

Item No.	Application No. and Parish	Statutory Target Date	Proposal, Location, Applicant
(1)	22/01330/REG3 Wokefield	30/08/2022	Construction and operation of a solar farm and battery storage system together with cable route and all associated works, equipment and necessary infrastructure Land North Of Bloomfield Hatch Farm Bloomfield Hatch, Mortimer, Reading, West Berkshire West Berkshire Council

To view the plans and drawings relating to this application click the following link:
<http://planning.westberks.gov.uk/rpp/index.asp?caseref=22/01330/REG3>

Recommendation Summary: Approve subject to conditions

Ward Members: Councillors Geoff Mayes, Graham Bridgman and Royce Longton

Reason for Committee Determination: Major planning application made by West Berkshire Council

Committee Site Visit: 17th August 2022

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This application seeks planning permission for the construction and operation of a solar farm and battery storage system together with cable route and all associated works, equipment and necessary infrastructure.
- 1.2 The proposed development is an installation of a ground mounted Photo Voltaic (PV) solar development, consisting of an area of approximately 30.5ha. Permission is sought for 30 years and a further 6 months to allow for decommissioning and reinstatement. The installation would have the design capacity for approximately 25.77MWp of electricity generation. Together with associated infrastructure and housings, the development is comprised of the following main elements:
- Approximately 57,160 solar photovoltaic (PV) panels, mounted to frames;
 - Ten central inverters;
 - Fifteen transformers;
 - Ten battery storage Systems;
 - Access via an existing farm access from Cross Lane;
 - Approximately 4,225m of stock-proof fencing; and
 - Security and monitoring CCTV mounted on posts within each field.
- 1.3 The site is agricultural grassland and arable farmland and is boarded by dense hedges and tree lines along the field boundaries. Some significant trees can be found both within the fields and the boundaries but no tree preservation orders (TPOs) are present. There is a central strip of dense woodland within the central area of the site. The farm and farm house are found to the south of the site alongside other properties to the south.
- 1.4 To the east of the site runs a railway line, to the north east of the site is a public right of way (Woke/14/1 byway) and Goodboy's Lane runs to the west boundary of the site parallel to the site.
- 1.5 In terms of the surroundings, the site is rural in nature within an area characterised by mixed arable agricultural land, detached residential properties and light industrial use, including the Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) base at Burghfield approximately 1.5km north of the site.
- 1.6 There are two operational solar schemes within the vicinity of the site:
- Pierce's Farm/Land north of Goring Lane, approximately 800m north of the site; and
 - Pingewood Road South, approximately 2.6km to the north of the site.

2. Planning History

- 2.1 No relevant planning history.

3. Procedural Matters

- 3.1 **EIA:** The development has been considered under the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England) Regulations 2017. The proposal falls within Schedule 2 of the Regulations, and as such, the applicant requested a formal Screening Opinion from the Local Planning Authority. After consideration of the relevant EIA criteria in Schedule 3 of the 2017 Regulations, it was concluded that an EIA would not be required for this proposal.
- 3.2 **Publicity:** Site notices were displayed on 08.06.2022 at the entrance to the site, off Goodboys's Lane, on the Public Right of Way (Woke/14/1 byway) to the north east of the site, adjacent to the connection point Anners Farm Road, and at The Mearings (at the proposed connection points). The deadline for representations expired on 29.06.2022.
- 3.3 **CIL:** Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a levy charged on most new development to pay for new infrastructure required as a result of the new development. CIL will be charged on residential (C3 and C4) and retail (A1 - A5) development at a rate per square metre (based on Gross Internal Area) on new development of more than 100 square metres of net floorspace (including extensions) or when a new dwelling is created (even if it is less than 100 square metres). CIL liability will be formally confirmed by the CIL Charging Authority under separate cover following the grant of any permission. More information is available at www.westberks.gov.uk/cil

4. Consultation

Statutory and non-statutory consultation

- 4.1 The table below summarises the consultation responses received during the consideration of the application. The full responses may be viewed with the application documents on the Council's website, using the link at the start of this report.

Wokefield Parish Council:	<p>Wokefield Parish Council (WPC) has a number of objections to this proposal.</p> <p>First, and foremost, we object to taking agricultural land out of production at a time when the nation is concerned about our ability to feed ourselves.</p> <p>Whilst the land is graded 3b (apparently lower-grade agricultural land), nevertheless there has been a viable farm there for many years.</p> <p>WPC would prefer to see solar generation targeted at brown field sites, marginal land, such as motorway verges and rail embankments, and the on the roofs of commercial buildings such as office blocks, shopping centres, carparks etc. This is consistent with the views expressed by WPC in relation to the existing solar farm in the parish created under application 13/03187/COMIND.</p> <p>Second, parishioners in the immediate vicinity have expressed several concerns which we are obliged to echo</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reduction in property values by as much as 5% in the opinion of a local estate agent
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- The proposed access road will add unnecessary risk for vehicles entering/leaving the site. In addition, it will cause nuisance for residents whose properties are adjacent to the driveway.

- The Traffic Management report (P4) asserts there have been no reported serious accidents. This may be true, but residents are aware of 8 or 9.

- It is understood that when the Land concerned was bequeathed to the local government by the Palmer family and that the transfer included a covenant that stated that the land must be used solely for the education and use of young farmers.

Third, we have concerns about the lack of detail about the route and work required to connect the development to the grid.

There seems to be a glaring omission in the application of any narrative describing the work to connect to the grid. The Application Form merely mentions “cable route and all associated works, equipment and necessary infrastructure”. Despite a wealth of detailed documentation covering myriad aspects of the proposed installation, the only evidence of the connection is in the Location Plan showing 2 options for connection to the grid. Both are routed along Goodboys Lane to its junction with Goring Lane.

Option 1 routes the cable clockwise round AWE via Goring Lane, James Lane, and the Mearings before final connection to a wooden pole in a field at map reference SU67604 68755. WPC understand that part, if not all, of the Mearings is a private road owned by MOD/AWE. There is no evidence of consultation with owners about access for this routing nor with the national grid re: connection thereto.

Option 2 routes the cable anti-clockwise round AWE across Goring Lane into Palmer’s Lane then Rider’s Lane to a point in Burnt House Lane approximately at map reference SU68781 68577 near a powerline in an adjacent field.

There is no commentary explaining criteria for choosing between the two options

Furthermore, the Construction Traffic Management Plan makes no reference of the impact of the implied work WPC are mindful of the Application 13/03187/COMIND which authorised the existing solar farm in the Parish. This application claimed it would connect directly into the adjacent AWE site a matter of a few hundred feet. This proved not to be the case and connection to the grid entailed routing along country lanes towards Burghfield, a considerable distance. (Incidentally WPC are unable to find any subsequent planning applications which relate to this fundamental change to the project specification.)

Fourth, we have concerns that there are no documents describing the viability of the scheme.

	In all the planning documentation there is no reference to feasibility of the scheme which ought to be a matter of public record since this is a publicly sponsored development (Unlike the existing solar farm in the parish). In particular, WPC understand that the length of connection between the scheme and the grid increases power losses and WPC would like to better understand these issues. The Community Engagement Report filed with the application describes how moving inverters further away from Bloomfield Hatch residents by an unspecified amount to just 225m away “will slightly increase power losses in the schemes DC cable network; however this is considered acceptable in light of the benefits to local residents” but without quantifying how much. The cable run in Option 1 is approximately 4.2km. What impact, we wonder, does this have on power loss?
Beech Hill Parish Council:	No response with 21 day consultation period
Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council:	The Committee considered this planning application located in an adjacent parish council and had no objections in principle, however, would like to know what plans are in place to replant new trees in the area to cover the significant loss of trees and hedges on the proposed site. The Committee was also concerned that, as this land would now become classified as brown field, they would like to see a condition so that the land returns to green field classification after the decommission of the solar farm.
Burghfield Parish Council:	No objections
Wokingham Borough Council:	No objections
Reading Borough Council:	Reading Borough Council will not be providing any response on this application.
WBC Highways:	No objections subject to conditions. See report for detailed comments.
Ramblers Association:	No response with 21 day consultation period
Ministry of Defence:	No response with 21 day consultation period
Health and Safety Executive:	Solar Farms are usually not a relevant development in relation to land-use planning in the vicinity of major hazard sites and major accident hazard pipelines. This is because they do not, in themselves, involve the introduction of people into the area. HSE’s land use planning advice is mainly concerned with the potential risks posed by

	<p>major hazard sites and major accident hazard pipelines to the population at a new development.</p> <p>HSE advice to the council to contact the relevant bodies within their email and in regards to the surrounding consultees such as the ONR.</p>
Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR):	Do not advise against this development, subject to the conditions proposed by the emergency planners.
Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue:	No response with 21 day consultation period
Thames Valley Police:	No response with 21 day consultation period
Fisher German Oil Pipeline/ SERCO Oil Pipelines:	No objections subject to informative.
British Gas:	No response with 21 day consultation period
AWE:	No response with 21 day consultation period
Environment Agency:	No response with 21 day consultation period
WBC Planning Policy:	No response with 21 day consultation period
WBC Economic Development:	No response with 21 day consultation period
WBC Ecology Officer:	No objections subject to conditions. See report for detailed comments.
Natural England:	<p>No objections. Based on the plans submitted, Natural England considers that the proposed development will not have significant adverse impacts on designated sites or result in the loss of best and most versatile agricultural land and has no objection.</p> <p>Natural England's further advice on designated sites/landscapes and advice on other natural environment issues is set out below.</p>
Network Rail:	No objections
WBC Public Rights of Way Officer:	No response with 21 day consultation period
WBC Joint Emergency Planners:	No objections subject to conditions. See report for detailed comments.

