

PLANNING APPLICATION RESPONSE OF PLANNING POLICY
DRAFT

Application No:	APP/14/01164
Site Address:	Manor Farm, Manor Road, Hayling Island
Development:	Solar installation comprising ground-mounted solar panels, associated switch room building and landscaping
Case Officer:	Stephen Cantwell
Comments by:	Sarah Hains
Date of Comments:	10 December 2014

Policy Status:

National Planning Policy Guidance

The recently published National Planning Practice Guidance, which includes more specific guidance on the consideration of renewable energy proposals, encourages the effective use of land by focusing large scale solar farms on previously developed and non agricultural land, provided that it is not of high environmental value. In addition, it states that where a proposal involves greenfield land, the LPA should consider whether the proposed use of any agricultural land has been shown to be necessary and that poorer quality land has been used in preference to higher quality land.

The other criteria identified in the NPPG (paragraph 013 ID: 5-013-20140306) should also be considered, including the impact on the setting of a heritage asset if the proposal is close to a listed building.

Local Plan (Core Strategy)

Policy CS14.2 (Efficient Use of Resources) is supportive of proposals where they locally contribute to the delivery of renewable energy. The principle of this type of development is therefore acceptable.

Policy CS17 seeks to concentrate development within the urban area and states that development will be permitted that makes the most effective use of land in the borough. Development in the non-urban areas will only be permitted if it is consistent with the policies for the countryside set out in national policy.

Local Plan (Allocations)

The Local Plan (Allocations) was adopted on the 23rd July 2014. Policy DM23 (Sites for Brent Geese and Waders) states that where the site is identified as uncertain, appropriate surveys should be carried out. Paragraph 9.21 states that, "in all cases, three consecutive years of recent survey data should ideally be carried out across the overwintering seasons and a record of any sightings on or adjacent to the application site will be required".

The applicant states that there have been on-going discussions with Hampshire County Council, who have confirmed that the site is uncertain for Brent Geese and Waders. The applicant has submitted an ecology report (November 2014) which sets out mitigation measures to address the impact of the solar panels in this location. The planning policy team does not have the expertise to ascertain whether these measures are adequate. It is therefore recommended that the advice of the County Ecologist and if necessary, English Nature, is sought to confirm the findings of the survey and the adequacy of the mitigation measures. In the absence of any confirmation, the proposal would appear to conflict with the provisions of policy DM23.

Proposal:

The applicant advises that the proposal is for a small scale installation to serve the farm and make it more self sufficient. As such, it is reasonably expected that the solar panels would be located close to the farm. Although the NPPG points such development towards previously developed and low grade agricultural land, the applicant has sought to address these issues at paragraphs 6.10 – 6.20 of their Planning Statement and it is considered that this adequately justifies this location for the development.

Principle of development:

There is no objection to the principle of this development, subject to the requirements of DM23 being agreed by Hampshire County Council Ecology and/or English Nature.