

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Planning Committee

5 November 2014

AUTHOR/S: Planning and New Communities Director

Application Number:	S/1902/14/FL
Parish(es):	MELBOURN
Proposal:	Solar Farm and Associated Development
Site address:	Black Peak Farm, Fowlmere Road
Applicant(s):	Lightsource SPV104
Recommendation:	Delegated Approval (as amended)
Key material considerations:	Countryside Landscape Character Heritage Assets Archaeology Ecology Biodiversity Trees and Landscaping Flood Risk Public Footpaths
Committee Site Visit:	4 November 2014
Departure Application:	No
Presenting Officer:	Karen Pell-Coggins
Application brought to Committee because:	Major Application of Local Interest
Date by which decision due:	6 November 2014

Executive Summary

1. This proposal, as amended, is for a 31.79 MW solar farm with associated equipment covering an area of approximately 54.5 hectares of grades 2 and 3a agricultural land located to the north west of the B1368 and A505, east of the village of Melbourn and south west of the village of Fowlmere. The development is of a kind that receives very considerable support in national and local planning policy and that, following the guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework there must be a strong presumption in favour of it.
2. The proposal would have an impact on the countryside but this is not considered to be unacceptable adverse visual impact that would significantly harm the character and appearance of the area as the development would be satisfactorily mitigated by

additional landscaping. The development is also not considered to harm landscape character, damage the setting of heritage assets, destroy important archaeological evidence, result in the loss of important trees and hedges, harm biodiversity interest, increase flood risk, be detrimental to highway safety, adversely affect the amenities of neighbours or seriously harm the amenity of public footpaths.

3. Therefore, on balance, the public benefits of the scheme in respect of renewable energy production are considered to outweigh any identified modest harm arising from the development such as the limited visual harm and temporary loss of agricultural productivity.

Site and Proposal

4. The site is located outside of any village framework and within the countryside. It is situated 600 metres to the north west of the B1368 and A505, 850 metres to the east of the village of Melbourn and 1.8km to the south west of the village of Fowlmere. The site, as amended, measures approximately 54.5 hectares in area and comprises one arable field. It has flat topography. There are some isolated trees along the northern boundary and a hedge that runs across the field. The other boundaries are mainly open. The surrounding land rises gently to the north, south and west.
5. The site has grades 2 (very good) and 3a (good to moderate) agricultural land classification and is situated in East Anglian Chalk Landscape Character Area. It lies within flood zone 1 (low risk). Melbourn and Fowlmere have conservation areas and a number of listed buildings. The Bran Ditch Scheduled Ancient Monuments runs along the northern boundary and there are a number of others within close proximity to the site. The site lies immediately to the south of the Fowlmere Watercress Beds Site of Special Scientific Interest and RSPB Fowlmere Nature Reserve. A public right of way runs north from New Road and stops short of the southern boundary of the site. Fowlmere Airfield is immediately to the north east of the site.
6. This full planning application, received on 7 August 2014 as amended, proposes the installation of 31.79MW of solar photovoltaic panels along with transformer buildings, inverter buildings, a client switch room building, a communications building, a site transformer, a storage building, access tracks, security fence and pole mounted CCTV cameras for a temporary period of 30 years. The photovoltaic panels would be mounted on steel frames that are angled at 20 degrees to face south. There would be arrays of panels running east to west across the site. They would have a maximum height of approximately 2.5 metres and be set 3.8 metres apart.
7. Access tracks would be provided along the southern boundary and within the field to the main access road that would run from Black Peak Farm. Within the site there would be a group of seven inverter and transformer x 2 buildings to serve the panels. The transformer buildings would measure 2.6 metres in length x 1.6 metres in width x 2.5 metres in height. The inverter buildings would measure 6 metres in length x 2.5 metres in width x 2.8 metres in height. The client switch room building, a communications building, a site transformer and a storage building would be situated in the south eastern corner of the site. The client switchroom building would measure 6.1 metres in length x 2.4 metres in width x 2.6 metres in height. The communications building would measure 3.7 metres in length x 3 metres in width x 2.5 metres in height. The site transformer would measure 6.1 metres in length x 2.5 metres in width x 2.6 metres in height. The storage building would measure 3 metres in length x 2.5 metres in width x 2.6 metres in height.

