Application Number:	P/FUL/2023/06578
Webpage:	https://planning.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/
Site address:	Land to the north west of Holt Road Three Legged Cross Wimborne
Proposal:	The construction and installation of a Battery Storage Facility, associated infrastructure, landscaping, fencing, site access road, biodiversity net gain planting and cable corridors.
Applicant name:	Pivoted Power LLP
Case Officer:	Diana Mezzogori-Curran
Ward Member(s):	Cllr Will Chakawhata Please note Cllr Cook was the elected Ward Member at the time of the consultation period.

Publicity expiry date:	6 May 2024	**Officer site visit date:**	08.12.2023 and 11.07.2024
Decision due date:	5 August 2024	**Ext(s) of time:**	5 August 2024
No of Site Notices:	5 site notices displayed on 8.12.2023		
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 19 of this report.

3.0 **Reason for the recommendation**: as set out in paras 16 – 18 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 though 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 (11.88%) would be delivered through on-site planting, including grassland, mixed scrub, individual trees and native hedgerow.
- The proposed development would have limited and localised adverse landscape and visual impacts and would not harm the characteristics of the area.
- Appropriate mitigation would be secured via planning condition to minimise adverse visual impacts.
- The mitigation measures regarding the cumulative noise levels from both BESS developments 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
Health and Safety - Fire safety	Acceptable, subject to conditions
Flood risk and drainage	Acceptable, subject to conditions
Pollution	Acceptable, subject to conditions

Impact on trees	Acceptable
Archaeology and heritage assets	Acceptable
Minerals and Waste Safeguarding	Acceptable

5.0 Description of Site

5.01 The site is located within a rural landscape at Mannington, Holt and within statutory Green Belt (GB). The site covers an area of approx. 5.13 ha in total, including the battery storage facility, a compound, grid connection cable corridor (covering 0.9 ha), and an area provided for biodiversity net gain enhancements (4.2 ha).

5.02 The site comprises an irregular parcel of vegetated land, with an electricity pylon in the west-central section of the site (running west to east), and a linear cable run feature connecting to a substation to the south. A dry ditch runs through the woodland to the south of the site. The site includes part of Holt Road to the south, connecting to the National Grid (NG) Mannington Substation to the east / south-east, via a proposed cabling route. The NG substation is located approximately 250m east / south-east of the site.

5.03 Immediately to the north of the site are agricultural fields, and a pond is located approximately 50m to the north-west. Linwood Sawmill is approximately 60m north of Holt Road and 75m east of the site. To the east there are fields, equestrian buildings, various outbuildings and containers.

5.04. Adjacent to the site and to the south-west is Emmers Farm which had planning consent for a 49.9MW Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) scheme in 2021 (Application ref: 3/21/0137/FUL). To the north-east are further agricultural fields and approximately 150m west is a waste storage area, accessed via Burt's Lane.

5.05 An area of woodland borders the site to the south-east. To the south there are two residential properties, Willow Cottage and The Copse. The closest Willow Cottage is located approx. 85m from the nearest proposed battery container and 95m from the nearest transformer/inverter. The Copse is located approx. 250m from the nearest, proposed battery container and 260m from nearest transformer/inverter. A Public Right of Way runs north-east from Mannington Farm toward Burt's Lane (PRoW) E45/9, approx. 220m to the south-west of the site,

5.06 The surrounding landscape is predominantly rural with a mixture of woodland, hedgerows, heathland, farmland, and scattered residential properties. Emmers Farm, Linwood Sawmill and Mannington 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) and Holt and West Moors Heaths Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) are located approximately 150m north of the site and 240m to the south. A Grade II listed bridge lies approximately 160m to the south and a Scheduled Monument 'Bowl barrow on 'Summerlug Hill' 520m to the south of the site.

The Dorset Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV) lies 70m to the south of the site. The Cranborne Chase National Landscape (formerly AONB) lies approximately 4.6 km west and 5 km north of the site.

5.07 The site will be accessed from Holt Road to the south via an existing access shared with Emmers Farm.

6.0 Description of Development

6.01 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 47.5MW. 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) Mannington Substation.

6.02 The proposed BESS has the following components:

Table 1 – Proposal Summary

Component	Detail
65 x Battery Containers (reduced from 78 as originally proposed)	The maximum height of the highest part of the containers would be 2.4m excluding any base. Set on a concrete plinth or stone base with a maximum height of 0.3m AGL. Total height including base is 2.7m Metal and finished in a neutral colour.
7 x Inverter/Transformers	The maximum height of the highest part of the equipment would be 4.3m. Set on a concrete plinth or stone base with a maximum height of 0.3m AGL. Total height including base is 4.6m
1 x Resistor and Harmonic Filter	The maximum height of the highest part of the equipment would be 3.2m. Set on a concrete plinth or stone base with a maximum height of 0.3m AGL. Total height including base is 3.5m
1 x BESS Switch Room	The maximum height of the highest part of the equipment would be 3.3m.

	Set on a concrete plinth or stone base with a maximum height of 0.3m AGL. Total height including base is 3.6m
1 x Earth Transformer 1 x Auxiliary Transformer	The maximum height of the highest part of the equipment would be 3.3m. Set on a concrete plinth or stone base with a maximum height of 0.3m AGL. Total height including base is 3.6m
1 x LV Substation	Maximum height of 3m. Set on a concrete plinth or stone base with a maximum height of 0.3m AGL. Total height including base is 3.3m
1 x DNO Substation Distribution Network Operator Substation)	Maximum height of 3m. Set on a concrete plinth or stone base with a maximum height of 0.3m AGL. Total height including base is 3.3m
1 x Welfare facility	Maximum height of 3m. Set on a concrete plinth or stone base with a maximum height of 0.3m AGL. Total height including base is 3.3m
1 x Spares container	Maximum height of 2.6m. Set on a concrete plinth or stone base with a maximum height of 0.3m AGL.

	Total height including base is 2.9m
1 x Control room	Maximum height of 3m. Set on a concrete plinth or stone base with a maximum height of 0.3m AGL. Total height including base is 3.3m
2 x EV Parking Spaces with charging point	
Infra-red CCTV cameras mounted on poles	The maximum height of the pole mounted CCTV cameras will be 4.2m.
Perimeter fencing	Timber board fencing along the northern boundary. The maximum height of the perimeter fencing will be 3.0m.
Acoustic fencing	Timber acoustic fencing along the southern, eastern, and western boundaries. The height of the acoustic fencing will be 4.0m.
Access track	Existing access from Holt Road (south), which comprises a bell-mouth area of hard-standing, is also utilised by the industrial site to the south-west (Emmers Farm), which has permission for the installation of a BESS development.
Internal perimeter track	Maximum width 4m. Finished in compacted crushed stone.
Distribution Cables (within the BESS compound)	

	These will be buried underground between components. Minimum depth of cable trenches will be 0.9m below ground level. Maximum depth of the cable trenches will be 1.2m below ground level.
Water tank	Maximum height of 3.3m. including concrete base. Size 10m² Capacity: 1,900 l/min for at least 120 minutes
Cable Route	Minimum depth of cable trenches will be 0.9m below ground level. Maximum depth of the cable trenches will be 1.2m below ground level. Cable route will sit within the existing road footprint.

6.03 An underground cable will run from the battery storage units to the NG Mannington substation. Site access is proposed from Holt Road, which bounds the south of the site. There is currently an existing access point to Emmers Farm which will remain.

