

**Reference:** 14/00660/FUL  
**Applicant:** Mr Stuart Bradshaw  
**Location:** Hall Farm Main Street Newbold Verdon  
**Proposal:** Erection of a 10 MW solar farm and associated infrastructure

**RECOMMENDATION:- Grant subject to conditions.**

**Introduction:-**

This application is to be considered at Planning Committee in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation, as the Chief Planning & Development considers it necessary to be determined by the Planning Committee.

**Application Proposal**

This application seeks full planning permission for the erection of a 10 MW photovoltaic solar farm. Electricity generated from the solar farm would be fed into the National Grid.

In addition to the photovoltaic panels, the proposed development includes associated infrastructure including inverter housings, grid connection housing, access tracks, security fencing and other minor works. Vehicular access to the site will be via the existing field access from Bosworth Lane.

The solar farm would be connected by underground cables to the 11 KV underground power line where it would be connected to the local distribution network.

The solar panels would be set at 15 degrees and would be mounted on a metal framework to a height of 2 metres above ground level. The proposed switchgear, inverter and transformer enclosures are proposed to a height of 2.6 metres. There would also be a small substation building and control room at a height of 3.5 metres. Meadow pasture would be established under and around the solar array and this would be managed by sheep grazing as a dual agricultural use for the land. A fence is proposed to surround the site. This would resemble deer fencing with wooden posts and mesh at a height of 1.8 metres.

Planning permission is sought for a 25 year period. After this period of time the site would be dismantled and returned back to its former agricultural use.

The initial proposal was for a 20.1 ha site area and 14.1 MW of generating capacity. Following discussions the proposal was subsequently reduced to 16.89 ha or 10 MW of generating capacity to reduce the visual impact of the proposal and to avoid development on grade 2 agricultural land.

**The Site and Surrounding Area**

The solar farm would occupy two adjacent arable fields in countryside to the south-west of Newbold Verdon. The site is 16.89 ha in size. The largest field would be to the south and the small field to the northwest. The largest field runs alongside the southern edge of a small wood known as Botany Bay Spinney.

Adjacent to the south of this field is an area of restored land from earlier workings of the Tilcon Quarry at Naneby Hall Farm. This large field is also restored land after quarrying.

