



STRATEGIC AND TECHNICAL PLANNING COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 1 MAY 2025

Present: Cllrs Duncan Sowry-House (Chair), Dave Bolwell (Vice-Chair), Belinda Bawden, Craig Monks, Pete Roper, David Taylor and David Tooke

Apologies: Cllrs Toni Coombs, Richard Crabb, Spencer Flower, David Northam and Belinda Ridout

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

Kim Cowell (Development Management Area Manager (East)), Philip Crowther (Legal Business Partner - Regulatory), Clare Marshall (Engineer (Development Liaison), Antony Nash (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Megan Rochester (Senior Democratic Services Officer) and Naomi Shinkins (Lead Project Officer).

87. Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting held on Monday 31st March were confirmed and signed.

88. Declarations of Interest

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

89. Registration for public speaking and statements

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

90. P/FUL/2023/03415 - Woodlands Manor Farm, Horton, Dorset, BH21 8ND

The Case Officer provided members with an update to the officer's report and presented a visual overview of the proposed solar farm development, using aerial photographs and site plans to explain the location, context, and relevant planning policies. The site is situated within the designated Green Belt, near the proposed North Farm Solar Farm and close to the National Landscape (formerly Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)). There are also some Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) in the wider area. The rural site, bordered by agricultural land and Remedy Oak Golf Club, accessed via Horton Road and intersected by public rights of way. A grid connection has been secured through the nearby Mannington Substation. Revised plans, submitted in December 2024, followed additional ecological surveys. The proposed development included 21 transformers (each approx. 3 meters high), solar panel arrays with inverter units, storage containers, fencing, and security cameras. The officer outlined visual

impact assessments, including mitigation through planting scheme agreed with Dorset Council landscape officers. The officer presented the Countryside Rights of Way (CRoW) Act and the need to 'seek further' to enhance the character of the National Landscape. While acknowledging the industrial appearance of solar panels could not enhance the National Landscape, the officer concluded that mitigation would conserve natural beauty and contain visual impact to the immediate site. The application was advertised publicly, and all comments were made available online.

The proposal's impact on the Green Belt was given substantial weight, while the loss of agricultural land carried moderate weight. However, the renewable energy benefits and public interest were judged to outweigh the harm. Heritage concerns were minimal, with only Horton Tower potentially affected, however resulting in no harm as presented. Historic England raised no objections, and the County Archaeologist requested conditions. The development posed no significant risks to residential amenity, trees, or biodiversity and was located in Flood Zone 1 (low flood risk). Access via Horton Road was deemed sufficient, with construction expected to last approximately 28 weeks and minimal traffic during operation. On balance, the planning officer found that very special circumstances existed and therefore planning permission was recommended, subject to conditions set out in the officer report.

Public Participation

The agent supported the officer's recommendation for approval, noting strong backing for the proposal. She referenced the declared climate emergency and the Council's Green Power Action Plan targeting clean energy by 2030. The proposal, capable of generating up to 30 megawatts, had secured a grid connection and was identified as a priority, deliverable scheme. She noted the 40-year operational period, after which the site would be restored, and confirmed that design and planning measures had minimised landscape impact. With no outstanding objections from consultees, she considered the proposal acceptable in terms of impact, delivering energy for thousands of homes, socioeconomic benefits, and supporting continued agricultural use.

Members questions and comments

- Clarification was sought regarding the protection status of nearby ancient woodlands and whether appropriate safeguards had been put in place.
- Queried whether existing hedgerows would be removed and, if so, whether there were plans for their replacement or enhancement in line with biodiversity commitments.
- It was noted that there was no significant flood risk to waterways, as confirmed by the Environment Agency.
- Further details were requested on lighting to ensure compliance with dark skies policies and to minimise light pollution.
- The officer was thanked for their comprehensive report and detailed presentation.
- The need to address whether the proposal met the threshold for 'very special circumstances' required for development in the Green Belt was emphasised.