7.0 Relevant Planning History

7.01

Application reference	Site address	Proposal	Decision & decision date
P/ESC/2023/03961	Land to the north west of Holt Road Three-Legged Cross	Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) screening request	Not EIA development 01/08/2023

7.02 To the south west of the site a planning application for 49.9MW Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) was approved in June 2021. A subsequent Variation of condition application was approved in August 2023:

Application reference	Site address	proposal	Decision and decision date
3/21/0137/FUL	Land Off Holt Road, adjacent to application site as per paragraph 7.02 above	*Proposed development of a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS)*	Approved 18/06/2021 **Development commenced**
P/VOC/2022/05875	Land Off Holt Road, adjacent to application site as per paragraph 7.02 above	*'Proposed development of a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) (Variation of Condition 3 of PP 3/21/0137/FUL in order to reinstate and return the site to agricultural use after 40 years from the date of energisation/connection*	Approved 09/11/2022

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

Application reference	Site address	proposal	Decision and decision date
P/ESC/2022/07135	Sturts Farm, West Moors, Road West Moors (approx. 0.6 km SE of the application site)	*Proposed battery energy storage system with associated infrastructure, access track and cable route*	Not EIA development November 2022
3/13/0669/FUL	Land At Wedgehill Farm Woodlands Wimborne approx. 0.9km north of the application site	*Solar farm, comprising the erection of solar arrays of photovoltaic panels, inverter/transformer sheds, fencing, site storage cabin, combined DNO and EPC switchgear housing, internal gravel access road,*	Approved January 2014 **Operational**

		and associated equipment (as amended by plans rec'd 25/10/13, 7/11/13, 27/11/13 & 16/12/13) AMENDED BY 3/14/0765/NMC	
3/14/0457/FUL	Manor Farm, St Michaels Road, Verwood approx. 1.8km NE of the application site	*Installation of ground mounted photovoltaic solar arrays to provide 20.4MW generating capacity together with power inverter systems; transformer stations; internal access track; landscaping; security fencing; access gate; CCTV and ancillary infrastructure*	Approved July 2014 **Operational**
3/13/0470/FUL	Homeland Farm, Ringwood Road, Three-Legged Cross approx. 2.km East of the application site	*Proposed temporary (30 years) change of use from agriculture to agriculture and solar photovoltaic farm with associated static arrays of photovoltaic panels together with cabins to contain inverter cabinets and transformers and a cabin to house a substation, with perimeter fencing, landscape, and ecological enhancements. As amended by plans received 29th July*	Approved October 2013 **Operational**

		2013. as amended by add info 20th August 2013	
3/14/0790/FUL	Bedborough Farm, Land at Uddens Drive, Wimborne approx. 3.5km South of the application site	*Development of a new solar farm of up to 7MW of generating capacity, comprising the installation of solar photovoltaic panels and associated infrastructure including electrical inverter and transformer cabins, switchgear and meter house, access tracks, fencing, CCTV and landscape planting as amended by plans rec'd 10/10/14*	Approved November 2014 **Operational**

Other applications currently under consideration

Application reference	**Site address**	**proposal**	
P/FUL/2023/03415	Woodlands Manor Farm, Horton, approx. 2.7km North of the site	*Construction of Solar Farm and associated infrastructure*	**Under consideration**
P/FUL/2023/02829	Woodlands Manor Farm, Horton, approx. 2.7km North of the site	*Construction of Solar Farm and associated infrastructure*	**Under consideration**

8.0 List of Constraints

Dorset heathlands - 400m heathland buffer, Description: Holt & West Moors Heaths

National Grid Overhead Line AXMINSTER - CHICKERELL - MANNINGTON Operating 400 and LOVEDEAN - MANNINGTON - NURSLING Operating 400

National Grid Substation 0.0 (132kV) and 10052203.0 (400kV)

National Grid Tower 10031218.0 (height 27.61)

Bournemouth Water Consultation Area

Environment Agency (EA) - Risk of Surface Water Flooding Extent 1 in 30, Extent 1 in 100, and 1 in 1000

EA - Groundwater no susceptibility to flooding.

Ancient Woodland: BAREWOOD COPSE; Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodland and: MANNINGTON COPSE; Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodland

Existing ecological network (Polygons)

Higher Potential ecological network

Natural England Designation - RAMSAR: Dorset Heathlands (UK11021)

Site of nature conservation interests (SNCIS): SU00/056 - Mannington Sub-station

Greenbelt: Bournemouth Greenbelt (GB)

Minerals and Waste - Sand and Gravel

9.0 Consultations

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

Consultees

1. **Environment Agency (EA)** - Final comments received on 17.05.2024.

   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 10, 11, 12, 13; Informative note 1, 2)

2. **Natural England (NE)** - Comments received 04.06.2024

   Natural England concur with the Council's Appropriate Assessment (AA) and has no objection to the authority granting the permission.
   NE welcomes submitted biodiversity mitigation and provisions for Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) which will be secured by way of planning conditions and informative Notes. (Condition 15)

3. **Dorset Fire & Rescue Service (DWFRS) -** Final comments received on 29.04.2024.

   Initial comments received from DWFRS identified a lack of information 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, a reduction in the number of units, 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. (Condition 27)

4. National Grid Plant Protection - Comments received on 18.12.2023.

National Grid has no objections to the above proposal subject to conditions. There are no National Gas Transmission assets affected in this area.

5. Forestry Commission

No comments received

6. Bournemouth Water Ltd - Comments received on 29.11.2023

Bournemouth Water has no comment or concern.

7. National Highways - Comments received on 27.11.2023

- noted that once in operation the site is unlikely to generate significant traffic flows. The primary vehicular impact will be during the construction phase which is expected to last 10-12 months commencing in 2025, subject to planning consent.
- consider that the proposed vehicle routing in respect of the Strategic Road Network (SRN) is suitable to accommodate the predicted development traffic.
- satisfied that the proposals are unlikely to result in a severe or unacceptable impact on the SRN in capacity or safety terms, as defined by the NPPF.

8. Dorset Council (DC) – Highways - Comments received on 14.12.2023.

No objection subject to conditions. (Conditions 23, 24, 25, 26)

9. DC - Natural Environment Team (NET)

Biodiversity Plan submitted and approved by NET on 30.05.2024 and a Certificate of Approval issued on 30.05.2024. (Condition 15)

10. DC - Environmental Assessment - Comments received 20.12.2023.

Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) and Appropriate Assessment (AA) have concluded that subject to the appropriate mitigation being properly secured, the proposed development will not result in an adverse effect upon the integrity of the Dorset Heaths SAC, and Dorset Heathlands SPA and Ramsar.

11. DC – Landscape - Final comments received on 03.06.2024.

Following the amendments to the site layout and reducing the number of units, Landscape Team are satisfied that subject to conditions, the proposal is acceptable in terms of landscape and visual impact. (Conditions 6, 7, 21)

12. DC - Flood Risk Management (LLFA) – Comments received 30.05.2024.

- Initial holding objection
- LLFA confirmed the additional information submitted provides the clarification required to substantiate the surface water discharge route.
- The applicant may still need to undertake some clearing work within the land owned/managed by the applicant to ensure that any open sections of culvert (drainage ditch) are cleared (if required).
- Accordingly, the LLFA has confirmed removal of its holding objection subject to conditions and informative Notes. (Conditions 16, 17; Informative note 3)

13. DC - Minerals & Waste Policy - Comments received 13.06.2024.

The site is within a safeguarded area for sand and gravel, and within the Bedrock Sand Resource Block. However, as the proposal is temporary, the mineral would not be sterilised by the development.

14. DC – Planning Policy - Comments received 18.06.2024.

There is no in principle policy objection to the proposal for the Battery Energy Storage System subject to there being very special circumstances in favour of the proposed development and it being acceptable in respect of all other material planning considerations.