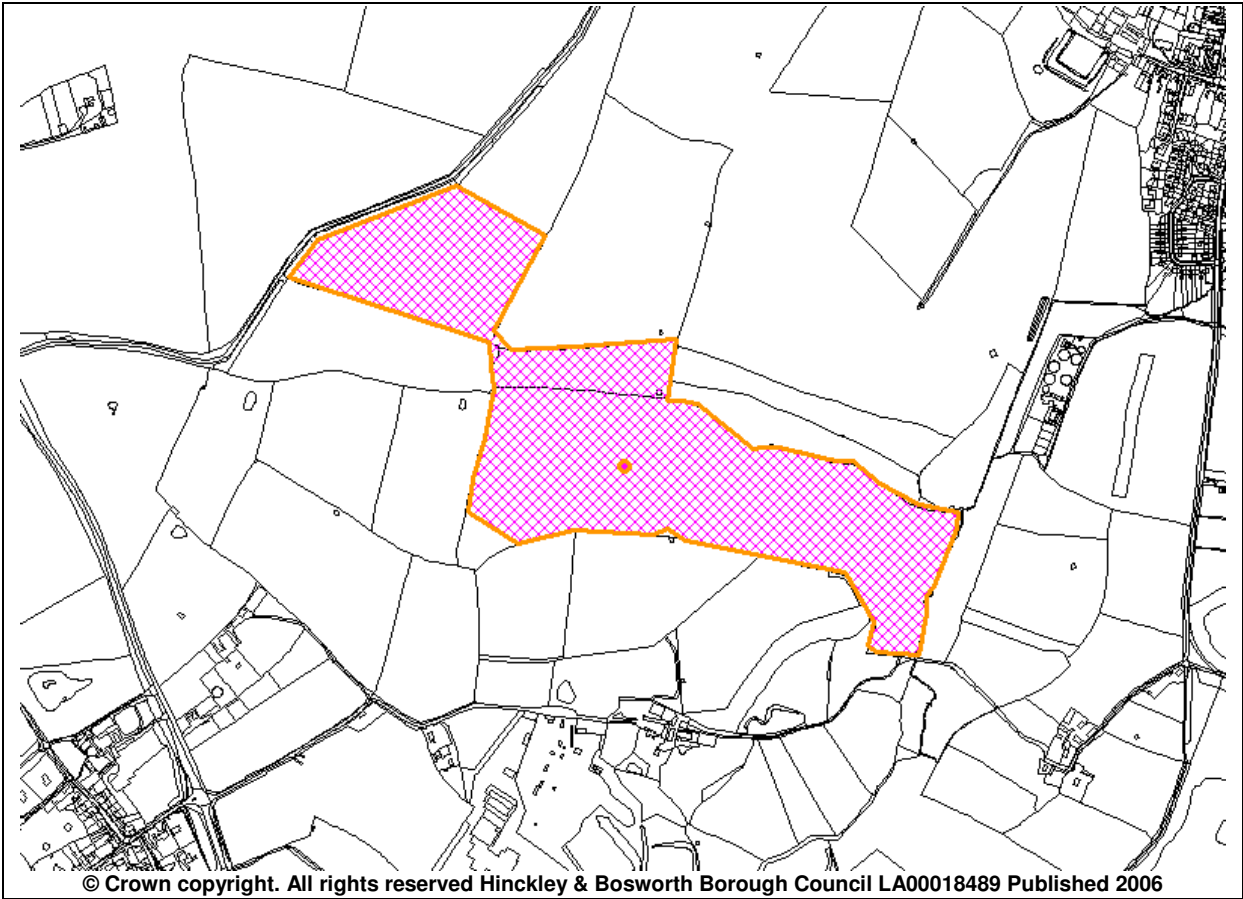
To the east there is a mix of pasture and arable fields and then Brascote Lane heading into the south of Newbold Verdon. The small field borders the western end of the north side of the larger field. This is to the west of Botany Bay Spinney and there are arable fields to the north and west.

Bosworth Lane runs north to south to the west and lies within a tree belt. The small field is low lying in a shallow valley, with the ground rising gently to the north and south. This field is largely enclosed by dense clipped hedges. Botany Bay Spinney continues the shallow valley bottom with the large field occupying the gently rising land to the south of this. The eastern end of this field drops into a similar but perpendicular shallow valley, before the land rises again towards Brascote Lane. The large field is enclosed by hedging to the west then hedging with trees and Botany Bay Spinney to the north. Its eastern edge follows a streamside with some hedging and trees, but with some open sections. The edge of the proposed solar installation stops some way short of this end of the field.

The southern boundary of the site is relatively open, but the ground rises again onto the old quarry and has maturing woodland plantings as well as some scattered mature trees. A pylon run crosses north to south in the centre of the large field just to the west side of Botany Bay Spinney. Another crosses the land just to the west of both fields.

**Relevant Planning History:-**

14/00454/SCOPE	EIA Screening Opinion relating to the erection of a PV Solar Farm 10 MWp and associated infrastructure.	EIA Not Required	19.05.14
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## **Consultations:-**

No objections have been received from:-

Environment Agency  
Environmental Health (Land Drainage)  
Historic England  
Leicestershire County Council (Archaeology)  
Leicestershire County Council (Ecology)  
Leicestershire County Council (Highways)  
Leicestershire County Council (Rights of Way)

Neighbours notified, site notices were displayed and a press notice published.

One letter of support has been received for the proposal.

## **Policy:-**

### National Policy Guidance

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2012  
The National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) 2014

### Local Plan 2006-2026: Core Strategy 2009

Spatial Objective 12: Climate Change and Resource Efficiency

### Hinckley & Bosworth Local Plan 2001

Policy NE5: Development in the Countryside  
Policy BE1: Design and Siting of Development  
Policy BE13: Initial Assessment of Site of Archaeological Interest and Potential  
Policy BE14: Archaeology Field Evaluation of Sites  
Policy BE15: Preservation of Archaeological Remains in Situ  
Policy NE12: Landscaping Schemes  
Policy NE14: Protection of Surface Waters and Ground Water Quality  
Policy T5: Highway Safety

### Other Relevant Policy Guidance

Hinckley & Bosworth Landscape Character Assessment (2006)  
Hinckley & Bosworth Renewable Energy Capacity Study (2014)

## **Appraisal:-**

The main considerations in determination of this application are:-

- The principle of development
- The landscape and visual impact
- Heritage assets, the historical landscape and archaeology
- Ecology
- The impact upon nearby residential amenity
- Highway safety and construction traffic management
- Flood risk
- Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations

## Principle of Development

One of the core planning principles of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) as set out in Paragraph 17 is to support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate by encouraging the use of renewable resources and the development of renewable energy.