8. A security fence that measures 2 metres in height and consists of timber posts with steel deer fencing would surround the site. A number of CCTV poles at a height of 2.4 metres would be erected around the perimeter of the site. Access to the site would be via the existing access to Black Peak Farm on to the B1368 close to the junction with the A505. The solar farm will connect to a new substation to the west of the A10.

Planning History

9. S/1429/14/E1 – Request for Screening Opinion – EIA Not Required

Planning Policy

10. **South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework (LDF) Development Control Policies DPD, adopted January 2007**

DP/1 Sustainable Development
DP/2 Design of New Development
DP/3 Development Criteria
DP/7 Development Frameworks
NE/2 Renewable Energy
NE/4 Landscape Character Areas
NE/6 Biodiversity
NE/11 Flood Risk
NE/15 Noise Pollution
NE/17 Protecting High Quality Agricultural Land
CH/2 Archaeological Sites
TR/1 Planning for More Sustainable Travel

11. **Submission Local Plan (March 2014)**

S/7 Development Frameworks
HQ/1 Design Principles
NH/2 Protecting and Enhancing Landscape Character
NH/3 Protecting Agricultural Land
NH/4 Biodiversity
NH/14 Heritage Assets
CC/2 Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Generation
CC/6 Construction Methods
CC/9 Managing Flood Risk
SC/11 Noise Pollution
SC/12 Contaminated Land
TI/2 Planning for Sustainable Travel

12. **South Cambridgeshire LDF Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD):**

Trees & Development Sites SPD - Adopted January 2009
Landscape in New Developments SPD - Adopted March 2010
Biodiversity SPD - Adopted July 2009
District Design Guide SPD - Adopted March 2010

Consultation by South Cambridgeshire District Council as Local Planning Authority

13. **Melbourn Parish Council** – Recommends approval.
14. **Fowlmere Parish Council** – Recommends refusal and comments as follows: -

“The Parish Council recommend refusal as the cumulative impact of those already with permission or seeking permission is too much is getting rid of good arable land. There is also concern over the unknown infrastructure for the grid connections.”

15. **Heydon Parish Council** – Recommends approval.
16. **Ecology Officer** – Has no objections if the RSPB are accepting of this development. However, requests additional information in the form of the precautionary measures requested by the RSPB. This could be attached as a condition to any consent providing the applicant is willing to commit to the measures.
17. **Trees and Landscapes Officer** – Comments are awaited.
18. **Landscape Design Officer** – Has no objections and welcomes the landscape measures as proposed but requests additional planting as screening works. Requires conditions in relation to hard and soft landscaping, details of tree and hedgerow protection and management measures and provision of swale ponds.
19. **Environmental Health Officer** – Has no adverse comments.
20. **Contaminated Land Officer** – Comments that a condition in relation to a contamination investigation is not required.
21. **Local Highway Authority** – Objects to the application and comments that speed and volume data in the vicinity of the access to the site and at the junction of the B1368 with the A505 is required to make an informed decision due to the high intensity of vehicles movements proposed as part of the application.
22. **Environment Agency** – Has no objections and comments that the submitted Flood Risk Assessment has adequately assessed the likely increase in greenfield runoff rates and volumes as a result of the proposed increase in impermeable area at the site. The proposed use of swales to intercept and attenuate runoff in the lower areas is an acceptable surface water drainage scheme. Requires conditions to ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the mitigation measures in the Flood Risk Assessment. Also request informatives in relation to surface water drainage, pollution prevention and habitat enhancement.
23. **English Heritage** – Comments that the solar farm would cause serious harm to the significance of the Bran Ditch Scheduled Ancient Monument though the impact upon archaeological remains and its setting and should be refused unless it can be demonstrated that that the public benefits of the proposal would outweigh the harm caused.
24. **Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Environment Team** – Comments that the site is undergoing an archaeological evaluation. This is a very significant archaeological site, multi-period and containing a variety of archaeological contexts. It will require considerable management to mitigate the potential impacts of this scheme, should it gain consent. Discussions are being held with the developer and their agent to come up with a mitigation scheme that both we and English Heritage would find acceptable. Withdrawing the area from further plough damage and placing panels on suitable foundations would enable the long-term conservation of the interest and physical character of the site - especially with regard to the known burial remains, which are sealed by less than 20cm of ploughsoil in places. The application is likely to be supported but further information is required before confirmation.