15. DC Environmental Health Officer (EHO) - Comments received 02.07.2024.

Following an initial objection, the EHO has confirmed the updated Noise Modelling Results for Battery Storage Facility received on 01.07.2024 has demonstrated that a cumulative (all plant permitted by applications 3/21/0137/FUL and P/FUL/2023/06578) rating level of no more than 35dB *Lar,Tr* at the nearest noise sensitive receptor can be achieved. Accordingly, the EHO has confirmed removal of its objection subject to conditions. (Conditions 8, 9, 26)

16. DC Archaeology Comments received on 17.06.2024.

There are no concerns regarding archaeology.

17. DC - Section 106

No comments received

18. DC - Rights of Way Officer

No comments received

19. DC - Building Control East Team (BC)

No comments received

20. Dorset Wildlife Trust (DWT)

No comments received

21. Ramblers Association

No comments received

22. Stour And Allen Vale Ward

No response received

23. Holt Parish Council Comments received 07.12.2023.

Parish Council has no objection to proposal however there are some concerns regarding noise disturbance to neighbouring residential properties and wildlife.

Representations received

Summary of comments of objection/support:

No letters of objection 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

Christchurch and East Dorset Core Strategy (Part 1) 2014 (CS)

KS1 Presumption in favour of sustainable development
KS3 Green Belt

ME1 Safeguarding biodiversity and geodiversity
ME2 Protection of the Dorset Heathlands
ME3 Sustainable development standards for new development
ME5 Sources of Renewable energy
ME6 Flood Management, Mitigation and Defence
HE1 Valuing and Conserving our Historic Environment
HE2 Design of new development
HE3 Landscape Quality

East Dorset Local Plan 2002 (Saved Policies)

LTDEV1 Criteria for external lighting on developments.
DES 2 Criteria for development to avoid unacceptable impacts from types of pollutions (Noise, smell, safety, health, lighting, disturbance, traffic or other pollution.
DES6 Landscaping schemes in rural areas and on the edge of settlements should be of indigenous species.
DES7 Criteria controlling the loss of trees.
DES11 Criteria for ensuring developments respect or enhance their surroundings.

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

13.01 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

14.01 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

15.01 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 2035. 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).

15.02 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.

15.03 Electricity storage complements the rapid necessary expansion of renewable technologies by providing a balancing function to support the intermittent energy supply from renewable sources.

15.04 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.

15.05 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.

15.06 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.

15.07 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."*

15.08 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.

15.09 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 breath 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 Lond 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 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.

15.14 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.

15.15 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.

15.16 The proposed BESS is 47.5MW. 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

Mannington Sub-Station from 30.05.2025 subject to planning permission. The proposal therefore has potential to make an early positive contribution towards the above objectives.

15.17 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.

15.18 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

Principle of development

Principle of BESS development - Sustainability

16.01 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.

16.02 The Christchurch and East Dorset Local Plan does not reference planning policy in relation to battery storage, however in **Objective 3**: *To Adapt to the Challenges of Climate Change*, an aim of "*at least 10% of total energy used on developments of 10 or more dwellings or 1,000 m2 of non-residential floor space will come from decentralised, renewable or low carbon sources*", highlighting the need for alternative systems like battery storage to be put in place within the Dorset Council administrative area.

16.03 Policy ME3 states "*Developments will be required to incorporate carbon emissions reduction, water and energy efficiency measures and to demonstrate they have explored a range of sustainable and low carbon options*" and "*In line with current government requirements and targets, all new development will ensure CO2 emissions are minimised to practical and viable levels by following the hierarchy for regulated energy (unless it can be demonstrated that utilising measures further down the hierarchy will achieve greater carbon reductions):*

1. Energy efficiency measures resulting from maximising building fabric performance, scheme layout and building orientation.
2. On-site renewable, decentralised, and low carbon energy.
3. Carbon reductions through off-site measures, known as 'Allowable Solutions' (to compensate for carbon emission targets that are difficult to achieve on site)"

16.04 Although not directly related to battery storage or renewable energy schemes themselves, Policy ME3 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.

16.05 Policy ME5 states that "*The Councils encourage the sustainable generation of energy from renewable and low carbon sources where adverse social, environmental and visual impacts have been minimised to an acceptable level. Proposals for renewable energy apparatus will only be permitted where:*

- *The technology is suitable for the location and does not cause significant adverse harm to visual amenity from within the landscape and views into it, and within the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is in accordance with its current Management Plan;*
- *It is in accordance with Policy ME1 regarding adverse ecological impacts upon the integrity of priority habitats or local populations of priority species and opportunities for biodiversity enhancement;*
- *Cumulative impacts are taken into account, and assessments undertaken for impacts on the landscape, visually, the local amenity and biodiversity;*
- *It would not cause interference to radar, or electronic communications networks, or highway safety;*
- *It would not cause significant harm to neighbouring amenity by reason of visual impact, noise, vibration, overshadowing, flicker (associated with turbines), or other nuisances and emissions;*
- *It includes an agreed restoration scheme, any necessary mitigation measures, and measures to ensure the removal of the installations when operations cease;*
- *Safe access during construction and operation must be provided; and*
- *It avoids harm to the significance and settings of heritage assets*.

16.06 Although not generating renewable energy the proposal would assist in managing supply and demand for renewable energy across the grid. Policy ME5 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 ME5 regarding individual and cumulative impacts on landscape, visually, local amenity, biodiversity, neighbouring amenity, access safety and decommissioning are considered later in this report.

16.07 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".

16.08 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.

16.09 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 martial 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.*

16.10 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.

16.11 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".*

16.12 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."*

16.13 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."

16.14 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."*

16.15 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 and 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.

Impact on the Green Belt

16.16 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.

16.17 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."*

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

- *"limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land, whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would:*
- *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."*

16.19 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.

16.20 Given its 40-year life span, the development would be temporary, but this lengthy period would mean openness is reduced for a considerable period.

16.21 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."

16.22 Policy ME5: Sources of Renewable Energy states *"The Councils encourage the sustainable generation of energy from renewable and low carbon sources where adverse social, environmental and visual impacts have been minimised to an acceptable level."*

16.23 The submitted Planning Statement, Section 3 'Site Selection process', sets out how the proposed site has been selected as the most suitable site in the area for the proposed BESS development. Table 3.1 'Strategic Sequential Site Selection Test' (page 12-13) of the Planning Statement demonstrates the sieving process of National Grid substations UK-wide, identifying NG Mannington substation as feasible substation in terms of its available capacity to allow more connections. Section 3.2 and Table 3.2 'NG Mannington Substation: Key Parameters Site Appraisal' (page 15) of the Planning Statement, identifies the proposed site as suitable site for the proposed development after site selection process reviewing land within 1km of the NG Mannington substation.

16.24 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 a 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 Mannington substation is one point at which there is an available connection. The substation is approximately 250m from the site and the cable route forms part of this application. Furthermore, given that the available land in the vicinity of Mannington 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 Mannington Substation, justifying the Green Belt location.

16.25 The proposed development would be capable of storing 47.5MW 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.

16.26 The surrounding landscape has no protected designation and has a moderate value. Pylons, overhead power lines and large National Grid Substation influence the local landscape character and visual amenity, although generally the surrounding fields and rural forms of development retain an attractiveness through their generally open character which can be appreciated from public rights of way in the vicinity.

16.27 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 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, partial long views of the site from the Holt

Road to the south/south east and Public Right of Way E45 to the south west/west are likely to open up during winter months with greater visual impact when considered in combination with the adjacent approved 3/21/0137/FULL BESS development and nearby NG Mannington substation.