- Consideration was given to the visual impact on Horton Tower, particularly during winter months when natural screening would be reduced.
- Clarification was requested regarding how the development would connect to the national grid and what infrastructure this would require.
- Clarification was sought to better understand the temporary nature of the proposal, and how this was weighed against the benefits of energy generation and the visual impact assessment.
- Confirmation was requested as to whether there would be any loss of agricultural land as a result of the development.
- Clarification was sought on the percentage increase in biodiversity net gain and the methodology used to determine it.
- It was confirmed that all reasonable mitigation measures to reduce visual impact had been considered.
- Cllr Tooke stated that he did not believe very special circumstances had been demonstrated and therefore could not support the application.

Having had the opportunity to discuss the merits of the application and an understanding of all this entailed; having considered the officer's report and presentation; the written representatives; and what they had heard at the meeting, a motion to **APPROVE** the officer's recommendation to **GRANT** the planning application, as recommended, was proposed by Cllr Belinda Bawden, and seconded by Cllr David Taylor.

Decision: Grant subject to conditions set out in the officer's report.

The Committee adjourned and reconvened at 11:30am.

91. **P/FUL/2023/02829 - North Farm, Horton, Dorset, BH21 7HL**

The Case Officer provided members with an update to the officer's report and presented a visual overview to members, including site plans and aerial photographs, to identify the location and outline the proposal in the context of relevant planning policies. The site was confirmed to lie within the designated Green Belt and in close proximity to the National Landscape. Public rights of way crossed the area, and the site was near the Mannington Substation. It was surrounded by agricultural land, and site photographs were used to illustrate the rural setting. The proposed site plan detailed the rolling topography and existing vegetation, alongside proposed planting. The same type of transformer units as previously presented were proposed, though in reduced numbers, along with equipment storage containers, security cameras, and perimeter fencing.

The application was advertised via site notices and press advertisements, and consultee responses were summarised. A landscape and visual impact assessment was presented, including viewpoints from Horton Tower. The proposed planting scheme is intended to mitigate visual impact, and the development's relationship with the National Landscape was assessed under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. Two listed heritage assets were considered, Horton Tower and Heythorne Cottage; however, the Conservation Officer and Historic England raised no objections. The loss of agricultural land was

noted and the proximity to residential dwellings was considered acceptable in terms of amenity. Access was proposed through the existing farm entrance, and traffic flows were illustrated. No flood risk was identified, and proposed drainage measures were deemed acceptable. There were no protected trees on site, though some hedgerow loss would occur. Biodiversity impacts were reviewed and addressed through proposed conditions. In the planning balance, the benefits of the development outweighed the identified harms, and it was recommended that planning permission be granted, subject to conditions set out in the officer report.

Public Participation

Mr Davidson objected to the proposal, describing it as a commercial venture that could set a precedent. He raised concerns over the lack of a clear grid connection plans, cumulative impact from similar developments, and insufficient assessment of visual harm to nearby listed heritage assets. He noted that screening may take decades to mature and questioned whether a 40-year term could've been considered temporary. The site bordered ancient woodland, and he argued more suitable locations existed. He highlighted strong local opposition and council objections, disputing the claimed national benefits and describing the impact as overwhelming and unjustifiable.

Mr Boyd, a long-standing resident, objected to the application, stating he regularly walked the nearby footpath and opposed the proposed view. He argued that any screening would take years to become effective and believed the development offered little added value. He saw no significant local or long-term economic benefit and criticised the use of green belt land. He claimed the applicant had ceased exploring alternatives and had not adequately considered the impact. He described the proposal as a business opportunity lacking sufficient public benefit.

Mr Hardy expressed full support for renewable energy but felt the focus should be on rooftop solar. He cited university research and noted that Dorset already had the highest number of approved solar farms nationally. He supported small, well-screened developments with minimal visual impact and hoped future local plans would include stronger protections. He urged the council to protect the local countryside.

Mr Snell, who had lived and worked on the farm since 2003, explained that farming had evolved rapidly and has become increasingly competitive due to international markets and rising input costs. He described food production as high-risk and saw the proposed solar site as a vital additional income stream and contribution to national renewable energy goals. He emphasised that, if approved, the solar panels would not have rendered the land unusable and that the project would help secure the long-term viability of the family business.

The agent, Ms Alexander stated that the application was supported with no technical objections and aligned with relevant policies, including the council's climate emergency declaration. The site was expected to generate up to 19.88 megawatts, supporting the national grid and powering thousands of homes. She noted that emissions had been considered, changes made to the proposal, and that the project supported habitat creation and ongoing agricultural use. Although within 300 metres of a national landscape, she explained that the site's low-level

nature, existing woodland, and proposed planting would have limited its visual impact.

