

MAIN CASE

Reference No: 20/00522/FUM

Proposal: Full planning application for the construction of a solar farm and associated works including inverter stations, DNO building, security measures, connection point to the national grid, communications mast, landscaping and upgraded access road. Site accessible to vehicles via a farm track leading from the A1123.

Site Address: Site South West Of Meadow View Farm The Butts Soham Cambridgeshire

Applicant: BSR Energy Ltd

Case Officer: Andrew Phillips, Planning Team Leader

Parish: Soham

Ward: Soham South
Ward Councillor/s: Ian Bovingdon
Dan Schumann

Date Received: 21 April 2020 **Expiry Date:** 14 October 2020

[V79]

1.0 **RECOMMENDATION**

1.1 Members are recommended to approve, subject to the recommended conditions below that can be read in full on the attached appendix 1.

- 1 Approved Plans
- 2 Time Limit
- 3 Temporary permission for 40 years
- 4 28MW export rate
- 5 Surface water drainage
- 6 Archaeological investigation
- 7 Construction hours (including piling)
- 8 Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP)
- 9 No external lights
- 10 Ecological Management Plan
- 11 Additional landscape
- 12 Landscape maintenance
- 13 Tree protection
- 14 Hard landscaping
- 15 Decommissioning

16 Site Access

2.0 SUMMARY OF APPLICATION

2.1 The site area for the solar farm measures 48.13 hectares / 118.92 acres and the applicant is seeking to use the site for this use for 40 years. It will generate a max electrical output of 28MW.

2.2

<p>It should be noted that: 1 million watts or 1000 kw = 1 megawatt 1 megawatt can power around 650 houses 1 gigawatt = 1000 megawatts</p>
--

2.3 In addition to this the proposal seeks permission for :

- The solar panels which measure 2.4m (7.9ft) in height.
- 2.2m (7.2ft) high 'deer style' fencing.
- 11 Inverter stations measuring 12m (39.4ft) x 2.9m (9.5ft), with a height of 3.2 m (10.5ft).
- 33kv Private Switchgear station measuring 6m (19.7ft) x 3m (9.8ft), with a height of 3.3m (10.8ft).
- 33kv DNO Switchgear measuring 5.4m (17.7ft) x 5m (16.4ft), with a height of 3.5m (11.5ft).
- Tele Communication Mast measuring 22m (72.2ft) in height.
- CCTV cameras on a 6m (19.7ft) high pole.
- Farm access widening during the construction period onto A1123 Wicken Road

2.4 The application has been amended, with the most significant amendment being revising the red line in order to allow a suitable entrance to the site from Wicken Road that would accommodate lorries during the construction phase. In addition the developer has provided additional photomontages and a flood risk assessment.

2.5 The full planning application, plans and documents submitted by the Applicant can be viewed online via East Cambridgeshire District Council's Public Access online service, via the following link <http://pa.eastcambs.gov.uk/online-applications/>.

3.0 PLANNING HISTORY

3.1

19/00760/SCREEN	SCREENING OPINION - Proposed solar farm	20.06.2019
-----------------	--	------------

The Screening Opinion concluded that the proposal was not likely to have significant effects on the environment.

4.0 THE SITE AND ITS ENVIRONMENT

4.1 The site is located to the west of Soham, to the southwest of Cherrytree Lane. The site is also located to the northwest of the St Lawrence Church in Wicken. The vehicular entrance is off Wicken Road (A1123).

- 4.2 The National Grid Electric Pylons loosely help define the western boundary of the site.
- 4.3 The site is primarily in a bowl/valley with the nearby settlements of Soham and Wicken being on the high ground. The ground to the north of site is on lower ground.
- 4.4 The current landscape is a mix of open fields, field ditches and hedge/tree lined walk ways.

5.0 RESPONSES FROM CONSULTEES

- 5.1 Responses were received from the following consultees and these are summarised below. The full responses are available on the Council's web site.

Wicken Parish Council – 20 May 2020

States:

“There were no objections to the planning application. However, the Parish Council would like the following to be included as conditions:

- All construction traffic to enter the site via the A1123 via Soham and not through Wicken. This had been stipulated in the application, but the Parish Council would like this as a condition.
- Substantial hedging around the development to screen from view.”

Wicken Parish Council – 12 August 2020

States:

“No objections”

Soham Town Council – 4 June 2020

Raises concerns in regards to:

- Bracks Drove is reinstated or a contribution is made to Soham Town Council.
- Environmental Statement to cover landscape maintenance.
- Decommissioning Statement is provided.
- To allow Soham to purchase some of the energy to make the town greener.

Soham Town Council – 26 August 2020

Raises previous comments.

Local Highways Authority - 26 May 2020

States:

“The highways authority requests a holding objection as the proposed access is not suitable for use by large construction vehicles and the internal access road is not wide enough for two vehicles to pass and be clear of the highway. If permitted this would result in large vehicles being required to use both sides of the road to gain access / egress the site and will require them to stop and manoeuvre in the highway causing a detriment of highways safety.

This objection could be overcome if the junction with the highway and access road was widened to mitigate the above. Please provide this information prior to the determination of this application.”

Local Highways Authority - 17 August 2020

States:

“After a review of the amended drawing and information I have no further objection

Recommended Condition

Prior to construction the access as shown on drawing 2321_PL_SK_203 Rev P01 will be installed and constructed to CCC standards and specifications”

Environmental Health - 30 April 2020

States:

“I can see that the site is located south of an existing solar farm which was granted under 14/00779/FUM.

Claire's comments at that time included "...All plant appears to be contained within buildings and the inverters and other buildings proposed are a greater distance from nearby properties. The solar panels will be facing in a Southerly direction, and therefore away from the nearest properties."

From reading the information supplied I can see that the 11 inverter stations are enclosed structures and that the Switchgear Substation will be located in the south-eastern section near to the existing access and also be enclosed. I have assumed that Claire made reference to the direction the panels were facing in the 2014 application due to potential glare. The Design and Access Statement mentions that the solar panels will also be facing south.

Taking all this in to account my previous comments still stand but I have no objections to raise at this time.”

Environmental Health - 4 August 2020

States:

“I have no specific comments to make concerning these amendments but I would like to make some comments with regard to the implementation of this proposal (if granted).