16.28 The applicant is seeking to complement the existing screening by increasing an area of native thicket planting along the south-eastern site boundary to provide additional screening. The reduction in the number of proposed battery containers, as per amended plans received on 19.04.2024, has reduced the size of the overall BESS compound, which will enable a greater area of species rich meadow to be proposed outside the BESS compound perimeter fencing to the north-east

16.29 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 4.6m) and the mature screening around the site, plus the assessment that the visual impact of the development on the character of the landscape will be limited, it is concluded that the development would cause moderate landscape and visual harm but this would be contained and limited, and mitigation measures through additional planning would ensure that harm would be localised. Harm to the openness of the GB would therefore be moderately adverse

16.30 It is accepted that the proposal would make a contribution to energy security nationally. As aforementioned (paragraphs 16.23 and 16.24), other sites within 1km of NG Mannington substation have been explored but found unsuitable as more sensitive. Due to NG Mannington 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. Officers note that past appeal decisions nationally 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 below when assessing whether there are ‘very special circumstances’ in the next section of this report.

<u>Green Belt – Very Special Circumstances (VSC)</u>

16.31 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.

16.32 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:

- *Need for energy storage facilities*

- *Site location and alternative sites*
- *Biodiversity and BNG*

16.33 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.

16.34 VSCs, associated benefits and associated harm in relation to this development is assessed in full in the planning balance section (Section 17) at the end of this report. 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**.

Need for energy storage facilities

16.35 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 gas 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.

16.36 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 in the planning balance.

16.37 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.

16.38 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.

Site location and alternative sites

16.39 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 Mannington substation where alternative brownfield/industrial 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 large Mannington electrical substation, several pylons across the site and surrounding area and an industrial site which already benefits from BESS planning consent. There is an existing access track connecting the proposed and approved BESS location with Holt Road to the south, comprising of bare ground and hardstanding. Holt Road itself, along which the proposed cable route runs, comprises of hardstanding. It is considered that the location of the site in close proximity to the NG Mannington substation and the secured grid connection can be given substantial weight in the planning balance.

Biodiversity

16.40 The application is supported by a Biodiversity Plan (BP) that has been agreed by the Council's Natural Environment Team (NET) on 30.05.2024. 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 areas of other neutral grassland will be enhanced.

16.41 This application was validated on 23 November 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 11.88% net gain of habitat area biodiversity units in line with policy requirements. A gain would also be achieved in hedgerow units.

16.42 The implementation and creation of habitats post-development will be outlined in a Landscape Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) which is conditioned (Condition 18). 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.

16.43 The BP also sets out mitigation measures regarding bats which includes that no trees identified on site with potential to support roosting bats will be removed; noise and vibration will be controlled by limiting working hours to 7am/7pm during construction; construction lighting would be also controlled by working hours especially in winter months when the light is limited; there will be no permanent light within the site and passive infrared (PIR) lighting will be designed to be downward facing to minimise any light-spill. The Council's Natural Environment Team have been consulted on these measures and confirmed that they are appropriate.

16.44 Subject to full implementation of the approved Biodiversity Plan dated 30.05.2024 (Condition 15), 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 11.88% 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.

Landscape and visual impact

16.45 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 1km radius for the consideration of potential landscape effects and a 2km radius for potential visual effects.

16.46 The application site falls within the National Character Area (NCA) 135 Dorset Heathland. At a finer detail, its host Landscape Character Type (LCT) is the Heathland/farmland mosaic LCT. Other LCTs within the 1km study area include Valley Pasture LCT, Rolling Wooded Pasture LCT and Lowland Heath LCT. The East Dorset Landscape Character Assessment sub-divides Landscape Character Types into Landscape Character Areas (LCAs). The site is located in Horton Common - Three Legged Cross Heath/Farmland Mosaic LCA.

16.47 The application site is not located within any nationally designated landscape, nor is it within the setting at 4km from the Dorset National Landscape, and does not exhibit any special qualities which elevate its value beyond that of everyday landscape. The Cranborne Chase National Landscape (formerly known as AONB) lies approx. 4km from the site at its closest point. The Holt Heath sub area of the Woodlands AGLV lies approx. 70m to the SW of the site.

16.48 In terms of roads and recreational routes, including Registered Common land, there are:

- Several short public rights of way (PROW) including footpaths and bridleways within the study area (to the N of the site includes Bridleways E46/12, E46/30 and E46/32 and Footpath E46/10)
- PRoW network to the S/SW of the site includes Bridleway E45/71 and Footpaths E45/9, E45/68, E45/1 and E45/6.
- A number of roads passing close to the application site including Holt Road; Burts Lane approx. 600 m to the west and Horton Road approx. 500 m to the north.
- Registered Common land at Mannington Heath is located approx. 55m to the N of the site at its closest point; and
- Open Access Land at Mannington Heath (which is also SSSI, SPA, SAC and Ramsar site) is located approx. 75m to the N of the site at its closest point.

16.49 The LVA itself contains an assessment of the landscape and visual effects of the proposed development, including cumulative effects in association with other existing/planned similar renewable energy developments within a 5m radius of the site and impact on the Green Belt.

16.50 With regards to ‘Landscape effects’ the introduction of the proposed development will locally alter the existing agricultural use 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.

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.

16.51 The LVA identified that there will be minimum loss to existing landscape features including the removal of five trees along access track to facilitate construction access. No further tree or hedgerow removal is anticipated for either construction or operational traffic access. No other existing vegetation (trees or hedgerows) would be removed as a result of the proposed development. During operation, the proposed development will have a minor adverse landscape effect on the characteristics of the application site. Some beneficial elements including compensatory heavy standard tree, new hedgerow planting and thicket (woodland edge) planting; rich grassland, semi shaded grassland and wetland and enhancements of the existing which will help integrate the proposed development within the wider landscape.

16.52 The LVA notes that the proposed development will directly affect the East Dorset Heathland/farmland mosaic LCT and will result in a Battery Energy Storage Facility located over approx. 0.9 hectares of this landscape (main development boundary, within existing compound). This will result in a moderate localised direct minor adverse landscape effect and a no change effect across the wider extents this landscape.

16.53 With regards to 'visual effects', the potential views of the proposed development within the local landscape will be limited to a small number of the nearest neighbours (receptors) on the access to the stables directly northeast of the application site. The visibility of the BESS will be largely contained by the low heights (max. 4.6m) of the proposed development, the mix of hedgerows and trees within the boundaries of the application site and surrounding farmland, along with screening by built elements and local topographical variations.

16.54 Whilst the BESS compound would be enclosed by mesh/timber perimeter/acoustic fencing, at 3m and 4m high this fencing would have a significant visual impact, and taller components of the BESS development would still be visible above the top of the fencing. Furthermore, the fencing and the external Distribution Network Operator building (DNO) would all have a functional, urban appearance which would not be sympathetic to the rural character of the setting.

16.55 Adverse visual effects would be experienced by residential properties at Willow Cottage and The Copse, and sensitive visual receptors using Holt Road including people walking along the road to access the local Public Rights of Way network and local amenities including the school in nearby Three Legged Cross, especially in winter when there would be no leaves on intervening vegetation.

16.56 The proposed mitigation planting would adequately compensate for the removal of existing vegetation and would contribute to the enhancement of landscape condition across the wider site area; however, it is necessary to impose condition requesting additional planting is required to adequately screen the development. (Condition 21)

16.57 With regards to 'Cumulative Impact', the LVA notes that although there are existing elements of energy infrastructure within a 2km radius of the proposed development,

including the adjacent BESS site, Mannington Substation, Wedgehill Solar Farm and a pylon line, the cumulative effects are limited to localised interactions with existing elements of energy infrastructure which will result in a localised minor adverse cumulative landscape effect on the Heathland/farmland mosaic LCT. Cumulative visual effects will also be limited and will range from very localised minor adverse effects to no change.

