

in partnership with



**Nottinghamshire
County Council**

Miss Honor Whitfield
Planner
Planning Policy Business Unit,
Newark and Sherwood District Council,
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Great North Road,
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Your ref: 20/01242/FULM
My ref: TP2050708
Date: 27th August 2021

Dear Honor,

Re: Planning Application Reference – 20/01242/FULM

Location – Land north of Halloughton, Southwell, Nottinghamshire

Proposal - Construction of a solar farm and battery stations together with all associated works, equipment and necessary infrastructure.

Applicant – JBM Solar Projects 6 Limited

1.Introduction

The following comments have been prepared by Helen Jones of Via East Midlands Limited, acting as a landscape consultant to Newark and Sherwood District Council (NSDC). These comments have been formulated on the basis of the additional submitted information detailed below. A site visit was made to the study area and representative viewpoints by Helen Jones on 26th August 2020.

The Environmental Management and Design (EMD) Team have examined the following additional information submitted by the applicant to make these comments (following previous comments provided by the EMD Team on 18th September 2020, 26th January 2021 and 12th February 2021.

- P18-2917 Cotmoor Briefing Note - Minor amendments – Draft 30.06.21- Pegasus Group
- Drawing P18-2917_ 12M – Site Layout – Pegasus Group

The above briefing note provides additional information and describes amendments that have been made to the site layout drawing as Revision M. These amendments are described by the applicant as follows:-

Amendment 1 – Removal of panels and associated infrastructure from a central field.

Amendment 2 – Removal of panels and associated infrastructure from a central field.

Amendment 3 – Additional native hedgerow with semi-mature hedgerow trees is proposed between the northern extent of the proposed development and PRoW FP43.

Amendment 4 – Removing panels and associated infrastructure from the north eastern corner of northern most field to facilitate the ‘rewilding’ of this area.

Previous amendments following the meeting with representatives of the Pegasus group on 29th January 2021 included the following:-

- The removal of an area of proposed panels from land closest to Halloughton village and the Halloughton Conservation Area, at the southern end of the easternmost field of the Application Site.
- The removal of an area of proposed panels from a field in the central section of the Application Site, south and east of PRoW Southwell Bridleway 74.

Previous amendments after the above meeting also included the following:-

- The removal of proposed hedgerow along the southern edge of PRoW Southwell Bridleway 74.
- The planting of new native hedgerow along the new southern edge of the panels in the easternmost field and along the northern edge of the access track to further establish separation between the Proposed Development and Halloughton village.
- The reinforcement of existing trees and hedgerows along the northern boundary of the southern parcel, including planting of semi mature trees.
- The reinforcement of hedgerow along western boundary of Application Site, adjacent to PRoW Southwell Footpath 42, including planting of native trees.

2. Discussion of changes to the scale of visual effect as a result of Amendments 1 - 4

Amendment 1

An amendment has been made by the applicant between the Revision L and Revision M of the Site Layout and Planting Proposals plan. This removes an area of solar panels and associated infrastructure from a central field within the proposed development. This amendment has been made by the applicant to reduce the visual effects upon receptors at the western extent of Halloughton and users of the Public Right of Way Halloughton Bridleway 3 and pull the development back from the Halloughton Conservation Area.

The EMD Team accept that the removal of this area of panels in the central area of the Proposed Development will be beneficial in reducing the visual effects upon residential receptors at the western extent of Halloughton and users of PRoW Halloughton Bridleway 3 which lies to the south west of the village of Halloughton. It will reduce the magnitude of change at the construction stage in particular for Viewpoint 12 which may reduce the major scale of effect at the construction stage.

Amendment 2

An amendment has been made by the applicant between the Revision L and Revision M of the Site Layout and Planting Proposals plan. A belt of new trees are proposed within an existing hedgerow which encloses a section of the proposed site boundary to the southwest. These trees would be a mix of native standard trees which would aid in filtering and obscuring views of the proposals from locations on PRow Southwell Footpath 42 to the southwest of the Site.