We have had noise issues from similar developments in our district concerning ground piling. Section 3.14 of the Design and Access Statement confirms that the metal framework for the solar panels will be supported by pile drive foundations. I want to ensure that if this application is granted there is as much control over the development/construction phase as possible in order to mitigate noise from the pile driving. I would therefore request the following -

The standard hours below to control construction times and deliveries during the construction phase:

07:30 - 18:00 each day Monday - Friday

07:30 - 13:00 on Saturdays and

None on Sundays or Bank Holidays

And the times below specifically to control ground piling:

09:00 - 17:00 each day Monday - Friday
None on Saturdays, Sundays or Bank Holiday

I would also request that a piling method statement be produced and agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority (LPA) before work takes place.

No other points to raise at this time but happy to discuss any of this in greater detail if required.”

Design Out Crime Officers - 5 May 2020

States:

“Thank you for the opportunity to review this planning application. I have reviewed relevant documents and drawings and fully supportive of the security measures being considered. This should ensure community safety and vulnerability to crime is being addressed. This area does attract rural crime especially poaching and I have made our rural crime team and Countryside Watch aware of this application. No objections but if the applicant would like site specific site security advice in the future more than happy to be involved.

No further comments at this stage.”

Asset Information Definitive Map Team - 11 May 2020

States:

“Please note Public Byways No. 107, 108 and 113 Soham run in close proximity to the site. To view the location of these public rights of way please view our interactive mapping online which can be found at <http://my.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/myCambridgeshire.aspx>.

Whilst the Definitive Map Team has no objection to this proposal, the applicant should be aware of the presence of the public rights of way and its legal alignment. If you require a copy of the Definitive Map & Statement, this can be requested online for a fee at www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/highwaysearches.

The public rights of way must remain open and unobstructed at all times. Building materials must not be stored on Public Rights of Way, contractors' vehicles must not be parked on it and the public should not be diverted off of them by physical barriers or gates. Should you need to temporarily close it for safe works, you should apply to the Streetworks Team online at <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/travel-roads-and-parking/roads-and-pathways/highway-licences-and-permits/cambridgeshire-permit-scheme-for-street-works/>.

The County Council notes that the Traffic Management Plan refers to the presence of public rights of way and that clear signage and procedures will ensure the safety of pedestrians. However the public rights of way in questions are recorded as public byways, giving rights to all users. It is therefore likely that motorised vehicles, motorbikes, horse riders and pedal cyclists will also be using these routes. It does not appear that the Traffic Management Plan has considered these users.

The County Council therefore requests that additional information, in the way of an amended Traffic Management Plan, is submitted for further consideration. Alternatively, a condition could be sought for a more detailed Traffic Management Plan on how the construction phase of the development will be implemented ensuring the safety of all public users of the local highway network.”

Cambs Wildlife Trust - 12 May 2020

States:

“The preliminary ecological report, wintering bird survey and Landscape and Ecological Management Plan cover all the relevant issues and makes appropriate avoidance, mitigation and enhancement recommendations. If planning permission is granted, the recommendations in the PEA "Summary of Key Issues" and implementation of the management plan should be secured through the use of appropriately worded planning conditions.”

Natural England - 19 May 2020

States:

“NO OBJECTION

Based on the plans submitted, Natural England considers that the proposed development will not have significant adverse impacts on statutorily protected nature conservation sites or landscapes.

Natural England’s generic advice on other natural environment issues is set out at Annex A.”

Natural England - 6 August 2020

States:

“Natural England has previously commented on this proposal and made comments to the authority in our letter dated 19 May 2020 (our ref 315861).

The advice provided in our previous response applies equally to this amendment although we made no objection to the original proposal.

The proposed amendments to the original application are unlikely to have significantly different impacts on the natural environment than the original proposal.”

Lead Local Flood Authority - 14 May 2020

States:

“We have reviewed the following documents:

~ Flood Risk Assessment, Cannon Consulting Engineering, Ref: CCE/W321/FRA-05, Dated: April

At present we object to the grant of planning permission for the following reasons:

1. Surface Water Management

While it is accepted that Solar Farm developments may not increase the impermeable areas of the site at ground level, the surface water running off the solar panels falls in concentrated areas from the drip lines from the panels. This can lead to rutting over time. Therefore, some level of surface water management should be proposed and implemented across the scheme. This could be through

the use of features such as filter drains between solar panel rows and swales, to assist in intercepting and managing surface water on site, to reduce the risk of any rutting where surface water falls off the solar panels. Until some level of surface water management to reduce the risk of rutting is proposed to safeguard against the risk of increasing flood risk into the future, we are unable to support this application.”

Lead Local Flood Authority - 22 June 2020

States:

“Based on these, as Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) we can remove our objection to the proposed development.

The above documents demonstrate that surface water from the proposed development can be managed through the use of a suitable planting scheme, composing grasslands, throughout the site. As the site is a relatively flat site with an average slope of around 1 in 85, there is little risk for high velocity runoff. The planting proposed across the site will manage the runoff, acting like a filter strip across the site. The planting scheme will be regularly maintained over the lifetime of the solar farm. There will be regular inspections to ensure that any short term, small scale erosion is picked up and repaired where necessary.

We request the following condition is imposed:

Condition

The surface water drainage scheme shall be constructed and maintained in full accordance with the Flood Risk Assessment as submitted by Cannon Consulting Engineering (ref: CCE/W321/FRA-05) dated April 2020.

Reason

To prevent an increased risk of flooding and protect water quality”

Lead Local Flood Authority - 11 August 2020

States:

“We have reviewed the following documents:

- Flood Risk Assessment, Cannon Consulting Engineers, Ref: CCE/W321/FRA-06, Dated July 2020

- Landscape and Ecological Management Plan, The Ecology Consultancy, Ref: 8166 V 4.0, Dated: 17 July 2020

Having reviewed the revised documentation we can confirm that the LLFA has no further comments beyond those set down in our response of 22 June 2020 (ref: 201105083). Our position therefore remains supportive of the development.”

Environment Agency - 18 May 2020

States:

“We have reviewed the submitted Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) with regard to tidal and designated main river flood risk sources only.

As the site is located approximately 1.3 km from the nearest main river under the jurisdiction of the Environment Agency, we consider that the main source of flood risk at this site is associated with watercourses under the jurisdiction of the Internal Drainage Board (IDB). As such, we have no objection to the proposed development on flood risk grounds. However, the IDB (Mere IDB) should be consulted with regard to flood risk associated with watercourses under their jurisdiction and surface water drainage proposals.

In all circumstances where flood warning and evacuation are significant measures in contributing to managing flood risk, we expect local planning authorities to formally consider the emergency planning and rescue implications of new development in making their decisions.”

Environment Agency - 4 August 2020

States:

“We have reviewed the amended red line boundary and have no comments to add to those made in previous letter AC/2020/129307 dated 18 May 2020.”

