the river or use the materials removed
 - diverting or impounding the flow of water or changing the level of water in a main river
 - quarrying or excavation within 16 metres of any main river, flood defence (including a remote defence) or culvert
 - any activity within 8 metres of the bank of a main river, or 16 metres if it is a tidal main river
 - any activity within 8 metres of any flood defence structure or culvert on a main river, or 16 metres on a tidal river
 - any activity within 16 metres of a sea defence structure
 - activities carried out on the floodplain of a main river, more than 8 metres from the riverbank, culvert or flood defence structure (or 16 metres if it is a tidal main river), if you do not have planning permission (you do not need permission to build agricultural hay stacks, straw stacks or manure clamps in these places).
6. For further guidance please visit Flood risk activities: environmental permits - GOV.UK or contact our National Customer Contact Centre on 03708 506 506 (Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm) or by emailing enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk. The applicant should not assume that a permit will automatically be forthcoming once planning permission has been granted, and we advise them to consult with us at the earliest opportunity.
7. 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.
8. The safe free passage of the public on all rights of way must not be obstructed at any time. If the public are unlikely to be able to exercise their public rights on a right of way, then a Temporary Path Closure Order must be obtained. This can be applied for through Rights of Way at Dorset Council see <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/w/changing-the-definitive-map>, but the application must be completed and returned at least thirteen weeks before the

intended closure date. It should be noted that there is a fee applicable to this application. This application and legal order must be confirmed before any works obstructing the path are commenced. Any damage to the surface of the footpath attributable to the development must be repaired to Dorset Council's specification, in accordance with Section 59 of the Highways Act 1980 by the applicant.

9. 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 made aware of issues and additional information was submitted to address these.

10. If badger surveys required under condition 12 show that specific relevant works require a licence to disturb a badger sett, a copy of a valid licence is to be submitted to the planning authority prior to the commencement of the relevant works.

11. The applicant is reminded landscaping must be carried out in accordance with approved landscaping plans under planning applications at North Farm Solar Farm ref. P/FUL/2023/02829 and Woodlands Solar Farm ref. P/FUL/2023/03415. No landscape planting will be removed to allow for the cable route.

12. The developer is encouraged to utilise trenchless installation methods, such as directional boring, where site conditions permit and where their use would reduce the impact of construction activities on the highway, local residents, and the surrounding environment.

13. The applicant is advised that, when seeking any licences or permits for works within the public highway, due regard should be given to avoid conflict with school traffic at peak drop off/pick up times and other planned or ongoing highway works in the surrounding area. Works on Horton Road should be programmed and coordinated to avoid conflict with other highway works taking place within a 1.5-mile radius. The applicant is encouraged to liaise with the

Local Highway Authority at an early stage to facilitate effective coordination and minimise disruption to the highway network.