Members questions and comments

- Queried whether an additional condition could be added to address any Tree Preservation Orders.
- Clarification was requested regarding the potential impact on protected species, particularly in relation to darkness.
- It was suggested that appeal decisions be referenced to reinforce the justification of special circumstances.
- The question was raised whether the biodiversity gains and carbon emissions reductions, resulting from improved soil management and planning, were being counted as part of the environmental benefits.
- Clarification was sought regarding the integration of rooftop solar, wind energy, and solar farms, emphasizing the need for appropriate renewable energy solutions through whichever necessary means.
- Acknowledgment was made of recent public polling, which reflected concerns about renewable energy.
- The officer's report and responses to public concerns were commended, noting significant mitigation efforts.
- It was emphasized that the overall benefits, particularly in terms of public good and biodiversity increase, had been clearly demonstrated.

Having had the opportunity to discuss the merits of the application and an understanding of all this entailed; having considered the officer's report and presentation; the written representatives; and what they had heard at the meeting, a motion to **APPROVE** the officer's recommendation to **GRANT** the planning application, as recommended, was proposed by Cllr Belinda Bawden, and seconded Cllr by David Taylor.

Decision: Grant subject to conditions set out in the officer's report.

92. Urgent items

There were no urgent items.

93. Exempt Business

There was no exempt business.

Decision Sheet

Duration of meeting: 10.00 am - 12.49 pm

Chairman

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Strategic and Technical Planning Committee
Thursday 1st May 2025
Decision List

Application: P/FUL/2023/03415

Application Site: Woodlands Manor Farm, Horton, Dorset, BH21 8ND

Proposal: Construction of Solar Farm and associated infrastructure

Recommendation: GRANT subject to conditions at Section 20 of this report.

Decision: Approve subject to the following planning conditions:

Officer note: Written agreement to the pre-commencement condition(s) was received from the applicant 17 April 2025.

Conditions

Commencement and decommissioning:

1. The development to which this permission relates must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of this permission.
Reason: This condition is required to be imposed by Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).
2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans and documents:

Environmental Statement (ES) Rev B February 2025

Location Plan 04/05/2023

Full Site Layout v6 (submitted March 2025)

Site Layout Parts 1-3 v6 (submitted March 2025)

Landscape Planting Plan - 21237-LA-LN-00-01-B Detailed Planting

Refuge Point Detail

Security Camera Detail - Layout1-10_detail_security came REV A

Container Detail - 04_detail_container – storage REV A

40ft Container Detail - 04_detail_container - storage 4 REV A

Switch Room Detail - Detailed_Switchroom REV A

Transformer Detail - 04_detail_transformer station 2500-3150k REV A

Fence and Gate Detail - 10_detail_fence and gate

Gravel Road Detail - 04_detail_gravel road REV A

Module Mounting - 02_detail_modul_mounting_1_1

Site Section AA

Site Section BB

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

3. The development (including all ancillary equipment and buildings) hereby approved shall be dismantled and removed from the site in its entirety and the land restored in accordance with a scheme and timetable of decommissioning works and land restoration pursuant to condition 4 of this consent, in accordance with the following timescales, whichever is the sooner:

- a) Within 40 years following first export of electricity to the grid; or
- b) within 6 months of the cessation of electricity generation by the solar PV facility hereby approved; or
- c) within 6 months following a permanent cessation of construction works prior to the solar pv facility coming into operational use.

Written notice of the date of first export, the cessation of electricity generation or the permanent cessation of construction works prior to the solar PV facility coming into operational use, whichever is the sooner, shall be given to the Local Planning Authority within 14 days of the said event occurring.

Reason: To ensure an acceptable restoration of the site in the interests of the setting of the National Landscape and the reuse of agricultural land.

4. Not later than 12 months before planned decommissioning of the development of the hereby approved development, a scheme for decommissioning and the restoration of the site shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

In the event of unplanned cessation of electricity, under scenario (b) of condition 3, a scheme for decommissioning and the restoration of the site shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority within 6 months of the date electricity generation ceased.