25. **Cambridgeshire County Council Rights of Way Team** – Comments that Public Byway No. 16 Melbourn runs adjacent to the site and has a recorded width of 30 feet between hedges. Requests that all solar panels and fences are placed a minimum of 2 metres from the edge of the right of way. Notes that site traffic would not use the byway. States that the byway is used by horse riders and the British Horse Society should be consulted. Requests informatives in relation to points of law with regards to the right of way.
26. **Natural England** – Comments that it is satisfied that the development would not damage or destroy the interest features of the Folwmere Watercress Beds Site of Special Scientific Interest or RSPB Fowlmere Nature Reserve. The interest features of these sites are breeding birds and there is a potential risk but the installation of panels with a white border would reduce the likeness to water and potential bird collision.
27. Considers that the proposed development is unlikely to lead to significant and irreversible long term loss of best and most versatile agricultural land, as a resource for future generations. This is because the solar panels would be secured to the ground by steel piles with limited soil disturbance and could be removed in the future with no permanent loss of agricultural land quality likely to occur provided the development is undertaken to high standards. Although some components of the development, such as construction of a sub-station, may permanently affect agricultural land this would be limited to small areas. In the short-term we recognise that it is likely that there will be a loss of potential agricultural production over the whole development area. Comments that the Authority should consider whether the proposals involve any smaller scale or temporary losses of BMV agricultural land with reference to Paragraph 112 of the National Planning Policy Framework.
28. Solar farm developments offer excellent opportunities to create new habitats, and especially “priority habitats” listed under s41 of the NERC Act 2006. In particular, solar farms are ideally suited to creating new grassland habitats, which can be created among the rows of solar panels. If not already provided, the applicant should be encouraged to prepare a habitat creation plan (which should include measures to create suitable soil conditions / arable reversion techniques), suggested species mix for sowing, and details of how new habitats will be managed (e.g. grazing / mowing). Other priority habitats that could be created or enhanced depending on site conditions are hedgerows, ponds, and arable field margins. We suggest that a habitat creation plan also references any existing local sites recognised for their nature conservation interest, such as SSSIs and Local Wildlife Sites.
29. The application may provide opportunities to incorporate features into the design which are beneficial to wildlife, such as the incorporation of roosting opportunities for bats or the installation of bird nest boxes. The Authority should consider securing measures to enhance the biodiversity of the site from the applicant, if it is minded to grant permission for this application in accordance with Paragraph 118 of the National Planning Policy Framework.
30. The application may provide opportunities to enhance the character and local distinctiveness of the surrounding natural and built environment; use natural resources more sustainably; and bring benefits for the local community, for example through green space provision and access to and contact with nature. Landscape characterisation and townscape assessments, and associated sensitivity and capacity assessments provide tools for planners and developers to consider new development and ensure that it makes a positive contribution in terms of design, form

and location, to the character and functions of the landscape and avoids any unacceptable impacts.

31. **Royal Society for the Protection of Birds** – Comments that the site holds one of the highest densities of breeding turtle doves in the county. Agrees with the mitigation measures proposed and concludes that there would not be significant adverse impacts upon biodiversity interests. Supportive of Natural England's standard recommendations for additional precautionary measures given the close proximity to the SSSI. Welcomes the biodiversity gains but recommends further enhancements for birds known in the local area by a condition to any planning consent.