This is set out further in Paragraph 93 of the NPPF which states that planning has a key role in supporting the delivery of renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure which is central to the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. Paragraph 98 states that when determining planning applications, local planning authorities should:-

- a) Not require applicants for energy development to demonstrate the overall need for renewable or low carbon energy and also 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.

Spatial Objective 12 of the Core Strategy on climate change and resource efficiency seeks to minimise the impacts of climate change by promoting the prudent use of resources through increasing the use of renewable energy technologies.

The National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) sets out at Paragraph 13 of the Renewable and Low Carbon Energy guidance that, the deployment of large-scale solar farms can have a negative impact on the rural environment, particularly in undulating landscapes. However, the visual impact of a well-planned and well-screened solar farm can be properly addressed within the landscape if planned sensitively.

Particular factors a local planning authority will need to consider include:-

- a) encouraging the effective use of land by focussing large scale solar farms on previously developed and non agricultural land, provided that it is not of high environmental value;
- b) where a proposal involves greenfield land, whether (i) the proposed use of any agricultural land has been shown to be necessary and poorer quality land has been used in preference to higher quality land; and (ii) the proposal allows for continued agricultural use where applicable and/or encourages biodiversity improvements around arrays;
- c) that solar farms are normally temporary structures and planning conditions can be used to ensure that the installations are removed when no longer in use and the land is restored to its previous use;
- d) the proposal's visual impact, the effect on landscape of glint and glare and on neighbouring uses and aircraft safety;
- e) the extent to which there may be additional impacts if solar arrays follow the daily movement of the sun;
- f) the need for, and impact of, security measures such as lights and fencing;
- g) great care should be taken to ensure heritage assets are conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, including the impact of proposals on views important to their setting. As the significance of a heritage asset derives not only from its physical presence, but also from its setting, careful consideration should be given to the impact of large scale solar farms on such assets. Depending on their scale, design and prominence, a large scale solar farm within the setting of a heritage asset may cause substantial harm to the significance of the asset;
- h) the potential to mitigate landscape and visual impacts through, for example, screening with native hedges;
- i) the energy generating potential, which can vary for a number of reasons including, latitude and aspect;

- j) the approach to assessing cumulative landscape and visual impact of large scale solar farms is likely to be the same as assessing the impact of wind turbines. However, in the case of ground-mounted solar panels it should be noted that with effective screening and appropriate land topography the area of a zone of visual influence could be zero;
- k) the site is greenfield agricultural land. Therefore consideration should be given to the quality of the agricultural land. The applicant has undertaken an assessment and has submitted a Soil and Agricultural Land Quality Assessment. This identifies that the majority of the land falls under Grade 3b. This is identified as moderate quality agricultural land which is defined as land capable of producing moderate yields of a narrow range of crops, principally cereals and grass or lower yields of a wider range of crops or high yields of grass which can be grazed or harvested over most of the year. The applicant proposes to seed the site with a grass and wildflower mix to develop the arable field into an area that benefits local wildlife. The field would also be grazed by sheep which will retain a "double crop" agricultural use whilst keeping the grass below the panel height and ensuring that scrub does not establish. Given the temporary nature of the proposal, for a period of 25 years, it is considered that the land could be used for agricultural after the solar farm has been removed.

Given the agricultural quality of the land which is considered to be of moderate quality and not of best quality (Grades 1 - 2), the development is considered to be acceptable in principle in relation to the NPPF and NPPG and the aims and objectives of the Local Plan.

#### Landscape and Visual Impact

Paragraph 17 of the NPPF states that planning should recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving rural communities within it, and Paragraph 109 states that the planning system should protect and enhance valued landscapes.