In the event of permanent cessation of construction, under scenario (c) of condition 3, a scheme for decommissioning and the restoration of the site

shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority within 6 months of the date construction permanently ceased.

The scheme shall make provision for the removal of the solar arrays and the associated above ground structures, equipment and foundations. The scheme shall include the management and timing of any works; a traffic management plan; an environmental management plan including measures to protect wildlife and habitat; identification of access routes; restoration measures; and a programme of implementation. Decommissioning and re-instatement of the land shall be carried out in accordance with the approved scheme.

Reason: To ensure an acceptable restoration of the site in the interests of the setting of the National Landscape and the reuse of agricultural land.

Pre commencement:

5. Development shall not commence unless planning permission for the required cable routing from the approved solar farm to Mannington Substation has been granted.

Reason: to ensure the approved solar farm can be delivered.

6. Prior to commencement of any development hereby approved, an updated Landscape Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

The LEMP shall follow the Management Measures and Objectives set out within Sections 11.1.25 and 11.1.26 of Volume 2a: Environmental Statement, Revision B, February 2025, and an additional objective to ensure the landscape integration and maintenance of the landscape screening of the solar development.

The LEMP shall include, but not be limited to, detailing specifications of the following topics:

- Proposed landscape and ecological mitigation works
- Protection Measures, including for A) Existing Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows during Construction and Decommissioning, B) Protection of Public Footpaths during Construction and Decommissioning and C) Protection of New Planting (undertaken prior to or during Construction)
- Fencing, including A) Fencing surrounding Electric Cables and B) Protective Fencing
- Selection of Hedgerow Trees
- Planting Specifications, including A) Grassland Planting, B) Hedgerow Planting, C) Existing Hedgerow Infill, and D) Tree and Woodland Planting
- Chemical Management

- Weed Management, including Injurious and Invasive Weeds
- Cultivation
- Buffer Strips
- Existing Woodland Protections
- Monitoring and Review Schedule
- Operational Maintenance

The LEMP shall provide for monitoring, review and updating to be undertaken to consider whether amendments are required to better meet the LEMP Management Measures and Objectives. Any updates to the LEMP shall be submitted to and agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

Thereafter, the development shall be carried out in accordance with the agreed LEMP, including updated revisions as approved by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: to ensure landscaping is appropriately installed and maintained for screening to the National Landscape and the wider area and in the interest of ecology and biodiversity.

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

- the use of plant and machinery
- wheel washing and vehicle wash-down and disposal of resultant dirty water
- oils/chemicals and materials
- the use and routing of heavy plant and vehicles
- the location and form of work and storage areas and compounds
- the control and removal of spoil and wastes.

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

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

8. Prior to the commencement of any development hereby approved, a detailed Surface Water Management Scheme for the site, based upon the hydrological and hydrogeological context of the development, providing clarification of how drainage is to be managed during construction and including a timetable for implementation, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The surface water scheme shall be implemented in accordance with the agreed details and timetable.

Reason: To prevent the increased risk of flooding and to protect water quality.

9. Prior to the commencement of any development hereby approved, details of maintenance and management of both the Surface Water Management Scheme and any receiving system shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall be managed and maintained in accordance with the approved details. These shall include a plan for the lifetime of the development, the arrangements for adoption by any public body or statutory undertaker, or any other arrangements to secure the operation of the surface water drainage scheme throughout its lifetime.

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

10. Prior to the commencement of any development hereby approved, a detailed method statement covering the soil management approach shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Details shall include:

- Soil management during the lifetime of the development;
- Preparation for reinstatement;

- Restoration details; and
- Aftercare plans.

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

Reason: In the interest of returning land to agricultural use.

11. Prior to the commencement of any development hereby approved, details of construction management shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Details shall include:
- no bonfires
 - protection of nearby receptors from dust arising from construction
 - storage of waste materials prior to removal from site

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

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

12. Prior to the commencement of any development hereby approved, notwithstanding the submitted Landscape Planting Plan 21237-LA-LN-00-01-B Detailed Planting Plan, details of planting stock shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Approved planting shall be planted prior to the installation of solar panels, with the exception of any planting that may not be practical during the construction process details of which must first have been submitted to and agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

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

Reason : to ensure landscaping is appropriately installed and maintained for screening to the National Landscape and the wider area.