16.58 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 East Dorset Heathland/farmland mosaic 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 and adjacent BESS development will help to integrate the proposed development within the local landscape.

16.59 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.

16.60 The Council's Landscape Officer broadly agrees with the 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. As mentioned previously in this report, an extensive site selection process rejected the most sensitive exposed sites in landscape terms due to specific requirement for BESS developments to be located within 1km of National Grid infrastructure. It is close to the Three Legged Cross and Holt Heath AGLV, and there are also nearby areas of Open Access land, Registered Common and Public Rights of Way.

16.61 The Three Legged Cross Heath/Farmland Mosaic Landscape Character Area where the site is located is however relatively well contained, and open views are not a key characteristic - longer views of the proposed development from publicly accessible areas would generally be screened by intervening landform and existing vegetation.

16.62 As previously noted, the additional planting to south eastern boundary would mitigate the visual impact caused by the acoustic/timber fencing and the external DNO building, as such 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 is supportive of the principle of the development in strictly landscape terms, though this is subject to the provision of the additional planting, a LEMP, the colour of the water tank and materials for the proposed buildings. The concerns raised by the Landscape Officer regarding the disposal of excavated materials, including that from the attenuation pond has been resolved via e-mail dated 21.06.2024 from the applicant confirm that all excavated materials from the development will be disposed off-site. Even with the proposed mitigation, the proposal would cause limited landscape harm but subject to the above

mentioned conditions the proposal is considered to be acceptable in landscape terms. (Conditions 6, 7, 21)

16.63 Taking into consideration the location of the development, mature screening and proposed landscape mitigation measures, it is considered that individual and cumulative impacts on landscaping is attributed limited weight in the planning balance.

Impact on the character of the area

16.64 As previously noted in this report, the site is located within a rural landscape of Mannington. Surrounding landscape is rural with a mixture of woodland, hedgerows, heathland, farmland, and some scattered residential properties with the exception of the Emmers Farn and Mannington Substation which are industrial sites. Dorset Heathlands Ramsar and SPA, Dorset Heaths SAC and Holt and West Moors Heaths SSSI are located approximately 150m north of the site and 240m to the south of the site. A Grade II listed bridge lies approximately 160m to the south of the site Scheduled Monument 'Bowl barrow on Summerlug Hill 250m south of Mannington Farm', which lies approximately 520m to the south of the site. The Dorset Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV) lies 70m to the south of the site. The application site is not in the Dorset National Landscape (formerly AONB) and is some 4 km from site.

16.65 The site itself is agricultural field with an electricity pylon present in the west-central section of the site, running west to east and a linear cable run feature connecting to a substation to the south. Site is suitably well screened by existing mature vegetation. With relatively low heights (max. 4.6) of the various proposed structures, including perimeter/acoustic fencing, it is considered, the siting of the proposed development within the limits of the existing 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. An appropriate condition securing additional planting to south east corner of the site is necessary to enhance the appearance of the development. (Condition 21)

16.66 Furthermore, the proposal is temporary (40 years) and thereafter reversible. Therefore, the long term impact to the character of the area is attributed limited weight in the planning balance.

Impact on neighbouring amenity - Noise

16.67 There are no residential properties immediately adjacent to the application site, the nearest properties being Willow Cottage off Holt Road some 85m and The Copse some 250m to the south east from the nearest battery container. While it may be possible to have limited views of the site in winter the outlook from neighbouring properties will be little affected.

16.68 The key issue in terms of potential amenity impacts relates to noise. The site is in a tranquil, rural location away from notable noise generators except for the existing Mannington electrical substation from which, at the time of the officer site visit, there was an audible hum emitting. The design of the BESS compound includes acoustic

fencing around the southern, eastern, and western borders, mitigating any potential noise impacts on nearby residential receptors.

16.69 A Noise Impact Assessment (NIA) dated November 2023 was produced to accompany the application and assess both the proposed development individually and cumulatively with the neighbouring consented BESS. The NIA results demonstrated that all receptors (neighbouring properties) within the 250m radius had a low impact, with the exception of one receptor (Willow Cottage) which would have an adverse impact and therefore, mitigation is required for the proposed development.

16.70 The applicant has submitted updated Noise Modelling Results for Battery Storage Facility dated 01.07.2024. 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 NSR1 (Willow Cottage).

16.71 The noise modelling has been undertaken in response to feedback from the 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 consented BESS development.

16.72 The proposed mitigation measures to achieve night-time rating levels no more than 35dB *Lar,Tr* at the nearest noise sensitive receptor (Willow Cottage) includes:

- Reduction in operational units - The number of operational battery units during the night-time period to be reduced to only four battery banks (and 4 x inverters, and 2 x transformers) in the north western part of the site will be operational.
- Inverter noise reduction - An 11dB reduction could be applied to the sound power level of the inverter. This could be achieved by a reduction in fan speed during the night-time and a noise attenuation kit.
- Battery noise reduction - A 10 dB reduction could be applied to the sound power level of the battery unit. Again, this could be achieved by a reduction in fan speed during the night-time and a noise attenuation kit.

16.73 The results from the above noise modelling mitigation measures shows that the specific sound level from the proposed BESS at Willow Cottage in the worst case scenario would be 23dB *Lar,Tr.* When considering the cumulative impact with the adjacent consented BESS (plus a 2dB character correction), it will result in BS 4142 cumulative rating level at 35dB *Lar,Tr.* 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.

16.74 Following an initial objection from Environmental Health Officer (EHO), the EHO has confirmed the updated Noise Modelling Results for Battery Storage Facility received on 01.07.2024 has demonstrated that a cumulative (all plant permitted by applications 3/21/0137/FUL and P/FUL/2023/06578) rating level of no more than 35dB Lar,Tr at the nearest noise sensitive receptor can be achieved. Accordingly, the EHO has confirmed removal of its objection subject to condition (Condition 9) 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 8) regarding contaminated land and construction management (Condition 23) are also necessary to be imposed to this consent to ensure any possible risks from contamination are minimised.

16.75 With the 'low' rating noise levels achieved as demonstrated above and mitigation measures proposed to be secured via planning condition (Condition 9) the proposal would not have an adverse impact on residential amenity in accordance with Policy ME5 of the Christchurch and East Dorset Core Strategy (2014).

16.76 Taking into consideration the nature of development, presence of NG Mannington substation, mitigation measures proposed, it is considered the impact on neighbouring amenities regarding the noise is attributed limited weight in planning balance.

Highway impacts, safety, access and parking

16.77 The site will be accessed via the existing access, off Holt Road. The applicant has provided a swept path analysis that shows the largest vehicles needed to access the site will be able to negotiate the radii of the existing bell-mouthed junction, and drawings confirm that the appropriate visibility splays for the junction can be achieved.

16.78 The application is supported by a Transport Statement, 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.

16.79 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.

16.80 The main impact will be during the construction phase, this is expected to last 10-12 months. Construction is expected to generate a worst-case scenario of 54 two-way vehicle movements per day, construction vehicles will be routed northwards up to Horton Road. It is considered that the proposed routing is suitable to accommodate the predicated development traffic.

16.81 The Council's Highways Team have been consulted on the proposals and they have confirmed that the submitted Transport Statement 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.

16.82 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 visibility splays, manoeuvring, parking and loading areas, construction traffic management plan and wheel cleaning

facilities to be submitted. (Conditions 23, 24, 25, 26) Officers therefore consider that the proposals are acceptable in relation to highway safety.

In relation to access the proposed is considered to accord with policy KS11 of the Core Strategy and is considered neutral in the planning balance.