Policy BE1 (criterion a) of the Local Plan requires development to complement or enhance the character of the surrounding area with regard to scale, layout, mass and design. Policy NE5 also requires development within the countryside to not have an adverse affect on the appearance or character of the landscape is in keeping with its surroundings and would be screened by landscaping.

Paragraph 97 of the NPPF supports this, stating that cumulative landscape and visual impacts of renewable energy sources should be addressed.

The National Planning Practice Guidance states that:-

"The deployment of large-scale solar farms can have a negative impact on the rural environment, particularly in undulating landscapes. However, the visual impact of a well-planned and well-screened solar farm can be properly addressed within the landscape if planned sensitively. Particular factors a local planning authority will need to consider include:

- encouraging the effective use of land by focusing large scale solar farms on previously developed and non agricultural land, provided that it is not of high environmental value;
- where a proposal involves greenfield land, whether (i) the proposed use of any agricultural land has been shown to be necessary and poorer quality land has been used in preference to higher quality land; and (ii) the proposal allows for continued agricultural use where applicable and/or encourages biodiversity improvements around arrays."

Concern was initially raised by officers as to the scale and extent of the site and due to part of the proposal being on grade 2 agricultural land. The proposal was subsequently reduced

and the parcel of grade 2 land excluded from the proposal. The applicant has demonstrated in the submitted Soil and Agricultural Land Quality Assessment that the remaining part of the land is of poor quality in terms of its environmental and agricultural value (grade 3a and 3b).

In addition to this the applicant proposes to seed the site with a grass and wildflower mix to develop the arable field into an area that benefits local wildlife. The field would also be grazed by sheep which will retain a "double crop" agricultural use whilst keeping the grass below the panel height.

The PV panels are to be sited in uniform, parallel rows. The panels themselves are relatively low level in nature, with one side of the panels being located higher than the other. The maximum height of the panels is proposed to be 2 metres. The substations/inverter housings would largely be screened by the panels themselves by being located amongst the solar arrays.

The local landscape setting is characterised as a rural patchwork of arable and pasture fields divided by managed hedges and a scattering of trees over a gently rolling landform. The Hinckley and Bosworth Landscape Character Assessment describes this area as within the Desford Vales (Character Area D).

There are no particularly notable landscape or heritage designations nearby or otherwise likely to be affected by the proposals.

Views to the site of the proposed solar farm would be largely restricted to locations within the close setting of the site. There are few potential visual receptors within this area, the most notable being public footpath routes, one of which crosses through the site. Additional views would be possible from Brascote Lane to the east and Bosworth Lane to the west. There may also be views from Manor Farm and Windmill Inn on Brascote Lane to the east.

The proposed solar farm development would have very limited effect on the fabric of the wider landscape, with no loss of hedges or trees. The principle landscape effects to consider are therefore those relating to the visual influence of the solar farm installation in relation to the character of the surrounding countryside.

In the immediate setting the solar farm would become one of the defining characteristics of the location alongside the prevailing rural features of the landscape. The presence of the solar farm would therefore have a significant impact upon the existing landscape fabric when experiencing it at close range. However, this influence of the solar farm would be highly localised and the landscape character of the wider area would not be significantly affected due to the limited height of the solar arrays and landscape screening. The solar farm can therefore be accommodated without significant degradation to the character or the scenic qualities of the surrounding countryside.

In analysis of the visual effect of the solar farm, the visual impact on views from Manor Farm to the south east and Windmill Inn to the east are not considered to be significantly detrimental. Public rights of way users would have the most direct appreciation of the solar farm installation and would be most affected by it. However, views would only be available from localised parts of the local path network and in most cases these views would be filtered by existing landscape screening. One section of footpath would cross through one of the solar farm fields and here the presence of the solar farm would be the dominant experience of walkers. However, this is a short section of path and so long as the corridor through the solar farm is a suitable width and there would be appropriate boundary treatments containing the route of the path, the experience should not be overpowering and the normal enjoyment of the route as a whole should not be compromised.

The Planning Practice Guidance also states that local planning authorities should consider the potential to mitigate landscape and visual impacts through screening with native hedges.

