

FINAL SUBMISSION

LONG SUTTON & WELL PC COMMENT ON PA 25/01007/FUL – SOLAR FARM GRID CONNECTION CABLE

Long Sutton and Well Parish Council wish to object strongly to this planning application, on the grounds of the severe disruption it will cause over a prolonged period to traffic and to residents of the parish, given the already very heavy traffic levels the parish endures along its narrow lanes due to the presence of two schools in the village, namely Long Sutton Primary School and Lord Wandsworth College.

Our objection needs to be seen in the wider context of the current traffic situation in Long Sutton, to which will be added the impact of the construction traffic which will be generated by the planned solar farm itself, planning permission for which was granted by Hart in March this year (23/02591/FUL). Data from the parish's Speed Indicator Device (SID) show that during the two schools' term time the average daily vehicle count entering the village is already some 2,300 and a similar count coming out, indicating over 4,500 vehicle movements a day in total through a village where much of the highway consists of narrow single-track lanes without pavements. This volume of traffic – which includes large school buses, heavy agricultural vehicles and other HGVs which have caused severe damage to the carriageway – is already the subject of great concern to residents of the parish, particularly as data from the SID also indicates that a significant proportion of vehicles break the 30mph speed limit with apparent impunity.

To add to this, the approved planning application for the solar farm itself (23/02591/FUL) provides for its construction traffic to approach the site via Hayley Lane, the principal access road into Long Sutton from the B3349 Odiham-Alton road, along which much of the school-generated and residents' traffic currently passes. Furthermore, the approved scheme provides for construction traffic to travel almost the entire length of Hayley Lane from the B3349, as it will only turn off into the construction site via an access road to be created less than 200 metres before the outskirts of the village and the junction with Wood Hill Lane, thus ensuring maximum congestion.

This latest planning application for the grid cable connection (25/01007/FUL) proposes that the cable should be routed almost entirely along the public highway – out of a total cable length of just over 7km, over 6km is proposed to be laid on the public highway. Furthermore, the application envisages a potential timeframe for the works of up to 45 weeks – 10 months. It also envisages that where the public highway is single-track the road will have to be completely closed. Within this parish, this will cover the whole of Wood Hill Lane and sections of the heavily-trafficked Long Lane, both of which provide access to the village of Long Sutton.

The additional road works involving the closure of two of the other access roads into the village over a prolonged period, and the diversionary routes which this will necessitate, will only add to an already dire – and worsening – traffic situation. The Parish Council regards this as imposing an intolerable additional burden on the village and our parishioners, and we

object to it in the strongest terms. Moreover, experience with trench works on the public highway indicates that the quality of the carriageway surface is degraded thereafter, further adding to the generally poor condition of roads throughout the parish.

The Parish Council is aware of the grid connection cable route for the Chosley Farm solar farm, also to the Fleet Grid Substation, which was approved by Hart DC in 2021 (21/03250/FUL). By contrast, that route - also about 7km - is almost entirely across private land, with less than 1km of the total cable route to be installed on the public highway, thus minimising disruption to traffic and local residents.

The Parish Council notes that, by contrast with Chosley Farm, the promoters of the Long Sutton solar farm are choosing the easy option of digging up the public highway for most of the connecting cable's length, with little regard for the disruption and inconvenience it will cause for local residents. The Council believes that it should in principle be possible to route at least part of the cable for the Long Sutton solar farm across land owned by the owner of the solar farm itself, from the solar farm across to Long Lane, running south of and parallel to - but not on - Wood Hill Lane; it could then cross Long Lane and - subject of course to the landowner's agreement - run across land owned by Newlands Farm up towards Hillside (the owner of Newlands Farm has already agreed to accommodate the Chosley Farm cable across part of their land).

In sum, the Parish Council regards this current proposal as having been devised with scant regard for its impact on the local community and the local environment and wishes to object to it in the strongest possible terms.