WBC Archaeology Officer:	No objections subject to conditions. See report for detailed comments.
WBC Conservation Officer:	No objections subject to conditions. See report for detailed comments.
Lead Local Flood Authority:	No objections subject to conditions. See report for detailed comments.
WBC Tree Officer:	No objections subject to conditions
Thames Water Utilities:	No comments to make
WBC Environmental Health:	No comments to make
WBC Minerals and Waste Team:	No response with 21 day consultation period
West Berkshire Spokes:	No response with 21 day consultation period
Berkshire Buckinghamshire Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust:	No objections subject to conditions. See report for detailed comments.

Public representations

4.2 Representations have been received from 15 contributors, all of which object to the proposal. The full responses may be viewed with the application documents on the Council's website, using the link at the start of this report. In summary, the following issues/points have been raised:

- The submitted document lacks information and details in regards to the impact the development would have on the Thames Basin Special Protection Area
- Community engagement before the application was considered inadequate and concerns were not listed too and have not been acted upon in the submissions.
- Support for Green Energy
- The development is considered to increase flooding to neighbouring homes and septic tanks
- The land categorisation is misleadingly calculate to not reflect the 37 ears of high successfully farm on the site.
- Concern raised in regards to the use of land that is protected and use for high quality farming for renewable energy production
- No information has been submitted with any plans as to ow they proposed to dig up the entire length of good boys lane, how the site will be connected to the grid.
- The build time is considered too short.
- The access to the proposed development poses risks to cyclists in the area.

- No alternative sites have been explored for this level of development.
- Local and National Policies seek to protect agricultural land that has been assessed as 'good quality with moderate Limitations...".
- The tenant farmers rear English Native Short Horn Cattle independently assessed as being of the highest quality and they were awarded farm of the year. In reality this Land has been evidenced as high quality.
- There is a restrictive covenant when the land was bequeathed to the Council by the Palmer Family of Huntley and Palmer Reading it can only be used in perpetuity for the use of young farmers.
- The submission has not taken enough account of CS17 in regards to conserving and enhancing the biodiversity of the site.
- Concern raised in terms of construction time length
- Concern raised in regards to visibility splays and the temporary traffic order reducing speed.
- The development does not enhance the local context as required by CS14
- The development has not taken enough account of the ecology of the site of surrounding areas
- The development has not taken enough account for birds and nesting birds
- Farm land must be used for food production not renewable energies
- The industrial size of the development is too big for the rural area
- The sight line distances in both directions are inadequate
- There has been 9 accidents along this stretch of road
- The access track to Bloomfield Hatch farm is considered to be inadequate due to it being a gravel driveway.
- The access roads is within close proximity to neighbouring dwellings and bedrooms.
- The site access operating ours are too long and over too many days
- The panels are clearly visible even with mitigation resulting in loss of amenity.
- The view from properties will be impacted due to the size of the proposed development
- There roads in the area will be dug up to accommodate the cables
- Loss of tree's would not be acceptable
- Devalue of homes
- Fences will be an eyesore
- The public engagement has been poor and the issues picked up are only a few that were cherry picked.
- The access road needs to be moved to reduce risks of serious accidents and nuisance caused to residents in the area.
- Residents are aware of 9 accidents that have occurred near to Bloomfield Hatch.
- The applicant has many other options to use that do NOT take vital farming land away.
- Alternative sites should be looked at rather farmland.
- Despite the land classification the farmer has farm the land for a significant period of time to which it has not restricted his ability to farm.
- The Railway Bridge near to the site could cause issues with long vehicles make deliveries.
- Impact on rural wildlife particularly endangered species of birds
- Impact on wellbeing i.e. noise from generators, disruption and visibility to quiet rural environment

5. Planning Policy

5.1 Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate

otherwise. The following policies of the statutory development plan are relevant to the consideration of this application.

- Policies ADPP1, ADPP6, CS5, CS10, CS13, CS14, CS16, CS17, CS18 and CS19 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026 (WBCS).
- Policies TRANS1, OVS5 and OVS6 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 (Saved Policies 2007).
- Policies 1 and 2 of the Replacement Minerals Local Plan for Berkshire 2001 (RMLP).
- Policy NRM6 of the South East Plan.

5.2 The following material considerations are relevant to the consideration of this application:

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)
- Local Transport Plan for West Berkshire 2011-2026
- Manual for Streets
- WBC Quality Design Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)
- WBC Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)
- West Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment (2019)

6. Appraisal

6.1 The main issues for consideration in this application are:

- Principle of development
- Soils and agricultural land quality
- Character of the area and landscape impact
- Historic environment
- Impact to neighbouring amenity
- Highway impact
- Flood risk and sustainable drainage
- Impact to ecology and trees
- Implications of AWE Burghfield, Pipeline and Network Rail

Principle of development

6.2 The most important development plan policies for determining whether the principle of development is acceptable are Policies ADPP1, ADPP6, CS10, and CS15 of the Core Strategy. The Core Strategy includes a Spatial Strategy (ADPP1 and ADPP6) that provides a broad indication of the overall scale of development in the district, applying the principles of sustainable development, and based on defined spatial areas and a settlement hierarchy.

6.3 According to Policy ADPP1, most development will be within or adjacent to the settlements in the hierarchy, and related to their transport accessibility and level of services. The urban areas will be the focused for most development. The scale and density of development will be related to the site's accessibility, character and surroundings. Only appropriate limited development in the countryside (outside of the defined settlement boundaries) will be allowed, focused on addressing identified needs and maintaining a strong rural economy.

6.4 The proposed application site is located within the East Kennet Valley, the name given to the rural south-east of the district that lies east of Thatcham and outside of the AONB.

Distinct features of this area are the Kennet and Avon Canal and River Kennet which both run from west to east across the breadth of this area, parallel to the Newbury – Reading train line and the A4. The East Kennet Valley is also characterised by a number of villages along the route of the canal/river and others dispersed across farmland and some woodland. The Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) has two bases in this area, at Aldermaston and Burghfield, which has implications for the future level of development in this area. Policy ADPP6 is the spatial strategy for the East Kennet Valley. According to the policy, the character of all the settlements in this area will be conserved and enhanced by ensuring that any development responds positively to the local context. Development in the open countryside will be strictly controlled.

- 6.5 Policy CS10 says that proposals to diversify the rural economy will be encouraged, particularly adjacent to Rural Service Centres and Service Villages. The policy goes on to say that proposals for appropriate farm diversification will be supported where it can be demonstrated that the proposal will make a long term contribution to sustaining the agricultural enterprise as a whole.
- 6.6 Whilst Policy CS15 focuses on sustainable construction methods, the supporting text identifies that carbon reduction is a key issue for West Berkshire. Sustainable construction and renewable energy generation can help in achieving emissions reduction.
- 6.7 West Berkshire Council has not identified suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy within the current Local Plan. The Core Strategy states that in order to reduce local carbon emissions and meet national targets, a policy approach that supports and reflects the significant challenge ahead needs to be adopted, and that any renewable energy schemes should be efficient.
- 6.8 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is also an important material consideration. It states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, which includes an environmental objective of mitigating and adapting to climate change, and moving to a low carbon economy.
- 6.9 Paragraph 11d of the NPPF states that where there are no relevant development plan policies decision makers should grant planning permission unless the NPPF gives a clear reason for refusing planning permission, or any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the NPPF as a whole. The development plan does contain relevant development plan policies as referred to above, but as no specific sites are allocated it is appropriate to have due regard to this presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- 6.10 The NPPF details in paragraph 152 that the planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, going on to say development should support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure.
- 6.11 Furthermore paragraph 158 states that when determining planning applications for renewable and low carbon development, local planning authorities should:
 - a) not require applicants to demonstrate the overall need for renewable or low carbon energy, and recognise that even small-scale projects provide a valuable contribution to cutting greenhouse gas emissions; and
 - b) approve the application if its impacts are (or can be made) acceptable. Once suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy have been identified in plans, local planning authorities should expect subsequent applications for commercial scale projects outside these areas to demonstrate that the proposed location meets the criteria used in identifying suitable areas.