The EMD Team accept that the strengthening of this hedgeline in the central area of the Proposed Development will be beneficial in reducing the visual impact from PRow Southwell Footpath 42 of the proposals to the north east of this PRow.

Amendment 3

An amendment has been made by the applicant between the Revision L and Revision M of the Site Layout and Planting Proposals plan. A new hedgerow is proposed along the northern extent of the proposed built form, adjacent to the proposed security fencing. The hedgerow would be comprised of a mix of native hedgerow shrubs and semi mature native trees and over time would aid in restricting and heavily filtering views of the proposals from locations along PRow Southwell Footpath 43.

The EMD Team accept that adding this hedgeline with semi mature trees in the northern area of the Proposed Development will be beneficial in reducing the visual impact on PRow Southwell Footpath 43. The visual impact on Viewpoint 14 - PRow footpath Southwell 43 looking south, is currently assessed as a major adverse scale of effect until year 1; and from Viewpoint 15 - PRow footpath Southwell 43 looking south, as a major adverse scale of effect until year 10. Therefore, any reduction in the scale of effect is welcomed. However, this hedgeline planting will completely change the nature of the current view of walkers on the PRow, with the topography sweeping up to a low ridge to the south. This view will be closed off to the walker, although there will still be views of the proposed solar panels at field entrances.

Amendment 4

An amendment has been made by the applicant between the Revision L and Revision M of the Site Layout and Planting Proposals plan. The proposed solar panels and security fencing have been pulled back from the north eastern corner of the field located to the east of New Radley Farm. Removing the proposal from this corner will enable an area of existing re-wilding to continue to establish.

The EMD Team accept this proposal for a rewilding area which will contribute to biodiversity net gain of the proposed scheme and will also have some benefit in reducing views of the site as above on PRow Southwell Footpath 43 in this area.

Summary – Amendments 1 - 4

It is accepted by the EMD Team that the applicant has reduced the scale of visual effect of the proposed development on viewpoints where the scale was previously major adverse, by either removing solar panels from the areas detailed above, or by strengthening vegetation in hedge lines along the Public Rights of Way which cross the site. Nevertheless visual effects remain, either as views of the proposed development and its infrastructure, or in the fact that currently existing views will be closed off by the planting or strengthening of existing hedgelines to obscure views of the development; this is particularly the case for PRoW Southwell footpath 43, represented by viewpoints 14 and 15.

3. Summary of scale of landscape effect

To summarise the scale of landscape effects remain as detailed in the previous comments: -

- A moderate adverse scale of landscape effect on landcover of the proposed site for the 40 year lifetime of the scheme. This remains unchanged.
- A major adverse scale of landscape effect on the character of Policy Zones 37, 38 and 39 for the 40 year lifetime of scheme is also described. This remains unchanged.

Taking the above into account the EMD Team still consider that there are long term impacts on the 'land cover' element of the landscape, and long term impacts on the landscape character of the site area, it is accepted that these effects will diminish with distance from the site. As stated in our previous comments harm has been identified to the setting of Halloughton Conservation Area and the listed buildings contained within the area, in the comments of Oliver Scott – Conservation Officer of NSDC.

4. Conclusion

The EMD Team welcome the reduction in area of panels shown on drawing reference P18 - 2917 Revision M and the additional and amended planting shown, and accept that these changes will lead to some reduction in the scale of visual effect of the proposed development particularly on viewpoints 14 and 15 which previously had a major adverse scale of visual effect as a result of the proposed development until year 1 (or Year 15 in the case of viewpoint 15) However, due to the scale of visual effects identified by the applicant, and the scale of landscape effect which remain as our previous comments, the EMD Team still do not support the proposals for the construction of a solar farm and battery stations together with all associated works, equipment and necessary infrastructure.

Yours sincerely

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