Health and safety – Fire Safety

16.83 Fire risk and associated impacts of any battery storage facilities have become principal concerns in terms of health and safety.

16.84 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.

16.85 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). This application is not for or within the consultation criteria of a major hazard site, and so does not fall within the remit of the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). Appropriate bodies have been consulted in respect of health and safety matters.

16.86 Of relevance to health and safety considerations is planning policy ME5, which notes inter alia that development proposals will only be permitted provided *'It would not cause significant harm to neighbouring amenity by reason of visual impact, noise, vibration, overshadowing, flicker (associated with turbines), or other nuisances and emissions.'*

16.87 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).

16.88 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'.

16.89 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 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').

16.90 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 design, access, turning of emergency vehicles on site, water supply, site access and spacing between BESS units.

16.91 The applicant has submitted amended site layout plan on 19.04.2024. The amended site layout plan contains the reduced number of battery containers within each row of batteries from 6 to 5, reducing the overall total number of containers required from 78 to 65. The reduction in the number of batteries does not reduce the maximum storage capacity of the BESS which remains at 47.5MW which will be addressed by the battery model. Battery container dimensions also remain unchanged.

16.92 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, a water tank is proposed within the updated site layout plan, located adjacent to the eastern access gate for the BESS compound.

16.93 The proposed water tank can store the recommended volume of water of 1,900 l/min for at least 120 minutes. The additional access track and second gate providing access into the opposite end of the BESS compound are also detailed as requested by DWFRS. The additional access tracks loop through the BESS compound and around the outside of the southern acoustic perimeter fencing. 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. A service vehicle passing place will also be provided to the south of the eastern access gate to the BESS compound.

16.94 The applicant has also submitted a Battery Safety Management Plan dated April 2024 which details the risk management of the BESS. This document sets out the most relevant guidance and legislation relating to the construction, operation, and decommissioning of BESS in the UK. It demonstrates that the design approach has considered the latest guidance released by the UK National Fire Chiefs Council,

NFPA 855, and the FM Global Property Loss Prevention Data Sheet 5-33. It confirms the statement has been informed by consultation responses and it also highlights how proposed BESS could be constructed, operated and decommissioned safely.

16.95 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 mentioned above, 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. In this case, the applicant has confirmed in submitted Battery Safety Management Plan (Table 3.1, page 8), the proposed battery will be Lithium-ion Phosphate (LFP), prismatic within close containers. The applicant (Pivoted Power LLP) is a 100% owned subsidiary of EDF and as part of their own internal procedures they undertake a risk analysis for new and existing suppliers of the equipment required.

16.96 The Applicant utilises an extensive multiphase qualification process which evaluates safety, quality control and assurance, testing, Research and Development (R&D), and a range of other criteria for new and existing suppliers. Supplier factory audits are also a key component of the qualification process. A specific aspect for BESS suppliers is the testing and certification of their cell, module, and Battery Management System (BMS) and the barriers designed within their equipment package to reduce the fire risks.

16.97 Battery Safety Management Plan advises the following fire safety measures have been incorporated into the design of the proposed BESS:

- *Detection and Monitoring*

16.98 The BESS containers will be protected and monitored by an in-built battery management system (BMS) which will ensure 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 PLC, fire alarm control panel (FACP), fire suppression, and deflagration mitigation.

16.99 Furthermore, each enclosure would be equipped with photoelectric smoke detector; CO sensor (carbon monoxide detector); and H2 sensor (gas detector). Each container row would be equipped with a fire alarm control panel. The smoke detectors would be networked to the control panel which would trigger an alarm if components are offline and/or in a failed state and following activation of a smoke detector.

16.100 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.

- *Suppression Systems*

19.101 All battery enclosures would have fire walls that can withstand fire exposure for 120 minutes without failure which will prevent fire from spreading to adjacent area. The firewalls assist with fire suppression through contaminant; time for fire suppression (like sprinklers or gas-based systems) to activate and extinguish the fire and provide emergency responders with more time to arrive and manage the situation; minimising damage; and thermal insulation that would prevents heat from affecting adjacent areas and to avoid thermal runaway in other battery cells or units.

- *Deflagration Prevention and Venting*

16.102 The battery enclosures would be fitted with a roof mounted deflagration panel that redirects forces created as a result of an explosion upwards. The panels use H2 sensors designed to vent rapidly in the event of deflagration which is a type of explosion where the combustion propagates through a gas.

16.103 A ventilation system would be included to purge any vented flammable gases and would be activated by the H2 sensor. Once H2 is detected inside the enclosure, the sensor triggers the operation of the ventilation fan to purge the gases within the enclosure. The deflagration panels also assist with fire suppression.

- *Access*

16.104 The existing access from Holt Road will be utilised and it is suitable for HGV's hence also suitable for emergency vehicles. Two gates will provide access to opposite ends of the BESS compound with 4.7m wide access tracks forming a loop through the compound and around the outside of the acoustic perimeter fencing to the south. A service vehicle passing place is situated to the south of the eastern access gate for the BESS compound. During operation, access tracks will be kept clear of obstruction at all times. Two turning hammer heads have also been included within the layout design to allow for turning within the BESS compound.

- *Water supplies*

16.105 The design includes a water tank to the south of the eastern access gate into the BESS compound as provision for water supply in the event of a fire. The water tank has been positioned more than 10m from the nearest battery container and has been designed to deliver a water volume of no less than 1,900 litres per minute for at least 2 hours.

16.106 The submitted Battery Safety Management Plan includes recommendations for firefighting noting 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.

- *Site security and layout*

16.107 A perimeter 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.

16.108 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.

16.109 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 are arranged into banks with spacing of 3.5m. Each pair of battery containers banks are spaced approximately 6.6m away from adjacent pairs and approximately 4m between enclosed battery pairs and associated inverters/transformers. NFPA 855 recommends a 3.1m spacing between container banks 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).

16.110 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, each battery enclosure has a firewall rated IE60 which provides a 120 minutes firewall between battery compartments from enclosure to enclosure and 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 proposed battery units include extensive mitigation measures and comply with the current fire safety legislations/guidance as listed above.

16.111 Any vegetation that naturally seeds within the Proposed Development's lifespan within the BESS compound would be removed and no planting of hedgerows or trees are proposed within 10m of the battery containers as per NFCC guidance.

16.112 It should be also noted, the battery units comprising the proposed development and the consented neighbouring BESS (3/21/0137/FUL) have more than sufficient intervening distance (approx. 100m) to prevent the spread of fire between the two developments. The proposed BESS has been designed in accordance with the latest standards for BESS layout designs and fire safety standards.

16.113 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 property is located approximately 85m away. This indicates the site is appropriately sited in relation to residential properties. Given the agricultural and industrial nature of surrounding land uses, the closer proximity between the battery enclosures and the southern (approx. 50m) and the eastern (approx. 60-91m) site boundaries are considered to accord with guidance.

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

16.115 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 April 2024 in response to DWFRS comments. In their latest correspondence on the 29th of April DWFRS stated: *'DWFRS note the improvements to the site design for firefighting provision on site with the inclusion of a perimeter road following the outside of the southern and western site boundary. 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 this achieves the objectives of NFPA 855.'*

16.116 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.

Notwithstanding the already submitted BESS Safety Management Plan and given the evolution of technology, it is appropriate to secure a Risk Management Plan (RMP) and Emergency Response Plan (ERP) via planning condition (Condition 27).

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.

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

16.117 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.

16.118 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 condition, officers are satisfied that the health and safety matters of the development are acceptable and comply with current fire safety regulations/guidance. (Condition 27)

Taking into consideration proposed measures regarding fire safety and health and safety respectively is considered neutral in planning balance.