- 6.12 Overall it is considered that the NPPF supports the provision of renewable energies.
- 6.13 According to paragraph 48 of the NPPF, local planning authorities may also give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans according to:
- a) the stage of preparation of the emerging plan (the more advanced its preparation, the greater the weight that may be given);
 - b) the extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies (the less significant the unresolved objections, the greater the weight that may be given); and
 - c) the degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to [the] Framework (the closer the policies in the emerging plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given).

6.14 Policy DC 3 is in the draft emerging Local Plan review to 2037. This policy can only be given limited weight due to its early stage of preparation. However, it does show the direction of travel, consistent with the NPPF's policies on such developments. Policy DC 3 states that:

B. The Council will support proposals for renewable energy provided that the technology is:

- i. Suitable for the location;*
- ii. Not on the most versatile agricultural land (grades 1,2, and 3a);*
- iii. Is accompanied by a landscape/visual impact assessment; and*
- iv. Would not cause harm to residential amenity by virtue of noise, vibration, overshadowing, flicker or other harmful emissions.*

6.15 The supporting text to Policy DC 3 is also relevant:

Renewable Energy Generation

Renewable energy technology can make a major contribution to reducing CO2 emissions. Communities can benefit from reduced fuel bills and improved security of energy supply. Building a green economy that can generate growth and improvements in people's lives is consistent with sustainable development and the Council's 'Environment Strategy' and helps build in a resilient economic future for renewable energy technology as it is constantly evolving. Examples of renewable energy technology include:

- (i) Combined heat and power (CHP) with a modest plant being able to serve a large number of dwellings and commercial uses in a small geographical area;*
- (ii) Large scale ground mounted solar PV systems; and*
- (iii) Micro-renewable technology, in particular solar water heating, ground and air source heat pumps, photovoltaic cells and biomass boilers.*

However it is important not to restrict future options for how renewable energy might be delivered within West Berkshire.

6.16 This reports goes on to detail that the proposed development complies with all these criteria of DC 3.

6.17 Taking into account the relevant development plans policies, the national policies in the NPPF and the draft emerging policies in the Local Plan Review, it is concluded that the principle of development is acceptable. The overall acceptability of the development

depends on compliance with the development plan as a whole and consideration of all other relevant material considerations.

Soils and agricultural land quality

- 6.18 Under the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 (DMPO) Natural England is a statutory consultee on development that would lead to the loss of over 20ha of 'best and most versatile' (BMV) agricultural land (land graded as 1, 2 and 3a in the Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) system, where this is not in accordance with an approved plan.
- 6.19 Paragraph 174 of the NPPF states that planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural environment by recognising the economic and other benefits of the BMV agricultural land.
- 6.20 The application supporting information demonstrates through an Agricultural Land Classification Survey dated 16th April 2021 that the proposed development comprises approximately 30.5 ha of agricultural land, all of which the survey classifies as grade 3b. It is therefore not BMV as defined by the NPPF.
- 6.21 Natural England also consider that the proposed development, temporary in nature as described, is unlikely to lead to significant permanent loss of BMV 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 appropriate soil management is employed and 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.
- 6.22 As such, the proposed development is not considered to conflict with paragraph 174 of the NPPF.

Character of the area and landscape impact

- 6.23 Policy CS14 requires new development to demonstrate high quality and sustainable design that respects and enhances the character and appearance of the area. It goes on to say that good design relates not only to the appearance of the development but the way in which it functions, and that the considerations of design and layout must be informed by the wider context, having regard not just to the immediate area, but to the wider locality.
- 6.24 Policy CS19 seeks to conserve and enhance the diversity and local distinctiveness of the landscape character of the District, and adopts a holistic approach to ensure that the natural, cultural and functional components of its character will be considered, particular regard will be given to
- (a) the sensitivity of the area to change,
 - (b) ensuring that new development is appropriate in terms of location, scale and design in the context of the existing settlement form, pattern and character, and
 - (c) the conservation, and where appropriate, enhancement of heritage assets and their settings (including listed buildings).
- 6.25 The application is supported by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) which has been subject to review by the Council's landscape consultant.

- 6.26 The site is located within Landscape Character Area (LCA) *CL1 Grazeley Open Clay Lowland*. As set out within the West Berkshire Landscape Character Assessment (2019) for LCA CL1, the valued features and qualities listed which can be found within the site include the mature oak trees both within hedgerows and as field specimens; the network of public rights of way which would include the PRoW on the northern edge and also Goodboys Lane would be valued for recreation; the stream (in the middle of the site) and its associated semi natural habitats; overall a strongly rural landscape with high levels of tranquillity which also provides a setting for the individual scattered farmsteads and partly the surrounding small villages.
- 6.27 Landscape detractors listed under LCA CL1 which are considered to be of relevance to this application include intrusive elements which are urban in character including large-scale fencing, as evident around the Atomic Weapons Establishment complex at Burghfield, the decline in hedgerow quality and the loss of farm ponds (a pond is located within the north western corner of the site). Noise and visual disruptions from transport routes would also include the railway line which aligns along the eastern boundary of the site.
- 6.28 The overall landscape strategy for LCA CL1 is to conserve the distinct rural character of the area by conserving and enhancing woodland, trees and hedgerows within the landscape; protecting and enhancing semi-natural habitats; maintaining the network of PRoW and rural lanes; respecting the form and vernacular of existing settlements in the landscape and historic farm buildings.
- 6.29 The visual assessment provided a Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV), then identified potentially 8 viewpoints with accompanying photos taken in April 2022. This is a time of year when because the trees are not in leaf, allows more open and filtered views across the landscape. Overall, the site is only visible from adjacent public locations as shown by Viewpoints 1 and 2 on Goodboys Lane and Viewpoint 3 and 4 taken from the PRoW adjacent the northern boundary of the site. There would also be views from the adjacent railway line from the northern stretch up to the crossing point of the PRoW, viewpoints from this stretch were excluded from the LVIA.
- 6.30 Within the ZTV, there are a few residential properties where potentially there are views of the site. However as explained within the Solar Photovoltaic Glint and Glare Study (February 2022 by Pagerpower), any potential views are screened by intervening hedgerows/woodland etc.
- 6.31 Viewpoints 1 and 2 were taken from the quiet and rural Goodboys Lane. Due to the shallow 'V' shaped landform (contains the stream), there are views including the site from this lane as it descends then ascends, whereby views are through the roadside hedgerow (and also site boundary hedgerow) into parts of the western fields. These views are very rural in character with no visual detractors.
- 6.32 Viewpoints 3 and 4 were taken from the PRoW which aligns part of the northern boundary of the site. The intervening wide hedgerow contains a lot of semi-dead elm, also allowing summer filtered views from stretches of the footpath into the adjacent field and site.
- 6.33 Viewpoints 5, 6 and 7 were taken south west of Bloomfield Hatch farmstead. These views are to the intervening farmstead, paddocks with hedgerows; and also partly due to the flattish landform there are no views of the site.
- 6.34 Viewpoint 8 was taken at a distant north east from the site and just south of Gravelly Bridge Farm. Again, due to the flat landform and in part to the slightly intervening elevated and vegetated railway line, there are no views of the site.

- 6.35 It is accepted that the installation of a solar farm will have an adverse effect on the actual site's landscape character, with an indirect impact concerning itself with the effect on the wider landscape character of the area, in particular against the underlying objective to conserve and enhance the landscape character of the *Open Clay Lowland landscape character type (CL)* and the *Grazeley Open Clay Lowland local character area (CL1)*. The applicants LVIA provided an assessment and stated that there would be no change, with a level of effect assessed as neutral. The landscape consultant appointed by the LPA disagrees with this assessment and how it was undertaken. The assessment has used the findings of the visual assessment; the assessment should have been undertaken against the description within the WBLCA 2019, in particular the impact and effect on valued features and qualities and how the development proposals also comply with the landscape strategy as set out within CL1. The LVIA assessment against the landscape character was incorrectly against whether one would be able to see the development proposals or not.
- 6.36 The survey area has a strong rural character, with limited modern influences. The development proposals will bring urban fringe elements into this strongly rural area which will have an adverse effect on the wider landscape.
- 6.37 The applicants LVIA considered the cumulative effects of the proposed development with potentially any other existing or pending planning application within their study area. This information was set out on Figure 2 of the applicants LVIA. It is agreed that there are three existing solar farms within and just beyond the study area. Due to the distance between these solar farms, there will be no significant cumulative effect.
- 6.38 Overall good primary mitigation measures (placement in the landscape), should then not lead to the requirement for secondary mitigation measures (landscape enhancements). The layout of the development proposals allows the retention of the central woodland belt and linear tree line and the surrounding mature hedgerows, with an additional buffer of rough grassland. Overall, the proposals have been designed to fit into the field pattern. However, the mitigation tree and shrub planting should be increased, as set out under the recommendations. The LPA's landscape consultant recommended the following:

"The site is set within a well intact rural area, with very few visual detractors. Due to the flattish landform and well intact hedgerow field pattern, this provides immediate semi enclosure for the site. With well-designed tree/shrub planting mitigation measures, this could then successfully address the initial and long-term residual effect of the visibility of the solar panels over the next 30 years.