The Ely Group of Internal Drainage Board - 5 May 2020

States:

“This application for development is within the Middle Fen and Mere Internal Drainage District.

The Board has no objections in principle to this development based on the proposed method of surface water disposal.

It should be noted that no works can take place in, over, under or within nine metres of 11 Board's Main Drain without the prior consent of the Board. Equally, no infilling of any watercourses on site can take place without the Board's consent.”

The Ely Group Of Internal Drainage Board - 20 August 2020

States:

“This amendment relates to part of the site which is outside of the Board's District.

The Board has no comment to make on this amendment.”

Historic England - 21 May 2020

States:

“On the basis of the information available to date, we do not wish to offer any comments. We suggest that you seek the views of your specialist conservation adviser.”

Historic England - 7 August 2020

States:

“Thank you for your letter of 30 July 2020 regarding further information on the above application for planning permission. On the basis of this information, we do not wish to offer any comments. We suggest that you seek the views of your specialist conservation and archaeological advisers, as relevant.”

Conservation Officer - 6 May 2020

States:

“The application is accompanied by a heritage assessment which satisfies NPPF requirements. Given the location and separation distance from any designated heritage assets, no demonstrable built heritage impacts have been identified”

Cambridgeshire Archaeology - 15 May 2020

States:

“We do not object to this development but recommend that an archaeological condition is applied to any planning consent that may be granted.

We have held pre-application discussions with Pegasus Planning Group regarding the need to conduct archaeological fieldwork owing to the evidence in the Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record (HER), which has been duly captured in the Heritage Statement within the planning application.

The proposal area is situated within Soham Mere, a large prehistoric freshwater lake that lay to the west of Soham, drained in the 17th century. It is located on the flank of the mere where any stratified lacustrine deposits will be relatively shallow, although could yet mask archaeological evidence relating to the mere or early land surfaces that pre-dated its development.

Within the application area a 4-flanged Bronze Age gold torc was ploughed up from the field in the 1950s (Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record reference 07092). An artefact of this significance and type is typically associated with two types of activity:

(i) burials - as part of the repertoire of personal items deposited as grave goods either worn by or associated with the body. If burial associated, the location of the artefact may indicate that this area was dry land in the earlier part of the Bronze Age, denoting a period before the development of marsh and mere conditions in this part of the fen basin. The presence of either flat graves or barrow mounded burial monuments associated with Beaker or Collared Urn phases of the Bronze Age would be a strong possibility if this were the case;

(ii) deposition of high value objects into water as part of the repertoire of later prehistoric rituals known across NW Europe. If this were the case, the location of the find would indicate that a permanent or semi-permanent water body was located here, and that this part of the mere's edge was submerged at the time of the deposition of the torc in the Bronze Age. This is a counter position to that given in a study of the gold work in 1973 that concluded that owing to the deposits of clay (not peat) on the torc, badly damaged by the plough, meant that the torc had been placed in a dry space to be retrieved at a later date (Joan J Taylor: Bronze Age Goldwork of the British Isles: 13). This view, however, did not take into account the character of the calcareous marly clay deposits indicative of the lacustrine edge that would have formed in a wet environment though one that precluded the development of marsh - at least no trace of classic fen deposits is present in the Bracks Farm area. The analysis also assumed that the damage to the torc was solely caused by the plough, whereas numerous examples of such items buried in this period indicate that they had been 'killed' by twisting and distortion (eg Priddy Hoard, Somerset, and torc from near Sherbourne, Dorset), if not cutting them to alter their power or imbue them with another.

Other finds surrounding the proposal area are also notable in that they are also metal finds: Saxon spearheads from Triangle Farm at the northern boundary (07093, 07094), and Roman coins found in the 19th century while dyke digging at North Farm (Wicken) to the south. Other artefacts include a Mesolithic tranchet axe (07077), revealed during dyke digging to the north of the proposal area, in the deepest zone of the mere. It is thought to have been recovered during manual ditch digging in this area. Later archaeological evidence relates to a night-time bombing decoy for RAF Waterbeach (CB15072) to the north-west of the proposal area. In

addition to the north of the application area are soil marks (07948) which unfortunately remain ambiguous.

A geophysical survey undertaken at the site demonstrated land drains and phases of post-drainage (i.e. 17th century to recent) cultivation and field boundaries. Numerous anomalies relate in part to the demolition of structures around the former site of Bracks Farm in the centre of the development area. The farm is shown on the 1837 Tithe Map of Soham, but its origin is unknown

In order that the context of the Bracks Farm torc can be understood and to determine the presence or absence of contemporary or other archaeological remains at the former mere's edge, we advise that the archaeological condition below is included in any planning consent in order to secure an appropriate programme of archaeological investigation.”

Cambridgeshire Archaeology - 3 August 2020

States:

“Thank you for consulting us again in relation to this scheme following the submission of amendments to the site access redline.

I am writing to confirm that the additional and amended submissions do not alter the advice previously issued by this department on 15/05/2020 (re-attached here).”

Cadent Gas Ltd - 30 April 2020

It makes reference to nearby affected apparatus and requests 28 days to provide more comments.

Cadent Gas Ltd - 5 May 2020

It makes reference to nearby affected apparatus and requests 28 days to provide more comments.

Cadent and National Grid Plant Enquiry – 27 May 2020

Has no objection to the proposal, though does provide substantial technical guidance.

National Grid - Electricity - 1 June 2020

States:

“National Grid has no objections to the above proposal which is in close proximity to a High Voltage Transmission Overhead Line.”

Civil Aviation Authority – 21 September 2020

Provides guidance which identifies as the aerodromes are chiefly responsible for their own safety.

It states that only under “Section 110 of the Localism Act 2011, it is not necessary to consult the CAA about:...Solar Photovoltaic Panels (SPV)”.

Cambridge Airport – (23 September 2020)

States:

“Due to the close proximity of this solar farm to the one which is already in situ along Great Drove, Cambridge Airport has no issues with this application.”

Cambridge Ramblers Association - No Comments Received

ECDC Trees Team - No Comments Received

Ward Councillors - No Comments Received

5.2 Neighbours –7 neighbouring properties were notified and the responses received are summarised below. A site notice was put up on 7 August 2020 and a notice put in the local press on the 6 August 2020. A full copy of the responses are available on the Council’s website.

7 Qua fen Common, Soham – While supports renewable energy, raises the following concerns:

- Serious harm to the views/landscape when looking towards Soham from Wicken (A1123).
- Loss of agricultural land.
- Solar panels should be installed on new buildings.
- Land should remain to be used for grazing.
- Financial compensation to the residents of Soham and Wicken, due to the visual harm.