13. Prior to the commencement of any development hereby approved (including site clearance and any other preparatory works), an Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS) for the protection of trees shall be submitted to and

approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The AMS shall include:

(a) a Tree Protection Plan showing the location of protective fencing or other measures required for the avoidance of damage to retained trees, all in accordance with BS5837:2012. Tree protective barriers and ground protection, where specified, shall be erected prior to any other site operations and at least 5 working days notice shall be given to the Local Planning Authority that it has been erected. The protective fencing shall be as specified in Chapter 6 and detailed in figure 3 of BS5837:2012 unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority; and,

(b) a pre-commencement site meeting between the Tree Officer, Arboricultural Consultant and Site Manager which shall take place to inspect the protection for the affected protected trees. The protection of the trees shall be in accordance with an agreed Tree Protection Plan and Arboricultural Method Statement.

The tree protection shall be retained until completion of the development and nothing shall be placed within the fencing, nor shall any ground levels be altered or excavations made without the written consent of the planning authority.

All underground cabling will avoid root protection areas (RPAs), as shown in the Tree Protection Plan.

Reason: to ensure existing trees are protected.

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

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

Prior to installation:

15. Notwithstanding the details shown on the approved plans, prior to installation, details of the materials, colour and finish of any built structures and containers, poles, fencing, gates etc., shall be 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 sensitive location

16. Notwithstanding the details shown on the approved plans, prior to above ground works, full details of hard landscape proposals shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. These details shall include where appropriate: proposed finished levels or contours and hard surfacing materials relating to maintenance and access routes. Thereafter, the development shall be proceed in strict accordance with such details as have been agreed.

Reason: To ensure the provision of amenity afforded by appropriate landscape design and maintenance of existing and/or new landscape features.

17. Prior to the installation of external lighting or audible alarm, details of the proposed lighting/alarm shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the development shall proceed in strict accordance with such details as have been agreed.

Reason: In the interest of visual amenity, dark night skies and ecology.

18. Prior to the installation of any security cameras and associated equipment, a plan showing camera location and coverage shall have been submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter, development shall proceed in strict accordance with such details as have been agreed.

Reason: In the interest of visual and neighbouring amenity.

Compliance:

19. The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the submitted 'Noise Impact Assessment submitted (Proposed Solar Scheme at Woodlands Manor Farm, Wimborne, Noise Impact Assessment, Technical Report: R9038-2 Rev 2, Dated 16th November 2022, by 24 Acoustics).

Further to the approved information, upon installation, noise measurements for solar inverter units shall be submitted in writing to Local Planning Authority, for approval to validate the noise impacts that have been predicted within the noise impact assessment. Should noise measurements exceed guidelines in BS8233:2014 a mitigation strategy shall be submitted to and agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

The agreed mitigation measure shall be fully implemented and permanently retained thereafter.

Reason: In order to protect the living conditions of surrounding residential properties

20. The ecological mitigation and biodiversity management and monitoring shall be carried out in accordance with the approved Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) submitted as part of the revised Environmental Statement (ES) REV B in February 2025.

Reason : to ensure landscaping is appropriately maintained for screening to the National Landscape and in the interests of biodiversity.

21. The development hereby approved shall be carried out in strict accordance with the submitted Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) dated March 2023.

Reason: In the interests of road safety.

Other

22. All new cabling between the solar PV modules and equipment on site shall be laid underground with the exception of above ground connections to equipment.

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

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

Reason: To ensure risks from contamination are minimized.

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

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

Informative Notes:

1. 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.
2. The applicant should contact Dorset Highways by telephone at 01305 221020, by email at dorsethighways@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk, or in writing at Dorset Highways, Dorset Council, County Hall, Dorchester, DT1 1XJ, before the commencement of any works on or adjacent to the public highway, to ensure that the appropriate licence(s) and or permission(s) are obtained.
3. The safe free passage of the public on all rights of way must not be obstructed at any time. If the public are unlikely to be able to exercise their public rights on a right of way, then a Temporary Path Closure Order must be obtained. This can be applied for through Rights of Way at Dorset Council see <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/w/changing-the-definitive-map>, but the application must be completed and returned at least thirteen weeks before the intended closure date. It should be noted that there is a fee applicable to this application. This application and legal order must be confirmed before any works obstructing the path are commenced.