Based on the LVIA and my own site observations I would recommend that the planting mitigation measures are enhanced to protect the rural character of the area from sensitive viewpoints, as follows:

- *East of Goodboys Lane: Instead of just beefing up the existing roadside hedgerow, I would recommend a 10m wide deciduous tree and shrub area of planting (planted on 1.5m centres) located along the western edge of the site adjacent Goodboys Lane*
- *South of PRow: The density of the proposed planting along this edge should be increased. I would recommend that a 10m wide tree and shrub belt with the plants planted on 1.5m centres be proposed*
- *Northern adjacent stretch adjacent railway line: Propose tapered 20 m wide woodland belt, linking into the proposed 10m wide tree and shrub belt to the north, as stated above*

If all of these enhanced planting mitigation measures are undertaken, the solar farm would then be a discrete development with no long-term visual effects on the

surrounding area, in line with the landscape strategy for LCA L1, by conserving its distinct rural character.

Additional to the planting mitigation, the infrastructure should be low key and rural in character, some additional recommendations are as follows:

- *Lighting: This should be avoided and not introduced into this area.*
- *Gateway off Cross Lane: Keep rural in style, avoid unnecessary large urban style signage. Siting should be discreet. Maintain access from Cross Lane as existing and avoid over engineered solutions and kerbing.”*

- 6.39 These points were taken on board by the applicants who have adjusted their Ecological Mitigation Plan to reflect the requests of the landscape consultant. Lighting can be controlled via planning condition. Whilst it may be necessary during construction for urban style signage at the gateway of cross lane for construction safety purposes this would only be temporary and beyond the construction period a more discreet approach to this area could be adopted.
- 6.40 Natural England raised comments in regards to the consideration of nearby AONB's. Given the site is not within the North Wessex Downs AONB or Chilterns and that there are significant distances and intervening development between the proposed development site and the AONB the LPA is satisfied in regards to the development having no material impact on AONB landscapes.
- 6.41 As stated within Policy CS 14: *New development must demonstrate high quality and sustainable design that respects and enhances the character and appearance of the area.* Policy CS19 also considers the conservation and enhancement of the local Landscape Character Areas of West Berks. Overall the site is set within a well intact rural area, with very few visual detractors. Due to the flattish landform and well intact hedgerow field pattern, this provides immediate semi enclosure for the site. With well-designed tree/shrub planting mitigation measures, this could then successfully address the initial and long-term residual effect of the visibility of the solar panels over the next 30 years. This in combination with the changes made as a result of the recommendations of the LPA's landscape consultant the proposed development is considered to be acceptable in terms of landscape character and visual amenity.
- 6.42 The proposed development is considered to comply with ADPP1, ADPP6, CS14 and CS19 of the Core Strategy and complies with NPPF (Paragraphs 8 (c), 130 (a & b) and 174) in this respect.

Historic environment

- 6.43 Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 places a statutory duty of the Council when determining planning applications that requires that special regard must be had to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. The NPPF also states that, when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation.
- 6.44 Policy CS 19 Historic Environment and Landscape Character notes that in order to ensure that the diversity and local distinctiveness of the landscape character of the District is conserved and enhanced, the natural, cultural, and functional components of its character will be considered as a whole.
- 6.45 Initial concerns were raised by the Council's Conservation Officer in regards to the scope of the Heritage Impact Assessment and whilst covering the archaeology aspects of the development it was considered that it did not adequately address the setting of nearby

listed buildings. During the course of the application an updated Heritage Impact Assessment was submitted that was considered to address the concerns of the Conservation Officer.

- 6.46 The revised Heritage Impact Assessment has addressed the concerns/issues raised by the Conservation Officer, and provides a thorough assessment of the proposals' impact on the heritage assets identified in her original comments. The Conservation Officer concurs with its conclusions and is content that the proposal will not cause any harm to the significance of the following heritage assets.

Designated;

- Grade II Listed Pierce's Farmhouse, c.300m to the north-west
- Grade II Listed The Elms, c.340m to the east
- Grade II Listed Clappers Farmhouse c.760m to the east
- Grade II* Listed St Benedict's School at Wokefield Park, c.920m to the south-east
- Grade II Listed Old Hall, c.830m to the north
- Grade II Listed Crosslane Farm Cottages, c.1.1km to the south-east
- Grade II Listed Great Park Farmhouse, c.1.1km to the south

Non-designated:

- Wokefield Park,
- Bloomfield Hatch Farm

- 6.47 In light of these the proposed development is considered to comply with CS14 and CS19 in regards to the heritage of West Berkshire. The development is considered to conserve the historic and cultural assets nearby in West Berkshire by not causing there setting material harm.

- 6.48 The application to develop this green-field site as a solar farm is potentially of some archaeological interest, and the LPA's Archaeologist have been involved in pre-application discussions over how this potential could be assessed. A Heritage Impact Study has been undertaken, which establishes that although there are no known heritage assets (designated or undesignated) within the site, this may be partly due to little archaeological intervention having taken place. Evidence from the surrounding area suggests that the site might hold the remains of settlement and agricultural activity from the later prehistoric and Romano-British periods and is likely to contain former field boundaries and drainage systems from later periods. The significance of these features might not be very high, and the Archaeologist accepts that it is doubtful that they would need to be preserved in situ. Nevertheless, the construction of the solar farm could lead to the loss of some currently unknown heritage assets of archaeological interest, particularly where cable trenches are being dug and groundworks are needed for access tracks, and sub stations and works compounds. The solar panels themselves would have a relatively thin impact from each of their piles but this pin cushion appearance would be widespread and would also effectively prevent any future examination of the site.

- 6.49 The Archaeologist's preference is for further information to be provided as to the archaeological interest of the land through field evaluation, specifically geophysical survey. This could provide evidence of possible below ground features which have not

been previously seen as cropmarks or soil marks from the air, and thus allow for some targeted supervision (a watching brief) when construction begins. The Archaeologist accepts the argument that trial trenching across the fields in order to better understand the character and survival of any deposits or features could actually amount to a larger surface area being disturbed than that of the piling, and hence cause more impact. However should any heritage assets of high significance be unexpectedly uncovered during investigations, the Archaeologist would wish to discuss whether mitigation by design could be achieved. This point is mentioned in the submitted study report.

- 6.50 It would be beneficial for all parties for the non-intrusive survey to be carried out as soon as possible, but it could also take place as part of a staged programme of archaeological work secured through a condition.
- 6.51 It is therefore considered that in regards to the historic environment the proposed development complies with the Core Strategy policies.

Impact to neighbouring amenity and land uses

- 6.52 The Council's Environmental Health Officers have raised no objections to the application. The proposed development is most likely to cause disruption during the construction phases of the development. This phase would be temporary until the construction is finished. Planning conditions are recommended in regards to hours of construction to safeguard neighbouring amenity.
- 6.53 Whilst the construction access is near an adjoining dwelling it does move away from residential properties after utilising the access and existing gravel road. It is considered that this is an existing farm track that could be utilised by tractors, tractors with trailers and other large vehicles accessing the farm (such as animal transportation). It is therefore considered that any disturbance can be restricted via a construction time condition and it should be recognised that the movement of large vehicles along this section of access could occur through the day to day function of the farm. Once the development is completed there will be maintenance vehicles which would move through the existing farm access track past neighbouring dwellings such as the Graney's but these will be small 4x4's or vans. Given the existing use of the site as a farm these vehicles are considered to cause minimal impact.
- 6.54 A Glint and Glare Assessment was produced as part of this application submission. The assessment showed that solar reflections are geometrically possible towards 29 out of the 31 assessed dwelling receptors. Whilst the report does note that solar reflections may occur at some dwellings the report comments that mitigation is not required in this instance due to the following factors:
- There is consistent and substantial intervening vegetation both proposed and existing which would reduce the duration of the effects.
 - The visibility of the reflecting panels will be limited to above the ground floor. In practice the main living space during the day would be on the ground floor in the living rooms and kitchen.
 - The effects will coincide with direct sunlight, which is a far more significant source of light compared to a solar reflection.
- 6.55 The development is not considered to give rise to significant issues of neighbouring amenity through overshadowing, overbearing, overlooking, through noise impacts, or in terms of glint and glare from the panels. The development can be adequately controlled through the construction period by condition. The development is therefore considered to comply with Policy CS14 in this respect.

