**Long Sutton Solar Farm Action Group**

**Sending letters of objection to Hart District Council**

**Guidance Note**

**January 3, 2024**

**How to write a letter of Objection**

To send a letter of objection to the planning application, you must follow the following steps:

* go onto the Hart District Council Planning website by clicking on the attached link:

<https://www.hart.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-development/viewing-and-commenting-applications>

* Alternatively, you can simply go to the **Hart.gov.uk/planning**  page on their web site and under “Viewing and commenting on applications” you will find a link
* In either case click on **submit comments**
* enter the planning application number **23/02591/FUL** and click on **search** bringing up the application summary
* If you have not previously registered with Hart District Council, you will have to do so at this point using your email address and creating a password
* Having registered with HDC, click on **comments** and you will be presented with a screen to type in your objections.
* When writing a comment, we recommend drafting your text in a separate software (Word for example) and then cutting and pasting into the comments window. This avoids the possibility of losing your comments before you have saved them.
* Multiple letters can be submitted from a single household and anyone of voting age.
* A maximum of one side of typed A4 text is a good target for your comments.

**Content of Objection**

Individually crafted letters are more likely to influence the Planning Committee than template-based ones, so please write comments in your own words. The following objections are, in rough order of priority, ones we have been advised are most likely to carry weight.

You may wish to select from these when you write in:

* The Government’s “Guidance – Renewable and low carbon energy” formulated to help councils in developing policies for renewable and low carbon energy (updated 14th August 2023) requires local authorities to encourage applications to focus on “previously developed and non-agricultural land” and goes on to say that where the site in question is a greenfield site, preference should be given to land of a poorer quality. **This application completely ignores Government’s own guidance and takes 260 acres of prime agricultural land out of food production.**
* Hart District Council approved an application of similar size last year around Cholsey Farm on land to the West of the B3349 less than one kilometre from the proposed site. The Cholsey development will be visible from the proposed site thereby giving rise to an aggregated intervisibility impact and creating the impression of urbanisation in the heart of the North Hampshire countryside.
* The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) addresses the issues of biodiversity loss from planning developments. This application does not set out details as to how the proposed development will avoid a net bio-diversity loss and does not therefore represent a sustainable form of development as defined in that framework. Barn owls will lose much of their natural habitat [ you may also think of other examples].
* Open views from the public rights of way northwest of Andrew’s Farm will be reduced to narrow alleyways between the mitigation planting. The applicant’s noise modelling also shows that what are currently quiet rural footpaths will be exposed to over 60dB of continuous noise from the transformers and other plant. This will make these footpaths a very unpleasant experience for those who use them. As a result, there will be a significant loss of Amenity to the community who use the footpaths around the village.
* Heritage buildings in the village are numerous, and include the Norman church (Grade II\*), The Old Parsonage, The Manor House, Hydegate House, The Court and Andrews Farm all of which are Grade II Listed Buildings. The applicant’s report recognises that all these buildings will be negatively impacted by the development but, without any explanation, assumes that the benefits of the development proposed outweigh those impacts.
* The proposed development is consistently described as being a “temporary development”. Forty years may not be permanent, but it is not temporary and there is no certainty that the land will be capable of being made good at the end of that period due to the possibility of polluted soil. The applicant has not offered any form of bond to underwrite the certainty of proper removal of the proposed installation.
* The applicant has formed a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) to apply for and operate this development. The nature of an SPV is that the owner (in this case BayWa of Germany) is more easily able to sidestep full restoration liabilities by winding the SPV up prematurely and before the site has been restored to its previous state.
* The village and approaches to Lord Wandsworth College already experience acute traffic congestion during the early morning and late afternoon “rush hours”. The presence of construction traffic at these times would cause unmanageable congestion and present a serious risk to public health and safety. Whilst the application acknowledges the need for controlled access to the site (s) there is no evidence that existing traffic flows have been surveyed nor fully considered.
* Planting proposals intended to screen the development from view are not fit for purpose. 60cm whips will take years to screen installations. Whips should be at least 1 metre high and proper provision should be made for maintenance.

**Please note that objections must be made before 8th February. The more objections the greater the chances of defeating the application. Objections are not confined to households. if you are of voting age you can each submit your own personal objections.**