6.0 The Planning Policy Context

6.1 East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015

GROWTH 2	Locational Strategy
GROWTH 3	Infrastructure requirements
GROWTH 5	Presumption in favour of sustainable development
ENV 1	Landscape and settlement character
ENV 2	Design
ENV 4	Energy efficiency and renewable energy in construction
ENV 6	Renewable energy development
ENV 7	Biodiversity and geology
ENV 8	Flood risk
ENV 9	Pollution
ENV 11	Conservation Areas
ENV 12	Listed Buildings
ENV 14	Sites of archaeological interest
COM 5	Strategic green infrastructure
COM 7	Transport impact
COM 8	Parking provision

6.2 Supplementary Planning Documents

Design Guide

Contaminated Land
Cambridgeshire Flood and Water
Renewable Energy Development (Commercial Scale)

6.3 National Planning Policy Framework 2019

- 2 Achieving sustainable development
- 8 Promoting healthy and safe communities
- 9 Promoting sustainable transport
- 11 Making effective use of land
- 12 Achieving well-designed places
- 14 Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
- 15 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
- 16 Conserving & enhancing the historic environment

7.0 PLANNING COMMENTS

7.1 Principle of Development

7.2 On the 27 June 2019 the United Kingdom (UK) passed legislation requiring the Government to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases by 100% compared to 1990 levels to ensure that the net zero target will be met by 2050.

7.3 The NPPF makes it clear that it seeks to facilitate sustainable development, which is defined by “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. It goes on to state in paragraph 154: “When determining planning application for renewable or low carbon development, local planning authorities should:

- a) 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
- b) approve the application if its impacts are (or can be made) acceptable. Once suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy have been identified in plans, local planning authorities should expect subsequent applications for commercial scale projects outside these areas to demonstrate that the proposed location meets the criteria used in identifying suitable areas.”

7.4 Policy ENV6 of the Adopted Local Plan states:

“Proposals for renewable energy and associated infrastructure will be supported, unless their wider environmental, social and economic benefits would be outweighed by significant adverse effects that cannot be remediated and made acceptable in relation to:

- The local environmental and visual landscape impact.
- Impact on the character and appearance of the streetscape/buildings.
- Key views, in particular those of Ely Cathedral.
- Protected species.

- Residential amenity.
- Safeguarding areas from nearby airfields; and
- Heritage assets

Renewable energy proposals which affect sites of international, national and local nature importance or other irreplaceable habitats will be determined against the relevant sections of Policy ENV7.

The visual and amenity impacts of proposed structures will be assessed on their merits, both individually and cumulatively.

Provision should be made for the removal of facilities and reinstatement of the site, should they cease to operate.”

7.5 The Council’s Renewable Energy SPD states:

“In summary proposals for renewable energy generation will be considered on their merits, on a case by case basis. The Council will take account of any environmental, economic or social benefits...The Council will refuse planning permission for commercial scale renewable energy schemes where it is considered that there are significant adverse impacts which outweigh the wider benefits of renewable energy development identified above. The Council will also consider to what extent any adverse impacts can be mitigated through the design and siting of proposals or by applying appropriate planning conditions. The views of local communities, residents, parish and town councils, community groups and all elected representatives relating to commercial scale renewable energy schemes will also be given significant weight in the determination of planning applications.”

7.6 On the 21 October 2019 East Cambridgeshire District Council declared a climate emergency, with the Leader of the Council stating:

“We acknowledge that the Council has a significant role to play in protecting and improving the environment for future generations and so we made the decision to amend our own climate change motion to formally declare a climate emergency.

We are proud of the work we already do as a Council to reduce our impact on the environment and we welcome the opportunity to join over 200 other Councils across the UK who are also working to fight climate change. On behalf of our residents, we as a Council will be taking the appropriate actions. The most ambitious piece of work already underway by the Council is the development of a joint bid with Cambridgeshire County Council to Innovate UK to design an energy system to deliver net zero carbon emissions from energy use in East Cambridgeshire by 2050; the project focuses on shifting transport, gas and oil use to electricity and to grow the electricity network to cater for the change.”

7.7 This follows a year after the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) stated the world had 12 years to ensure global temperatures do not raise by more than 1.5C. Going beyond a rise of 1.5C will have a significant effect on the world’s liveability. It has also stated that if there is not a 45% reduction in CO2 levels from 2010 levels by 2030 the 2050 target will not be met.

- 7.8 The requirements of the Climate Emergency will require a complete change on how humans respond to the Earth; as either the rapid change to climate caused by humans will create a more hostile/unpredictable climate or humans will have to radically change their diet (in both senses of the definition: food/activities) and provide a continuous fight against climate change.
- 7.9 In short scientists advise that if climate change is not substantially tackled by 2030 it will be the cause of the death of large numbers of the species that inhabit the world including humans. The International Committee of the Red Cross consider there to be 250,000 more deaths in the human population each year between 2030-2050, including from malnutrition, due to climate change.
- 7.10 In regards to principle it is concluded that a solar farm in this location is acceptable in principle due to the clear policy guidance at both national and district level; in addition to the clear international requirements to tackle climate change. The benefits of renewable solar energy is considered to be granted very substantial weight. The proposal will help to ensure the Council meets the 2050 target by providing renewable energy early that will be up and running prior to 2030. In order to reasonably argue for this application to be refused it would need to be demonstrated that significant and demonstrable harm either individually or cumulatively, which cannot be mitigated against would be caused by the proposal and that is not considered to be the case.
- 7.11 The additional benefits and harm, alongside the assessment in accordance with policy ENV6 of the Local Plan which specifically relates to renewable energy development are covered in the remainder of the report.
- 7.12 Visual Amenity
- 7.13 The developer submitted a Landscape Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) with the application and additional information has also been submitted to address the concerns raised by the Case Officer. The LVIA concluded that the proposal would not significantly harm the existing landscape, though does identify a wide range of public areas in the locality that would be moderately affected by the proposal. The following section of the report covers the viewpoints assessed in the LVIA.
- 7.14 The developer has submitted a landscape Planting Plan (P19-0460_10 Rev D) that shows additional landscaping along the western boundary, southwest corner and northeast corner of the solar farm. This is to provide more landscaping to help the development blend into the wider countryside and reduce the more long term impacts the proposal will have on the rural character of the area, without this landscaping. This plan also shows the extent of the existing field boundary planting.
- 7.15 Viewpoint 1 – is located on the edge of Angle Common (which is common land), looking south towards the site and with the existing solar farm (Triangle Farm) at Angle Farm just in view to the right. There is no reason to consider that the long term impacts will be any greater than negligible on the character of the rural area; on this basis the LVIA is agreed with.