Highway impacts

- 6.56 The Highway Authority has raised no objection to the application. Through consultation in regards to the details of the Construction Traffic Management Plan the officers have raised no objection the existing access being utilised. The access would be laid to 10m of asphalt bonded surface to ensure loose debris is not spread onto the road. It is agreed that there will not be significant traffics flows from the site during the construction and operational phases.
- 6.57 Utilising the 85th percentile speeds detailed above, the required visibility splays, based on the recommended parameters from the centreline of the proposed access, are 114m and 104m to the east and west respectively.
- 6.58 Visibility splays have been provided to the kerbline in line with WBC standards. An offset of 1m has previously been used for the visibility splays in Issue 01 which is considered to be suitable given the nature of the carriageway is typically characterised as rural with no footway provision, and therefore, with the 2.4m set back applied, is considered to provide a robust visibility assessment.
- 6.59 The visibility assessment drawing provided at Appendix E of the Construction Traffic Management Plan demonstrates emerging visibility splays are provided within the extent of the adopted highway and client owned land, as follows:
- a) to the east 2m x 21m visibility splay can be provided to the kerbline
 - b) to the west 2m x 96m visibility splay can be achieved to the kerbline
 - c) to the east 2.4m x 14m visibility splay can be achieved to the kerbline
 - d) to the west 2.4m x 81m visibility splay can be achieved to the kerbline
- 6.60 Vegetation will be kept trimmed back to the fence line at the edge of the highway boundary on the western side of the access and will be trimmed back within the visibility splay requirements for the eastern side of the visibility splay within the applicants owned land and highway owned land.
- 6.61 Drawing SK03 provided in Appendix E of the Construction Traffic Management Plan indicates that appropriate forward visibility can be provided on Cross Lane. Therefore, the forward visibility on Cross Lane is considered suitable for the temporary construction site access, and low vehicle trips associated with the operation of the site.
- 6.62 Appropriate mitigation measures for the reduced visibility commensurate with the limited number of vehicle movements associated with the construction period will be provided. Temporary signal controls will be provided at the site access junction with Cross Lane. The signals will remain phased Green on Cross Lane unless a vehicle is using the construction site access.
- 6.63 Temporary signage will be provided on the highway verges in advance of the proposed site access to warn road users of the construction access and temporary signals ahead and therefore existing users of Cross Lane will be aware that vehicles will be turning into and out of the site access. There will be signage indicating the signals are in temporary use on Cross Lane.
- 6.64 Therefore, further to the temporary traffic signals at the sits access with Cross Lane during construction to assist with traffic management, it is considered that the achievable emerging visibility splays of 2.4m x 14m to the east and 2.4m x 81m to the west is therefore suitable for the site access.
- 6.65 A temporary construction road into the site will be constructed from the existing farm access track. The internal access track has been designed to adequately accommodate

larger vehicles delivering equipment to the site during construction. The construction track, which will be removed after the construction of the solar energy farm is complete.

- 6.66 The solar farm once completed would be serviced by smaller maintenance vehicles such as smaller vans and 4x4s to which can utilise the existing access arrangements through the site.
- 6.67 The site during construction phase will have adequate parking for contractors.
- 6.68 Overall the proposed development is considered to comply with Policy CS13 and highways safety can be managed through the implementation of the details in the submitted documents which can be conditioned accordingly.

Flood risk and sustainable drainage

6.69 The Lead Local Flood Authority accepts that :

- The site is in Flood Zone 1 hence the flood risk from rivers is not of concern.
- The proposed solar panels will be elevated above the ground such that the development will not be adversely affected by surface water flooding except in the lower part of the site adjacent to the stream valley; nor will it cause an increase in surface water flooding risk.
- There is likely to be some perched groundwater present within the site due to the ground make-up but this will not cause any flood risk, nor will the proposals be detrimental to groundwater.

6.70 The proposed solar panels will however contribute to some speeding up of rainfall run-off from the site due to the concentration of water landing on the panels that would otherwise currently fall on the ground and infiltrate naturally, and as a result this must be managed so as not to reduce the time taken for rainfall run-off to reach the natural low point at the existing stream. In section 13 of the submitted Flood Risk Assessment (FRA), the Surface Water Drainage Strategy deals with this largely by proposing gravel filled infiltration trenches (Section 13.3 SuDS Selection Matrix table 12, and Section 13.6 Proposed Surface Water Drainage Strategy). This is acceptable in principle but as pointed out in the report, 'flow barriers' will be required at intervals to slow any flow within these trenches and maximise infiltration potential.

6.71 Associated with this, therefore, it will be necessary to carry out a ground investigation and soakage tests to BRE365 across the site in order to inform the design of the trenches. Ultimately off-site discharge should not exceed the 1 in 1 year greenfield rate (contrary to the Qbar greenfield rate proposed in the report). The Lead Local Flood Authority require 1 in 1 year rate for all development.

6.72 In order for the LLFA to give final approval to the proposals in the future, it would be necessary for the applicant to provide a layout of the infiltration trenches including where any flow barriers will be located along with finalised construction details. Details of the outfall arrangements to the existing watercourse will also be required, as will an application under the ordinary watercourse consent process. This can be secured by planning condition.

6.73 The FRA report mentions the possibility of the provision of a green roof for the switchroom building. This would be welcome and should be encouraged in order for the Council to demonstrate a commitment to this type of SuDS solution.

- 6.74 Of concern would be the high likelihood of run-off from the site during construction allowing polluted water to be carried into the stream and therefore a robust Construction Management Plan is necessary to demonstrate how silt laden water will be intercepted and de-silted before reaching the stream.
- 6.75 As such, in summary the LLFA does not have any concerns over flood risk providing site run-off is managed in a suitable way such as suggested in the FRA report. In due course detail design proposals for the SuDS / SW management proposals will be required which should be based on a full site investigation and soakage tests.
- 6.76 On that basis, the LLFA raise no objections in principle to the current application in relation to drainage and flood risk subject conditions being applied. The proposed development is therefore considered to comply with Core Strategy Policy CS16.

Impact on trees

- 6.77 The application is accompanied by an Arboricultural Impact Assessment to BS 5837:2012 by Woodland and Countryside Management Ltd. This includes a Tree Survey, Arb Method Statement and Tree Protection details. The application paperwork also includes a Planning Statement by Renplan Consultants, a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) by Aluco Ecology and a LVIA by Amalgam Landscape which all touch on site trees and hedges.
- 6.78 The site benefits from a number of significant trees and hedges. There are many standard trees in the hedges and a linear woodland belt running approximately SW to NE between the two largest fields. There are some over grown trees, the most notable of which is tree 129 a B-grade Oak within the eastern field. Accommodation is made for this tree within the arrangement of the solar panels.
- 6.79 A low number of smaller open-grown trees (mostly Field Maple) are ear-marked for removal from the southern part of the site, as is a short stretch of Blackthorn / Hawthorn hedge (Hedge 7) in the north of the western field. The Tree Officers considered the LEMP to show that Hedge 7 will be translocated to the north-west corner of the western field and certainly this is welcome in terms of mitigation. They would advise the root systems of these hedge trees is undercut in the summer before translocation to encourage root branching and the development of a concentrated fine feeding root system. If the project is delayed, another under cut in year three and at a slightly greater depth should be carried out. Further delays will require further undercutting.
- 6.80 Tree protection is to be provided by the installation of deer/security fencing and temporary tree protection fencing and ground protection before any site activity begins. This is shown on the Woodland and Countryside Management Ltd Tree Protection Plan at Appendix 8 of the AIA. It is important that this timescale is adhered to, and Arb Supervision will be required to ensure this takes place in compliance with the TPP.
- 6.81 Replacement/additional tree planting is shown in the Ecological Mitigation Works plan 302/014-007 B. A Landscaping Plan showing specific species and specifications will be required and the Tree Officer has suggested a condition. There is the opportunity to plant one or two standard trees (or a low number depending on species and appropriate densities) in the northern-most corner of the western field. This could develop longer term into a Wood Pasture type of habitat.
- 6.82 The Tree Officer raises no objections and considers the proposed landscaping to be in principle acceptable subject to conditions securing specific information such as tree species.

