

Boxted Solar Farm – Public Comment Theme Tracker

Comment	Applicant's Response
<i>Principle of Development</i>	
<p>Concern about siting of the proposed development and its efficiency for solar.</p>	<p>Whilst some of the Proposed Development is located on north/north-east facing land, the solar panels will be oriented in a south-facing direction and the topography of the land has been factored into the design. It is worth noting that whilst flat/south-facing land provides the optimum orientation for solar generation, solar panels on east, west and north facing land are still viable in terms of the amount of energy produced from both direct and diffuse sunlight.</p> <p>The Applicant is proposing the use of bifacial modules for the Proposed Development, which as the name suggests, have two sides of solar cells, enabling additional energy generation from the reflected and diffused light on the rear-side of the panels. Solar panels do not require direct sunlight to produce energy – diffuse sunlight is sufficient, and a grass surface reflects enough light to justify the use of bifacial modules.</p>
<p>Proposals in conflict with Neighbourhood Plan.</p>	<p>The proposed development is not located within a designated Neighbourhood Plan area. The proposed development has been assessed against the Joint Local Plan and the requirements of the NPPF.</p>
<i>Landscape and Visual Impact</i>	
<p>The proposed development will have a detrimental visual impact on the local landscape and Special Landscape Area.</p>	<p>It is acknowledged that some impact on landscape character and local views would arise but that the landscape masterplan has been carefully considered to positively respond to local character and provide visual mitigation as far as practicable. Any impacts would be limited and localised and confined to locations adjacent to the site itself.</p> <p>It is not considered that there will be a cumulative impact with other schemes within the District.</p>
<p>Concern about cumulative impact of other schemes.</p>	
<i>Heritage</i>	
<p>The proposed development is in close proximity to a number of heritage assets.</p>	<p>As discussed within the submitted Heritage Statement and subsequent addendum, the scheme has the potential to cause less than substantial harm at the low end of the scheme to Grade II listed Moorhouse Farm and the Grade II Listed Water Hall. It is concluded that the proposed scheme is temporary, with any</p>

	harm arising to significance through setting being capable of being reversed upon decommissioning.
Agricultural Land	
The proposed site has a significant amount of Grade 2 and 3a, therefore proposes a loss of agricultural land.	<p>It is acknowledged within the wider planning submission that the classification of land within the development is identified identifies as 53% Grade 3b (not BMV) and 46.7% Grades 3a and 2 (BMV). It is acknowledged that the proposed development will result in a temporary loss of agricultural land but will enable the continued agricultural use for grazing.</p> <p>When balanced against other significant benefits associated with the development, the planning balance makes the harm acceptable in planning terms.</p>
Community Benefits	
Concerned that the proposed development is not offering much in return to the community.	<p>The Applicant seeks to be a power for good in communities that neighbour their energy projects by working openly and constructively to ensure tangible local benefits. The Applicant takes a tailored approach and works directly with the community to understand how the energy project could support the local area, aligned with the priorities of the local community. As part of the pre-application consultation period for the Proposed Development, the Applicant sought feedback from the local community on local benefits and priority projects that they would like to see supported or delivered in their community from the Proposed Development, if it is consented.</p> <p>Whilst there were a limited number of suggestions at that time, the feedback received suggested that subsidised electricity for the residents living closest to the Proposed Development would be the preferred opportunity. The Applicant looks forward to continuing these conversations if the application is consented and also continues to welcome feedback from the community on any alternative suggestions that will help to secure long-term economic, social and environmental benefits and provide a lasting legacy in the local area.</p>
Lighting	
Concerns about light pollution created by the proposed development.	There is no lighting proposed within the site once operational. Infrared lighting is proposed to the CCTV columns but this will not emit light within the wider landscape. There will be lighting at the substation only, this will be used for infrequent maintenance and operational activities only. The lighting at the substation will be manually controlled rather than PIR in order to prevent unnecessary activation.

<i>Flood Risk</i>	
Concerns about recent flood events in the Glem River valley floor and the potential runoff from the proposed development.	As addressed at Section 5 of the wider planning addendum, further surface water drainage schemes in the form of swales and gravel trenches have been proposed at the lower lying areas of the site to mitigate any potential run off from the development and assist with infiltration. It is not anticipated that the proposed development will increase the potential for flood events elsewhere.
<i>Fire Risk</i>	
Concern about fire risk relating to battery storage proposals.	This addendum is supported by a Fire Risk Management Strategy (Appendix 7), prepared in liaison with the Fire Service. This document contains the key mitigation measures against the risk of fire ignition and propagation within the battery energy storage units which are designed as part of a solar project with associated battery storage project.
<i>Highways</i>	
Concern about suitability of access.	The response of Highways Officer (dated 24 November 2023) outlined their general acceptance of the scheme. Section 6 of the Addendum outlines the additional clarifications that were required by Officers. The applicant is happy to accept a suitably worded condition to secure a CTMP prior to the commencement of development.
Concern about the increased number of HGVs travelling on narrow roads.	
<i>Length of Project and Decommissioning</i>	
Concern that the length of time proposed will have a long-lasting impact on the community.	The proposal seeks a permission with an operational lifetime of 40 years after which time the scheme would be decommissioned and removed from the site. The applicant would be happy to accept a condition for a decommissioning strategy to secure the works following the completion of generation.
<i>Public Consultation</i>	
Concern that the public consultation was not adequate.	The submitted Statement of Community Involvement outlines the scheme of consultation that was undertaken prior to the submission of the application. The applicant had undertaken a comprehensive pre-application engagement programme in order to proactively inform and engage with the local community and key stakeholders. The applicant is committed to continuing the open dialogue it has established with the local community as the application process continues.

Noise	
Concern about noise pollution from battery storage.	The proposed development has sought to locate inverters, battery storage and the substation at a sufficient distance from residential receptors. A noise impact assessment has been undertaken in support of this application and confirms that there are no adverse impacts at any residential receptors.