The solar farm scheme includes proposals for supplementary landscape planting works, such as hedge planting to the corridor of the footpath route crossing through part the solar farm and gap fill or new hedge planting in other outward facing boundaries. These works would further contain the proposed development and would be a sensitive long term enhancement to the landscape structure of the area. Conditions have been imposed to ensure supplementary landscape screening is secured.

### Cumulative Impact

In order to consider the potential for cumulative effects of more than one solar farm in the local area other existing consented solar farm developments has been carried out. The nearest solar farm is one approximately 6.5km to the south west at Stoke Golding. Given the distance from this solar farm to the site and intervening landscape features it is not considered that there would be any conceivable landscape or visual cumulative effects.

A solar farm has been consented and is currently being constructed north of Desford Lane, Desford. This solar farm is approximately 6.2 km to the north east of the site and due to the distance from this solar farm to the site and intervening landscape features it is not considered that there would be any conceivable landscape or visual cumulative effects.

A solar farm has recently been consented at Lindridge Farm, Desford approximately 3 km to the north east of the site. Due to the distance from this solar farm to the site and Newbold Verdon which intervenes across the landscape it is not considered that there would be any conceivable landscape or visual cumulative effects.

### Security and Fencing

The Planning Practice Guidance requires authorities to consider the need for, and the impact of, security measures such as lights and fencing. There is no permanent lighting proposed; manually operated portable lights may be required in cases of emergency maintenance visits during the hours of darkness. It is a requirement of the Distribution Network Operator that a security light is fitted to the substation building, this would be operated by a motion sensor and would not be illuminated on a permanent basis.

The applicant originally proposed pole mounted CCTV cameras spaced at regular intervals to the boundaries of the site. This was not considered acceptable due to the urbanising effect and height of the cameras. A condition has been imposed requiring alternative details to be agreed, a favourable solution would be low level infrared CCTV cameras mounted on the transformer/inverter housings.

The fencing proposed is akin to deer fencing which is considered to be acceptable in the countryside setting and does not create any additional visual impact upon the landscape.

### Heritage Assets and the Historical Landscape

Paragraph 19 of the renewable and low carbon energy guidance as set out in the NPPG states that the significance of a heritage asset derives not only from its physical presence but also from its setting and careful consideration should be given to the impact of solar farms on such assets. This is reinforced by Paragraph 131 of the NPPF which states that in determining planning applications local planning authorities should take account of the positive contribution the conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable

communities. The NPPG also sets out guidance in respect of solar farms and that they can cause harm to the setting of heritage assets.

Leicestershire County Council (Archaeology) raised concerns about the visual impact on the Scheduled Monument, Hall and Church at Newbold Verdon. The applicant has conducted a geophysical survey and incorporated this into an assessment of direct and indirect impacts.

Historic England has raised no objection but has commented on the application and note that the submitted assessment provides a fair assessment of impact on the assets identified for further attention. They also agree with the report that the proposal will impact on the appreciation and character of the landscape setting of Newbold Verdon Hall and on the Bull in the Oak, a grade II listed farmhouse where the agricultural setting is part of the heritage significance.

Whilst these comments have been carefully considered, given the degree of separation and intervening landscaping in the form of Botany Bay Spinney this impact would be negligible which is supported by the Conservation Officer.

### Archaeology

The application has been accompanied by an Archaeological Survey in conformity with Saved Policy BE14 of the Local Plan. Paragraph 128 of the NPPF states that where a site on which development is proposed includes or has the potential to include heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation. Saved Policy BE16 states that the Local Planning Authority will seek to enter into a legal agreement or impose conditions requiring that satisfactory archaeological investigation and recording be carried out. The Geophysical Report submitted by the applicant concludes that the identified anomalies all relate to recent ploughing, ridge-and-furrow and mapped or projected field boundaries and states that any excavation required to further investigate the significance of the anomalies could be carried out as a condition, prior to construction.

Leicestershire County Council (Archaeology) comment that it is unlikely that archaeological remains of significance are likely be present and recommend that should planning permission be granted that conditions should be attached to the permission to secure further investigative works to be carried out prior to the commencement of development.

Therefore subject to the conditions imposed requiring further on-site investigation and recording it is unlikely that the proposal would cause a detrimental impact to possible archaeological remains and the proposal is considered to be in accordance with Policies BE14 and BE16 and Paragraph 128 of the NPPF.