Any damage to the surface of the footpath attributable to the development must be repaired to Dorset Council's specification, in accordance with Section 59 of the Highways Act 1980 by the applicant.

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

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

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

In this case:

- The applicant was made of aware of issues and additional information was submitted to address these.

Application: P/FUL/2023/02829

Application Site: North Farm, Horton, Dorset, BH21 7HL

Proposal: Construction of Solar Farm and associated infrastructure

Recommendation: GRANT subject to conditions at Section 20 of this report.

Decision: Approve subject to the following planning conditions:

Officer note: Written agreement to the pre-commencement condition(s) was received from the applicant on 17 April 2025.

Conditions

Commencement and decommissioning:

25. 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).

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

Environmental Statement (ES) Rev B February 2025

Location Plan (submitted February 2025)

Full Site Layout v6 (submitted January 2025)

Landscape Planting Plan - 21238-LA-LN-00-01-A Detailed Planting Plan REV F Refuge Point Detail

Security Camera Detail - Layout1-10_detail_security came REV A

Container Detail - 04_detail_container – storage REV A

40ft Container Detail - 04_detail_container - storage 4 REV A

Switch Room Detail - Detailed_Switchroom REV A

Transformer Detail - 04_detail_transformer station 2500-3150k REV A

Fence and Gate Detail - 10_detail_fence and gate

Gravel Road Detail - 04_detail_gravel road REV A

Module Mounting - 02_detail_modul_mounting_1_1

Site Section AA

Site Section BB

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

27. The development (including all ancillary equipment and buildings) hereby approved shall be dismantled and removed from the site in its entirety and the land restored in accordance with a scheme and timetable of decommissioning works and land restoration pursuant to condition 4 of this consent, in accordance with the following timescales, whichever is the sooner:

- d) Within 40 years following first export of electricity to the grid; or
- e) within 6 months of the cessation of electricity generation by the solar PV facility hereby approved; or
- f) within 6 months following a permanent cessation of construction works prior to the solar pv facility coming into operational use.

Written notice of the date of first export, the cessation of electricity generation or the permanent cessation of construction works prior to the solar PV facility coming into operational use, whichever is the sooner, shall be given to the Local Planning Authority within 14 days of the said event occurring.

Reason: To ensure an acceptable restoration of the site in the interests of the setting of the National Landscape and the reuse of agricultural land.

28. Not later than 12 months before planned decommissioning of the development of the hereby approved development, a scheme for decommissioning and the restoration of the site shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

In the event of unplanned cessation of electricity, under scenario (b) of condition 3, a scheme for decommissioning and the restoration of the site shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority within 6 months of the date electricity generation ceased.

In the event of permanent cessation of construction, under scenario (c) of condition 3, a scheme for decommissioning and the restoration of the site shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority within 6 months of the date construction permanently ceased.

The scheme shall make provision for the removal of the solar arrays and the associated above ground structures, equipment and foundations. The scheme shall include the management and timing of any works; a traffic management plan; an environmental management plan including measures to protect wildlife and habitat; identification of access routes; restoration measures; and a programme of implementation. Decommissioning and re-instatement of the land shall be carried out in accordance with the approved scheme.

Reason: To ensure an acceptable restoration of the site in the interests of the setting of the National Landscape and the reuse of agricultural land.

Pre commencement:

29. Development shall not commence unless planning permission for the required cable routing from the approved solar farm to Mannington Substation has been granted.

Reason: to ensure the approved solar farm can be delivered.

30. Prior to commencement of any development hereby approved, an updated Landscape Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

The LEMP shall follow the Management Measures and Objectives set out within Sections 11.1.25 and 11.1.26 of Volume 2a: Environmental Statement, Revision B, February 2025, and an additional objective to ensure the landscape integration and maintenance of the landscape screening of the solar development.