Representations by the Applicants Agent

32. First it is important to note that we concur with EH that the effect identified in our Settings Assessment is a serious matter. The NPPF makes it clear that any degree of harm to a designated heritage asset, no matter how minimal, requires “clear and convincing justification”.
33. EH have also stated that they are not of the view that an enhanced understanding of the buried remains within the application site, gained through archaeological works currently on going, would outweigh the visual impact of the proposed development. Again, we wish to make clear that we share this view, however it is also true that the proposed development would have the effect of halting the current ploughing of the application site, which is gradually destroying remains which are likely to be associated with the scheduled monument. This ploughing is a negative aspect of the setting of the monument and its cessation during the operation of the proposed development, combined with the additional archaeological information, would provide a positive benefit to the significance of the monument. However we made it clear in our assessment that this enhancement did not completely outweigh the adverse effects identified (see Impact Assessment on pages 27 and 28).
34. Finally, EH have expressed concern that the proposed development would detract from the appreciation of the monument from the wider area, in particular from the right of way to the west and Goffer’s Knoll. We would advise that it is currently very difficult to visually experience the monument from these positions given that the ditch has been filled in and any earthworks levelled for some time. Furthermore the line of the ditch is not marked by any substantive hedgerows or other vegetation which would aid in its identification in the wider landscape. Therefore while true in a technical sense, we would advise that this aspect of the effect of the scheme is not a serious consideration in this instance.

Representations by Local Members

35. Two Local Members that represent Melbourn support the application.

Representations by members of the public

36. One letter of objection has been received from a resident of Melbourn. The following concerns are raised: -
- i) Loss of agricultural land;
 - ii) The technology is not fully formed in terms of its storage for times where the solar farm may not operate as efficiently i.e. night;
 - iii) 25 years is too long as new technologies will be developed;
 - iv) Alternatives such as buildings on supermarket car parks with solar roofs;
 - v) Solar glare as adjacent to airfield;

- vi) Displacement of deer that use land;
 - vii) Questions benefits to village.
37. 9 Letters have been received from residents of the local area that support the application for the following reasons: -
- i) Reduction in carbon emissions and reliance on foreign fossil fuel supplies;
 - ii) Power to a large number of homes and save carbon emissions;
 - iii) Agricultural use would be continued with sheep grazing;
 - iv) Measures for enhancing wildlife habitats;
 - v) Limited visual impact;
 - vi) Temporary use;
 - vii) Consistent with paragraph 97 of the NPPF.

Material Planning Considerations

38. The key issues to consider in the determination of this application are whether the principle of development is acceptable in the countryside and impact of the development upon the character and appearance of the area, the setting of heritage assets, biodiversity, ecology, archaeology, flood risk, highway safety, neighbour amenity and public footpaths.

Principle of Development in the Countryside

39. The proposal represents a major development for the generation of renewable energy and as such receives considerable support from national and local planning policy.
40. Nationally the NPPF has as one of its 12 core principles the requirement to support renewable resources. Reference is made throughout the NPPF to the support of sustainable development and renewable energy whilst paragraph 98 clarifies that applications for energy development ought not to be required to demonstrate the need for renewable energy.

The Government's commitment to electricity generation by renewable sources is set out in the Renewable Energy Strategy, and in particular the target that 15% of national electricity production should be derived from renewable sources by 2020. This target has been maintained under the Coalition Government.

41. Locally the development plan comprises the adopted Core Strategy and Development Control Policies DPD. The Core Strategy has as two of its four objectives the effective protection and enhancement of the environment, and the prudent use of natural resources. Policy DP/7 of the Development Control Policies DPD states that outside village frameworks, only development for agriculture, horticulture, forestry, outdoor recreation and other uses that need to be located in the countryside will be permitted. Policy NE/2 relates to renewable energy and advises the district council will support proposals to generate energy from renewable sources subject to compliance with general sustainable development principles and additionally be able to connect efficiently to existing infrastructure and for provision to be made for the removal of facilities from site should the facility cease to be operational.
42. The site is located within the countryside. The installation of a solar farm is considered to represent appropriate development within the countryside providing that there are no suitable brownfield sites available in the area of the scale required and the proposal would not result in the permanent loss of high quality agricultural land.

Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land

43. The site covers 54.5 hectares of arable land. An Agricultural Land Classification Report has been submitted following soil sampling that states the site has an agricultural land classification of grades 2 (very good) and 3a (good to moderate).
44. Whilst the use of brownfield or previously developed land is considered more appropriate and the preference for the development of solar farms rather than greenfield land as per the application site, it is difficult to find such land available that could accommodate the scale of the development and have low land values to enable the scheme to be commercially viable. The whole of the district comprises grade 2 and 3 agricultural land so it would be difficult to contribute to renewable energy in the area without the use of some of this land. Brownfield and previously developed land sites have been ruled out for reasons such as allocations for new development, existing uses, limited site area, contamination, higher land costs and distance from the grid connection.
45. The majority of the site has grade 3a (good to moderate) agricultural land classification that is the lowest grade agricultural land available in the area with a very small proportion of grade 2 (very good) agricultural land. Other sites would have a greater rural character, higher visibility or constraints such as a high flood risk zone, Registered Parks and Gardens or Green Belt. Without the use of greenfield land, the district would not be able to contribute towards the renewable energy targets set out by the government.
46. Furthermore, the proposal is not considered to result in the irreversible loss of this land given that it could be returned to its original agricultural use when there is no further need for the development. The land would be laid to grass on the site and although it is noted that it would not be cropped, there will be the opportunity to use the land for sheep grazing and/or biodiversity gain to retain the agricultural use throughout the life of the development.

Character and Appearance of the Area

47. The site currently consists of open arable land. Whilst it is noted that the introduction of a significant scale arrays of solar panels and buildings would substantially change the character and appearance of the landscape from being open and rural in character to being industrialised in character, it is unlikely to have adverse visual impact from the main public viewpoints surrounding the site. This is as a result of the the low height of the development and new planting that is proposed along the boundaries to screen the development and mitigate its impact upon the landscape from long distance views from Therfield Heath and close views from the public right of way to the south of the site.
48. The nearest approved solar farms to the site where the cumulative impact of the development needs to be taken into consideration are at Muncneys Farm, Melbourn, land to the west of the A10, Melbourn and Bury Lane Fruit Farm, Meldreth. It is clear from the Landscape Officer's comments that the development would be viewed cumulatively with the adjacent solar farms in the area from very long distance public viewpoints from Therfield Heath. Although these impacts cannot be completely mitigated, the development is considered acceptable providing there is a robust landscaping scheme. This would be a condition of any consent.

49. The site is located within the East Anglian Chalk Landscape Character Area. The distinctive features of this area are the gently undulating arable landscape with large fields bounded by hedges and occasional small groups of woodland. Although the development is not necessarily compatible with the existing landscape qualities of the area as the open arable landscape would be lost, the development would retain some of the the characteristic features such as the field pattern and additional planting in the form of boundary hedges that would be designed to ensure it is in keeping with the visual qualities of the area. The development is unlikely to have an unacceptable impact upon landscape character.

Heritage Assets

50. The site is not located in close proximity to any listed buildings or conservation areas that would be adversely affected by the development. There are a number of Scheduled Ancient Monuments in close proximity to the site and significant harm would result to the significance of the Bran Ditch in terms of archaeological remains and its setting. The impact upon archaeological remains should be addressed through mitigation measures to ensure the remains are protected. The impact upon the setting has been addressed by the agent and further comments from English Heritage have been sought. However, if the harm remains significant, the public benefits of the proposal in terms of the generation of renewable energy for over 9000 homes would be likely to outweigh the harm to the setting of the Scheduled Ancient Monument for a temporary period of time.
51. The developers are working with the Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Team to determine mitigation measures to ensure that the development would not result in the loss of any important archaeological remains. Trenching is currently being carried out on site and further information is to be submitted shortly for approval.

Biodiversity

52. The site is located immediately adjacent the Fowlmere Watercress Beds Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The development is not considered to have an adverse impact upon the features of this designation. However, further mitigation measures are considered necessary to ensure that the the breeding of birds in the area that is the interest feature of the site is protected and enhanced.
- 53.. The habitats on the site comprise a mixture of arable land, grassland, a dry ditch, trees and hedges. The ditch was not suitable and did not show any evidence of use by water voles, otters or Great Crested Newts. The hedges and trees on the site are likely to support breeding birds and turtle doves breed locally at the RSPB Fowlmere Nature Reserve. No trees were suitable for barn owls but a hay stack could provide a habitat although no evidence was found. The trees offer limited opportunities for roosting bats due to being covered with ivy although the hedges would provide foraging for bats. The hedges and grassland field margins provide a suitable habitat for reptiles but no evidence was recorded. A rare arable weed was found close to the site.
54. The development would include mitigation measures such as a buffer zone next to the Site of Special Scientific Interest and Nature Reserve for turtle doves, margins for rare arable weeds, native tree and hedgerow planting, existing tree and hedgerow protection, wildflower seeding and grassland. Any clearance of vegetation would also take place outside the bird nesting season. A condition would be attached to any consent to secure further recommendations from the RSPB and Ecology Officer.