### Ecology

Paragraph 109 of the NPPF recognises the wider benefits of ecosystems and that the planning system should minimise impacts on biodiversity, providing enhancements where possible.

The applicant has submitted an ecology report which concludes that overall the scheme shall deliver ecological benefits for a range of species, including foraging and roosting bats, a number of bird species, and invertebrates as the land will in effect not be intensively farmed for 25 years and a wildflower habitat will be created. Precautions will also be taken to protect the small great crested newt population, present within three ponds between 50 and 640 metres from the site boundary. The proposal has been considered by Leicestershire County Council (Ecology) who have raised no objections. It is not considered that the proposal would



have an adverse impact upon sites of ecological importance or protected species. The proposals are therefore considered acceptable in relation to the consideration of biodiversity.

### Impact Upon Residential Amenity

Policy BE1 (criterion i) of the Local Plan requires that development does not adversely affect the amenity of neighbouring properties.

The nearest residential dwellings to the site are Manor Farm to the south east and Beachwood Rise Farm to the south west. Given the distance from the site and the amount of screening in the form of hedgerows and planting that is in place the impact on those properties would be limited. There are no direct views of the proposal from the village of Newbold Verdon to the north east.

As such it is considered that the proposal is in accordance with Policy BE1 (criterion i) and the renewable and low carbon energy guidance as set out in the NPPG. The proposal is not considered to cause a detrimental impact upon residential amenity.

### Highway Safety

Policy T5 of the Local Plan states that proposals should not impact upon highway safety or the satisfactory functioning of the local highway network.

Access will be along the existing farm track from Bosworth Lane. The track is currently used as an access route for existing cars and machinery for the agricultural fields and it is therefore considered suitable for use by the small number of HGV's associated with the short construction period of the solar farm. Once the solar farm is operational there will be no staff based on site, the only visitors will be security and maintenance staff and the minimal traffic associated with the management of the sheep grazing the land around the panels.

Leicestershire County Council (Highways) has raised no objection to the proposal subject to condition relating to access improvements.

Subject to the imposition of conditions, the proposal is considered to be in accordance with Policy T5 of the Local Plan and would not have a detrimental impact upon highway safety or the satisfactory functioning of the local highway network.

### Drainage and Flood Risk

Saved Policy NE14 states that development proposals should provide satisfactory surface water and foul water measures. In addition the NPPF sets out at Paragraph 100 that inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk, but where development is necessary, making it safe without increasing flood risk elsewhere.

The application is accompanied by a Drainage and Flood Risk Assessment which concludes that given that the site has no flooding history and that the panels will not greatly increase surface water run-off beyond the existing situation. The Environment Agency raises no objection subject to a condition in respect of contamination in case of any contaminates that are found during construction that may affect a water course. Following comments from the Environment Agency in respect of ensuring appropriate surface water drainage is implemented the applicant has added swales to capture surface water run off.

Subject to conditions requiring a satisfactory contamination condition the proposal would be in accordance with Policy NE14 of the Local Plan and the NPPF.

## Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

The proposed development has been screened by the Local Planning Authority in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011 to determine whether it constituted EIA development and if a subsequent Environmental Statement was required to be submitted for consideration.

The application falls within 3 (a) Industrial installations for the production of electricity, steam and hot water.

Whilst the scheme is listed within Schedule 2, as 3 (a) and exceeds the relevant thresholds in Column 2 (as the site area exceeds 0.5 hectares), the site is not in a sensitive area and there is no other information relating to the test of significance that makes the development EIA development.

Based on the information provided it is concluded that the proposed solar panel farm is not EIA development and therefore an Environmental Statement is not required.

## Conclusion

The NPPF supports the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate by encouraging the use of renewable resources and the development of renewable energy and that local planning authorities should approve the application if its impacts are (or can be made) acceptable.

The principle of development is therefore considered to be acceptable. It is considered that the proposal would lead to a minimal landscape and visual impact, mitigated against by existing landscape screening, with proposed additions to build up gaps in the site boundaries.