The LEMP shall include, but not be limited to, detailing specifications of the following topics:

- Proposed landscape and ecological mitigation works
- Protection Measures, including for A) Existing Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows during Construction and Decommissioning, B) Protection of Public Footpaths during Construction and Decommissioning and C) Protection of New Planting (undertaken prior to or during Construction)
- Fencing, including A) Fencing surrounding Electric Cables and B) Protective Fencing
- Selection of Hedgerow Trees
- Planting Specifications, including A) Grassland Planting, B) Hedgerow

Planting, C) Existing Hedgerow Infill, and D) Tree and Woodland Planting

- Chemical Management
- Weed Management, including Injurious and Invasive Weeds
- Cultivation
- Buffer Strips
- Existing Woodland Protections
- Monitoring and Review Schedule
- Operational Maintenance

The LEMP shall provide for monitoring, review and updating to be undertaken to consider whether amendments are required to better meet the LEMP Management Measures and Objectives. Any updates to the LEMP shall be submitted to and agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

Thereafter, the development shall be carried out in accordance with the agreed LEMP, including updated revisions as approved by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: to ensure landscaping is appropriately installed and maintained for screening to the National Landscape and the wider area and in the interest of ecology and biodiversity.

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

- a) Risk assessment of construction activities.
- b) Identification of "biodiversity protection zones".
- c) Practical measures (both physical measures and sensitive working practices) to avoid or reduce impacts during construction (may be provided as a set of method statements).
- d) The location and timing of sensitive works to avoid harm to biodiversity features.
- e) The times during construction when specialist ecologists need to be present on site to oversee works.
- f) Responsible persons and lines of communication.
- g) The role and responsibilities on site of an ecological clerk of works (ECoW) or similarly competent person.

h) Use of protective fences, exclusion barriers and warning signs.

i) Details of pollution risks including:

- the use of plant and machinery
- wheel washing and vehicle wash-down and disposal of resultant dirty water
- oils/chemicals and materials
- the use and routing of heavy plant and vehicles
- the location and form of work and storage areas and compounds
- the control and removal of spoil and wastes.

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

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

32. Prior to the commencement of any development hereby approved, a detailed Surface Water Management Scheme for the site, based upon the hydrological and hydrogeological context of the development, providing clarification of how drainage is to be managed during construction and including a timetable for implementation, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The surface water scheme shall be implemented in accordance with the agreed details and timetable.

Reason: To prevent the increased risk of flooding and to protect water quality.

33. Prior to the commencement of any development hereby approved, details of maintenance and management of both the Surface Water Management Scheme and any receiving system shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall be managed and maintained in accordance with the approved details. These shall include a plan for the lifetime of the development, the arrangements for adoption by any public body or statutory undertaker, or any other arrangements to secure the operation of the surface water drainage scheme throughout its lifetime.

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

34. Prior to the commencement of any development hereby approved, a detailed method statement covering the mitigation approach to secure the conservation status of Skylark populations affected by the development shall

be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interest of protected species.

35. Prior to the commencement of any development hereby approved, a detailed method statement covering the soil management approach shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Details shall include:

- Soil management during the lifetime of the development;
- Preparation for reinstatement;
- Restoration details; and
- Aftercare plans.

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

Reason: In the interest of returning land to agricultural use.

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

- no bonfires
- protection of nearby receptors from dust arising from construction
- storage of waste materials prior to removal from site

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

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

37. Prior to the commencement of any development hereby approved (including site clearance and any other preparatory works), an Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS) for the protection of trees shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The AMS shall include:

(a) a Tree Protection Plan showing the location of protective fencing or other measures required for the avoidance of damage to retained trees, all in accordance with BS5837:2012. Tree protective barriers and ground

protection, where specified, shall be erected prior to any other site operations and at least 5 working days notice shall be given to the Local Planning Authority that it has been erected. The protective fencing shall be as specified in Chapter 6 and detailed in figure 3 of BS5837:2012 unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority; and,

(b) a pre-commencement site meeting between the Tree Officer, Arboricultural Consultant and Site Manager which shall take place to inspect the protection for the affected protected trees. The protection of the trees shall be in accordance with an agreed Tree Protection Plan and Arboricultural Method Statement.

The tree protection shall be retained until completion of the development and nothing shall be placed within the fencing, nor shall any ground levels be altered or excavations made without the written consent of the planning authority.

All underground cabling will avoid root protection areas (RPAs), as shown in the Tree Protection Plan.