Flood risk and drainage

16.119 The site and the access route fall within Flood Zone 1 and have low risk of flooding. Groundwater levels are between 0.025m and 0.5m below the ground surface within eastern part of the site. The mapping suggests that there could be a risk of groundwater emergence and risk to subsurface assets. The Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) has reviewed the surface water proposals by the applicant and following an initial holding objection, the LLFA confirmed the additional information submitted provides the clarification required to substantiate the surface water discharge route.

16.120 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, additional impermeable liner would also be installed to prevent contaminated runoff from affecting groundwater hence all the main equipment areas will be considered impermeable and runoff from these areas will be attenuated. The proposed SuDS for the site include a combination of permeable paving and attenuation basin. The proposed SuDS features are designed to provide the required storage volume to retain the 1 in 100 plus 25% climate change event.

16.121 The outfall option is a gravity connection down the site entrance road and connecting to the existing culvert crossing the site entrance which will allow surface water to be drained to the south following the existing culvert beside Holt Road to the watercourse to the south. Invert level details of the existing assets have been identified and a gravity connection appears to be viable and acceptable by the LLFA.

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

16.123 All battery infrastructure including the access road is proposed to be located in areas of lower flood risk. The LLFA has withdrawn their objection and confirmed that subject to planning conditions securing the surface water management and maintenance scheme, the proposal is acceptable from a surface water perspective and would not generate flooding through surface water run-off or exacerbate flooding elsewhere (Conditions 16, 17; Informative note 3).

Proposed drainage strategy is considered neutral in the planning balance.

Pollution

16.124 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.

16.125 The applicant has responded to initial concerns raised by the Environment Agency (EA). A revised Flood Risk Assessment & Surface Water Drainage Strategy 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.

16.126 The system will be automated so that the system is instantly isolated in the event of a fire once an alarm is raised. The chamber/valves would be closed during a fire incident to contain contaminated firewater within the proposed attenuation system. After the fire event it would then be tankered offsite for treatment. The isolating sub-base located around the battery units will incorporate an impermeable liner, which will prevent infiltration into the ground thereby mitigating the risk of contamination of the aquifer from firewater. Given the possibility of chemical leaking during a sufficiently serious fire incident this may result in firewater runoff being contaminated with corrosive components. The pipes of the drainage network will therefore be constructed from materials proofed against corrosive water in order to prevent structural compromise or leaking contaminated water from joints in the system.

16.127 The Environment Agency has been consulted and is content with the existing layout design and has now removed its objection to the development subject to conditions. These conditions 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. Accordingly, with the recommended conditions imposed the proposal is not considered to give rise to concerns with pollution. (Conditions 10, 11, 12, 12; Informative note 1, 3)

Environmental Protection measures mitigate for the proposed development and are therefore considered neutral in the planning balance.

Other matters

Impact on Protected Habitats - Dorset Heathlands

16.128 The application site lies outside of any environmental designations. The Dorset Heathlands Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar Site, as well as the Holt and West Moors Heaths SSSI, which forms part of the Dorset Heaths Special Area of Conservation (SAC) are located approximately 150m north of the application site at their closest point. Additionally, Holt Heath National Nature Reserve (NNR) is located c. 240m south. 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 proposal is not likely to have a significant effect on the Dorset Heathlands.

16.129 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 proposal is not likely to have a significant effect on the Dorset Heathlands. The impact on protected Dorset Heathlands is therefore has no weight in the planning balance.

Trees

16.130 There are a number of trees and hedgerows in and around the site, most of which would be retained. Hedgerows around the site are mixed species field hedges. Some gorse is present around field edges/watercourses. A small number of Goat Willow and one Silver Birch are to be removed to form the new access to the site. Another small group of Goat Willow is to be removed from the hedgerow along the west edge of the wider site area. All of the trees, 5 in total, that are to be removed are of poor quality/low value and their removal would be compensated for by the provision of mitigation planting.

16.131 The applicant has submitted an Arboricultural Impact Assessment together with Arboricultural Method Statement and tree survey plan. From the submitted information and case officer assessment, it is considered that subject to condition that no work would start on site other than the felling and pruning of trees until tree details are submitted and agreed in writing with the LPA. 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 22)

16.132 The proposals are acceptable subject to the implementation of the details set out in the Arboricultural method statement and above listed tree protection condition.

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

Archaeology and heritage assets

16.133 The application is accompanied by a Historic Environment Assessment (HEA) dated September 2023 evaluating the potential direct and indirect effects of the proposed development upon cultural heritage assets and archaeological remains.

16.134 The survey did not identify anything of archaeological significance and only a small section of the linear cropmarks would be impacted by the proposed development and the HEA concluded that any effect would be minor.

16.135 There are no designated heritage assets within the proposed development site boundary. Within a 1km area of search there is one scheduled monument and two grade II listed buildings. The site is not within the setting of any designated heritage asset. This is due to the distance of separation, intervening mature vegetation, and local topography which prevents intervisibility between these assets and the site.

16.136 There are three non-designated heritage assets that lie partially within the site boundary; linear cropmarks interpreted as possible ditched trackways, a wood bank, and drainage ditches or field boundaries. Only a small section of the linear cropmarks would be impacted by the proposed development and the HEA concluded that any effect would be minor. This has also been confirmed by DC Archaeologist. The other two non-designated assets within the site are within an area proposed only for managed grassland, and as such a negligible impact.

16.137 The associated cable route crosses another non-designated asset. However, the asset was impacted during the construction of the NG Mannington substation and, at the point where the cable route crosses, is of negligible heritage value.

16.138 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.

16.139 In conclusion, as confirmed by DC Archaeologist, the battery storage and cable route elements of the proposed development are both anticipated to have a low to negligible potential for archaeological remains, expected to be limited to deep-lying remains that may not have been affected by previous ground disturbance. As a result, no archaeological mitigation measures are considered to be necessary. The Proposed Development therefore accords with Policy HE1.

Impact on archaeology and heritage assets is attributed limited weight in the planning balance.

Mineral safeguarding

16.140 The site is within a safeguarded area for sand and gravel, and within the Bedrock Sand Resource Block. The Council's Minerals and Waste Team have confirmed that as the proposal is temporary, the mineral would not be sterilised by the development. The impact on minerals has no weight in the planning balance.

Decommissioning

16.141 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)

16.142 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.

17.0 Planning balance

17.01 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.*

17.02 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	• Substantial contribution to energy security and achieving national and local climate targets
Environmental benefits	Substantial	• 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	• The immediate local landscape is already influenced by large electrical substation, pylons and two other industrial sites

		• Sequential site selection test ruled out other sites within 1km of NG Mannington substation • Site is within 250m of substation • Confirmed grid connection to Mannington Substation • Site is suitably well screened by existing mature vegetation
Public benefit	Substantial	• Renewable energy generation identified as a public benefit
Biodiversity and BNG	Significant	• Limited loss of habitat • No loss of trees with a potential for bat roosting • BNG of 11.88%
Economic benefits	Limited	• Limited economic benefits beyond construction

Consideration against	**Weight**	**Reason**
Impact on the Green Belt	Substantial	Inappropriate development in GB
Impact on the character of the area	Limited	• Temporary nature of development • Reduction in proposed battery units from 78 to 65 • Existing BESS development in the vicinity • Existing electricity substation in the vicinity
Impact on landscape character and visual effects	Limited	• No effects from development across the wider landscape • Development screened by mature vegetation and will integrate within the local landscape • Development temporary and reversable
Residential amenity – noise	Limited	• 4m high acoustic fence proposed • Low rate noise levels during night achievable by reduction in operational units, inverter noise reduction and battery noise reduction - conditioned
Impact on archaeology and heritage assets	Limited	• Limited number of non-heritage assets partly effected by development

		• Small section of cropmarks would be impacted by proposal with very minor effect
Impact on Dorset Heathlands	None	• No direct habitats loss - site of any environmental designations

17.03 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.