- 7.16 Viewpoint 2 – is located on Byway 113, located on the northern edge of the site and adjacent to the Twelve Foot Drain. The current view is that of an open field with an established hedge line, with the electric pylons being the most dominant feature in the landscape. The photomontage shows that the solar panels will be clearly seen in a small section of the landscape. The case officer agrees with the LVIA that there will be a moderate impact in the short term, though with additional planting in the area by the 5th year the impact is likely to have been reduced to low-moderate. The harm specifically from this solar farm would be negligible if the North Angle Solar Farm (County Council) was approved and constructed, as it would block the view of this end of the proposed solar farm currently under consideration. It is noted that the County Council Solar Farm is also proposing landscape that should lessen the combined impact of both solar farms.
- 7.17 Viewpoint 3 – is located at the end of Cherrytree Lane looking over South Horse Fen (common land) towards the north-east corner of the proposed development. With the existing mature landscape along the site boundary and given the shape of the site, the impact is considered to be low-moderate; with the closer you get to the site the more the impact will increase to moderate.
- 7.18 Viewpoint 4 – is located on Wicken Road near the railway line. The existing view is of the wide open fields with field hedges in the background and the large pylons sitting behind this landscaping. While some of the solar farm may be visible, given the existing planting the impact is considered to be negligible.
- 7.19 Viewpoint 5 – is located along Wicken Road (A1123) and on Byway 108 leading to the southwest of the site. The existing view is over a wide expanse of countryside with the tower of St Andrew’s Church (Grade 1 Listed) in Soham being seen in the distance. Year 1 shows a ‘sea’ of solar panels, this will both substantially change the landscape and is considered to cause significant harm to the rural character of the local area when viewed from this locality. By year 5 the proposed new landscaping will have started to mature and will begin to break up the scale of the solar farm and by year 10 the vast majority of the proposed solar farm will be obscured. It is therefore considered that in year 1 there will be significant harm, year 5 moderate harm and year 10 low-moderate harm to the landscape when viewed from this position.
- 7.20 Viewpoint 6 – is located along Wicken Road next to Wicken’s church St Lawrence (Grade II*) looking towards Soham. The existing view is again a mix of fields, hedges and pylons. The LVIA suggests that the impact to the rural character will be low. However, given that this viewpoint is on higher ground and given the impact on viewpoint 5 (located relatively close to the east) the impact is considered to be higher. This impact will also be reduced given the developer is seeking to plant new hedges along the western boundary of the solar farm and on this basis it is accepted there will be a low impact to the landscape after 10 years, with potentially moderate harm under 5 years.
- 7.21 Viewpoint 7 – is located to the northeast of the pub in Wicken and on footpath 27 looking towards Soham. Given the distance it is accepted the proposal will have a negligible impact upon this viewpoint.

- 7.22 Viewpoint 8 – is located to the west of the site and on Bridleway 38 looking towards Soham. This view is again of open fields in the foreground with pylons and field boundaries in the background. While there might be small elements of the proposed solar farm that will be visible, the impact to this view is likely to be low given the additional landscaping proposed.
- 7.23 Viewpoint 9 – is located to the west of the northwest corner of the site. The current view is one of open fields, mature hedgerows and pylons. With the view overlooking the thinnest part of the site, the impact is likely to be low both in the short and longer term.
- 7.24 Viewpoint 10 – is located on Lower Drove and to the northwest of the main element of the settlement of Wicken. It is agreed with the LVIA that the change will be low to the visual character of this area, due to the distance to the proposed solar farm.
- 7.25 Viewpoint 11 – is located along the southern boundary of the site and is on Byway 108. It is taken looking over a low level hedge, with the electric pylons being the dominant feature along the left hand side with St Andrew's Church in Soham being seen to the right of the view. The majority of the view is a large open field surrounded by field boundary hedges. In year 1 the solar panels will define the entire view and thus causes substantial harm to the immediate locality with the new planting also being in view, it is too small to obscure the panels. However, by year 5 the new landscaping will have matured enough to fully obscure the panels. This will not be out of character with the area, as enclosed rights of way through mature planting is found on the south and eastern boundary. The harm to the landscape is, therefore, considered to be negligible by year 5 of the development.
- 7.26 Viewpoint 12 – is located along the southern boundary of the site and is on Byway 108; it also forms the main entrance to the site from Wicken Road. With there being an existing farm access gate here and needing to maintain access to the site for this proposal, no landscaping is proposed and therefore will not be able to obscure the proposal. The solar panels will remain in full view, though this is only while standing in the entrance way; on this basis the harm is considered to be low-moderate in this precise location.
- 7.27 With the proposed solar farm (being considered), the new solar farm at North Angle Farm (County Council application still being considered) and the existing Triangle Farm Solar Farm the western edge of Soham will be substantially changed from being just agricultural to fields of solar panels. However, given solar panels are less than 3m (9.8ft) high and can be easily obscured by hedging (or potentially reed beds for low level areas) any people travelling primarily along the Public Rights of Way (PRoWs) will generally only see glimpses of the solar farm. It is on this basis that while the area given over to solar farms is substantial, the combined harm is likely to be only moderate at worse.
- 7.28 It is considered that at worse the proposal will cause moderate harm to the rural character within the first five years and only low levels of harm by year 10. It should also be noted that this harm is predominantly from land close to Wicken Road (see viewpoint 5) that gives a raised view over the widest part of the proposal. With the long term harm being low it is considered that the proposal complies with policies

ENV1, ENV2 and ENV6 of the Adopted Local Plan, subject to the submitted landscaping scheme and long term maintenance conditions.