Reason: to ensure existing trees are protected.

Prior to installation:

38. The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance the Landscape Planting Plan 21238-LA-LN-00-01-A Detailed Planting Plan REV F. Approved planting shall be planted prior to the installation of solar panels, with the exception of any planting that may not be practical during the construction process details of which must first have been submitted to and agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

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

Reason : to ensure landscaping is appropriately installed and maintained for screening to the National Landscape and the wider area.

39. Notwithstanding the details shown on the approved plans, prior to installation, details of the materials, colour and finish of any built structures and containers, poles, fencing, gates etc., shall be 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 sensitive location

40. Notwithstanding the details shown on the approved plans, prior to above ground works, full details of hard landscape proposals shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. These details shall include where appropriate: proposed finished levels or contours and hard surfacing materials relating to maintenance and access routes. Thereafter, the development shall be proceed in strict accordance with such details as have been agreed.

Reason: To ensure the provision of amenity afforded by appropriate landscape design and maintenance of existing and/or new landscape features.

41. Prior to the installation of external lighting or audible alarm, details of the proposed lighting/alarm shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the development shall proceed in strict accordance with such details as have been agreed.

Reason: In the interest of visual amenity, dark night skies and ecology.

42. Prior to the installation of any security cameras and associated equipment, a plan showing camera location and coverage shall have been submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter, development shall proceed in strict accordance with such details as have been agreed.

Reason: In the interest of visual and neighbouring amenity.

Compliance:

43. The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the submitted 'Noise Impact Assessment submitted (Proposed Solar Scheme at North Farm, Wimborne, Noise Impact Assessment, Technical Report: R9038-1 Rev 2, Dated 16th November 2022, by 24 Acoustics).

Further to the approved information, upon installation, noise measurements for solar inverter units shall be submitted in writing to Local Planning

Authority, for approval to validate the noise impacts that have been predicted within the noise impact assessment. Should noise measurements exceed guidelines in BS8233:2014 a mitigation strategy shall be submitted to and agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

The agreed mitigation measure shall be fully implemented and permanently retained thereafter.

Reason: In order to protect the living conditions of surrounding residential properties

44. The ecological mitigation and biodiversity management and monitoring shall be carried out in accordance with the approved Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) submitted as part of the revised Environmental Statement (ES) REV B in February 2025.

Reason : to ensure landscaping is appropriately maintained for screening to the National Landscape and in the interests of biodiversity.

45. The development hereby approved shall be carried out in strict accordance with the submitted Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) dated March 2023.

Reason: In the interests of road safety.

Other

46. All new cabling between the solar PV modules and equipment on site shall be laid underground with the exception of above ground connections to equipment..

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

47. In the event that contamination is found at any time when carrying out the approved development, it must be reported in writing immediately to the Local Planning Authority and an investigation and risk assessment must be undertaken in accordance with requirements of BS10175 (as amended). Should any contamination be found requiring remediation, a remediation scheme, including a time scale, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The

approved remediation scheme shall be carried out and on completion of the approved remediation scheme a verification report shall be prepared and submitted within two weeks of completion and submitted to the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure risks from contamination are minimized.

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

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

Informative Notes:

1. 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.
2. The applicant should contact Dorset Highways by telephone at 01305 221020, by email at dorsethighways@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk, or in writing at Dorset Highways, Dorset Council, County Hall, Dorchester, DT1 1XJ, before the commencement of any works on or adjacent to the public highway, to ensure that the appropriate licence(s) and or permission(s) are obtained.
3. The safe free passage of the public on all rights of way must not be obstructed at any time. If the public are unlikely to be able to exercise their public rights on a right of way, then a Temporary Path Closure Order must be obtained. This can be applied for through Rights of Way at Dorset Council see <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/w/changing-the-definitive-map>, but the application must be completed and returned at least thirteen weeks before the intended closure date. It should be noted that there is a fee applicable to this application. This application and legal order must be confirmed before any works obstructing the path are commenced.

Any damage to the surface of the footpath attributable to the development must be repaired to Dorset Council's specification, in accordance with Section 59 of the Highways Act 1980 by the applicant.

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

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

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

In this case:

- The applicant was made of aware of issues and additional information was submitted to address these.