The solar farm would have a limited impact upon heritage assets, the historic landscape, flood risk and ecology. It is also considered that the proposed solar farm would have a minimal impact upon residential amenity and would not create any highway safety issues.

Therefore, and after considering the issues discussed above and representations received from the local community, it is considered that the principle of development would be acceptable and there would be minimal landscape harm. The proposal is therefore considered to be in accordance with the development plan and the overarching intentions of the NPPF. In addition, regard has been had to the renewable and low carbon energy guidance as set out in the NPPG as a material consideration.

## **RECOMMENDATION**:- Grant subject to conditions.

### **Summary of Reasons for Recommendation and Relevant Development Plan Policies :**

Having regard to the pattern of existing development in the area, representations received and relevant provisions of the development plan, as summarised below according to their degree of consistency with the National Planning Policy Framework, it is considered that subject to compliance with the conditions attached to this permission, the proposed development would be in accordance with the development plan as the principle of development is considered acceptable, the proposal would not have significant detrimental visual or landscape impact, cumulative visual or landscape impact, would not impact upon ecology, flood risk, historic assets, residential amenity or highway safety.

Hinckley & Bosworth Local Plan 2001:- Policies NE5, NE12, NE14, BE1, BE14, BE16 and T5.

In dealing with the application, the local planning authority have worked with the applicant in a positive and proactive manner based on seeking solutions to problems arising in relation to dealing with the planning application.

**Conditions:-**

- 1 The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.
- 2 The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out otherwise than in accordance with the submitted applications details, as follows and received by the local planning authority 22 July 2014 and 11 February 2015:-

Dwg No. JT04/PA001D Amended Site Location Plan  
Dwg No. JT04/PA002L Amended Site Layout Plan  
Dwg No. JT04/PA003A Proposed PV Layout  
Dwg No. JT04/PA004A Proposed Mounting System Details  
Dwg No. JT04/PA005B Proposed Substation Plan and Elevations  
Dwg No. JT04/PA008 Proposed Fencing and Gate Elevations  
Dwg No. JT04/PA009B Proposed Noise Pattern Plan  
Dwg No. JT04/PA012 Proposed 11kv Pad Mount  
Dwg No. JT04/PA005B Proposed Grid Connection Cabinet  
Dwg No. JT04/PA011A Proposed Comms Cabinet  
Dwg No. JT04/PA006B Proposed Switchgear/Inverter/Transformer Enclosure

- 3 Written confirmation of the date of the first export of electricity to the National Grid from the solar farm hereby approved shall be provided to the local planning authority within one month of the date of this taking place.
- 4 The planning permission hereby granted is temporary for a period of 25 years from the date of the first export of electricity to the National Grid from the solar farm hereby approved. After such time the use shall cease and the solar farm and associated equipment shall be removed from site in accordance with Condition 5.
- 5 Not less than 12 months prior to the expiry of this permission a decommissioning Method Statement & Site Restoration Scheme shall be submitted to and in agreed in writing by the local planning authority. This shall include details of:-
  - a) The works for the removal of the solar panels, ancillary equipment and structures;
  - b) works for the restoration of the site;
  - c) the management and timing of any works;
  - d) a Traffic Management Plan;
  - e) an Environmental Management Plan to include measures to be taking during decommissioning to protect wildlife and habitats;
  - f) identification of access routes; and
  - g) a programme of implementation.

The decommissioning works shall then be carried out in accordance with the agreed Decommissioning Method Statement & Site Restoration Scheme during the 12 months of the expiry of this permission.

- 6 Should the solar farm hereby approved no longer be required for the purposes of electricity generation or cease to operate for a continuous period of 6 months, a Decommissioning Method Statement & Site Restoration Scheme as per the requirements of Condition 5 shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the local

planning authority within 3 months after the end of the 6 months cessation period. The decommissioning works shall then be carried out in accordance with the agreed Decommissioning Method Statement & Site Restoration Scheme.