- 7.29 The shorter term harm is considered to be outweighed by the substantial renewable energy benefits that the proposal would create.
- 7.30 Residential Amenity
- 7.31 It is considered due to the nature of the proposal that while it is operational, the proposal will have very limited impact upon residential amenity.
- 7.32 It is noted that the construction of solar farms can lead to substantial impact upon the amenity of surrounding residents; demonstrated by peoples' concerns in regards to Goosehall Farm solar farm located in Burwell. While it is noted that this site is not as close to existing residents it should also be noted that sound can carry and Environmental Health are requesting conditions in regards to control hours of construction work and tighter controls on piling. These conditions will also help to ensure those using the area for recreation have a measure of protection.
- 7.33 On this basis it is considered reasonable to both condition when general construction/deliveries take place and a tighter time frame of when piling can be undertaken; on this basis the comments from the Environmental Health Officer are supported. This should grant a balance between allowing the solar farm to be constructed, while providing protection to the local residents. In addition the case officer supports the Environmental Health Officer in removing rights to install additional external lights and the requirement for a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP).
- 7.34 It is considered that subject to suitable conditions the proposal will be acceptable in regards to policies ENV2 and ENV6 of the Adopted Local Plan.
- 7.35 Historic Environment
- 7.36 It is noted County Council's Historic Environment Team has not objected, subject to a pre-commencement condition. It is considered reasonable to add a pre-commencement archaeological condition, as the site is likely to be in an area of high archaeological potential being on an area of land that would have been dry and close to water, and given its size could hold important archaeological finds. Subject to this recommended condition it is considered that the proposal will be in accordance with policies ENV6 and ENV14 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015.
- 7.37 It is noted that both Historic England and the Council's Conservation Officer do not raise concerns over this proposal. With the proposed development being of low height the case officer agrees with the specialist advice provided. The more general visual impact to the churches in Soham and Wicken has been considered above. Even if the proposal did cause less than substantial harm to the setting of the nearby listed buildings, the public benefit of the solar farm would substantially outweigh this harm.

- 7.38 The proposal is considered to comply with policies ENV6, ENV11 and ENV12 of the Adopted Local Plan.
- 7.39 Highways
- 7.40 The primary impact upon the public highways and Public Rights of Ways (PRoW) will be during construction and decommissioning phases of the solar farm.
- 7.41 The main concern from the Local Highways Authority was ensuring construction vehicles could pull off Wicken Road safely without having to wait for a vehicle to leave the site. This has been overcome by the developer's amendment that seeks to widen the entrance onto Wicken Road and County Highways have now withdrawn their initial objection to the proposal.
- 7.42 However, to ensure that all the construction work is as safe as possible, as well as to get the developer to instruct that suppliers use certain routes to the site both a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and decommissioning conditions are recommended. The CEMP will also need to detail the timing of when the site entrance widening will take place and the phase of development when it will be returned to its existing format. It will also need to detail how the users of the PRoWs will be duly protected from the construction vehicles. Soham Town Council have raised concerns in relation to Bracks Drove. Given that the site access is from the south (Wicken Road) it is very unlikely that the proposal will have any detrimental impact upon Bracks Drove, which is located between this site and the solar farm to the north. However, it is noted that the County Council proposed solar farm to the north of this site is likely to require access via Bracks Drove, though this is not material consideration for the application being considered by this solar farm.
- 7.43 It must also be noted that conditions provide controls on the site and are far more difficult to impose or enforce for off-site impacts. So while a CEMP can require a preferred route for heavy good vehicles, the Council's Enforcement Team cannot easily monitor if this is being complied with or enforce as we cannot control the use of the public highway. Therefore a condition specifying the route that must be used by construction vehicles as requested by Wicken Parish Council would not meet the required tests for a planning condition.
- 7.44 The proposal is considered to meet with the requirements of policies COM7 and COM8 of the Adopted Local Plan, subject to the recommended conditions.
- 7.45 Ecology
- 7.46 It is noted that the Wildlife Trust and Natural England have not raised any objections to this proposal.
- 7.47 The developer has submitted a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, Wintering Bird Survey and a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan in support of its application.
- 7.48 The site is mainly agricultural land; with a mix of improved grasses, hedges and ditches (mainly dry ditches) also located within it.

- 7.49 The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal based its evidence on both a Desk Study and a site survey on the 28th June 2019. This report concluded that the proposal will have no direct or indirect impacts on statutory or non-statutory designated sites. It considers that the proposal will lead to an improvement in a net gain in biodiversity by improving grassland on the site. It goes on to say that the existing hedgerows should be maintained and that the ditches should be protected during construction works. The removal of the site from being farmland will likely lead to improvement in water quality, due to the reduction in nutrient run off.
- 7.50 The appraisal continues to state if the boundary hedgerows and trees are maintained, combined with no artificial lighting proposed the development is considered to have no detrimental impact to the local bat population. Improvements to grasslands will help secure a net gain, though it also recommends bat boxes.
- 7.51 It concluded that no Great Crested Newts are likely to be on or near the site.
- 7.52 In regards to Otters the proposal is unlikely to have impacts on the local population, though improvement to grasslands could lead to a net biodiversity gain.
- 7.53 A pole mounted barn owl nest box is required in order to lead to a net gain in biodiversity for the owl population.
- 7.54 In order to achieve a net gain in biodiversity for birds the creation of bird boxes, a beetle bank and grasslands is required.
- 7.55 The proposal will lead to a long term benefit in reptile biodiversity given the improvement in grasslands.
- 7.56 Given the likelihood of water voles security fencing is recommended prior to the installation of the solar panels with a 5m wide buffer to each ditch maintained. The reduction in nutrient agricultural run-off is likely to lead to net gain in biodiversity, due to improvement in water quality.
- 7.57 The appraisal recommends a badger survey 3 months prior to work commencing.
- 7.58 The developer also undertook four site surveys between November 2019 and February 2020 to consider impact on wintering birds. The majority of the birds using the site were using the hedges and field margins, which will remain. The site was not determined to be of county importance.
- 7.59 The biodiversity maintenance and net gain is set out in the developers submitted Landscape and Ecological Management Plan; a condition is recommended to ensure the developer carries out this plan and to ensure a net gain in biodiversity.
- 7.60 It is considered based on this specialist knowledge that the proposal is very likely to provide a significant benefit in regards to biodiversity in the local area. On this basis the application meets with the requirements of policies ENV6 and ENV 7 of the Adopted Local Plan, subject to a condition ensuring biodiversity measures are brought forward.