Landscaping/Trees

55. The development would be unlikely to result in the loss of any important trees or hedges that contribute to the visual amenity of the area providing a condition is attached to any consent for protection purposes. A significant landscaping scheme would also be attached as a condition of any consent in order to mitigate the impact of the development upon its surroundings.

Flood Risk

56. The site is located within Flood Zone 1 (high risk). The surface water drainage scheme includes swales to intercept any increased runoff. The development is not considered to increase the risk of flooding to the site and surrounding area.

Highway Safety

57. Access to the site during and after construction would be via the existing access to Black Peak Farm off the B1368 close to the junction with the A505. This is a road with a speed limit of 60 miles per hour. The A505 is a busy road with a speed limit of 50 miles per hour.
58. The traffic generation during the construction period (12 weeks) of the development is estimated at 485 HGV movements. In addition, there would be movements by minibuses and cars/vans for staff. When construction is complete, the traffic generation to maintain the development is estimated at 10 to 20 visits by small van per year. Whilst it is acknowledged that there would be a significant number of traffic movements during the construction period, this would be in the short term and the development is unlikely to result in a level of traffic generation to and from the site that would be detrimental to highway safety given the capacity of the road, position of the access and visibility, the route taken to the site and the management of the traffic to the site. However, confirmation of the acceptability of the access is awaited from the Local Highways Authority.
59. There is space on site for vehicles to park off the public highway during the construction period.

Residential Amenity

60. The site is located in close proximity to a residential property at Black Peak Farmhouse. The development is not considered to result in a loss of amenity to this property through noise and disturbance as the low noise levels from the development would not be audible outside the site area and the access would be situated to the side of the property and screened by hedges.

Other Matters

61. A new substation subject of planning application S/1928/14/FL would ensure that there is an efficient connection to the grid. Planning application S/2358/14/FL for the cable route from the solar farm to the substation is also under consideration.
62. The solar panels are designed to absorb rather than reflect light. Whilst the Glint and Glare Study submitted with the application has acknowledged that this may have an impact upon aircraft, drivers and residential properties, it is not considered harmful as it would be similar to other reflective surfaces such as water or glass already experienced by these receptors.

63. The development could be removed if more efficient technologies are introduced in the future. The electricity generated in the day would be likely to be stored for use at night.
64. The Council has to consider the application put forward for planning permission and cannot consider any other methods of renewable energy generation suggested such as buildings with solar roofs on supermarket car parks.
65. The applicants have offered to provide solar panels to a community building in the village as a community benefit. It should be noted, however, that this does not form part of the Council's consideration of the application as its decision has to be based solely upon the planning merits of the case.
66. The Ecology Officer has not raised any concerns in relation to deer using the land. Any deer displaced from the solar farm site could use adjacent land that would be still be located a significant distance from main roads.

Conclusion

67. The development is of a kind that receives very considerable support in national and local planning policy and that, following the guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework there must be a strong presumption in favour of it.
68. The proposal would have an impact on the countryside but this is not considered to be unacceptable adverse visual impact that would harm the character and appearance of the area as the development would be satisfactorily mitigated by additional landscaping. The development is also not considered to harm landscape character, significantly damage the setting of heritage assets, destroy important archaeological evidence, result in the loss of important trees and hedges, harm biodiversity interests, increase flood risk, be detrimental to highway safety or adversely affect the amenities of neighbours.
69. Therefore, on balance, the benefits of the scheme in respect of renewable energy production are considered to outweigh any harm from the visual impact and temporary loss of agricultural productivity.