- 7 The development shall be fully implemented in accordance with the recommendations contained within the extended phase 1 ecology report and habitat survey prepared by SLR dated February 2015.
- 8 Notwithstanding the landscaping details as shown on the site layout plan, prior to the commencement of development a detailed landscaping scheme to show the species, location and amount of planting to be provided to the boundaries of the site shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall then be carried out in accordance with the approved details.
- 9 The approved landscaping scheme shall be fully implemented in accordance with the approved details in the first available planting season after the commencement of development. The landscaping scheme shall be maintained for a period of five years from the date of planting. During this period any trees or shrubs which die or are damaged, removed, or seriously diseased shall be replaced by trees or shrubs of a similar size and species to those originally planted at which time shall be specified in writing by the local planning authority.
- 10 No development shall commence on the site until such time as a construction traffic/site traffic management plan, including site access signage details, wheel cleansing facilities and vehicle parking and turning facilities, and a timetable for their provision, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall thereafter be carried out in accordance with the approved details and timetable.
- 11 Prior to the commencement of development details of the proposed vehicular access to the site from Bosworth Lane shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall then be carried out in accordance with the approved details.
- 12 If any gates, bollards or other obstructions are to be erected at the vehicular access to the site they shall be set back a minimum of 15 metres from the highway.
- 13 If, during development, contamination not previously identified is found to be present at the site then no further development shall be carried out until the developer has submitted a remediation strategy to the local planning authority detailing how this unsuspected contamination shall be dealt with and obtained written approval from the local planning authority. The remediation strategy shall be fully implemented in accordance with the agreed details.
- 14 No development shall take place/commence until a programme of archaeological work, commencing with an initial phase of trial trenching has been detailed within a Written Scheme of Investigation, submitted to and approved by the local planning authority in writing. The scheme shall include an assessment of significance and research questions; and:-
  - a) The programme and methodology of site investigation and recording (including the initial trial trenching, assessment of results and preparation of an appropriate mitigation scheme)
  - b) The programme for post-investigation assessment
  - c) Provision to be made for analysis of the site investigation and recording

- d) Provision to be made for publication and dissemination of the analysis and records of the site investigation
  - e) Provision to be made for archive deposition of the analysis and records of the site investigation
  - f) Nomination of a competent person or persons/organisation to undertake the works set out within the Written Scheme of Investigation.
- 15 The development shall not be occupied until the site investigation and post investigation assessment has been completed in accordance with the programme set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation approved under condition 14 and the provision made for analysis, publication and dissemination of results and archive deposition has been secured.

**Reasons:-**

- 1 To comply with the requirements of Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
- 2 For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.
- 3 This permission is temporary and as such notification of commencement of the export of electricity to the National Grid is required to maintain proper record.
- 4 This permission is temporary for a period of 25 years following first export to the National Grid.
- 5 In the interests of visual amenity and to order to ensure the site is restored to a satisfactory appearance following decommission of the solar farm in accordance with Policy BE1 (criterion a) of the Hinckley & Bosworth Local Plan 2001.
- 6 To ensure the development is used for sustainable renewable energy generation in accordance with Paragraph 93 of the NPPF.
- 7 To protect and enhance biodiversity in accordance with Paragraph 109 of the NPPF.
- 8&9 To ensure adequate landscape screening is in place in accordance with Policy NE12 and NE5 of the adopted Hinckley and Bosworth Local Plan 2001.
- 10-12 In the interests of highway safety in accordance with Policy T5 of the Hinckley & Bosworth Local Plan 2001.
- 13 To protect the water environment in accordance with Paragraph 109 of the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 14&15 To ensure satisfactory archaeological investigation and recording in accordance with Policies BE14 and BE15 of the adopted Hinckley and Bosworth Local Plan 2001.

**Notes to Applicant:-**

- 1 Bats, nesting birds, great crested newts and certain other species are protected by law. If any such species are discovered before or during the works the works must be suspended and the local office of Natural England contacted for advice.

- 2 This permission does not grant approval under the Building Act 1984 and the Building Regulations 2000 (as amended) for which a separate application may be required. You are advised to contact the Building Control Section.
- 3 As from 6 April 2008 this Authority are charging for the discharge of conditions in accordance with revised fee regulations which came into force on that date. Application forms to discharge conditions and further information can be found on the planning portal web site [www.planningportal.gov.uk](http://www.planningportal.gov.uk).
- 4 All works within the limits of the Highway with regard to the access shall be carried out to the satisfaction of the Southern Area Manager (0116 3052202).

**Contact Officer:-** Simon Atha Ext 5919