- 7.61 Tree Protection
- 7.62 The existing trees and hedges around the site will need to have a level of protection. The submitted tree protection plan does not specifically protect the trees/hedges along the site boundaries; though the development is not placed near these given the biodiversity concerns.
- 7.63 However, while the tree protection details are acceptable in part, the CEMP will need to ensure that equipment, machinery etc is not placed near these hedges/trees. This is required in order to ensure the proposal meets ENV1, ENV2, ENV6 and ENV7 of the Adopted Local Plan.
- 7.64 Flood Risk and Drainage
- 7.65 The site is within Floodzone 1 according to the latest flood maps and is therefore appropriate location for a solar farm; the main concern is to ensure the proposal does not cause increased risk of flooding elsewhere. It is noted that given the latest amendments that the Lead Local Flood Authority, Environment Agency and Internal Drainage Board have not raised any objections.
- 7.66 The Lead Local Flood Authority has requested a condition to ensure the developer complies with its own Flood Risk Assessment and this is considered to be reasonable to ensure that water run-off is appropriately controlled in the long term.
- 7.67 Subject to this recommended condition the proposal is considered to comply with ENV8 of the Adopted Local Plan, the Flood and Water SPD, as well as the requirements of the NPPF.
- 7.68 Temporary Loss of Farm Land
- 7.69 It is noted that the Landscape and Ecological Management Plan submitted requires the site to maintain sheep on site, though the amount of sheep on site will vary throughout the year as the purpose is to help improve the biodiversity on the site.
- 7.70 It is generally considered that by 2050 the world will have a homo sapien (humans) population of around 9 to 10 billion (currently around 7.5 billion). There is substantial scientific argument that we can currently feed 10 billion people, though not necessarily sustainably. Starvation is, therefore, currently down to greed and bad management of food production/storage/distribution and not down to lack of agricultural land.
- 7.71 According to Natural England Map of East Anglian the site is in an area of Grade 3 Agricultural Land, this is some of the lowest quality agricultural land in the district. The benefits of solar energy is considered to far outweigh the loss of this agricultural land, as in this rural district this is the best place to locate solar farms.
- 7.72 In addition allowing the site 40 years to recover from intensive farming is likely to lead to a net benefit in the long term, this will be conditioned in both how the site is decommissioned and restored.
- 7.73 Other Material Matters

- 7.74 It is not for the Local Planning Authority to determine who the developer should sell the renewable energy to. It would not be reasonable to place a condition to require the developer to sell renewable energy first to Soham, as this is not a material planning consideration, so cannot form part of the assessment of the proposal. In addition it may also not be practical, as it is the National Grid that distributes energy of this scale.
- 7.75 In regards to aviation given that no objections have been currently raised, though a couple of responses are still being awaited (members will be updated prior to planning committee if the other aviation bodies comment), and given the close proximity of an existing solar farm the potential impact to flight craft is minimal.
- 7.76 In regards to Glint/Glare given the distance to nearby residents and the existing/proposed landscaping there is unlikely to be any detrimental impacts from Glint or Glare from the solar farm.
- 7.77 Planning Balance
- 7.78 It is concluded that at worst the proposal will cause moderate harm to the rural character within the first five years and only low levels of harm by year 10.
- 7.79 The proposal subject to the recommended conditions is unlikely to have any noticeable impact upon the residential amenity of the people living within either Soham or Wicken.
- 7.80 While the proposal could cause substantial harm to archaeological finds within the site, this can be overcome by a condition. The proposal is not considered to cause any harm to nearby listed buildings or other heritage assets.
- 7.81 Following the proposal being amended to allow for a wider access off Wicken Road, there is no longer any risk to highway safety; subject to the recommended conditions.
- 7.82 The proposal is considered to lead to a net benefit in biodiversity within the local area, subject to the recommended conditions.
- 7.83 The site is within Flood Zone 1 and subject to a condition in relation to surface water drainage, will not lead to a greater risk of other areas flooding.
- 7.84 The proposal will lead to the loss of intensive farming land for 40 years, though this could be achieved without planning permission as the farmer could decide to graze animals or leave the land fallow. It is also accepted that the loss of this farmland is a small proportion of the district's farmland, even when considering all the approved and proposed solar farms. In addition it is accepted that the farmland on the whole is likely to be improved in 40 years, as it is allowed to recover from intense farming practices. So while there is short term minor harm to food production, this is outweighed by long term positives.

- 7.85 From international, national and local area perspective the need to substantially increase our renewable energy within the next decade is imperative. The creation of this solar farm in an area already benefiting from a National Grid Substation connection point is a significant benefit in preparing the Country for the next 30 years for the 2050 target.
- 7.86 With the need to create energy from sustainable methods, allowing continued economic growth, the transition to electric cars and the reduction in using natural gas to heat properties places a significant requirement on the planning system to allow renewable energy schemes. With this scheme also highly likely improving biodiversity on the site; as well as long term benefits to agricultural land quality. The merits of the scheme far outweigh any short term harm identified.
- 7.87 The proposal is considered to comply with the adopted Local Plan, Renewable Energy Development SPD and National Policy (NPPF).
- 7.88 On this basis it is recommended that the application is approved, subject to the recommended conditions that can be read in full in Appendix 1.

8.0 COSTS

- 8.1 An appeal can be lodged against a refusal of planning permission or a condition imposed upon a planning permission. If a local planning authority is found to have acted unreasonably and this has incurred costs for the applicant (referred to as appellant through the appeal process) then a cost award can be made against the Council.
- 8.2 Unreasonable behaviour can be either procedural ie relating to the way a matter has been dealt with or substantive ie relating to the issues at appeal and whether a local planning authority has been able to provide evidence to justify a refusal reason or a condition.
- 8.3 Members do not have to follow an officer recommendation indeed they can legitimately decide to give a different weight to a material consideration than officers. However, it is often these cases where an appellant submits a claim for costs. The Committee therefore needs to consider and document its reasons for going against an officer recommendation very carefully.
- 8.4 In this case members' attention is particularly drawn to the following points:
- No objections from statutory bodies
 - East Cambridgeshire has declared a climate emergency.
 - Generally accepted that substantial improvements to sustainability is required by 2050

9.0 APPENDICES

- 9.1 Appendix 1 – Recommend Conditions

<u>Background Documents</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Contact Officer(s)</u>
20/00522/FUM	Andrew Phillips Room No. 011	Andrew Phillips Planning Team Leader
19/00760/SCREEN	The Grange Ely	01353 665555 andrew.phillips@ea stcambs.gov.uk

National Planning Policy Framework -

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf

East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015 -

<http://www.eastcambs.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Local%20Plan%20April%202015%20-%20front%20cover%20and%20inside%20front%20cover.pdf>

APPENDIX 1 - 20/00522/FUM Conditions

- 1 Development shall be carried out in accordance with the drawings and documents listed below

Plan Reference	Version No	Date Received
1597-0205-00	02	20th July 2020
Z321_PL_SK_204	P01	20th July 2020
1597-0201-02	10	20th July 2020
1597-0201-28	01	19th May 2020
1597-0201-20	02	21st April 2020
1597-0204-00	02	21st April 2020
1597-0205-01	01	21st April 2020
1597-0207-00	01	21st April 2020
1597-0208-50	01	21st April 2020
1597-0208-70	01	21st April 2020
1597-0208-76	02	21st April 2020