Recommendation

70. It is recommended that the Planning Committee grants officers delegated powers to approve the application (as amended) subject to the comments of the Local Highways Authority, Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Environment Team and English Heritage and the following conditions and informatives: -

Conditions

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 3 years from the date of this permission.
(Reason - To ensure that consideration of any future application for development in the area will not be prejudiced by permissions for development, which have not been acted upon.)
2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Drawing numbers to be confirmed.

(Reason - To facilitate any future application to the Local Planning Authority under Section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.)

3. The development, hereby permitted, shall be removed and the land restored to its former condition or to a condition to be agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority on or before 30 years of the date of the first operational use of the development in accordance with a scheme of work submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
(Reason - Approval of the proposal on a permanent basis would be contrary to Policy NE/2 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007 and the land should be reinstated to facilitate future beneficial use.)
4. All development must be removed from site within 6 months of the solar farm ceasing to be operational.
(Reason - The application site lies in the open countryside and it is important that once the development has ceased the site is brought back into a full agricultural use in accordance with the provisions of the NPPF and policy NE/2 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)
5. No development shall take place until full details of both hard and soft landscape works have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. These details shall include indications of all existing trees and hedgerows on the land and details of any to be retained, together with measures for their protection in the course of development. The details shall also include specification of all proposed trees, hedges and shrub planting, which shall include details of species, density and size of stock.
(Reason - To ensure the development is satisfactorily assimilated into the area and enhances biodiversity in accordance with Policies DP/2 and NE/6 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)
6. All hard and soft landscape works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details. The works shall be carried out prior to the occupation of any part of the development or in accordance with a programme agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. If within a period of five years from the date of the planting, or replacement planting, any tree or plant 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.
(Reason - To ensure the development is satisfactorily assimilated into the area and enhances biodiversity in accordance with Policies DP/2 and NE/6 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)
7. In this condition "retained tree" means an existing tree which is to be retained in accordance with the approved plans and particulars; and paragraphs (a) and (b) below shall have effect until the expiration of 5 years from [the date of the first occupation of the dwellings hereby approved].
 - (a) No retained tree shall be cut down, uprooted or destroyed, nor shall any retained tree be topped or lopped other than in accordance with the approved plans and particulars, without the written approval of the Local Planning Authority. Any topping or lopping approved shall be carried out in accordance with the relevant British Standard.

- (b) If any retained tree is removed, uprooted or destroyed or dies, another tree shall be planted at the same place and that tree shall be of such size and species, and shall be planted at such time, as may be specified in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
- (c) The erection of fencing for the protection of any retained tree shall be undertaken in accordance with the approved plans and particulars before any equipment, machinery or materials are brought on to the site for the purposes of the development, and shall be maintained until all equipment, machinery and surplus materials have been removed from the site. Nothing shall be stored or placed in any area fenced in accordance with this condition and the ground levels within those areas shall not be altered, nor shall any excavation be made, without the written consent of the Local Planning Authority.
(Reason - To protect trees which are to be retained in order to enhance the development, biodiversity and the visual amenities of the area in accordance with Policies DP/1 and NE/6 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)
8. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the Traffic Management Plan reference (to be confirmed).
(Reason - In the interests of highway safety in accordance with Policy DP/3 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)
9. No development shall commence until a revised Biodiversity Management Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The developments shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.
(Reason - To achieve biodiversity enhancement on the site in accordance with adopted Policies DP/1, DP/3 and NE/6 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)
10. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the Flood Risk Assessment reference (to be confirmed).
(Reason - To prevent the increased risk of flooding in accordance with Policies DP/1 and NE/11 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)
11. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation Archaeological Evaluation reference (to be confirmed).
(Reason - To secure the provision of archaeological excavation and the subsequent recording of the remains in accordance with Policy CH/2 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)
12. No external lighting shall be provided or installed within the site other than in accordance with a scheme which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
(Reason -To minimise the effects of light pollution on the surrounding area in accordance with Policy NE/14 of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007.)

Background Papers: the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

- South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Development Control Policies DPD 2007
- South Cambridgeshire Local Plan Submission March 2014
- South Cambridgeshire Supplementary Planning Documents
- National Planning Policy Framework 2012
- Planning File References S/1902/14/FL, S/1928/14/FL, S/2358/14/FL, S/1898/14/FL, S/1427/14/FL and S/2616/13/FL

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