17.04 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.

17.05 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 are sufficient to outweigh the harm impact caused by the inappropriate nature of the development in the Green Belt.

18.0 Conclusion

18.01 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.

18.02 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.

18.03 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.

18.04 On balance, it is considered that the development is sustainable, and the collective significant benefits of the proposal outweigh any harm and therefore 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.

19.0 Recommendation

Grant subject to the following planning conditions:

Officer note: Written agreement to the pre-commencement condition(s) was received from the applicant on 17 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:

   P001 J Location Plan
   G001 A Spare Parts Container Floor Plans & Elevations
   G002 A PCS & Transformer Arrangement
   G003 A Battery Arrangement
   G004 A DNO Incomer Substation Arrangement
   G005 C Fencing Gate & CCTV Arrangement
   G006 A BESS 33kV Switch Room Arrangement
   G007 A Auxiliary & Earthing Transformer Arrangement
   G008 A Comms & DNO Feeder Pillar Arrangement
   G009 A LV Auxiliary Switch Room Control Room & Welfare Unit Arrangement
   G010 A EV Charge Point Arrangement
   G012 A Water Tank Arrangement
   G013 A Harmonic Filter Arrangement
   P002 T Site Layout Plan
   E001 C Site Elevations
   E002 C Site Elevations with fencing
   P003 C Cable Route Plan

SCP/230303/ATR03 Transport Statement swept path

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. Prior to the installation of battery storage units, the water tank shown on the approved drawing P002 T shall be installed, filled with water to capacity and made available for use. Thereafter, the water tank shall be maintained, filled with water to capacity and available for use throughout the lifetime of the development and until the battery containers are removed from the site. The water tank shall be green in colour externally, and details of the precise shade shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to first installation and shall thereafter be installed and retained in the agreed colour.

   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) and to ensure an appropriate visual impact within this rural location.

8. 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 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.

9. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the noise technical note "Updated Noise Modelling Results for Battery Storage Facility, Mannington, Project No. 402.V08525.00022, by SLR Consulting Limited, dated 1st July 2024" to ensure a cumulative (all plant permitted by applications 3/21/0137/FUL and P/FUL/2023/06578) rating level of no more than 35dB *Lar,Tr* at the nearest noise sensitive premises.

   A noise validation report demonstrating compliance with the noise criteria shall be submitted to the LPA within 28 days of first operation and approved by the LPA. This assessment shall be conducted in accordance with BS4142:2014+A1:2019 'Methods for rating and assessing Industrial and Commercial noise'.

   The approved noise mitigation matters shall thereafter be maintained for the lifetime of the development.

   Reason: To protect neighbouring amenity.

10. The development hereby permitted shall not be commenced until such time as a final scheme to dispose of surface water for the battery storage area has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. The scheme must include the pollution protection principles set out in the supporting Flood Risk Assessment & Surface Water Drainage Strategy by LDE (Issue No. R1(7), dated 22 March 2024). The final drainage designs should demonstrate that in the event of a battery fire, all firefighting effluent can be retained on site with no discharge to surface or ground water bodies. 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.

11. 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
    - How and where contaminated surface water, 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 in 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.

12. Prior to 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. The relevant areas shall thereafter only be brought back into use following approval in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

    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.

13. No development approved by this permission shall be commenced until a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP), 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

14. 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.

15. The Biodiversity Plan (BP) dated 30.05.2024 shall be implemented in full in accordance with the specified timetable(s) in the BMP.

    Reason: To minimise impacts on biodiversity.

16. 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 strategy shall include details of any remedial works that may be required to the existing surface water drainage infrastructure, within land under control of the applicant. The surface water scheme shall be fully implemented in accordance with the submitted 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.

17. No development shall take place until details of maintenance & 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 should 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.

18. 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.

19. Unless otherwise agreed by the Local Planning Authority, all new cabling between the Mannington Sub Station and here permitted Battery Storage Plant, shall be laid underground in accordance with the approved details.

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

20. Prior to the first use of the Battery Energy Storage System a 4m high acoustic fence shall be installed to southern, eastern and western side of the site in accordance with the P002 T Site Layout Plan. The fence shall thereafter be maintained and retained until such time that the use of the site ceases.

Reason: In order to protect the environmental amenities of the immediate locality.

21. Prior to the commencement of any development hereby approved, above ground level, a soft landscaping and planting scheme shall be submitted to, and approved in writing, by the Local Planning Authority. The approved scheme shall be implemented in full during the planting season November - March following

commencement of the development or within a timescale to be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall include provision for the maintenance and replacement as necessary of the trees and shrubs for a period of not less than 5 years.

Reason: In the interest of visual amenity.

22. The development hereby approved shall proceed only in accordance with the details set out in the Arboricultural Impact Assessment dated November 2023, ref. no. RT-MME-161199-02-Rev D, setting out how the existing trees are to be protected and managed before, during and after development.

Reason: To ensure thorough consideration of the impacts of development on the existing trees

23. Before the development hereby approved commences a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) must be submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority. The CTMP must include:
    - site operating hours
    - 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
    - a scheme of appropriate signing of vehicle route to the site
    - general signage details
    - a route plan for all contractors and suppliers to be advised on
    - temporary traffic management measures where necessary
    - details of personnel car/van sharing to minimise vehicle movements

    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.

24. Before the development commences a scheme showing precise details of the design, specification and position of wheel washing facilities must be submitted to

the Planning Authority. The scheme requires approval to be obtained in writing from the Planning Authority. The agreed facilities must be maintained in full working order for use throughout the duration of the development.

Reason: To prevent the likely deposit of loose material on the adjoining highway.

25. Before the development hereby approved is occupied or utilised the visibility splay areas as shown on Drawing Number SCP/230303/D01, submitted within Transport Statement ref.no. 230303, dated November 2023, must be cleared/excavated to a level not exceeding 0.60 metres above the relative level of the adjacent carriageway. The splay areas 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.

26. Before the development is occupied or utilised the areas shown on Drawing Number P002 T Site Layout Plan, 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.

27. Notwithstanding already submitted BESS Safety Management Plan dated April 2024, prior to installation of any battery storage units, 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 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 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.

28. Water tank - Prior to the installation of battery storage units, the water tank shown on the approved drawing P002 T shall be installed, filled with water to capacity and made available for use. Thereafter, the water tank shall be maintained, filled with water to capacity and available for use throughout the lifetime of the development and until the battery containers are removed from the site. The water tank shall be green in colour externally, and details of the precise shade shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to first installation and shall thereafter be installed and retained in the agreed colour.

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) and in the interests of visual amenity.

Informative Notes:

1. Environment Agency (EA) recommend that battery energy storage sites have drainage systems which can be completely sealed in the event of a fire to contain all contaminated firewater within the site and ensure there is no discharge of polluted water to ground or surface water bodies. The final drainage scheme should include, but not necessarily be limited to, the impermeable lining underneath the gravel attenuation areas, lined attenuation ponds and infrastructure proposed in the drainage strategy, as well the suggested penstock which can be automatically closed and prevent contaminated firewater leaving the site via the proposed outfall. EA recommend an additional backup system be included in the event of a power failure. The drainage scheme should also demonstrate there is sufficient capacity to contain the expected volume of firefighting water in addition to any surface water within the system.

2. 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.

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. 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/agent was updated of any issues and provided with the opportunity to address issues identified by the case officer.