- 1 Reason: To define the scope and extent of this permission.
- 2 The development hereby permitted shall be commenced within 3 years of the date of this permission.
- 2 Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as amended.
- 3 This permission is for a limited period only, expiring 40 years from the date of this decision or 6 months after the solar panels on site are no longer being used for the production of energy. After this date, the site shall be reinstated in accordance with a scheme to be submitted (in accordance with condition 15 of this permission) and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the expiration of this permission.
- 3 Reason: The application has been assessed and determined on this basis.
- 4 The, hereby approved, solar farm shall only export up to 28MW of renewable electricity to the National Grid during peak operation.
- 4 Reason: The application has been assessed and determined on this basis
- 5 The surface water drainage scheme shall be constructed and maintained for the lifetime of the development in full accordance with the Flood Risk Assessment as submitted by Cannon Consulting Engineering (ref: CCE/W321/FRA-05) dated July 2020.
- 5 Reason: To prevent the increased risk of flooding and to improve and protect water quality, in accordance with policies ENV2 an ENV8 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015.
- 6 No development shall commence until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has implemented a programme of archaeological work which has been secured in accordance with a written scheme of investigation (WSI) which has been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority in writing. For land that is included within the

WSI, no development shall take place other than under the provisions of the agreed WSI that shall include:

- a) the statement of significance and research objectives;
 - b) The programme and methodology of site investigation and recording and the nomination of a competent person(s) or organisation to undertake the agreed works;
 - c) The timetable for the field investigation as part of the development programme;
 - d) The programme and timetable for the analysis, publication & dissemination, and deposition of resulting material
- 6 Reason: To ensure that any archaeological remains are suitably recorded in accordance with policy ENV14 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015. The condition is pre-commencement as it would be unreasonable to require applicants to undertake this work prior to consent being granted.
- 7 Construction times and deliveries, with the exception of fit-out and excluding piling, shall be limited to the following hours:

07:30 - 18:00 each day Monday - Friday
07:30 - 13:00 on Saturdays and
None on Sundays, Public or Bank Holidays

Any piling construction work is limited to:

09:00 - 17:00 each day Monday - Friday
None on Saturdays, Sundays, Public or Bank Holiday

- 7 Reason: To safeguard the residential amenity of neighbouring occupiers, in accordance with policy ENV2 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015.
- 8 Prior to any work commencing on the site a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) shall be submitted to and agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority regarding mitigation measures for noise, dust and lighting during the construction phase. These shall include, but not be limited to, other aspects such as access points for deliveries and site vehicles, and proposed phasing/timescales (specifically the timing of the site access widening works from Wicken Road) of development, ensuring no machinery or equipment is placed in close proximity to hedges/ditches etc. The CEMP shall be adhered to at all times during all phases.
- 8 Reason: To safeguard the residential amenity of neighbouring occupiers, suitable highway management, biodiversity and water management during construction in accordance with policies ENV2, ENV7, ENV8 and COM7 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015. The condition is pre-commencement as it would be unreasonable to require applicants to undertake this work prior to consent being granted.
- 9 No external lights shall be erected within the site (either freestanding or building-mounted) other than those expressly authorised within this application.

- 9 Reason: To safeguard the character and appearance of the area and protect biodiversity, in accordance with policy ENV2, ENV6 and ENV7 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015.
- 10 The development shall be implemented in accordance with the recommendations in the 'Summary of Key Issues' detailed in the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal dated 17/07/2020 and comply with the Landscape and Ecological Management Plan, dated 17/07/2020, throughout the lifetime of the development.
- 10 Reason: To protect and enhance species in accordance with policies ENV1, ENV2 and ENV7 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015.
- 11 The additional planting as detailed on drawing P19-0460_10 Rev D shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details prior to the end of the first planting season following completion of the development. If within a period of 15 years from the date of the planting, or replacement planting, any tree or plant (including retained existing trees/hedgerows) is removed, uprooted or destroyed or dies, another tree or plant of the same species and size as that originally planted shall be planted at the same place, unless the Local Planning Authority gives its written consent to any variation.
- 11 Reason: To assimilate the development into its surroundings, in accordance with policies ENV1 and ENV2 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015.
- 12 Prior to the commencement of use of the development, a scheme for the maintenance of the soft landscaping for the lifetime of the development, shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. All works shall be maintained in accordance with the agreed scheme. The scheme shall include the following:
 - i) methods for the proposed maintenance regime;
 - ii) detailed schedule;
 - iii) details of who will be responsible for the continuing implementation
 - iv) details of any phasing arrangements
- 12 Reason: To ensure the longevity of the landscaping scheme and benefit to biodiversity, in accordance with policy ENV1, ENV2 and ENV7 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015.
- 13 The tree protection measures as detailed in the Tree Survey, Arboricultural Impact Assessment dated 23/09/2020 and shown on 7617-D3-AIA and 7617-D4-AIA shall be implemented prior to the commencement of development, site works or clearance in accordance with the approved details, and shall be maintained and retained until the development is completed. Within the root protection areas the existing ground level shall be neither raised nor lowered and no materials, temporary buildings, plant, machinery or surplus soil shall be placed or stored thereon. If any trenches for services are required within the fenced areas they shall be excavated and backfilled by hand and any tree roots encountered with a diameter of 25mm or more shall be left unsevered.
- 13 Reason: To ensure that the trees on site are adequately protected, to safeguard the character and appearance of the area, in accordance with policies ENV1 and ENV2 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015.

- 14 No above ground construction shall commence until full details of hard landscape works have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details prior to the occupation of any part of the development or in accordance with an implementation programme submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to first occupation.
- 14 Reason: To safeguard the character and appearance of the area, in accordance with policy ENV2 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015.
- 15 Prior to the expiry of the planning permission granted, a scheme for the decommissioning of the site shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall include the method of removal of all solar panels, cabins, buildings, structures, enclosures, equipment and all other apparatus both above and below ground level from the site (and the details of their destination in terms of waste/recycling). The scheme shall also include details of how the site is to be restored to its original condition and a timeframe for such works to be completed.
- 15 Reason: To safeguard the residential amenity of neighbouring occupiers, suitable highway management, biodiversity and water management during construction in accordance with policies ENV2, ENV7, ENV8 and COM7 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015.
- 16 The access as shown on drawing Z321_PL_SK_204 Rev P01 shall be installed in accordance with the timeframe approved as part of the CEMP (Condition 8) and constructed to CCC standards and specifications during the entire period of construction works.
- 16 Reason: In the interests of highway safety, in accordance with COM7 and COM8 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015.