Biodiversity and ecological impacts

- 6.83 Objections from residents and the residents association include concerns that the application has not given due regard to the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA).
- 6.84 The Core Strategy recognises that a small area in the very south-east of the district around Beech Hill falls within the 5km boundary of the Thames Basin Heath SPA, as determined by Natural England. Policy ADPP6 requires screening of new residential development of one or more net additional dwellings proposed within this radius, and where significant effects existing or cannot be excluded, an Appropriate Assessment under the Conservation or Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 should be undertaken.
- 6.85 In May 2010 the Government announced its intention to abolish Regional Strategies, including the South East Plan. In February 2013 the South East Plan was formally abolished except for Policy NRM6 which relates to new residential development close to the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area. Policy NRM6 therefore continues to be part of the statutory development plan.
- 6.86 Policy NMR6 states that new residential development which is likely to have a significant effect on the ecological integrity of Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA) will be required to demonstrate that adequate measures are put in place to avoid or mitigate any potential adverse effects. Such measures must be agreed with Natural England.
- 6.87 The proposed development is not residential and so the specific requirements for residential development under the aforementioned policies are not engaged. The purpose of these policies in regards to these policies is to manage the anthropogenic impacts to the SPA. No concerns have been raised by Natural England or the Council's Ecologist with respect to the SPA. Given the nature of this development and the distance from the SPA, it is not considered that there would be a material effect on the SPA.
- 6.88 In their consultation response, Natural England advises it does not consider that this application will result in an adverse effect on the site integrity of any designated sites and will not result in the loss of best and most versatile (BMV) agricultural land. As such, no further detailed comments were offered.
- 6.89 Natural England does, however, provide some general advice. Soil is a finite resource which plays an essential role within sustainable ecosystems, performing an array of functions supporting a range of ecosystem services, including storage of carbon, the infiltration and transport of water, nutrient cycling, and provision of food. It is recognised that a proportion of the agricultural land will experience temporary land loss. In order to both retain the long term potential of this land and to safeguard all soil resources as part of the overall sustainability of the whole development, it is important that the soil is able to retain as many of its many important functions and services (ecosystem services) as possible through careful soil management and appropriate soil use, with consideration on how any adverse impacts on soils can be avoided or minimised.
- 6.90 Consequently, Natural England advise that any grant of planning permission should be made subject to conditions to safeguard soil resources and agricultural land, including the preparation of reinstatement, restoration and aftercare plans; normally this will include the return to the former land quality (ALC grade). Natural England would also advise the authority to apply conditions to secure appropriate agricultural land management and/or biodiversity enhancement during the lifetime of the development, and to require the site to be decommissioned and restored to its former condition when

planning permission expires. These conditions are listed below in this report but are condition 17 Agricultural Land Management Strategy and condition 3

- 6.91 From an ecological perspective the Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust (BBOWT) are largely in favour of this application due to the number of different ecological enhancement works proposed, delivering biodiversity net gain (BNG), negligible impact on designated sites, the majority of onsite biodiversity features being retained and buffered, and retention of reasonable ecological connectivity on site (namely along the watercourse). BBOWT outline in their response several areas of suggested changes and improvements to the LEMP. These changes are not considered to be areas to which the BBOWT are objecting but are offering further input into the documents. This input can be accommodated through securing the documents via planning condition.
- 6.92 The application is accompanied by a completed Ecological Net Gain matrix 3.1 (as recently adopted by DEFRA). The matrix confirms that the proposal, subject to implementation of the recommendations set out in the Ecology Assessment report and the submitted landscaping ecological management proposals would deliver 13.28% ecological net gain to habitat units, a 10.47% ecological net gain of hedgerow units and a 16.20% net gain of river units.
- 6.93 The Council's Ecologist has raised no objections to the proposed development subject to condition. This conditions include the submission of a full detailed planting document with updates to the Landscape Ecological Management plan to reflect these details. The Ecologist also required a Construction Ecological Management plan. The Ecologist also required conditions restricting external light and requiring reports to be updated within certain time periods.
- 6.94 Overall, it is considered that the proposed development complies with Policy CS17, subject to applying appropriate conditions to avoid, minimise and mitigate potential environmental effects.

Implications of AWE Burghfield, Pipeline and Network Rail

- 6.95 Emergency Planning have reviewed this application in relation to the AWE Off-Site Emergency Plan. It is noted that high voltage cables will be running in close proximity to the AWE Burghfield site. The Emergency Planners commented that provided AWE have no concerns the cable could pose a risk to the site impacting on the safety and operations of the site, then Emergency Planning have no adverse comments on this application subject to the conditions. AWE has been consulted but have not received comments from them. The Office of Nuclear Regulation updated there comments following WBC Emergency Planners input stating that they do not advise against this development.
- 6.96 It is noted that a response from Exolum Pipeline system's was received noting that the proposed cabling crosses one of its pipelines. The LPA has engaged with this consultee who recommended that an informative be attached to the planning application requiring a works consent order be applied for by the applicants to ensure the safety of the pipeline during the construction of the development. This issues was also raised by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) who recommended finding a resolution as above with the pipeline owners. The LPA also took on board the HSE's comments and consulted with the relevant parties accordingly (mainly AWE, ONR, Emergency Planning and the pipeline owners).
- 6.97 Overall, whilst there are a number of health and safety related constraints nearby to the site and proposed development, it is considered that these can be adequately controlled

via a number of conditions and informatives. The development is therefore considered to be in accordance with Core Strategy Policy CS8.

- 6.98 A railway line runs along the eastern boundary of the application site, and so glint and glare from the panels was identified as a potential issues. The LPA has consulted with Network Rail on the glint and glare report that was submitted during the course of the application. This report found that the development would not be harmful or give rise to health and safety issues. Whilst no formal response has been received from Network Rail to this consultation, direct communications with their Asset Management Team have given a positive response raising no issue with the proposal. The LPA is therefore content that the development will not give rise to issues related to the adjacent railway.

7. Planning Balance and Conclusion

- 7.1 The proposed development is considered to be supported in principle by the NPPF and the overarching aims of the Core Strategy and associated local planning policies. There is strong social and environment support for the provision of renewable energy in tackling climate change and dealing with the climate crisis. Overall, it is considered that there are substantial benefits to the proposed development that weigh in favour of granting planning permission.
- 7.2 The application site is generally well-contained within the landscape, and although there would be landscape and visual impacts, there are not considered significant when weighed against the benefits of the development. It is considered that the proposed layout has responded positively to the host landscape in terms of using the topography and landscape features to assimilate the development into its setting. Moreover, further mitigation can be secured through conditions. The biodiversity of the site, including a significant number of trees, can be protected and enhanced as part of the proposals.
- 7.3 Whilst the development would be visible within the surrounding landscape, no significant issues in relation to neighbouring amenity have been identified. The Highway Authority raises no objections to the access or potential impacts on the highway. No material conflicts with neighbouring land uses, including AWE, the railway line or oil pipelines, have been identified. There are no significant flood risk issues with the site and conditions can ensure appropriate drainage measures.
- 7.4 Overall, taking into account the main issues identified by this report and having regard to the representations made in response to application consultation, it is concluded that the proposed development complies with national and local planning policy and that the benefits of the development outweigh the limited adverse effects. As such, the application is recommended for conditional approval.

8. Full Recommendation

- 8.1 To delegate to the Service Director of Development & Regulation to GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION subject to the conditions listed below.

Conditions

- Commencement of development**
The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

2. **Approved plans**

The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans and documents listed below:

Site Location Plan and Red Line Boundary - 302-014-008 REV C

Proposed Layout Plan - 302-014-004 REV D

Intake Substation Plan - 302-014-009 REV B

Proposed Installation Elevations - 302-014-005 REV D

Proposed Ecological Mitigation Works & Planting - 302-014-007 REV D

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interest of proper planning.

3. **Lifetime of development**

No electricity shall be generated by the development hereby permitted until 14 days prior notice has been submitted to the Local Planning Authority in writing. The development hereby permitted shall be removed in its entirety and the land restored to its former condition within 30 years and six months of the date that electricity was first generated by the development, or within six months of the development failing to generate electricity for 12 consecutive months, whichever occurs first. The land shall be restored to its former condition to enable it to revert to agricultural use in accordance with a scheme of decommissioning work and land restoration that shall have first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that the land is restored to its original undeveloped condition following the expiry period or once the development fails to generate electricity, in the interests of protecting the amenity of the open countryside. This condition is imposed in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, and Policies ADPP1, ADPP6, CS10, CS14, CS15 and CS19 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026).

4. **Decommissioning removal of operational development**

As part of the decommissioning process required by Condition 3, all operational development in, on, over or under the land enclosed by the red line on the Location Plan associated with the development hereby permitted shall be completely removed from the application site within 30 years and six months of the date that electricity was first generated by the development, or within six months of development failing to generate electricity for 12 consecutive months, whichever occurs first.

Reason: To ensure that the land is restored to its original undeveloped condition following the expiry period or once the development fails to generate electricity, in the interests of protecting the amenity of the open countryside. This condition is imposed in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, and Policies ADPP1, ADPP6, CS10, CS14, CS15 and CS19 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026).

5. **Materials**

No development shall take place until a schedule of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This condition shall apply irrespective of any indications as to these matters which have been detailed in the current application. Samples of the materials shall be made available for inspection on request. Thereafter the development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved materials.

Reason: To ensure that the external materials respond to local character. This condition is imposed in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, Policies ADPP1, ADPP6, CS14 and CS19 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026), and Supplementary Planning Document Quality Design (June 2006). A pre-commencement condition is required because the materials we need to be agreed prior to construction.

6. **Hours of work (construction/demolition)**

No demolition or construction works shall take place outside the following hours, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority:

7:30am to 6:00pm Mondays to Fridays;

8:30am to 1:00pm Saturdays;

No work shall be carried out at any time on Sundays or Bank Holidays.

Reason: To safeguard the amenities of adjoining land uses and occupiers. This condition is applied in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, and Policy CS14 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026.

7. **Drainage measures**

No development shall take place until details of sustainable drainage measures to manage surface water within the site have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. These details shall:

- a) Incorporate the implementation of Sustainable Drainage methods (SuDS) in accordance with the Non-Statutory Technical Standards for SuDS (March 2015), the SuDS Manual C753 (2015) and the WBC SuDS Supplementary Planning Document December 2018 with particular emphasis on Green SuDS and water re-use;
- b) Include attenuation measures to retain rainfall run-off within the site and allow discharge from the site to an existing watercourse or piped system at no greater than 1 in 1 year Greenfield run-off rates;
- c) Include and be informed by a ground investigation survey which establishes the soil characteristics, infiltration rate and groundwater levels. Soakage testing shall be undertaken in accordance with BRE365 methodology;
- d) Include run-off calculations based on current rainfall data models (FEH 2013 preferred), discharge rates (based on 1 in 1 year greenfield run-off rates), and infiltration and storage capacity calculations for the proposed SuDS measures based on a 1 in 100 year storm +40% for climate change;
- e) Include construction drawings, cross-sections and specifications of all proposed SuDS measures within the site;
- f) Ensure permeable paved areas are designed and constructed in accordance with manufacturers guidelines if using a proprietary porous paved block system; otherwise ensure any permeable areas are constructed on a permeable sub-base material, such as MoT/DoT Type 3;
- g) Include a management and maintenance plan showing how the SuDS measures will be maintained and managed after completion for the lifetime of the development. This plan shall incorporate arrangements for adoption by the Council, Water and Sewage Undertaker, Maintenance or Management Company (private company or Trust) or individual property owners, or any other arrangements, including maintenance responsibilities resting with individual property owners, to secure the operation of the sustainable drainage scheme throughout its lifetime. These details shall be provided as part of a handover pack for subsequent purchasers and owners of the property/premises;
- h) Include measures with reference to Environmental issues which protect or enhance the ground water quality and provide new habitats where possible;

- i) Include details of how surface water will be managed and contained within the site during construction works to prevent silt migration and pollution of watercourses, highway drainage and land either on or adjacent to the site;
- j) Include an Application for an Ordinary Watercourse Consent in case of surface water discharge into a watercourse (i.e stream, ditch etc);

Thereafter, the development shall be undertaken in accordance with the approved details. The development shall not start generating electricity until the drainage measures have been completed in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that surface water will be managed in a sustainable manner; to prevent the increased risk of flooding; to improve and protect water quality, habitat and amenity and ensure future maintenance of the surface water drainage system can be, and is carried out in an appropriate and efficient manner. This condition is applied in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, Policy CS16 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026), Part 4 of Supplementary Planning Document Quality Design (June 2006) and the Sustainable Drainage Supplementary Planning Document (December 2018). A pre-condition is necessary because insufficient detailed information accompanies the application; sustainable drainage measures may require work to be undertaken throughout the construction phase and so it is necessary to approve these details before any development takes place.

8. **Archaeological work**

No development including site clearance shall take place within the application area until a Stage 1 written scheme of investigation (WSI) for a programme of archaeological work has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. For land that is included within the WSI no demolition or development shall take place other than in accordance with the agreed WSI, and the programme and methodology of site evaluation and the nomination of a competent person(s) or organisation to undertake the agreed works. If heritage assets of archaeological interest are identified by Stage 1, then for those parts of the site which have archaeological interest a Stage 2 WSI shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. For land that is included within the WSI no site clearance work or development shall take place other than in accordance with the agreed WSI, which shall include:

- a) The statement of significance and research objectives, the programme and methodology of archaeological site investigation and recording and the nomination of a competent person(s) or organisation to undertake the agreed works.
- b) The programme for post-investigation assessment and subsequent analysis, publication & dissemination and deposition of resulting archaeological material. This part of the condition shall not be discharged until these elements have been fulfilled in accordance with the programme set out in the Stage 2 WSI.

Reason: To ensure that any significant archaeological remains that are found are adequately recorded. Such an approach follows the guidance set out in paragraph 205 of the 2021 National Planning Policy Framework and is in accordance with the requirements of Policy CS19 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026). A pre-condition is required because the WSI will need to be adhered to through construction activities.

9. **Arboricultural supervision**

No development shall take place (including site clearance and any other preparatory works) until the applicant has secured the implementation of an arboricultural watching brief in accordance with a written scheme of site

monitoring, which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: The Local Planning Authority must be satisfied that the trees to be retained will not be damaged during development works and to ensure that, as far as is possible, the work is carried out in accordance with the approved details pursuant to section 197 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 in accordance with the objectives of the NPPF and Policies ADPP1, CS14, CS17, CS18 and CS19 of West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026. A pre-commencement condition is necessary because insufficient detailed information accompanies the application; tree protection installation measures and site supervision works may be required to be undertaken throughout the construction phase and so it is necessary to approve these details before any development takes place.

10. Tree protection

All tree protective fencing and ground protection shall be erected and installed in accordance with the submitted plans, reference Woodland and Countryside Management drawing numbers WWCM/SSR/HPE/ES/BHF/TP/1 dated May 2022. The protective fencing shall be implemented and retained intact for the duration of the development, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Within the fenced area(s), there shall be no excavations, storage or mixing of materials, storage of machinery, parking of vehicles or fires.

Reason: Required to safeguard and to enhance the setting within the immediate locality to ensure the protection and retention of existing trees and natural features during the construction phase in accordance with the NPPF and Policies ADPP1, CS14, CS17, CS18 and CS19 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026.

11. Landscaping

No development shall take place until a detailed landscaping scheme has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The landscaping scheme shall include:

- a) Detailed plans with planting a retention schedules, noting species, plant sizes and proposed numbers/densities.
- b) A programme or work including an implementation programme providing sufficient specifications to ensure successful cultivation of trees, shrub and grass establishment.

All landscaping works shall be completed in accordance with the approved soft landscaping scheme within the first planting season following completion of building operations / first operation of the development (whichever occurs first). Any trees, shrubs, plants or hedges planted in accordance with the approved scheme which are removed, die, or become diseased or become seriously damaged within the lifetime of the development five years of completion of the approved landscaping scheme shall be replaced within the next planting season by trees, shrubs or hedges of a similar size and species to that originally approved.

Reason: Comprehensive landscaping is essential to ensure the development is appropriately assimilated into the environment, and detailed specifications and a programme of works are necessary to ensure proper establishment and maintenance. This condition is applied in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, Policies CS14 and CS19 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026), and the Quality Design SPD. A pre-condition is required because

landscaping is essential to landscape and visual mitigation and so a clear strategy must be agreed before the development is built out.

12. **Landscape maintenance**

No development shall take place until a Landscape Maintenance and Management Strategy has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Such a strategy shall detail the maintenance and management of the landscape during the lifetime of the development. Thereafter the development shall be carried out and operated in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that the landscaping remains of a sound quality throughout the lifetime of the solar farm, to the benefit of the character of the area and neighbouring properties. This condition is imposed in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, and Policies ADPP1, ADPP6, CS14, CS17, CS18 and CS19 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026).

13. **AWE Emergency Plan**

No development shall take place until a site-specific Emergency Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Emergency Plan shall provide policies and procedures for the preparedness and response to an incident at AWE Burghfield. The Plan should cover both the construction and operational phases of development, or two separate plans may be provided for each phase. The Emergency Plan must cover the processes for:

- a) Activation of the Plan.
- b) Sheltering.
- c) Supporting the vulnerable residents, staff and visitors whilst in sheltering conditions.
- d) Evacuation.
- e) Recovery.

Thereafter, the development shall be carried out with the implementation of the approved Emergency Plan(s), or an approved revision.

Upon the site being commissioned for operations to commence the approved measures within the Emergency Plans shall be implemented in full, shall be kept up-to-date by the site manager/operator and management/owners. Thereafter, the Plan should be reviewed and amended as necessary and at least annually. The Local Planning Authority may at any time require the amendment of the plan by giving notice pursuant to this condition. The Local Planning Authority may at any time require a copy of the then current Emergency Plan for the site which shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority within 1 month of notice being given.

A landline phone shall be installed on site to ensure the AWE Telephone Alerting System can operate successfully, to inform the workers in the event of a radiation emergency at AWE.

Reason: The approval and implementation of a site-specific Emergency Plan is necessary to mitigate the residual risk posed to public safety by the close proximity of AWE Burghfield, to ensure appropriate preparedness and response in the event of an incident at AWE, and to ensure that the development does not adversely affect the AWE Off-Site Emergency Response Plan. This condition is applied in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, and Policy CS8 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026.

Note: For queries relating to the content of the site-specific Emergency Plan, please contact the Joint Emergency Planning, West Berkshire Council, Council

Offices, Market Street, Newbury, RG14 5LD. Tel: 01635 503535, Email: emergencyplanning@westberks.gov.uk. Please quote the application reference. In order to provide assurance that an effective plan will be put in place, normally this means that only the final contact details and names are not completed.

14. **Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP)**

The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved Construction Method Statement and site set-up plan, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To safeguard the amenity of adjoining land uses and occupiers and in the interests of highway safety. This condition is imposed in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, Policies CS5 and CS13 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026), Policy TRANS.1 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006 (Saved Policies 2007).

15. **Access and visibility splays**

The first development operation shall be the construction of the site access onto Cross Lane in accordance with the approved details. No further development shall take place until the access has been completed in accordance with the approved details, and the visibility splays shown on the approved drawings, including within the CTMP, have been provided at the site access. The visibility splays shall, thereafter, be kept free of all obstructions to visibility above a height of 0.9 metres above carriageway level.

Reason: In the interests of road safety. This condition is imposed in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and Policy CS13 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026). A pre-condition is necessary because safe access must be maintained from the outset of construction.

16. **Agricultural Land Management Strategy**

The development hereby approved shall not begin producing electricity until an Agricultural Land Management Strategy has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Strategy shall include the following:

- a) A strategy for reinstatement, restoration and after plans for the soil to return the soil to the former land quality grade or as close as reasonably possible.
- b) A agricultural land management plan for the lifetime of the development.

Thereafter the development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: Soil is a finite resource which plays an essential role within sustainable ecosystems, performing an array of functions supporting a range of ecosystem services, including storage of carbon, the infiltration and transport of water, nutrient cycling, and provision of food. The soil before the solar panels need to be maintained so that the land can be returned to its original condition This condition is imposed in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, and Policies ADPP1, ADPP6, CS14, CS17, CS18 and CS19 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026).

17. **Construction Environmental Management Plan**

No development shall take place (including demolition, ground works, vegetation clearance) until a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The CEMP shall include the following:

- (a) Risk assessment of potentially damaging construction activities.

- (b) Identification of “biodiversity protection zones”.
- (c) Practical measures (both physical measures and sensitive working practices) to avoid or reduce impacts during construction (may be provided as a set of method statements).
- (d) The location and timing of sensitive works to avoid harm to biodiversity features.
- (e) The times during construction when specialist ecologists need to be present on site to oversee works.
- (f) Responsible persons and lines of communication.
- (g) The role and responsibilities on site of an ecological clerk of works (ECoW) or similarly competent person.
- (h) Use of protective fences, exclusion barriers and warning signs.

The approved CEMP shall be adhered to and implemented throughout the construction period strictly in accordance with the approved details, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: This condition is imposed in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, and Policies ADPP1, ADPP6, CS14, CS17 and CS19 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026). A pre-commencement condition is required because the LEMP may need to be implemented during construction.

18. **Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP)**

No development shall take place until an updated Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) (also referred to as a Habitat or Biodiversity Management Plan) has been submitted to and be approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The content of the LEMP shall include the following:

- (a) Description and evaluation of features to be managed.
- (b) Ecological trends and constraints on site that might influence management.
- (c) Aims and objectives of management.
- (d) Appropriate management options for achieving aims and objectives.
- (e) Prescriptions for management actions.
- (f) Preparation of a work schedule (including an annual work plan capable of being rolled forward over a five-year period).
- (g) Details of the body or organization responsible for implementation of the plan.
- (h) Ongoing monitoring and remedial measures.

The LEMP shall also include details of the legal and funding mechanism(s) by which the long-term implementation of the plan will be secured by the developer with the management body(ies) responsible for its delivery.

The plan shall also set out (where the results from monitoring show that conservation aims and objectives of the LEMP are not being met) how contingencies and/or remedial action will be identified, agreed and implemented so that the development still delivers the fully functioning biodiversity objectives of the originally approved scheme.

The approved plan will be implemented in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: This condition is imposed in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, and Policies ADPP1, ADPP6, CS14, CS17 and CS19 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026). A pre-commencement condition is required because the LEMP may need to be implemented during construction.

19. **Time constraints for ecological plans/updated reports**

Bat reports will need to be updated every 12 months and all other surveys after 3 years. As such after 12months/3 years (as appropriate to their validity) from the date the approved report is written a further supplementary ecological survey will need to be undertaken and submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority along with any mitigation measures updated. Thereafter the development shall be undertaken in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: Ecological surveys are valid for limited periods of time. As such, they will need to be kept under review to ensure the appropriate mitigation measures are in place in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, and Policy CS17 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026.

20. **Lighting strategy (Landscape/Ecology)**

No external lighting shall be installed until a lighting strategy has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The strategy shall:

- (a) Identify those areas on the site that are particularly sensitive for bats and that are likely to cause disturbance.
- (b) Show how and where external lighting will be installed so that it can be clearly demonstrated that areas to be lit will not disturb or prevent the above species.
- (c) Include isolux contour diagram(s) of the proposed lighting.
- (d) Ensure all lighting levels are designed within the limitations of the appropriate Environmental Lighting Zone , as described by the Institute of Lighting Engineers.

No external lighting shall be installed on site except in accordance with the above strategy.

Reason: To ensure the conservation and enhancement of the biodiversity assets of the site. This condition is applied in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, and Policies CS17 and CS19 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026.

21. **Restrictions during bird breeding season**

No demolition, or site/vegetation clearance shall take place during the bird breeding season (March to August inclusive) unless carried out under the supervision of an experienced ecologist, who will check the habitat to be affected for the presence/absence of any birds' nests. If any active nests are found then works with the potential to impact on the nest must temporarily stop, and an appropriate buffer zone shall be established, until the young birds have fledged and the nest is no longer in use.

Reason: To prevent harm to nesting birds from demolition and vegetation clearance. This condition is applied in accordance with the statutory provisions relating to nesting birds, the National Planning Policy Framework, and Policy CS17 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026.

22. **Hard landscaping**

The development hereby permitted shall not commence until the hard landscaping of the site has been completed in accordance with a hard landscaping scheme that has first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The hard landscaping scheme shall include details of any boundary treatments (e.g. walls, fences) and hard surfaced areas (e.g. driveways, paths, patios, decking) to be provided as part of the development.

Reason: Landscaping is an integral element of achieving high quality design. This condition is applied in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, Policies CS14 and CS19 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026), and the Quality Design SPD.

Informatives

1. **Proactive statement**

This decision has been made in a positive way to foster the delivery of sustainable development having regard to Development Plan policies and available guidance to secure high quality appropriate development. In this application whilst there has been a need to balance conflicting considerations, the local planning authority has secured and accepted what is considered to be a development which improves the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area.

2. **Compliance with conditions**

Your attention is drawn to the conditions of this permission and to the Council's powers of enforcement, including the power to serve a Breach of Condition Notice under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended). All Conditions must be complied with. If you wish to seek to amend a condition you should apply to do so under s.73 of the Act, explaining why you consider it is no longer necessary, or possible, to comply with a particular condition.

3. **Pre-conditions**

This decision notice contains pre-conditions that impose requirements which must be met prior to commencement of the development. Failure to observe these requirements could result in the Council taking enforcement action, or may invalidate the planning permission and render the whole of the development unlawful.

4. **Compliance with approved drawings**

Planning permission is hereby granted for the development as shown on the approved drawings. Any variation to the approved scheme may require further permission, and unauthorised variations may lay you open to planning enforcement action. You are advised to seek advice from the Local Planning Authority, before work commences, if you are thinking of introducing any variations to the approved development. Advice should urgently be sought if a problem occurs during approved works, but it is clearly preferable to seek advice at as early a stage as possible.

5. **Access construction**

The Asset Management team, West Berkshire District Council, Environment Department, Council Offices, Market Street, Newbury, RG14 5LD, or highwaysassetmanagement@westberks.gov.uk should be contacted to agree the access construction details and to grant a licence before any work is carried out within the highway. A formal application should be made, allowing at least four (4) weeks' notice, to obtain details of underground services on the applicant's behalf.

6. **Damage to footways, cycleways and verges**

The attention of the applicant is drawn to the Berkshire Act, 1986, Part II, Clause 9, which enables the Highway Authority to recover the costs of repairing damage to the footway, cycleway or grass verge arising during building operations.

7. **Damage to the carriageway**

The attention of the applicant is drawn to the Highways Act, 1980, which enables the Highway Authority to recover expenses due to extraordinary traffic.

8. **Incidental works affecting the highway**

Any incidental works affecting the adjoining highway shall be approved by, and a licence obtained from, the Principal Engineer (Streetworks), West Berkshire District Council, Transport & Countryside, Council Offices, Market Street, Newbury, RG14 5LD, telephone number 01635 – 503233, before any development is commenced.